

Running Head: FEATURES OF EMERGING ADULTHOOD

An Examination of Features of Emerging Adulthood

By

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Abstract

The present study examined features of the theory of emerging adulthood among primarily Canadian post-secondary students aged 18-25 ($M = 22.25$). In particular, the proposed study attempted to replicate and expand Arnett's (2000a, 2004) and Nelson and McNamara Barry's (2005) work by comparing perceived adult status as a function of criteria for adulthood, demographic characteristics, emotional well-being, and identity exploration in groups of young people. Participants were 116 university (39 males, 57 females) and community college students (2 males, 18 females). Results revealed significant differences for achieved criteria for adulthood, self-esteem, and identity explorations. There were no significant differences for important criteria, demographic characteristics, or levels of depression. Implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed in detail with respect to the theory of emerging adulthood.

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An Examination of Features of Emerging Adulthood

The markers of the onset of adolescence have typically been well defined (e.g., chronological age, pubertal development, physical and social changes). However, markers of the end of adolescence have been less well defined (e.g., legal adult status, school-to-work transition, accepting responsibilities for one's actions). Furthermore, the length of this period has been difficult to estimate, as it may be short for some and considerably longer for others (Sears, Simmering, & MacNeil, 2005).

Historically, different ideas and theories about the criteria for attainment of adulthood, and the timing of entry into adult status have been proposed. For instance, in taking a psychological perspective, the cognitive task of adolescence (as defined by Inhelder & Piaget, 1958, as cited in Arnett & Taber, 1994) has been the achievement of formal operational reasoning. Emotionally, adulthood is thought (by Erikson, 1963, 1968) to have been reached when identity achievement allows one the capacity for intimacy with others. Behaviourally, adulthood is thought to have been reached when one establishes impulse control, and is able to comply with social conventions (Arnett & Taber, 1994). However, all of these "psychological" transitions are somewhat ambiguous, and are thus likely to occur gradually over time rather than all at once. Furthermore, there are no particular ages that have been agreed upon with regard to when each task is attained.

Traditionally, there have been several role transitions that are thought to characterize the attainment of adulthood. These include the completion of school, entering the workforce, marriage, and parenthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986). However, in today's westernized societies there have been great demographic changes, including a

longer period of living with parents, and a later age of completion of education, first marriage, and parenthood (Beaujot, 2004). Thus, such role changes have become less significant in the transition to adulthood. Even subjectively, young people have been found to place more importance upon individualistic and psychological criteria for adulthood than role transitions such as marriage and parenthood (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 2001a).

As role transitions have become less important in marking the attainment of adulthood, and the more cognitive, emotional, and behavioural transitions occur gradually over time, it may be many years between the time adolescence begins and the time a person considers him or herself to have become fully adult. In response to this, Arnett (1994) has suggested the term “emerging adulthood” to refer to this transition period that is in some ways beyond adolescence and in some ways not fully adult. This term is useful in reflecting the difficulty in assigning a specific age to the end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood.

However, research on emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000a, 2004) is still within its initial stages, and needs further empirical investigation in several areas. In the paragraphs that follow, I begin with an historical overview on the transition to adulthood, highlighting the theories which most influenced Arnett. The theory of emerging adulthood will be then be explained in more detail, including recent supporting evidence. This will be followed by an evaluation of the theory, leading to the particular issues that were investigated in the present study. More specifically, the purpose of the present study was to further examine possible differences in significant emerging adulthood issues (i.e., perceived adult status, criteria considered important for adult status,

achievement of those criteria, identity explorations, and emotional well-being) among a diverse group of students, as well as what factors contribute to a young person feeling as though she/he is an “adult”.

Overview on the Transition to Adulthood

Identity formation. Erikson’s (1963) theory of development involves eight stages which modify and expand Freud’s theory of psychosexual development with a greater focus on social aspects of development. These stages are presented in Table 1. Each of the eight developmental stages is characterized by a conflict that has two opposing possible outcomes. If the conflict is resolved in a satisfactory manner, the positive quality becomes part of the ego and promotes further healthy development. However, if the conflict persists or is resolved unsatisfactorily, the negative quality is incorporated into the personality structure and may manifest itself in psychopathology (Muuss, 1988).

Table 1

Erikson’s Eight Stages of Development

Trust versus Mistrust

Autonomy versus Shame & Doubt

Initiative versus Guilt

Industry versus Inferiority

Identity versus Identity Confusion

Intimacy versus Isolation

Generativity versus Stagnation

Integrity versus Despair

According to Erikson (1963), the main developmental crisis facing adolescents is the achievement of ego identity. This is otherwise known as the “identity versus role

confusion” stage. Identity formation is the psycho-social task of adolescents before they transition into adulthood, whereby an identity resolution must occur before being able to move on to the next stage in which one acquires stable and meaningful relationships. It is this task of developing intimacy with others that is the crisis which faces individuals in their twenties. This is otherwise known as the “intimacy versus isolation” stage. If an individual has not yet formed an identity, he or she will not be able to commit to intimacy (fuse his or her identity with that of others) and will therefore risk being alone and isolated.

Marcia (1966) extended Erikson’s identity versus role confusion stage, noting that the criteria for attainment of a mature identity are based on two variables: crisis and commitment (applied to occupational choice, religion, and political ideology). He used an interview method in order to determine an individual’s specific identity status - that is which of four concentration points along a continuum of ego-identity achievement best characterized him or her. “Crisis refers to the adolescent’s period of engagement in choosing meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits” (p. 551).

The four types of identity status as described by Marcia (1966) include: identity achievement, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity foreclosure. More specifically, an identity-achieved subject has experienced a crisis period and has since committed to an occupation and ideology. The identity-diffused subject may or may not have experienced a crisis period, yet lacks commitment. The moratorium subject is in the crisis period with vague commitments, and continues to actively struggle with commitments. Finally, a foreclosed subject has not experienced a crisis, yet expresses

commitment. It is difficult, however, to tell whether these goals have been developed by him or herself, or whether they have been “passed down” by parents.

Erikson (1968) also describes a period of “psycho-social moratorium”, “during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him” (pg. 156). According to Erikson, a moratorium is a period of delay granted to somebody who is not ready to meet an obligation, or is forced on somebody who should give himself time. Thus, according to Arnett (2000a), psycho-social moratorium is a delay of adult commitments, and Erikson seems to have distinguished a period that is in some ways adolescence and in some ways young adulthood (yet not strictly either one). It is a period during which adult commitments and responsibilities are delayed, while the role experimentation that began in adolescence continues and intensifies (Arnett, 2000a).

Through the theories of Erikson (1963) and Marcia (1966), it is clear that adolescence is a period of search for identity. If one’s identity is not resolved during adolescence, then one risks unhealthy development into adulthood. Furthermore, it is expected that with the completion of the period of adolescence comes identity resolution and if unsuccessful then one will experience a sort of prolonged adolescence in the continuing search for identity.

“Novice phase” of development. In “The Season’s of a Man’s Life” Levinson (1978) described the ages of 17-33 as the “novice phase” of development, whereby he argued that the task of this phase is to move into the adult world and build a stable life structure (Arnett, 2000a). This process is thought to be one during which a young person experiences a considerable amount of change and instability.

Levinson (1986) has also described an invariant basic pattern whereby the life structure develops through a relatively orderly sequence of age linked periods during the adult years. This sequence is thought to consist of an alternating series of structure-building and structure-changing (transitional) periods. The primary task in a structure-building period is to form a life structure and enhance our life within it, typically lasting 5 to 7 years. Then this life structure that has formed the basis for stability must be modified. Accordingly, a transitional period then terminates the existing life structure and creates the possibility for a new one. The primary tasks of every transitional period are “to reappraise the existing structure, to explore possibilities for change in the self and the world, and to move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for a new life structure in the ensuing period” (pg. 7). This period lasts about five years. Then, as a transition comes to an end, an individual begins to make crucial choices, giving them meaning and commitment, and building a new life structure around them.

Thus, according to Levinson (1986), the period from age 17-22 is the “early adult transition”, the period from age 22-28 is the “entry life structure for early adulthood”, and the period from age 28-33 is the “age 30 transition”. It is these three periods of early adulthood, from approximately 17-33, that constitute its “novice phase”. According to Levinson, they provide an opportunity to move beyond adolescence, through the building of a provisional (but necessarily flawed) entry life structure, and to learn the limitations of that structure.

“Youth”. Kenneth Keniston (1971) has proposed a theory of “youth”. He has proposed this period to be one where there is continued role experimentation between adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett, 2000a). However, his description of this

period was influenced by youth movements such as university students protesting against the Vietnam War. As noted by Stern (2004), Keniston was led to the conclusion that existing developmental theory lacks adequate ways of understanding the feelings and behaviours of American youth in contemporary society by noting that these young people are neither psychological adolescents nor sociological adults.

General commentary. It is clear that there are different ideas concerning the period of adolescence and when it ends. Moreover, from looking historically into how theorists have viewed the transition to adulthood, it becomes clear that most see this as a period where there is an “in-between” state in achieving full adulthood, marked by experimentation between aspects of adolescence and aspects of young adulthood. Subsequently, there has been great difficulty in assigning a specific age to the end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood. This has created a lack of consistency, however, within the research. For instance, some scholars have suggested that the late teens and early twenties should be considered late adolescence, while others focus only on the ages 10-18 as the years of adolescent development (Arnett, 2000a).

Furthermore, since there have been such dramatic demographic changes (i.e., increases in the ages of marriage and parenthood) over the past few decades, the nature of the transition to adulthood has also dramatically changed in westernized societies. The typical markers of adulthood are no longer considered as important in attaining adult status. Thus, these changes have influenced the gradualness in which the transition to adulthood occurs for many individuals. It is therefore quite possible that a new and distinct period of life between the periods of adolescence and adulthood has developed.

The Theory of Emerging Adulthood

Arnett (2000a) has proposed a new theory of development for the period from the late teens through the twenties, with a particular focus on ages 18-25 years. According to Arnett, this period of development “is neither adolescence nor young adulthood, but is theoretically and empirically distinct from them both” (pg. 469, 2000a). This newly distinct period is thought by Arnett to be a product of industrialized societies, whereby marriage, children and careers are being delayed until the mid to late twenties. These changes are due to such factors as the need for higher education, different ideas about adult obligations, and less stringent standards of sexual morality (Arnett, 2000a, 2004). Furthermore, an exceptionally high level of demographic change and diversity characterizes this period. This is demonstrated by the fact that residential mobility peaks in the mid-20s, as well as frequent changes in occupation, educational status, and personal relationships (Arnett, 2000a).

According to Arnett (2004), emerging adulthood has been created in part by the steep rise in the typical ages of marriage and parenthood that has taken place in the past half century. For instance, by the year 2000 the typical age of marriage for Americans was 25 for women and 27 for men (a four-year rise for both sexes in the space of just three decades). Furthermore, age at entering parenthood has followed a similar pattern whereby most couples today wait until at least their late twenties before becoming parents. Similarly, in Canada in 2001, the median age at first marriage for brides was 26 years, and for grooms it was 28 years (whereas in the 1970s it was 21 years for brides and 23 years for grooms). Furthermore, the age at first childbirth went from women’s median age of 23.4 years in 1976 to 27.6 years in 2001 (Beaujot, 2004).

According to Arnett (2004), one reason for these dramatic rises in the typical ages of entering marriage and parenthood is the invention of the birth control pill, along with less stringent standards of sexual morality after the sexual revolution of the 1960s and early 1970s which meant that young people no longer had to enter marriage in order to have a regular sexual relationship. Another important reason is the increase in those who pursue higher education. For instance, in the United States today, about two thirds of individuals now enter college after graduating from high school. Furthermore, Arnett argues that an even more important reason may be the profound change in how young people view the meaning and value of becoming an adult and entering the adult roles of spouse and parent. Adulthood offers security and stability, something that most young people today strive for, but not until they reach 30. Until then, they view it as a closing of doors; the end of independence, the end of spontaneity, and the end of a sense of wide-open possibilities (Arnett, 2004).

According to Arnett (2004), there are five main features of emerging adulthood, including: (1) identity explorations and trying out various possibilities (especially in love and work), (2) instability, (3) being self-focused, (4) feeling in between and in transition (being neither an adolescent nor an adult), and (5) possibilities, with great hopes and opportunities.

With regard to the first main feature of *identity explorations*, Arnett (2004) argues it to be the most central feature of emerging adulthood. It is through this exploration that individuals are able to clarify their identities, and learn more about whom they are and what they want out of life. Adolescence has typically been the period of development that is associated with identity formation, specifically Erikson's (1963) stage of identity

versus role confusion. However, as Arnett argues, Erikson (1968) also commented on the prolonged adolescence typical of industrialized societies and the “psycho-social moratorium” granted to young people in such societies. Thus, it is likely that as time has passed and our industrialized societies have grown, this psycho-social moratorium has become more salient throughout people’s twenties.

It is this identity exploration of emerging adults that make the period an exceptionally full and intense period of life, but that also runs a very high risk of being an exceptionally unstable one (Arnett, 2004). This is demonstrated through the fact that emerging adults are constantly changing their plans in life, including changes in such things as majors during university, work, and relationships. These changes refer to the second main feature of emerging adulthood, which is *instability*. According to Arnett, emerging adults know that they are supposed to have a plan (some kind of idea about the route they will be taking from adolescence to adulthood), and most of them do come up with one. However, for most of them, their plan is subject to numerous revisions during the emerging adult years. It is through each revision in the plan that they learn something about themselves and hopefully take a step towards clarifying the kind of future they want.

The third main feature of emerging adulthood as described by Arnett (2004) is being extremely *self-focussed*. This is demonstrated by the fact that during this age period, there are few daily obligations and commitments that involve others, in comparison to the periods of childhood and adulthood. Arnett argues that the goal of this self-focussing is learning to stand alone as a self-sufficient person. However, emerging adults do not see this self-sufficiency as a permanent state.

It is these issues of intense exploration and instability that give rise to the fourth main feature of emerging adulthood - *the in-between period*. According to Arnett (2004), the reason that so many emerging adults feel in-between is clear from the criteria they consider to be most important for becoming an adult. Since the criteria most important to them are gradual, so is their feeling of becoming an adult. From several studies conducted by Arnett (1994, 1997, 2001a), emerging adult's top three criteria for adulthood are: (1) accepting responsibility for one's self, (2) making independent decisions, and (3) becoming financially independent. According to Arnett, all three criteria may be considered as gradual and incremental, rather than occurring all at once. Thus, while they are in the process of developing such qualities, emerging adults are bound to feel like they are in between the periods of adolescence and full adulthood.

Finally, the fifth main feature of emerging adulthood is that it is the *age of possibilities*, whereby many different futures remain open, and there is little in one's life that has been decided for certain. Thus, it is an age of high hopes and great expectations, in part because "few of their dreams have been tested in the fires of real life" (Arnett, 2004).

How Emerging Adulthood is thought to Differ from Adolescence & Adulthood

According to Arnett (2000a, 2004), in today's society it makes sense to call those between the ages of 10-18 "adolescents" for they have several things in common such as living with parents, experiencing puberty, attending secondary school, and they are part of a school-based peer culture. Such things, however, are not generally characteristic beyond the age of 18, and therefore it is inadequate to call the late teens and early twenties "late adolescence". Furthermore, late adolescents are not able to vote, cannot

sign legal documents, and are still under the legal authority of their parents in a variety of ways. Accordingly, Arnett (2004) argues that the term emerging adulthood is preferable because it distinguishes them from adolescents, while recognizing that they are not yet fully adult.

Arnett (2000a, 2004) also argues that there are several reasons why emerging adulthood differs from young adulthood. For instance, by using the term “young adulthood”, it implies that adulthood has already been reached. But according to Arnett, most people in this age period would subjectively argue that they are still making their way into adulthood. Therefore, “the term ‘emerging adulthood’ captures the dynamic, changeable, fluid quality of the period” (Arnett, p. 477, 2000a). Furthermore, since the term young adulthood is already used in diverse ways, it makes for a confusing and incoherent term for describing a specific period of life. Also, calling people from their teens through their mid-twenties “young adults” raises the problem of what to call people who are in their thirties, since they are not quite middle-aged yet. Therefore, according to Arnett, it makes little sense to lump the late teens, the twenties, and thirties together and call the entire period ‘young adulthood’. Young adulthood is thus better applied to those who are in their thirties, who are still young but are definitely adult in ways those in the late teens through the mid-twenties are not.

Arnett (2004) also makes the case for why emerging adulthood should not be considered “the transition to adulthood”. He argues that one problem is that thinking of the years from the late teens through the twenties as merely the transition to adulthood leads to a focus on what young people in that age period are *becoming*, at the cost of neglecting what they *are*. According to Arnett, this is what has happened in sociological

research on the period. There is much research in sociology on the “transition to adulthood”, but mostly all of it focuses on the transitions that sociologists assume are the defining criteria of adulthood - leaving home, finishing education, entering marriage and parenthood. Sociologists thus examine the factors that influence when young people make these transitions and explain the historical trends in the timing of the transitions (Arnett, 2004). However, Arnett argues that this research tells us little about what is actually going on in young people’s lives from the late teens through the twenties. Another problem is that the term transition to adulthood implies that the period between adolescence and young adulthood is brief, linking two longer and more notable periods of life, when it should be studied as a separate period of life.

The Cultural and Religious Context of Emerging Adulthood

According to Arnett (2000a, 2004), emerging adulthood does not exist in all cultures, because cultures vary widely in the ages that young people are expected to enter full adulthood and take on adult responsibilities¹. Emerging adulthood exists only in cultures in which young people are allowed to postpone entering adult roles such as marriage and parenthood until at least their mid-twenties, thereby allowing the late teens and the twenties to be a time of exploration and instability. Thus, according to Arnett, the period of emerging adulthood exists mainly in industrialized societies such as the United States, Canada, most of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

¹ It should be noted that the vast majority of adolescent and young adulthood developmental research has been conducted primarily on white, middle-class North American and European samples. These theories therefore may not be valid to other ethnic, cultural, and/or minority groups.

Arnett (2002, 2004) argues, however, that emerging adulthood is likely to become more persistent worldwide in decades to come, with the increasing globalization of the world economy. This can be shown through the following statement:

Rising education reflects economic development, and this makes possible the period of independent identity exploration that is at the heart of emerging adulthood. As societies become more affluent, they are more likely to grant young people the opportunity for the extended moratorium of emerging adulthood, because their need for young people's labour is less urgent. (p. 24, 2004)

Emerging adulthood, however, is likely to vary in content both within and between countries (Arnett, 2004). An example of between countries can be seen in the study conducted by Nelson, Badger, and Wu (2003). These researchers examined emerging adulthood in the Chinese culture through Chinese university students (mean age of 20.54 years). This included: (1) the types of criteria Chinese young people deem necessary for becoming an adult, (2) the types of behaviours Chinese emerging adults engage in, (3) identity-related issues, and (4) other aspects of Chinese culture that suggests that emerging adulthood in China might be different than in the United States. Results provided evidence that emerging adulthood is affected by culture. Findings revealed that the majority of Chinese college students (1) feel they have reached adult status in their early twenties, (2) have culturally specific criteria for their adult status, and (3) tend to engage in behaviours and have beliefs and values that appear to differ from emerging adults in Western cultures.

Within any given country, emerging adulthood is also likely to vary. For instance, for young people in developing countries, emerging adulthood exists only for the wealthier in society (urban areas). Whereas emerging adulthood does not exist for the poorer (in rural areas), who may not have even experienced adolescence due to work, marriage, and parenthood at a relatively early age (Arnett, 2002). Furthermore, within a country there may be some cultures that have a period of emerging adulthood and some that do not, and the length of emerging adulthood also varies among some cultures. This can be seen through young Mormons, who were found to differ from emerging adults in the majority culture in a number of ways (Nelson, 2003).

McNamara Barry and Nelson (2005) also conducted a study in which they explored the role of religious culture in the emerging adulthood of college students. Participants were undergraduates (aged 18-20 years) from institutions that were Catholic, Mormon, and public. Results showed that there were religious differences in the criteria these young people deemed necessary for adulthood, the extent to which they felt they had achieved those criteria, various aspects of spirituality including practices and beliefs, and their engagement in typical emerging adulthood behaviour. More specifically, Mormon students felt they had achieved more of the criteria that is emphasized by their culture (e.g., family). They placed greater emphasis on the criteria for adulthood in the areas of interdependence, norm compliance, biological transitions, and family capacities. They also perceived themselves as having achieved the criteria of independence, interdependence, norm compliance, and family capacities to a greater extent than the other students.

School and Work during Emerging Adulthood

Given this proposed period of “coming of age” that involves intense explorations with regard to such things as work, and school, it is important to examine specific changes that occur within these areas. For instance, according to Hamilton and Hamilton (2005):

If changes in the nature of work and consequent changes in schooling are primarily responsible for creating a new stage of emerging adulthood, then an understanding of school and work during emerging adulthood is a prerequisite to understanding the life stage. (p. 257)

These researchers argue that the paths emerging adults follow throughout school and work differ widely, and that such differences strongly shape experiences of the life stage. The Hamiltons (2005) describe a debate in the employment literature over whether the instability of emerging adults’ work patterns indicates searching (a search for a job that best matches their interests and abilities) or floundering (a lack of planning or direction). They conclude that the instability reflects searching for some and floundering for others. More importantly, they suggest that scholars should begin to distinguish between those who are following productive career paths from those who are not in order to identify their characteristics. Thus, it is important to understand how young people during the emerging adulthood become either searchers or flounders.

Empirical Research on the Period of Emerging Adulthood

Arnett (1994) surveyed college students (aged 18-21 years) on their conceptions of the transition to adulthood and their own status as adults. The students indicated on a questionnaire the criteria that they believed to be necessary for a person to be considered

an adult. There were 40 items, and for each one, the students were asked to indicate whether or not it was necessary in order for a person to be considered an adult (yes or no responses). The questionnaire was developed for this particular study, and the items were based on the literature concerning the transition to adulthood (sociological, anthropological, and psychological). The students were also asked “Do you think that you have reached adulthood?” and the possible responses were “no”, “yes”, and “in some respects yes, in some respects no”.

The results indicated that only 23% indicated that they considered themselves to have reached adulthood, while nearly two-thirds indicated that they considered themselves to be adults in some respects but not in others. The most important criteria for marking the transition to adulthood were found to be individualistic and intangible criteria. These included: “accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions”, “decide on beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences”, and “establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult”. Each of these was found to be endorsed by more than 70% of the sample, whereas role transitions such as completing education, marriage, and becoming a parent were endorsed by less than 20%.

In a similar study, Arnett (1997) examined the conceptions of the transition to adulthood among a group of college students aged 18-23 years, and a group of individuals aged 21-28 years (with a broad range of demographic characteristics). Results from the two groups of individuals were found to be almost identical. Young people who were in their late teens through their 20s considered more intangible, psychological, and individualistic criteria (accept responsibility for one’s actions, decide on personal beliefs and values independently of others, & establish a relationship with

parents as an equal adult) to be more important in the transition to adulthood than typical role transitions. Moreover, for the most part the characteristics of the young people made no differences in their responses. In the broad demographic sample, participants who were not currently in school were no more likely than those who were currently in school full or part time to indicate that they believed “finished with education” was necessary for adulthood. Similar findings occurred for those who were married or employed full time. However, there was a notable difference with regards to the question “Do you think that you have reached adulthood?” Among the college students, only 27% responded with “yes”, whereas the majority chose the ambiguous response (63%). In contrast, among the other broad group, the proportion of people indicating “yes” increased with age, from 53% among the 21-24 year olds to 71% among the 25-28 year olds. According to Arnett (1997), this may be because the criteria that they consider important for adulthood is reached gradually and incrementally, and thus takes several years to complete. Therefore, those who are older may feel like they have achieved those criteria, and thus feel that they *are* adults.

Additionally, Arnett (2001a) conducted a study in which he examined the conceptions of the transition to adulthood in the American majority culture from adolescence through midlife. The participants included 171 adolescents (aged 13-19), 179 emerging adults (aged 20-29), and 165 young-to-midlife adults (aged 30-55) from a midsized Midwestern community. These participants were recruited through the “consumer intercept” technique, whereby research assistants approached potential participants in public places and asked if they would be willing to fill out a brief questionnaire. The participants evaluated the importance of various possible criteria for

the transition to adulthood (i.e., role transitions, family capacities, norm compliance, and individualistic, legal and biological transitions). Once again, the criteria used were drawn from anthropological, sociological, and psychological studies of the transition to adulthood, and from previous studies (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998). More specifically, Arnett asked the following question: Do young-to-midlife adults in the American majority culture share the individualistic conception of the transition to adulthood articulated by adolescents and emerging adults, or does the conception found in the responses of young-to-midlife adults differ significantly?

The results indicated that young-to-midlife adults shared the individualism found in studies of adolescents' and emerging adults' conceptions of the transition to adulthood. However, the results also showed age differences in the conceptions of the transition to adulthood that appear to be related to the developmental characteristics of the three age groups. In particular, young-to-midlife adults were less likely than adolescents to consider biological transitions to be important, and more likely than adolescents or emerging adults to view norm compliance (such as avoiding drunk driving) as a necessary part of the transition to adulthood. In all three groups, role transitions (e.g., marriage) ranked lowest in importance.

Galambos, Turner, and Tilton-Weaver (2005) conducted a study in which they examined the relationship between chronological age and subjective age in emerging adulthood among Canadian youth. Subjective or self-perceived age refers to how old one feels. The researchers hypothesized that regardless of chronological age, an individual's psycho-social maturity is likely to be related to an older subjective age in emerging adults. Furthermore, role transitions were expected to be less important than psycho-

social maturity as predictors of an older subjective age among the emerging adults. Their study was cross-sectional, and included a sample of university students. A negative linear relationship was observed between subjective age and chronological age, whereby older individuals felt younger than their chronological age. The crossover from an older to a younger subjective age occurred at about 25.5 years. Furthermore, psycho-social maturity was found to be the only significant predictor of subjective age, with higher maturity related to feeling older.

According to Galambos, Turner, and Tilton-Weaver (2005), that there were some emerging adults who wanted to abandon their youth is consistent with the finding that emerging adults who reported higher levels of psycho-social maturity had older subjective ages. Thus, there appears to be some young people who value mature behaviour, and consider it a sign of adulthood. Furthermore, the results supported the hypothesis that psycho-social maturity would be more important as a marker of adulthood than the number of role transitions attained. These results are consistent with Arnett's (1994) research showing that individualistic characteristics such as attaining independence are seen by emerging adults as more important in reaching adulthood than are role transitions such as marriage.

The Role of Self-Classification as an Adult in Emerging Adulthood

According to Nelson & McNamara Barry (2005), there is convincing evidence that emerging adulthood is a unique period in development, due to the ambivalence that young people have about their own status as adults. However, they also argue that there are some 18-25 year olds who *do* consider themselves to be adults. According to Nelson & McNamara Barry, these individuals are the minority within this age group, but also

represent a unique group that is worthy of investigation. This is because they perceive themselves as adults at an age when the majority of their peers do not. This gives rise to the question of how they differ from their peers, including their criteria used to define themselves as adults, as well as their attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, an important question is whether these self-perceived adults differ from their emerging adult peers in attitudes and behaviours that are characteristic of this developmental period.

Correspondingly, Nelson & McNamara Barry (2005) conducted a study in which they identified 18 to 25 year olds who perceived themselves as adults. They then compared these individuals to their emerging adult peers to see whether they (1) used the same criteria for adulthood, (2) believed they had achieved those criteria, and (3) were different on three significant emerging adulthood issues (identity issues, risk-taking, and depression). In order to do this, a large group of 19-25 year old college students who attended a university in the United States completed several questionnaires. These included background information, their own perception of whether or not they were an adult (using the method of adult-status classification developed by Arnett, 1994), their criteria for adulthood (also developed by Arnett, 1994), their achieved criteria for adulthood (by asking the extent to which the criteria for adulthood was applicable to them), their identity achievement (Nelson, 2003), risk behaviours (Norm Compliance Scale; Arnett, 1994), and possible depression (CES-D; Radloff, 1977).

The results were found to support the hypotheses; there was a small group of 18-25 year old students who considered themselves to be adults, and these perceived adults (when compared to their emerging adult peers), did not differ on the criteria that they used for adulthood, believed that they had achieved more of the criteria for adulthood,

had a better sense of their overall identity as well as what type of person they wanted as a romantic partner, were less depressed, and engaged in fewer risk behaviours (Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005).

The Heterogeneity of Emerging Adulthood

Even though Arnett (2000a, 2004, 2005) has argued for emerging adulthood as a distinct developmental period that shares certain common features, he also recognizes the heterogeneity of the period. This is demonstrated through the following statement:

Although I have described what I believe to be common patterns for the emerging adulthood age period as a whole, an understanding of subgroups and individual differences is essential to a complete understanding of emerging adulthood, because young people in this age period are extraordinarily diverse. (p. 15, 2005)

Arnett believes the diversity of the emerging adulthood period to be a result of freedom, including a lack of social control and the lack of strict norms for what individuals should be doing with their lives during these years.

However, Arnett (2005) raises an important question concerning the obvious heterogeneity of the emerging adulthood period – “Given the diversity that exists during the years from ages 18 to 25, it is possible to call it a distinct developmental period with certain common features?” (p. 15). He then proceeds to answer this very question through arguing that it is both possible and desirable to do so, as long as it is recognized that along with the characteristics that are common to many emerging adults, there is also great diversity among them in nearly every aspect of development. According to Arnett it is important to think about emerging adulthood as a separate developmental period despite its heterogeneity because paradigms are important in structuring how researchers

think and how they explain their research.

Commentary and Critique on Emerging Adulthood

Even though there appears to be much evidence as presented by Arnett (1994, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2001a, 2001b 2004) and other researchers (Galambos, Turner, & Tilton-Weaver, 2005; Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2003; Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005a) that emerging adulthood is a new and distinct developmental period, there is still much empirical research to be done in the area. This involves a further differentiation and elucidation of the distinguishing features of the period. Moreover, there are several concerns with the theory of emerging adulthood and its supporting research that should be noted and investigated. Such concerns include further examination of psychological aspects of the period, implications of the period (i.e., emotional well-being of emerging adults), individual differences among those within the period (i.e., different subgroups of emerging adults), as well as the measures and samples used to measure features of emerging adulthood.

One particular area within emerging adulthood research that needs further research is that of individual differences. For instance, little research has focused specifically on those who do consider themselves to be adults during this proposed emerging adulthood period, and for what reasons. It may be possible that such individuals have reached more “typical” markers of adulthood (i.e., marriage, parenthood, full-time career), or have had special circumstances in their lives that did not allow them to experience emerging adulthood. Even Arnett (2000a) has recognized that not all young people will experience the phenomenon of emerging adulthood. This can be seen through the following statement:

Not all young people experience their late teens and twenties as years of change and exploration, even in industrialized societies. Some lack the opportunities to use those years as a volitional period; others may be inclined by personality or circumstances to limit their explorations or to seek a relatively early resolution to them. (p. 479)

Thus, research should further examine what factors contribute to *not* experiencing the features of emerging adulthood, even in industrialized societies. Furthermore, emerging adulthood research has focused a great deal on how culture and religion affect how one will experience the period of emerging adulthood, yet the effects of other factors still warrant more attention. For instance, there appears to be little research concerning whether or not there are gender differences among the experiences of emerging adults. Upon examination of what young people consider important for adulthood, Arnett (1994) found that female students were more likely to believe that a woman must be capable of running a household. However, several questions still remain. For instance, do men and women feel differently about the transition to adulthood? Do they differ in the important criteria for adulthood that they have achieved? Does identity formation differ for men and women during this period? Does the period affect them differently emotionally?

Similar questions as above may be asked of other subgroups of emerging adults. Perhaps the period differs depending on one's personality traits, sexual orientation, hobbies, type of employment, etc. As Arnett (2005) has stated, the period of emerging adulthood is quite heterogeneous and an understanding of subgroups is necessary for a complete understanding. In particular, he states "In our research, we should not only look for general patterns but also investigate different patterns among subgroups of

emerging adults” (p. 16).

Furthermore, the majority of emerging adulthood research has focused solely on American college/university students, neglecting individuals not attending school or who attend less traditional educational institutions. However, according to Arnett (2004), “in many ways, the American college is the emerging adult environment par excellence. It is expressly designed for the independent explorations that are at the heart of emerging adulthood” (p. 140). A university environment allows for the constant exploration of possible directions, while being surrounded by thousands of other people experiencing the same explorations (few who are married, and who have a considerable amount of unstructured time). This lifestyle may keep many of the responsibilities of adult life minimized (Arnett, 2004). Thus, it would also be interesting to examine patterns among different subgroups of university students, including different types of degrees being attained (e.g., arts and social sciences versus sciences versus applied), place of residency (e.g., living with parents versus in a dormitory versus on one’s own), financial independence (e.g., parents paying for university versus paying for university on one’s own through loans or working), as well as type of educational institution attending (e.g., university versus community college versus non-students), etc.

Another area in the emerging adulthood research needing further investigation is examination of the implications of the period for individuals’ emotional well-being. For instance, since emerging adulthood is thought to be such a volatile time, how does it affect one’s emotional well-being such as self-esteem and depression? Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) touched on this issue by including a depression measure in their study. They found that those who subjectively perceived themselves as adults were less

depressed than those who perceived themselves as non-adults (i.e., emerging adults). This finding deserves further attention, for if being an emerging adult puts one at a higher risk of depression, then it is important to further examine why this occurs and ultimately how to modify it. Furthermore, the implications of the emerging adulthood period on individuals' mental and emotional health should be further examined among different subgroups of young people.

The Present Study

The primary focus of the present study was to further investigate features of the theory of emerging adulthood among individuals aged 18-25 in Canadian society. In particular, the proposed study attempted to replicate and expand Arnett's (2000a, 2004) and Nelson and McNamara Barry's (2005) work with respect to the importance of specific criteria for defining the features of emerging adulthood. The purposes and hypotheses are described in more specific detail below.

Purposes of study and hypotheses:

(1) The present study attempted to include a more diverse sample than is typically used within emerging adulthood research (i.e., students attending 4-year colleges in the United States) through inclusion of a broader range of students, attending a variety of Canadian universities (including community colleges), and completing an array of degrees.

It may be that features of emerging adulthood vary as a function of typical demographic characteristics of young people completing post-secondary education. Consider for example, university students versus community college students, students employed full-time versus part-time versus not at all, students attending school full-time

versus part-time, type of degree being studied (Arts and Social Sciences, Public Affairs and Management, Sciences and Engineering, Applied), and level of education being completing (1st and 2nd year versus 3rd year and 4th year versus and graduate students – Master's and Doctorates).

The present study specifically sought to determine whether perceptions of adult status among a diverse sample of post-secondary students would differ as a function of various demographic characteristics. There is little direct research as to how one's choice of educational program or work status might affect perceived adult status. However, based on Arnett's 1994, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005) general discussions about emerging adulthood, it was hypothesized that those individuals employed full-time or part-time while completing their education would be more likely to consider themselves as having reached adulthood (i.e., perceived adult), whereas those individuals attending school full-time and not working at all would be more likely to consider themselves to not yet have reached adulthood (i.e., perceived emerging adult). Furthermore, it was hypothesized that individuals taking more "applied" (i.e., community college) programs would be more likely to consider themselves adults than those taking programs directed towards liberal arts, social sciences, or humanities. Hence, all of the demographic characteristics described above may influence the criteria for adulthood a young person considers important and has achieved, in turn affecting whether he/she consider him/herself to be an adult.

(2) The present study also attempted to replicate Arnett's (1994, 1997, 2001a) work with regard to important features of emerging adulthood. According to Arnett, psychological markers of adulthood are now considered more important in transitioning

to adulthood than are typical markers such as sociological role transitions (e.g., marriage and parenthood), and most individuals of this particular age group would not consider themselves to be adults, but rather somewhere “in between” (e.g., classified as “emerging adults”).

Most of the studies that have been conducted by Arnett (1994, 1997, 2001a) concerning young people’s subjective sense of having attained adulthood have included American college student samples, or a mixture of students and non-students. Findings from such research have generally shown that the majority of young people do not consider themselves to have reached adulthood, and only a small portion actually considers themselves as adults. Thus, in the present study it was hypothesized that the majority of the sample would not yet consider themselves to be adults. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that psychological markers for adulthood (e.g., accepting responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions, making decisions independently) would be endorsed more often by the sample than would more sociological role transitions (e.g., marriage, parenthood). Males and females were not expected to vary with regard to emerging adult status or endorsement of specific markers of adulthood.

(3) The present study also attempted to replicate the results of Nelson and McNamara Barry’s (2005) study by examining differences between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults in terms of (a) the criteria considered important for adulthood and (b) the number of achieved criteria for adulthood.

Previous research (Arnett, 2001a; Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005) has found that most young people (regardless of demographic characteristics such as education, age, or their subjective sense of having attained adulthood) do not differ on the criteria that

they consider to be most important in marking adulthood. It was therefore hypothesized in the present study that perceived adults and perceived emerging adults would not differ in their ratings of important criteria for adulthood. It was expected, however, that the groups would differ on the number of specific criteria achieved. For instance, Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) found that those who felt they had reached adulthood had achieved more of the criteria considered important for adulthood than those who felt they had not yet reached adulthood. Similar results were expected in the present study.

(4) The present study examined emotional well-being (i.e., depression and self-esteem), in an effort to obtain an idea of overall self-worth during this period and whether it would differ as a function of subjective sense of adulthood. Emerging adulthood is thought to be a time of intense experimentation and exploration, and for some it may be full of instability (Arnett, 2000a, 2004). How then does this affect one's mental health and emotional well-being? According to Schulenberg and Zarrett (2005), mental health has actually been found to improve in emerging adulthood overall, as measured in terms of increasing well-being, decreasing depressive affect, and decreasing antisocial behaviour. However, emerging adulthood is also the highest risk period the life course for the diagnosis of major psychopathology such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and borderline personality disorder (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2005). Correspondingly, researchers have found that depression is a growing problem across college campuses in the United States (O'Conner, 2001).

Accordingly, Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) suggested that the lack of roles and responsibilities, along with the search for identity, may lead to a sense of ambivalence and this may, in turn, give rise to depression. They investigated this, and

found that self-perceived emerging adults reported moderate levels of depressive symptoms, and that self-perceived adults were less depressed than those who did not classify themselves as adults. Therefore, in the present study it was hypothesized that perceived adults would be less depressed and have higher self-esteem than perceived emerging adults. No significant gender effects were hypothesized.

(5) Finally, the present study also attempted to examine the extent to which the young people were currently exploring their identities through Marcia's (1966) ego identity domains. (Whether or not there would be a corresponding pattern associated with perceived adults versus perceived emerging adults was also of interest).

According to Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005), emerging adults (especially those in higher education) have few societal roles, responsibilities, and expectations placed on them. They therefore have an extended period of time to explore and try on various possible selves in various domains (e.g., changes in majors, attending graduate school, short-term volunteer jobs, and travelling). Nelson and McNamara Barry found that perceived adults had a stronger sense of their identity with respect to their values and beliefs, career, romantic partner, and overall sense of self.

In general then, emerging adulthood tends to be characterized as a state of moratorium, or extensive exploration with little commitment (Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005). It was hypothesized in the present study that perceived adults would be more likely to be in a state of identity achievement (experienced a crisis period and has since committed to an occupation and ideology) and perceived emerging adults would be more likely to be in a state of moratorium (active exploration with little commitment) due to the fact that they are still engaging in explorations.

Since the study of sex differences in identity development has produced conflicting and varied results whereby most of the studies using the Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status report no significant gender differences between identity statuses (Adams, 1998), it was hypothesized that the present study would not find any significant gender differences.

Method

Participants

Participants were 116 university (39 males, 57 females) and college students (2 males, 18 females) recruited primarily from central and eastern Canadian institutions. However, a small percentage of individuals were attending other institutions in western Canada and Europe when they completed the survey. All participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years ($M = 22.25$, $SD = 2.00$). They were recruited through class presentations, the “snowball technique”, and from the introductory Psychology pool at Carleton University. As shown in Table 3, the sample was predominately female and unmarried, religiously and ethnically diverse, and was obtaining a variety of majors/degrees.

Measures

All students completed an online survey that addressed topics in the order described below.

Background information. Participants were asked to provide demographic information specifying the following information: age, gender, marital status, number of children, current educational status, current institution attending and major/degree, current employment situation, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, and current living arrangement (on one’s own or with one’s parents). See Table 2 for more detailed information.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics of Total Sample

Variable	Total
Gender	
Males	41 (35.3%)
Females	75 (64.7%)
Marital Status	
Single	115 (99.1%)
Married	1 (.9%)
Ethnic Group	
European-Canadian	87 (75%)
African-Canadian	8 (6.9%)
Asian-Canadian	15 (12.9%)
European	3 (2.6%)
Other	3 (2.6%)
Religion	
Catholicism	29 (25%)
Protestant	31 (26.7%)
Judaism	7 (6%)
Muslim	6 (5.2%)
Atheist	13 (11.2%)
Agnostic	7 (6%)
Buddhist	4 (3.4%)
Spiritual/New Age	5 (4.3%)
None	12 (10.3%)
Current Educational Status	
University Full-Time	82 (70.7%)
University Part-Time	13 (11.2%)
College Full-Time	19 (16.4%)
College Part-Time	1 (.9%)
Category of Degree	
Arts & Social Sciences	31 (26.7%)
Public Affairs & Management	34 (29.3%)
Sciences & Engineering	23 (19.8%)
Applied	24 (20.7%)
Current Employment Status	
Full-Time	27 (23.3%)
Part-Time	50 (43.1%)
Unemployed	36 (31.9%)

Perceived adult status. In order to determine whether or not the participants considered themselves to be adults, the following question was asked: “Do you think that you have reached adulthood?” The response options included “yes”, “no”, and “in some respects yes, and in some respects no”. This method of adult-status classification has been used in previous studies (Arnett, 1997; Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005). As the study was comparing those who consider themselves to be adults (perceived adults) and those who do not yet consider themselves to be adults (perceived emerging adults), the “yes” responses were considered a single group for the analyses, and the “no” and “in some respects yes, and in some respects no” were collapsed into a single group for the analyses.

Importance of criteria for adulthood. Participants were asked to state with “yes” or “no” responses whether or not they considered 43 criteria necessary for an individual to have reached adulthood. The criteria were developed by Arnett and used in several previous studies (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001a; Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005a, 2005b). Participants were also asked to rate the importance of these same criteria on their degree of importance using a scale of 1 = *very important* to 4 = *not at all important*. The criteria were then reverse coded, aggregated, and grouped into seven categories, based on a previous study conducted by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005). All criteria for adulthood items are presented in Table 2. The categories included independence ($\alpha = .39$), interdependence ($\alpha = .67$), role transitions ($\alpha = .82$), norm compliance ($\alpha = .83$), biological transitions ($\alpha = .77$), and family capacities ($\alpha = .92$).

Achieved criteria for adulthood. Participants were presented nearly the same criteria as before, and asked to “indicate the extent to which the statement currently

applies to you". For 22 items, participants were able to respond with 1 = *very true*, 2 = *somewhat true*, or 3 = *not true*. For 11 items, participants were able to respond with either 1 = *yes, applies to me*, and 3 = *no, does not apply to me*. This method is consistent with that used by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005). Because some of the questions do not apply to all individuals (e.g., the item "For women, become biologically capable of rearing children" does not apply to men), fewer items were actually included in this measure. All items were reverse coded and then aggregated into sums for the various subscales of criteria for adulthood described above.

Depression. Participants completed the 20-item Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977). This method was used previously by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) to detect depressive symptoms among emerging adults. The scale has been found to have very good internal consistency, acceptable test-retest stability, and construct validity (Radloff, 1977, 1991). In the current sample, the scale had high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$). Participants rated each of the items (e.g., "Last week I felt sad") on a scale of 1 = *rarely or none of the time* to 4 = *most or all of the time*. Some of the items were reverse coded, such that higher scores indicated higher levels of depression. Missing values were replaced with a participant's mean score for the scale. All items were then aggregated to form an overall score for depression.

Self-esteem. Participants completed the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). In the current sample, the scale had high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$). Participants rated each of the items on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 4 = *strongly disagree* (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"). Some of items were reverse coded, such that high scores indicated higher levels of self-esteem.

Missing values were replaced with a participant's mean score for the scale. All items were then aggregated to form an overall score for self-esteem.

Identity exploration. Participants completed the 64-item Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2), developed by Bennion and Adams (1986). Each item was rated on a six point scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 6 = *strongly disagree*, and was designed to measure ego identity status in ideological domains (occupation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle) and interpersonal domains (friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation). Each of the eight domains is measured by eight items - two items for each identity status originally delineated by Marcia (1966). These identity statuses include achievement (e.g., "It took me awhile to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career"), moratorium (e.g., "There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me"), foreclosure (e.g., "My ideas about men's and women's roles come right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further"), and diffusion (e.g., "I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something comes along"). Adequate convergent, discriminate, concurrent, and predictive validity and internal consistency have been found (Bennion & Adams, 1986). In the present study, the following internal consistencies were found: ideological diffusion ($\alpha = .70$), ideological foreclosure ($\alpha = .84$), ideological moratorium ($\alpha = .68$), ideological achievement ($\alpha = .65$), interpersonal diffusion ($\alpha = .64$), interpersonal foreclosure ($\alpha = .85$), interpersonal moratorium ($\alpha = .64$), and

Table 3

List of Possible Criteria for Adulthood

Independence	Norm compliance
Financially independent of parents	Avoid becoming drunk
No longer living in parents' household	Avoid illegal drugs
Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	Have no more than one sexual partner
Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences	Drive safely and closely to the speed limit
Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions	Avoid use of profanity or vulgar language
Establish equal relationships with parents	Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child
Interdependence	Avoid drunk driving
Committed to long-term love relationships	Avoid committing petty crimes such as vandalism and shoplifting
Make life-long commitments to others	Chronological transitions
Learn always to have good control over your emotions	Have obtained a driver's license
Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others	Reached age 18
Role transitions	Reached age 21
Finish education	Family capacities
Married	If a man, become capable of supporting a family financially
Have at least one child	If a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially
Settle into a long-term career	If a man, become capable of caring for children
Purchase a house	If a woman, become capable of caring for children
Become employed full-time	If a man, become capable of running a household
Biological transitions	If a woman, become capable of running a household
Grow to full height	If a man, become capable of keeping family physically safe
If a woman, become biologically capable of bearing children	If a woman, become capable of keeping family physically safe
If a man, become biologically capable of bearing children	
Have had sexual intercourse	

interpersonal achievement ($\alpha = .65$). Depending on which of the eight identity statuses an item was missing from, missing values were replaced with a participant's mean score for that particular identity status.

All items were then aggregated to form an identity status score for each of the 8 identity statuses. These scores were then categorized to form overall total ideological and interpersonal identity status classifications (1 = *diffusion*, 2 = *foreclosure*, 3 = *moratorium*, 4 = *achievement*).

Procedure

The questionnaires used in the present study were posted on the web via online survey software (i.e., surveyconsole.com). Participants first agreed to take the survey through an informed consent page, and were given the appropriate debriefing following completion. Participants were offered the chance to win a draw as a thank you for their participation, or were given course credit if part of the introductory Psychology pool. If participants chose to discontinue completion of the survey, their responses were not used in the analyses. The total survey took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Data was collected over the course of a 3 month period during the spring/summer of 2006.

Results

Replication of Arnett's Work

Identification of perceived adults versus perceived emerging adults. In response to the question of whether they felt they had reached adulthood, 42.2% of the participants indicated that they had reached adulthood, 4.3% indicated that they had not reached adulthood, and 53.4% indicated that they had reached adulthood in some respects, and not in others. Thus, 42.2% of participants were classified as "adults", and 57.7% were

classified as “emerging adults”.

Most important criteria deemed necessary for adulthood. When participants were asked to give “yes” or “no” responses to whether the 43 criteria were necessary to have reached adulthood, the four most endorsed as “yes” included: (1) accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions (98.3%), (2) establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult (90.5%), (3) decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences (83.6%), and (4) avoid committing petty crimes like shoplifting and vandalism (83.6%). The four least endorsed criteria were found to be (1) have at least one child (3.4%), (2) married (9.5%), (3) purchased a house (14.7%), and (4) not deeply tied to parents emotionally 21 (18.1%). The frequencies and percentages for all criteria are presented in Table 4.

Summary. As expected, results in the present study were consistent with previous research conducted by Arnett – the majority of the sample did not perceive themselves to have fully reached adulthood, and the top four criteria considered most necessary for adulthood by the sample were not role transitions such as marriage and parenthood, but rather more intangible and psychological criteria.

Replication of the Role of Self-Classification as an Adult

Differences in importance of criteria for adulthood based on perceived adult status. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine differences between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults in terms of the criteria they deemed necessary for adulthood. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and perceived adult status (perceived adults and perceived emerging adults). The dependent variables were the seven summary scores of criteria for adulthood

(independence, interdependence, role transitions, norm compliance, biological transitions, chronological transitions, and family capacities). Results showed no significant effects for Gender, $F(7, 93) = 1.40, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .91$, Perceived Adult Status, $F(7, 93) = .78, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, or Gender x Perceived Adult Status, $F(7, 93) = .47, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$. Thus, perceived adults and perceived emerging adults did not differ with regard to the criteria they considered important for adulthood. See Table 5 for corresponding means and standard deviations.

However, since the results of the reliability analysis for the independence subscale showed such low reliability ($\alpha = .39$, as presented in the measures section), a separate MANOVA was conducted for the items in that particular subscale. Results revealed no significant results for Gender, $F(6, 106) = 1.35, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .93$, Perceived Adult Status, $F(6, 106) = 1.31, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .93$, or a significant Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction, $F(6, 106) = .53, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$.

Differences in achieved criteria for adulthood based on perceived adult status. A MANOVA was conducted to examine differences between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults with respect to the criteria they believe they had achieved. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and perceived adult status (perceived adults and perceived emerging adults). The dependent variables were the 6 summary scores of achieved criteria (independence, interdependence, role transitions, norm compliance, chronological transitions, and family capacities).

Note that a biological transitions summary score of achieved criteria was not used in this analysis, for no relevant information concerning this subscale was collected (e.g., grown to full height, have had sexual intercourse, biologically capable of having

children). Results revealed no significant effects for Gender $F(6, 99) = 1.03, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .94$, or a significant Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction $F(6, 99) = 1.28, p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .93$. However, a significant result for Perceived Adult Status was found, $F(6, 99) = 3.00, p = .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .85, \eta_p^2 = .15$.

An examination of univariate tests for each of the dependent variables showed that significant differences as a function of perceived adult status existed for achieved independence $F(1, 104) = 11.04, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .10$, achieved role transitions $F(1, 104) = 6.96, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$, and achieved family capacities $F(1, 104) = 8.36, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .07$. See Table 5 for a list of corresponding means and standard deviations. For independence, it was found that perceived adults rated themselves higher on achieved independence than did perceived emerging adults. For role transitions, perceived adults rated themselves significantly higher on achieved role transitions than did perceived emerging adults. Finally, for family capacities, perceived adults rated themselves significantly higher on achieved family capacities than did perceived emerging adults.

Summary. Thus, as hypothesized, perceived adults and perceived emerging adults did not differ significantly with regard to the criteria they considered to be most important for adulthood. However, consistent with expectations, perceived adults were found to have achieved significantly more of those criteria than perceived emerging adults.

Do Demographic Characteristics contribute to Self-Classification as an Adult?

Differences among perceived adult status as a function of demographic characteristics. Chi-square analyses were performed on perceived adult status as a function of gender, $\chi^2(1, N = 116) = .44, p > .05$, ethnicity, $\chi^2(4, N = 116) = 5.83, p > .05$,

and religious affiliation, $\chi^2(9, N = 115) = 12.04, p > .05$; no significant differences were found. See Tables 6-8 for corresponding frequencies and percentages.

Chi-square analyses were also performed on perceived adult status as a function of current employment status, $\chi^2(3, N = 114) = 3.17, p > .05$, category of degree, $\chi^2(3, N = 112) = .35, p > .05$, and category of year enrolled, $\chi^2(2, N = 116) = .51, p > .05$; no significant differences were found. See Tables 9-12 for corresponding frequencies and percentages.

Summary. Contrary to expectations, perceived adults were not found to significantly differ from perceived emerging adults with regard to demographic characteristics.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of "Yes" Responses given to the Question "Necessary for Adulthood"

Criteria for Adulthood	"Yes"
Accept responsibility for the consequence of your actions	114 (98.3%)
Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult	105 (90.5%)
Decide on personal beliefs & values independently of parents or Other influences	97 (83.6%)
Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism & shoplifting	97 (83.6%)
Financially independent of parents	92 (79.3%)
Become less self-oriented, develop a greater consideration for others	92 (79.3%)
Avoid drunk driving	91 (78.4%)
For a man become capable of running a household	80 (69%)
For a woman, become capable of running a household	79 (68.1%)
Learn always to have good control of your emotions	79 (68.1%)
Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child	75 (64.7%)
For a man, become capable of keeping family physically safe	75 (64.7%)
For a woman, become capable of keeping family physically safe	75 (64.7%)
For a man, become capable of caring for children	74 (63.8%)
No longer living in parents' household	72 (62.1%)
Reached age 18	72 (62.1%)
For a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially	68 (58.6%)
For a man, become capable of supporting a family financially	67 (57.8%)
For a woman, become capable of caring for children	66 (56.9%)
Reached age 21	63 (54.3%)
Avoid illegal drugs	60 (51.7%)
Allowed to drink alcohol	57 (49.1%)
Be employed full-time	54 (46.6%)
For a woman, become biologically capable of bearing children	54 (46.6%)
Make life-long commitments to others	53 (45.7%)
For a man, become biologically capable of fathering children	53 (45.7%)
Drive an automobile safely & closely to the speed limit	52 (44.8%)
Settled into a long-term career	45 (38.8%)
Capable of supporting parents financially	42 (36.2%)
Have obtained license and can drive an automobile	40 (34.5%)
Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language	39 (33.6%)
Allowed to smoke cigarettes	38 (32.8%)
Grow to full height	34 (29.3%)
Finished with education	33 (28.4%)
Avoid becoming drunk	33 (28.4%)
Have had sexual intercourse	31 (26.7%)
Have no more than one sexual partner	29 (25%)
Committed to long-term love relationship	27 (23.3%)
Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	21 (18.1%)
Purchased a house	17 (14.7%)
Married	11 (9.5%)
Have at least one child	4 (3.4%)

Table 5

Results of Multivariate Analysis of Variance on Criteria for Adulthood and Achieved Criteria for Adulthood as a Function of Perceived Adult Status

Variable	Perceived Adults			Perceived Emerging Adults			<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
Important Criteria for Adulthood							
Independence	18.30	2.69	43	18.77	60	60	1.25
Interdependence	9.95	2.28	43	10.43	2.27	60	1.61
Role Transitions	12.14	4.32	43	12.82	3.38	60	.92
Norm Compliance	19.95	5.81	43	21.17	4.87	60	1.39
Biological Transitions	8.74	3.34	43	7.97	3.31	60	.88
Family Capacities	20.60	6.28	43	22.10	5.58	60	1.31
Chronological Transitions	7.28	2.00	43	7.17	2.28	60	.01
Achieved Criteria for Adulthood							
Independence	14.02	1.84	44	12.77	2.09	64	11.04**
Interdependence	8.95	1.93	44	8.48	1.75	64	1.46
Role Transitions	7.43	1.69	44	6.70	1.32	64	6.96**
Norm Compliance	19.14	2.98	44	19.52	2.29	64	.00
Family Capacities	7.75	2.04	44	6.72	2.11	64	1.87**
Chronological Transitions	8.59	.82	44	8.25	1.22	64	8.34

***p* < .01

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Gender

Perceived Adult Status		Gender	
		Male	Female
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	22	45
	% Per. Adult Status	32.8%	67.2%
	% Gender	53.7%	60%
Perceived Adults	Count	19	30
	% Per. Adult Status	38.8%	61.2%
	% Gender	46.3%	40%

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Ethnicity

Perceived Adult Status		Ethnicity				
		Euro-Canadian	African-Canadian	Asian-Canadian	European	Other
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	53	2	10	1	1
	% Per. Adult Status	79.1%	3%	14.9%	1.5%	1.5%
	% Ethnicity	60.9%	25%	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%
Perceived Adults	Count	34	6	5	2	2
	% Per. Adult Status	69.4%	12.2%	10.2%	4.1%	4.1%
	% Ethnicity	39.1%	75%	33.3%	66.7%	66.7%

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Religious Affiliation

Perceived Adult Status		Religious Affiliation									
		Catholic.	Protest.	Judaism	Muslim	Atheist	Agnostic	Buddhist	New Age	None	Orthodox
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	15	17	5	1	11	4	2	3	9	0
	% Per. Adult Status	22.4%	25.4%	7.5%	1.5%	16.4%	6%	3%	4.5%	13.4%	0%
	% Religion	51.7%	54.8%	71.4%	16.7%	84.6%	57.1%	50%	60%	75%	0%
Perceived Adults	Count	14	14	2	5	2	3	2	2	3	1
	% Per. Adult Status	29.2%	29.2%	4.2%	10.4%	4.2%	6.3%	4.2%	4.2%	6.3%	2.1%
	% Religion	48.3%	45.2%	28.6%	83.3%	15.4%	42.9%	50%	40%	25%	100%

Table 9

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Age

Perceived Adult Status		Age							
		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	3	10	4	12	8	12	14	4
	% Per. Adult Status	4.5%	14.9%	6%	17.9%	11.9%	17.9%	20.9%	6%
	% Age	75%	76.9%	80%	54.5%	88.9%	57.1%	45.2%	36.4%
Perceived Adults	Count	1	3	1	10	1	9	17	7
	% Per. Adult Status	2%	6.1%	2%	20.4%	2%	18.4%	34.7%	14.3%
	% Age	25%	23.1%	20%	45.4%	11.1%	42.9%	54.8%	63.6%

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Category of Degree

Perceived Adult Status		Category of Degree			
		Arts & Social Sciences	Public Affairs & Management	Sciences & Engineering	Applied
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	17	21	13	14
	% Perceived Adult Status	26.2%	32.3%	20%	21.5%
	% Category Degree	54.8%	61.8%	56.5%	58.3%
Perceived Adults	Count	14	13	10	10
	% Perceived Adult Status	29.8%	27.7%	21.3%	21.3%
	% Category Degree	45.2%	38.2%	43.5%	41.7%

Table 11

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Current Employment

Perceived Adult Status		Current Employment Status			
		Full-Time	Part-Time	Unemployed	Full-Time Parent
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	13	27	24	1
	% Perceived Adult Status	20%	41.5%	36.9%	1.5%
	% Employment	48.1%	54%	66.7%	100%
Perceived Adults	Count	14	23	12	0
	% Perceived Adult Status	28.6%	46.9%	24.5%	.0%
	% Employment	51.9%	46%	33.3%	.0%

Table 12

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Category of Year Enrolled

Perceived Adult Status		Category of Year Enrolled		
		Younger (1 st & 2 nd)	Older (3 rd & 4 th)	Graduate Student
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	25	24	18
	% Per. Adult Status	37.3%	35.8%	26.9%
	% Yr. Enrolled	61%	58.5%	52.9%
Perceived Adults	Count	16	17	16
	% Per. Adult Status	32.7%	34.7%	32.7%
	% Yr. Enrolled	39%	41.5%	47.1%

Emotional Well-Being

Correlation between depression & self-esteem measures. Results revealed that total scores for the depression and self-esteem scales were significantly correlated, $r = -.635$, $p < .01$, in that the higher one's level of self-esteem, the lower one's level of depression and vice versa.

Depression. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine possible differences in the levels of depression among perceived adults and perceived emerging adults. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and perceived adult status (perceived adults and perceived emerging adults), and the dependent variable was total depression score. Results revealed a significant Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction, $F(1, 112) = 5.29$, $p < .05$, but no significant results for Gender, $F(1, 112) = .23$, $p > .05$, or Perceived Adult Status, $F(1, 112) = .36$, $p > .05$. However, through box plot analysis one case was found to be an outlier, and was consequently removed from the analyses. With the outlier removed, no significant results were revealed for the Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction, $F(1, 111) = 3.53$, $p > .05$, Gender, $F(1, 111) = 1.11$, $p > .05$, or Perceived Adult Status, $F(1, 111) = .01$, $p > .05$. There was, however, a trend such that perceived adults who were female reported being less depressed than perceived emerging adults who were female. See Table 13 for corresponding means and standard deviations.

Self-esteem. Another ANOVA was conducted to examine possible differences in the levels of self-esteem among perceived adults and perceived emerging adults. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and perceived adult status (perceived adult and perceived emerging adult), and the dependent variable was total

self-esteem score. Results revealed no significant main effect for Gender, $F(1,112) = .50$, $p > .05$, but a significant main effect for Perceived Adult Status. Perceived adults reported significantly higher self-esteem than perceived emerging adults, $F(1,112) = 4.27$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. There was no significant Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction, $F(1,112) = .62$, $p > .05$. See Table 13 for corresponding means and standard deviations.

Summary. Thus, as expected, perceived adults reported having higher self-esteem than did perceived emerging adults. Contrary to expectations, however, there was no significant difference between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults with regard to their reported levels of depression.

Identity Exploration

Differences in identity statuses based on perceived adult status. A MANOVA was conducted to examine differences in identity explorations between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults. The independent variables were gender (male and female) and perceived adult status (perceived adult and perceived emerging adult). The dependent variables were the 8 identity statuses (ideological diffusion, ideological foreclosure, ideological moratorium, ideological achievement, interpersonal diffusion, interpersonal foreclosure, interpersonal moratorium, and interpersonal achievement). It was expected that perceived adults would have higher scores on ideological and interpersonal achievement, whereas perceived emerging adults would have higher scores on ideological and interpersonal moratorium. No significant main effects were found for Gender, $F(8, 105) = 1.23$, $p < .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .91$, or Perceived Adult Status $F(8, 105) =$

Table 13

Results for Analysis of Variance on Self-Esteem and Depression as a Function of Gender and Perceived Adult Status

Variable	Perceived Adults						Perceived Emerging Adults						<i>F</i>
	Males			Females			Males			Females			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
Self-Esteem	24.05	4.35	19	24.13	4.45	30	22.82	4.47	22	21.38	5.62	45	4.27*
Depression	14	7.45	18	12.65	8.95	30	10.79	5.75	22	15.58	9.05	45	.01

* $p < .05$

Note. The *F* values presented here are for Perceived Adult Status.

1.18, $p > .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .92$. However, a significant interaction was found for Gender x Perceived Adult Status, $F(8, 105) = 2.36, p < .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .85, \eta_p^2 = .15$.

An examination of univariate tests for each of the dependent variables showed that significant differences as a function of Gender x Perceived Adult Status existed for ideological diffusion $F(1, 112) = 4.15, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$ and interpersonal moratorium $F(1, 112) = 6.82, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .06$. See Table 14 for corresponding means and standard deviations. To examine the Gender x Perceived Adult Status interaction, the univariate analyses were conducted again, but for males and females separately. For females, results showed that significant differences as a function of Perceived Adult Status existed for interpersonal moratorium, $F(1, 73) = 9.24, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .11$. Comparisons revealed that female perceived emerging adults were higher on interpersonal moratorium than were female perceived adults. Results for females showed no significant differences for ideological diffusion as a function of Perceived Adult Status, $F(1, 73) = 1.21, p > .05$. For males, results showed no significant differences for interpersonal moratorium as a function of Perceived Adult Status, $F(1, 39) = 1.02, p > .05$, or significant differences for ideological diffusion as a function of Perceived Adult Status, $F(1, 39) = 2.68, p > .05$.

Chi-square analyses were performed on perceived adult status as a function of overall ideological and interpersonal ego-identity statuses (ideological diffusion, ideological foreclosure, ideological moratorium, ideological achievement, interpersonal diffusion, interpersonal foreclosure, interpersonal moratorium, and interpersonal achievement). No significant differences were revealed; ideological status, $\chi^2(3, N = 116) = 1.38, p > .05$, interpersonal status, $\chi^2(3, N = 116) = 1.72, p > .05$. However, it is interesting that upon examination of frequencies and percentages, it was shown that for

both ideological and interpersonal domains the majority of the sample was found to have a status classification of 'moratorium'. This was followed by 'diffusion', 'achievement', and 'foreclosure'. See table 15 for frequencies and percentages as a function of perceived adult status. Thus, contrary to hypotheses, there was no clear pattern of identity status as a function of perceived adult status.

General Summary

In summary, the main purpose was to replicate and expand previous research conducted by Arnett and Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005). This involved further examination of the characteristic features of emerging adulthood with a focus on self-classification as adult. Results were found to indicate the following: (1) as expected, the majority of the sample did not consider themselves to be adults, but rather an adult in some respects, and not in others, (2) the top criteria considered necessary for adulthood were consistent with previous research, (3) as expected, there was no difference between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults regarding the criteria they considered important for having attained adulthood, (4) as hypothesized, perceived adults had achieved more of these criteria than perceived emerging adults, (5) contrary to expectations, there were no differences between perceived adult status as a function of demographic characteristics, (6) perceived adults had a better sense of emotional well-being than did perceived emerging adults, as expected, and (7) contrary to expectations, there were no main effects for perceived adult status as a function of identity statuses, although interestingly, there was a significant effect of Gender x Perceived Adult Status for interpersonal moratorium. Females who were perceived emerging adults scored significantly higher on this variable than females who were perceived adults.

Table 14

Results of Multivariate Analysis of Variance on Ego-Identity Status as a Function of Gender x Perceived Adult Status

Variable	Perceived Adults						Perceived Emerging Adults						<i>F</i>
	Males			Females			Males			Females			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
Ideological Diffusion	26.32	7.53	19	23.07	6.03	30	22.36	7.88	22	24.86	7.42	45	4.15*
Ideological Foreclosure	18.26	8.88	19	14.42	6.12	30	16.42	6.29	22	17.22	6.98	45	2.88
Ideological Moratorium	23.63	5.64	19	23.73	5.89	30	24.40	6.61	22	25.94	6.41	45	.35
Ideological Achievement	32.83	5.73	19	31.59	5.80	30	33.90	5.14	22	32.82	5.71	45	.01
Interpersonal Diffusion	24.39	6.31	19	20.37	5.21	30	23.18	5.60	22	23.12	5.81	45	3.14
Interpersonal Foreclosure	17.63	6.72	19	15	5.44	30	18.41	6.89	22	16.30	6.99	45	.04
Interpersonal Moratorium	25.95	6.96	19	21.99	4.08	30	24.12	4.51	22	25.60	5.57	45	6.82*
Interpersonal Achievement	33.52	5.31	19	31.97	5.69	30	31.55	6.53	22	32.47	4.62	45	1.36

**p* < .05

Table 15

Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Ideological and Interpersonal Identity Statuses

Perceived Adult Status		Ideological Status			
		Diffusion	Foreclosure	Moratorium	Achievement
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	20	3	32	12
	% Perceived Adult Status	29.9%	4.5%	47.8%	17.9%
	% ID Status	57.1%	75%	54.2%	66.7%
Perceived Adults	Count	15	1	27	6
	% Perceived Adult Status	30.6%	2%	55.1%	12.2%
	% ID Status	42.9%	25%	45.8%	33.3%
Perceived Adult Status		Interpersonal Status			
		Diffusion	Foreclosure	Moratorium	Achievement
Perceived Emerging Adults	Count	22	2	35	8
	% Perceived Adult Status	32.8%	3%	52.2%	11.9%
	% IN Status	64.7%	40%	57.4%	50%
Perceived Adults	Count	12	3	26	8
	% Perceived Adult Status	24.5%	6.1%	53.1%	16.3%
	% IN Status	35.3%	60%	42.6%	50%

Discussion

Inclusion of a Diverse Sample of Students

Since most of the emerging adulthood literature has focused on young people attending four year universities in the United States, an attempt was made in the present study to include not only Canadian university students, but also students attending community colleges. However, because of the difficulty in recruitment of participants, only a small number of such a sample could be included. This affected the ability to examine whether there were differences among these subgroups of young people with regard to their perceptions of the transition to adulthood. Consequently, I examined differences in perceived adult status as a function of the type of degree in which participants were enrolled (i.e., Arts and Social Sciences, Public Affairs and Management, Sciences and Engineering, Applied). Community college students fell under the “applied” degree category.

Although there were no group differences, it should be noted that there still may be important differences between university students and community college students with respect to the transition to adulthood. Individuals who attend community college may be more likely to gain valuable practical experience in the workforce than those who attend universities. This is demonstrated through the following quote stated by one community college:

Our degree programs provide the best of both worlds, combining the practical application of college education with the theoretical and critical foundations of university learning... The majority of our programs allow students the opportunity to learn from experience through field placements or clinical

experiences. (Algonquin College Viewbook, p. 2, 2006-2007)

Such an opportunity may also permit individuals to develop employment connections, facilitating a career upon completion of a diploma or degree. It is possible that experiences as such may affect students' perceptions of individualism and independence, hence having an impact upon how they view their transition to adulthood.

Replication of Arnett's Work

A primary purpose of the present study was to further validate the theory of emerging adulthood through replication of previous research that has, for the most part, been conducted by Arnett (1994, 1997, 2000a, 2001a, 2004, 2005). This involved the examination of the criteria that young people consider to be the most necessary to reach adulthood. According to Arnett (1994, 1997, 2001a), the top criteria that today's young people consider necessary for adulthood are no longer sociological role transitions such as marriage and parenthood, but rather more intangible and psychological criteria such as accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.

Analogous findings were found in the present study, whereby the top four criteria that were deemed necessary for adulthood by more than 80% of the sample were: (1) accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions (98.3%), (2) establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult (90.5%), (3) decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences (83.6%), and (4) avoid committing petty crimes like shoplifting and vandalism (83.6%). Being married (9.5%) and having children (3.4%) were deemed necessary for adulthood by less than 10% of the sample.

It is interesting, though, that only one person in the entire sample had children and there was only one person who was married. This is most likely an indication of the age

and educational status of the current sample. Thus, it would be interesting to examine a large sample of young people between the ages of 18-29 years who are married or have children, and observe whether or not they *do* share similar values such as the importance of independence and the non-importance of role-transitions for adulthood. Those who are married and/or have children may have very different life experiences, given that they have a committed partner and dependents to care for. This might influence the self-focusedness, feeling of being in-between, and breadth of possibilities that are characteristic of the emerging adulthood period.

The present study also examined Arnett's (1994, 1997, 2001a) previous findings that the majority of the sample would consider themselves to have not yet reached adulthood, but rather feel as though they were somewhere in between – having reached adulthood in some respects, but not in others. Similar results were found, whereby in the current sample, 4.3% did not consider themselves to be adults, 42.2% considered themselves to be adults, and 53.4% considered themselves to have reached adulthood in some respects, but not in others.

These findings are therefore consistent with Arnett's work (1994, 1997, 2001a) – i.e., majority of the young people aged 18-25 years old surveyed did not feel as though they had reached adulthood. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there were still a substantial number of individuals who *did* regard themselves as adults. This self-classification as an adult further demonstrates the (immense) heterogeneity that is characteristic of the period. Even though individuals during the emerging adulthood period share several of its characteristic features (identity explorations, instability, self-focusedness, feeling of being in-between, and having a future full of possibilities), not *all*

individuals will share *all* of the features. Consequently, these differences are likely to affect individual perceptions of the transition to adulthood.

The issue then is determining what factors contribute to individuals experiencing the five main features of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004, 2005) differently, and what contributes to perceptions of their own status as being an adult or not. Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) examined the role of self-classification as an adult during the emerging adulthood period, and found that regardless of age, a person believes they have reached adulthood when they have achieved the criteria deemed important for adulthood by today's young people (as described above). Accordingly, the present study presented a replication of these researchers' findings through examination of differences between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults in the criteria deemed important for adulthood and the number of criteria achieved.

The Role of Self-Classification as an Adult

Upon examination of perceived adults versus perceived emerging adults, it was revealed that these two groups did not differ with respect to the criteria they considered to be important for adulthood. The groups did, however, differ in the extent to which they had achieved those same criteria. These results are consistent with those found by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005). Thus, participants in this 18-25 year age group agreed as to the importance or relevance of specific criteria in defining adulthood. Although the participants varied in the extent to which they had achieved these adult criteria, they still *valued* the same criteria.

It would be interesting to see whether or not achievement of more family-oriented criteria affects an individual's judgment of what is most relevant for adulthood. For

example, only one individual in the current sample had a child; however, the reality of giving birth and raising a child may affect one's evaluation as to the role of parenthood as a defining feature of adulthood. The same can be asked of other similar criteria.

Perceived Adult Status as a Function of Demographic Characteristics

Since the present study included a diverse sample of students, an attempt was made to examine whether certain demographic characteristics of students (such as type of degree, educational status, year enrolled, and employment status) would influence individuals' self-perceptions as an adult. Given the heterogeneity of the period of emerging adulthood, it is important to gain a better understanding of how the developmental period may vary as a function of subgroups of individuals. Thus, in the present study I examined whether self-classification as an adult would differ among students with different demographic characteristics (e.g., majors, full versus part-time status and employment). Results, however, revealed no significant differences between the different subgroups of students.

These results might imply that factors such as demographic characteristics do not necessarily contribute to self-classification as an adult. It is interesting that these factors do not influence the degree to which an individual feels that he/she has reached adulthood (such as working full-time, being a graduate student, taking more applied programs, being a full-time student, or being older in age). Interpreting one way, this may further validate the theory of emerging adulthood. Given its characteristic features of volatility, lack of direction, self-focusedness, and continuous explorations, emerging adults (especially students) are likely to change their demographic characteristics so often, that their perceptions of adulthood are not influenced by them. However, it should be noted

that all individuals in the present study were essentially students (either university or community college). Demographic characteristics typical of non-students (e.g., full-time employment, non-student lifestyle) may have an impact on an individual's self-perceptions of adulthood. Nevertheless, it could be that some non-students would have just as much volatility in their lives as students, including such things as changing jobs frequently, lack of career direction, changing living arrangements, etc.

Emotional Well-Being

Yet another purpose of the present study was to examine young people's emotional well-being during the period of emerging adulthood, including levels of self-esteem and depression. In the study conducted by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005), they found that perceived adults were less depressed than perceived emerging adults. They argued the reason for this is because emerging adulthood is such a volitional period, and thus those who considered themselves to be part of this period would be more depressed than those who did not consider themselves to be part of the period.

Correspondingly, these findings were also expected in the present study. However, the results were not consistent with Nelson and McNamara Barry's (2005) findings in that perceived emerging adults did not have significantly higher depression scores than perceived adults. With regard to self-esteem, however, perceived adults had significantly higher levels than perceived emerging adults.

According to Schulenberg and Zarrett (2005), emerging adulthood is a time when mental health improves overall. This is interesting then that the current sample of individuals appeared to have quite high scores of depression. For instance, a score of over 16 is considered depressed for the particular measure used (CES-D, Radloff, 1977),

and participants in the present study had a mean score of 13.95 with a standard deviation of 8.90. This may correspond to the fact that although mental health improves overall during emerging adulthood, it is also the period of greatest risk for developing psychopathology such as major depression (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2005). Given the period's general lack of direction, it is not surprising that many individuals would have negative feelings towards themselves while going through it. Further research is needed to examine this issue, and determine more specifically what factors contribute to such high levels of depressed feelings and how to overcome them. Longitudinal research would be beneficial to investigate whether high levels of depression remain throughout the period of emerging adulthood and thereafter or whether depressed feelings begin to decrease as a person believes they have entered adulthood.

Exploration of Identity

The present study also attempted to examine the degree of progress that participants were making towards forming mature identities through use of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (Bennion & Adams, 1986). More specifically, an attempt was made to uncover a possible distinction between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults with respect to identity exploration. Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005) conducted a similar procedure, however, did not use Bennion and Adams (1986) measure that is based on Marcia's (1966) work with identity statuses. They instead used a self-designed questionnaire involving identity resolution of beliefs and values, career, romantic partner, and overall sense of self. Given that emerging adulthood is said to be a prolonged state of moratorium (Arnett, 2000a), or extensive exploration with little commitment, it may be that those who perceive themselves to be

adults are more likely to have reached the identity status of achievement, whereas perceived emerging adults may be more likely to be in a state of moratorium. However, no such differences were found in the present study. Perceived adults and perceived emerging adults did not differ as a function of the eight identity domains (ideological diffusion, ideological moratorium, ideological foreclosure, ideological achievement, interpersonal diffusion, interpersonal moratorium, interpersonal foreclosure, interpersonal achievement), nor as a function of overall ideological and interpersonal ego-identity statuses. In fact, the majority of both of these groups were found to be in a state of moratorium.

Although, a significant interaction was revealed for Gender x Perceived Adult Status, suggesting differential patterns of identity status formation for males and females. More specifically, for interpersonal moratorium (crisis period with vague commitments with regard to friendship, dating, sex roles, recreation), female perceived emerging adults scored significantly higher than female perceived adults. Such results may have been found because females are socialized to be more “interpersonally oriented” than males. As such, it is likely that in this area females go through a more severe crisis period when they do not perceive themselves to have reached adulthood. However, once a young woman feels that she has reached adulthood, it is likely she will then have a stronger sense of who she is in this area, and thus score lower on moratorium than during the self-perceived emerging adulthood period. Since not as much pressure tends to be placed on males with regard to interpersonal identity, it is likely that a young man will not experience as severe a crisis as females during the self-perceived emerging adulthood, and still have vague commitments when self-perceived as an adult.

Identity statuses, as discussed by Erikson (1963), represent a developmental sequence of identity resolution, whereby identity explorations are normative occurrences that lead to commitments in ideological and interpersonal domains. However, according to Côté (2005), recent research would tend to downplay the significance of Erikson's model to today's youth in industrialized societies. Indeed, as Côté points out, if this developmental sequence were the normative course toward resolution of the identity stage, identity explorations would constitute a major transformative life event of which most adults would have explicit memories. Conversely, Côté argues that 35 years of research suggests that few exploration-based commitments can be found among those who could be said to have resolved the identity stage in purely Eriksonian terms (i.e., functioning adults with apparently low levels of identity confusion). Thus, conscious exploration as the best route to the formation of an adult identity through identity stage resolution, has not been empirically established (Côté, 2005).

Côté (2005) states what is more common from the literature is evidence that identity formation patterns beyond adolescence are rather erratic, with commitments showing instability and people regressing to less mature identity statuses, such as diffusion or foreclosure. In fact, most people studied thus far apparently do little active, conscious deliberation on a variety of alternative identities. They instead take a more passive approach, just letting things happen for them, as is characteristic of diffusion (an estimated 25% of college students and 10%-20% of the adult population), or avoid active deliberation and quietly take the lead from their parents with little forethought, as is characteristic of foreclosure (estimated at 30%-40% of the adult population). Those who do consciously consider options in relation to their self-attributes and then settle on a

committed course of action (those 20%-30% who would be classified as achievement) generally do so over a long period, often dealing with only one or two identity domains at a time. Others may only ever do this for one or two identity domains (especially occupation), which is perhaps one reason why it is difficult to identify identity achievement as a global, integrated developmental characteristic for most people (Côté, 2005).

According to Côté (2005), the reasons now for undertaking a “prolonged moratorium” are probably much more varied, with only a minority of youth actually using it to actively resolve an identity crisis. Most others are likely undertaking it for a variety of reasons, including being pushed into institutionalized settings such as college. It may therefore be inappropriate to use Erikson’s stage development theory as a “marker” of the emerging adulthood period. This is a plausible interpretation for why no differences in identity stage resolution as a function of perceived adult status were found in the present study.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the present study that should be noted. A primary limitation is the small sample size, which may have created an inability to find significant results if present, especially with regard to examination of differences between subgroups of students. Furthermore, there were slightly unequal sample sizes with respect to gender (more females than males). Another limitation is that the independence subscale for important criteria for adulthood had quite low internal reliability, and thus the results for that particular subscale might be called into question. On the other hand, it can be argued that the items of that subscale have been used in several previous studies and its

individual items were also analyzed separately in the present study (and no significant differences as a function of perceived adult status existed).

An additional limitation of the present study may have been that only 18 to 25 year olds were included. This decision was made based on Arnett's (2000a) theory that this particular age group is that which the emerging adulthood period applies to the most. However, there are likely many individuals beyond the age of 25 years who would still be considered to be within the 'emerging adulthood' period (with defining features as described by Arnett, 2000a). For instance, Côté (2005) has argued that many young individuals do continue to prolong adulthood even into their thirties, leading to what he calls "youthhood", or a permanent form of emerging adulthood. Thus, it could be valuable to include individuals 18 to 29 years old in the present study. Perhaps then more of an age trend would have been found.

The present study also only included a sample of post-secondary students in order to confine the sample and control for biases. However, given a larger sample of individuals, it would have been useful to include a subgroup of non-students in order to examine possible differences between this group and the student groups in how they experience the emerging adulthood period. It is likely that more non-students, especially if they are settled into their long-term careers, would be likely to have achieved more of the criteria considered important for attaining adulthood, and correspondingly would be more likely to consider themselves adults.

Another possible limitation is that the study relied solely on measures of self-report. It would be interesting in future research to examine the agreement of characteristics of emerging adulthood among young people, their friends and close

relatives. It is possible that these individuals would have a different opinion regarding a particular young person's status as an adult.

Directions for Future Research

Different way to measure emerging adulthood? The present study attempted to further investigate the defining features of emerging adulthood through examination of criteria considered important by the young people sampled, the extent to which they had achieved those criteria, their self-perceptions as adults, and the extent to which they were exploring their identities. However, these are only several aspects of the five features of emerging adulthood as described by Arnett (2004, 2005), including identity explorations, feeling in-between, and instability).

Thus, how do we empirically examine the other features? A more useful method would be to examine the five main features of emerging adulthood in one measure. At the time of this study, such a measure had not yet been completed. However, more recently, Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell (2005) have developed a scale called the Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). This measure involves five subscales based on the five features of emerging adulthood presented previously (identity explorations, instability, self-focusedness, feeling of being in-between, and having a future full of possibilities). A sixth subscale "Other Focused", was created as a counterpoint to the Self-Focused subscale, to test the hypothesis that persons older than emerging adults would be more other-focused than emerging adults. In a series of studies (Reifman et al., 2005), exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported the lucidity of the five features, along with the Other-Focused factor. For instance, it was revealed that emerging adults were significantly higher on all factors related to the five

features (and lower on Other-Focused), compared with older adults, and were also distinct from adolescents (ages 13-17) on most factors.

Hence, in future research it would be interesting to examine whether the five features of emerging adulthood differ among perceived adults and perceived emerging adults, or among the different subgroups of students and non-students. This may be a more appropriate indicator of why some people in their early-mid twenties consider themselves to be adults and why some do not.

Longitudinal research and qualitative methods. Arnett (2005) has stated that he is a strong proponent of qualitative methods for the purpose of studying emerging adults. He argues that these methods are valuable because they allow for unexpected responses when studying an area in which little is known, that they provide data that can lead to the development of questionnaires, and that they provide a vivid understanding of the variance that exists among emerging adults. Furthermore, one of the most striking features of emerging adulthood is the capacity for social or self-cognition (Arnett, 2005). Accordingly, this is difficult to examine with questionnaires, but becomes more evident with the use of interviews.

Given the nature of the period of emerging adulthood, it would be valuable to conduct longitudinal research as opposed to cross-sectional. Doing so would allow one to examine the changes that occur over this volatile time, and thus more accurately assess the foundation of changes.

Is the emerging adulthood period really beneficial? Arnett (2005) argues that countless benefits can be derived from the emerging adulthood period. One primary benefit includes unstructured freedom to be utilized to experiment with different possible

futures, while enjoying the twenties for oneself and making the most of the unique time period. However, not all researchers share Arnett's view with respect to the benefits of emerging adulthood. Some (as Côté, 2005), tend to place a more pessimistic spin on the developmental period if it is not dealt with constructively. This is seen through the following statement made by Côté:

On the surface, then, emerging adulthood looks like a positive development, with late-modern societies giving adolescents and emerging adults a greater amount of choice and freedom. However, when the ideology of free choice is peeled away, and absence of guiding structures and norms is noticed – a situation of relative anomie that can present serious challenges to some people. Without guiding structures to give meaning to the potential choices people face, realistic and informed choices become burdensome for many young people. (p. 92)

Côté (2005) argues that the benefits of such a loosely structured, prolonged, choice-oriented moratorium as emerging adulthood should include accelerated cognitive, emotional, and ego development if favorable decisions in relation to the opportunities available are made. However, Côté also points out the problems with such a loosely structured moratoria, including living with the consequences of poor educational guidance. This may occur when emerging adults are encouraged to earn devalued or potentially purposeless educational credentials that can lead to dead-end jobs or no jobs at all. Furthermore, liabilities can include the wasting of prospects if the moratorium is devoted mainly to hedonistic activities and immediate gratifications that are not associated identity development (Côté, 2005).

Thus, for some young people, the emerging adulthood period may be a time used

as a refusal to grow up, neglecting a focus toward the future. It is possible that society needs to begin aiding young people in committing to more useful life paths. Future research should examine different types of educational institutions, and whether one is more beneficial to emerging adults than others. Future research should also examine what other factors contribute to a refusal to grow up, and how to prevent young people from creating a permanent moratorium for themselves. If the period of emerging adulthood is not necessarily beneficial (or even necessary) for everyone, then future research needs to consider this and how to test it empirically.

What about coping? Given the volatility of the emerging adulthood period, it would be interesting for future research to examine how these young people cope with their explorations and instabilities. It would especially be interesting to examine whether there are differences in coping mechanisms between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults. Perhaps those who have achieved more of the criteria considered to be important for adulthood (and thus are more likely to consider themselves adults), cope differently and more effectively than those who have not achieved the same criteria and do not consider themselves to have yet reached adulthood.

Concluding Remarks

According to Arnett (2005), "Emerging adulthood is a fascinating time of life, full of changes and important decisions that have profound implications for how the rest of the life course will go" (pg. 17). If new changes are occurring within this period of life, then it is important to continue to explore and study it. The more we can understand about the transition to adulthood, the more we can facilitate this period as a straightforward and uncomplicated one. Further empirical research involving

investigation, replication, and expansion is therefore a necessity.

It was a goal of this project to aid in doing so by examining the theory of emerging adulthood through investigation of how several of its defining features (such as identity explorations, feeling in-between or self-classification as an adult, emotional well-being) affect a diverse group of Canadian students. In particular, the present study hoped to increase the understanding of how young people perceive their entry into adulthood. This was first reflected upon by Nelson and McNamara Barry (2005), who asked the significant question of what signifies the departure from emerging adulthood into young adulthood.

While results of this study generally supported previous research in this area, the fact that almost half of the participants described themselves as adults suggest that not all 18-25 year olds experience this emerging adulthood period in the same way. Some may not even experience it at all, and some may experience it for a much shorter period of time than others. Thus, in agreement with Côté's (2005) arguments of the "downside" of emerging adulthood, the present study has also highlighted the tenuous understanding of this developmental period.

Several questions therefore remain to be investigated. For instance, if the emerging adulthood period is really so heterogeneous, then can it truly be considered a separate developmental period from adolescence and young adulthood? Are the characteristics shared by most people of this age group salient enough to merit a distinct developmental period with distinct features to be examined empirically? What about those who do not go through it at all – how do they differ? Is this perhaps a period that is unique to individuals in post-secondary education? Is there a better way to measure when

one has entered the period of emerging adulthood, and when one has transitioned into adulthood? Does this period of development ultimately end up helping young people to be “better off” in the long run? Or is this period actually harming the future of today’s young people through an environment that allows such extensive identity explorations, that some people never fully accept an adult status? Future studies with a longitudinal design, including non-students and older individuals will hopefully answer some of these remaining questions.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Participant online informed consent form

Carleton University Research Study on Young Adulthood 2006

Amanda Nolan, MA Candidate

Department of Psychology, Carleton University

You have been asked to be in a research study on young adulthood. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be filling out some questionnaires about yourself and your conceptions of adulthood. As a thank you for participating in this study, you may either receive course credit if you are an introductory psychology student (a 30 minute study is equivalent to .5% credit) or be entered into a draw for \$100 to be done following completion of data collection in approximately 3 months. After you finish completing the questionnaires you will be taken to a page where you may enter your name and e-mail address and whether you would like course credit (again, only if an introductory psychology student) or to be entered in the draw. Your name and e-mail address will only be used to give you the corresponding course credit or to contact you if you are the winner of the draw. With this method, your name and e-mail address will not be associated with the data you have just provided. Your odds of winning the draw will be approximately 1/150.

The questionnaires should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete, but there is no time limit, so you can take as long as you would like to complete them. You are free to stop filling out the questionnaires at any time, or to omit any questions that you feel uncomfortable in answering. If you choose to stop the survey altogether, your recorded answers will be saved, however will not be used in any analyses.

Your answers will be kept anonymous and not shown to anyone, except Amanda Nolan and research assistants at Carleton University. You will be assigned a participant number on the survey and your real name will not be included with the data you provide. Aggregate responses will be collected and used as a part of the primary researcher's Master's thesis, and may possibly be published at a future date.

After you complete the survey you will be automatically directed to debriefing information. There are no anticipated risks as a result of completing the questionnaires. However, this survey may provide an opportunity for self-reflection. If you would like to discuss personal issues that result from thinking about these questions, please contact Health and Counseling Services (if you are a Carleton University student), or your family physician, who can provide a referral for you. You can also get in touch with Amanda if you have any questions or problems with completing the survey at anolan@connect.carleton.ca.

Please click on the “I Agree” button if you would like to participate and you will be redirected to the survey. If you choose not to participate at this time, please click on the “No Thank-You” button below and you will be redirected to a different page.

I AGREE

NO THANK-YOU

Should you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact the principal investigator Amanda Nolan (anolan@connect.carleton.ca), or her supervisor, Dr. Anne Bowker (520-2600 x8218). You may also contact Dr. Janet Mantler (520-2600 x4173), Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, or Dr. Mary Gick (520-2600 x2664), Chair of the Department of Psychology, Carleton University.

Appendix B

*Debriefing form for participants***Debriefing*****What are we trying to learn in this research?***

It has more recently been proposed that a new and distinct period of development has been formed in industrialized societies, lying between adolescence and young adulthood. This developmental period has been labelled 'emerging adulthood', and is thought to be characterized by great demographic changes and identity explorations, as well as a feeling of being in-between adolescence and adulthood.

Emerging adulthood research, however, is still a relatively new theory and needs further empirical investigation. The length, existence, and features of emerging adulthood may vary depending on several factors. In the present study we are interested in examining features of emerging adulthood among a broad sample of students, including university students and community college students. Thus, your participation in this study will aid us in further validating the theory of emerging adulthood among different groups of young people, as well as determine important distinguishing features of the theory.

Where can I learn more?

If you would like further information concerning this topic, here are a few applicable references:

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What if I have questions later?

If you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about the study that you have just completed, please feel free to contact Amanda Nolan (anolan@connect.carleton.ca or 520-2600 x2654) or Dr. Anne Bowker (anne_bowker@carleton.ca or 520-2600 x8218). If I have any concerns with my ethical rights as a participant I may contact Chair of the Psychology Department, Dr. Mary Gick (mary_gick@carleton.ca or 520-2600 x2648) or Chair of the **Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research**, Dr. Janet Mantler (janet_mantler@carleton.ca or 520-2600 x4173).

Appendix C

Demographic Information

Background Information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender:

- 1) male
- 2) female

3. Marital status:

- 1) single
- 2) married
- 3) divorced
- 4) remarried

4. Number of children:

- 1) none
- 2) one
- 3) two
- 4) three or more

5. Highest level of education completed:

- 1) less than high school
- 2) high school degree
- 3) some college or vocational school
- 4) college degree
- 5) some university
- 6) undergraduate university degree
- 7) graduate university degree

6. Current educational status:

- 1) in university full-time
- 2) in university part-time
- 3) in community college full-time
- 4) in community college part-time
- 5) not in school

7. If a student, what year are you currently enrolled in?

- 1) first
- 2) second
- 3) third
- 4) fourth
- 5) graduate student
- 6) other: _____

8. If a student, what degree and major are you studying?

9. Current employment status:

- 1) employed full-time
- 2) employed part-time
- 3) unemployed
- 4) full-time parent

10. What ethnic group do you identify with the most?

- 1) Euro-Canadian
 - 2) African-Canadian
 - 3) Asian-Canadian
 - 4) Hispanic
 - 5) Other: _____
-

11. What religion do you identify with the most?

- 1) Catholicism
 - 2) Protestantism
 - 3) Judaism
 - 4) Islam
 - 5) Atheist
 - 6) Other: _____
-

12. Family income (of your parents):

- 1) Less than \$10,000
- 2) \$10,000 - \$29,999
- 3) \$30,000 - \$49,999
- 4) \$50,000 - \$69,999
- 5) More than \$70,000

13. Your current income:

- 1) Less than \$10,000
- 2) \$10,000 - \$29,999
- 3) \$30,000 - \$49,999
- 4) \$50,000 - \$69,999
- 5) More than \$70,000

14. Current living arrangement:

- 1) live with parents
 - 2) live in a university/college dormitory
 - 3) rent an apartment or house with others or by yourself
 - 4) own your own house
 - 5) other:
-

15. Where did you spend most of your adolescent years (ages 10-17)?

- 1) Canada
 - 2) United States
 - 3) Other:
-

16. Do you think that you have reached adulthood?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- 3) in some respects yes, in some respects no

Appendix D

Necessary Criteria and Ratings of Importance of Criteria for Adulthood

Markers of Adulthood

Please respond to BOTH of the following questions for EACH item:

- 1) Indicate whether or not YOU believe the following are necessary for adulthood.**
- 2) Please give your opinion of the importance of each of the following in determining whether or not a person has reached adulthood.**

	Necessary for Adulthood?		Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
1. Financially independent of parents.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
2. No longer living in parents' household.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
3. Finished with education.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
4. Married.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
5. Have at least one child.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
6. Settled into a long-term career.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
7. Purchased a house.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
8. Avoid becoming drunk.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
9. Avoid illegal drugs.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
10. Have no more than one sexual partner.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
11. Drive and automobile safely and close to the speed limit.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
12. Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
13. Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
14. Not deeply tied to parents emotionally.	Yes	No	A	B	C	D

15. Reached age 18.	Yes No	A B C D
16. Reached age 21.	Yes No	A B C D
17. Committed to a long-term love relationship.	Yes No	A B C D
18. Decided on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences.	Yes No	A B C D
19. Make life-long commitments to others.	Yes No	A B C D
20. For a man, become capable of supporting a family financially.	Yes No	A B C D
21. For a woman, become capable of caring for children.	Yes No	A B C D
22. For a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially.	Yes No	A B C D
23. For a man, become capable of caring for children.	Yes No	A B C D
24. For a woman, become capable of running a household.	Yes No	A B C D
25. For a man, become capable of running a household.	Yes No	A B C D
26. Grow to full height.	Yes No	A B C D
27. For a woman, become biologically capable of bearing children.	Yes No	A B C D
28. For a man, become biologically capable of fathering children.	Yes No	A B C D
29. For a man, become capable of keeping a family physically safe.	Yes No	A B C D
30. For a woman, become capable of keeping a family physically safe.	Yes No	A B C D
31. Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions.	Yes No	A B C D

32. Have obtained license and can drive an automobile.	Yes No	A B C D
33. Have had sexual intercourse.	Yes No	A B C D
34. Be employed full-time.	Yes No	A B C D
35. Avoid drunk driving.	Yes No	A B C D
36. Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting.	Yes No	A B C D
37. Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult.	Yes No	A B C D
38. Learn always to have good control of your emotions.	Yes No	A B C D
39. Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others.	Yes No	A B C D
40. Capable of supporting parents financially.	Yes No	A B C D
41. Allowed to drink alcohol.	Yes No	A B C D
42. Allowed to smoke cigarettes.	Yes No	A B C D
43. For a man, completed military service.	Yes No	A B C D

Appendix E

*Achieved Criteria for Adulthood***Achieved Criteria for Adulthood**

Please indicate the extent to which each statement currently applies to you.

	1 Very True	2 Somewhat True	3 Not True
1. Financially independent from parents.	1	2	3
2. Have settled into a long-term career.	1	2	3
3. Drive safely and close to the speed limit.	1	2	3
4. Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language.	1	2	3
5. Not deeply tied to parents emotionally.	1	2	3
6. Committed to a long-term love relationship.	1	2	3
7. Have decided on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences.	1	2	3
8. Have made life-long commitments to others.	1	2	3
9. Have become capable of supporting a family financially.	1	2	3
10. Have become capable of caring for children.	1	2	3
11. Have become capable of running a household.	1	2	3
12. Have become capable of keeping family physically safe.	1	2	3
13. Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions.	1	2	3
14. Have established a relationship with parents as an equal adult.	1	2	3
15. Have learned always to have good control of your emotions.	1	2	3
16. Have become less self-oriented and developed greater consideration for others.	1	2	3
17. Capable of supporting parents financially.	1	2	3

18. Avoid becoming drunk.	1	2	3
19. Avoid illegal drugs.	1	2	3
20. Avoid drunk driving.	1	2	3
21. Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting.	1	2	3
22. Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child.	1	2	3
23. Living in parents' household.	Yes	No	
24. Finished with education.	Yes	No	
25. Have purchased a house.	Yes	No	
26. Have no more than one current sexual partner.	Yes	No	
27. Have become biologically capable of producing children.	Yes	No	
28. Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile.	Yes	No	
29. Employed full-time.	Yes	No	
30. Have served in the military.	Yes	No	

Appendix F

Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale

CES-D

Instructions for questions: Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please tell me how often you have felt this way during the past week.

- A. Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)**
- B. Some or little of the time (1-2 days)**
- C. Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)**
- D. Most or all of the time (5-7 days)**

During the past week:

1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. _____
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor. _____
3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.

4. I felt that I was just as good as other people. _____
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing. _____
6. I felt depressed. _____
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort. _____
8. I felt hopeful about the future. _____
9. I thought my life had been a failure. _____
10. I felt fearful. _____
11. My sleep was restless. _____
12. I was happy. _____
13. I talked less than usual. _____
14. I felt lonely. _____
15. People were unfriendly. _____
16. I enjoyed life. _____
17. I had crying spells. _____
18. I felt sad. _____
19. I felt that people dislike me. _____
20. I could not get "going". _____

Appendix G

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale***Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle SA. If you agree with the statement, circle A. If you disagree, circle D. If you strongly disagree, circle SD.

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. At times, I think I am no good at all. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. I certainly feel useless at times. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on equal plane
with others. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. | SA | A | D | SD |

Appendix H

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status

Please read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. There's no single "lifestyle" which appeals to me more than another.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. I haven't really thought about a 'dating style'. I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.

1 2 3 4 5 6

11. There's so many was to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "lifestyle" view, but I haven't really found it yet.

1 2 3 4 5 6

13. There are many reasons for friendships, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.

1 2 3 4 5 6

14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can really get involved in.

1 2 3 4 5 6

15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.

1 2 3 4 5 6

16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.

1 2 3 4 5 6

17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really any question since my parents said what they wanted.

1 2 3 4 5 6

18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.

1 2 3 4 5 6

19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "lifestyle" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.

1 2 3 4 5 6

21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.

1 2 3 4 5 6

22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.

1 2 3 4 5 6

23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.

1 2 3 4 5 6

25. I'm really not interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.

1 2 3 4 5 6

26. I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.

1 2 3 4 5 6

27. My ideas about men's and women's roles come right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.

1 2 3 4 5 6

28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.

1 2 3 4 5 6

30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.

1 2 3 4 5 6

31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.

1 2 3 4 5 6

33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.

1 2 3 4 5 6

34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.

1 2 3 4 5 6

37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.

1 2 3 4 5 6

38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.

1 2 3 4 5 6

39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.

1 2 3 4 5 6

40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.

1 2 3 4 5 6

41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through their plans.

1 2 3 4 5 6

42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.

1 2 3 4 5 6

43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.

1 2 3 4 5 6

44. My parent's views on life are good enough for me. I don't need anything else.

1 2 3 4 5 6

45. I've tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.

1 2 3 4 5 6

46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by

myself or with friends.

1 2 3 4 5 6

47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.

1 2 3 4 5 6

48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.

1 2 3 4 5 6

49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.

1 2 3 4 5 6

50. I attend the same church my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.

1 2 3 4 5 6

51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.

1 2 3 4 5 6

53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.

1 2 3 4 5 6

54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.

1 2 3 4 5 6

55. I've dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.

1 2 3 4 5 6

56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.

1 2 3 4 5 6

57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.

1 2 3 4 5 6

60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.

1 2 3 4 5 6

61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.

1 2 3 4 5 6

63. I date only people my parents would approve of.

1 2 3 4 5 6

65. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.

1 2 3 4 5 6