

**"ARE WE THERE YET?" INVESTIGATING FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH
YOUTHS' SELF-CONCEPTS OF ADULTHOOD**

by

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Abstract

In the past, research on young adulthood has concentrated on the study of specific traits and characteristics, with little examination of youths' subjective experiences during this period of the lifespan. This study applies symbolic interaction theory to the investigation of youths' self-concept of adulthood, and examines the traits and characteristics that are associated with being defined as an adult by the self and others. In addition, the study also examines the association between parental and peer perceptions of youths' self-concept of adulthood. Participants were 79 triads ($N=239$) made up of a target youth between the age of 19-26 from the University of British Columbia, a parental figure of the target youth, and a peer of the target youth. Participants were assessed using the Perceived Adulthood Scale, the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, and the Financial Independence Scale. Target youths' were also assessed on living circumstances, relationship status, and parenting status. Results indicate that youths' perceptions of parent and peer ratings of youths' adult status were related to youths' self-definitions of adulthood. Results also find that psychological traits of maturity and the developmental task of living on one's own are connected with perceiving whether someone is an adult or not.

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Literature Review

A systematic review of literature on young adulthood indicates that the majority of topics concentrate on the study of psychological factors that imply adult status, such as "psychosocial maturity" (Bomar & Sabatelli, 1996; Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974), "individuation" (Gavazzi & Sabatelli, 1990) and "psychological separation" (Hoffman, 1984) to signify entrance into adulthood. In addition, a number of researchers have concentrated on the achievement of tasks, such as leaving home, and marriage to investigate adult status (Avery, Goldscheider, & Speare, 1992; Bomar & Sabatelli, 1996; Hoffman, 1984; O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hauser, 1996; Moore, 1987). Although it is not disputed that the attainment of certain traits and the fulfillment of certain tasks are connected to adulthood, there is no clear connection of these concepts and tasks to the attainment of perceived adult status. More specifically, having met some of these criteria does not necessarily mean that youths define themselves as adults, and are defined as adults by others. It is important to examine what is involved in defining oneself as an adult, and the factors that are most associated with defining youths' adulthood during this period of the lifespan. This paper will attempt to provide an association between certain traits and the achievement of perceived adult status.

Defining the Self as an Adult

Symbolic interaction theory can be used to guide research on how youths' self-define as adults. One of the key concepts of symbolic interaction theory is that of a symbol. Symbols are defined as "mental abstractions such as words or ideas that have meaning" (Burr et al., 1979, p. 46). According to symbolic interactionism, symbols are created through social interaction, in that their meanings are acquired by learning from others what something means to them (Burr et

al., 1979). Because symbols are socially created, their meanings arise, and are shared or agreed upon by a specific society (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993).

When applying symbolic interactionism to the period of adulthood, it can be argued that adulthood is defined through symbols. More specifically, individuals are defined or perceived as adults when they possess or have achieved the symbols of adulthood that have been agreed upon by a specific society. In North American society, the symbols of adulthood include a variety of traits and characteristics, such as financial independence, marriage, or parenthood (Arnett, 1997; Avery et al., 1992; Bomar & Sabatelli, 1996; Hoffman, 1984; O'Connor et al., 1996; Moore, 1987). Thus, youths who possess these characteristics are more likely to perceive themselves as adults, and be perceived as adults by others.

Another key concept within symbolic interaction theory is that of a self-concept, which is defined as individuals' perceptions of themselves (Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1992), or "how one describes oneself" (Harter, 1999, p. 3). Individuals come to develop their self-concept through social interaction in which they begin to distinguish certain self-characteristics that are similar or different from others (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). At the same time, individuals also begin to determine their own inclinations and traits, thus beginning to form a self-concept or self-definition (Burr et al., 1979). Throughout this study, the terms "self-concept," "self-definition," and "self-perception" will be used interchangeably to describe how individuals perceive or define themselves.

Individuals' self-definitions will motivate their future behaviour (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Thus, late adolescents who define themselves as adults will also begin to behave as such. Youths, for example, may begin to assume more adult responsibilities, such as making independent decisions, or taking more financial responsibility for themselves.

It is assumed that the responses of others to individuals have a strong impact on youths' self-definitions (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). In particular, individuals create meaning through interacting with others, and this meaning will influence how they define themselves.

Interactions occurring within the family environment have particular salience over other social interactions. Specifically, interactions between youths and their parents are especially meaningful due to the high value and respect youths place on their parents' opinions (Rosenberg, 1973). Rosenberg (1973) found that youths valued and respected their parents' opinions more than they did friends' opinions. In addition, a study conducted by Wilks (1986) found that youths nominated their parents, particularly their mothers, as the most important people in their lives. For this reason, parental figures are considered to be more significant in youths' lives than friends, reference groups, or society and media (Stryker, 1967; Burr et al., 1979; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Thus, the meanings constructed through interactions with parents will have a stronger impact on youths' self-concepts (Stryker, 1967). In particular, whether parents define youths to be adults may be associated with the degree to which youths define themselves to be adults as well.

Interactions with significant peers may also hold particular meaning for youths. Although research has found that the influence of parental opinions remains strong for areas of youths' lives that concern future-oriented areas, such as career planning, finance, and education (Sebald, 1989, 1986; Wilks 1986), the influence of peer opinions seems to increase as youths age. For example, some studies (Sebald, 1989; Wilks, 1986) have found that peer orientation increases for areas such as advice seeking on personal problems, or issues that are more "current." Thus, the meanings constructed through interactions with peers will also have an

impact on youths' self-concepts. In this case, the degree to which peers perceive youths to be adults may be congruent with the degree to which youths self-define as an adult.

It is important to emphasize that the perceptions of parental and peer responses to the youths' self-concepts are created by youths. Specifically, even if parents or peers perceive individuals to be adults, what matters is what youths perceive parents and peers to think of their adult status. In this case, it is not the *actual* perceptions of others, but the *perceived* perceptions of others that are most significant to youths' self-concept (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Therefore, the degree to which youths define themselves to be adults will be associated with youths' perceptions of parent or peer ratings of their adult status.

Symbols Associated with the Self-Concept of Adulthood

Developmental Tasks as Symbols

Developmental tasks are defined as "things that constitute healthy and satisfactory growth in our society" (Havighurst, 1953, p.2). These tasks arise at critical periods of an individual's life, and their successful achievement leads to happiness and success with subsequent tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness and hindrance to the completion of later ones (Havighurst, 1953). Certain developmental tasks have become symbolic of adulthood, such as living on one's own, marriage, parenthood, and managing a household (Arnett, 1997, 1998; Gilmore, 1990; Hogan & Astone, 1986). The achievement of these tasks signifies that individuals possess certain symbols of adult status. Thus, the completion of these tasks symbolizes that youths are adults. Likewise the failure to complete these tasks signifies that youths are not adults. Whether or not youths achieve these tasks will influence whether they are perceived to be adults by others, or whether they self-define as adults.

Past research appears to support the assertion that the completion of specific developmental tasks is associated with whether individuals are defined as adults. Previous research has traditionally defined entrance into adulthood by specific developmental tasks, particularly marriage and parenthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986). Research in anthropology has also shown that in more traditional cultures, marriage is the key event that marks the entrance into adulthood (Gilmore, 1990; Schlegel & Barry, 1991). In addition, recent studies in Western cultures have found that the majority of youths promote leaving home as an indicator that the youth has become an adult (Arnett 1997, 1998; Fabio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003).

Neo-Psychoanalytic Concepts as Symbols

Another group of factors that might be influential in perceiving an individual's adulthood incorporates concepts from the neo-psychoanalytic literature. Here, terms and principles from the neo-psychoanalytic literature have become deeply embedded within North American culture, and have greatly altered the way those in North American society interpret the world (Scharff et al., 2001). Because of this, psychological traits and characteristics have become symbols in North American culture of psychosocial development. More specifically, terms such as "maturity" and "psychological separation" have come to symbolize adulthood (Scharff et al., 2001). Therefore, it is possible that youths who are perceived as possessing psychological traits of "maturity" and "autonomy" have also defined themselves as adults, and are viewed as adults by others. An examination of varying conceptualizations of adulthood from past scholars in the neo-psychoanalytic literature allowed for a compilation of four main traits commonly associated with perceived adulthood.

One of the most emphasized qualities of a perceived adult is the characteristic of independence and making decisions on one's own, which is congruent with establishing a personal identity (Arnett, 1997; Erikson, 1968; Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974; Greene, Wheatley, & Aldava, 1992; Loevinger, 1966; White, 1952; Wittenberg, 1968). This includes accepting responsibility for one's own actions, being self-reliant, self-sufficient, and not being overly dependent on the opinions of others. An example of this was offered by a personality theorist named White (1952) who introduced the concept of a "stabilizing ego identity" (p. 332), which means that the adult can now make self-judgments, and evaluate successes and failures, based on his or her accumulated experiences and feelings. A level of self-knowledge and understanding has been obtained so that self-esteem and self-perceptions are no longer contingent on outside sources and new events (White, 1952).

In addition to independence and self-reliance, many conceptualizations of young adulthood also emphasize the criteria of establishing intimacy and relations with either a significant other (Erikson, 1968; Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974; Havighurst, 1953; White, 1952; Wittenberg, 1968) or other persons in general (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974; Loevinger, 1966). This included the ability to trust, the gradual learning and use of communication skills, and the ability to maintain ego boundaries so that a feeling of mutual interdependence is established. This concept is best illustrated by Erikson's ego stage of intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1968). After youths have established a clear sense of self from the previous developmental stage, they begin to form intimate bonds, or a "true and mutual psychosocial intimacy" (Erikson, 1968, p. 135) with others, be it through romantic relationships, friendships, or relationships of joint interests (Erikson, 1968). Erikson proposes that a key problem in forming intimacy with others, however, is the fear of losing one's identity and becoming fused

interpersonally. This is why Erikson, along with other scholars (i.e. Havighurst and White), stress the importance of successfully establishing an identity before forming intimate bonds with another individual.

Connected with the notion of intimacy and connection is empathy and the growing sense of community and concern for the welfare of others. This is emphasized most in Greenberger and Sorenson's (1974) model of psychosocial maturity. Their model stresses the individual's ability to contribute to social cohesion, which is mainly concerned with caring for society's welfare, and the welfare of all others encompassed within that society (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974). The model also emphasizes tolerance of individual and cultural differences despite the realization that there might be costs for tolerance (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974). This characteristic is also found in Loevinger's (1966) conceptualization of adulthood. Thus, perceived adulthood is not only defined by individualistic character qualities concerned with the youth alone, but also encompasses the establishment of feelings for another individual, the social group, and society.

Another prominent theme reiterated in the majority of models examined is the need of the adult to establish a philosophy of life, or a personal and moral value system in which to follow and abide by (Loevinger, 1966; White, 1952; Wittenberg, 1968). This value system is a result of the accumulation of past experiences, and is subject to change overtime. In addition, a person's value system encompasses such things as codes of moral conduct, personal goals, and a foundation for evaluating successes and failures. This is illustrated in Wittenberg's (1968) definition of adulthood, in which he makes reference to a concept called "toward a Weltanschauung" (p. 62), which is the development of a philosophy of life. A Weltanschauung provides a hierarchy of values that help individuals adapt to reality and the outside world

(Wittenberg, 1968). Similarly to this is Greenberger and Sorenson's (1974) notion of developing an internalized value system, and Loevinger's (1966) development of a moral imperative.

Lastly, the establishment of financial independence is also heavily emphasized in many of the conceptualizations of perceived adulthood (Arnett, 1997; Havighurst, 1953; Wittenberg, 1968). Arnett (1997) identified economic independence as one of the three main qualifications used to signify the entrance into adulthood. In addition, Wittenberg (1968) described in great detail a psychological dilemma called "the economic bind" (p. 45), which occurs when young adults feel compelled to support themselves economically and become financially independent. However, they are not able to do so primarily because they are not fully participating in the labour force (Wittenberg, 1968). According to Wittenberg (1968), youths cannot become active members in the workforce due to society's rejection of them – there is an expectation for young adults to become members of educational institutions instead.

After compiling a list of characteristics most often associated with perceived entrance into adulthood, the collection of traits bears great resemblance to the concept of maturity. Maturity is defined as the "ability to exhibit socially responsible behaviour that is directed toward ensuring the survival and well-being of society" (Bomar & Sabatelli, 1996, p. 424). The traits of independence, intimacy and connection with others, the development of a philosophy of life, and financial independence, are all congruent with this definition of maturity from the neo-psychoanalytic literature.

Incorporating these neo-psychoanalytic traits within the symbolic interactionist perspective, it can then be argued that maturity has become a symbol of adulthood in North American culture. Once youths are perceived to be mature, and have acquired this symbol of adulthood, they may be more likely to adopt a self-concept of an adult. In addition, if youths are

perceived by others to be mature, they will be more likely to perceive youths as adults because they have acquired this symbol of adulthood.

In the current literature, Arnett (1997, 1998, 2003) attempted to link specific qualities and traits to the period of adulthood. In one study (Arnett, 1997), 345 college students between the ages of 18 to 23 were sampled via questionnaire to determine what they believed were characteristics necessary for an individual to be considered an adult. Along with collecting demographic information on the subjects, each questionnaire also assessed whether subjects considered themselves to have reached adulthood. A second study (Arnett, 1997) of 140 subjects, aged 21 to 28, followed the same protocol.

Findings from both studies indicated that subjects were least likely to endorse developmental tasks to signify entrance into adulthood (Arnett, 1997). Rather, it was found that the characteristic of individualism was the most widely endorsed trait, such as accepting responsibility for one's actions and independent decision-making. Financial independence was also widely endorsed as a marker for adulthood (Arnett, 1997). The characteristic of "decide on personal beliefs and values," which bears great resemblance to the neo-psychoanalytic trait of establishing a philosophy of life, also received strong endorsement as an indicator of adulthood (Arnett, 1997). Subsequent studies that have replicated his methods have found similar findings (Arnett, 1998, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003).

Interestingly, in some studies (Arnett 1997; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003), qualities such as "mak[ing] lifelong commitment to others" and being "committed to a long-term love relationship" only received marginal support as characteristics considered necessary to be an adult. This was also found in cross-cultural samples (Arnett, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). These studies indicate that perhaps not all neo-psychoanalytic traits are

equally symbolic of adulthood. In this case, perceiving the ability to establish intimacy and connection with another individual may not be as clearly symbolic of adulthood as the perceived characteristics of independence, financial independence, and philosophy of life.

Hypotheses and Research Question

It was theorized that the opinions of significant others are important to a youth's self-definition of adulthood (Marsh et al., 1992). To examine the association of a youth's adult self-concept to the perceptions of significant others, particularly parents and peers, it is hypothesized that:

1. Parental perceptions of whether youths are adults will have a positive association with whether youths consider themselves to be adults.
2. Peer perceptions of whether youths are adults will have a positive association with whether youths consider themselves to be adults.

According to symbolic interactionism, it was theorized that youths' self-definitions are associated with, not only what others think of them, but also with what youths perceive others to think of them (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Therefore, to examine the relationship between youths' self-concept of adulthood and their perceptions of parental and peer ratings of their adult status, it is hypothesized that:

3. Youths' perceptions of parent ratings of youths' adult status will have a positive association with whether youths consider themselves to be adults.
4. Youths' perceptions of peer ratings of youths' adult status will have a positive association with whether youths consider themselves to be adults.

Past research has found that youths respect and value parental opinions more than peer opinions (Rosenberg, 1973). Furthermore, parental figures are considered to be more significant

in youths' lives than friends and other reference groups (Stryker, 1967; Burr et al., 1979; LaRossa, 1993). Therefore, to investigate whether parental assessments of target youths' adulthood have a greater association to youths' self-concepts than peer assessments of target youths' adulthood, it is hypothesized that:

5. Youths' self-definitions of adulthood will have a stronger association with parental perceptions of youths' adult status than with peer perceptions of youths' adult status.

In addition, to examine whether target youths' perceived parental ratings of youths' adult status have a greater association to youths' self-concepts than target youths' perceived peer ratings, it is hypothesized that:

6. Youths' self-definitions of adulthood will have a stronger association with youths' perceived parental ratings of youths' adult status than with youths' perceived peer ratings of youths' adult status.

To examine whether youths' self-definitions of adulthood have a greater association with youths' perceptions of parent and peer ratings, than with parental and peer perceptions of youths, it is hypothesized that:

7. Youths' self-definitions of adulthood will have a stronger association with youths' perceptions of parental ratings of youths' adult status than with parental perceptions of youths' adult status.

8. Youths' self-definitions of adulthood will have a stronger association with youths' perceptions of peer ratings of youths' adult status than with peer perceptions of youths' adult status.

Two groups of symbols were described that might be associated with youths' self-concept of adulthood. One group of symbols focused on developmental tasks associated with

adulthood, while the other focused on traits and characteristics emerging from neo-psychoanalytic perspectives. With regards to developmental tasks as symbols, a number of hypotheses will be examined. Firstly, to investigate whether living on one's own is associated with the degree to which youths and others define individuals to be adults, it is hypothesized that:

9. Youths who are living away from home (off-campus) are more likely to have a self-concept of adulthood than youths who are living on-campus, or at home.
10. Parents and peers are more likely to consider youths to be adults if they are living away from home (off-campus) than if they are living on-campus, or at home.

To examine whether marriage is associated with the degree to which youths and others define individuals to be adults, it is also hypothesized that:

11. Youths who are married are more likely to have a self-concept of adulthood than youths who are single, seriously dating, or engaged.
12. Parents and peers are more likely to consider youths to be adults if they are married than if they are single, seriously dating, or engaged.

To investigate whether neo-psychoanalytic symbols are associated with the degree to which youths are defined as adults by themselves and by others, it is hypothesized that:

13. Individuals who consider themselves to be more mature will be more likely to have a self-concept of adulthood, as compared to individuals who consider themselves to be less mature.
14. Parents and peers who consider the youth to be more mature will be more likely to see the youth as an adult, as compared to peers and parents who consider the youth to be less mature.

In studies that have examined the qualities that youths perceive are necessary for adulthood (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003), some have found that the characteristics of “mak[ing] lifelong commitment to others” (Arnett, 1997, p. 10) and being “committed to a long-term love relationship” (p. 10) were not highly endorsed as symbolic of adulthood. On the other hand, qualities such as accepting responsibility for your own actions, financial independence, and “decid[ing] on your own personal beliefs and values” (p. 10) were viewed as necessary for adulthood by the majority of the youths sampled (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). To examine whether the four perceived characteristics of maturity are equally symbolic of adulthood, it is hypothesized that:

15. No specific characteristic of maturity is more or less associated with the degree to which youths self-define as adults. Thus, youths who are considered to be financially independent are no more likely to have a self-concept of adulthood than youths who are considered to have a philosophy of life. This is also expected for any other combination of characteristics of maturity.

Having described two possible groups of factors that may be associated with perceived adult status a final research question becomes salient: Which group of factors is more salient as a symbol of adulthood? Is perceived adult status defined by achieving developmental tasks that are associated with adulthood? Or is it defined by having neo-psychoanalytic traits of independence, intimacy and connection, philosophy of life, and financial independence?

Methods

Procedures

The study was conducted on the campus of the University of British Columbia. In total, sixteen classes in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences were approached for participant solicitation. Ten courses were in Family Studies, two were in Political Science, two were in Geography, one was in Biology, and one was in Computer Science. Permission to approach students was obtained by the professor of each class prior to collecting data. Once permission was granted, the researcher spent 5-10 minutes of a lecture period to introduce herself and give a brief description of the study and its purposes (see Appendix A). After the introduction, the researcher asked students if they would like to participate and distributed survey packages only to those who volunteered to take part.

A group of young adults not attending classes that were solicited, were provided with information about the study (see Appendix B) and asked to distribute additional surveys. A small portion of these young adults were not currently attending the University of British Columbia. All young adults wanting to participate were provided with survey packages. In addition, only those that agreed to distribute questionnaires were given additional surveys.

The researcher collected completed questionnaires from the target youths in two ways. For target youths that were approached during class time, the researcher collected completed surveys during the following 3 lecture periods. All target participants, including those that did not attend a solicited class or the university, also had the option of dropping-off completed surveys at the research coordinator's office, or mailing finished surveys using postage-paid, pre-addressed envelopes provided.

Within all questionnaire packets, there were two additional questionnaires that were given to a parental figure and peer of the target participant to complete. These questionnaires were given to each parent and peer by the target youth. These surveys also had a cover letter attached informing the participant of the purposes of the study. The cover letters for parent and peer surveys were identical to the ones attached to the target youth surveys (see Appendix C), except for a few changes to the procedures. In this case, parental and peer questionnaires asked participants to complete surveys regarding their perceptions of the target youth. Parents and peers could mail completed questionnaires to the researcher using a postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope provided within the survey packets.

The cover letter attached to all surveys informed participants that they were providing informed consent by completing the questionnaire (see Appendix C). Participants were made aware that they were under no obligation to take part in the study and were not penalized for refusing to participate. In addition, participants were told that the surveys were anonymous and confidential. Each survey took approximately 30 minutes to an hour to complete, and could be completed at the participant's own time.

Of the 359 questionnaire packets that were distributed, 5 were given to individuals that did not attend the university. In addition, 13 survey packages were given without the peer or parent questionnaires, while an additional 10 were given without the parent questionnaire only. This was due to target youth interest in volunteering for the study, but his or her inability to obtain a peer and/or parent participant as well.

Of the 1077 surveys that were distributed to target youths, parents, and peers, 178 target youths completed and returned their surveys, along with 116 peers and 114 parents, making the overall response rate to be 39.2%. A total of 9 target youth surveys were returned blank, as were

9 peer and 15 parent questionnaires. Furthermore, one peer survey was excluded from the data set because it was evident that the respondent did not seriously respond to the items of the survey. Of all the questionnaires that were returned, only 79 were complete sets, meaning the target youth, as well as his or her peer and parent, completed the questionnaire and returned it to the researcher. For the purposes of this study, only data from the complete sets will be used for analysis of the hypotheses (N=237).

Participants

Participants for this study were 79 sets of individuals, each made up of a target young adult, a parental figure of the target youth, and a peer of the target youth (N=237). The majority of target young adults in this study were undergraduate students enrolled in courses at the University of British Columbia. Participants were between the ages of 19 and 30. This age range was selected to include individuals who had reached the age of majority and those that have not completed the third decade of life. Five (6.3%) target participants were not undergraduate students, but had graduated university in the previous 4 years. Those 5 target youths were fully participating in the labour force at the time of the study.

Target participants in the study had a mean age of 20.7 years. The majority (n=34; 43%) self-identified as Canadian and European, while a large minority (n=30; 38%) self-identified as Asian. The remaining participants had ethnicities that included Latin American, Middle Eastern and Egyptian (n=15; 19%). Target youths who lived at home accounted for 62% (n=49) of the target participant sample, while 13% (n=10) were living on campus, and 25% (n=20) were living away from home, off-campus. Twenty-six (33%) target youths were unemployed, 42 (53%) were employed on a short-term basis, including part-time work, and 11 (14%) were working in a long-term position with no plans to change careers in the next two years. The majority of target

youths were single (n=43; 54%), while 27 (34%) were in a serious relationship, 3 (4%) were engaged, and 5 (6%) were either married or common-law. One target participant was parenting (1%), while all remaining target youths were childless (n=78; 99%).

Forty-eight (n=38) target participants were enrolled in Arts, 20% (n=16) were in Sciences, and 4% (n=3) were in Commerce. One student (1%) was enrolled in the interdisciplinary program, and 15 (19%) did not indicate an area of study. The majority of target youths identified themselves as being in their second year of university (n=27 or 34%), while 19% (n=15) indicated they were in their first year. Fifteen percent (n=12) specified they were in their third year, 18% (n=14) indicated they were in their fourth, and 10% (n=8) identified they were in their fifth year or beyond.

Parents that participated in the study had a mean age of 50. In terms of ethnic identity, 31 parents (39%) self-identified as Canadian and European, while the same number self-identified as Asian (n=31; 39%). The remaining parents reported having a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including Latin American and Middle Eastern (n=17; 22%). Twenty-eight (25%) parents were working in professions that included the medical, academic, business, financial and engineering fields. Ten (13%) parents were in social services, 8 (10%) were in sales and marketing, 7 (9%) were in administrative support positions, and 8 (10%) were in trades. The remaining parents indicated they were either homemakers (n=12; 15%) or retired (n=1; 1%). The majority of parents (n=41; 52%) had a post-secondary or Bachelor's degree. Three (4%) parents had less than high school education, 23 (29%) had a high school diploma, 10 (13%) had a Master's degree, and 2 (3%) had a doctoral degree. In terms of household income, the majority (n=33; 42%) indicated incomes of \$75,000 annually or greater. Eighteen parents (23%) indicated household incomes between \$30,000-49,000, and 19 (24%) had less than \$29,000.

Peers that participated in the study had a mean age of 22 years. The majority self-identified as Canadian and European (n=41; 52%), while the largest ethnic minority was Asian and Oriental (n=31; 39%). The remaining were from a variety of backgrounds, including Latin American (n=9; 9%). Forty-two (53%) peers were living at home, 9 (11%) were living on-campus, while 28 (35%) were living away from home, off-campus. Regarding employment, 26 (33%) peers indicated that they were unemployed, 32 (41%) reported they were working in a short-term position including part-time work, and 21 (27%) indicated they were in a long-term position with no plans to change careers in two years. Thirty-seven (47%) peers were single, 33 (42%) were in a serious, dating relationship, 5 (6%) were engaged, and 4 (5%) were either married or common-law. Of the 79 peers that participated in the study, only 1 was parenting at the time (1%). All remaining peers were childless (n=78; 99%). Finally, in terms of area of study, thirty-five students (44%) were enrolled in Arts, 21 were in Sciences (27%), and 8 were in Commerce (10%). There were 5 students (6%) that did not indicate an area of study.

Unfortunately, due to an error in data collection, information on the sex of the respondent could only be estimated in this sample. Two-hundred and one questionnaire packets were distributed without gathering information on the sex of the target participant, parental figure or peer. The error was discovered before the remaining 158 questionnaire packets were given out, allowing for a correction in the surveys. In the end, for the target youth sample, only 38 participants indicated their gender. Of those 38 individuals, 37 were female and 1 was male. By calculating the percentage of males in the sample of 38 participants (2.6%), it was estimated that there were only 2 males and 77 females in the entire sample of 79 target youths. The same method of estimation was used for the parent and peer samples as well. For the parent sample, there were 4 males and 31 females that indicated their gender. After calculating the percentage

of males in the sample of 35 (11.4%), it was estimated that in the entire sample of parents, there were 9 males and 70 females. Finally, for the peer sample, there were 15 males and 21 females that indicated their gender. It was estimated that there were 33 males and 46 females in the entire peer sample.

Measures

For each measure, three separate versions were administered. One was completed by a target youth, another by a parental figure reporting on the target youth, and the last completed by a peer of the target youth. The target participant version assessed target youths' perceptions of their maturity level and adult status. The parent and peer versions assessed their perceptions of the target individual's maturity and adult status. In cases where the parent or peer was unsure of their perceptions of the target youth, they were asked to guess in order to limit the number of items left unanswered.

Target youths were asked to provide demographic information for descriptive purposes and to assess developmental tasks of adulthood (see Appendix D). Parental figures and peers were also asked to provide some demographic information for descriptive purposes. All respondents were asked to indicate their age and ethnicity.

Living circumstances. For target participants, as well as peer figures, information on living circumstances was assessed. Respondents were asked to indicate their living arrangements based on three categories: at home with parents, away from home (on-campus), or away from home (off-campus).

Relationship status. Target participants and peer figures were asked to provide information on their relationship status. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were single, seriously dating, engaged, or in a married/common-law relationship.

Parenting Status. Parental status was assessed for target youths and peer figures. Participants were asked to indicate whether they were parenting or childless.

Occupational Status. Target youths and peers were asked to indicate whether they were one of the following three options: currently unemployed; in a short-term job which includes temporary part-time work, or any temporary job for less than 2 years; or in a long-term job (longer than 2 years).

Household income. All respondents were asked to indicate household income. Participants were grouped into the following categories: less than \$10,000; between \$10,000 to \$19,999; between \$20,000 to \$29,999; between \$30,000 to \$39,999; \$40,000 to \$49,999; between \$50,000 to \$74,999; and \$75,000 or greater.

Educational level. Parental figures and peer figures were assessed on education level by indicating whether they had completed one of the following six options: less than a high school diploma, high school diploma, post-secondary diploma, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, or doctoral degree.

Sex. Due to an error in data collection, the gender of the target youth, parent, and peer was assessed in only 158 questionnaire packets that were distributed.

The Perceived Adulthood Scale. A Perceived Adulthood Scale was developed for the purposes of this study (see Appendix E). The concept of the scale was derived from Arnett's (1997, 1998) research that asked young adults if they believed they had reached adulthood. The measure, however, only consisted of one question, and gave participants a 'yes/no/maybe' option of response (Arnett, 1997, 1998). The scale used in the present study was developed to expand on Arnett's work. This scale examined youths' self-concept of adulthood using more items, thus ensuring more variability in participant responses. During the initial creation of the scale, a

number of people were asked to provide feedback on the items to ensure face validity and clarity of the scale. Of the initial 7 items that were considered, 2 were removed after feedback indicated they were not good items.

The resulting measure consisted of 5 items in which respondents were asked to rate statements on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In surveys that were distributed to target participants, target youths were asked to complete three variations of this measure. The original scale was designed to measure the degree to which target youths perceived themselves to be adults. An example item is "I consider myself to be an adult." Two variations of the original scale assessed youth perceptions of whether a parent and peer considered the youth to be an adult. Example items from the revised scales include "my parent considers me to be an adult" and "my good friend feels that I have not yet reached adulthood." For parent and peer versions of the scale, the wording was changed from the original scale to assess the degree to which the parent or peer perceived the target youth to be an adult. Example items from the parent and peer versions are, "I consider my son or daughter to be an adult," or "I consider my friend or peer to be an adult."

For all versions of this measure, the scores were calculated by taking the mean scores of all the items. Higher scores represented a greater tendency to perceive the target participant to be an adult. Cronbach's alphas for target youth, parent, and peer versions of the scale yielded values of .84, .89, and .88 respectively.

The Psychosocial Maturity Inventory. The Psychosocial Maturity Inventory, or PSM (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974) was used to measure two characteristics of maturity in the target youth, independence and, intimacy and connection (see Appendix F). The scale is composed of 61 items (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974). For each item, target youths were asked

to indicate the degree to which they agreed with a particular statement on a scale of 1 (agree strongly) to 4 (disagree strongly). For the parent and peer versions of this measure, the respondents were instructed to rate each statement according to how the target youth would answer. In all versions of the scale, the wording for some items was altered from the original to reflect gender equality (i.e. he or she).

The PSM was divided into six subscales: self-reliance, work-orientation, identity, social commitment, communication, and enlightened trust (Greenberger & Sorenson, 1974). The trait of independence was assessed by combining responses from the self-reliance, identity, and work orientation subscales. Example items from the subscale included, "In a group I prefer to let other people make decisions," "most people are better liked than I am," and "I seldom get behind in my work." The trait of intimacy and connection was assessed by combining scores from the social commitment, communication, and trust subscales. Example items from this subscale included, "why work for something that others will enjoy if you won't be alive to enjoy it too?" "I find it easy to explain what I think or believe," and "people can be trusted no matter what they have to win or lose."

For all versions of this measure, summary scores were mean scores of items from all pertinent subscales. Higher summary scores were indicative of perceived higher levels of psychosocial maturity. Cronbach's alphas for the independence subscale were .85 for the youth version, .92 for the parent version, and .87 for the peer version. Additionally, the intimacy and connection subscale in this study also produced alphas of .76, .83, and .64 for the target youth, parent, and peer versions respectively.

It is important to note that some changes were made to the original scale. First, one item from the self-reliance subscale was omitted in order to improve reliability. An item analysis

indicated that the item of "It's not practical to try to decide what kind of job you want" was poor. Once the item was deleted, Cronbach's alpha for the self-reliance subscale improved.

Changes were also made to the original trust subscale after it was discovered that the reliability of the subscale was poor. Cronbach's alphas for the original trust subscale were .59, .63, and .58 for the target youth, parent, and peer versions respectively. The following items were deleted from the subscale to improve reliability: "If people are picked in a fair way to be on a trial jury, they are sure to reach a fair decision," "If a person in government isn't honest, he or she won't get elected more than once," "There is no way to decide ahead of time who you can trust," and "Never depend on anyone if you can help it." Once the items were deleted, Cronbach's alphas improved to .64, .52, and .63 for target youth, parents, and peers respectively.

The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire. The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, or EIPQ, was developed by Balistreri, Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995) to measure ego identity in four ideological domains and four interpersonal domains (see Appendix G). The ideological domains consist of occupational choice, political preference, religious affiliation, and personal values. Interpersonal domains include friendships, dating, sex roles, and family. The EIPQ assesses these domains on two dimensions, exploration and commitment (Balistreri et al., 1995). High commitment indicates that individuals are decided in their views and opinions. This study uses the commitment subscale of the EIPQ to assess the philosophy of life aspect of maturity.

The commitment subscale is made up of 16 items in which target respondents were asked to rate statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). An example item is, "I will always vote for the same political party." For the parent and peer versions of this measure, respondents were asked to rate statements based on how they thought the target youth would answer. For all versions of the measure, the total score is the mean of all items. Higher

scores represent the greater tendency to perceive the target youth of having a clear philosophy of life. With regards to the reliability of this measure, both the target youth and peer versions of the scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .79, while the parent version had an alpha of .76.

The Financial Independence Scale. Financial independence was assessed using a scale that was developed for the purposes of this study (see Appendix H). The items were created to measure two areas of financial independence. The first area involved financial responsibility, such as saving and budgeting money for the future, and remembering to pay expenses on time. The second area concerned financial self-reliance, such as having a personal income, and the ability to pay for one's own expenses. During the initial development of the scale, a number of people were asked to provide feedback on the items to ensure face validity and clarity of the scale. Of the initial 20 items that were proposed, 6 were removed because they were not needed or confusing. Some items were also re-worded and integrated with other items.

The resulting measure consisted of 11 items in which respondents were asked to rate statements on a scale ranging from 1 (not like me) to 5 (a lot like me). The original scale for target participants was designed to assess the degree to which target youths viewed themselves as financially independent and self-sufficient. Example items included, "I pay for my own expenses" and "I sometimes rely on others for money." For the parent and peer versions of this measure, the wording was changed to assess parent and peer perceptions of the target youth's financial independence. Example items included, "My son or daughter pays for his/her own expenses," and "My friend or peer sometimes relies on others for money." For all versions of the measure, total scores were mean scores of all items. Higher scores were indicative of higher levels of perceived financial independence. Item analyses of the data indicated that the internal consistency of the scale was good, with target youth responses yielding a Cronbach's alpha of

.70, while parent scores produced an alpha of .80, and peer responses gave an alpha of .77. However, item analyses indicated that item 6 (I am sometimes uncertain about my future sources of income) and 7 (I often worry about how I will pay my expenses at the end of the month) were poorly correlated with the total scores, and that alpha would increase if they were deleted. Once those items were excluded from the data, the internal consistency of the scale had improved, with values of .71, .80, and .79 for target youth, parent, and peer responses respectively.

Results

Appendix I displays the intercorrelations between target youths' four traits of maturity, living circumstances, marital status, and age, for target youth, parent, and peer ratings respectively.

It was hypothesized that parental and peer perceptions of target youths' adult status would be associated with target youths' perceptions of themselves. To test these predictions, Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted between three variables, parental and peer perceptions of target participants' adult status, and youths' perceptions of their adulthood. Table 1 shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients between the three variables.

Results indicate that the association between parental and target youth perceptions was positive and statistically significant. In addition, results also show that peer and target youth perceptions were significantly, positively related. However, it is important to note that Table 1 shows the mean scores for parent and peer ratings of target youths' adulthood were higher than target youths' ratings of their own adult status. These results suggest that ratings of target youths' adulthood for parents and peers co-varied with target youth self-perceptions, but target

youths' scores were lower than the other two raters. Thus, Hypothesis 1 and 2 were only partially supported.

Table 1

*Intercorrelations Between Target Youth, Parent, and Peer Ratings of Target Youth's Adulthood
(N=79 triads)*

	Youth	Parent	Peer	Mean	S.D.
Youth	---	0.25*	0.46**	3.07	0.85
Parent		---	0.36**	3.52	1.04
Peer			---	3.57	0.84

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

It was also hypothesized that target youth ratings of their own adult status would be associated with their perceptions of parent and peer ratings of the target youth's adulthood. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted. The three variables that were examined were target youth ratings of their own adulthood, target youths' perceived parent ratings of target youths' adulthood, and target youths' perceived peer ratings of target youths' adulthood. Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between the three variables, as well as the mean scores and standard deviations of each.

Results show that the relationship between perceived parental ratings of target youths' adulthood and target youths' ratings of their own adult status is positive and significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported; target youths who perceive that their parents think they are adults are more likely to consider themselves adults as well. Results also found that perceived peer ratings of target youths' adulthood and target youths' ratings of their own adult status was positive and significantly related. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was also supported; target

youths who perceive that their peers think they are adults are more likely to define themselves as adults as well.

Table 2

Intercorrelations Between Target Youth, Perceived Parent, and Perceived Peer Ratings of Adulthood (N=79 triads)

	Youth	Parent	Peer	Mean	S.D.
Youth	---	0.50**	0.68**	3.07	0.85
Parent		---	0.53**	3.06	0.95
Peer			---	3.42	0.83

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that there would be a stronger association between parent and target youth perceptions of target youths' adult status, than between peer and target youth ratings. However, Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between peer and target youth perceptions was greater than between parent and target youth ratings. To test whether the two correlations were equal, a Fisher's Z test was conducted. Analyses indicate that the difference between the two correlations was not statistically significant ($z = 1.49, p > .05$). Therefore, the association between peer and target youth perceptions of adulthood is not statistically significantly stronger than the association between parental and target youth ratings of adulthood.

It was also hypothesized that the association between target youth ratings of their own adulthood and target youth perceptions of parent ratings of their adulthood would be stronger than the association between target youth ratings and target youth perceptions of peer ratings. Similar to the results shown in Table 1, Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient between

perceived peer and target youth ratings was greater than between perceived parent and target youth ratings. A Fisher's Z test was conducted in order to test whether the two correlations were equal. Results indicate that the difference between the two correlations is statistically significant ($z = 2.20, p < .05$). Therefore, opposite to what was predicted in Hypothesis 6, the relationship between target youths' ratings of their own adult status and target youth perceptions of peer ratings is stronger than the association between target youth ratings and perceived parental and target youth ratings.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that target youths' ratings of their own adulthood would be more strongly associated with target youths' perceived parental perceptions than with parental perceptions. To test this hypothesis, a Fisher's Z test was conducted. Results show that the two correlation coefficients were statistically significantly different ($z = 2.14, p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported; target youths' self-concept of adulthood is more strongly associated with what target youths perceive their parents think of them, than what parents perceive of target youths.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that target youths' ratings of their own adulthood would have a stronger association with target youths' perceived peer ratings of their adult status than with peer perceptions of target youth's adult status. Fisher's Z tests were conducted to examine this hypothesis. Results indicate that the difference in correlation coefficients was statistically significant ($z = 2.42, p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 8 was also supported; target youths' self-concept of adulthood is more strongly associated with what target youths perceive their friends think of them, than what peers perceive of target youths.

With regards to examining characteristics associated with adulthood, it was hypothesized that target youths who were living away from home (off-campus) would be more likely to be

perceived by others and the self as adults than target youths who were living at home, or on-campus. To examine this, an ANOVA was conducted. The independent variable was target youths' living circumstances, while the dependent variables were target youth, parental, and peer perceptions of target youths' adult status.

Table 3 shows the differences in perceptions of the target youths' perceived adult status for subjects who are living at home, living on-campus, or living off-campus. The mean ratings and standard deviations of target youth's perceived adult status are provided for each living circumstance. Results indicate that target youths who are not living at home (off-campus) have significantly higher ratings of their own adult status, than target youths who live at home, $F(2,75) = 4.25, p < .05$. In addition, parents give higher ratings of adulthood to target youths who are not living at home (off-campus), compared to those who do live at home, $F(2,75) = 7.93, p < .01$. Peer ratings between target youths who live at home and off-campus were not statistically significant, $F(2,76) = 2.90, p = .06$.

Table 3

Summary of ANOVA with Living Circumstances Predicting Target Youth's Perceived Adulthood

Reporter	Mean Score (S.D.)		
	At Home	On Campus	Off Campus
Target Youth	2.87 _a (0.84)	3.26 _{a,b} (0.62)	3.48 _b (0.85)
Parent	3.20 _a (1.01)	3.70 _{a,b} (0.88)	4.20 _b (0.84)
Peer	3.45 _a (0.78)	3.38 _a (0.94)	3.95 _a (0.84)

Note. Target Youth and Parent differences were calculated using the Dunnett C procedure due to unequal variances between groups of living circumstances. Peer differences were calculated using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference Test. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$.

It was also hypothesized that target youths who were married would be more likely to be perceived by others and the self as adults than target youths who were single, seriously dating, or engaged. Because there were so few participants that were either engaged ($n=3$) or married ($n=5$), these categories were combined into one group. Thus, the three categories of relationship status were single, seriously dating, and engaged/married. An ANOVA was conducted to test differences of target youth, parental, and peer perceptions of the target youth's adulthood for each relationship status. Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for target youths' perceived adulthood by relationship status.

It was expected that target youths who were engaged or married would have significantly higher ratings of their own adult status than target youths who were not. Results did not support this prediction, with $F(2,75) = 2.18, p = .12$. In addition, it was also expected that peers and parents would give target youths higher ratings of adulthood when they were engaged or married, than when they were not. Results found that this hypothesis was also not supported, with $F(2,75) = 1.00, p = .37$ and $F(2,75) = 3.30, p = .40$ for parents and peers respectively.

Table 4

Summary of ANOVA with Relationship Status Predicting Target Youth's Perceived Adulthood

Reporter	Mean Scores (S.D.)		
	Single	Seriously Dating	Engaged/Married
Youth	2.93 _a (0.82)	3.16 _a (0.85)	3.58 _a (0.95)
Parent	3.40 _a (0.99)	3.60 _a (1.09)	3.93 _a (1.12)
Peer	3.48 _a (0.79)	3.47 _a (0.84)	4.25 _a (0.84)

Note. Target Youth and Parent differences were calculated using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference Test. Peer differences were calculated using the Dunnett C test due to unequal variances between groups of relationship status. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$.

Hypotheses 13 and 14 predicted that target youths who were perceived as more mature by themselves or others, would be more likely to consider themselves adults, and be considered by others as adults, than those who were perceived as less mature. To test these hypotheses, three multiple regressions were conducted. For the first analysis, target youths' ratings of their own adult status were regressed on their perceptions of their four characteristics of maturity (independence, intimacy and connection, philosophy of life, and financial independence). The second and third regression analyses examined parent and peer ratings of target youths' adult status regressed on their ratings of the target youth's four characteristics of maturity respectively. To illustrate the association between each characteristic of maturity to perceptions of adulthood, Table 5 shows the individual correlation matrixes for target youth, parent, and peer ratings.

To investigate whether perceptions of the youths' four characteristics of maturity predicted the extent to which youths were considered adults, the *R* square and the adjusted *R* square values were examined for each multiple regression equation. Table 6 shows each value for target youth, parent, and peer equations respectively. Results indicate that the amount of variability in perceptions of adulthood that can be explained by the four characteristics ranged from 9% in target youths to 39% in parents. Thus, Hypothesis 13 and 14 were supported by the analyses; target youths who are perceived as more mature, are almost more likely to be perceived as adults, by themselves, parents, and peers.

Table 5

*Intercorrelations Between Perceptions of Target Youths' Adulthood and Maturity**Characteristics*

		Target Youths				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Perception of Adulthood	---	0.30*	0.08	0.28*	0.07
2.	Independence		---	0.61**	0.50**	0.22
3.	Intimacy and Connection			---	0.27*	0.20
4.	Philosophy of Life				---	0.00
5.	Financial Independence					---
		Parents				
1.	Perception of Adulthood	---	0.56**	0.55*	0.42**	0.40**
2.	Independence		---	0.77**	0.38**	0.51**
3.	Intimacy and Connection			---	0.21	0.40**
4.	Philosophy of Life				---	0.28*
5.	Financial Independence					---
		Peers				
1.	Perception of Adulthood	---	0.24*	0.26*	0.33**	0.30**
2.	Independence		---	0.62**	0.31**	0.32**
3.	Intimacy and Connection			---	0.19	0.30**
4.	Philosophy of Life				---	0.14
5.	Financial Independence					---

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6

Comparing R square and Adjusted R square Values for Youth, Parent, and Peer Equations

Reporter	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE	F	p value
Youth	0.14	0.09	0.82	2.66	0.04
Parent	0.42	0.39	0.81	12.66	0.00
Peer	0.20	0.15	0.78	4.23	0.00

To examine whether all four characteristics of maturity were equally significant in predicting perceptions of the target youth's adulthood, multiple regressions for target youth, parent, and peer ratings were conducted. It was hypothesized that all four characteristics would be significant in the regression model. Tables 7, 8, and 9 show the results from the target youth, parent, and peer multiple regression equations respectively. Table 7 reveals that the characteristic of independence was the only significant predictor variable in the multiple regression equation for target youth ratings; the traits of intimacy and connection, philosophy of life, and financial independence were not significant.

Table 7

Regression Model for Target Youth Ratings of Maturity Predicting Self-Perceptions of Adulthood

Predictor Variables	b	SE	t	p value
Independence	0.82	0.36	2.31	0.02
Intimacy and Connection	-0.53	0.39	-1.34	0.19
Philosophy of Life	0.17	0.16	1.05	0.30
Financial Independence	0.00	0.16	0.02	1.00

With regards to parental perceptions of the target youth's adulthood, Table 8 shows that the traits of intimacy and connection and philosophy of life were statistically significant predictor variables in the multiple regression model, whereas independence and financial independence were not. To test whether the two traits of intimacy and connection and philosophy of life were uniquely predicting variance of parental ratings of the youth's adulthood, each were eliminated separately in the model to observe the change in adjusted R square. Results indicate that for each model, adjusted R square changes only slightly from .33 to .35. Therefore, the traits were not significantly different in accounting for variance in parental ratings of the target youth's adulthood.

Table 8

Regression Model for Parent Ratings of Maturity Predicting Target Youths' Adulthood

Predictor Variables	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> value
Independence	0.21	0.35	0.59	0.56
Intimacy and Connection	1.08	0.42	2.56	0.01
Philosophy of Life	0.45	0.16	2.83	0.01
Financial Independence	0.13	0.14	0.91	0.36

For peer ratings of target youths' adulthood, results indicate that only the traits of philosophy of life and financial independence were statistically salient predictor variables in the regression model. To test whether both traits were uniquely predicting variance of peer ratings of target youths' adulthood, each were eliminated from the model separately to examine the change in adjusted R square. Results show that there was no change in adjusted R square, with a value of .11 for both regression models. Therefore, both traits were not significantly different in accounting for the variance in peer ratings of target youths' adulthood.

Table 9

Regression Model for Peer Ratings of Maturity Predicting Target Youths' Adulthood

Predictor Variables	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> value
Independence	0.08	0.32	0.28	0.78
Intimacy and Connection	0.37	0.44	0.84	0.40
Philosophy of Life	0.33	0.16	2.09	0.04
Financial Independence	0.29	0.14	2.15	0.04

The results from Tables 7, 8, and 9 indicate that Hypothesis 15 was not supported; the four characteristics of maturity are not perceived as equally symbolic of adulthood.

Finally, to examine whether perceptions of target youths' adulthood were more strongly associated with the achievement of developmental tasks, or maturity, multiple regressions were conducted. Target youth, parental and peer perceptions of target youths' adulthood were regressed on the four characteristics of maturity, as well as target youths' developmental tasks. It is important to note that the categorical variables of target youths' relationship status and living circumstances were coded to allow for their inclusion in a regression analysis. Target participants were assigned values that incrementally increased by 1 with every progressive increase in autonomy for each developmental task. For example, target youths were given a score of 1 if they were single, a score of 2 if they were in a serious relationship, or a score of 3 if they were engaged, or married. For living circumstances, target youths were assigned a score of 1 if they were living at home, a score of 2 if they were living on-campus, or a score of 3 if they were living off-campus and away from home.

Results for each analysis are shown in Tables 10, 11, and 12 for target youth, parent, and peer ratings respectively. For target youth ratings, results indicate that none of the predictor variables are significant in predicting self-perceptions of adulthood.

Table 10

Regression Model for Target Youth Ratings of Maturity and Developmental Tasks Predicting Perceptions of Adulthood

Predictor Variables	b	SE	t	p value
Living Circumstances	0.17	0.12	1.40	0.17
Relationship Status	0.11	0.13	0.82	0.42
Independence	0.65	0.37	1.76	0.08
Intimacy and Connection	-0.44	0.39	-1.13	0.26
Philosophy of Life	0.09	0.18	0.52	0.61
Financial Independence	-0.02	0.16	-0.12	0.91

For parent ratings, the results show that only two traits were significant in predicting target youth's adulthood, intimacy and connection and philosophy of life. When either trait was eliminated from the regression model, adjusted *R* square decreased to .36 from .41. When both traits were excluded concurrently, adjusted *R* square decreased to .35.

Table 11

Regression Model for Parent Ratings of Maturity and Developmental Tasks Predicting Target Youth's Adulthood

Predictor Variables	b	SE	t	p value
Living Circumstances	0.23	0.12	1.93	0.06
Relationship Status	-0.09	0.12	-0.75	0.46
Independence	0.14	0.35	0.39	0.70
Intimacy and Connection	1.04	0.42	2.47	0.02
Philosophy of Life	0.41	0.17	2.49	0.02
Financial Independence	0.13	0.14	0.93	0.36

For peer ratings, results indicated that financial independence was the only significant predictor variable in the multiple regression model. When looking at the overall results for target youth, parent, and peer ratings, findings show that traits of maturity are more strongly associated with whether individuals are perceived as adults or not, as compared to developmental tasks.

Table 12

Regression Model for Peer Ratings of Maturity and Developmental Tasks Predicting Target Youth's Adulthood

Predictor Variables	b	SE	t	p value
Living Circumstances	0.18	0.12	1.48	0.14
Relationship Status	0.03	0.13	-0.23	0.82
Independence	0.10	0.32	0.32	0.75
Intimacy and Connection	0.25	0.44	0.56	0.58
Philosophy of Life	0.25	0.18	1.43	0.16
Financial Independence	0.33	0.14	2.35	0.02

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the traits and characteristics associated with whether youths' are defined as adults by themselves or others. One area of interest was to examine whether developmental tasks or psychological traits were more associated with perceived adult status. In addition, the study also examined the relationship between youths' self-concepts of adulthood and perceptions of youths by significant others. Results from this study allude to the current tendency of individuals to view psychological traits, and leaving home, as markers for perceived adult status. Furthermore, the study also found that youths have difficulty in self-defining as adults, perhaps suggesting a need for a reexamination of the symbols of adulthood, or a reexamination of the applicability of symbolic interactionism to youths' self-concepts of adulthood.

This study found that psychological traits were more often associated with perceived adult status than certain developmental tasks, such as marriage. The traits of intimacy and connection, philosophy of life, and financial independence were all significant predictor variables for parent and peer perceptions of youths' adulthood. Conversely, target youths' who were married or in common-law relationships were not more likely to be perceived as adults by themselves, parents or peers. These results confirm previous findings that adulthood is currently less defined by marriage, and more by psychological traits such as independence and financial independence (Arnett, 2003, 1998, 1997; Greene et al., 1992; Facio, & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). For example, in a study (Facio & Micocci, 2003) of 163 young adults in Argentina between the ages of 25-27, participants were asked to rate a list of qualities on whether they were necessary for entrance into adulthood. Results found that only 22% of youths believed marriage was a necessary characteristic for adult status (Facio & Micocci, 2003). A study of 574 North American young adults (Arnett, 2003) yielded similar findings with only 5-32% of the ethnically diverse sample of young adults endorsed marriage as a marker for adulthood.

One plausible explanation for why marriage is not currently viewed as a marker for perceived adult status may be attained when examining the patterns of marriage in Canada. More specifically, with increased divorce rates since the early 1970s (Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995), youths may consider marriage as less sacred and valued than it once was. In addition, increasing numbers of individuals in Canada are beginning to view marriage as unnecessary, and choosing to remain unmarried as a valid lifestyle choice (Wu, 1999). For example, statistics indicate that 12% of couples were identified as cohabiting in 1996, a 6% increase since 1981(Wu, 1999). Thus, youths may decide that because of the changing meaning of marriage,

and the growing decision of many to remain single, that marriage is not a good indicator of an individual's adulthood.

Another explanation for why psychological traits are viewed as markers for adult status concerns the nature of developmental tasks, in that they are single events that mark a definite cut-off from one phase of development to another. However, development rarely occurs in such a straightforward manner. Rather, it is a gradual process. Similarly, neo-psychoanalytic notions such as gaining independence and establishing a belief system are gradual processes (Arnett, 1998). Once youths have gone through the process of establishing their autonomy and philosophy of life, they may be more likely to perceive they are adults. Thus, neo-psychoanalytic notions are more compatible with the view that becoming an adult is gradual. In this case, adulthood is not defined by a single event, such as marriage or parenthood (Arnett, 1998).

Although the present study found that youths who were married or in common-law relationships were not more likely to be considered adults by themselves and others, the results did find significant results for various youths' living circumstances. Youths who lived away from home (off-campus) were more likely to be perceived as adults by themselves and their parents than youths who lived at home. These findings were similar to other studies that reported the majority of youths promote leaving home as an indicator of adulthood (Arnett, 1997, 1998; Fabio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). For example, Mayseless and Scharf (2003) studied a group of 218 university students in Israel, and found that 75% of youths endorsed leaving home as necessary for being considered an adult. In two other studies (Arnett, 1997) conducted on university students between the ages of 18-28, 57-60% of young adults believed living on one's own was a marker for adult status.

A possible reason why leaving home has become a salient marker for adulthood is because of its attached social recognition (Cordon, 1997). In this case, having an independent home is an indicator of social status. Those who do not have homes, or who live with their family of origin, are viewed negatively (Cordon, 1997), or are assumed to be undergoing difficulties (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). As a result, youths may view leaving home as the ultimate marker of whether someone has become autonomous and recognized as such in the surrounding society.

In addition, leaving home assumes that individuals can make responsible decisions for themselves (Stattin & Magnusson, 1996). For example, living on one's own generally requires individuals to be economically independent, to make autonomous decisions, and to take responsibility for personal care, without direct reliance on parental figures or friends (Cordon, 1997; Dubas & Petersen, 1996; Stattin & Magnusson, 1996). Thus, it would follow that youths who live away from home would be perceived as more responsible and independent, leading to the perception that they are adults.

With regards to psychological traits associated with adulthood, the most interesting result found in the present study is that only 9% of the variability in target youths' self-perceived adulthood was accounted for by the characteristics of maturity. In contrast, 39% of parental perceptions of target youths' adulthood were accounted for by the characteristics. This suggests that parents were able to associate traits of adulthood to perceived adult status, while target youths had more difficulty in making the connection. This large discrepancy may reflect the ambiguity of young adulthood itself. Because young adulthood is an ambiguous period of the lifespan with no clear consensus of roles and characteristics for youths (Arnett, 2000), young adults are perhaps unsure of the qualities necessary to become an adult, and may be unable to

connect the traits they possess to their own adult status. On the other hand, because parents have already undergone the transition, parental figures may be more able to perceive whether their children are adults based on the characteristics they possess. This explanation, however, seems unlikely because peers of target youths were also able to connect traits associated with adulthood to perceived adult status, even though they themselves are young adults. The study found that 15% of the variability in peer perceptions of target youths' adulthood were accounted for by characteristics of maturity.

The finding that parents and peers were able to associate youths' traits to their adult status, suggests a difficulty in youths' to self-define as adults. In other words, when youths are regarding another person, youths are able to associate characteristics of adulthood to perceived adult status. However, when youths are evaluating themselves, it is much more difficult to make the association. Within a symbolic interactionist framework, individuals who are perceived as possessing the symbols of adulthood should be perceived as adults by others, and should perceive themselves to be adults as well. However, the present study did not support this theory. Target youths in this study were not able to self-define as adults, even though they perceived themselves as possessing the symbols of adulthood. These results may suggest that the symbols examined in this study were not associated with perceived adulthood at all. However, that is unlikely because parents and peers were able to connect the symbols examined to perceived adult status in target youths. What is more plausible is perhaps a problem with theory, and the applicability of symbolic interactionism to youths' ability to self-define as adults. More particularly, symbolic interactionism may not be the best theory to explain the link between youths' self-concepts of adulthood and the symbols associated with perceived adult status.

The psychological literature on possible selves may offer an alternative to symbolic interactionism to explain youths' difficulty in self-defining as adults. Possible selves are defined as "ideals selves that we would very much like to become" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). They represent psychological beliefs, aspirations, and fears about what individuals can become in the future. In addition, possible selves function as motivation for future behaviour (they represent selves to be achieved or avoided). Most importantly, possible selves can act as referents or standards in which current selves can be judged (Markus & Nurius, 1986). For example, middle-class individuals who aspire to be millionaires may judge their current selves negatively, while those same individuals may judge themselves positively if their possible selves only aspire to be financially secure.

Applying possible selves to the present study could explain why youths have difficulty in self-defining as adults, even though they were perceived as possessing the symbols associated with adulthood by themselves and significant others. Past studies have found that youths associate psychological traits and characteristics to perceived adult status (Greene et al., 1992; Facio, & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). Unfortunately, these psychological traits, such as gaining autonomy and having a clearly defined belief system, are intangible and individualistic (Arnett, 2000). More specifically, there is no definite cut-off in which individuals can undoubtedly judge themselves to have reached adulthood (Hardwick, 1984). Thus, youths may not be able to perceive their current selves as adults in the context of their possible adult selves. For example, no matter how much autonomy youths achieve, or how well-defined their personal belief systems are, they may perceive that they have not yet reached the level of autonomy that their possible selves would ideally have. As a result, youths may be unable to define themselves as adults.

It is also possible that youths' beliefs of adulthood may be overly idealistic and hard to achieve. In one study (Whitty, 2002), youths between the ages of 17-22 described in narrative terms their possible selves for the future. Many youths included grandiose descriptions of themselves, such as becoming wealthy, famous, or having glamorous occupations (Whitty, 2002). These idealistic representations of adulthood may hinder youths' ability to evaluate their actual selves as adults. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee (1976) suggest that as individuals move into the adult world, they must come to terms with their idealistic visions of the future, and learn to compromise or let go of some of their dreams. However, the reconciliation of actual selves with their possible selves does not occur until the 30s, when individuals have reached middle adulthood and have settled down (Levinson et al., 1976). Thus, youths may have a difficult time in perceiving they are adults because they have not yet reconciled their dreams with their actual selves. They may feel that they need to accomplish more before they can judge themselves to have reached their idealistic notions of adulthood.

The concept of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) can also explain other findings from this study. The study's results indicate that the correlations of youths' self-concepts of adulthood with youth perceived parent and peer perceptions were significantly greater than with parents and peer perceptions. These findings may indicate the importance of considering possible selves when evaluating another individual. When youths perceive themselves, they not only evaluate their present selves, but also their future potential and capabilities (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In contrast, significant others' appraisals of youths are not able to take into account these factors because they are not overtly evident to the outside observer (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This would explain why there was a weak correlation coefficient between parent and peer perceptions of youths' adulthood and youths' self-concepts. This would also provide

another explanation for why there was a stronger correlation between youths' self-definitions of adulthood and youths' perceptions of parent and peer ratings. In this case, as with their perceptions of their own self-concepts, youths' appraisals of parent and peer evaluations are taken in context to their possible selves.

What is important to note, however, is that although there is congruence between youths' self-concepts of adulthood and parent and peer perceptions of youths' adult status, the correlations are relatively small in this study. Felson (1985) has offered another possible explanation for why this was so. In his work, Felson examined the concept of projection (Felson, 1985, 1989, 1990; Felson & Reed, 1986), which occurs in instances where individuals are unsure of what others perceive of them and therefore assume that others perceive what they perceive of themselves. The concept of projection would explain why numerous studies have found that self-perceptions are more highly correlated with perceived assessments than actual assessments by others (Felson, 1985 Hergovich, Sirsch, & Felinger, 2002; Phillips, 1987, 1985). In the case of the present study, youths may not know how parents and peers view their adult status. As a result, they may assume that parents and peers view similarly to how they view themselves. That would explain why there is a greater association between youths' self-concepts and youths' perceptions of parent and peer ratings, than between youths' self-concepts and parent and peer perceptions.

The final finding of this study was that parental and peer perceptions were both associated with youths' self-definitions. Moreover, perceived peer perceptions were more strongly related to youths' self-concepts than perceived parental perceptions. A possible reason for this may be the difference in confidence youths have for parental and peer opinions. Rosenberg (1975) found that confidence in adult judgments diminish as children age, and their

faith in the opinions of friends becomes more salient. As children grow older, they believe less that significant adult figures know who they are, and begin to feel that their best friends are more accurate in their assessments of them. Because youths are less likely to believe that parental perceptions of them are accurate, they may feel parental opinions of their adult status are not as important as peer opinions. Thus, youths may alter their self-definitions of adulthood to become more congruent with what they believe peers perceive of them, rather than what they consider parents perceive. Perhaps in future studies, it would be beneficial to measure the level of importance youths place on parental and peer opinions. By doing so, it would be possible to determine whether peer opinions of the youth are more of a concern to the youth's self-definition of adulthood, than parental opinions.

Contributions and Limitations

There were a few limitations in this study that need to be mentioned. The first limitation concerns the data collection error that did not measure the sex of the respondent in the majority of the sample. This mistake resulted in a loss of information that could have been useful in the description of the sample. Regardless, the data still yielded valuable information regarding youth, parent, and peer perceptions of the target youth's adulthood.

Another concern involved the sampling technique used to obtain participants, which was a convenience sample of undergraduate students and acquaintances. As a result, the sample was not representative of the total population of students attending the university, nor the total population of young adults. It is likely that the sample had a higher level of socioeconomic status, and a higher level of education as compared to young adults not attending a post-secondary institution. In addition, the sample was comprised of subjects who volunteered to participate, and those who were willing to spend 30 minutes to one hour to complete the

questionnaire. As a result, participants may have differed in significant ways from those who did not volunteer. For example, participants may have been more compliant than the general university population.

Despite this limitation, however, the sample was still diverse in the age of respondents, their areas of study, and their living circumstances. In addition, the parent sample varied in household income and employment. Future studies may want to target young adults not attending educational institutions. However, for now, this sample was a good starting point for examining youths' self-definitions of adulthood, and the associations of parent and peer perceptions to youths' self-concepts.

A final limitation of this study concerns the use of a cross-sectional sample of individuals between the ages of 19 to 26. This was not the ideal method of studying an individual's self-concept of adulthood because it was not able to examine individual changes over time. It would have been preferable to use a longitudinal sample and follow youths across time as they began late adolescence till the time they had fully developed an adult self-concept. Using a cross-sectional sample, however, does not take away from the findings of this study, which are still valuable to existing research on young adulthood. For example, a link has been established between perceived perceptions of parents and peers, and the youth's self-concept of adulthood. In addition, there is greater insight into what traits and characteristics are associated with defining an individual as an adult.

Despite these limitations, this study was still valuable to the existing research on young adulthood. This study was able to examine, not only what characteristics and traits are important in defining whether someone is an adult, but it also examined whether youths considered themselves to be adults in relation to those traits and characteristics. This had never been done

before in previous research. Rather, past studies only asked youths to indicate whether they felt they had reached adulthood, without examining whether they possessed qualities associated with adult status (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). For example, in a study of 484 university students between the ages of 17-25 (Nelson, 2003), youths were asked whether they believed they had reached adulthood. In addition, the participants examined a list of traits commonly associated with adult status, and were asked to rate whether those items were necessary for entrance into adulthood.

Results from the study indicated that the overwhelming majority of youths endorsed traits such as "accepting responsibility for your actions" and "decide on personal beliefs/values," as markers for adulthood (Nelson, 2003). In addition, 24% of youths believed they had reached adulthood, 10% believed they had not, and 66% believed they had reached adulthood, but only in some respects. These results were similar to past studies that employed the same research methodology (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003). However, similar to past studies on young adulthood, Nelson (2003) did not measure the extent to which participants perceived they had attained the traits associated with adulthood. If he had done so, it would have been possible to determine whether youths who perceived they had attained these qualities were also more likely to self-define as adults.

The present study examined the relationship between traits and characteristics of youths and perceived adult status. Surprisingly, it was found that although youths were perceived to have the qualities associated with adulthood, they still did not self-define as adults. This suggests that there is something missing in the existing literature on young adulthood. Unlike what previous researchers have theorized (Arnett, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003), perhaps becoming an adult is not as simple as having the qualities typically

associated with adulthood. Self-defining as an adult may be more complex, and involve an individual psychological process that is not captured by previous research. This study has offered some plausible explanations for the inability of youths to perceive themselves as adults. The area of possible selves may be examined in future research for its relevance to youths' self-concepts of adulthood.

There are a number of directions future studies can take to further examine youths' self-perceptions of adult status. Firstly, longitudinal studies would be beneficial to examine how youths come to gradually self-define as adults. For example, it would be interesting to investigate what factors are involved in the self-definition process, and in what ways parents and peers can foster a self-concept of adulthood in youths. Another area of future interest is possible selves and youths' notions of adulthood. In this case, it would be interesting to know whether youths' notions of adulthood are tangible, and whether their possible selves are influential in their evaluation of their current selves as adults.

In conclusion, this study was a good starting point in examining youths' self-concepts of adulthood in relation to the traits and characteristics they possess. Hopefully, future research will expand on this study to further examine the factors involved in the self-definition of adulthood. In particular, future studies may want to conduct interviews to examine how youths internalize an adult self-concept. It is suspected that perceiving oneself as an adult is not as simple as fulfilling a checklist of qualities associated with adult status. However, without further investigation, it will not be possible to determine what defining oneself as an adult requires.

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Appendix A

Advertisement to Recruit Subjects in Class

Hello, my name is Cynthia Lin, and I am a Masters student in the family studies department. I am here today because I am collecting data for my thesis, which is on the transition to young adulthood. What I'm interested in, in particular, is whether *you* think you are an adult, whether your *parents* think you are an adult, and whether your *friends* think you are an adult. The reason I've come to you specifically is because a lot of you are currently transitioning into adulthood right now, or becoming adults. Perhaps some of you have seriously considered this already, or have talked about this with your friends and family? So I just wanted to know what you thought about this transition.

If you decide to volunteer for my study, you will receive a questionnaire packet that I've put together. All you need to do is complete the blue (target youth) copy of the survey. It will only take about 20 minutes of your time, and I will be back in the next 3 lecture periods to collect them. You also have the option of dropping-off completed surveys to Dr. Sheila Marshall's office in the Jack Bell Building, or in her mail box.

Along with your participation, and this is very important, is if you could get a good friend (someone who knows you well) to complete the white copy of the survey, and a parent (like a mom, dad, or step-parent) to complete the yellow copy. All they need to do is take the survey out of the envelope, fill it out, put it back in, seal it, and mail it to me – the stamps are already included on the front. Again, the survey will only take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

If you want, you can also mail your copy of the questionnaire along with a peer or parent survey. Each envelope can hold a maximum of two surveys each.

If you decide to participate in my study, unfortunately, I do not have any money or gifts to give you (I am just a student with no money). However, you may keep the clip that comes with the questionnaire packets, and you will have my eternal gratitude. So do I have any volunteers? Thank you so much for your interest.

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Appendix B

Advertisement to Recruit Snowball Sample

Hi. I was wondering if you'd like to participate in my study on the transition to adulthood? I'm interested in knowing whether you think you are an adult, whether your parents think you are an adult, and whether your friends think you are an adult. It won't take very long – just a half hour or so. And you will only need to fill out this simple questionnaire.

If possible, you will also need to get one parent, and one good friend to participate. When you are all finished, you can just mail them to me.

Also, if you have any other friends that are between the ages of 19-26, could you ask if they would be interested in participating as well? If you have any interested people, please let me know and I'll give you another survey packet to distribute. All the information is included with each package. Be sure to let them know that all data collected is anonymous and confidential. Participation is completely voluntary, so if you do not want to participate (or distribute), that's fine, but I would really appreciate your help.

Appendix D

General Demographic Information

Before beginning, please take some time to answer the following questions concerning general demographic information. Thank you.

1. What is your age?

2. What is your ethnicity?

3. What is your education level? (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- Less than high school diploma
- High school diploma
- Post-secondary diploma
- University Bachelors degree
- University Masters degree
- University Doctoral degree
- Other (please specify): _____

4. Please estimate your current annual household income (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000-\$19,999
- \$20,000-\$29,999

- \$30,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000 or greater

5. What is your current living situation? (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- At home with parents/guardian
- Away from home (on campus, i.e. dorm)
- Away from home (off campus)

6. What is your current occupational status? (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- Unemployed
- Employed short-term (includes temporary part-time work and/or plans to change positions in less than 2 years)
- Employed long-term (no plans to change positions in less than 2 years)

7. What is your current relationship status? (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- Single
- Seriously dating
- Engaged
- Married or in common-law relationship

8. What is your current parental status? (choose ONE that most closely applies)

- Childless or Childfree
- Parenting

9. How many children do you currently have?

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 and more

Appendix E
Perceived Adulthood Scale

For this section, please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Although items may seem slightly repetitive, please try to rate each statement individually.

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5
<p>1. I feel that I have not yet reached adulthood</p> <p>2. I consider myself to be an adult</p> <p>3. Sometimes I don't feel like an adult</p> <p>4. I believe I have reached adulthood</p> <p>5. I am an adult</p>				

Appendix F

The Psychosocial Maturity Inventory

For this section, please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
1	2	3	4

1. When a job turns out to be much harder than I was told it would be, I don't feel I have to do it perfectly.
2. I find it easy to explain what I think or believe.
3. It's not very practical to try to decide what kind of job you want.
4. I can't really say what my interests are.
5. I would rather use my free time to enjoy myself than to help raise money for a neighbourhood project.
6. I find it hard to stick to anything that takes a long time to do.
7. If people are picked in a fair way to be on a trial jury, they are sure to reach a fair decision.
8. It would be hard to write a letter explaining why I should be hired for a job.
9. In a group I prefer to let other people make the decisions.
10. I never seem to feel the same about myself from one week to the next.
11. Why work for something that others will enjoy if you won't be alive to enjoy it too?
12. I hate to admit it, but I give up on my work when things go wrong.
13. People can be trusted no matter what they have to win or lose.
14. Even if I know how to do something, I find it hard to teach someone else.
15. You can't be expected to make a success of yourself if you had a bad childhood.
16. Most people are better liked than I am.

17. I would only give a large sum of money to medical research on cancer if I knew they would find a cure in my life-time.
18. I seldom get behind in my work.
19. If a person in government isn't honest, he or she won't get elected more than once.
20. It is hard to talk to someone you don't know.
21. Luck decides most things that happen to me.
22. My life is pretty empty.
23. There is no way to decide ahead of time who you can trust.
24. If I felt strongly about something, like race relations or better medical care for the poor, I would only work for it if there was a chance things could be changed quickly.
25. I tend to go from one thing to another before finishing any one of them.
26. You can be sure people will be honest with you if you are honest with them.
27. In a discussion, I often find it hard to understand what people are trying to say.
28. The main reason I'm not more successful is that I have bad luck.
29. I can't seem to keep people as friends for very long.
30. It's not really my problem if my neighbours are in trouble and need help.
31. I often don't finish work I start.
32. I do not mix well with other people.
33. Someone often has to tell me what to do.
34. I'm acting like something I'm not a lot of the time.
35. Never depend on anyone if you can help it.
36. Time you spend helping others get what they want would be better spent trying to get what you want.
37. I often leave my work unfinished if there are other pleasurable activities to do on that evening.

38. Nobody really wants to cheat another person out of something.
39. I often forget to listen to what others are saying.
40. When things go well for me, it is usually not because of anything I myself actually did.
41. I never know what I'm going to do next.
42. It is much more satisfying to work for your own good than to work for the good of a group you belong to.
43. I believe in working only as hard as I have to.
44. If a person is on trial in court, the decision will be fair no matter what kind of family he or she comes from.
45. It is hard to speak your thoughts clearly.
46. I feel very uncomfortable if I disagree with what my friends think.
47. I change the way I feel and act so often that I sometimes wonder who the "real" me is.
48. There are more good people than bad people.
49. I would not like it if they used some of my tax money to keep up a park that I never use.
50. It's more important for a job to pay well than for a job to be very interesting.
51. If you can trust a person in one way, you know you can trust him or her in all ways.
52. It is not hard to give a talk in front of other people.
53. It is best to agree with others, rather than say what you really think, if it will keep the peace.
54. Nobody knows what I'm really like.
55. If there is only one copy of a book everyone wants to read, the person who gets it first should be able to keep it as long as he or she wishes.
56. Very often I forget work I am supposed to do.
57. I am not good at describing things in writing.
58. I don't know whether I like a new outfit until I find out what my friends think.
59. I am not really accepted and liked.

60. If a sign in a park says "Do not pick the flowers – They are here for all to enjoy," you can pick a few if you have a good personal reason.
61. A person is responsible only for the happiness of his or her family, relatives, and close friends.

Appendix G

The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire

For this section, please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

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

1. I have definitely decided on the occupation I want to pursue.
2. I don't expect to change my political principles and ideals.
3. I have considered adopting different kinds of religious beliefs.
4. There has never been a need to question my values.
5. I am very confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.
6. My ideas about men's and women's roles have never changed as I became older.
7. I will always vote for the same political party.
8. I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.
9. I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviours involved in dating relationships.
10. I have considered different political views thoughtfully.
11. I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.
12. My values are likely to change in the future.
13. When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.
14. I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.
15. I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.
16. Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the near future.
17. I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.
18. I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.

19. I have undergone several experiences that made me change my views on men's and women's roles.
20. I have consistently re-examined many different values in order to find the ones which are best for me.
21. I think what I look for in a friend could change in the future.
22. I have questioned what kind of date is right for me.
23. I am unlikely to alter my vocational goals.
24. I have evaluated many ways in which I fit into my family structure.
25. My ideas about men's and women's roles will never change
26. I have never questioned my political beliefs.
27. I have had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like my friends to have.
28. I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.
29. I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.
30. I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.
31. The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.
32. My beliefs about dating are firmly held.

Appendix H

Financial Independence Scale

Please indicate the degree to which the following statements describe you.

Not like me A little like me A lot like me

1

2

3

4

5

1. I am often reminded by others to pay my bills on time
2. I pay for my own expenses
3. I sometimes rely on others for income
4. I try to save money for my future plans/goals
5. I generally take responsibility for generating my own income
6. I am sometimes uncertain about my future sources of income
7. I often worry about how I will pay my expenses at the end of the month
8. I have my own budget and stick to it
9. I sometimes borrow money from family members
10. I often find myself exceeding my own income
11. I generally do not require assistance from family members to pay my expenses

Appendix I

Intercorrelations Between Perceptions of Target Youths' Adulthood, Maturity Characteristics, Developmental Tasks, and Target Youths' Age

	Target Youths								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Perception of Adulthood	---	0.30*	0.08	0.28*	0.07	0.32*	0.23*	0.43**	---
2. Independence		---		0.61**	0.50**	0.22	0.41**	0.21	0.37**
3. Intimacy and Connection			---		0.27*	0.20	0.19	0.12	0.08
4. Philosophy of Life				---	0.00	0.26*	0.43**	0.33**	---
5. Financial Independence					---	0.90	0.20	0.21	---
6. Target Youths' Living Circumstances						---	0.23*	0.18	---
7. Target Youths' Relationship Status							---	0.47**	---
8. Target Youths' Age								---	---
	Parents								
1. Perception of Adulthood	---	0.56**	0.55*	0.42**	0.40**	0.42**	0.16	0.21	0.25*
2. Independence		---		0.77**	0.38**	0.51**	0.36**	0.18	0.05
3. Intimacy and Connection			---	0.21	0.40**	0.32**	0.15	0.01	0.07
4. Philosophy of Life				---	0.28*	0.30**	0.28*	0.28*	0.39**
5. Financial Independence					---	0.20	0.11	0.02	-0.05
6. Target Youths' Living Circumstances						---	0.23*	0.18	0.32*
7. Target Youths' Relationship Status							---	0.47*	0.23*
8. Target Youth's Age								---	0.43**
9. Target Youths' Self-Perception of Adulthood									---
	Peers								
1. Perception of Adulthood	---	0.24*	0.26*	0.33**	0.30**	0.23*	0.21	0.34**	0.46**
2. Independence		---		0.62**	0.31**	0.32**	0.02	0.14	0.19
3. Intimacy and Connection			---	0.19	0.30**	0.19	0.12	0.06	0.17
4. Philosophy of Life				---	0.14	0.29**	0.45**	0.30**	0.23*
5. Financial Independence					---	-0.02	0.26*	0.28	-0.06
6. Target Youths' Living Circumstances						---	0.23*	0.18	0.32**
7. Target Youths' Relationship Status							---	0.47**	0.23*
8. Target Youths' Age								---	0.43**
9. Target Youth's Self-Perception of Adulthood									---

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.