PARENTAL AND PEER ATTACHMENT AS PREDICTORS OF THE PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE OF EMERGING ADULTHOOD AMONG UNDERGRADUATES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-20: A MULTIPLE REGRESSION STUDY

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Christina Schnyders

August 2012
A dissertation written by

Christina M. Schnyders

B.A., Simpson College, 2000

M.A., Ashland Theological Seminary, 2005

Ph.D., Kent State University, 2012

Approved by

___________________________ Co-director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Jason McGlothlin

___________________________ Co-director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee

J. Steve Rainey

___________________________ Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Rhonda Richardson

Accepted by

___________________________ Director, School of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences

Mary Dellman-Jenkins

___________________________ Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Services

Daniel Mahony
The purpose of this study was to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. This study included 1,614 participants; participation included the completion of demographic data, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA), and the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). An alpha of 0.01, power of .80, and a small effect size were maintained throughout this study. A standard multiple regression design and a stepwise multiple regression design were used.

Results showed that the multiple regression equations were statistically significant for both genders. Using standard multiple regression, peer trust explained a unique proportion of the variance for males while peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation explained a unique proportion of the variance for females. Using stepwise multiple regression, peer trust and peer alienation explained a unique proportion
of the variance for males, while peer communication and peer alienation explained a unique proportion of the variance for females. Thus, results suggest that parent and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood as measured by this study.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people I would like to thank whose interest, participation, and support have shaped the process of writing my dissertation. First, I would like to thank those who participated in this study—I could not be where I am today without you! Your willingness to serve as participants was a tremendous blessing, and your willingness to participate was instrumental in helping me to answer my research question for this study.

Next, I would like to thank my dissertation committee. Dr. Rainey, you expressed interest in my proposed dissertation topic from the moment I shared it with you, and your overwhelming support has been a tremendous source of encouragement for me. You have taught me that being verbose should take a back seat to clarity when it comes to scholarly writing, and I hope to carry that lesson with me in future writing efforts. Dr. McGlothlin, I have deeply appreciated your willingness to develop my dissertation concept from the time I had you as a professor in Research Seminar. Thank you for asking good questions and drawing fantastic pictures to exemplify items of importance. Dr. Richardson, your thought-provoking questions and passionate inquiry were just what I needed to hone in on how to conceptualize my study in a meaningful way. Thank you for your investment in me and in my growth as a researcher.

There were a few “behind the scenes” individuals I would like to thank as well. Patti Peters, your expertise with regard to research was an invaluable resource, and I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with you as I collected and analyzed data for this study. Sharon Smith, your editing expertise saved me hours . . . probably even days of
work! Judy Smith, your editing and formatting expertise was tremendous, and I am grateful for the ways in which your knowledge and skills enhanced my dissertation as well. Thank you for helping to put the finishing touches on my dissertation in such a thorough manner.

In many ways, I believe this dissertation is the direct result of a variety of people who have influenced and shaped my life. To the Malone University community, thank you for allowing me the space to begin thinking about the ways in which we serve emerging adults on college and university campuses. To the Akron Christian Reformed Church community, thank you for helping me to discern how my faith impacts all aspects of my life, including my roles as a counselor and counselor educator. I am keenly aware of the fact that I would not be where I am today without the amazing support of my family…thank you for your love, support, and encouragement as I have engaged in this venture. I am deeply grateful for you and am so blessed by your presence in my life.

Throughout this process, my anchor has been the steady, unconditional love of my husband Scott. Your commitment, investment, and pride in me throughout this process have been tremendous source of strength and encouragement. Thank you for the ways in which you enrich and challenge me to be a better version of who I am. I love you and hold gratitude in my heart to God for allowing us the privilege of doing life together as husband and wife. My cup truly overflows!
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................ iv

LIST OF TABLES ....................................................................................................................... xii

CHAPTER .............................................................................................................................. Page

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................. 1
   Theories of Attachment ........................................................................................................ 1
   Emerging Adulthood as a Developmental Stage ................................................................ 2
   Relationship Between Attachment and Emerging Adulthood .............................................. 3
   Definition of Terms .............................................................................................................. 4
   Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................................ 6
   Statement of the Problem ..................................................................................................... 7
   Review of the Literature ...................................................................................................... 10
      Attachment Theory ........................................................................................................... 10
         Parental attachment ........................................................................................................ 14
            Attachment to mother ................................................................................................. 17
            Attachment to father ................................................................................................. 18
         Peer attachment ............................................................................................................ 19
         Attachment and gender differences ............................................................................. 22
   Emerging Adulthood ........................................................................................................... 23
      Markers of emerging adulthood ..................................................................................... 25
         Dimensions of emerging adulthood ........................................................................... 25
         The process of recentering ........................................................................................... 27
         Developmental gains ....................................................................................................... 28
         Contextual implications of emerging adulthood ........................................................... 29
   Emerging adulthood critique ............................................................................................. 32
   Emerging adults in counseling ........................................................................................... 33
   Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................... 35

II. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 36
   Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................... 36
   Instruments ......................................................................................................................... 37
      Demographics Sheet ......................................................................................................... 38
      Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) ............................................................ 38
         Norming data of the IPPA ............................................................................................ 39
         Reliability of the IPPA .................................................................................................... 40
         Validity of the IPPA ........................................................................................................ 40
   Scholarly critique of the IPPA ............................................................................................. 41
III. RESULTS .................................................................................................................61
   Sampling ..................................................................................................................62
   Univariate Data Analysis .........................................................................................63
      Demographic Data .................................................................................................63
         Gender ................................................................................................................64
         Ethnicity ..............................................................................................................64
         Mental health diagnosis .....................................................................................64
         Age .....................................................................................................................66
      Relationship Status ...............................................................................................66
      Residential Status ...............................................................................................66
      Primary Caregivers ...............................................................................................67
      Quality of Relationship with Primary Caregivers and Closest Friends ............68
   Testing Instruments .................................................................................................70
      IPPA ......................................................................................................................71
      IDEA .....................................................................................................................71
   Bivariate Data Analysis ..........................................................................................72
      Non-Significant Correlations ................................................................................72
      Statistically Significant Correlations ....................................................................73
      Statistical Significance and Practical Significance ................................................75
         Small correlations .............................................................................................76
         Moderate correlations .......................................................................................78
         Large correlations .............................................................................................79
      Significant Findings Based on Gender .................................................................80
   Multivariate Data Analysis .....................................................................................82
      Standard Regression .............................................................................................82
      Stepwise Regression .............................................................................................85
   Chapter Summary ....................................................................................................87
IV. DISCUSSION ......................................................................................................................... 89
  Discussion of Findings ............................................................................................................ 89
  Sample Characteristics ........................................................................................................... 89
  Perception of Attachment Relationships ............................................................................. 93
  Attachment and Emerging Adulthood ................................................................................. 95
    Peer attachment and emerging adulthood ..................................................................... 95
    Parent attachment and emerging adulthood ............................................................... 98
  Gender Differences ............................................................................................................. 99
  Standard Regression ......................................................................................................... 101
  Stepwise Regression ......................................................................................................... 104
  Limitations ........................................................................................................................ 110
  Recommendations for Future Research ........................................................................... 112
  Summary ............................................................................................................................ 115

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................. 116
  APPENDIX A. DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET ............................................................................. 117
  APPENDIX B. THE INVENTORY OF PARENT AND PEER
             ATTACHMENT—ARMSDEN AND GREENBERG (1987) ........................................ 120
  APPENDIX C. THE IDEA: INVENTORY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF
             EMERGING ADULTHOOD—REIFMAN, ARNETT, AND
             COLWELL (2007) ........................................................................................................ 125
  APPENDIX D. PERMISSION TO USE THE IPPA ................................................................. 128
  APPENDIX E. PERMISSION TO USE THE IDEA ................................................................. 131
  APPENDIX F. INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A
             RESEARCH STUDY ........................................................................................................ 134
  APPENDIX G. EMAIL TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS .......................................................... 138

REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 140
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Univariate Analysis</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Multivariate Analysis</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Demographic Data including Gender, Ethnicity, Mental Health Diagnosis, and Age</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Residential Status of Sample Participants (N = 1610)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Primary Caregiver(s) of Sample Participants (N = 1611)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Perceived Quality of Sample Participants’ Relationship with Two Primary Caregivers (N = 1608) and Two Closest Friends (N = 1612)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Correlation Coefficients (p &lt; .01)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Statistically and Practically Significant Correlations (p &lt; .01)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Multiple Regression using Simultaneous Analysis for Males (N = 395) and Females (N = 1106)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Multiple Regression using Stepwise Analysis for Males (N = 395) and Females (N = 1106)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter includes an introduction to the study. This chapter includes definitions of terms that are pertinent to the study, along with a description of the purpose and rationale. In addition, the chapter contains a review of the relevant literature in order to provide a justification for the research question and methodology for this study.

Theories of Attachment

Various theories have been posited to explain human development. One developmental theory of prominence is attachment theory. Bowlby (1969) conceptualized the initial proposed theory of attachment, which outlined aspects of a significant bond that existed between two individuals: a mother and her infant child. With this as a foundation, Ainsworth was able to build on attachment theory and conduct the first empirical study on attachment (1963, 1967). Later, the seminal “strange situation” experiment took place (named as such because the study examined the impact of a stranger’s presence on a child when the child’s mother was or was not present), which highlighted the attachment anxiety that babies could experience when separated from an attachment figure (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Following that experiment, the conceptualization of attachment was expanded, based upon the idea that although attachment relationships typically begin in the family with the mother, they could also include the father (Bowlby, 1973, 1980, 1988). This idea that attachment relationships
can include individuals in addition to mothers set a foundation for other potential attachment relationships to be explored.

As ideas on attachment expanded, perceptions of the focus of attachment increased. Although attachment usually begins with a mother-child relationship, attachment relationships seem to expand into more of a network through the existence of a hierarchy, which highlights the attachment relationships in one’s life from most significant to least significant (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). While the role of the family seems to be significant in terms of creating and maintaining attachment relationships, attachment relationships can also be created and maintained with significant people outside of the family. Pitman and Scharfe (2010) found that there was no significant gain for individuals who experience an attachment relationship with a family member versus those who experience an attachment relationship with a peer. Thus, it seems that the presence and degree of an attachment relationship is more important than the person with whom the attachment relationship is created. While preliminary research focused on the mother-child attachment relationship (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1969, 1973), it seems clear that attachment relationships can be created with parents, siblings, and close friends (Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1992; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Thus, attachment provides a lens through which developmental processes can be understood.

**Emerging Adulthood as a Developmental Stage**

Another lens through which to understand developmental theory is that of emerging adulthood. The theory of emerging adulthood was created by Arnett (2000), who contended that emerging adulthood is a distinct developmental stage placed between
adolescence and adulthood that is focused upon five dimensions of experience: identity exploration, feeling in-between, instability, possibilities, and self-focus (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood is a culturally constructed stage of development (Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2004) experienced by individuals who live in industrialized countries worldwide (Arnett, 1998). These dimensions and experiences serve as the foundational elements of emerging adulthood.

Emerging adulthood has been recognized as a stage that is distinct from both adolescence and young adulthood. For instance, emerging adults are distinct from adolescents because they have the ability to move away from home and are released from the parental guidance that is required when living with a parent or guardian; in addition, emerging adults are distinct from young adults because they typically are not married, do not have children, and do not have stability in terms of a career path (Arnett, 2000, 2004). Because of this, emerging adults tend to experience feelings of ambivalence since they perceive that they have reached adulthood in some ways but not in others (Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005). Nonetheless, emerging adulthood seems to be a distinct and necessary developmental step towards attaining maturity as an adult (Buhl & Lanz, 2007). These distinctions highlight the unique features of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of development.

**Relationship Between Attachment and Emerging Adulthood**

Since its inception, the conceptualization of emerging adulthood has expanded to give greater clarity and understanding to the developmental processes that occur in the lives of emerging adults. While much of the research on emerging adulthood focuses on
the characteristics of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004; Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005; Tanner, 2006), additional research suggests that outside relationships may impact the process of emerging adulthood. For instance, a shift occurs in the relationship between parents and their emerging adult children, which may impact the processes that take place during emerging adulthood (Tanner, Arnett, & Leis, 2009). In addition, peer relationships seem to be significant to emerging adults as well (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006). Although attachment and emerging adulthood both seem to be understood as developmental constructs, the relationship between attachment and emerging adulthood has not been directly explored through research. In order to understand the ways in which emerging adulthood is impacted by significant relationships, an investigation that seeks to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood is warranted.

**Definition of Terms**

Various definitions should be understood with regard to this study.

*Attachment*—Perceived relational bond existing between two individuals. Furman and Wehner (1997) contended that this bond can be conscious or unconscious in nature. According to Armsden and Greenberg (1987), attachment involves an emotional bond that is experienced with a substantial degree of intensity; however, Allen et al.
(2003) noted that attachment contains a combination of cognitive and emotional dependence. For the purpose of this dissertation, attachment is the relational bond experienced between two individuals evidenced by cognitive and emotional dependency.

*Emerging adulthood*—Developmental stage between adolescence and young adulthood. Emerging adulthood is focused upon five dimensions of development: identity exploration, instability, possibilities, self-focus, and feeling in-between (Arnett, 2004). According to Tanner and Arnett (2009), emerging adulthood includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 24; however, Tanner et al. (2009) contended that emerging adulthood occurs for individuals between 18 and 29 years of age. For the purpose of this dissertation, emerging adulthood is the stage of development between adolescence and young adulthood experienced by individuals between the ages of 18 and 29.

*Parental attachment*—Relational bond existing between a parent or guardian and child. According to Nickerson and Nagle (2005), parental attachment is established through proximity, safety, and security that is offered by a parent or guardian and experienced by a child; however, parental attachment is expressed through varying levels of trust, communication, and alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Rather than just focusing on the bond experienced between a parent or guardian and child, Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, and Albershein (2000) provided the perspective that parental attachment is actually a pattern of relational interactions that collectively form an ideological model to which future attachment relationships are compared. For the purpose of this dissertation, parental attachment is the perception of a relational bond experienced between a child and their parent(s) or guardian(s).
Peer attachment—Relational bond existing between individuals of equal relational standing. According to Nickerson and Nagle (2005), peer attachment is established through proximity and time investment; however, peer attachment is expressed through varying levels of trust, communication, and alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). For the purpose of this dissertation, peer attachment is the perception of a relational bond experienced between individuals of equal relational standing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Emerging adulthood has received attention and come to be viewed as a unique stage of development, distinct from both adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Because of this, researchers have sought to highlight various factors which comprise this developmental stage (see MacMillan, 2007; Nelson et al., 2007; Scharf & Mayseless, 2010; Sneed, Hamagami, McArdle, Cohen, & Chen, 2007). Attachment theory provides a lens through which individuals can conceptualize the factors that collectively occur during emerging adulthood. Thus, the aim of this study is to determine which factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential
status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

**Research Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment and peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Null Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment would not predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment or peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Statement of the Problem**

Introduced through research by Arnett (2000), the concept of emerging adulthood has a fundamental theoretical framework; however, the ways in which this framework is affected by other important aspects of identity formation is still unknown because
emerging adulthood is still a relatively new area of research. Since being identified as a
developmental stage, research on emerging adulthood has focused on understanding the
basic components that comprise this developmental stage as well as identifying the
components of emerging adulthood that are experienced among various cultures
worldwide (see Buhl & Lanz, 2007; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Nelson et al., 2004; Nelson
et al., 2007; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, & Willinger, 2009). The Inventory of the Dimensions
of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) was created by Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell (2007) in
order to assess perceived experiences of dimensions measured on six scales determined to
collectively measure emerging adulthood. Research is lacking, however, that identifies if
and how the dimensions of emerging adulthood can be predicted by other factors that
have been shown through research to be important to the developmental process.

Beginning with Bowlby (1982), research on attachment theory has been
expansive, highlighting the ways in which the level of one’s relationship to another
person can significantly impact various aspects of well-being. Parental and peer
attachment have been explored through research among college students, but attachment
research has explored the ways in which these attachment relationships have impacted
specific aspects of life and well-being for college students rather than focusing on the
impact of attachment upon the developmental stage of emerging adulthood. Currently,
no research was found that explores the relationship between attachment and emerging
adulthood; moreover, no research was found that explores which factors of attachment
related to the dimensions of emerging adulthood (database search included JSTOR,
ERIC, EBSCO Host, Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete,
This paucity of research legitimizes the need to understand and identify the factors of attachment that can predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. In doing so, attachment can be better conceptualized in terms of its impact upon emerging adulthood and its role in the stages of development.

More than the gap in research, exploration of the relationship between attachment and emerging adulthood can provide meaningful insights into which relationships are significant to the process of emerging adulthood and why those relationships are perceived as valuable. Such information can equip and inform counselors who work with emerging adult clients, particularly those who work in college counseling settings, with a developmentally-informed framework from which to address clients’ presenting concerns. The IDEA outlines six dimensions that are characteristics of emerging adulthood, but it does not specify which attachment relationships emerging adults perceive to be significant to their growth as emerging adults. By understanding the impact of parental and peer attachment relationships upon emerging adulthood, clinicians can better assess which client concerns are unique to the individual versus those that are collectively experienced by emerging adults as a result of their developmental stage. This, in turn, will help to provide validation of emerging adulthood as a developmental stage, and it will also promote excellence in clinical practice by empowering clinicians with a developmentally-informed approach in working with emerging adult clients. Research highlighting which factors of parental and peer attachment help to predict the
dimensions of emerging adulthood, therefore, provides a logical next step in the exploration and application of the developmental stage known as emerging adulthood.

**Review of the Literature**

Because this study explored which factors associated with parent and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood, it is important to understand the theoretical underpinnings of attachment and emerging adulthood. The following literature review highlights concepts related to attachment theory, including an exploration of topics in the literature related to parent attachment (which includes research on attachment to mother and attachment to father) as well as peer attachment. The review of literature also highlights concepts related to emerging adulthood, including the markers of emerging adulthood (including dimensions, processes, and developmental gains) as well as cultural implications related to emerging adulthood. In so doing, the review of literature was included in order to explore the theoretical underpinnings of attachment and emerging adulthood that may provide a rationale for this study.

**Attachment Theory**

The concept of attachment is one that has been studied extensively as a vital part of developmental theory. The conceptualization of attachment was initiated by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), who theorized the ways people become attached to significant others as well as their rationale for doing so. Preliminary ideas on attachment were largely influenced by Freud and psychoanalysis, as emphasized by the focus placed on the relationship fostered between a mother and her infant (Bretherton, 1992). As attachment theory began to take shape, Ainsworth (1963, 1967) conducted the first empirical study
on attachment, which examined Ugandan mothers and their infants. Later, the “Strange Situation” study was conducted, which explored the formation and impact of separation anxiety on infants (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). From these initial studies, attachment research expanded to include relationships between parents and children of various ages, which now includes the exploration of adult attachment relationships, including parental, familial, and peer relationships.

Various characteristics have been associated with attachment relationships. To begin, secure attachment relationships require the presence of attachment figures, individuals who are attainable through an appropriate proximal distance, provide a source of safety, and serve as a secure base (Bowlby, 1969; see also Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). It is a secure base of attachment that would encourage individuals to explore, engage in outside relationships, and decrease the potential for psychological distress later in life (Bowlby, 1969). Because of the depth of the bond created in attachment relationships, the development of a genuine attachment relationship is not immediate but rather grows over a period of time (Bowlby, 1982). However, attachment relationships can also show evidence of insecurity towards an attachment figure, such as an ambivalent or avoidant response by an individual towards an attachment figure (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Thus, attachment relationships can have positive and negative characteristics, and it seems that the level of perceived security in an attachment relationship sets the tone and trajectory for future attachment relationships.

Emotions also provide an impetus towards creating and maintaining attachment relationships. For instance, attachment is purported to be strongest when individuals
experience feelings of distress or threat (Bowlby, 1969). Moreover, two dimensions have been identified in attachment relationships: an emotion-based aspect that encourages connection, and a behavioral component that is highlighted when, through feelings of need, a person wants to feel a physical presence of support and stability (Parkes & Stevenson-Hinde, 1982). In contrast, an added motive for pursuing attachment relationships is an effort to control emotions—more specifically, to limit levels of fear, insecurity, or distress (Campa, Hazan, & Wolfe, 2009). Thus, although positive emotions are sought to be increased through attachment, it seems that negative emotions are sought to be limited through an attachment bond. With these characteristics and dimensions as a foundation, it is also important to understand how attachment relationships develop in the life of an individual.

Initial conceptualizations of attachment were focused on the mother as an attachment figure. Ainsworth and Bell’s (1970) preliminary research on attachment explored the relationship between mothers and their infant children, which exemplified the mother as a primary source of attachment. As research has increased on the subject of attachment, however, it seems clear that multiple people may serve as attachment figures in the life of an individual. Attachment relationships were initially believed to begin with between infants and parents (specifically, mothers) but, as development occurred, it was believed that attachment would eventually shift towards peers as evidence of healthy development in adolescence (Ainsworth, 1989). Such a shift does not negate parental attachment; rather, the principles of attachment are extended outside the parental relationship in order to include other important relational ties for adolescents.
(Bowlby, 1988). With developmental gains bringing forth changes in attachment figures, it is also important to note that the ways in which attachments are behaviorally displayed may change as well. Connected with this, although the manifestations of attachment may change as individuals grow from infancy into adulthood, the need to express behaviors that emphasize the presence of an attachment relationship is still valued and acted upon, regardless of gender (Campa et al., 2009). Thus, attachment relationships seem to be important and evidenced by individuals throughout the life span.

Although initial research seemed to highlight an individual who served as an attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1970; Bowlby, 1969), others have postulated that multiple attachment relationships can co-exist for an individual. Some affirm the idea that attachment starts with a primary figure in infancy and gradually grows into more of an attachment network throughout adolescence and into adulthood (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Within this framework, it is believed that attachment networks contain an order, which allows individuals to sequence attachment relationships based upon perceived connectedness to attachment figures (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Related to this, attachment hierarchies have been identified and explored by allowing individuals to create diagrams that visibly depict perceived levels of attachment that a person has with multiple individuals (Rowe & Carnelley, 2005). Such frameworks allowed for the presence of multiple attachment figures in the life of an individual, which was a shift from the original postulation that individuals had only one primary attachment figure in their lives (Bowlby, 1969). The use of networks and hierarchies allow various
attachment relationships to be identified and explored as meaningful bonds that relationally coexist.

Because attachment is understood to develop initially with parents and then shift toward peers, it might seem that parental and peer attachment compete for significance in the life of an individual. While these differences may shift throughout the life span, the quality of attachment relationships adolescents experience with both parents and peers has been shown to be significantly related to overall psychological well-being (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). In addition, once individuals make the transition into adulthood, it seems that the focus of attachment is less important than the vitality of the attachment relationships experienced by an emerging adult. This is illustrated by the finding that there is really no significant gain for emerging adults who have their attachment relationships primarily sourced in peer relationships versus those who primarily have family relationships as the source of their primary attachments (Pitman & Scharfe, 2010). In light of this, it is clear that parental and peer attachment relationships seem to be significant, particularly in the lives of emerging adults.

**Parental attachment.** The role parents embody in the lives of emerging adults seems to be one of significance. Even in young adulthood, parents generally are the most significant attachment figures in the lives of their children (Fraley & Davis, 1997). In line with this, most young adults maintain a significant relationship with parents, even though the process of becoming adults lends itself to less parental involvement than was present during children’s growing-up years (Ainsworth, 1989). The rationale for emerging adults to maintain parental attachment relationships seems to be related to a
desire for security; this is illustrated by study findings that suggested emerging adult participants were more likely to rely upon parents because of their ability to provide a secure base rather than for their ability to serve as a safe haven (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Related to this, the time investment parents make as primary caregivers may deeply impact children as well. In 2008, the United States Census Bureau published findings that, as of 2004, 61% of children under the age of 18 lived with biological parents, regardless of whether or not the biological parents were married to one another, and 94% of children lived with at least one biological parent. (http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/children/cb08-30). These findings seem to suggest that emerging adults still value attachment relationships with parents, and the sense of security they receive as well as the investment of time by parents seem to be motivating factors for emerging adults to maintain attachment relationships with their parents.

This status of secure attachment with parents or parental figures seems to be an aim for emerging adults. Secure attachment is believed to be of vital importance to individuals because it empowers them to simultaneously experience a sense of independence and relatedness to others (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O’Connor, 1994; Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming, & Gamble, 1993). This idea was underscored by study results which indicated that individuals who exhibited autonomy as adolescents actually reported higher levels of emotional connection with their parents once they were emerging adults (Scharf, Mayseless, & Kivenson-Baron, 2004). Thus, it seems that parental relationships based on secure attachment provide emerging adults with a sense of
safety, thereby enhancing their freedom to explore their own identity as well as engage in relationships with others and the world around them.

Parental attachment has also been connected to various positive outcomes in the lives of emerging adults. For instance, the relationship between parents and emerging adults was considered a significantly influential factor in adolescents’ ability to attain solid coping strategies and systems of personal support (Greenburger & McLaughlin, 1998). In addition, increased levels of attachment to parents have also been correlated with positive adjustment to college for emerging adults (Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993; Rice & Whaley, 1994). Because of this, it seems clear that although parental attachment may look different for an infant than for an emerging adult, the presence of healthy parental attachment seems to be positively related to emerging adults’ overall sense of well-being and adjustment in life.

The positive impact of attachment relationships seems to be evident in a variety of cultures. For instance, in a study exploring the relationship between attachment and identity development in Pakistani adolescents, parental attachment was significantly correlated with identity development for females (Nawaz, 2011). In a different study involving Latvian adolescents, identity development was significantly correlated with family achievement orientation for both males and females (Lubenko & Sebre, 2007). In addition, Lubenko and Sebre found that identity development was also significantly correlated with intellectual or cultural orientation and family control for males, while identity development was additionally significantly correlated with low conflict and family cohesion for females. Thus, it seems that attachment relationships can have a
positive impact on wellbeing in a variety of cultural settings. In light of these findings, it seems apparent that parental attachment can significantly impact emerging adults and their overall wellbeing. Because of this, it is important to understand the distinctions between attachment to mothers and attachment to fathers for emerging adults.

**Attachment to mother.** In terms of parental attachment, the underlying assumption is that attachment to one’s mother is the primary attachment relationship for emerging adults, which is rooted in the fact that the mother-child relationship was the first (and thus initial) primary attachment relationship noted in literature (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1969, 1973). This assumption has been further validated through research efforts, exemplified through a study that explored in part which relationships in the lives of emerging adults were truly attachment relationships (as opposed to having qualities of attachment); results indicated that participants’ mothers were the most significant attachment figure cited (Campa et al., 2009). In another study using 18 to 19-year-old emerging adults, results indicated that participants perceived the emotional connection experienced within an attachment relationship to be significantly stronger with their mothers than with their fathers, and participants were more likely to seek out their mothers rather than their fathers when seeking support (Patterson, Field, & Pryor, 1994). Moreover, another study found that mothers are relied upon more than fathers as attachment figures (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). These findings suggest that attachment to one’s mother seems to be a primary attachment relationship for emerging adults.
The importance of maternal attachment relationships is often contrasted with other attachment relationships. For instance, in a study that explored the attachment relationship between emerging adults (who were then called “late adolescents”) and mothers versus emerging adults and fathers, results suggested that emerging adults experienced significantly higher levels of attachment to their mothers than to their fathers (Benson, Harris, & Rogers, 1992). An additional finding from this study revealed that, despite greater levels of attachment to mothers, there were no significant differences in the overall process of identity development for emerging adults based on gender. In contrast, another study found that attachment to the mother predicted identity development for emerging adult females, but attachment was not significantly related to parental attachment for emerging adult males (Samoulis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001). In sum, while there is not agreement on how the gender of emerging adults may impact attachment, it does seem clear that, for emerging adults, attachment to one’s mother is a foundational and primary attachment relationship.

**Attachment to father.** While attachment relationships between mothers and their emerging adult children are noteworthy, it is also important to understand the role fathers play in attachment relationships. In a study that explored how emerging adults ranked attachment relationships in terms of importance, results suggested that emerging adults ranked attachment to fathers as the fourth most significant attachment relationship, citing attachment to mothers, partners, and peers as more significant than attachment to fathers (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Moreover, results suggested that attachment to siblings was the only attachment relationship that was less significant than attachment to fathers.
for emerging adult participants. In contrast to this, another study found that fathers were second only to mothers as the most frequently identified attachment figure among emerging adults (Campa et al., 2009). Despite the discrepancy between these two studies, it is clear that fathers are individuals with whom emerging adults have experienced significant attachment relationships.

The role of emotion may highlight some distinct qualities displayed in attachment relationships between emerging adults and their fathers. In a study that explored the attachment relationships between adolescents, parents, and peers, findings indicated that fathers were perceived as less of a primary attachment figure than mothers (Patterson et al., 1994). However, results also showed that affective aspects of attachment between adolescents and their fathers were found to be significantly stronger than affective aspects of attachment between adolescents and their peers. Based on these findings, Patterson et al. speculated that fathers may be perceived by adolescents as less interested, less involved on an emotional level, and less available (especially in cases where parents are separated and children live with their mothers), which may lead adolescents to rely more on mothers for emotional support. Although not cited as primary attachment figures, these findings seem to suggest that fathers are regarded as significant attachment figures in the lives of their emerging adult children.

**Peer attachment.** In addition to parents, peers seem to play a significant role in the lives of emerging adults. While attachment relationships begin with parents, individuals transition into creating more attachment relationships with peers as they grow older (Fraley & Davis, 1997). Although research supports the role of parents in the lives
of their emerging adult children, individuals who were involved in a romantic attachment relationship were more likely to place their partner, one who is in a peer-level relationship with the emerging adult, at the top of the attachment hierarchy (Pitman & Scharfe, 2010). Thus, attachment to peers seems to be a significant bond that is created and maintained by emerging adults.

Although individual studies on peer attachment can be explored, it can also be valuable to note findings that have been demonstrated through a meta-analysis on peer attachment. Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012) conducted a meta-analysis on 44 studies related to parent and peer attachment, and the results showed that the majority of studies demonstrated a positive moderate correlation between parent attachment and peer attachment among adolescents (which were defined as individuals between the ages of 8-21 based on the various studies in the meta-analysis). In addition to this finding, Gorrese and Ruggieri looked at 54 studies to determine if there were significant findings related to peer attachment with regard to gender. Results showed that, in general, adolescent females were more attached to peers than adolescent males. More specifically, findings demonstrated that females tended to have higher levels of trust and communication than males. Thus, these meta-analysis results seemed to demonstrate that peer attachment and parent attachment are significantly related to one another, and there seems to be a difference in the degree of peer attachment based upon gender.

Various qualities of peer attachment relationships have been deemed noteworthy in promoting and maintaining such relationships. For instance, attachment relationships between peers seem to include the presence of “enduring affectional bonds” (Ainsworth,
1989, p. 714). In addition, peer attachment relationships tend to allow for more equal levels of giving and receiving between individuals within the relationship, which is in contrast to infant-adult attachment relationships, where parents generally give more than they receive in the attachment relationship (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Peer attachment relationships also hold value for their ability to provide emotional support (Patterson et al., 1994). This is evidenced by the fact that adolescents and young adults are more likely to go to peers rather than parents when seeking to discuss situations in their lives, highlighting that peers seem to be a perceived source of emotional support, which in turn can validate their role as attachment figures. In a study that explored the role of attachment in peer relationships, results suggested that emerging adults are more likely to value attachment relationships with peers for their ability to provide a safe haven than for their ability to provide a secure base in relationships (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). These qualities may collectively provide an impetus for emerging adults to value the attachment relationships they have with peers.

One of the by-products of peer attachment relationships seems to be an added sense of security among emerging adults. For instance, individuals who experience secure attachment relationships also seem to exhibit security in their relationships with peers (Furman, Simon, Shaffer, & Bouchey, 2002). This idea was also underscored through findings from another study which indicated that individuals who showed a sense of autonomy as adolescents had a stronger capacity for engaging in intimate friendships and relationships as emerging adults (Scharfe et al., 2004). Furthermore, peer attachment relationships were found to be significantly related to identity development among
Pakistani adolescents (Nawaz, 2011). In light of these findings, it seems that peer attachment relationships allow emerging adults to gain a sense of security, thus underscoring the value of peer attachment relationships in the lives of emerging adults.

In sum, it is evident that parental and peer attachment seem to play a significant role in the lives of emerging adults. In order to further understand the role of parental and peer attachment, it is necessary to explore the ways in which attachment experiences may be differentiated based upon gender.

**Attachment and gender differences.** Various perspectives exist as to the ways in which attachment relationships are experienced based upon gender differences. Del Guidice (2009) contended that, when stressed, men tend to engage in higher levels of avoidance behaviors, which draw them away from others; in contrast, when women feel stressed or anxious, they tend to desire social support, which draws them toward relationship with others. Interestingly, research on gender-role socialization seems to support the idea of gender differences. For instance, men are noted to be socialized to limit the expression of emotions and to refrain from self-disclosure (Good, Wallace & Borst, 1994; Good & Wood, 1995). In contrast, women seem to be more likely to seek positive social interactions and fear negative evaluations from others (Nelson, 1993). This highlighted tendency for men to avoid and women to pursue relationships seems to carry over into the field of counseling as well. In one study conducted with college students, results suggested that females were significantly more likely to pursue and receive counseling services than males (Rule & Gandy, 1994). In another study exploring gender differences in counseling, women were found to be more likely to
express satisfaction in terms of their progress in counseling than men (Nelson, 1993). These results suggest that gender differences may be evidenced through differences in attachment relationships.

Although gender differences have been noted with regard to attachment, others contend that gender differences are not significant with regard to attachment. Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van Ijzendoorn (2009) conducted a study exploring gender differences with regard to attachment during middle childhood and adulthood, and results suggested no significant differences with regard to attachment based upon gender. In addition, while Nelson (1993) pointed out differences with regard to gender as it pertained to counseling, Nelson’s final concensus was that there were a lack of definitive outcomes regarding the ways in which attachment relationships are differentiated based upon gender. Thus, it is clear that perspectives differ as to the role that gender may play in how attachment relationships are understood and experienced.

In sum, parent and peer attachment seem to hold significance for emerging adults. Whether or not gender differences exist, it seems apparent that attachment relationships are experienced throughout the life span and seem to play an instrumental role during emerging adulthood. As aspects of emerging adulthood are identified and understood, one can have a greater understanding of the relationship between parental and peer attachment and the dimensions of emerging adulthood.

**Emerging Adulthood**

The theory of emerging adulthood was originally postulated as a distinct developmental stage that occurs between adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett,
As such, emerging adulthood is considered to be a culturally constructed stage of development that occurs for individuals in industrialized countries worldwide (Arnett, 1998, 2004, 2006; Nelson et al., 2004). Initial publications by Arnett, who coined the term “emerging adulthood,” suggested that individuals between the ages of 18–25 experience this developmental stage (2000, 2004, 2006). Since those publications, there seems to be a bit of discrepancy regarding the age range of emerging adulthood: In the same year, one article affirmed that emerging adulthood describes individuals between the ages of 18–25 (Tanner & Arnett, 2009), whereas another article stated that emerging adulthood is a stage of development faced by individuals between the ages of 18–29 (Tanner et al., 2009). While the time frame seems to be more fluid rather than exact, the construct of emerging adulthood has come to be understood as a legitimate stage of development between adolescence and adulthood.

Ideas behind the development of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage came through exhibited changes that occurred among those who were considered to be young adults. It was through those observations that characteristics associated with emerging adulthood were identified as processes that occurred independent of generational influences, which thereby suggested that generational descriptions of emerging adulthood were insufficient in describing the developmental stage of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). More specifically, increased instances of obtaining higher education, delay of marriage, delay of parenthood, and greater acceptance of sex outside of marriage were characteristics that seemed to distinguish emerging adults from young adults (Tanner & Arnett, 2009). Unlike young adults, emerging adults typically are not married, do not
have children, and do not have a stable career; in addition, emerging adults are also distinct from adolescents, who are still in high school, facing the challenges of puberty, and live by necessity in the household of their parents or guardians (Arnett, 2000, 2004). These observations served as a rationale for the conceptualization of emerging adulthood as a stage of development that is distinct from both adolescence and young adulthood. Moreover, emerging adulthood is understood as a distinct and necessary stage that serves as a crucial step in helping individuals to mature (Buhl & Lanz, 2007). It is within this stage of development that various markers surfaced.

**Markers of emerging adulthood.** Although emerging adulthood has been recognized as a stage of development, it seems that within that stage various dimensions, processes, and gains occur that enhance the developmental process. Conceptually, emerging adulthood connoted a “process rather than an event or string of social transitions” (Tanner et al., 2009, p. 38). The stage of emerging adulthood involves a dynamic progression that includes the following dimensions: instability, feeling in-between, self-focus, identity exploration, and possibilities (Arnett, 2004). While these aspects are present during other times in a person’s life, Arnett’s research seems to suggest that they are most distinct during emerging adulthood.

**Dimensions of emerging adulthood.** The concept of identity exploration is one that was also described in Erikson’s theory of life-span development (1950); however, Erikson’s work outlined that identity exploration was indicative of adolescent development rather than adult development. Although identity exploration can occur throughout the life span and has been cited as a characteristic of adolescence, there is
now evidence to suggest that identity exploration occurs more in emerging adulthood than it does during adolescence; while the conceptualization of identity exploration is introduced during adolescence, it is focused upon to a deeper degree during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Thus, identity exploration is an important characteristic of emerging adulthood.

Along with identity exploration, another dimension of emerging adulthood is instability. Instability may be shown in a variety of areas, including relationships, educational pursuits, living situations, and even job or career choices (Tanner et al., 2009). Moreover, instability can be evidenced through a lack of commitment or follow-through as well as increased fluctuation in these areas, which in turn may produce emotions such as fear, anxiety, or tension. Instability, then, is considered to be another significant characteristic of emerging adulthood.

An additional dimension of emerging adulthood is a significant level of self-focus. Self-focus is underscored by the reality that emerging adults possess an element of independence, which in turn can shape their approach to relationships, work, and living (Arnett, 2004). Further, self-focus does not necessarily mean self-absorbed. Instead, the freedom experienced during this stage in life affords emerging adults the opportunity to live the way they would like to live rather than being instructed on how to live or being obliged to others in terms of how to configure their time and relationships (Arnett, 2004). This focus upon self seems to be an integral characteristic of emerging adulthood.
The element of feeling in-between is another dimension of emerging adulthood. This aspect is important because, for many emerging adults, they recognize a lack of identification with adolescence but do not perceive themselves to be full-fledged adults (Arnett, 2001, 2003). Because of this, emerging adults experience ambivalence, perceiving themselves to have reached adult status in some ways but not in others (Nelson & McNamara Barry, 2005). Interestingly, these findings have also been affirmed by emerging adults in a variety of countries and cultures (see Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003). Feeling in-between is yet another characteristic associated with emerging adulthood.

A final dimension associated with emerging adulthood is a focus upon possibilities. A focus upon possibilities is evidenced in the level of hope emerging adults place upon the future and potential they perceive to be present therein (Arnett, 2004). In addition, emerging adults embrace the possibilities for change in their lives, which is a result of their perceived sense of freedom with which they can make decisions for themselves rather than being told what to do by others (Arnett, 2004). This focus on possibilities, combined with identity exploration, instability, self-focus, and feeling in-between, comprise the central characteristics associated with the developmental stage known as emerging adulthood.

The process of recentering. Arnett’s research on emerging adulthood has seemed to serve as the foundation upon which the conceptualization of emerging adulthood has been built. In addition to this, other processes and gains that occur during emerging adulthood have been identified as well. For instance, attempts have been made to
integrate the concepts of emerging adulthood with life span developmental theory. In so doing, emerging adulthood is further conceptualized as a process that focuses upon recentering, the primary transition that occurs during emerging adulthood which requires the act of a relational reorientation in an effort to promote stability and longevity in relationships (Tanner, 2006). Recentering, then, is considered a necessary process in order to mature and progress through emerging adulthood.

Three stages are used to describe the recentering process: launching, emerging adulthood proper, and young adulthood (Tanner, 2006). Launching is a pre-emerging-adulthood stage in which adolescents make the transition from being dependent adolescents to being more independent emerging adults. During emerging adulthood proper, emerging adults engage in identity and role exploration so that they can attempt to find congruence between who others believe they are and who they believe they are. Young adulthood is the stage in which emerging adults settle into more of a permanent sense of identity and corresponding roles. In light of this, recentering provides more of a developmental map, showing the processes that occur from adolescence through young adulthood. Nonetheless, it seems clear that recentering takes place within the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, thereby preparing emerging adults for young adulthood.

*Developmental gains.* In addition to the basic characteristics of emerging adulthood, various developmental gains seem to be profoundly experienced during emerging adulthood. Cognitive development is evidenced by the increased capabilities of emerging adults to display emotional intelligence (i.e., increased ability to conceptualize
emotions in themselves as well as in others), and increased practical intelligence is demonstrated through emerging adults’ ability to solve problems and display intelligence through the tasks of daily life (Tanner et al., 2009). The development of personality and identity are additional areas of perceived growth that are experienced during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Moreover, the cognitive development that takes place during emerging adulthood seems to be connected to the process of exploring and eventually embracing a sense of identity for emerging adults (Tanner et al., 2009). Thus, experienced gains in cognitive development and personality development seem to be identified features of emerging adults. These aspects provide a framework through which the processes of emerging adulthood can be explored and understood in light of cultural and contextual considerations.

**Contextual implications of emerging adulthood.** Although emerging adult theory originated through observation and study of individuals in the United States, it was speculated that emerging adulthood could be observed in other industrialized countries as well (Arnett, 1998). Interestingly, emerging adulthood is not a universally experienced stage of development and is greatly based upon cultural influences in order to occur (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood has been identified as a distinct phenomenon that is present in other countries; however, some differences have been identified with regard to the characteristics of emerging adulthood across cultures. For instance, emerging adults in China were found to be less independent than emerging adults in the United States (Nelson et al., 2004). In addition, emerging adults in Argentina were found to be much more likely to have stability in their living situation than American emerging adults, and
Argentinian emerging adults were more likely to live with family members rather than living alone or with friends (Facio & Micocci, 2003). Amidst these differences, it seems that evidence suggests that emerging adulthood as a developmental stage has applicability beyond just the United States.

Another facet of the cultural implications of emerging adulthood can be seen through the differences that exist between emerging adults of different ethnicities who live in the United States. Interestingly, emerging adults who are part of ethnic minorities in the United States seem to be more cognizant of others than Caucasian emerging adults; moreover, emerging adults who identify with ethnic minorities in the United States perceive that the ability to focus on others shows evidence of a person becoming an adult (Arnett, 2003). Related to this idea, cultural considerations (including a person’s environment, upbringing, and relational influences) can shape a person’s ethnic identity, which in turn shapes the way a person will experience the developmental stage of emerging adulthood (Phinney, 2006). These factors seem to suggest that the ways in which emerging adulthood is experienced may vary based on culture.

An additional consideration is the impact that various relationships can have on the processes that take place during emerging adulthood. One important relationship is the one between emerging adults and their parents, which experiences a shift during emerging adulthood (Tanner et al., 2009). Rather than exhibiting a power differential between parents and children, which is typically seen in parent-child relationships during adolescence, emerging adults transition into a relationship with parents that is marked more by equality than by dependency. The result is a decrease in conflict, along with a
more pronounced sense of support between parents and their emerging adult children (Aquilino, 2006). This relational shift is one of the most significant indicators that an individual is transitioning into adulthood (Arnett, 1998). Moreover, emerging adults tend to possess a level of respect and understanding towards parents that was previously diminished during adolescence (Arnett, 2004). In light of this, it seems that changes in the relationship between emerging adults and their parents serve as markers that development is occurring in the lives of emerging adults.

In addition to parental relationships, relationships with friends also seem to be significant to emerging adults. One aspect of this change is reflected in emerging adults’ perception that relationships with their friends were more significant and intimate than relationships with their siblings (Pulakos, 1989). Because friendships are voluntary and not required (versus family relationships, which are considered to be involuntary), emerging adults are motivated to maintain those relationships because they are not assumed to be permanent in ways that family relationships may be perceived (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006). Connected with this, it seems that conversations with close friends during emerging adulthood can be instrumental in helping emerging adults work towards identity formation (Johnson & Aries, 1983). In addition, successful engagement in friendships during emerging adulthood has also been found to predict successful engagement in work activities as well as success in dating relationships (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004). From these findings, it seems that friendships also play a significant role in the development of emerging adults. In sum, it seems that emerging adulthood is a unique stage of development that is shaped by culture,
environment, and even various significant relationships, including those with parents and peers.

**Emerging adulthood critique.** Despite support for the conceptualization of emerging adulthood as a developmental stage, criticism of the theory has been expressed as well. One major critique with regard to the theory is that “youth” or “adolescence” provide more appropriate and long-standing terms with which to conceptualize individuals who are between the ages of 18-25 (Bynner, 2006; Cote & Bynner, 2008). In response to this critique, Arnett (2006a) contended that such terms have been used to describe individuals whose ages span from children through adults, and the use of the term “emerging adulthood” provides more specificity with which to describe those between 18-25 years of age and their developmental experiences. Interestingly, amidst their critique of emerging adulthood, Cote and Bynner (2008) affirmed that by using the term “emerging adulthood,” it brings attention to what occurs during the transition to adulthood in meaningful ways. Thus, it seems that even those who find issue with providing a new name to the transition to adulthood have also acknowledged the merit of specifically naming the transition to adulthood.

Another criticism towards emerging adulthood is that, rather than being a developmental stage, the transition to adulthood is just an extended stage of adolescence or youth that is impacted by structural or social factors. Structural factors that impact the transition to adulthood include factors such as gender, social class, and socioeconomic status (Bynner, 2006), while social factors that impact the transition to adulthood include holding off on marriage, attaining education, and holding off on a stable career (Cote &
Bynner, 2008). In contrast, Arnett (2006a) acknowledged that social and structural factors are important but they also combine with vital developmental factors during emerging adulthood, such as parental relationships, peer relationships, intelligence, and personality. Connected with this, research on emerging adulthood has been conducted which underscores that, despite differences in structural or social factors, similar dimensions of emerging adulthood are experienced by those experiencing that stage of development (Arnett, 1994; Arnett, 1998; Arnett, 2001; Arnett, 2003; Arnett, 2004). In sum, despite critique regarding the conceptualization of emerging adulthood, it seems that there is research to support the idea of conceptualizing emerging adulthood as a unique stage of development.

**Emerging adults in counseling.** The educational environment may provide unique context to the ways emerging adulthood is experienced by individuals. Characteristics and dimensions of emerging adulthood can easily be nurtured within the context of a college or university environment, thus facilitating the growth and development of emerging adults (Tanner et al., 2009). Despite this fact, research suggests that the college environment is not necessarily the only or best location for emerging adults to develop (Arnett, 2006b; Tanner, 2006). Connected with this idea, it seems that college student development literature, in and of itself, is insufficient to describe individuals who are emerging adults because the focus of this population is too narrow and does not include individuals who do not attend a college or university. This is because emerging adults who seemingly break away from the status-quo behaviors of emerging adults by getting married, having children, or attaining a stable job will still
exhibit the dimensions of emerging adulthood (Tanner et al., 2009). However, participation in higher education is a significant aspect of life for many emerging adults (Arnett, 2006b). Viewed collectively, these viewpoints suggest that, whether an emerging adult does or does not attend a college or university, aspects of emerging adulthood will surface in their lives because the characteristics of emerging adulthood are not context-dependent in order to occur. However, it is important to highlight the issues and concerns that bring emerging adults to receive counseling services.

The traditional approach to college and university counseling has involved a focus upon developmental gains and preventative measures in an effort to help clients increase their health and wellbeing; however, this approach has been expanded due to an increased number of students who seek counseling as well as an increased severity in client’s presenting concerns (Kitzrow, 2003). For instance, the University of Cincinnati reported a 55% increase in counseling services from 1997-2002 (Goetz, 2002), and Stony Brook University reported a 21% increase in requested counseling services in just one year (Gabriel, 2010). Combined with this, the severity of student issues and concerns has increased as well. In a study surveying college and university counseling centers, results indicated that the severity of clients’ presenting concerns significantly increased over a five-year span (Gallagher, Gill, & Sysko, 2000). These increases seem to suggest that emerging adults are likely to utilize counseling services offered by colleges and universities.

Many of the presenting concerns of clients seem to be relationally-based. For instance, college students’ presenting concerns involving issues such as eating disorders,
suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and abuse can still possibly be related to relational factors such as divorce, poor parenting, and family dysfunction (Gallagher et al., 2000). Thus, it seems that relational factors may influence the presenting concerns of emerging adult clients. In sum, relational concerns seem to play a significant role in motivating college students to pursue counseling services.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of attachment and emerging adulthood theory in order to highlight the purpose and rationale for the current study. An extensive review of literature was also provided in order to suggest a rationale for this study that is underscored by research on both attachment theory and emerging adulthood theory. The following chapter provides an extensive description of the methodology for the current study.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The following chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methods used in this study. First, the purpose of the study is presented. Next, information on the two inventories is also provided, which includes norming data, validity, reliability, and a scholarly critique of each inventory. The procedures of the study are then outlined, which include inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, participants, and sampling. Following this, the rationale for selecting multiple regression as the chosen method of quantitative study is shared. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis for the study, which also includes highlighting the delimitations of the research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 20. Emerging adulthood has received attention and come to be viewed as a unique stage of development, distinct from both adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Because of this, researchers have sought to highlight various factors which comprise this developmental stage (see MacMillan, 2006; Nelson et al., 2007; Sneed et al., 2007; Scharf & Mayseless, 2010). Attachment theory provides a lens through which
individuals can conceptualize the factors that collectively occur during emerging adulthood. Thus, the aim of this study is to determine which factors associated with parental and peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

**Research Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment and peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Null Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment would not predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment or peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Instruments**

Various instruments were used for the purposes of this study. A demographics sheet was created and used to gather information regarding participants in this study. In
In addition, two testing instruments were used in this study: the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). The following section includes a detailed description of each instrument.

**Demographics Sheet**

A demographics sheet was created and used as part of the study in order to gain background information on participants. Basic areas of inquiry on the demographics sheet included sex, age, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, ethnicity, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, identification of primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment. These aspects were included in order to identify which variables predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. Participants completed the demographics sheet prior to completing the testing instruments.

**Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)**

The IPPA was created in order to assess the perceptions of adolescents and young adults with regard to their relationships with parents and peers. The IPPA is comprised of two sections: attachment to parents, which includes 28 questions, and attachment to peers, which includes 25 questions (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The original version of the IPPA collectively explored attachment to parents; however, the IPPA was later revised to allow for parental attachment to be explored separately through relationship to mother and relationship to father rather than viewing parental attachment as a singular entity (Greenberg & Armsden, 2009). For the purpose of this study, the original version of the IPPA (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) was used because the purpose of this study
was to explore which factors associated with parental attachment (viewed collectively) and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. The IPPA utilizes quantifiable means to explore factors associated with parental and peer attachment, which made it a valuable testing instrument for this study.

The IPPA explores three dimensions with regard to both parental and peer relationships: trust, communication, and alienation. In addition, the IPPA is presented in a self-report, 5-point Likert-scale format, and scoring is conducted by scoring responses in the two categories: attachment to parents, and attachment to peers (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Scores can range from 28 to 140 for parental attachment and from 25 to 125 for peer attachment; thus, the total combined score for the IPPA can range from 53 to 265. In instances where questions are negatively-worded, reverse-scoring is used. The total response values for each of the three sections of the IPPA are then summed to create cumulative scores for attachment to mother, attachment to father, and peer attachment.

**Norming data of the IPPA.** The original version of the IPPA was normed using 179 participants who were between 16 to 20 years of age; these participants were predominantly middle class, Caucasian (75%), and female (63%; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Means and standard deviations were calculated on the IPPA for parental attachment \((M = 60.7, SD = 16.2)\) and peer attachment \((M = 56.6, SD = 10.4)\) using the norming sample (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The IPPA was later revised to explore the attachment relationship between individuals and their parents separately (understood as attachment to mother and attachment to father) rather than viewing attachment to parents collectively (Greenberg & Armsden, 2009), but norming data were not collected.
on the revised version of the IPPA.

**Reliability of the IPPA.** Reliability has also been established for the IPPA. Test-retest reliability for 18 to 20-year olds were .93 for parent attachment and .86 for peer attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). In addition, internal reliabilities, as measured by Cronbach’s Alpha, were established for attachment to mother (α =.87), attachment to father (α =.89), and attachment to peers (α =.92) as measured by the IPPA (Greenberg & Armsden, 2009). In light of these findings, the IPPA has been shown to be a reliable instrument that can be used to quantify an emerging adult’s attachment to parents and peers.

**Validity of the IPPA.** Validity has been established for the IPPA. The construct validity of the IPPA was initially demonstrated by highlighting its convergent validity: the constructs in the IPPA were shown to have significant correlations with constructs from other inventories that sought to measure similar characteristics (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). For instance, a significant correlation exists between parent attachment in the IPPA and family self-concept (which seeks to measure how clients view themselves in light of family relationships) in the Tennessee Self Concept Scale: $r(53) = .78$, $p < .001$. Parental attachment on the IPPA was also significantly correlated with mother utilization (which seeks to measure the degree to which adolescents seek out their mothers when feeling lonely, angry, depressed, anxious, or happy) on the Inventory of Adolescent Attachment: $r(53) = .62$, $p < .001$. In addition, parental attachment on the IPPA was significantly correlated with father utilization (which seeks to measure the degree to which adolescents seek out their fathers when feeling lonely, angry, depressed,
anxious, or happy) on the Inventory of Adolescent Attachment: \( r(53) = .60, p < .001 \).

Peer attachment in the IPPA was significantly correlated with the social self-concept scale (which measures how clients perceive themselves in relation to peers) on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale: \( r(53) = .57, p < .001 \). Peer attachment on the IPPA also had a significant correlation with peer utilization (which seeks to measure the degree to which adolescents seek out their peers when feeling lonely, angry, depressed, anxious, or happy) on the Inventory of Adolescent Attachment: \( r(53) = .32, p < .01 \) (Greenberg, Siegal, & Leitch, 1983). These results indicate that convergent validity is present, which in turn shows that the IPPA can be viewed as a valid instrument for the purposes of conducting research.

**Scholarly critique of the IPPA.** Various strengths have been acknowledged in scholarly literature regarding the IPPA. One major strength of the IPPA is its reliability for indicating levels of attachment to parents and peers (Lyddon, Bradford, & Nelson, 1993; Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2007). The validity of the IPPA has also been praised. In a study with Chinese American college students, internal reliability and test-retest reliability were found to be strong, thereby substantiating the use of the IPPA (Ying et al., 2007). These results suggested that the IPPA is appropriate to measure attachment relationships, but it also shows that the inventory may be appropriately used with college students and with non-Caucasian populations. In addition to reliability and validity, the three-factor model of attachment outlined in the IPPA (trust, communication, and alienation) has been shown to provide a more complete outline of the factors that comprise attachment than a one-factor model (attachment) or a two-factor model (trust-
communication and alienation; Pace, Martini, & Zavattini, 2011). Collectively, these findings suggest that the IPPA is a valuable instrument that measures attachment to parents and peers.

Weaknesses with regard to the IPPA have been identified as well. For instance, although the three-subscale model of attachment utilized in the IPPA (trust, communication, and alienation) seems to be the best factorial depiction of attachment, the three constructs are highly interrelated, which prevents each construct to be measured independently from the others in the IPPA (Pace et al., 2011). In addition, while the IPPA has been tested with non-Caucasian populations, it is important to do further research to determine the degree to which the IPPA is appropriate for multicultural populations, since research with non-Caucasian populations and the IPPA is lacking overall (Ying et al., 2007). While these areas of critique should be acknowledged, research seems to indicate that the IPPA is a valid and reliable self-report inventory used to measure parental and peer attachment.

**Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA)**

The IDEA was created to assess various aspects identified to be descriptive of the process of becoming an adult, which was based on preliminary research by Arnett (2000), who introduced the term “emerging adulthood” as a developmental concept. The IDEA was constructed in order to highlight differences between individuals with regard to dimensions that describe the developmental stage known as emerging adulthood (Reifman et al., 2007). With regard to test construction, the inventory contains 31 questions that collectively measure six dimensions of development: identity exploration,
experimentation/possibilities, negativity/instability, other-focused, self-focused, and feeling “in-between.” All of these dimensions were postulated by Arnett (2004) except for “other-focused,” which was later accepted as a dimension of emerging adulthood and incorporated into the IDEA in order to contrast it against self-focus (Reifman et al., 2007). The IDEA is presented in a self-report, four-point Likert-scale format, and scores on the IDEA can range from 31-124.

**Norming data of the IDEA.** The IDEA was normed using a total of 517 participants in five studies (Reifman et al., 2007). The IPPA was normed on individuals between the ages of 18-23; approximately two-thirds of the norming sample was female, whereas approximately three-fourths of the norming sample was Caucasian. The means and standard deviations for each dimension of the IDEA were also established through the five studies, including Identity Exploration ($M = 3.35, SD = 0.55$); Possibilities $M = 3.37, SD = 0.55-0.60$; Negativity ($M = 2.93, SD = 0.55$); Self-Focus ($M = 3.23, SD = 0.50-0.55$); Other-Focus ($M = 2.47, SD = 0.70-0.75$); and Feeling In-Between ($M = 3.26, SD = 0.65$; Reifman et al., 2007; A. Reifman, personal communication, September 26, 2011). The IDEA has been used to quantify the processes of emerging adulthood in ways that make them distinguishable and measureable for the purposes of research.

**Reliability of the IDEA.** Research has been conducted in order to establish the reliability of the IDEA. Reifman et al. (2007) found that test-retest reliability was found to be significant for all of the dimensions, which include identity exploration (.66), experimentation (.76), negativity (.72), other-focused (.64), self-focused (.65), and feeling in-between (.37). Internal consistency, or the degree to which items representing
each of the six constructs of the IDEA measured what they were intended to measure, was established for all six constructs of the IDEA, including identity exploration (α = .85), experimentation and possibilities (α = .81), negativity or instability (α = .69), self-focused (α = .77), feeling in-between (α = .77), and other-focused (α = .63; Van Dulmen & Goncy, under review). Thus, these findings suggest that the IDEA is a reliable measure used to quantify the dimensions of emerging adulthood (Reifman et al. 2007; Van Dulmen & Goncy, under review).

Validity of the IDEA. In addition to reliability, research has been conducted in order to establish the validity of the IDEA as a testing instrument. The construct validity of the IDEA was initially demonstrated by highlighting its convergent validity: the constructs in the IDEA were shown to have significant correlations with constructs from other inventories that sought to measure similar characteristics (Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007). For instance, a significant negative correlation exists between the Satisfaction with Life Scale (which seeks to provide a global measure of one’s subjective experience regarding life satisfaction) with instability on the IDEA: \( r(243) = -0.38, p < 0.001 \) (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Another negative correlation was noted between The Self-Mastery Scale, which measures one’s perception of personal mastery or control over outcomes in life, and instability on the IDEA: \( r(243) = -0.35, p < 0.001 \) (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978). A positive correlation was found between the Envisioned Possible Future Selves scale (which measures individualized depictions of oneself in various future conditions that are explored in terms of thoughts, expectations, hopes and fears held towards various aspects of life) and identity exploration on the IDEA: \( r(71) = 0.34, p \)
Additional positive correlations were identified between the Future Orientation Scale (which measures how and to what extent individuals consider immediate versus prolonged consequences of various behaviors) and the IDEA dimensions of possibilities: $r(121) = .22, p < .05$; self-focus: $r(121) = .23, p < .05$; and other-focus: $r(121) = .29, p < .01$ (Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, and Edwards, 1994). Because of these results, preliminary research indicated that the IDEA was a valid testing instrument.

In addition to introductory research that explored the validity of the IDEA, Van Dulmen and Goncy (under review) also conducted research that sought to revalidate the IDEA as a testing instrument. Results indicated that the six-factor model used in the IDEA fit the data significantly better than a one-factor model (emerging adulthood) or a four-factor model (which included identity exploration, feeling in-between, possibilities, and a fourth factor which combined self-focus, other-focused, and instability). Thus, factor analysis was used by Van Dulmen and Goncy to establish construct validity for the IDEA in order to highlight the six factors that serve as dimensions of emerging adulthood.

Moreover, Van Dulmen and Goncy (under review) also found through confirmatory factor analysis that the differences between the six dimensions of emerging adulthood, when considering gender, were statistically insignificant, which supported the idea that the results of the IDEA were experienced equally for both men and women. These results affirmed the structure of the IDEA, including its value as a valid instrument. In addition, because Van Dulmen and Goncy conducted their research using
college students at a large university as their participants, these results also affirmed the use of the IDEA with a large population of students in a college or university setting. In sum, research has shown the IDEA to be a reliable and valid testing instrument (Reifman et al., 2007; Van Dulmen & Goncy, under review).

**Scholarly critique of the IDEA.** Because the IDEA was published in 2007, there is very limited scholarly critique regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the inventory. Goncy and Van Dulmen (under review) have praised the IDEA as a valid instrument that measures the dimensions of emerging adulthood. Another major strength is its usefulness in a variety of cultures. The IDEA has been used to assess emerging adulthood in college students from Israel, Argentina, and the United States (Atak & Cok, 2008). These strengths highlight the value of the IDEA as an inventory designed for use with emerging adult populations worldwide.

Amidst the strengths, the IDEA has weaknesses as well. For instance, the original version of the IDEA has been used successfully in industrialized countries, but there is a distinct need for the IDEA to be modified in order to be used in developing countries (Atak & Cok, 2008). Modifications to the IDEA were also made when the inventory was administered to emerging adults in Mexico and Spain in order to ensure that the concepts outlined in the IDEA translated to Hispanic populations (Arias & Hernandez, 2007). Although the IDEA has been used in a variety of cultural settings, the need to modify the inventory for the sake of cultural application is a weakness that should be acknowledged. In addition, while the convergent validity of the IDEA was exemplified by comparing instability, possibilities, identity exploration, self-focus, and other-focus to other testing
instruments, the dimension of feeling in-between was not noted as a source of convergent validity due to having a significant correlation with constructs from another testing instrument. Nonetheless, the IDEA has been used successfully in a variety of cultures and with college student populations, which makes the IDEA an appropriate inventory for the purposes of this study.

**Participants: Inclusion Criteria**

Participation in the study was voluntary; individuals could participate in this study if they were an undergraduate student between the ages of 18 and 20 at one large mid-western university. This criteria was established because emerging adulthood begins at age 18 (Arnett, 2004) and the IDEA was normed using participants between the ages of 18 and 23. In addition, the IPPA was normed using participants between the ages of 16 to 20 (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987); thus, the age overlap for the IPPA and the IDEA included individuals between 18 to 20 years of age. Number of undergraduate credit hours and high school graduation date did not matter so long as participants were undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Demographic data was retrieved from all participants as part of the online survey they completed for the study, and aspects of demographic data will be outlined following data collection. Aside from this, there were no additional inclusion criteria for this study.

**Procedures**

An online survey was created through Survey Monkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com). The survey was created on Survey Monkey so that all participants who fit the inclusion criteria could be emailed a link to participate in the
study. The survey included a demographic sheet (see Appendix A), all of the questions included in the IPPA (see Appendix B), and all of the questions included in the IDEA (see Appendix C). The test creators for both the IPPA and the IDEA granted permission for the inventories to be used as part of an online survey (see Appendixes D and E), which allowed the questions for both inventories to be included as part of one comprehensive survey. In addition, the proposal and the Informed Consent form (see Appendix F) used for this study were reviewed and accepted by the Institutional Review Board at the university where the study was conducted.

An e-mail was sent to 9,348 undergraduate students at a large Midwest university (see Appendix G) inviting them to participate in the study; the number of emails sent out was determined by the number of individuals who fit the inclusion criteria for the study. The email was used to recruit participants, and email was selected as the method of recruitment because it could be sent through Survey Monkey, which allowed the number of participants to be tracked throughout the study to ensure that the necessary sample size (and thus power) was achieved. The email addresses of individuals who fit the inclusion criteria were provided by the research bureau for the university at which the study took place. The email provided a basic description of the purpose of the research, explained the requirements of the study, and included a link to the website where the survey was located. The email also explained that it would take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey so that participants knew ahead of time how long it would take to complete the survey. This allowed those who were interested to gain information on the process of the survey in order to make an informed decision on whether or not to
participate in the study. A reminder email was sent out one week after the initial recruitment email in order to remind potential participants to consider participating in the study.

An incentive to participate in the study was also identified in the email in order to serve as a motivation for participants to complete the survey. As an incentive, one participant was randomly selected to receive the original version of the Apple iPad 2. The incentive was selected through use of a cost-benefit analysis: although only one Apple iPad was distributed, the retail value of the item was listed as $499 (http://www.apple.com/ipad/). All individuals who completed the required elements of the research study were eligible to win the iPad, and one participant was randomly selected through SPSS from those eligible to receive the iPad. The randomly selected participant was notified via email of being randomly selected to receive the iPad.

Upon accessing the link to the online survey, potential participants read an Informed Consent form and checked a box indicating that they were thereby giving consent to participate in the study. This allowed participants to provide consent prior to gaining access to the survey. Following the Informed Consent page, students were required to enter their email address; this allowed students to gain access to the survey. The use of an email address was required in order to track the number of participants who took the survey as well as provide a cross-checking measure to ensure that duplicate survey entries could be eliminated once the data was transferred to SPSS. In addition, the email address was used to contact the participant who was randomly selected to receive the incentive for the study. The survey began with questions pertaining to demographic
information, which were collected in order to gain supplementary data from the participants for the purpose of data analysis. Once the demographic information was completed, participants answered questions from the IPPA followed by questions from the IDEA.

As a continuation of the online survey, participants were given instructions on how to complete the IPPA questions. This allowed participants to provide numerical responses to 28 questions regarding parental attachment and 25 questions regarding peer attachment using the following Likert Scale: *Almost Never or Never True, Not Very Often True, Sometimes True, Often True,* or *Almost Always/Always True*. Participants provided responses to questions regarding trust, communication, and alienation with regard to parental attachment and peer attachment. Next, participants were given instructions on how to complete the IDEA questions. Participants provided numerical responses to the 31 questions on the IPPA using the following Likert scale: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree,* or *Strongly Agree*. Participants provided Likert-scale responses to questions regarding identity exploration, possibilities, instability, self-focus, other-focus, and feeling in-between, which are the six dimensions of emerging adulthood highlighted through the IDEA. Once participants completed these questions, the official online survey was completed.

Upon completion of the survey, the results were electronically submitted through Survey Monkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com) and transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Version 19 for Windows, which was the computer program used to analyze data for this study, in order to conduct data analysis. Participant
data that was transferred into SPSS included information from the demographic sheet, responses to questions from the IPPA, and responses to questions from the IDEA. Thus, no identifying information of participants was entered into SPSS in order to ensure that the identity of participants was protected through the process of data analysis. The research bureau at the university separated the email addresses of eligible participants from the survey data, and email addresses were kept in a password-protected document in order to eliminate any way of identifying participants based on survey data. Survey responses and SPSS data were maintained by the researcher for this study in order to ensure that confidentiality was maintained on behalf of the participants. Once all data was collected, the data was analyzed using SPSS Version 19 for Windows.

**Sampling**

An alpha level of 0.01 and a small effect size were maintained for all statistical procedures. A power analysis was conducted with an alpha level of 0.01, power of .80, and a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The power analysis was used to determine the recommended sample size for this study. Based upon the power analysis, it was determined that the study needed to include a minimum of 1,188 participants because the study included 12 independent variables (Cohen, 1988): parental attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parental attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment.
Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was calculated using an alpha level of .01 to achieve statistical significance. The purpose of maintaining the alpha level was to eliminate the potential of a Type I error. In addition, the beta level will also be maintained in order to eliminate the potential for a Type II error. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for Windows (2010) was the computer program used to analyze data for this study.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all of the demographic variables as well as for the dependent variables (scores on the IPPA and IDEA). Normality was tested using a histogram. Linearity was tested via a scatterplot. Univariate analysis was conducted to gain descriptive statistics on each of the variables in this study. Descriptive statistics were calculated for parental attachment (including the subscales of trust, communication, and alienation), peer attachment (including the subscales of trust, communication, and alienation), and emerging adulthood, (including the subscales of identity exploration, possibilities, feeling in-between, instability, self-focus, and other-focus). In addition, descriptive statistics were calculated for age, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment. Relative frequency was determined for subscales related to nominal data, which included gender, ethnicity, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, and primary caregiver. Table 1 outlines the variables used in this study.

In addition to univariate analysis, bivariate analysis was conducted to analyze the
Table 1

*Univariate Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Attachment (Trust, Communication, and Alienation)</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Attachment (Trust, Communication, and Alienation)</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Undergraduate Credit Hours</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduation Date</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Status</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Status</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Diagnosis</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primarily Caregiver</td>
<td>Relative Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Closeness of Parent Attachment</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Closeness of Peer Attachment</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Exploration</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibilities</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling In-Between</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instability</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Focus</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Focus</td>
<td>Mean, SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relationship between various pairs of variables in this study. For bivariate data, correlations were determined in order to identify the relationship between parental attachment and peer attachment, parental attachment and emerging adulthood, and peer attachment and emerging adulthood. Correlations were also determined regarding the relationships between all of the subscales for parental attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood. Tetrachoric correlations were used to analyze correlations comparing interval with interval data and interval with nominal data. Chi squares were used to analyze all combinations of nominal bivariate data.

Multivariate analysis was also conducted to simultaneously analyze multiple variables in this study. A simple (simultaneous) regression model and a stepwise regression model were used to determine which combination of predictor variables including parental attachment (including the subscales of trust, communication, and alienation), peer attachment (including the subscales of trust, communication, and alienation), gender, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregiver, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood, the criterion variable, was measured through six sub-scales on the IDEA: identity exploration, possibilities, instability, feeling in-between, self-focus, and other-focus. Attachment relationships seem to play an important role during emerging adulthood (Pitman and Scharfe, 2010). With that said, it is unclear as to whether parent or peer attachment is more important in predicting the dimensions of emerging
adulthood. Although parent and peer attachment seem to be linked to identity development (Nawaz, 2011), identity exploration is only one of the six dimensions of emerging adulthood, which underscores the idea that pre-established hypotheses regarding which variables associated with parent and peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood would have been premature prior to this study. Thus, the aim of data analysis was to determine which combination of variables pertaining to parental and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Table 2 outlines the criterion and predictor variables used in this study.

**Multiple Regression as a Quantitative Research Method**

Because this study sought to explore which factors associated with parental and peer attachment could predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood, multiple regression was selected as the appropriate method for this study. In so doing, aspects of parental and peer attachment, along with other information collected on the demographics sheet, could be understood in terms of their ability to predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood amongst undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Two types of multiple regression were used in this study: the standard model, which is also referred to as simultaneous regression, and the stepwise regression model.

The standard regression model was selected to be used in this study. Standard regression allows all variables to be entered into the regression equation at the same time, which allows for each independent variable to be analyzed in terms of its impact upon the dependent variable after all other variables have been entered into the regression equation.
Table 2

*Multivariate Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>Criterion Variables</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Attachment</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Attachment—Trust</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Identity Exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Attachment—Communication</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Attachment—Alienation</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Instability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Attachment</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Feeling In-Between</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Attachment—Trust</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Self-Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Attachment—Communication</td>
<td>Emerging Adulthood—Other-Focus</td>
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<td>Peer Attachment—Alienation</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Closeness of Peer Attachment</td>
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(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The rationale for using the standard model of multiple regression for this study is based upon the aim of the research question itself: to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parental attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

Because the research question suggests that each of the predictor variables are equally perceived as factors that could predict emerging adulthood, simultaneous regression was deemed as an appropriate regression model for the purpose of this study. The determination to treat parental and peer attachment equally is underscored by findings that suggested no distinct benefit occurred for individuals whose primary attachment relationship was with parents rather than those whose primary attachment relationship was with peers (Pitman & Scharfe, 2010). With this in mind, it seems that it is the strength of attachment relationships rather than the source of attachment relationships which seems to predict wellbeing in individuals.

Stepwise regression was also selected for this study. The stepwise regression model allows predictor variables to be entered according to the statistical contribution variables make in terms of their ability to explain variance in the dependent variable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This differs from the standard regression approach in which all variables are entered into the regression model simultaneously. The stepwise
approach was selected because it utilizes a statistical analysis in order to enter and remove variables from the regression equation.

The use of the stepwise approach is underscored by the idea that parent and peer attachment can exist simultaneously (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997; Rowe & Carnelley, 2005). Because of this, the aim of using a stepwise approach was to refrain from assuming that parent attachment was more significant than peer attachment (or vice versa) at the onset of the study. Instead, stepwise regression would allow significant variables to surface based upon their ability to explain variance in the dependent variable. Thus, the use of the stepwise model was selected to determine which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parental attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. By using the stepwise regression model along with the standard regression model, differences in results based upon two different approaches to multiple regression could be identified and explored in this study. Thus, standard regression and simultaneous regression was selected as models through which statistical analysis was conducted for this study.

**Delimitations**

The scope of this research was intended to explore which factors of parental and peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. Attachment was explored in light of relationships between emerging adults, parents, and peers; other
aspects of attachment (i.e., romantic relationships, other family members, other
significant relationships) were not intended to be explored for this research. In terms of
emerging adulthood, the six dimensions outlined in the IDEA were the constructs
explored for the purposes of this study. Whereas other aspects of emerging adulthood
may exist and be significant to emerging adulthood, the intent of this research was to
solely focus on the six dimensions acknowledged in the IDEA as descriptive of emerging
adulthood.

Undergraduate students were the population from which participants were
selected for this research. Whereas non-college students could have been used as
participants, the aim of this research was to understand which factors of parental and peer
attachment predicted the dimensions of emerging adulthood among undergraduate
students. More specifically, undergraduates under the age of 18 or over the age of 20
were not used for the purpose of this study. Although emerging adulthood pertains to
individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 (Tanner & Arnett, 2009) and possibly even up
to age 29 (Tanner et al., 2009), the IPPA was normed on individuals between the ages of
16 and 20; thus, the age range of overlap for the IDEA, which measures the dimensions
of emerging adulthood, and the IPPA, which measures parental and peer attachment,
would involve participants between the ages of 18 and 20. Because of this, individuals
under the age of 18 or over the age of 20 were excluded from this study.

Due to the nature of the research question, quantitative research (more
specifically, multiple regression) was the approach best suited to answer the research
question. Methods associated with qualitative research, therefore, are outside of the
scope of this study. While gaining insights as to the experiences of emerging adults through interviews may provide meaningful information, such research could not answer the research question posed for this study and therefore qualitative approaches were not selected for use. These delimitations outline the focus of this study as well as the rationale for what was both included and excluded throughout the process of conducting this research.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology used for the current study. It reiterated the purpose of this study and also outlined the procedures of the study, including the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, participants and sampling methods, instruments, data analysis, and delimitations of the study. With this information as a foundation, it is now possible to analyze the results of this study.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

The following chapter provides a detailed explanation of the results from this study. First, a summary of sampling procedures are presented. Next, univariate data analysis results are presented, which include descriptive statistics of all variables and relative frequency of nominal variables used in this study. Bivariate results are also outlined, which include an exploration of correlation coefficients for all variables and chi-square coefficient for nominal variables. Finally, multivariate results are provided, which identify the combination of variables that predict experience of emerging adulthood. The chapter concludes with a summary of significant findings from the study.

The purpose of this study was to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Various hypotheses were created in response to the research question. The hypotheses for this study were as follows:

*Research Hypothesis:* Levels of parental attachment and peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers,
perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Null Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment would not predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** Levels of parental attachment or peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood.

**Sampling**

9,348 undergraduates who fit the qualification requirements for this study received an initial email requesting their participation in the study. After one week, 1,028 individuals had participated in the study, a number which was 160 individuals short of the required sample size for this study. Because of this, a reminder email was sent to potential participants one week after the original recruitment email was sent. After the reminder email was sent out, the minimum sample size of 1,188 participants was achieved within two days. The survey through which participants were able to participate in this study remained open for six days after the minimum sample size was achieved in
order to allow those interested to participate in the study. The data collection process took place over the course of 17 days, and 1,614 individuals participated in the study.

An incentive to participate in the study was also identified in the email in order to encourage individuals to consider participating in the study. As an incentive, one participant was randomly selected to receive the original version of the Apple iPad 2. The randomly selected participant was notified via email of being randomly selected to receive the iPad, and the iPad was distributed to the participant once data analysis was completed.

**Univariate Data Analysis**

Univariate data results were collected for this study. These results included descriptive statistics for demographic data (which included gender, ethnicity, mental health diagnosis, and age), relationship status, residential status, and primary caregivers. Results also included descriptive statistics regarding the perceived quality of relationship with participants’ two primary caregivers and two closest friends. Finally, results were collected regarding the two testing instruments used in this study: the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA).

**Demographic Data**

Descriptive statistics were used to better understand characteristics of the sample population used for this study. Demographic data was outlined in terms of the number of individuals who represent each demographic as well as the percentage that each demographic represents when compared to the whole sample. Although high school
graduation date was originally to be considered as a demographic variable for this study, the variable was eliminated due to many participants responding to the question with their anticipated college graduation date rather than with their high school graduation date. Table 3 includes demographic data pertaining to gender, ethnicity, mental health diagnosis, and age.

**Gender.** Demographic data pertaining to the gender of participants was collected for this study. As outlined in Table 3, it is clear that more females ($n = 1192, 73.9\%$) participated in this study than males ($n = 420, 26.1\%$). Thus, the majority of participants in this study identified as female.

**Ethnicity.** Demographic data was also collected regarding the ethnic background of participants in this study. As suggested by Table 3, it is clear that significantly more Caucasians ($n = 1388, 86.1\%$) were represented in the study sample than members of any other ethnic background. The next highest frequency with regard to ethnicity was Black/African American ($n = 107, 6.6\%$), and the third highest ethnicity represented by participants included those who identified with more than one race ($n = 52, 3.2\%$) which is much lower than the number of Caucasian participants. Thus, the majority of participants for this study identified as Caucasian with regard to their ethnicity.

**Mental health diagnosis.** To understand the mental health status of participants, demographic data was collected in order to learn whether or not participants had previously received a mental health diagnosis. Participants who indicated “yes” affirmed that they have received a mental health diagnosis ($n = 322, 20.0\%$), while those who indicated “no” denied that they have received a mental health diagnosis ($n = 1287,$
80.0%). As indicated in Table 3, more participants had not received a mental health diagnosis than those who had received a mental health diagnosis.

Table 3

*Demographic Data including Gender, Ethnicity, Mental Health Diagnosis, and Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N = 1614)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity (N = 1612)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than One Race</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health Diagnosis (N = 1614)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1287</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age. The range pertaining to the age of participants for this study was 18-20. In terms of descriptive statistics, more 20-year-olds (n = 637, 39.5%) participated in the study than 18-year-olds (n = 384, 23.8%) or 19-year-olds (n = 590, 36.6%). However, results also showed that the mean age for participants in this study was approximately 19 years of age (M=19.16, SD = 0.781). Thus, although less 18-year-olds participated in this study as compared to 19-year-olds or 20-year olds, there seemed to be fair representation for each age group in the age range used for this study. In sum, Table 3 highlights the fact that the majority of participants in this study were Caucasian females between the ages of 19-20 who had not received a mental health diagnosis.

Relationship Status

The relationship status of participants from this study was also examined. Results indicated that the number of participants who identified as being in a committed relationship (n = 688, 42.7%) was similar to the number of participants who identified as being single (n = 726, 45%). However, the number of participants who identified as dating but not in a committed relationship was much lower (n = 197, 12.2%). Thus, significantly more participants classified themselves as either in a committed relationship or single as opposed to classifying themselves as dating but not in a committed relationship.

Residential Status

Table 4 outlines the residential status of the participants in this study. The majority of participants live in the dorm (n = 936, 58.1%). The next largest number of participants live with their parents or guardians (n = 288, 17.9%), and the third largest
number of participants live with friends or non-family members ($n = 265, 16.5\%$).

However, these results suggest that living in the dorm is much more prevalent than other residential living options for participants in this study.

Table 4

*Residential Status of Sample Participants ($N = 1610$)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live in Dorm</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live by Myself</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with Romantic Partner</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with Friends/Non-Family</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with Others (not parent/guardian)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1610</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Caregivers**

Table 5 highlights the primary caregiver(s) of the participants for this study.

Although participants had a variety of options from which to select in order to identify their primary caregivers, the biological mother ($n = 1539, 95.4\%$) was clearly the most selected option. The second highest selection for a primary caregiver was the biological father ($n = 1253, 77.6\%$). Although the question did not specify how much time was spent with each primary caregiver, it is interesting to note that the biological mother and biological father were the two most selected options for primary caregivers as deemed by
participants. Thus, results suggest that participants were primarily raised by their biological mothers and/or biological fathers.

Table 5

*Primary Caregiver(s) of Sample Participants (N = 1611)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Caregiver(s)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Mother</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Father</td>
<td>1253</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-Mother/StepFather</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother/Grandfather</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian/Foster Parent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt/Uncle</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality of Relationship with Primary Caregivers and Closest Friends

Table 6 identifies participants’ perception of the quality of the relationship they possess with their two primary caregivers and two closest friends. The questions was posed on a 1-5 Likert scale, with a score of 1 reflecting a relationship that is “too close” and a score of 5 reflecting a relationship that is “not close enough.” Because of this, a score of 3 would reflect the perception that the participant’s relationship with his or her two primary caregivers has a healthy or balanced level of intimacy. Results indicated
Table 6

Perceived Quality of Sample Participants’ Relationship with Two Primary Caregivers (N = 1608) and Two Closest Friends (N = 1612)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Scale Score</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of Sample</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Close (Score of 1)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Close Enough (Score of 5)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that the participants perceive their relationship with their two primary caregivers as balanced overall (x = 2.55, median = 2, mode = 2, SD = 0.796). Results also indicated that most participants gave a score of 2 for their perceived relationship to primary caregivers (n = 722, 50.9%), which suggests that participants seem to believe the quality of relationship they experience with their two primary caregivers falls somewhere between being too close and balanced. The second highest score for perceived relationship with primary caregivers was a score of 3 (n = 636, 39.6%), which suggests that many participants do perceive that their relationship with their two primary caregivers is balanced in terms of the level of intimacy they experience. Thus, the perception of the relationship participants have with their two primary caregivers seems to be balanced overall.
Table 6 also displays results regarding participants’ perceived relationship with their two closest friends. Results indicated that participants perceived their relationships with their two closest friends as generally displaying balance ($x = 2.42$, median = 2, mode = 2, SD = 0.916). More specifically, most participants rated the quality of the relationship they have with their two closest friends with a score of 2 ($n = 792, 49.1\%$). This score suggests that the majority of participants believe that their relationship with their two closest friends falls somewhere between being too close and being balanced in its level of intimacy. Similar to their perception of primary caregivers, the second highest score for perceived relationship with two closest friends was a 3 ($n = 436, 27\%$). Thus, these results suggest that participants perceive their relationship with their two primary caregivers and their two closest friends to be generally balanced, with a slight tendency towards being too close rather than too distant.

**Testing Instruments**

Data regarding continuous variables measured on the testing instruments for this study (which included the IPPA and the IDEA) were also collected. With regard to the IPPA, total scores were reported for Parent Attachment and Peer Attachment, and a total score was also reported for the IDEA. Parent Attachment and Peer Attachment subscale scores were reported in the areas of trust, communication, and alienation. Emerging Adulthood subscale scores were reported in the areas of identity exploration, possibilities, instability, other focus, self-focus, and feeling in-between. Thus, total scores and subscale scores were collected for the IPPA and the IDEA.
IPPA. Scores were calculated for parent attachment and peer attachment using the IPPA. Results suggest that more participants completed the Parental Attachment questions \((n = 1562, 96.7\%)\) from the IPPA than the Peer Attachment questions \((n = 1527, 94.6\%)\). Descriptive statistics were also collected and differentiated based upon gender. Significantly more females than males completed the IPPA. More specifically, 1152 (73.8%) females completed questions pertaining to parent attachment on the IPPA while 408 (26.2%) males completed parent attachment questions. In addition, 1129 (73.9%) of females completed peer attachment questions on the IPPA, while only 398 (26%) of males completed peer attachment questions. Descriptive statistics were also collected for Parent Attachment \((M = 99.59, SD = 19.575\) for males; \(M = 103, SD = 21.326\) for females) and Peer Attachment \((M = 93.59, SD = 16.469\) for males; \(M = 98.88; SD = 15.584\) for females) on the IPPA. Thus, more questions pertaining to parent attachment than peer attachment were answered on the IPPA, and more females than males completed questions pertaining to parent and peer attachment on the IPPA. However, no significant differences were found with regard to scores on the IPPA due to gender.

IDEA. Scores were calculated for emerging adulthood using the IDEA. In comparison to the IPPA, fewer participants completed the questions from the IDEA \((n = 1501, 93.0\%)\) than those from the IPPA pertaining to parent attachment \((n = 1562, 96.7\%)\) and peer attachment \((n = 1527, 94.6\%)\). Just as a gender difference was identified regarding results from the IPPA, this was also true on the IDEA: 1106 (73.7%) females completed the IDEA questions, while only 395 (26.3%) males completed the
IDEA. Descriptive statistics were also collected for Emerging Adulthood (M = 97.84, SD = 9.000 for males; M = 100.83; SD = 7.949 for females). No significant differences were found regarding IDEA scores due to gender. Thus, results showed that fewer participants completed questions pertaining to the IDEA as compared to the IPPA. Moreover, results showed that study participants consisted of more females than males; however, there were no significant differences with regard to scores on the IPPA or IDEA based on gender.

**Bivariate Data Analysis**

Various correlation coefficients were calculated using the criterion and predictor variables in this study. Many results were statistically significant; however, it is important to note that the number of significant findings may be due to the very large sample size (N = 1614). Thus, the results for this study are separated into three categories: non-significant findings, findings that are statistically significant, and findings that are statistically and practically significant. Statistical significance for this study was determined by setting alpha at 0.01, power at 0.80, and maintaining a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Statistical and practical significance for this study were determined by identifying statistically significant results that were also meaningful and applicable to the profession of counseling. For the purpose of this study, statistical and practical results included results related to parental attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood.

**Non-Significant Correlations**

Many variables were included in this study in order to understand the relationship between various demographic variables with parent attachment, peer attachment, and
emerging adulthood. Although many findings in this study were significant, many findings were not significant as well. Results showed that a variety of demographic variables did not produce statistically significant correlations with other demographic variables. In addition, a variety of demographic variables did not produce statistically significant correlations with emerging adulthood. The following variables did not have any significant correlations with one another: gender, age, ethnicity, college credit hours, residential status, mental health diagnosis, quality of relationship to primary caregivers, and quality of relationships with two closest friends. A final important finding is that parent attachment was not significantly correlated with emerging adulthood.

**Statistically Significant Correlations**

Statistically significant correlations were found in this study. In order to interpret the results, correlation coefficients were understood with the premise that a correlation of 0.5 is large, 0.3 is moderate, 0.1 is small, and anything below 0.1 is technically statistically significant but is not practically significant (Cohen, 1988). Based on these criteria, statistically significant correlational coefficients can be understood with regard to this study. Table 7 outlines correlations that would be considered statistically significant but not practically significant.

Correlations pertaining to demographic variables, parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood that did not reach the threshold of 0.01, which was deemed by Cohen (1988) as necessary for practical significance, were identified. In addition, correlations related to demographic variables that were unrelated to IPPA or IDEA scores were also identified in the table. With regard to demographic variables that
Table 7

Statistically Significant Correlation Coefficients ($p < .01$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>Correlation ($r$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Parent Alienation</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Trust</td>
<td>Feeling In-Between</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Communication</td>
<td>Feeling In-Between</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Trust</td>
<td>Feeling In-Between</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Focus</td>
<td>Possibilities</td>
<td>-0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Credit Hours</td>
<td>Quality of Relationship with Caregivers</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Mental Health Diagnosis</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Quality of Relationship with Caregivers</td>
<td>-0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>College Credit Hours</td>
<td>0.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>College Credit Hours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Diagnosis</td>
<td>Quality Relationship with Caregivers</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
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<td>Quality Relationship with Closest Friends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Credit Hours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Adulthood</td>
<td>Mental Health Diagnosis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Quality Relationship with Closest Friends</td>
<td>-0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>College Credit Hours</td>
<td>0.622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
were not related to IPPA or IDEA scores, such variables still showed statistical significance but not practical significance for this study.

With regard to statistically significant correlations, results indicated that feeling in-between had significant correlations with parent trust \((r = 0.067)\), peer trust \((r = 0.068)\), and parent communication \((r = 0.092)\); however, none of these findings hold practical significance according to Cohen because the correlation is below 0.1. In addition, results showed that the majority of correlations related to demographic variables were statistically significant but not practically significant according to the standard set by Cohen. A key exception to this is the correlation between age and college credit hours \((r = 0.622)\); however, since this finding does not relate directly to the profession of counseling, the finding is considered to be a statistically significant finding that is not practically significant. Therefore, some correlations were produced in this study that were statistically significant but not practically significant.

**Statistical Significance and Practical Significance**

Statistical significance for this study was determined by setting alpha at 0.01, power at 0.80, and maintaining a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Statistical and practical significance for this study were determined by identifying statistically significant results that were also meaningful and applicable to the profession of counseling. For the purpose of this study, statistical and practical results included results found in the areas of parental attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood. Correlations that maintained statistical and practical significance are outlined in Table 8.
Small correlations. Small correlations were those that fell between 0.1 and 0.3 with regard to this study (Cohen, 1988). More specifically, small correlations were found with regard to parent attachment. Results showed that parent trust was positively correlated with peer communication ($r = 0.189$), peer trust ($r = 0.259$), and peer alienation ($r = 0.298$). Results also showed that parent trust was positively correlated with emerging adulthood in the areas of possibilities ($r = 0.167$) and self-focus ($r = 0.250$). Regarding parent communication, a positive correlation was found with peer trust ($r = 0.235$) and peer communication ($r = 0.271$). Parent communication was also positively correlated with emerging adulthood in the areas of possibilities ($r = 0.153$) and self-focus ($r = 0.239$).

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P1T</th>
<th>P1C</th>
<th>P1A</th>
<th>P2T</th>
<th>P2C</th>
<th>P2A</th>
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<td>0.327</td>
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<td>0.271</td>
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<td>0.822</td>
<td></td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2A</td>
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<td>0.291</td>
<td>0.500</td>
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<td>-0.175</td>
<td>-0.116</td>
<td>-0.350</td>
<td>.147</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
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<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.546</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.238</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.185</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. P1T = Parent Trust, P1C = Parent Communication, P1A = Parent Alienation, P2T = Peer Trust, P2C = Peer Communication, P2A = Peer Alienation, ID = Identity Exploration, PO = Possibilities, IN = Instability, OT = Other-Focused, SE = Self-Focused, BE = Feeling In-Between.
Parent communication was positively correlated with peer alienation ($r = 0.291$) but negatively correlated with emerging adulthood in the area of instability ($r = -0.251$). Parent alienation was positively correlated with peer communication ($r = 0.256$) and with emerging adulthood in the areas of possibilities ($r = 0.161$) and self-focus ($r = 0.266$). Thus, small positive correlations were found for parent attachment with regard to trust, communication, and alienation; however, a small negative correlation was found only for parent communication.

Small correlations were also found for peer attachment. In addition to a positive correlation with parent trust ($r = 0.259$) and parent communication ($r = 0.235$), peer trust was positively correlated with emerging adulthood in the areas of identity exploration ($r = 0.152$), experimentation ($r = 0.217$), and self-focus ($r = 0.267$). Peer trust was negatively correlated with emerging adulthood in the area of instability ($r = -0.175$). Peer communication was positively correlated with parent trust ($r = 0.189$), peer alienation ($r = 0.235$), and parent communication ($r = 0.271$). In addition, peer communication was positively correlated with emerging adulthood in the areas of feeling in-between ($r = 0.126$), identity exploration ($r = 0.208$), possibilities ($r = 0.241$), and self-focus ($r = 0.275$). Peer communication was negatively correlated with emerging adulthood in the area of instability ($r = -0.116$). Peer alienation was positively correlated with parent communication ($r = 0.291$) and parent trust ($r = 0.298$). Peer alienation was also positively correlated with emerging adulthood in the areas of possibilities ($r = 0.168$) and self-focus ($r = 0.266$). Thus, peer attachment showed positive and negative shown in
correlations in the areas of trust and communication while only positive correlations were the area of alienation.

Various small correlations were found among the dimensions of emerging adulthood. Instability had a positive correlation with identity exploration \((r = 0.147)\) and feeling in-between \((r = 0.179)\). In addition, self-focus had a positive correlation with feeling in-between \((r = 0.185)\). A negative correlation was found between instability and self-focus \((r = -0.121)\). Thus, small positive correlations were found among dimensions of emerging adulthood.

Three additional small correlations are noteworthy as being statistically significant and practically significant. First, a positive correlation was found between peer attachment and emerging adulthood \((r = 0.134)\). This suggests that as peer attachment increases, experiences in emerging adulthood increase as well. Second, a small positive correlation was found between emerging adulthood and gender \((r = 0.158)\). Third, a small correlation was found between the quality of relationship with primary caregivers and the quality of relationship with closest friends \((r = 0.176)\). In sum, small positive and negative correlations were found among variables related to parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood.

**Moderate correlations.** Various moderate correlations found in this study, which include correlation coefficients between 0.3 and 0.5 (Cohen, 1988). First, a positive correlation was found between parent attachment and peer attachment \((r = 0.328)\). Thus, as parent attachment increases, peer attachment also increases. With regard to parent attachment, parent trust was negatively correlated with the emerging
adult area of instability ($r = -0.316$). Therefore, as parent trust increases, instability in emerging adulthood decreases. Parent alienation was positively correlated with peer trust ($r = 0.327$) and peer alienation ($r = 0.500$) but was negatively correlated with emerging adulthood area of instability ($r = -0.437$). Since alienation scores were reverse-scored, results showed that as parent alienation increases, peer trust decreases. However, as parent alienation increases, peer alienation increases as well. Peer alienation was negatively correlated with the emerging adult area of instability ($r = -0.350$). This means that as peer alienation increases, instability in emerging adulthood also increases, since alienation was reverse-scored. Other moderate correlations included the emerging adulthood area of identity exploration, which was positively correlated with feeling in-between ($r = 0.345$), self-focus ($r = 0.425$), and possibilities ($r = 0.469$). Thus, positive and negative moderate correlations were found between parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood in this study.

**Large correlations.** Large correlations, which included those producing a coefficient above 0.5 (Cohen, 1988), were also identified for this study. Results indicated that parent trust was positively correlated with parent communication ($r = 0.788$) and parent alienation ($r = 0.790$). Therefore, as parent trust increases, parent communication increases. However, alienation scores were reverse scored, so results showed that as parent trust increases, parent alienation decreases. Parent communication was also positively correlated with parent alienation ($r = 0.750$). Since alienation scores were reverse-scored, these results showed that as parent communication increased, parent alienation decreased.
Peer trust was positively correlated with peer communication \((r = 0.822)\) and peer alienation \((r = 0.686)\). Thus, as peer trust increased, peer communication also increased. However, since alienation scores were reverse-scored, results showed that as peer trust increased, peer alienation decreased. Peer communication was also positively correlated with peer alienation \((r = 0.581)\); thus, as peer communication increased, peer alienation decreased, since alienation scores were reverse-scored. The emerging adult construct of self-focus was positively correlated with possibilities \((r = 0.546)\). Therefore, as self-focus increases among emerging adults, focusing on possibilities seems to increase as well. In sum, large, positive correlations were found in the areas of parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood. Moreover, small and moderate correlations were found between parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood, and these correlations were both positive and negative. However, large correlations for this study were all positive correlations.

**Significant findings based on gender.** Correlations between parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood were also analyzed with regard to gender differences. This analysis was conducted because a significant positive correlation was found between peer attachment and gender \((r = 0.134)\). More specifically, results showed that peer attachment was positively correlated with emerging adulthood for males and females; however, peer attachment had a stronger correlation with emerging adulthood for males \((r = 0.198)\) than for females \((r = 0.079)\). Also, given the criteria provided by Cohen (1988) for identifying the strength of a correlation, the correlation between peer attachment and emerging adulthood for females would not be considered practically
significant. In contrast, the correlation between peer attachment and emerging adulthood for males would be considered a small but statistically significant correlation.

In addition to the correlation found between peer attachment and emerging adulthood, a positive correlation was found between parent attachment and peer attachment ($r = 0.328$). More specifically, results suggested that the correlation between parent and peer attachment is stronger for females ($r = 0.338$) than for males ($r = 0.273$). The correlation between parent and peer attachment would be considered moderate for females and small for males based on Cohen’s (1988) categorizations: according to Cohen, 0.1-0.3 is considered a small correlation, and 0.3-0.5 is considered moderate. Thus, gender differences were found in this study with regard to parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood.

Chi square tests were also used to determine if there were significant differences between groups based upon gender. Results indicate that a significant difference occurs between groups concerning mental health diagnosis based on gender: $\chi^2 (1, 1607) = 6.497, p = 0.011$. Post hoc tests indicated that significantly more females had a mental health diagnosis than males who participated in this study. An additional finding using a chi square test is that there is a significant difference between groups concerning relationship status based upon gender: $\chi^2 (2, 1609) = 10.472, p = 0.005$. Post hoc tests indicated that males were more likely to be single or in a committed relationship than dating but not in a committed relationship. Results also indicated that females were less likely to be dating but not in a committed relationship than single or in a committed relationship. Thus, significant differences were found between anticipated results versus
actual results with regard to mental health diagnosis and relationship status based on gender. In sum, various differences based on gender were identified in this study.

**Multivariate Data Analysis**

In order to assess which combination of variables predicted experiences of emerging adulthood, a standard regression equation and a stepwise regression equation were used in this study. Since a positive correlation was found between peer attachment and gender ($r = 0.134$), and correlation coefficients were different between peer attachment and emerging adulthood for males ($r = 0.198$) and females ($r = 0.079$), it was determined that separate regression equations were conducted for males and females in order to understand predictive differences among predictor variables based on gender. Therefore, a standard regression equation and a stepwise regression equation were used in order to determine differences in results based on alternative approaches to regression.

**Standard Regression**

The results for the standard regression equation for males are displayed in Table 9, which shows that results indicated the regression equation was significant for males: $F(6,388) = 5.476, p = 0.000$. Using standard regression, the order in which variables were entered and removed included peer alienation, parent communication, peer communication, parent alienation, parent trust, and peer trust. Thus, the combination of these variables predicted a significant proportion of variance in the experiences of emerging adulthood among 18-20 year old males. More specifically, $R = 0.279$ and $R^2 = 0.078$, which indicates that approximately 8% of the variability in experiences of
Table 9

*Multiple Regression using Simultaneous Analysis for Males (N = 395) and Females (N = 1106)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
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<th>Females</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td><strong>SE B</strong></td>
<td><strong>β</strong></td>
<td><strong>t</strong></td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td><strong>SE B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>27.745</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>97.901</td>
<td>1.749</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>P1T</td>
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<td>0.037</td>
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<tr>
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<td>P1C</td>
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<td>P2A</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.894</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* P1T = Parent Trust, P1C = Parent Communication, P1A = Parent Alienation, P2T = Peer Trust, P2C = Peer Communication, P2A = Peer Alienation. p < 0.001.
emerging adulthood among males is explained by the six variables used to assess parent and peer attachment. When considering the individual contributions of the predictors to the overall study, one variable explained a unique proportion of the variance—peer trust: \( t(388) = 2.594, \ p = 0.010 \). The adjusted \( R^2 = 0.064 \) for this regression equation. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the linear combination of parent attachment variables (including parent trust, parent communication, and parent alienation) and peer attachment variables (including peer trust, peer communication, and peer alienation) are significantly capable of predicting the experiences of emerging adulthood among males between the ages of 18 and 20. More specifically, peer trust seems to have a significant impact on the perceived experiences of emerging adulthood for male participants in this study when a standard regression model was used.

Results for the standard regression equation for females are also displayed in Table 9. With regard to females, results indicated that the regression equation was significant: \( F(6,1099) = 15.894, \ p = 0.000 \). Using standard regression, the order in which variables were entered and removed included peer alienation, parent trust, peer communication, parent communication, peer trust, and parent alienation. Thus, the combination of these variables predicted a significant proportion of variance in the experiences of emerging adulthood among 18-20 year old females. More specifically, \( R = 0.283 \) and \( R^2 = 0.080 \), which indicates that approximately 8\% of the variability in experiences of emerging adulthood among females is explained by the six variables used to assess parent and peer attachment. When considering the individual contributions of the predictors to the overall study, three variables explained a unique proportion of the
variance—peer communication: \( t(1099) = 6.452, p = 0.000 \); parent alienation: \( t(1099) = -3.476, p = 0.001 \); and peer alienation: \( t(1099) = -3.309, p = 0.001 \). The adjusted \( R^2 = 0.075 \) for this regression equation. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the linear combination of parent attachment variables (including parent trust, parent communication, and parent alienation) and peer attachment variables (including peer trust, peer communication, and peer alienation) are significantly capable of predicting the experiences of emerging adult females between the ages of 18 and 20. More specifically, peer communication, parent alienation, and peer alienation had the most significant impact on predicting experiences of emerging adulthood for female participants in this study when a standard regression model was used.

**Stepwise Regression**

In addition to standard regression, stepwise regression was also conducted in order to see if there were significant results using an alternative format for regression. With standard regression, all variables are entered into the regression equation simultaneously. However, stepwise regression allows predictive variables to be entered according to the statistical contribution the variables make in terms of their ability to explain variance in the dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

For males, stepwise regression results indicated that only two variables (peer trust and peer alienation) significantly contributed to the regression model (\( R^2 = 0.066 \), \( R^2 \text{ adj.} = 0.061 \), \( F (2, 392) = 13.785 \). More specifically, the most significant factor to predict experiences of emerging adulthood for males was peer trust (\( B = 0.418 \), SE = 0.081, \( \beta = 0.338 \)), and the second most significant factor for predicting experiences of emerging
adulthood among males was peer alienation ($B = -0.387$, $SE = 0.140$, $\beta = -0.180$). In contrast, parent trust, parent communication, parent alienation, and peer communication were not found to significantly predict experiences of emerging adulthood among male participants. Thus, peer trust and peer alienation were the variables that significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood for male participants when a stepwise regression model was used. Table 10 outlines the results from the stepwise regression model for males.

A stepwise regression model was also used to determine which factors pertaining to parent and peer attachment predicted experiences of emerging adulthood among females. Results from the stepwise regression model indicated that only two variables (peer alienation and peer communication) significantly contributed to the regression model ($R^2 = 0.065$, $R^2$ adj. $= 0.064$, $F (2, 1103) = 38.600$. More specifically, the most significant factor to predict experiences of emerging adulthood for females was peer communication ($B = 0.448$, $SE = 0.052$, $\beta = 0.322$), and the second most significant factor for predicting experiences of emerging adulthood among females was peer alienation ($B = -0.447$, $SE = 0.067$, $\beta = -0.249$). These results are displayed in Table 10. In contrast, parent trust, parent communication, parent alienation, and peer trust were not found to significantly predict experiences of emerging adulthood among female participants. Thus, peer communication and peer alienation were the variables that significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood for female participants when a stepwise regression model was used.
Table 10

Multiple Regression using Stepwise Analysis for Males (N = 395) and Females (N = 1106)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>BC2</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.041</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>B2A</td>
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<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2A</td>
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<td>-0.180</td>
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<td>0.052</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>19.597</td>
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<tr>
<td>ΔF</td>
<td>7.641</td>
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Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the results found in this study. Sampling procedures were discussed, and results were outlined for univariate, bivariate, and multivariate data. The subsequent points are the major findings from this study:

- The majority of participants were Caucasian females between the ages of 19-20 who had not received a mental health diagnosis.

- The majority of participants perceived their relationship with their two primary caregivers and their two closest friends to be balanced (neither too distant nor too close).
Peer attachment was positively correlated with emerging adulthood; however, parent attachment was not significantly correlated with emerging adulthood.

Significant differences were identified due to gender regarding which factors associated with parent and peer attachment predicted experiences of emerging adulthood.

Using a standard regression equation produced significant findings, indicating that parent and peer attachment significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood for males and females. However, peer trust had the most significant impact on predicting emerging adulthood experiences for males, whereas peer communication, parent alienation, and peer alienation had the most significant impact on predicting emerging adulthood experiences for females.

Using a stepwise regression equation produced significant findings, indicating that parent and peer attachment significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood for males and females. However, peer trust (primarily) and peer alienation (secondarily) had the most significant impact on predicting emerging adulthood experiences for males, whereas peer communication (primarily) and peer alienation (secondarily) had the most significant impact on predicting emerging adulthood experiences for females.

The following chapter includes a discussion of the findings of this study.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The following chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings from this study. First, salient findings from the study are discussed. Next, limitations for this study are also outlined, and recommendations for further research are presented based on the findings from this study. The chapter concludes by revisiting the purpose of the study, research question, hypotheses, and findings for this study.

Discussion of Findings

Various results were found for this study that supported the research hypothesis. More specifically, results supported the premise that parent and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood, and thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Some results from this study were statistically significant, while other results were statistically significant and practically significant because they relate to the profession of counseling. Salient results from this study, or those which have statistical and practical significance with regard to counseling, are important to discuss in order to acknowledge why results from this study are meaningful with regard to attachment and emerging adulthood.

Sample Characteristics

Results from this study showed that the majority of participants displayed the following characteristics: female ($n=1192, 73.9\%$), Caucasian ($n=1388, 86.1\%$), received no mental health diagnosis ($n=1287, 80.0\%$), and were primarily raised by one’s biological mother and or biological father. Based on statistics provided by the
institution at which this study was conducted (http://www.kent.edu/about/facts/ StudentBody.cfm), two of these majority representations found in this study are also true of the student population as a whole (which consists of 22,260 students): undergraduate students at this university are predominantly female ($n = 12,980, 58.3\%$) and Caucasian ($n = 17,226, 77.4\%$). These results suggest that the demographic majority for participants in this study is also reflective of the demographic majority at the university where the study was held. In light of the large sample size for both males and females, it seems that the discrepancy between the number of males and females who participated in this study does not impact the validity of the results. Nonetheless, it is clear that the sample of participants used in this study were predominantly Caucasian females.

Recognizing the distinct characteristics of this sample is important when interpreting the results from this study. Just as more females participated in this study as compared to males, females seem to be more likely than males to pursue counseling (Rule & Gandy, 1994). This study showed a gender difference in terms of participation based on gender, and that theme seems to be consistent with differences in the pursuit of counseling based on gender. Thus, gender should be noted as a meaningful element when interpreting results from this study.

In like manner, ethnicity should be recognized as a noteworthy component of this study. The prevailing ethnicity for participants in this study was Caucasian, so caution should be used when seeking to generalize the results of this study to individuals with various ethnic backgrounds. However, attachment relationships have been identified and
explored among individuals from non-western cultures, including Pakistan and Latvia (Nawaz, 2011; Lubenko & Sebre, 2007). In addition, emerging adulthood has been studied among a variety of non-Caucasian populations, including China, Argentina, and ethnic minorities in the United States (Nelson et al., 2004; Facio & Micocci, 2003, Arnett, 2003). Although research has suggested that attachment and emerging adulthood seem to be recognized worldwide (amidst various cultural differences in how they are experienced and understood), cultural diversity was not represented within the population used in this study.

In terms of mental health diagnosis, the results showed that the number of participants who had received a mental health diagnosis ($n = 322, 20.0\%$) was much lower than the number who had not received a mental health diagnosis ($n = 1287, 80.0\%$). The low number of participants who had received a mental health diagnosis seems to contradict research that suggests that the number of college students who utilize college counseling centers is increasing (Kitzrow, 2003; Goetz, 2002, Gabriel, 2010). However, this discrepancy in findings may be due to the fact that the population from which the sample for this study was recruited was a non-clinical population, so the increase in counseling services may not be reflected to the same degree within this sample as it is within clinical populations. Moreover, although many college students may receive counseling services, such services may not mandate the use of a clinical diagnosis, so it is possible that many participants in this study have received counseling
services but have not received a mental health diagnosis as part of their counseling services. In terms of this study, it seems important to acknowledge that the study sample predominantly consisted of individuals who would not represent a clinical population. Demographic data also showed that the majority of participants in this study were primarily raised by their biological mother \((n = 1539, 95.4\%)\) and or their biological father \((n = 1253, 77.6\%)\). These results seem to coincide with data produced by the United States Census Bureau in 2008 (http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/children/cb08-30), which showed that in 2004, 61% of children under the age of 18 lived with their biological mother and biological father, regardless of the marital status of the mother and father. Additional data from the United States Census Bureau showed that, as of 2004, 94% of children were primarily living with at least one biological parent. These findings seem to coincide with the findings produced in this research study, which highlight the fact that the biological mother and or biological father seem to be the primary caregivers for the majority of participants in this study.

This idea of the biological mother and biological father serving as primary caregivers lends support to Fraley and Davis (1997) in their assertion that parental relationships are important attachment relationships for young adults. Moreover, the mother-child attachment relationship was the first attachment relationship acknowledged in literature (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1969, 1973). Mothers have been cited frequently as the most significant attachment figure for children (Campa et. al, 2009). In addition, the father-child attachment relationship is affirmed by studies that showed
attachment to one’s father as being important to emerging adults (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997, Campa et. al., 2009). Thus, it seems that parental relationships were important to participants because participants seemed to exhibit attachment relationships with their primary caregivers. In recognizing this, counselors can be sensitive to the relational bonds that may be experienced between an emerging adult client and his or her parents. Such awareness can in turn provide insight and perspective as to how parental relationships seem to impact an emerging adult client in various areas of life.

**Perception of Attachment Relationships**

The majority of participants in this study seemed to perceive the quality of their relationship with their primary caregivers to be balanced overall, with a slight tendency towards being too close rather than too distant. Results also showed that participants in this study perceived the quality of their relationship with their two closest friends to be balanced overall, with a slight tendency towards being too close rather than being too distant. Based on these findings, it seems that the majority of participants in this study would seem to be experiencing secure attachment in their relationships to primary caregivers (most of whom are biological parents) and peers.

The assessment that participants in this study seemed to exhibit secure attachment relationships with parents and peers is derived from the definition of secure attachment, which involves a balance of independence and relatedness to others (Allen, Hauser, Bell & O’Connor, 1994; Kobak, Core, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming & Gamble, 1993). Moreover, maintaining secure attachment relationships with parents and peers simultaneously lends
support to the idea that an attachment network exists that involves multiple attachment relationships at once (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). The importance of parent and peer relationships may also support the idea that an attachment hierarchy is in place, which allows for multiple significant attachment relationships (Rowe & Carnelly, 2005). This idea contradicts initial research on attachment that suggested that one individual served as a primary attachment figure rather than multiple attachment figures exiting for an individual (Ainsworth, 1970; Bowlby, 1969). Thus, based on the mean scores regarding perceived quality of relationship to primary caregivers and peers, it seems that the majority of participants in this study would articulate a secure attachment relationship to primary caregivers and peers.

The idea of an emerging adult maintaining meaningful attachment relationships with parents and peers has much significance in the field of counseling. First, it is important for counselors to explore with emerging adult clients which relationships are significant rather than assuming the order of an attachment hierarchy on behalf of the client. Second, it may be helpful for counselors to explore themes in attachment relationships in order to see how parent attachment and peer attachment experiences may be similar to or different from one another. As counselors gain an awareness of the ways in which clients experience attachment relationships, clients may gain insight and perspective in ways that can shape the therapeutic relationship and the treatment process.
Attachment and Emerging Adulthood

A small correlation was found between peer attachment and emerging adulthood in this study. However, a significant correlation was not found between parent attachment and emerging adulthood. It is important to recognize the impact of these findings and note implications for the profession of counseling.

Peer attachment and emerging adulthood. Peer attachment was positively related to emerging adulthood in this study. Therefore, as peer attachment increases, emerging adulthood experiences increase as well. This finding underscores Fraley and Davis (1997), who asserted that individuals begin life building attachment relationships with parents but transition into creating more significant attachment to peers as they grow older. Results from this study showed the correlation between peer attachment and emerging adulthood to be significant for males and females; however, this finding seems to conflict with Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012) in their assertion that females seem to be more attached to peers than males. Peer attachment relationships have been noted as being valuable because they allow more equal levels of giving and receiving in relationships than is typically found in parent attachment (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). In light of this, results from this study seem to corroborate with prior findings that peer attachment relationships are of prime importance during emerging adulthood.

The idea that peer attachment and emerging adulthood are significantly related to one another has implications within the discipline of counseling. For instance, Armsten and Greenberg (1987) noted that healthy peer attachment is related to psychological well-
being. By understanding the connection between peer attachment and emerging adulthood, counselors who work with emerging adults can conceptualize the ways in which peer relationships can impact one’s sense of self and one’s sense of self in relation to others, thereby deeply shaping experiences associated with emerging adulthood. As counselors become aware of the impact peer relationships can have upon experiences of emerging adulthood, case conceptualization can be understood and applied in ways that highlight what is unique to an individual client versus what is understood as an experience common to emerging adulthood.

More specifically, results from this study showed that peer attachment was significantly related to emerging adulthood in the areas of possibilities, self-focus, and instability. Peer attachment was positively related to possibilities: as attachment to peers increases, experiences with possibilities and hope towards the future increases. The link between peer attachment and possibilities seems to highlight the assertion by Trinke and Bartholomew (1997) that peer attachment is founded on a sense of a safe haven, which can encourage individuals to explore possibilities in life and in relationships. Peer attachment was also positively related to self-focus: when peer attachment increases, one’s sense of independence and freedom to live life as one desires increases. In addition, the relationship between attachment and self-focus is underscored by Arnett (2004), who contended that self-focus is actually a natural aspect of development that involves simultaneously embracing a personal sense of independence and freedom.
Therefore, self-focus and possibilities are positively related to peer attachment for emerging adults.

Interestingly, the relationship peer attachment has with self-focus and possibilities seems to be relevant to counseling. As counselors seek to understand the subjective worldview of the client, it may be helpful to explore the ways in which connections with peers enhance clients’ sense of self, pursuit of identity, and experimentation with who they are and who they would like to become. It seems possible that lessons learned through peer relationships may be carried over into the counselor-client relationship as well, which could be important to acknowledge in terms of the possible impact of transference. Because self-focus and possibilities are dynamic characteristics of emerging adulthood, it may be helpful for counselors to affirm this as a natural part of the developmental process for emerging adults.

A negative relationship was shown between peer attachment and instability in this study. In effect, this demonstrates that as peer attachment increases, instability decreases for emerging adults. This finding seems to be substantiated by the idea that peer relationships are valued for their ability to provide emotional support (Patterson et. al., 1994). Therefore, individuals with secure attachment to peers would thereby encounter support in their peer relationships, thus limiting instability in those relationships. Thus, counselors should be aware of the ways in which instability may be related to peer relationships. In doing so, clinicians may become more empathic towards expressions of
instability and recognize the ways that stability in peer relationships may enhance overall wellbeing for emerging adults.

**Parent attachment and emerging adulthood.** In contrast to peer attachment, parent attachment was not significantly related to emerging adulthood in this study. These findings contrast with ideas presented by Trinke and Bartholomew (1997), who noted that parent attachment relationships are valued because they provide a secure base from which an emerging adult learns to explore life and engage in other relationships. This also seems to contradict findings from Rice and Whaley (1994) who found that parent attachment (as evidenced by maintaining current relationships with parents) was positively related to adjustment to college, which in turn helped promote students’ sense of stability and wellbeing. Furthermore, Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, and Albershein (2000) noted that parent-child attachment relationships form a model to which future attachment relationships are compared. This finding may be reflective of the fact that the recentering process occurs during emerging adulthood, which includes a reorientation of relationships during the transition to adulthood (Tanner, 2006). Such reorientation may encourage an adjustment in the attachment hierarchy, thereby shifting parents into a lesser role and promoting peer relationships to a place of greater importance among emerging adults. Although some research seems to demonstrate the importance of parent attachment, the results of this study showed that parent attachment was not significantly related to emerging adulthood.
Although results from this study did not show a significant relationship between parent attachment and emerging adulthood, it seems to be important for counselors to recognize the role that parent attachment may play in the lives of their clients. Since parent attachment relationships may serve as a model for future relationships, understanding parent attachment may be help clinicians gain a deeper understanding of how clients engage in attachment relationships in their day-to-day lives. In addition, since recentering seems to be a process rather than an event (Tanner, 2006), it is important for counselors to inquire about parent attachment rather than assuming that parent attachment is in the process of being relinquished in favor of pursuing peer attachment relationships. In sum, it seems that although parent attachment was not correlated with emerging adulthood in this study, it is important to acknowledge the potential role that parent attachment can play in the lives of emerging adult clients.

**Gender Differences**

A small, positive correlation was found between gender and emerging adulthood. Thus, as peer attachment (including areas of trust, communication, and alienation) increases, experiences of emerging adulthood increase as well. More specifically, results from this study demonstrated that the correlation between peer attachment and emerging adulthood for males was stronger than the correlation between peer attachment and emerging adulthood for females. Differences in attachment based on gender is supported by Del Giudice (2009), who contended that men tend to engage in avoidance behaviors when stressed, which draws them away from relationship with others, whereas women
tend to seek social interaction and support when stressed or anxious, which draws them towards relationships with others. However, the finding that peer attachment seems to be related to emerging adulthood more for males than for females contradicts findings from Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012), whose findings showed that females tended to have greater levels of peer attachment than males during adolescence. Findings from this study also contradict research suggesting that there are no conclusive differences regarding attachment relationships based on gender (Bakermans-Kranenburg & Van Ijzendoorn, 2009; Nelson, 2003).

Although perspectives differ on the role gender plays with regard to attachment relationships, it would seem profitable to acknowledge the difference between peer attachment and emerging adulthood based on gender and to recognize potential implications of these findings when counseling emerging adults. For instance, it could be an easy mistake to assume that emerging adulthood is experienced equally regardless of gender; however, these results suggest that there may be differences in how emerging adults experience emerging adulthood based upon gender. In light of these findings, it is important for counselors to be aware of how gender differences may shape emerging adulthood experiences, which in turn could impact the identification of presenting concerns and prevailing factors that are noteworthy regarding an emerging adult client’s pursuit of well-being.
**Standard Regression**

The method of standard regression produced significant results for this study, which demonstrated that parent and peer attachment significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood. It is important to acknowledge that emerging adulthood as measured by the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) includes seemingly positive (identity exploration, possibilities, self-focus, other-focus) and negative (feeling in-between, instability) components of emerging adulthood. In addition, parent and peer attachment as measured by the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) includes positive (trust and communication) and negative (alienation) qualities pertaining to attachment. Because both the IPPA and the IDEA included positive and negative constructs, this may have contributed to the finding that parent and peer attachment predict experiences of emerging adulthood.

The standard regression model showed that parent and peer attachment significantly predicted emerging adulthood experiences for males when all variables pertaining to parent and peer attachment were entered into the regression model simultaneously. In addition, peer trust significantly predicted emerging adulthood experiences for males. Thus, although findings suggest that parent and peer attachment collectively predict experiences of emerging adulthood, peer trust seems to be the most influential component of peer attachment that predicts experiences of emerging adulthood for males. This finding aligns with results from Fraley and Davis (1997) which showed that, as individuals age, they transition into creating more attachment bonds with peers.
rather than solely relying upon their parent attachment relationships. Furthermore, the idea of peer trust being important is underscored by the finding that emerging adults value peer attachment relationships for their ability to provide a safe haven (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). It seems that, for males, trust is a significant component that contributes to experiences associated with emerging adulthood.

The importance of peer trust for males may have significant implications in the discipline of counseling. Although peer trust seems to be important to emerging adult males, it seems that gender-role socialization may shape the ways in which trust is experienced and expressed, since males are socialized to refrain from self-disclosure (Good, Wallace & Borst, 1994) and tend to limit their expression of emotions (Good & Wood, 1995). Moreover, a complicated relationship seems to exist between a value placed upon peer trust combined with gender-role socialization that seems to inhibit the expression of emotion. This may influence the fact that men are less likely to pursue and receive counseling services as compared to females (Rule & Gandy, 1994). Thus, it seems that acknowledging the importance of peer trust and working to establish trust may be of prime importance when working with emerging adult male clients in a counseling setting. As counselors recognize the unique ways that male clients may perceive themselves and gain perspective on their lives, a concerted effort to establish trust may increase rapport and enhance the therapeutic alliance, thereby increasing the likelihood that emerging adult males will pursue and receive counseling services.
In contrast to males, peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation explained a unique proportion of the variance in the standard regression equation for females. Thus, although findings suggest that parent and peer attachment collectively predict experiences of emerging adulthood, peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation seem to be the most influential components of attachment that predict experiences of emerging adulthood for females. These results suggest that communication with peers as well as a sense of emotional connection with parents and peers seem to predict experiences of emerging adulthood for females. These results align with those found by Hazan and Zeifman (1994), who noted that peer attachment relationships are valued because there tends to be more equal levels of giving and receiving in peer attachment than in parent-child attachment relationships. In conjunction with this, emotional connection and support are important components of peer attachment and parent attachment (Patterson et. al., 1994, Scharf, Mayseless, & Kivenson-Baron, 2004), which may be why females seem to value a lack of parent alienation and peer alienation based on the results from this study.

The role that peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation play in terms of emerging adulthood are important to acknowledge within the discipline of counseling. Based on results from this study, it seems that elements of social support are vital to females with regard to attachment relationships. This finding is supported by Nelson (1993), who asserted that, due to a desire to eliminate negative evaluations made by a counselor, females tend to respond better to counselor suggestions during treatment,
work harder in therapy, and are more likely to positively evaluate a counselor than male clients. In addition, findings from this study support research from Del Giudice (2009), who noted that females tend to be drawn towards others during times of distress out of a need for social support. In light of this, it makes sense that emerging adult females are much more likely to seek out and receive counseling services than males (Rule & Gandy, 1994). Therefore, it is imperative that counselors recognize the ways in which attachment relationships inform client perspectives and experiences with regard to emerging adulthood. More specifically, it seems that a concerted effort on the part of counselors to focus on communication and emotional connection may encourage emerging adult females to explore presenting concerns and establish a therapeutic alliance while in counseling.

**Stepwise Regression**

The method of stepwise regression also produced significant results for this study, which further demonstrated that parent and peer attachment significantly predicted experiences of emerging adulthood. These results from the stepwise regression approach align with the results from the standard regression approach in some ways but differ in others. One commonality among the two approaches to the regression equation was that results showed that peer attachment seems to be more significant in predicting the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood than parent attachment. In addition, the most significant variable to predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood for males is peer trust for the standard and stepwise regression equations, and the most significant
variable to predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood for females seems to be peer communication based on results from the standard and stepwise regression equations.

In contrast to one another, the stepwise regression equation highlighted peer alienation as a significant predictor of emerging adulthood experiences for males, while the standard regression equation did not show peer alienation to be significant. Thus, for emerging adult males, peer trust and peer alienation were the most significant variables in terms of their ability to predict experiences of emerging adulthood. The value placed upon peer trust for males affirms the idea that security and emotional support seem to be important factors for emerging adults (Patterson et. al., 1994; Furman, Simon, Shaffer, & Bouchey, 2002). The additional finding suggesting the relevance of peer alienation as a predictor of emerging adulthood seems to support the assertion by Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012) that males tend to have lower levels of communication and trust than females. However, findings from this study conflict with findings from Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van Ijzendoorn (2009) as well as Nelson (1993) which showed that there are no significant differences regarding attachment based upon gender.

The importance of peer trust and peer alienation in terms of their ability to predict experiences of emerging adulthood among men has significant implications with regard to counseling. First, it seems that a counselor’s ability to increase levels of trust and decrease levels of alienation for male emerging adult clients is of vital importance in order for male clients to feel safe to explore issues in counseling. Moreover, it would
seem beneficial for counselors to help assess the roles that peer trust and peer alienation seem to have with regard to clients’ sense of well-being. As counselors learn to acknowledge the importance of peer trust and peer alienation with male clients, it would seem that the therapeutic alliance will be enhanced, which in turn may encourage clients to understand how their attachment relationships impact their view of themselves, their perception of counseling, and their ability to proceed through the developmental experiences of emerging adulthood.

Regarding females, the stepwise equation and the standard regression equation showed peer communication and peer alienation as significant variables, but the stepwise equation also showed parent alienation to contribute significantly to emerging adulthood experiences. Thus, according to the stepwise regression model, peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation seem to predict the experiences of emerging adulthood for females. The value of peer communication seems to be underscored by Hazan and Zeifman (1994), who noted that peer relationships are important for emerging adults because they tend to provide more reciprocity in terms of a sense of give-and-take in relationships in contrast to parent-child relationships. Peer relationships are also valued for their role in helping to provide a safe haven (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997), which in turn may be why peer alienation (which could suggest the lack of a safe haven) may be such an important predictor of emerging adulthood experiences for females. Findings suggesting that parent attachment increases one’s sense of security and autonomy for emerging adults may also underscore why parent alienation (or a lack of
security in relationship to one’s parents) seems to be a predictor of emerging adult experiences for females (Allen, Hauser, Bel, & O’Connor, 1994; Kobak, Cole Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming, & Gamble, 1993). Therefore, according to the stepwise regression model, peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation have the most significant ability to help predict the experiences of emerging adulthood among females. However, it is important to note that these findings contradict with findings from Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van Ijzendoorn (2009) as well as findings from Nelson (1993) which suggest that no definitive differences exist with regard to attachment based upon gender.

The idea that peer communication, peer alienation, and parent alienation predict experiences of emerging adulthood for emerging adult females is significant for counselors. As when working with male clients, it is important to recognize the unique needs and concerns of emerging adult females in light of their gender. Because of this, it seems that counselors who work with emerging adult females would benefit from exploring the role that communication with peers has on presenting concerns. In addition, it seems that exploring feelings of alienation that are experienced in relation to parents and peers may help counselors better understand the presenting concerns of clients, which in turn, may inform counselors on how to assess and provide optimal treatment to female clients in view of their developmental stage. In so doing, clients may have a deeper understanding of how attachment relationships seem to impact self-
Thus, with regard to this study, it is clear that the standard regression model and the stepwise regression model produced different results. The reason for these differences seems to be due to the difference in how regression is measured for each model. The standard regression approach measured whether parent and peer attachment predicted experiences of emerging adulthood by entering all variables into the equation simultaneously. In contrast, the stepwise regression approach allowed variables to be entered into the regression model in a specific order based upon the statistical contribution variables made in explaining overall variance in the dependent variable. Therefore, although results from both regression equations were significant for males and females, differences exist regarding which variables were shown to significantly contribute to each regression model.

The idea that peer attachment may significantly predict experiences of emerging adulthood has been suggested in prior research. For instance, Pitman and Scharfe (2010) found that, among emerging adults, peers were more likely to be at the top of an attachment hierarchy than parents. Security also seems to be a quality exhibited in relationships with peers who have experienced secure attachment relationships (Furman, Simon, Shaffer, & Bouchey, 2002), a finding that seems to align with the results from this study that showed the role that peer trust plays for males. However, it is important to note that findings from Furman, Simon, Shaffer, and Bouchey were based on both
genders and were not specified as true only for males. Results from this study also seem to align with the idea that conversations and relational connections with peers can help emerging adults move towards identity formation (Johnson & Aries, 1983; Nawaz, 2011), which underscores the role of peer communication in predicting the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood for females. However, the contention made by Johnson and Aries was directed toward emerging adults as a whole rather than specifically referring to females. Research has also shown that emerging adults seem more motivated to work towards maintaining peer relationships because they recognize that these relationships are not assumed to be permanent in the ways family relationships may be perceived (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006). This motivation may be an impetus for emerging adults to limit peer alienation because there seems to be less security in peer relationships than is typically assumed in family relationships.

In sum, findings from this study showed that different aspects of attachment serve as predictors of emerging adult experiences based upon gender. This idea is underscored by Del Giudice (2012), who affirms that gender differences exist with regard to attachment; however, results from this study contradict findings from Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van Ijzendoorn (2009) who contended that significant gender differences do not exist with regard to attachment. Interestingly, results from this study may have implications within the field of counseling. For instance, since results suggest that peer trust is a predictor of emerging adult experiences for males, the idea (and possible fear) of building trust with a counselor may prevent males from pursuing
counseling services. Therefore, a concerted effort should be made when working with male clients to establish trust and limit feelings of alienation in order to encourage male clients to participate in counseling. In contrast, since peer communication seems to be of significant value to females, it seems to make sense that females are more likely to receive counseling as compared to males (Rule & Gandy, 1994). Thus, when discussing clinically significant issues, it would seem beneficial to recognize the ways that trust and security issues may shape the ways in which males experience life as emerging adults whereas communication and emotional connection issues may shape the ways in which females experience life as emerging adults. Although these results were true of this sample and cannot automatically be assumed upon emerging adults as a whole, it may be valuable for counselors to recognize potential differences in attachment relationships and experiences of emerging adulthood based upon gender. Finally, peer relationships seem to significantly predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood, regardless of gender.

**Limitations**

Various limitations should be acknowledged with regard to this study. First, the sample was quite large (N = 1614). Although alpha was set at 0.01, power was at .80, and a small effect size was maintained, the large sample size may have led to results that were statistically significant simply because the sample was so large. In addition, the sample was primarily composed of Caucasian females who were primarily raised by their biological mothers and or biological fathers. Nonetheless, the number of male
participants was significant \(n = 420\), but it was much lower than the number of female participants \(n = 1192\). In light of this, it is important to limit generalization of the results of this study and to recognize that, while these results reflect the sample used for this study, they may not be applicable to other samples that are more diverse based upon gender, ethnicity, or primary caregiver status.

Initially, high school graduation date was one of the variables for this study. However, upon analyzing data, it was discovered that many participants seemed to misread the question regarding high school graduation date and instead provided what looked to be an anticipated college graduation date since many of the dates listed were future dates rather than being a date in the past. Because of this, high school graduation date was not included for data analysis in this study.

An additional limitation of this study was the high level of interrelatedness of parent and peer attachment as measured by the IPPA. Ideally, when conducting a regression analysis, the aim is to select predictor variables that are not related much to one another but are highly related to the criterion variables. Because parent attachment and peer attachment were highly related to one another, this seems to have led to a very large constant for the standard regression equation and the stepwise regression equation. Thus, it is important to recognize the impact that the interrelatedness of parent and peer attachment may have had on the results for this study.
**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study included a quantitative research design; however, it would be beneficial to conduct further research using either a qualitative or a mixed-methods approach that would broaden the ways in which the relationship between parent and peer attachment and emerging adulthood could be understood. Future research efforts should also explore gender differences with regard to attachment and emerging adulthood using a qualitative or mixed-methods approach. In addition, it may be helpful to explore counselors’ perceptions of attachment and emerging adulthood in an effort to recognize and inform counselor perspectives regarding parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood.

Participants in this study were primarily Caucasian females who were raised by their biological mothers and or biological fathers. Future research should include a more diverse sample in order to assess for differences in results with participants from different ethnic backgrounds and among those who were not primarily raised by their biological parents. Because participants for this study were recruited from a public Midwest university, further research should explore the degree to which parent and peer attachment predict experiences of emerging adulthood using emerging adults from other geographical locations, both in the United States and internationally. In so doing, the relationship between parent and peer attachment and emerging adulthood may be clarified and expanded.
Future research should also explore the differences between results for a clinical population versus a non-clinical population with regard to attachment and emerging adulthood. More specifically, further research could explore how parent and peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among emerging adult college students who receive counseling at a university counseling center. Such research could increase understanding as to the differences in how parent and peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among those who consistently receive mental health counseling in comparison to the general population of students who do not consistently receive counseling services.

Data was collected on participants’ gender, but sexual orientation data was not collected for this study. Future research could involve the collection of data pertaining to sexual orientation as part of demographic data. In so doing, the role of sexual orientation may be better understood with regard to attachment and also as it relates to the experiences of emerging adulthood.

Most of the participants in this study seemed to perceive their relationships with parents and peers as balanced (neither too close nor too distant), which demonstrates security in attachment. Future research should explore differences in how other types of attachment relationships, such as insecure or avoidant attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), are related to experiences of emerging adulthood. Related to this, most of the participants in this study seemed to show high levels of trust and communication towards parents and peers but noted low levels of alienation as measured
by the IPPA. It would be valuable to conduct research that explores how different constructs of attachment as measured by the IPPA (such as low trust, low communication, and high alienation) may uniquely relate to or predict emerging adulthood experiences. Such research could expand awareness of the impact that attachment variations may have upon emerging adulthood.

Although standard and stepwise regression models were used in this study, the hierarchical regression model was not used in this study. Because hierarchical regression seems to rely on the use of a theoretical model in order to determine the order of variables entered into the regression equation, it would seem beneficial to use a hierarchical regression model with the theoretical premise that peer attachment seems to be a stronger predictor of emerging adulthood experiences than parent attachment. By utilizing hierarchical regression, differences in which attachment variables significantly and meaningfully predict emerging adulthood experiences can be better understood.

In sum, although this study produced significant results, there is much more room for exploration with regard to parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood. As more research is conducted in these areas of study, counselors can gain insight and awareness as to the unique concerns and characteristics of emerging adult clients. Further research involving the relationship between parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood can thereby encourage excellence in clinical practice and help counselors acknowledge qualities and characteristics that are unique or meaningful to emerging adults who seek counseling services.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify which combination of factors associated with parent attachment, peer attachment, sex, age, ethnicity, number of undergraduate credit hours, high school graduation date, relationship status, residential status, mental health diagnosis, primary caregivers, perceived closeness of parent attachment, and perceived closeness of peer attachment predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20. Results from this study seemed to show that parent and peer attachment predicted the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood among participants used in this study, although the facets of attachment that most significantly predicted emerging adult experiences differed based upon gender. Various limitations were identified for this study; however, the results from this study suggest that a dynamic relationship exists between parent attachment, peer attachment, and emerging adulthood. Future research should be pursued in order to gain further insight on the ways in which parent and peer attachment can shape and predict the degree of experiencing emerging adulthood. In so doing, counselors can be equipped and trained to understand the unique experiences of emerging adults in an effort to provide optimal counseling services to them. With that as a foundation, the hope is to assist emerging adult clients and the counselors who work with them to better understand and appreciate the ways in which attachment to parents and attachment to peers impact the dynamic stage of life known as emerging adulthood.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Sex: __ Male   __ Female

Age: ___18   ___19   ___20

Ethnicity: ___ Asian or Pacific Islander        ___ Asian Indian
            ___ Black/African American (non-Hispanic) ___ Caucasian/White
            ___ Native American             ___ Latino/Hispanic
            ___ Puerto Rican              ___ Other(specify):_____
            ___ More than one race (specify): _______________________

Number of undergraduate credit hours: ______

High School graduation date (month/year): ______

Relationship Status: ___ In a committed relationship
                     ___ Dating but not in a committed relationship
                     ___ Single

Residential Status (select 1): ___ Live in dorm
                                 ___ Live with parent(s)/guardian(s)
                                 ___ Live by myself
                                 ___ Live with parent or family member
                                 ___ Live with romantic partner
                                 ___ Live with friends/non-family

118
___ Live with others (not parent(s)/guardians)

Have you ever received a mental health diagnosis? (eg. Depression, anxiety, etc.)

___Yes  ___No

Primarily raised by (check all that apply):

___ Biological Mother  ___ Biological Father
___ Step-Mother  ___ Step-Father
___ Grandmother  ___ Grandfather
___ Guardian(s)/Foster Parent(s)  ___ Aunt
___ Uncle  ___ Cousin
___ Other (specify) ____________________

Click on the number that corresponds to the quality of the relationship you have with your 2 primary caregivers based on the spectrum below:

1  2  3  4  5
Too Close  Not Close Enough

Click on the number that corresponds to the quality of the relationship you have with your 2 closest friends based on the spectrum below:

1  2  3  4  5
Too Close  Not Close Enough
APPENDIX B
THE INVENTORY OF PARENT AND PEER ATTACHMENT—ARMSDEN AND GREENBERG (1987)
APPENDIX B

THE INVENTORY OF PARENT AND PEER ATTACHMENT—
ARMSDEN AND GREENBERG (1987)

This questionnaire asks about your relationships with important people in your life: your parents (or parental guardians), and your close friends. Please read the directions to each part carefully.

Part I

The following statements ask about your feelings about your parents or the people who have acted as your parents. If you have more than one person acting as your mother or father (e.g., a natural mother and a stepmother) answer the questions for the ones you feel have most influenced you. Please read each statement and click the box that tells how true the statement is for you now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Almost Never or Never True (1)</th>
<th>Not Very Often True (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes True (3)</th>
<th>Often True (4)</th>
<th>Almost Always or Always True (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My parents respects my feelings.</td>
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<td>I feel my parents are successful as parents.</td>
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<td>I wish I had different parents.</td>
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<td>My parents accept me as I am.</td>
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<td>I have to rely on myself when I have a problem to solve.</td>
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<td>I like to get my parents’ point of view on things I’m concerned about.</td>
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<td>I feel it’s no use letting my feelings show.</td>
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<td>My parents sense when I’m upset about something.</td>
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<td>Talking over my problems with my parents makes me feel ashamed or foolish.</td>
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<td>My parents expect too much from me.</td>
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<td>I get easily upset at home.</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
<td>Almost Never or Never True (1)</td>
<td>Not Very Often True (2)</td>
<td>Sometimes True (3)</td>
<td>Often True (4)</td>
<td>Almost Always or Always True (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I get upset a lot more than my parents know about.</td>
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<td>When we discuss things, my parents consider my point of view.</td>
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<td>My parents trust my judgment.</td>
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<td>My parents have their own problems, so I don’t bother them with mine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My parents help me to understand myself better.</td>
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<td>I tell my parents about my problems and troubles.</td>
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<td>I feel angry with my parents.</td>
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<td>I don’t get much attention at home.</td>
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<td>My parents encourage me to talk about my difficulties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My parents understand me.</td>
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<td>I don’t know whom I can depend on these days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I am angry about something, my parents try to be understanding.</td>
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<td>I trust my parents.</td>
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<td>My parents don’t understand what I’m going through these days.</td>
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<td>I can count on my parents when I need to get something off my chest.</td>
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<td>I feel that no one understands me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If my parents know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part II

This part asks about your feelings about your relationships with your close friends. Please read each statement and click the box that tells how true the statement is for you now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Almost Never or Never True (1)</th>
<th>Not Very Often True (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes True (3)</th>
<th>Often True (4)</th>
<th>Almost Always or Always True (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like to get my friends’ point of view on things I’m concerned about.</td>
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<td>My friends can tell when I’m upset about something.</td>
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<td>When we discuss things, my friends care about my point of view.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking over my problems with friends makes me feel ashamed or foolish.</td>
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<td>I wish I had different friends.</td>
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<td>My friends understand me.</td>
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<td>My friends encourage me to talk about my difficulties.</td>
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<td>My friends accept me as I am.</td>
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<td>I feel the need to be in touch with my friends more often.</td>
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<td>My friends don’t understand what I’m going through these days.</td>
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<td>I feel alone or apart when I am with my friends.</td>
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<td>My friends listen to what I have to say.</td>
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<td>I feel my friends are good friends.</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
<td>Almost Never or Never True (1)</td>
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<td>Almost Always or Always True (5)</td>
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<td>My friends are fairly easy to talk to.</td>
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<td>When I am angry about something, my friends try to be understanding.</td>
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<td>I trust my friends.</td>
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<td>My friends respect my feelings.</td>
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<td>I get upset a lot more than my friends know about.</td>
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<td>It seems as if my friends are irritated with me for no reason.</td>
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<td>I can tell my friends about my problems and troubles.</td>
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<td>If my friends know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.</td>
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APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

THE IDEA: INVENTORY OF THE DIMENSIONS OF EMERGING ADULTHOOD—
REIFMAN, ARNETT, AND COLWELL (2007)

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

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

Be sure to click only one box per line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this period of your life a…</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree (3)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (4)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. time of many possibilities?</td>
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<td>2. time of exploration?</td>
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<td>3. time of confusion?</td>
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<td>4. time of experimentation?</td>
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<td>5. time of personal freedom?</td>
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<td>6. time of feeling restricted?</td>
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<td>7. time of responsibility for yourself?</td>
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<td>8. time of feeling stressed out?</td>
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<td>9. time of instability?</td>
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<td>10. time of optimism?</td>
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<td>11. time of high pressure?</td>
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<td>12. time of finding out who you are?</td>
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<td>13. time of settling down?</td>
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<td>14. time of responsibility for others?</td>
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<td>15. time of independence?</td>
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<td>16. time of open choices?</td>
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<td>17. time of unpredictability?</td>
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<td>18. time of commitments to others?</td>
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<td>19. time of self-sufficiency?</td>
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<td>20. time of many worries?</td>
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<td>21. time of trying out new things?</td>
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<td>22. time of focusing on yourself?</td>
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<td>23. time of separating from parents?</td>
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<td>24. time of defining yourself?</td>
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<td>25. time of planning for the future?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is this period of your life a…</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1)</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree (2)</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree (3)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (4)</td>
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<td>26. time of seeking a sense of meaning?</td>
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<td>27. time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?</td>
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<td>28. time of learning to think for yourself?</td>
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<td>29. time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?</td>
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<td>30. time of gradually becoming an adult?</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
PERMISSION TO USE THE IPPA
APPENDIX D
PERMISSION TO USE THE IPPA

From: Greenberg, Mark [mailto:mxg47@psu.edu]

Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2011 10:51 am

To: Schnyders, Christina

Subject: emerging adulthood

Dear Christina

Thanks for your email. I have attached a copy of the IPPA and manual and this email provides you with permission for use in your study.

Best of luck!

Mark

Mark T. Greenberg Ph.D.
Bennett Chair of Prevention Research
Director, Prevention Research Center
HDFS - Henderson Building South Room 109
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802
PHE 814 863-0112
FAX 814 865-2530

Visit our website: http://www.prevention.psu.edu
Hello!

I am a doctoral student at Kent State University, and I am very interested in using the IPPA as part of my dissertation research. I am looking to do a multiple regression study in order to understand how parental and peer attachment are able to predict dimensions of emerging adulthood (as measured by the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood). Through my research thus far, I have become aware of the IPPA and believe it would be an excellent inventory to use for my dissertation. Because of this, I am writing to ask for permission to use the IPPA for dissertation purposes. If you do grant permission, please let me know how I might attain copies of the IPPA. My aim is to use the inventory as part of an online survey for first-year university students at Kent State University, so I also wanted to ask for permission to convert the inventory to an online format. The survey would be offered to KSU freshman through a private email, which would include a link to the survey for those interested in participating in the study.

If you have any further questions for me, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Blessings!

Christina Schnyders
APPENDIX E

PERMISSION TO USE THE IDEA
From: Reifman, Alan [mailto:Alan.Reifman@ttu.edu]

Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2011 12:22 PM

To: Schnyders, Christina

Subject: emerging adulthood

Thanks for your message. I have attached the Journal of Youth Development article, plus a more extensive manuscript that provides detailed psychometric data. The IDEA questionnaire, for which no permission is necessary, is available at: http://courses.ttu.edu/hdfs3317-reifman/IDEA.htm. At Kent State, are you in the same program where Manfred van Dulmen is a faculty member? He’s used the IDEA in some of his research. His faculty webpage is:

http://www.personal.kent.edu/~mvandul/

SINCERELY, ALAN REIFMAN
Hello!

I am a doctoral student at Kent State University, and I am very interested in using the IDEA as part of my dissertation research. I am looking to do a multiple regression study in order to understand how parental and peer attachment (as measured by the Inventory of Parental and Peer Attachment) are accounted for in dimensions of emerging adulthood (as measured by the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood). Through my research thus far, I have become aware of the IDEA and believe it would be an excellent inventory to use for my dissertation. Because of this, I am writing to ask for permission to use the IDEA for dissertation purposes. If you do grant permission, please let me know how I might attain copies of the IDEA. My aim is to use the inventory as part of an online survey for first-year university students at Kent State University, so I also wanted to ask for permission to convert the inventory to an online format. The survey would be offered to KSU freshman through a private email, which would include a link to the survey for those interested in participating in the study.

If you have any further questions for me, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Blessings!

Christina Schnyders
APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: Parental and Peer Attachment as a Predictor of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood

Principal Investigator: Christina Schnyders

You are being invited to participate in a study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Purpose: Attachment theory provides a developmental lens through which individuals can be described and understood. Attachment was initially understood to occur between a mother and her infant child(ren), (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) but research now suggests that attachment relationships can occur outside of the mother-child bond, expanding to relationships with other family members and key individuals in a person’s life (Bretherton, 1985; Weiss, 1982). In addition, research has shown that attachment relationships can continue beyond childhood and can exist throughout the life span (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Pitman & Scharfe, 2010).

Another lens through which to describe and understand individuals is through the lens of emerging adulthood, a developmental stage that describes individuals between the ages of 18-24 (Tanner & Arnett, 2009) but can occur up through age 29 (Tanner, Arnett, & Leis, 2009). Emerging adulthood can be distinguished from both adolescence and young adulthood as a unique stage of development (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood consists of five dimensions: instability, self-focus, identity exploration, feeling in-between, and possibilities (Arnett, 2004). It is through these dimensions that emerging adulthood has been understood and conceptualized as a developmental stage.

Although both attachment theory and emerging adulthood theory have a basis in research, the integration of these two constructs has room for further exploration. More specifically, the impact of parental and peer attachment upon the dimensions of emerging adulthood has not yet been studied. The purpose of this study is to determine which factors associated with parental and peer attachment predict the dimensions of emerging adulthood in undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 20.
Procedures: Undergraduate students at Kent State University between the ages of 18 to 20 will receive an email requesting their participation in this study. The email will contain a link to an online survey created through Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). The survey which contains questions pertaining to demographic information, all of the questions from the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, and all of the questions from the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood. Participants will be required to complete the online survey. The standard practice requirement for this study is that participants provide informed consent, thereby acknowledging their willingness to participate in the study. Survey completion is for the purpose of the study. The online survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Aside from completing the survey, no additional follow-up requirements are necessary for participants.

Benefits: This research will not benefit you directly. However, your participation in this study will provide information regarding the relationship between attachment and emerging adulthood which can potentially increase understanding as to which factors associated with parent and peer attachment predict the dimensions of emerging adulthood in undergraduate students.

Risks and Discomforts: Some discomfort may be experienced as a result of this study. For example, some of the questions that you will be asked are with regard to your perception of yourself as well as your perception of your relationship you’re your parents (or parental guardians) and peers, which may in turn cause discomfort for you. For those who find that the questions have touched on emotionally sensitive issues and wish to speak further with someone, on-campus counseling services are available in the Counseling and Human Development Center and are free of charge to students.

In addition, because the survey will be offered online, some individuals may experience discomfort because of the use of technology (i.e., a computer-based survey). Participation in this study is voluntary, and if you find that you are uncomfortable answering the questions or completing the survey because it is administered online, you can opt out of participating in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Your study related information will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Any identifying information (i.e., student identification number) will be kept in a secure location and only the researchers will have access to the data. Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used. All data collected from participant surveys will be transferred and stored on a spreadsheet in preparation for data analysis, and the spreadsheet will contain no identifying information in order to ensure confidentiality of participants.
Compensation: As an incentive for participation in this study, one participant will be randomly selected to receive a new Apple iPad 2.

Voluntary Participation: Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Christina Schnyders at (419) 606-0900 or Jason McGlothlin, Ph.D., PCC-S at (330) 672-0716. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

Consent Statement and Signature: I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. My completion and return of this survey will be indicative of my consent to participate in this study. I may print a copy of this statement for future reference.
APPENDIX G

EMAIL TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS
APPENDIX G

EMAIL TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

To: Undergraduate Students Between the Ages of 18 and 20
From: Christina Schnyders
Subject: Dissertation Study—Participation Request

Hello!

Please consider participating in my dissertation study. As an incentive for participating in the study, one participant will be randomly selected to receive a new Apple iPad 2!

My name is Christina Schnyders, and I am a doctoral candidate at Kent State University in the area of Counseling and Human Development Services. I am sending you this email in order to ask you to serve as a participant for my dissertation study. The purpose of my dissertation is to determine the degree to which parent and peer attachment predict experiences of emerging adulthood. In order to serve as a participant, click on the link below, which will allow you to see the requirements for participation in the study. You will then access a link that will allow you to read and check a box indicating that you provide informed consent for the study. Once you have provided informed consent, you will then fill out an online survey that contains demographic information and rating-scale question. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey.

To participate in the study, please click on the following link:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K6WL78G

Thank you for your time, and please consider serving as a participant for this dissertation study.

Sincerely,

Christina Schnyders, M.A., P.C.
Doctoral Candidate, Kent State University
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