

**Five Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood:
A Comparison Between Students, Nonstudents, and College Graduates**

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DEDICATION

This dedication page is perhaps the one I've spent the most time contemplating. I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Nick, and the rest of my family all of whom I love so dearly. I dedicate this project to you because it is a shared victory. "Thank you" will never be enough to express the gratitude I have for all of the hard work and sacrifices that it took in order for me to pursue my dreams. To Nick, I appreciate your willingness to listen to me read at least one million versions of this project as it has evolved along the way and for your newfound respect for the word "cohort". Your unwavering love and support, along with all of our inside jokes has kept me sane and has encouraged me to keep moving forward, especially during this past year. Thank you for always remaining unquestioningly by my side and for your excitement over my progress as well as over the next steps we will endure together.

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ABSTRACT

U.S. census data suggests that young people today are entering marriage (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011) and parenthood (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012) later than young people in previous decades. Delayed trajectories have led researchers to reconsider the nature of development from adolescence to adulthood and has given way to the construct of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000a). Although this construct has been largely embraced by contemporary scholars, questions remain about the universality of emerging adulthood and whether or not it accurately captures the experiences of young people who do not pursue postsecondary education as well as those who have transitioned out of postsecondary education but who are still within the emerging adulthood age range of 18 to 29. The purpose of this study was to explore the attainment of traditional adult roles and the degree to which young people endorse the emerging adult dimensions among a sample of emerging adult college/university students, nonstudents, and graduates.

The final sample ($n = 101$) consisted primarily of women (69.3%) who identified as White (89.1%). In terms of education status, 30.7% were students, 32.7% ($n = 33$) were nonstudents, and 36.6% ($n = 37$) were graduates. Results were that graduates were more likely than students to be married and employed, nonstudents were more likely to be parents than both students and graduates, and groups did not statistically differ on type of living arrangement. Groups also differed in their responses to three of the five emerging adult dimensions. Students endorsed *age of feeling in-between* to a greater extent than did nonstudents and graduates endorsed *age of possibilities* and *time of self-focus* more than nonstudents. In regards to the counterpart of *other-focus*, nonstudents scored higher on this subscale than did both students and graduates. Results are discussed in terms of implications for the emerging adulthood construct and development during this period in the life course.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Erik Erikson's (1950) psychosocial stages of development have often been the benchmark for understanding human development, but changing trends in industrialized societies have led some scholars to reconsider the nature of developmental processes surrounding adolescence and adulthood. Erikson argued that people transition from adolescence into young adulthood around age 18. This is a time of venturing outside the family of origin where individuals take more responsibility for their development by choosing future paths rather than having decisions made for them by others, such as parents and caregivers. Adulthood has been defined in terms of the establishment of intimate unions with spouses and close friends and entry into parenthood (Erikson, 1950). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development was introduced over half a century ago when many Americans completed these tasks around age 20 (Arnett, 2007). However, more recent evidence shows that transitioning into adulthood by the early 20s may not accurately capture the path that today's young adults follow.

Recent trends in American society reveal that young people are prolonging the onset of two traditional markers of adulthood: marriage and parenthood. In 2011, the average age of marriage was 26 for women and 28 for men. These averages have risen considerably since the 1950s when women typically married around age 20 and men at age 22 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011). Research has also indicated that couples are entering parenthood at later ages, with approximately 25% of women in 2010 waiting until after age 30 to give birth to their first child, which increased from 5% in 1975 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

A number of factors have contributed to the shifts in postponing the onset of these traditional adult roles and perhaps one of the most influential contributors is an increase in educational attainment, particularly among women (Isen & Stevenson, 2010). Advanced

education affords women the resources to bargain for more financial equity, providing an alternative to immediate entry into marriage and parenthood (Tanner & Arnett, 2009).

Attitudinal shifts regarding the urgency and necessity to marry and bear children by a certain age, greater acceptance of premarital cohabitation (Sobotka, 2008), accessibility to and the use of birth control (Isen & Stevenson, 2010), and economic shifts from an industrial-focused to an information-based economy (Tanner & Arnett, 2009) have also contributed to delays in completing traditional tasks associated with adulthood. These trends have led some scholars to suggest the need to reconsider the nature of development from the late teens through the 20s. This thinking has given way to the construct of emerging adulthood (Arnett 200a, 2004), which is a developmental period positioned between adolescence and young adulthood and is explained as a an age of feeling in-between an adolescent and adult status, a period of identity exploration, a time of self-focus, an age of possibilities, and an age of instability. Although emerging adulthood is said to better capture the experiences of contemporary young people, important questions remain about the universality of this developmental shift.

The majority of research on emerging adulthood has focused on college students samples (e.g., Badger, Nelson, & Barry, 2006; Nelson, 2009; Nelson & Chen, 2007) and those not in higher education are considered the “Forgotten Half” (William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, 1988). An abundance of literature has examined young people's conceptions of adulthood and whether young people perceive themselves as adults (e.g. Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003; Facio, & Micocci, 2003; Facio et al., 2007; Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2004; Nelson, & Barry, 2005; Nelson et al., 2007; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, & Willinger, 2009), with less attention given to examining the five proposed dimensions of emerging adulthood.

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine group differences between college and university students, nonstudents, and graduates, all between the ages of 18 and 29, on attainment of traditional adult roles and to assess the degree to which each endorse the five dimensions of emerging adulthood. Individuals between 18 to 29 encompass a majority of individuals whose lives appear markedly different from each other in terms of parenthood, marital status, and the pursuit of higher education or employment opportunities. Many in this cohort are college students, some are college graduates, and others have never pursued higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) recently reported that in 2011, 42% of people between the ages of 18 and 24 were enrolled in postsecondary education whereas the remaining 58% were not. In 2014, 28% of Americans received their bachelor's degree by age 27 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). These differing trajectories likely create variability in how the 20s are experienced. This study will address the following research questions to determine group differences on attainment of adult roles and to better understand the applicability of emerging adulthood to individuals in different groups divided by education status.

Research Question 1 asks: *Are there group differences between students, nonstudents, and graduates on employment status, marital status, parental status, and living arrangements?*

Research Question 2: *What are the similarities and differences between students, nonstudents and graduates in the degree of endorsement of the five dimensions of emerging adulthood?*

Theoretical Orientation

Individuals, societies, and cultures across the world adjust to accommodate changes presented over time. The life course perspective situates human development within a changing

environment affected by social forces (Elder, 1995, 1998). Considering the underlying sociohistorical emphasis, the life course perspective is an appropriate theoretical lens through which to view the construct of emerging adulthood. The life course perspective emphasizes the ways in which historical events and societal changes and locations situate and shape a human development. Likewise, the period of emerging adulthood acknowledges that recent trends, specifically the delayed onset of entry into traditional adult roles, found in America and other industrialized societies alters developmental trajectories. Furthermore, the life course perspective emphasizes that development is affected differently depending on the point in which an event occurs during a specific time in one's life (Elder, 1998) and that individuals have a certain level of agency over their development through personal decisions made "within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstance" (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003, p. 11). Emerging adulthood occurs between the late teens through the 20s, a period when many are transitioning out of secondary education and are faced with decisions about the future. Many choose to pursue college or employment, whereas others simultaneously pursue both. Such decisions may be a matter of preference, or economic constraints may limit opportunities and lead to an early commitment to a particular path. Studies have indicated that from the late teens to the mid-to-late 20s the event of being employed full-time (Arnett, 1997) or attending college (Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010) influence developmental outcomes such as self-perceptions of adult status.

A life course perspective includes the concept of linked lives, which emphasizes social interconnectedness among individuals in that decisions by one person typically have consequences for significant others (i.e., parent, sibling, spouse, close friend, etc.; Elder, 1995). This point is particularly salient in the research on the period of emerging adulthood. Padilla-

Walker, Nelson, and Carroll (2012) asserted that emerging adults, particularly those in pursuit of higher education, are still somewhat dependent on their family of origin for things such as financial support. Thus, a young person who chooses to postpone financial independence by pursuing a college degree would affect the experiences of parents who provide financial support, as this decision may postpone retirement and other financially related tasks for parents.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following sections begin with a brief overview of the emerging adulthood construct is then discussed, followed by a description of the defining features of emerging adulthood. The majority of emerging adulthood literature has focused on characteristics that young people deem necessary for attaining an adult status. This information is presented first, followed by an outline of the body of literature that has examined the five dimensions of emerging adulthood, an aspect of emerging adulthood that has been less explored. A discussion of studies focused on young people in varying education statuses and their degree of agreement with each of the five dimensions is then provided, followed by an overview of the research questions and hypotheses.

Emerging adulthood

Arnett (2004) suggested that, "for today's young people, the road to adulthood is a long one" (p. 3). This prolonged transition requires achieving a suitable standard of living (Furstenberg, Kennedy, McLoyd, Rumbaut, & Settersten, 2004). Given the economic shift towards information-based training, many Americans obtain a college degree to maintain marketability within the workforce. Attending college typically occurs after high school when individuals are transitioning from their teenage years into their 20s. Furstenberg and colleagues (2004) explained that "not only are more Americans attending college than ever before, it takes longer to complete a degree than in years past" (p. 39). These trends contribute to the prolonged pathway that many young people take towards adulthood in the United States. The construct of emerging adulthood has been presented as a framework for understanding these prolonged trajectories.

Emerging adulthood is described as a developmental period extending from the late teens into the 20s with attention given to the period between 18 and 25 (Arnett, 2000a, 2004, 2007).

However, a majority of the emerging adulthood literature is also inclusive of individuals in their late 20s (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2000b, 2001, 2003; Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Arnett, Ramos, & Jensen, 2001). This time period is characterized by self-exploration, contemplation about future opportunities, and continued identity development in the domains of love, work, and world views (Arnett, 2000a), notions that have been consistently embedded within developmental frameworks. For instance, Erikson (1950) indicated that beginning in late adolescence and extending into adult years, individuals are faced with an identity crisis followed by the need to establish intimacy with others. In terms of identity development, individuals heavily contemplate who they are, how they appear to others and they begin to make decisions about the future to reach identity resolution or remain in a state of identity confusion. This stage is followed by issues of intimacy in which people either establish intimate bonds with significant others or remain isolated (Erikson, 1950). Building on this work, Marcia (1966) suggested that instead of falling into one of two identity statuses (i.e., identity resolution or identity confusion), individuals face a range of identity outcomes (i.e., foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, identity achievement). Identity status is dependent on an individual's level of experimentation and commitment to identity ideals within certain areas of life including occupation, religion and politics (Marcia, 1966).

Although identity exploration and solidification may extend from late adolescence into adult years, emerging adults are considered to be biologically, socially (Arnett, 2004) and cognitively (Tanner & Arnett, 2009) distinct from both adolescents and adults. For instance, legally adolescents are considered minors and are unable to participate in a variety of civic activities such as voting and serving in the military and are undergoing biological changes associated with puberty (Arnett, 2004). In contrast, emerging adults have typically reached full

reproductive maturity and are more cognitively advanced. Specifically, they more effectively handle higher order cognitive tasks such as strategizing, problem-solving, and reasoning and generally display greater intelligence levels when compared to adolescents (Tanner & Arnett, 2009). However, compared to older individuals, emerging adults display less advanced cognitive interpretive abilities and less control over emotional reactivity because of differences in brain maturation and exposure to stimuli (Tanner & Arnett, 2009). Personality differences also set apart emerging and older adults. For instance, Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) pointed out that social vitality, associated with "traits like sociability, positive affect, and gregariousness" (p. 5), and openness decrease with age.

Emerging adults are also distinct from others in different developmental stages regarding conceptions of adulthood (i.e., criteria considered necessary for attaining an adult status). In general, emerging adults tend to view "intangible, gradual, psychological, and individualistic terms" (Arnett, 1997, p. 3) as the most important criteria for attaining an adult status. Specifically, emerging adults consider the following as necessary for reaching adulthood: accepting responsibility for one's own actions, making decisions about personal beliefs and values independent of parents and influential others, and establishing a relationship with parents as equal adults (Arnett, 1994, 1997). Although individuals in differing developmental stages generally agree that these individualistic traits are necessary for reaching adulthood, studies have indicated that young-to-midlife adults between 30 and 55 (Arnett, 2001) and parents of emerging adults (Nelson et al., 2007) also consider norm compliance (e.g., avoiding petty crimes, practicing safe driving, etc.) as necessary for attaining adulthood.

Although research has indicated that conceptions of adulthood do not differ among emerging adults as a function of race-ethnicity (Arnett, 2003), conceptions of emerging

adulthood does vary cross culturally. In literature review, Arnett (1998) conducted a cross-cultural comparison to determine if conceptions of adulthood differed by culture. Differences emerged in that Americans reported individualistic criteria as necessary for reaching adulthood and people residing in traditional and preindustrialized societies (e.g., Morocco, Ploynesia, the Canadian Arctic) reported that marriage and certain character qualities (e.g., moral character, mental changes, impulse control, and diligence) were of greatest importance (Arnett, 1998). Furthermore, Chinese college students, between age 18 and 25, reported both individualistic (i.e., accepting responsibility for one's actions, controlling emotions, and achieving financial independence) and collectivist characteristics (i.e., becoming less self-oriented, developing greater consideration for others, being responsible to parents) as being necessary for reaching adulthood (Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2004). Nelson and colleagues (2004) concluded that "while some findings appear to be similar to those found in Western cultures like the United States, many findings suggest that emerging adulthood is different in China" (p.31), further emphasizing that emerging adulthood varies cross-culturally. Compared with others in industrialized societies, results are that, in conjunction with accepting responsibility for one's self and making personal decisions about beliefs and values, Argentinean young people reported being capable of caring for a child, exercising control over emotions, and showing consideration for others (Fazio & Micocci, 2003) as important in being considered an adult. Similarly, Austrian young people reported contraception use to avoid pregnancy (Sirsch et al., 2009) of equal necessity for reaching adulthood.

In sum, emerging adults are biologically, socially, and cognitively different from adolescents and older adults and have different ideas about what is necessary to reach adult status. Emerging adulthood differs by culture and these differences call into question the

universality of emerging adulthood. The emerging adult construct is effective in linking social change to developmental processes and captures the experiences of many young people living in industrialized societies. However, critics are skeptical of the applicability of emerging adulthood to individuals restricted by educational and social class constraints (Bynner, 2005), a concern that Arnett discussed more recently (Arnett & Tanner, 2011). Individuals born into the bottom of the "income ladder" (Furstenberg et al., 2004, p. 39) typically enter adult roles earlier than their more affluent counterparts, even though they are typically unequipped to do so because of a lack of experience and training (Furstenberg, 2008). The inability to postpone adult roles is attributed to the absence of opportunities for educational and career exploration (Furstenberg, 2008). Therefore, concerns exist regarding whether emerging adulthood accurately represents the development of young individuals who do not pursue higher education either by choice or due to social class constraints. Furthermore, recent research indicated that a 28% of emerging adults are college graduates (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014), however, an extensive review of the literature yielded no studies that focused on the experiences of emerging adults who have transitioned out of postsecondary education. An abundance of research has been dedicated to identifying criteria considered most necessary to reach adulthood among diverse samples. Less attention has been given to examining the five dimensions that define the construct of emerging adulthood.

Five Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood encompasses five defining dimensions: (a) age of feeling in-between, (b) period of identity exploration, (c) time of self-focus, (d) age of possibilities, and (e) age of instability. Among these, the majority of research has focused on age of feeling in-between, which pertains to feelings young people have about feeling between adolescent and

adult statuses (Arnett, 2001). Many are beginning to establish themselves outside of their family of origin, but still may be dependent on their parents for certain resources such as financial and emotional support (Padilla-Walker, 2012). They are "on the way to adulthood but not there yet" (Arnett, 2004, p. 14). To measure perceptions of having reached adulthood, studies typically asked participants, "'Do you feel you have reached adulthood?' Response options were 'yes', 'no', and 'in some respects yes, in some respects no'" (Arnett, 1997, p. 9). In general, most individuals in their late teens to mid-to-late 20s feel in-between the adolescent and adult statuses (Fazio, Resett, Micocci, & Mistrorgio, 2007; Nelson & Barry, 2005; Nelson et al., 2007; Sirsch et al., 2009). However, some studies have indicated that those who are employed full-time, compared to those in college (Arnett, 1997) may already self-perceive as adults. Likewise, those identifying with African-American and Latino race-ethnicity, compared to Caucasian and Asian Americans (Arnett, 2003) also self-perceive as adults. Furthermore, studies (Fazio & Micocci, 2003; Nelson et al., 2004) have identified cross-cultural differences with the majority of young people in Argentina (Fazio & Micocci, 2003) and China (Nelson et al., 2004), already self-perceiving as adults rather than feeling in-between. In addition to feeling in-between, emerging adulthood also includes four other dimensions that have been explored less often.

Emerging adulthood is also a period of *identity exploration* during which young people spend time thinking about and exploring their futures, particularly in relation to love, work, and world views (Arnett, 2000a). In so doing, they learn more about themselves and define future goals and expectations (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adults begin to engage in ventures outside of their family of origin where they exercise independence. Growing independence creates situations where individuals are more self-focus as they make more decisions for themselves. This *time of self-focus*, afforded to those who are able to postpone traditional adult roles such as

marriage and parenthood, is a healthy and temporary period that allows for further development of personal identity (Arnett, 2004). Growing independence also leads emerging adults to spend a considerable amount of time contemplating future trajectories, which Arnett (2004) refers to as *the age of possibilities*. Young individuals begin making more decisions for themselves, which may set the stage for years to come. This is a time "when many different futures remain open, when little about a person's direction in life has been decided for certain" (Arnett, 2004, p. 16). In contemplating the realm of future possibilities, emerging adults may need to revise their strategies and plans for reaching their future goals, which characterizes this period as a *time of instability*. Arnett (2004) indicated that "these revisions are a natural consequence of their explorations" (p. 10) when searching for a path for their goals. The most common types of instability during this time period revolve around changes in college, work and place of residence.

Regarding to educational status, studies have indicated differences between those attending college and those who are not. Assessments of self-perceptions of adult status and how they may differ based on college status, in general, have shown that young individuals not attending a college or university tend to view themselves as adults more often than their college-attending counterparts (Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010). Fewer studies have examined whether or not the five dimensions of emerging adulthood accurately represent the lives of young individuals, regardless of educational status. The sections that follow provide an overview of studies that have examined these dimensions among young people. These studies are organized into those that used only college student samples, those that used nonstudent samples, and those that compared students and nonstudents.

College Student Samples

Several studies have examined select dimensions of emerging adulthood among college students. Arias and Hernández (2007) examined all five dimensions in a sample of 720 Mexican and Spanish individuals ranging in ages from 16 to 34 years. Their sample was students from a variety of educational levels including undergraduate college students, postgraduate students, and former college students. Although this study did collect data from former college students, data from this subset of individuals was included to examine age, not group, differences. The purpose of this study was to examine the applicability of the emerging adulthood dimensions to educated Mexican and Spanish young people and to make inferences based on age rather than educational status and was therefore included in the "college student samples" section of the current manuscript. Overall, participants reported their developmental stage as a time of freedom, independence, an age of possibilities, and a time when adult roles were postponed, with the latter being the component with the highest level of agreement. Cultural differences also emerged. Participants from Mexico scored higher on views of future possibilities and postponing adult roles and those from Spain scored higher on the dimensions of instability and identity moratorium. In terms of age differences, younger participants more strongly endorsed the dimension of instability, reported less autonomy and adult assumption.

Nelson (2009) examined three of the five dimensions (*feeling in-between*, *age of possibilities*, and *identity exploration*) in a sample of 203 Romanian college students. The majority of the sample reported feeling in-between adolescent and adult statuses, supporting the idea that college students are ambivalent about feelings of having reached adulthood. When asked to compare their future quality of life, financial standing, career achievements, and future relationships to that of their parents, the majority of participants reported feeling that they would

be better off than their parents in these domains. Specifically, 80% felt their quality of life would be better, 73% felt their financial well-being would be better, 87% reported more optimism for their career achievements, and 70% felt their personal relationships would be better than that of their parents. Future expectations indicated that Romanian college students held optimistic views of their future possibilities. Nelson (2009) also examined whether or not participants had committed to an identity. Identity was measured by assessing participants' Likert-type responses to eight items about establishing personal beliefs, career goals, romantic partner ideals, and level of self-understanding. He concluded that feeling in-between adolescent and adult statuses and adopting adult roles and responsibilities in the absence of self-perceiving as an adult negatively affected on identity formation. Specifically, those who did not identify with either an adolescent or adult status and those who experienced a mismatch between self-perception and roles struggled with identity commitment.

Nelson and Barry (2005) examined the ways in which identity are influenced by feeling in-between. They focused on a sample of college students, but compared those who self-perceived as already having reached adulthood to those who self-perceived as emerging adults. Results were that individuals who perceived themselves as adults tended to have already solidified their personal identity and reported feeling stronger about their ideas of who they were and what they wanted out of their futures. Conversely, individuals who perceived themselves as emerging adults did not report such concrete notions of themselves, indicating that feeling in-between and identity status are perhaps inextricably linked.

Badger, Nelson, and Barry (2006) compared American and Chinese college students on their feelings of having reached adulthood versus feeling in-between, in an attempt to determine the applicability of emerging adulthood in multiple cultural contexts. Chinese participants

viewed themselves as having already reached adulthood more often than American participants, who more frequently reported feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood. A notable percentage (35%) of the Chinese participants did report feeling in-between, indicating that perhaps a minority of Chinese young people did experience emerging adulthood.

Nonstudent Samples

Despite concerns about the applicability of emerging adulthood to nonstudent samples, an extensive review of the literature generated only one article that explicitly examined the emerging adulthood dimensions in a sample comprised only of nonstudents. Hendry and Kloep (2010) conducted a study with a sample of 38 young, Welsh individuals between the ages of 17 and 20 who did not pursue higher education. The majority ($n = 33$) were employed, four were unemployed and one was pursuing a training course. Thirty two participants resided with their parents, and few were married ($n = 1$) or were parents (i.e. one reported having a child and one reported being pregnant at the time of study).

When considering the defining features of emerging adulthood, the age range the authors examined was relatively young. They found that the five dimensions of emerging adulthood only applied to a subset of the sample. The authors found variations in the levels of identity formation, and not all participants reported experiencing a prolonged moratorium (i.e. an identity status that is still under construction where the individual is still in the process of solidifying his/her identity and has not yet committed to a particular status), which is often associated with emerging adulthood. Furthermore, 23 of the 38 participants in this study felt they had already reached adulthood and had also established themselves in the areas of love and work, with many committing to romantic and career choices, indicating stability in their lives. Many in the sample did not view their future possibilities optimistically nor did they feel they had a vast number of

life choices. Although a small portion of the sample endorsed the dimensions of emerging adulthood, the majority of the sample did not, indicating that young people who are not in higher education may differ in the degree to which they fit within emerging adulthood. It is not known the degree to which college students within this same region (South Wales) would endorse each dimension, and this lack of a comparison group created difficulties in drawing conclusions about how diversified routes to adulthood actually are.

Comparative Studies

Three studies (two published studies and one unpublished doctoral dissertation) were found that addressed the dimensions of emerging adulthood in a sample comprised of both college and non-college students. Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell (2007a, 2007b) developed the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA), an instrument designed to measure the five dimensions of emerging adulthood. This measure consists of six subscales; one for each of the five dimensions of emerging adulthood and an additional subscale, referred to as *other-focus*, that serves as a counterpart measurement to the dimension of *time of self-focus*.

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in two studies that included participants from a wide age range. First, they conducted an exploratory factor analysis with a sample ($n = 243$) between the ages of 18 and 70-plus. In their unpublished supplemental analyses, they reported that they assessed 28 of the 31 items that comprise the IDEA measure for the exploratory factor analysis. Their rationale was that at the time of the exploratory factor analysis, the items for *feeling in-between* were not yet available (Reifman et al., 2007b). Following Stevens (1992), who suggested the cut-off point of .40 or higher regardless of sample size, results for Reifman and colleagues' (2007a) exploratory factor analysis revealed that all items had sufficient loadings of with the exception of one item on the

subscale of *self-focus*, which had a loading of .38. All remaining items loaded at .48 or higher with the highest loadings reaching .80.

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with a sample ($n = 121$) between the ages of 12 and 26. The confirmatory factor analysis included all 31 items within the IDEA measure and three items loaded below .40, one item on the subscale *identity exploration* had a loading of .38, and the two weakest loadings were .19 for an item in the *negative/instability* subscale and .18 for an item in the *self-focus* subscale. All other items had sufficient loadings above .40, with the highest loading being .87.

Across studies, which included of individuals from a range of developmental stages, 13 factor loadings fell within .05 of each other, further strengthening the credibility of this measure by indicating the items replicated between studies (Reifman et al., 2007b). Keeping in mind that the items associated with the subscale of *feeling in-between*, were not included in the initial exploratory factor analysis, Reifman and colleagues (2007b) stated that:

The newly introduced “feeling in-between” factor correlated to a substantial degree with all of the other EA [emerging adult] dimensions, except of course, other focused. To the extent that feeling in-between is a cornerstone of emerging adulthood, it is encouraging that it is associated with the other dimensions. (p. 15)

Additionally, test-retest reliability as assessed over a one-month period and reliability coefficients ranged from .64 to .76 with the exception of the subscale that assessed *feeling in-between* (.37; Reifman and colleagues, 2007a).

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) state that the IDEA measure has “a reasonable factor structure, generally strong reliability, and some meaningful correlations with existing constructs in the literature” (p. 48). Reifman et al. (2007b) also reported concerns about correlations

between items across scales and suggested that future research consider a reorganization of the items within each IDEA subscale and to determine which composition reaches the highest degree of model fit. Future research should keep in mind that McCourt (2004) used the IDEA items to create an overall measure of emerging adulthood. In reference to this work, Reifman and colleagues (2007b) said that “the construct appeared to work well, with standardized factor loadings for the indicators ranging from .48 - .75” (p. 24).

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) conducted five studies within this work. Three of these studies examined differences on the degree to which individuals respond to the five emerging adulthood dimensions based on age, one study assessed test-retest reliability for the IDEA measure, and one explored group differences based on education status. The fifth of these studies conducted by Reifman and colleagues (2007a) will be elaborated on in this section. Convenience sampling techniques were used, and specific to the "college/non-college comparison, students in a class completed surveys themselves and administered them to non-college acquaintances of theirs" (Reifman et al., 2007a p .43). The final sample consisted of 26 college student-nonstudent pairs. The majority were women between the ages of 18 and 25, and a small proportion exceeding this age range. Results were that college and non-college students agreed with each emerging adulthood dimensions, with the exception of sense of experimentation and possibilities. Specifically, college students more often reported feeling that they were in an age of experimentation and possibilities than did non-college participants. Regarding the remaining emerging adult dimensions, it was concluded that "identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, and negative/instability all increased when respondents felt that their career path required greater education, whereas other-focus went down" (Reifman et al., 2007a, p. 6). In regards to additional lifestyle characteristics, increased sense of other-focus was

related to extended work hours, full assumption of financial responsibilities, and living with a partner or spouse. Furthermore, level of experimentation was positively related to living with friends and negatively related to working extended hours and living with a partner or spouse.

In an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Zaluski (2012) used mixed methods to assess the five dimensions of emerging adulthood in a sample of individuals from a variety of settings. The author gathered data from 204 individuals between the age of 18 and 29, 98 of which were university students, 58 were vocational college or trade school students, and 48 were in the labor force with no prior history of higher education. Participants, regardless of educational or occupational status, tended to endorse the five dimensions of emerging adulthood; however, each group varied slightly in the degree to which they endorsed each dimension. For instance, individuals in the labor force tended to envision fewer future possibilities when compared to university and vocational students. During interviews, those in the labor force held more of an other-focused, as opposed to a self-focused, view compared to students. Group differences indicated the degree to which one responds to each dimension of emerging adulthood may vary based on student, or non-student, status.

Seiter and Nelson (2011) examined experiences of emerging adulthood in India. They used a sample of 478 college students and 100 nonstudents who had never attended college, all of whom ranged in ages between 18 to 26. The authors assessed two of the five dimensions of emerging adulthood (feeling in-between and age of possibilities) and the criteria considered most important for having reached adulthood. They found that regardless of educational status, the majority, 61%, of the sample indicated that they felt they had already reached adult status and did not express feelings of being in-between. This finding is not consistent with responses typically given in samples from Western societies and differences were attributed to cultural

context. Differences were found about age of possibilities based on educational status. Students were more likely than nonstudents to hold optimistic views about future possibilities.

Specifically, more students than nonstudents reported their quality of life, financial attainment, career achievements, and personal relationships would be better than that of their parents.

To summarize, three studies (two published and one unpublished) were found that compared student and nonstudent samples to assess the degree to which young people agreed with the dimensions of emerging adulthood. Two of these (Reifman et al., 2007a; Zaluski, 2012) examined all five dimensions, whereas Seiter and Nelson (2011) focused on feeling in-between and the age of possibilities. Differences emerged in regards to sense of possibilities, with students reporting greater optimism about their future possibilities than nonstudents. Other lifestyle characteristics such as work (Reifman et al., 2007a; Zaluski, 2012), financial responsibility and living arrangements (Reiffman et al., 2007) were identified as factors associated with the degree to which one reported being self-focused or other-focused. Those committed to career, assuming financial responsibility, and living with a partner or spouse were more other-focused rather than self-focused. Seiter and Nelson (2011) concluded that their sample, comprised of both students and nonstudents, did not vary in responses to feeling in-between. The majority of their sample self-perceived as adults, a finding that is inconsistent with other studies (e.g., Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010) that found that students and nonstudents respond differently on the dimensions of feeling in-between.

Although these studies compared students and nonstudents, more research is needed to fully understand the applicability of the construct of emerging adulthood to young people in a variety of contexts. These comparative studies have begun to address this gap in the literature, but have important limitations. First, only two of the three studies examined all five dimensions

of emerging adulthood and, as previously discussed, being inclusive of the full set of dimensions is important to fully understanding the applicability of emerging adulthood to individuals divided by education and social statuses. Second, these studies did not examine college graduates as a distinct subgroup of emerging adults. Studies focused on student and nonstudent emerging adults. Although some college graduates may have been included in the nonstudent portion of these studies, researchers did not examine graduates' responses to the emerging adulthood dimensions. Doing so is important in getting closer to the applicability of the emerging adulthood construct to the lives of young people in a variety of educational settings and social classes. Each of these studies contribute to the literature by examining the dimensions of emerging adulthood among different groups of individuals, but more research in this area is needed to investigate the universality of the emerging adulthood construct.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study addressed the following two research questions. Following each research question are the associated hypotheses that are based on existing literatures.

Research Question 1: *Are there group differences between students, nonstudents, and graduates on employment status, marital status, parental status, and living arrangements?*

Previous research has indicated that those not in higher education tend to be more established in the realms of love and work (Hendry & Kloep, 2010). Therefore, it is expected that those not in college, nonstudents and graduates, will respond similarly to questions pertaining to the attainment of adult roles. Specifically, it is hypothesized that nonstudents and graduates will be more likely to be employed, to be married, to have at least one child, and to live with a partner or spouse compared to current students.

Research Question 2: *What are the similarities and differences between students, nonstudents and graduates in the degree of endorsement of the five dimensions of emerging adulthood?* Based on available literature, it is hypothesized that overall group differences based on educational status will be found. Specifically, with regard to the dimension of feeling in-between, research has indicated that students tend to feel ambiguous about their perceptions of having reached adulthood (Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010). It is hypothesized that current students will more strongly will score higher on the dimension of *age of feeling-in between* than nonstudents and graduates.

Based on previous research related to social class constraints and opportunity structure, it is hypothesized that students and graduates will report more optimistic views of their future possibilities than nonstudents. Specifically, research has indicated that access to opportunity structures is influenced by social status, with those at the bottom lacking the luxury of career and educational exploration (Furstenberg, 2008) and the ability to postpone adult roles. Research has also indicated that those afforded the opportunity to pursue higher education report more optimistic future possibilities than nonstudents who did not or could not pursue higher education (Reifman et al., 2007a; Seiter & Nelson, 2009; Zaluski, 2012).

Regarding instability, Hendry and Kloep (2010) asserted that nonstudents reported being more established in the realms of love and work, which is indicative of stability as opposed to considering a variety of options and making changes in multiple domains which is more closely associated instability. Therefore, it is hypothesized that nonstudents will be less likely to report this time in their lives as a time of instability than will current students. Considering that graduates have completed their educational journeys and have likely transitioned into career

paths, it is further hypothesized that graduates will report a lower endorsement of the dimensions of instability than students who may still be exploring their educational and career trajectories.

Studies have shown an underlying connection between the dimensions of feeling in-between and identity (Nelson, 2009; Nelson & Barry, 2005). Specifically, young individuals who perceive themselves as adults, compared to those who feel in-between adolescent and adult statuses, reported having a stronger idea of who they were and also reported more developed views and plans for future (Nelson & Barry, 2005), negating the necessity for identity exploration. Previous hypotheses for this study were that students will report more feelings of being in-between adolescent and adult statuses than both nonstudents and graduates. Considering the connection between feeling in-between and identity solidification, it is hypothesized that students will more likely report feeling that this period in their life is a time for identity exploration than both nonstudents and graduates.

Lastly, research has found that lifestyle characteristics have been associated with either being self-focused or focused on others (i.e., other-focus). For instance, working in the labor force (Zaluski, 2012) and living with a partner or spouse and assuming full financial responsibilities have been related to being more other-focused and less self-focused (Reifman et al., 2007a). This finding, in conjunction with findings that emerging adults in college may still be dependent on family for financial and emotional resources (Padilla-Walker, 2012), leads to the following hypotheses: compared to nonstudents and graduates, current students will score higher on measures of self-focus, whereas nonstudents and graduates will score higher on measures of other-focused, a counterpart to self-focus, than when compared to current students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Sample and Recruitment

Individuals were invited to participate in the current study with the use of physical and electronic advertisements. Physical advertisement was conducted through the use of flyer postings (see Appendix B). Flyers served as a call for participants between the ages of 18 and 25 who were not currently enrolled in college. Although flyers targeted people not currently in college, a substantial proportion, 30.7%, of the final sample were college students. Flyers further indicated that the purpose of the study was to gather information about the lives and experiences of contemporary young people, that participation was expected to last approximately 20 minutes, and upon completion of the online survey participants were offered a chance to enter their name into a drawing to win one of three \$50.00 Visa gift cards. Flyers were posted at 50 locations in Knox County. Specifically, flyers were posted on public community boards at 13 public libraries, six Starbucks coffee shops, five workout facilities, four Panera Bread Company restaurants, three places of worship, three career centers, and one used bookstore. Flyers were also posted in student-employee lounges at three beauty schools, two trade schools and in the break rooms of major retailers including four Target stores, three Home Depots, two Lowe's Home Improvement stores, and one Wal-Mart. Electronic advertisements were posted to eight social media sites: Facebook, Craigslist, Reddit, Google +, LinkedIn, Digg, Stumble Upon, and Delicious. When asked to indicate how they found out about the survey, the majority (88.1%, $n = 89$) reported having seen an advertisement for the study through social media. Specifically, 38.6% ($n = 39$) saw it on Facebook, 26.7% ($n = 27$) on Craigslist, and 22.8% ($n = 23$) on Reddit. The remaining 8.9% ($n = 9$) heard about the study through a friend or family member and 3% ($n = 3$) saw a flyer posting. All participants were invited to respond to the online survey, which

took approximately 20 minutes to complete and included questions pertaining to demographic characteristics, dimensions of emerging adulthood, and lifestyle characteristics. Upon completion, participants were invited to enter their name in a drawing for a chance to win one of three \$50.00 Visa gift cards.

In total 184, people responded to the online survey. Considering that emerging adulthood is expected to occur from the late teens into the 20s and to maintain consistency with existing literature (Arnett 1997, 2000b, 2001, 2003; Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Arnett, Ramos, & Jensen, 2001), age criteria for participation was set to be inclusive of those between the ages of 18 and 29. Forty six respondents did not meet the age criteria. Specifically, 20 did not report their age, four were under the age of 18, and 22 were over the age of 29. After removing these cases, the sample size was 138. The sample was further adjusted based on the response rate to the IDEA measure¹ and outliers, which resulted in a final sample of 101.

Participants ultimately were 101 individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 with a mean age of 23.3 ($SD = 2.5$). This sample consisted primarily of women 69.3% ($n = 70$) who identified as White 89.1% ($n = 90$). In terms of education status, at the time of study 30.7% ($n = 31$) were students, 32.7% ($n = 33$) were nonst²udents, and 36.6% ($n = 37$) were college graduates. A full description of the sample is outlined in Table 1 (see Appendix A) and a detailed overview of demographic characteristics by group (i.e., students, nonstudents, and graduates) and a description of how demographic data were coded is provided in the sections that follow.

¹ Analyses that address research question two (i.e. whether group differences exists on scores from the IDEA measure that assess the relevance of the emerging adulthood dimensions), were inclusive of those who missed no more than one item per subscale within the IDEA measure. For example, the subscale measuring *age of possibilities* consisted of five items and those who provided responses to at least four of the five items were included in final analyses. Consequently, those completing fewer than four of the items were excluded from final analyses. In total, 34 participants did not meet this criterion in that their response rates were too low for one or more of the IDEA measure, therefore leaving final sample to consist of $n = 104$.

Students. Students were defined as individuals who were enrolled in a college or university at the time of the study either at the undergraduate or graduate level. This sample consisted of 30.7% ($n = 31$) students. Of these, 45.2% ($n = 14$) already held a four-year college degree or higher, indicating that approximately half those still in college or university (i.e., students) were either pursuing a second degree or working towards a graduate degree. The mean age for students was 22.3 years ($SD = 2.9$), 58.1% ($n = 18$) were women, and 90.3% ($n = 28$) reported as White.

Nonstudents. Nonstudents were defined as individuals who were not currently enrolled in college or university courses at the time of study and whose highest level of educational attainment was less than a four year degree. Nonstudents comprised 32.7% ($n = 33$) of the full sample. Of these, 9.1% ($n = 3$) had less than a high school diploma/GED, 36.4% ($n = 12$) had a high school diploma/GED, 36.4% ($n = 12$) had some college experience but were no longer in school and did not have a degree, and 18.2% ($n = 6$) had either an Associate's Degree or a College/Vocational Certification. The mean age for nonstudents was 23.5 years ($SD = 2.7$), 63.6% ($n = 21$) were women, and 87.9% ($n = 29$) reported as White.

Graduates. Graduates were defined as individuals who were not enrolled in college or university courses at the time of study but whose highest level of educational attainment was a four year degree or higher. Graduates comprised 36.6% ($n = 37$) of the sample. Of these, 83.8% ($n = 31$) had a Bachelor's Degree and 16.2% ($n = 6$) had a Graduate Degree. The mean age for graduates was 24.1 years ($SD = 1.5$), 83.8% ($n = 31$) were women, and 89.2% ($n = 33$) reported as White.

Measures

Attainment of traditional adult roles. To assess employment, marital, parental status, and current living arrangements, participants were asked to respond to a set of questions that assessed these lifestyle characteristics (see Appendix C). In the event that a question offered an “other” category, there was a space for participants to elaborate on their “other” answer selection. For instance, when asked “*Are you employed?*” participants selected either “full-time,” “part-time,” or “other.” Open-ended responses such as “unemployed,” “looking for employment,” “homemaker,” etc. were coded as “Not Employed,” whereas answers of “I have two jobs,” “gainfully employed,” etc. were coded as “Employed.” In sum, 21.8% ($n = 22$) were not employed and 76.2% ($n = 77$) were employed, and 2% ($n = 2$) were missing information for employment.

To assess marital status, participants were asked to indicate if they were “single,” “married,” or “other” category. Nine participants provided open-ended answers to this questions and all open-ended responses (e.g., “dating,” “divorced,” “engaged,” “in a committed relationship,” etc.) fell into the “Not Married” category. Therefore, 13.9% ($n = 14$) were married and 86.1% ($n = 87$) were not married. Parental status was measured by asking participants “*Do you currently have any children?*” and participants selected either “yes” or “no.” In total, 11.9% ($n = 12$) were parents and 88.1% ($n = 89$) were not.

Living arrangement was assessed by asking “*What is your current living arrangement?*” Response options included “with a parent/caregiver,” “with a roommate,” “with a partner/spouse,” “by yourself,” and “other.” Answers were dichotomized into “lives with a spouse or partner” and “does not live with a spouse or partner”. Seven participants provided open-ended responses to this question, with some (e.g., “I live with my partner and my mother”,

etc.) falling into the ‘lives with a spouse or partner’ category and others (e.g., “2 roommates,” etc.) into the “does not live with a spouse or partner” category. In total, 32.7% ($n = 33$) lived with a partner or spouse, and 67.4% ($n = 68$) did not. A full description of the sample is outlined in Table 1 (see Appendix A).

Endorsement of emerging adulthood dimensions. The *Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood* (IDEA; Reifman et al., 2007a, 2007b) was used to measure the degree to which individuals endorsed the emerging adult dimensions (see Appendix D). The IDEA asks participants to contemplate an approximated five year period, which includes the current point in their lives, the last few years, and the next few years. Participants responded to 31 questions on a Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (4) *Strongly agree*. One sample item for each of the emerging adult dimensions are as follows: age of feeling in-between (“*Is this period of your life a time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?*”), period of identity exploration (“*Is this period of your life a time of finding out who you are?*”), age of possibilities (“*Is this period of your life a time of many possibilities?*”), age of instability (“*Is this period of your life a time of unpredictability?*”), time of self-focus (“*Is this period of your life a time of focusing on yourself?*”), and other-focus, counterpart to time of self-focus (“*Is this period of your life a time of responsibility to others?*”). Reifman and colleagues (2007a) provided a key for researchers to use to decipher the specific items within each subscale. For instance, the subscale for *time of identity exploration* consisted of seven items (i.e., IDEA questions 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28). In the current study, items were collapsed into six subscales and higher scores indicated a stronger endorsement of the associated construct. Mean responses for each of the six subscales is found in Table 2 (see Appendix A).

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) further indicated that the six subscales of the IDEA measure displayed strong internal consistency with alphas between .70 to .85 and other research reported similar findings (Miller, 2011). A general trend does exist across studies, including Reifman and colleagues (2007a), in that the subscale measuring *time of self-focus* produced the lowest alpha reliability coefficient among the subscales, but the remaining five subscales have consistently produced sufficient measures of internal consistency. For instance, Zaluski (2012) reported an alpha of .63 for the subscale measuring *time of self-focus*, with all other subscales generating alphas of .70 and higher. Likewise, McCourt (2004) reported an alpha of .66 for *self-focus* with all other subscales having an internal consistency of .71 or higher. This is consistent with the present study. Cronbach's alpha was .63 for *time of self-focus*, .66 for *time of feeling in-between*, .74 for *age of identity exploration*, .75 for *other-focus*, .78 for *age of possibilities*, and .80 for *time of instability*.

Analysis

Regarding to research question one, a set of chi-square analyses were conducted to determine if students, nonstudents, and graduates significantly differed on reports of employment status, marital status, parental status, and living arrangement. Chi-square analyses were conducted on two groups at a time and repeated until all groups had been compared to one another on the four characteristics. In the event that differences between groups were found proportions were then examined to determine the nature of the differences (e.g., if students and nonstudents differ on parental status, then proportions for each group were examined to see which group was more/less likely to be a parent).

To address research question two, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to determine if group differences existed between students, nonstudents, and

graduates the IDEA measure. The overall model was first examined, followed by Games-Howell post-hoc analyses to examine specific group differences. Mean scores were then examined for each group to further determine the direction of results and the nature of differences between groups.

Reifman and colleagues (2007a) used the IDEA measure to conduct several studies to explore potential differences in scores for each of the emerging adulthood dimensions and an additional component of *other-focus* based on age and education status. They reported gender differences in two of the three age-based studies, with women scoring higher on *self-focused* items than men. This finding was consistent with Seiter and Nelson (2011) who reported gender differences when examining the emerging adulthood dimensions with more men reporting they had reached adulthood than women. Based on these findings, gender was used as a control in this project for analyses that examine group differences.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Attainment of Traditional Adult Roles

In terms of attainment of traditional adult roles, 67.7% ($n = 21$) of students, 69.7% ($n = 23$) of nonstudents, and 89.2% ($n = 33$) of graduates were employed either full-time or part-time. Furthermore, 3.2% ($n = 1$) of students, 12.1% ($n = 4$) of nonstudents and 24.3% ($n = 9$) of graduates were married. Regarding parental status, no students reported having children, whereas 30.3% ($n = 10$) of nonstudents and 5.4% ($n = 2$) of graduates reported having at least one child. Lastly, 19.4% ($n = 6$) of students, 39.4% ($n = 13$) of nonstudents, and 37.8% ($n = 14$) of graduates lived with a partner or spouse.

A set of chi-square tests revealed statistically significant differences between students and graduates on employment status, $\chi^2 (1) = 3.90, p \leq .05$, with a greater percentage of graduates (89.2%) than students (67.7%) being employed (see Table 3 in Appendix A). As indicated by Cramer's V , effect size for this finding was weak at .241. Students and graduates were also statistically different in terms of marital status, $\chi^2 (1) = 5.99, p \leq .05$, with a greater percentage of graduates (24.3%) than students (3.2%) being married. The effect size for this finding was small with Cramer's $V = .297$.

In terms of parental status, differences were found between students and nonstudents, $\chi^2 (1) = 11.13, p \leq .05$, (Cramer's $V = .417$) and graduates and nonstudents, $\chi^2 (1) = 7.61, p \leq .05$, (Cramer's $V = .330$). Specifically, a greater percentage of nonstudents (30.3%) reporting having at least one child compared to students (0%) and graduates (5.4%). The effects sizes for both findings were moderate. Groups did not statistically differ on reports of living with a partner or spouse $\chi^2 (2) = 4.10, p > .05$, (Cramer's $V = .203$).

Endorsement of Emerging Adulthood Dimensions

Assumptions. Before proceeding with MANCOVA analyses, a set of seven assumptions must first be met: independence of observations, adequate sample size, no univariate or multivariate outliers, normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance, and no multicollinearity. This study consisted of three groups: students, nonstudents, and graduates. Individuals were coded such that students represented individuals who were currently enrolled in a college or university at the time of study, nonstudents were not enrolled in a college or university and had no credentials equivalent to a four-year degree or higher, and graduates were no longer in school but had a four-year degree or higher. Coding participants in this manner addressed the assumption of independence of observations given that participants fell into one category only. Furthermore, there were more cases in each group (i.e. students, nonstudents, and graduates) than number of dependent variables, which satisfies the assumption of adequate sample size.

Data were then examined to determine the presence of univariate and multivariate outliers. After graphically examining the data, some concerns of influential univariate outliers surfaced and a closer statistical examination occurred. To get a better idea of the influence problematic data points had, calculations for Cook's D and DFITS were examined. The cut-off point for Cook's D was $4/n$ (i.e., $4/104$), which generated a value of .038. The cut-off point for DFITS was $2*(\sqrt{k/n})$ (i.e., $2*(\sqrt{1/104})$), which resulted in a value of .196. After statistically examining the data, it was determined that three responses exceeded the cut-off points for both Cook's D and DFITS. Considering that these responses violated both statistical assessments of influence, these three responses were removed and the final sample was adjusted to 101. To assess the presence of multivariate outliers, values for Mahalanobis distance were calculated.

This study consisted of five dependent variables and therefore the cut-off point for Mahalanobis distance used was 20.52. No concerns for multivariate outliers existed.

In terms of normality, data were examined both visually and statistically. Initial examination of histograms indicated that the data generally looked fine with slight indications of negative distributions, but histograms did not indicate the presence of severely skewed distributions. Data were then statistically examined by assessing values for skewness and kurtosis and then by evaluating results for Shapiro-Wilk's test. Three evaluations of skewness and kurtosis were considered. First, data were examined to identify skewness and kurtosis values that were outside of ± 1 , and this evaluation provided no indications of nonnormality. The second assessment was an examination of the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis that exceeded three times that of the associated standard error. These calculations revealed only one skewed value of $-.732$ ($SE = .240$), for the *age of possibilities*, that exceeded three times the standard error. Ideally, the absolute value of skewness for *age of possibilities* should not have exceeded $.720$ (i.e., standard error $.240 * 3$). The third evaluation of skewness and kurtosis was whether z-scores fell outside of ± 3.3 , which provided no indications of nonnormality. After examining skewness and kurtosis values using these three assessments, it was concluded that the data were generally normally distributed and no severe threats of nonnormality existed. However, Shapiro-Wilk's tests of normality indicated that for each dependent variable the data were not normally distributed ($p < .05$).

In response to a significant Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality for each of the dependent variables, data were transformed to address this issue. As previously mentioned, graphical examination of the data revealed only slight indications of a negative distribution. Therefore the data were transformed using a reflect and square root technique (i.e., $SQRT[h - \text{dependent}]$

variable], where $h = [1 + \text{the highest value of the dependent variable}]$). After this transformation, Shapiro-Wilk's tests remained significant ($p < .05$) and the data were transformed again using techniques indicative of strongly, negatively skewed data. After using a reflect and log transformation (i.e., $\text{LG10}[h - \text{dependent variable}]$), Shapiro-Wilk's tests remained significant ($p < .05$) for each variable. The remaining transformation technique for negatively skewed data was then used. Data were transformed using a reflect and inverse technique (i.e., $1/[h - \text{dependent variable}]$). Tests of normality were re-run and Shapiro-Wilk's tests remained significant ($p < .05$) for each variable.

Although graphical examination of the data and evaluation of the values for skewness and kurtosis revealed no substantial threats of nonnormality, Shapiro-Wilk's test generated significant p-values for each of the dependent variables. In response to the latter, a series of data transformations were conducted to explore the potential for correcting significant Shapiro-Wilk's levels. It was concluded that no data transformation generated non-significance for Shapiro-Wilk's tests. Similar to this study, research that conducts diagnostics uses a variety of techniques to assess assumptions of normality. Considering that two of the three techniques utilized in the current project (i.e., graphical examination and evaluation of skewness and kurtosis values) generated no major threats of nonnormality, the decision to proceed with analyses using non-transformed data was made. Although, data generally adhered to tests of normality, results are interpreted with caution.

Regarding to the assumption of linearity, a series of scatter plot matrices were examined and no violations of were found. Additionally, there was homogeneity of variance-covariances, as assessed by Box's test of equality of covariance matrices ($p = .712$). There was also homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance ($p > .05$), for

all dependent variables with the exception of *age of possibilities* ($p = .02$). Interpretations of potential associations with *age of possibilities* will use caution however; it is noted that similar sample sizes among groups helps to reduce concerns. No concerns of multicollinearity existed given the categorical nature of the independent variables. Intercorrelations among the dependent variables were also examined (see Table 4 in Appendix A). In sum, a strong, positive correlation emerged between *time for self-focus* and *age of possibilities* ($r = .71, p < .05$). *Time for identity exploration* was moderately positively correlated with *age of possibilities* ($r = .48, p < .05$), *feeling in-between* ($r = .38, p < .05$), and *time for self-focus* ($r = .45, p < .05$). Lastly, *feeling in-between* was moderately positively correlated with *time of instability* ($r = .34, p < .05$) and moderately negatively correlated with *other-focus* ($r = -.36, p < .05$).

MANCOVA. Controlling for gender, MANCOVA analyses revealed a difference between students, nonstudents, and graduates on scores for the IDEA measures, $F(12, 184) = 2.34$, Wilk's $\Lambda = .75, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .132$. This finding indicated that groups scored differently on the measures of the emerging adult dimensions, leading to further investigation of specific group differences. To more closely examine which dimensions generated group differences, univariate analyses were conducted. Levene's test, which assesses homogeneity of variance, was significant for one dependent variable (*age of possibilities*, $p = .013$); therefore, results associated with this dimension should be interpreted with caution. When examining univariate results, differences were found for *age of possibilities* $F(2, 97) = 4.16, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .079$, *feeling in-between* $F(2, 97) = 4.66, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .088$, *time of self-focus* $F(2, 97) = 3.87, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .074$, and *other-focus* $F(2, 97) = 7.83, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .139$ (see Table 3 in Appendix A). In sum, four of the six IDEA subscales generated between group differences.

Considering the significance of both multivariate and univariate F -tests, post-hoc analyses were examined to determine specific group differences. As previously mentioned, a violation of homogeneity of variance, as indicated by Levene's test, surfaced for *age of possibilities*. Therefore, multiple precautions were taken. First, Welch's analysis of variance (ANOVA), a robust test for violations of homogeneity of variance, was first examined to ensure the significant univariate findings were replicated for *age of possibilities*. Results from Welch's ANOVA did replicate this finding in that there was a difference for *age of possibilities* between groups, Welch's $F(2, 62.44) = 3.21, p < .05$. The second measure that was taken in response to the violation of homogeneity of variance for *age of possibilities*, was the examination of Games-Howell post-hoc tests (see Table 3 in Appendix A). Games-Howell post-hoc tests revealed that for *age of possibilities* graduates (16.27 ± 2.33) had higher mean scores than nonstudents (14.52 ± 3.56), $p = .05$. For *age of feeling in-between* students (10.19 ± 1.72) had higher mean scores than nonstudents (8.76 ± 2.11), $p < .05$. For *time of self-focus* graduates (20.08 ± 2.22) had higher mean scores than nonstudents (18.48 ± 3.15), $p < .05$. For *other-focus* students (7.19 ± 1.74) and graduates (7.92 ± 2.25) had lower mean scores than nonstudents (9.18 ± 2.02), $p < .05$. In sum, results indicated that compared to nonstudents, graduates reported a greater sense of possibilities and were more self-focused, and students reported more ambiguity about their adult status. Nonstudents reported being more other-focused than both graduates and students. No differences emerged between graduates and students.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The majority of the literature dedicated to Arnett's (2000a) notion of emerging adulthood has focused on the criteria that young people deem necessary for attaining adulthood. Less attention has been devoted to investigating the five dimensions of emerging adulthood, particularly among samples with diverse educational backgrounds. The emerging adulthood time period spans approximately 11 years and includes individuals pursuing different educational and work paths. Skepticism about the applicability of the emerging adulthood construct exists as to whether this life course stage only represents the experiences of those in advantaged positions where the opportunity to pursue postsecondary education is available. In other words, questions remain regarding whether or not emerging adulthood is a college student phenomenon or if it applies to others with different education statuses. The current study assessed the ways in which students, nonstudents, and graduates differed on the attainment of traditional adult roles and assessed how the five dimensions of emerging adulthood differed based on varying education statuses.

When comparing groups on their attainment of traditional adult roles, it was found that a greater percentage of graduates than students were married and employed. These findings partially support the hypotheses that graduates were different from students. It was also expected that a greater percentage of nonstudents would be married and employed than students, which was not supported. Also in partial support of hypotheses, a greater percentage of nonstudents than students and graduates reported having at least one child. It was also expected that a greater percentage of graduates would be parents than students, which was not supported. Regarding living with a partner or spouse, groups did not differ, which was contradictory to study hypotheses. Considering the variability among groups in the attainment of these traditional adult roles, mainly marital, employment and parental statuses, it can be concluded that groups

within the emerging adult age period report having markedly different experiences. Further investigating whether groups also differ on the degree to which they endorse the emerging adulthood dimensions is needed to further assess the applicability of this construct to the lives of young people in varying educational statuses.

Group differences were found for three of the five dimensions of emerging adulthood. Specifically, post-hoc analyses revealed that mean differences existed between nonstudents and students on *age of feeling in-between* and between nonstudents and graduates on *age of possibilities* and *time of self-focus*. When compared to nonstudents, students and graduates also responded differently to *other-focus*, the counterpart measure to *time of self-focus*. Students had higher mean scores on *feeling in-between* compared to nonstudents. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which has highlighted students' tendencies to report more ambiguity about their adult status than those not in higher education (Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010). This finding partially supports study hypotheses that students and nonstudents would differ, but students and graduates did not.

Graduates in the current study endorsed the dimension *age of possibilities* to a greater extent than did nonstudents as represented by higher mean scores on these items. This finding is consistent with existing literature and partially supports study hypotheses. Several studies (e.g., Reifman et al., 2007a; Seiter & Nelson, 2009; Zaluski, 2012) suggested that those who attend colleges or universities tend to hold more optimistic views of their futures than those who do not or cannot pursue higher education. Individuals in the current sample who had already completed higher education (i.e., graduates) endorsed *age of possibilities* to a greater extent than did those not enrolled in higher education and those without a college degree. However, students did not statistically differ from nonstudents, a finding that was hypothesized. The life course perspective

emphasizes that development is affected differently depending on the point in which an event occurs during a specific time in one's life (Elder, 1998). Graduating from college instills a greater sense of possibilities among people who complete this tasks during the emerging adulthood time period. Considering the emphasis from the life course perspective that development is affected differently depending on the time in which an event happens, it would be interesting to examine the effects of graduating from college among older samples to determine if results related to sense of possibilities are replicated.

In regards to being either *self-focused* or *other-focused*, it was found that graduates were more *self-focused* than nonstudents, and nonstudents were more *other-focused* than graduates and students. It was hypothesized that students would be more self-focused than nonstudents and graduates given their current student status and the idea that the higher education experience creates an environment conducive to self-focus and exploration; however, this hypothesis was not supported. Graduates had higher mean scores on measures of self-focus when compared to nonstudents, which may lead to questions about the nature of development following college or university attendance. One explanation for this finding could be that graduates are equipped with the skills and experience necessary to pursue career-based employment, which may foster a sense of self-focus and personal development. Nonstudents who lack these credentials may be forced to seek employment as a means to establish financial stability rather than for the purposes of personal growth and career development.

It was hypothesized that nonstudents and graduates would be more other-focused than students considering the likelihood that they would be more established financially and within their personal relationships. Results partially supported this hypothesis in that nonstudents were more other-focused than both students and graduates. This finding may be attributed to the fact

that nonstudents were more likely than both students and graduates to have at least one child. The concept of linked lives, outlined in the life course perspective, emphasizes a social interconnectedness among individuals. Emerging adults with young children may find that their decisions are heavily influenced by the needs of the dependents in their lives. This could either create barriers to pursue postsecondary education or the fulfillment of family formation may take the place of personal growth that some get from the college experience. Either way, having children creates a need to be other-focused to meet the needs of dependents. Critiques of the emerging adulthood construct have called into question whether this time period captures the experiences of those restricted by educational and social class constraints (Bynner, 2005) and that those in lower income brackets typically enter into traditional adult roles more quickly than do their affluent counterparts (Furstenburg, 2008). Therefore, it may be a combination of several factors that influence whether person experiences emerging adulthood.

The current study examined whether the dimensions of emerging adulthood accurately captured the experiences of young people in a range of educational standings. It is important to keep in mind that "Arnett (2000, 2004) never portrayed higher education as an essential part of emerging adulthood" (Arnett & Tanner, 2011, p. 39) and argues that all people, regardless of education and social standings, pass through emerging adulthood (Arnett & Tanner, 2011). However, studies that have compared college students and nonstudents concluded that students and nonstudents experience emerging adulthood somewhat differently. Specifically, students and nonstudents have consistently endorsed *feeling in-between* and *age of possibilities* differently, with students reporting greater ambiguity about their adult status (Arnett, 1997; Hendry & Kloep, 2010) and tend to hold more optimistic views of their futures in terms of amount of possibilities (Reifman et al., 2007a; Seiter & Nelson, 2011; Zaluski, 2012). The

current study extends these findings in two ways. First, differences between groups were found on *feeling in-between*, *age of possibilities*, *time of self-focus*, and the counterpart measure, *other-focus*. Second, this study considered the perspective of those who have already transitioned out of postsecondary education. Although existing studies may have included graduates in the nonstudent portion of their samples, none of these studies explored graduates as a distinct group. Given the importance that postsecondary education has on future trajectories, it is important to consider the experiences of college and university graduates to more fully investigate how education status may influence the endorsement of the dimensions of emerging adulthood and to further address this critique of the emerging adulthood construct. Interestingly, in the current study, no differences between students and graduates were found on the degree to which they responded to the five emerging adult dimensions. Differences on the emerging adult dimensions were only found when groups were compared to nonstudents, further calling into question the applicability of the emerging adult construct as it may not accurately reflect the experiences of those who do not pursue higher education.

Whether a person pursues higher education is largely influenced by social class (Breen & Jonsson, 2005), and in turn, increased education affects timing of entry into marriage (Amato, Booth, Johnson, & Rogers, 2007) and parenthood (Glick et al., 2006). When examining the attainment of traditional adult roles in the current study, graduates were more likely to be married than students. However, even with these marital status differences, students and graduates did not differ on their endorsement of the emerging adult dimensions. Upon examining parental status, nonstudents were more likely than students and graduates to be parents, a finding that may help to explain the differing levels of endorsing the emerging adult dimensions. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that a multitude of factors influence the degree

to which a person experiences emerging adulthood. Social status affects how a person experiences this time period (Cohen, Kasen, Chen, Hartmark, & Gordon, 2003; Hendry & Kloep, 2010), but the culture in which one lives and develops also affects experience. Those within the same culture likely experience emerging adulthood differently. Development is a unique experience. Galambos, Barker, and Krahn (2006) referred to emerging adulthood as a "critical period" (p. 350) where there is variability in individuals' pathways. More research that holistically considers the influences that various markers of social class and other lifestyle characteristics have, such as parental status, on the experience of emerging adulthood would promote further understanding of the applicability of this life course period.

A strength of the current study was the inclusion of graduates as a distinct group. As previously noted, one critique of emerging adulthood is whether this phenomenon is experienced only by those afforded the opportunity to pursue higher education. Considering the perspectives of those who have completed higher education is important to addressing this skepticism. Using graduates as a distinct group and assessing their experiences independently extends research as no other study was found to have used this subgroup.

Regarding study limitations, data was collected through the use of an online survey, which limited the opportunity for those without computer and internet access to participate. Although advertisement for this study included 50 flyers postings at local businesses and eight social media postings, the majority of participants reported seeing an advertisement for the study on social media. Although a useful outlet to recruit contemporary young people, advertising via social media does not allow for the calculation of response rates. There is no way to determine the number of individuals who saw the advertisement and the proportion of those who then participated. A second limitation is the demographic composition of the sample. Specifically,

almost half of the students had a four-year degree and approximately half of the nonstudents had some college experience, decreasing generalizability of study findings. Students in this study may not accurately represent traditional undergraduate students given that a substantial portion had already obtained a Bachelor's degree and were either in pursuit of a graduate degree or an additional four-year degree. This fact could have contribute to the lack of differences between students and graduates in this study. Nonstudents in this sample may not accurately reflect the experiences of those with no former college experience. The college experience provides individuals with opportunities for personal growth and exploration of future career trajectories. Even some college experience may affect a person in a way that sets them apart from those with no higher education exposure. For instance, research has shown that individuals with some college experience face lower unemployment rates and make, on average, approximately \$8,000.00 more in annual salaries than do those with no college experience (Greenstone & Looney, 2013). Therefore, the experiences of nonstudents in this study may not accurately represent the experiences of nonstudents with no higher education experience. Generalizability was further affected by the race-ethnicity composition of the sample, as the majority identified as White.

There are several other points that should be considered. Advertisement flyers for this study were initially created to recruit emerging adults who were not currently enrolled in college or university courses. Although advertisements targeted nonstudents, equal amounts of students and graduates responded to the survey. This emphasizes the challenges of accessing nonstudent populations and may contribute to those not in higher education being referred to as the “Forgotten Half” (William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, 1988). Future research would benefit from using better methods in which to recruit young

people not attending college to better capture their experiences. A final point to consider surrounds the items within the subscale *time of self-focus* in the IDEA measure. As previously noted, this subscale consistently generated the lowest alpha scores across studies and may have contributed to the necessity for Reifman and colleagues (2007a) to create the counterpart subscale, *other-focus*. This leads to questions about whether this area of emerging adulthood is appropriately conceptualized. Perhaps there is still confusion as to what this dimension is and the field of emerging adulthood literature may benefit from further exploration of this dimension.

In conclusion, groups in this study differed on three of the five emerging adult dimensions: *feeling in-between*, *age of possibilities*, and *time of self-focus*. Students and graduates endorsed the emerging adult dimensions similarly, regardless of differences between these groups on their marital and employment statuses. Nonstudents reported less ambiguity on the adult status items than did students and they perceived the current time in their lives as a *time of self-focus* and an *age of possibilities* to a lesser extent than did graduates. Furthermore, nonstudents were more *other-focused* than students and graduates and a greater percentage had children. These findings can be useful to professionals working with young people and can also be useful to policy makers. From these findings, professionals now have a better insight into how higher educational experiences affect young people's development both during and following college. Students tend to report more ambiguity about their developmental status than do nonstudents, which indicates that students still may be developing a sense of self. Emerging adulthood is chronologically defined as occurring between the late teens through the mid-to-late 20s, but this finding indicates that individuals may be different in terms of their social age. Students reported more ambiguity in perceived status whereas others in the emerging adult cohort, nonstudents, did not. The college environment may create experiences that influence

emerging adult students' social age and how they self-perceive in terms of feeling in-between adolescent and adult statuses. Following the postsecondary experience, young people report a greater sense of possibilities and also report being more self-focused. Knowing this, professionals can foster these areas of development by providing young people with opportunities for further self-exploration and personal growth specific to these domains. Findings can also inform policy that works towards enhancing young people's opportunities for higher education. A college degree not only provides individuals with advance training and credentials to obtain a higher standard of living, but it also impacts their personal development. The higher education experience promotes positive well-being as it has shown to foster a more optimistic view of the realm of future possibilities that young people envision for themselves. Group differences between students, nonstudents, and graduates in this study begin to shed light on the ways in which postsecondary education may impact development, but of equal importance are the similarities among groups.

Groups did not differ on their endorsement of *identity exploration* and *time of instability* and these subscales generated the highest scores across groups. Considered together, results suggest that perhaps this time period is generally about finding one's path in life. The majority of young people are transitioning out of secondary education and establishing their independence from their families of origin. For some, this means pursuing postsecondary education, which has been shown to postpone entry into traditional adult roles, whereas for others this transition involves entry into the workforce or more immediate entry into traditional adult roles. These differing trajectories appear to affect the degree to which individuals self-perceive as adults, the realm of their future possibilities that they envision for themselves, and the degree to which they are either self- or other-focused. Given that students and graduates scored higher on these

dimensions leads to evidence that perhaps these aspects of emerging adulthood are contingent on the pursuit of higher education. Differing educational trajectories do not, however, seem to affect young people from differently reporting that this time period is one of identity exploration and instability. These two dimensions also generated the highest mean scores across groups. Perhaps the dimensions of *feeling in-between*, *age of possibilities*, and *time of self-focus* are really a college student and college graduate phenomenon, whereas *time for identity exploration* and *time of instability* capture the essence of this period in the life course regardless of education status. In this way, emerging adulthood is a time for developing a sense of self and making the necessary adjustments to solidify this identity.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Tables

Table 1: *Description of the sample*

Variable	Students (<i>n</i> = 31)	Nonstudents (<i>n</i> = 33)	Graduates (<i>n</i> = 37)	Full Sample (<i>n</i> = 101)
Age (mean)	22.3	23.5	24.1	23.34
Gender (%)				
Female	58.1	63.6	83.8	69.3
Male	41.9	36.4	16.2	30.7
Race-Ethnicity (%)				
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	3.0	0	1.0
Asian	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.0
Black or African American	0	0	2.7	1.0
Hispanic or Latino	3.2	0	2.7	2.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	3.0	0	1.0
White	90.3	87.9	89.2	89.1
Other	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.0
Educational Attainment				
Less than high school degree or GED	0	9.1	0	3.0
High school degree or GED	19.4	36.4	0	17.8
Some college (no degree)	29.0	36.4	0	20.8
Associate's Degree/Vocational School Certification	6.5	18.2	0	7.9
Bachelor's Degree	38.7	0	83.8	42.6
Graduate Degree	6.5	0	16.2	7.9
Employment Status				
Employed	67.7	69.7	89.2	76.2
Not Employed	29.0	27.3	10.8	21.8
Missing	3.2	3.0	0	2.0
Marital Status				
Married	3.2	12.1	24.3	13.9
Single	96.8	87.9	75.7	86.1
Parental Status				
Had at least one child	0	30.3	5.4	11.9
Had no children	100	69.7	94.6	88.1
Living Situation				
With a parent or caregiver	25.8	21.2	18.9	21.8
With a roommate	41.9	21.2	27.0	29.7
With a partner or spouse	19.4	39.3	37.8	32.7
Alone	12.9	9.1	16.2	12.9
Other	0.0	9.0	0	3.0

Table 2: MANCOVA results for scores on the IDEA measure, mean scores reported for each group with standard deviations in parenthesis

Subscale	Students	Nonstudents	Graduates	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Feeling "In-Between"	10.19 (1.72) ^b	8.76 (2.11) ^b	9.73 (2.06)	2	4.66	.012*	.09
Identity Exploration	24.19 (2.77)	22.76 (3.75)	23.59 (3.21)	2	1.68	.191	.03
Experimentation/Possibilities	16.23 (2.31)	14.52 (3.56) ^a	16.27 (2.33) ^a	2	4.16	.018*	.08
Negative/Instability	22.26 (3.71)	20.64 (4.11)	21.16 (4.18)	2	1.62	.204	.03
Self-Focus	19.81 (2.34)	18.48 (3.15) ^c	20.08 (2.22) ^c	2	3.87	.024*	.07
Other-Focus	7.19 (1.74) ^d	9.18 (2.02) ^d	7.92 (2.25) ^d	2	7.83	.001*	.14

Note: Superscripts represent Games-Howell post-hoc results that revealed statistically significant differences between education groups for the associated IDEA subscale.

* $p < .05$

Table 3: *Chi-square results for group differences on attainment of traditional adult roles*

Adult Role	df	χ^2	Cramer's V
Students vs. Nonstudents			
Employment Status	1	.026	.021
Marital Status	1	1.76	.166
Parental Status	1	11.13*	.417*
Lives with a Partner/Spouse	1	3.72	.245
Students vs. Graduates			
Employment Status	1	3.90*	.241*
Marital Status	1	5.99*	.297*
Parental Status	1	1.73	.159
Lives with a Partner/Spouse	1	2.78	.202
Graduates vs. Nonstudents			
Employment Status	1	3.36	.221
Marital Status	1	1.72	.157
Parental Status	1	7.61*	.330*
Lives with a Partner/Spouse	1	.12	.042

* $p < .05$

Table 4: *Intercorrelations among dependent variables.*

	Time for Identity Exploration	Age of Possibilities	Time of Instability	Feeling In- Between	Time of Self- Focus	Other-Focus
Time for Identity Exploration	1.00	.48 .00*	.10 .34	.38 .00*	.45 .00*	-.06 .56
Age of Possibilities		1.00	-.03 .81	.13 .20	.71 .00*	-.15 .14
Time of Instability			1.00	.34 .00*	-.17 .10	-.17 .10
Feeling In-Between				1.00	.11 .30	-.36 .00*
Time of Self-Focus					1.00	-.13 .20
Other-Focus						1.00

* $p < .05$

Advertisement Flyer for the Current Study

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Are you 18 – 25 years old
&
not currently enrolled in college?**

Researchers at the University of Tennessee are conducting an anonymous survey on young adults' experiences. The purpose of this study is to understand more about the lives and experiences of young people today. Participation is expected to last approximately 20 minutes and will involve responding to a series of questions. Upon completion of the survey, you will be invited to enter your name in a drawing to

win a **\$50.00** Visa Gift Card

For more information please contact:

University of Tennessee
Young Adults' Experiences Study
Jennifer Zorotovich
jphagan@utk.edu

[illegible]

Appendix C

Demographic Survey Containing Question about Attainment of Traditional Adult Roles

1. How old are you? _____
2. What is your gender? _____
3. What is your race-ethnicity?
_____ American Indian or Alaskan Native.
_____ Asian.
_____ Black or African American.
_____ Hispanic or Latino.
_____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
_____ White.
_____ Other. Please explain _____
4. Are you currently attending a post-secondary institution (ex. university, college, institutes of technology, etc.)?
_____ Yes.
 If yes, what year are you? _____
_____ No.
5. Have you ever attended a post-secondary institution?
_____ Yes.
 If yes, how long did you attend? _____
_____ No.
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
_____ Less than high school degree/GED
_____ High school degree/GED
_____ Some college (no degree)
_____ Associates Degree or College/Vocational School Certification
_____ Bachelor's Degree
_____ Graduate Degree (ex. Master's, Doctoral of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine)
7. Are you employed part-time or full-time?
_____ Full-Time.
_____ Part-Time.
_____ Other. Please explain _____

8. What do you do for work? _____

9. What is your marital status?

_____ Single.

_____ Married.

_____ Other. Please explain _____

10. If you are not currently married, do you think you will marry in the future?

_____ Yes.

If yes, by what age? _____

_____ No.

_____ Maybe.

11. Do you currently have any children?

_____ Yes.

If yes, how many? _____

_____ No.

12. If you currently do not have children, do you think will in the future?

_____ Yes.

If yes, by what age do you think you will have your first child? _____

_____ No.

_____ Maybe.

13. How many different jobs have you had in the past?

_____.

14. How many different jobs do you think you will have in the future?

_____.

15. What is your current living situation?

_____ With a parent/caregiver.

_____ With a roommate.

_____ With a partner/spouse.

_____ By yourself.

_____ Other. Please explain _____

16. What is the highest level of education your parent(s) completed?

Parent/Caregiver 1:

_____ Less than high school degree/GED

_____ High school degree/GED

_____ Some post-secondary education (no degree)

- ☐ Associates Degree or College/Vocational School Certification
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Graduate Degree (*ex. Master's, Doctoral of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine*)
☐ Don't Know

Parent/Caregiver 2:

- ☐ Less than high school degree/GED
☐ High school degree/GED
☐ Some post-secondary education (no degree)
☐ Associates Degree or College/Vocational School Certification
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Graduate Degree (*ex. Master's, Doctoral of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine*)
☐ Don't Know

17. What is the annual income of your parent/caregiver(s) combined?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Less than \$24,999 | ☐ \$125,000 - \$149,999 |
| ☐ \$25,000 - \$49,999 | ☐ \$150,000 - \$174,999 |
| ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999 | ☐ \$175,000 - \$199,999 |
| ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999 | ☐ More than \$200,000 |
| ☐ \$100,000 - \$124, 999 | ☐ Don't Know |

18. What is your personal annual income (excluding your parents income)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Less than \$24,999 | ☐ \$125,000 - \$149,999 |
| ☐ \$25,000 - \$49,999 | ☐ \$150,000 - \$174,999 |
| ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999 | ☐ \$175,000 - \$199,999 |
| ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999 | ☐ More than \$200,000 |
| ☐ \$100,000 - \$124, 999 | |

19. How did you find out about this research project?

- ☐ I saw a flyer posted on a public community board (i.e. a bulletin board).
☐ I saw a flyer posted in the break room of a local employer.
☐ I saw an advertisement on Craigslist.
☐ Other, please explain _____.

Appendix D

Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA)

First, please think about this time in your life. By "time in your life," we are referring to the present time, plus the last few years that have gone by, and the next few years to come, as you see them. In short, you should think about a roughly five-year period, with the present time right in the middle.

For each phrase shown below, please place a check mark in one of the columns to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree that the phrase describes this time in your life. For example, if you "Somewhat Agree" that this is a "time of exploration," then on the same line as the phrase, you would put a check mark in the column headed by "Somewhat Agree" (3).

Be sure to put only one check mark per line.

<i>Is this period of your life a ...</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
1. time of many possibilities?				
2. time of exploration?				
3. time of confusion?				
4. time of experimentation?				
5. time of personal freedom?				
6. time of feeling restricted?				
7. time of responsibility for yourself?				
8. time of feeling stressed out?				
9. time of instability?				
10. time of optimism?				
11. time of high pressure?				
12. time of finding out who you				

are?				
13. time of settling down?				
14. time of responsibility for others?				
15. time of independence?				
16. time of open choices?				
17. time of unpredictability?				
18. time of commitments to others?				
19. time of self-sufficiency?				
20. time of many worries?				
21. time of trying out new things?				
22. time of focusing on yourself?				
23. time of separating from parents?				
24. time of defining yourself?				
25. time of planning for the future?				
26. time of seeking a sense of meaning?				
27. time of deciding your own beliefs and values?				
28. time of learning to think for yourself?				

29. time of feeling an adult in some ways but not others?				
30. time of gradually becoming an adult?				
31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?				

* Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. J. (2007a, Summer). Emerging adulthood: Theory, assessment, and application. *Journal of Youth Development*, 2(1), Article 0701FA003.

VITA

Jennifer Zorotovich received her Bachelors of Science in 2007 from the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia with a major in Psychology. She accepted a graduate student research assistantship from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Department of Child and Family Studies in 2008 and graduated with her Masters of Science degree in 2010. She is continuing her education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Department of Child and Family Studies and anticipates completion of her doctoral studies in June 2014.