

EA 2026

Emerging Adults on the Road to Maturity

June 29 - July 1, 2026

 Poznań, Poland

 June 29 - July 1, 2026

CONFERENCE BOOK

Programme • Abstracts • Practical Information

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Dear Colleagues,

The Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood has now resurrected our thematic regional conferences around the globe in the off-years from our biennial Conference on Emerging Adulthood.

Please mark your calendar and join us at Poznań, Poland on **Jun 29th - July1, 2026** for what is shaping up to be a great conference.

Sincerely,



*Carolyn McNamara Barry, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Professor of Psychology
University of Scranton
President, Society for the Study of Emerging
Adulthood*

I cordially invite an international group of researchers to participate in a conference dedicated to the topic of emerging adulthood.

This event offers a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary dialogue on the complex transformations shaping the lives of young adults in today's world. I believe that our shared reflections and exchange of experiences will not only deepen our scientific understanding, but also inspire new and innovative directions for future research.



ks. prof. Mieczysław Polak

*Dean Faculty of Theology
Dziekan Wydziału Teologicznego*

I am pleased to invite you to join the conference dedicated to exploring the challenges and opportunities accompanying the transition into adulthood. In today's rapidly changing social and cultural landscape, the assumption of full responsibility for one's life is increasingly delayed, and the journey toward maturity has become more intricate and multi-stage.

This gathering will offer a forum for in-depth examination of this phenomenon, with particular attention to its developmental, cognitive, and social dimensions. I am convinced that our joint search for answers to questions about the boundaries and definitions of adulthood will allow us better to understand the dynamics of change in the younger generation.



Mariusz Urbański

*Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Cognitive
Science
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*

*Dziekan Wydziału Psychologii i Kognitywistyki
Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*

Conference Venue

Faculty of Theology
Wieżowa 2/4, 61-111 Poznań

The Law on Higher Education in Poland allows relevant Church authorities to run and supervise faculties of theology at state colleges and universities nationwide with regard to the teaching of Roman Catholic theology.

The Faculty of Theology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań is thus supervised by the current Archbishop of Poznań who acts in his capacity as the Grand Chancellor of the Faculty and on behalf of the Apostolic See in the Vatican, confirms the right to teach in the name of the Roman Catholic Church.



Collegium Maius
Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology
Fredry 10, 61-701 Poznań

The Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology is located in Collegium Maius a building built between 1908 and 1911 as a part of the Imperial Quarter. The Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology where tradition meets modernity: modern teaching rooms in an historical building, a neo modernist library, a wide range of specialized courses, development of pioneering scholarly projects, wide array of educational options for foreign students.



Collegium Minus (Gala Dinner Venue)
Henryka Wieniawskiego 1, 61-712 Poznań

Collegium Minus is a striking, Neo-Renaissance historic building located at Adam Mickiewicz Square (Plac Adama Mickiewicza), right in the heart of Poznań's Imperial Quarter. Serving as the main administrative headquarters of Adam Mickiewicz University (UAM) in Poznań, it stands as an iconic symbol of the city's rich academic heritage. The building was erected between 1905 and 1910 based on the designs of the German architect Eduard Fürstenau. Its impressive Neo-Renaissance architecture features massive portals with towering gables. A distinctive round tower, originally intended as an astronomical observatory, adds to its unique silhouette. While it was built long before, it is today an inseparable part of the university that proudly traces its local roots back to 1519 and Bishop Jan Lubrański's Academy. Collegium Minus is not just the rectorate and the central administrative hub. It is famous for housing the magnificent University Auditorium (Aula UAM), which is widely celebrated for its outstanding acoustics and regularly hosts academic ceremonies as well as classical music concerts. The building's interior also features the Small Hall, adorned with a copy of Jan Matejko's famous painting „The Founding of the Lubrański Academy,” as well as numerous plaques and busts honoring distinguished scholars and cultural figures.



Special Event | Organ Concert

Organ Concert in Fara Basilica

A musical encounter with Bach, Polish organ music and Romantic repertoire
in one of Poznań's historic sacred spaces.

**How can music, architecture and academic community become a shared moment
of reflection on the road to maturity?**

1

Experience the Basilica

An invitation to enter the historic atmosphere of Poznań's Fara Basilica through sound, space and a short cultural pause within the conference day.

2

Listen to organ traditions

A programme built around Johann Sebastian Bach, Polish organ music by Mieczysław Surzyński and Feliks Nowowiejski, and a Romantic sonata by August Gottfried Ritter.

3

Encounter through music

The concert offers a non-verbal space of attention, beauty and community, complementing scientific dialogue with cultural and spiritual resonance.

For conference participants and invited guests

Music | Heritage | Organ repertoire | Reflection | Poznań

CONCERT PROGRAMME

From Bach to Polish and Romantic organ traditions

A short cultural event in the conference programme, performed by young organists from the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań.

1. Baroque opening

Johann Sebastian Bach's Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV 547 opens the programme with architectural clarity and festive energy. The chorale prelude O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß, BWV 622 introduces a contemplative dimension.

2. Polish organ colour

Works by Mieczysław Surzyński and Feliks Nowowiejski bring Polish organ tradition into the programme. Surzyński's Capriccio in F-sharp minor offers expressive virtuosity, while Nowowiejski's Dumka adds a lyrical and meditative tone.

3. Romantic closing

August Gottfried Ritter's Sonata No. II in E minor, Op. 19 closes the concert with Romantic breadth, dramatic contrasts and a clear sense of musical culmination.

Performers

Bartosz Wódczak, Witold Piotrowski

organ

First-year students of the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań.

Academic supervisor: Prof. Agnieszka Tarnawska.

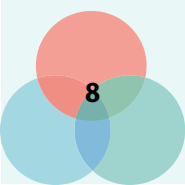
30 June 2026, 16:15-17:00 | Fara Basilica, Poznań

Key themes

- Bach and Baroque architecture
- Polish organ tradition
- Romantic organ repertoire
- Sacred space and reflection
- Music as cultural encounter
- Poznań heritage

Concert programme

Composer	Work	Performer
Johann Sebastian Bach	Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV 547	Witold Piotrowski
Johann Sebastian Bach	Chorale Prelude O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß, BWV 622	Witold Piotrowski
Mieczysław Surzyński	Capriccio in F-sharp minor, Op. 36	Bartosz Wódczak
Feliks Nowowiejski	Dumka (Andante lamentabile), Op. 31 No. 1	Witold Piotrowski
August Gottfried Ritter	Sonata No. II in E minor, Op. 19	Bartosz Wódczak



Pre-conference Workshop

In Search of Religious/Spiritual Identity in Emerging Adulthood

A workshop on religious change, meaning-making and professional accompaniment in emerging adulthood.

How do young people rethink belief, practice, affiliation and self-understanding while moving toward adult life?

1 Explore religious change

A developmental look at shifts in religious/spiritual identity, including affiliation, belief, practice and self-understanding.

2 Clarify measurement

A focused discussion of conceptual and psychometric issues, including multidimensionality and changing institutional involvement.

3 Support young adults

Theory-informed strategies for counseling, education, mentoring and pastoral or spiritual accompaniment.

For researchers and practitioners accompanying emerging adults

Theory | Methods | Applied strategies | Reflective practice

Workshop Design

From theory to accompaniment

Three workshop segments

1. Workshop overview

Religious/spiritual identity exploration in emerging adulthood, grounded in emerging adulthood theory and meaning-making. The segment examines changes in affiliation, belief, practice and self-understanding, supported by brief religious deidentification narratives.

2. Methodological segment

A discussion of key conceptual and psychometric issues, with attention to multidimensionality, changing institutional involvement and tools for assessing religiosity in emerging adult populations.

3. Applied segment

Theory-informed intervention propositions and supportive strategies transferable across helping contexts, including counseling, education or mentoring, and pastoral/spiritual accompaniment. Cognitive-behavioral principles illustrate work with meaning, hope, practice, community and moral commitments.

Facilitators



Adam Falewicz, PhD

Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Szczecin, Poland

Focus: religious struggle, deconversion, doubt, meaning-making and existential development; certified cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist



Radosław Rybarski, PhD

Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

Focus: meaning-making, religious struggle, perceptions of suffering, spirituality as coping and quality of life; certified cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist

Pre-conference Workshop

Emerging Adulthood in the Context of Hyperculture. A Philosophical Perspective

A workshop on identity formation, freedom, meaning-making, relationships, and belonging in contemporary culture.

How does adulthood emerge in a world characterized by hyperconnectivity, self-optimization, transparency, cultural mobility, declining rituals, and the growing pressure to perform?

1 Explore identity in hyperculture

A philosophical examination of identity formation in emerging adulthood, including selfhood, authenticity, belonging, cultural mobility, digital self-construction, and the transition from inherited identities to self-designed life projects.

2 Understand contemporary cultural pressures

A focused discussion of the major social and cultural forces shaping young adults today, including achievement culture, burnout, self-optimization, pressure of positivity, transparency, digital communication, information overload, loneliness, changing experiences of intimacy, and the erosion of shared symbolic frameworks.

3 Cultivate meaningful adulthood

Theory-informed reflections on fostering resilience, commitment, friendship, community, contemplation, meaning-making, and sustainable forms of adulthood capable of resisting fragmentation, exhaustion, and social isolation.

For researchers and practitioners accompanying emerging adults

Philosophy | Culture | Identity | Meaning-Making | Applied Reflection

Workshop Design

From hyperculture to meaningful adulthood

Three workshop segments

1. Workshop overview

Emerging adulthood as an existential condition in contemporary hyperculture. This segment explores identity formation in a world characterized by cultural abundance, unlimited choice, digital connectivity, and the transformation of freedom into a project of continuous self-construction. Particular attention will be given to questions of belonging, authenticity, and the search for meaning amid fluid social and cultural environments.

2. Cultural-philosophical segment

A discussion of the principal pathologies and opportunities shaping contemporary adulthood. Topics include achievement and burnout, self-optimization and psychopolitical self-management, transparency and digital self-exposure, swarm-like forms of communication, information fatigue, the weakening of deep attention, changing forms of intimacy and friendship, the disappearance of rituals, the decline of symbolic structures, and the growing difficulty of encountering genuine otherness.

3. Applied segment

Theory-informed reflections and practical strategies transferable across counseling, education, mentoring, coaching, and pastoral accompaniment. Special attention will be given to meaning-making, commitment, community formation, ritual practices, contemplative attention, healthy limits, responsible freedom, and the cultivation of relationships capable of supporting mature and flourishing adulthood.

Facilitator

Rev. Przemysław Zgórecki, PhD

Faculty of Theology
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

Focus: philosophical anthropology, phenomenology, philosophy of culture and technology, identity formation, meaning-making, contemporary social philosophy, and the existential challenges of emerging adulthood.

Key themes

- Hyperculture and identity
- Achievement culture and burnout
- Psychopolitics and self-management
- Eros, friendship, and belonging
- Contemplation and deep attention
- Community and otherness
- Freedom and self-optimization
- Digital selfhood and transparency
- Swarm communication and loneliness
- Rituals and symbolic life
- Meaning-making in emerging adulthood
- Flourishing beyond performance

Pre-conference Workshop

Self-Compassion and Intuitive Eating in Emerging and Early Adulthood

A workshop on self-kindness and rebuilding trust in internal hunger and satiety cues.

How can young women move from body control, restrictive dieting and self-criticism toward a more compassionate, embodied and intuitive relationship with food?

1

Understand intuitive eating

A developmental and health-oriented introduction to intuitive eating as an adaptive eating style based on internal hunger and satiety cues, unconditional permission to eat, biological rather than emotional reasons for eating, and gentle nutrition.

2

Explore self-compassion and body esteem

A focused discussion of how self-compassion, body esteem and cultural body norms shape women's relationship with food and the body in early adulthood, including self-kindness, mindfulness, common humanity, shame, judgment and restrictive dieting.

3

Support mindful eating practices

Theory-informed strategies for education, counseling, prevention and psychoeducational work with young adults, showing how self-compassion can support emotion regulation, body acceptance and a non-restrictive, health-supportive approach to eating.

For researchers and practitioners working with young adults, eating behavior and health psychology

Theory | Health Psychology | Body Image | Self-Compassion | Psychoeducation

Workshop language: Polish

Workshop Design

From body control to compassionate attunement

Two workshop segments

1. Workshop overview

The workshop introduces intuitive eating as a non-restrictive and weight-neutral approach to eating, grounded in body awareness, trust in internal cues and care for one's physical and psychological wellbeing. The segment presents intuitive eating in relation to early adulthood, body esteem and the sociocultural pressures shaping women's body image and eating practices. Special attention will be given to research on women in early adulthood and to psychological measures such as the Intuitive Eating Scale and the Self-Compassion Scale.

2. Applied segment

The final segment translates research findings into psychoeducational and helping practices. Participants will work with examples of compassionate responses to body dissatisfaction, restrictive dieting, food-related guilt and emotional eating. The segment offers practical exercises supporting mindful awareness of hunger and satiety, self-kindness in moments of eating difficulty, and a shift from control-based to care-based eating choices.

Facilitator

Julita Wojciechowska, PhD

Faculty of Psychology and Cognitive Science
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

Focus: psychology of eating and educational psychology.

Workshop language: Polish

Key themes

- Intuitive eating
- Body esteem
- Gentle nutrition
- Restrictive dieting
- Mindful eating practices
- Weight-neutral approach
- Self-compassion
- Hunger and satiety cues
- Body-related shame
- Emotional eating
- Emotion regulation
- Health psychology

Warsztat przedkonferencyjny

Samowspółczucie i jedzenie intuicyjne w wyłaniającej się i wczesnej dorosłości

Warsztat o życzliwości wobec siebie i odbudowywaniu zaufania do wewnętrznych sygnałów głodu i sytości.

Jak wspierać młode kobiety w przechodzeniu od kontroli ciała, restrykcyjnych diet i samokrytyki ku bardziej współczującej, uważnej i intuicyjnej relacji z jedzeniem?

1 Zrozumienie intuicyjnego jedzenia Rozwojowe i zdrowotne wprowadzenie do jedzenia intuicyjnego jako adaptacyjnego stylu odżywiania, opartego na sygnałach głodu i sytości, bezwarunkowym przyzwoleniu na jedzenie, jedzeniu z powodów biologicznych, a nie emocjonalnych, oraz łagodnym odżywianiu.	2 Analiza samowspółczucia i stosunku do ciała Skoncentrowana dyskusja o tym, jak samowspółczucie, stosunek do własnego ciała oraz kulturowe normy wyglądu wpływają na relację młodych kobiet z jedzeniem i ciałem we wczesnej dorosłości.	3 Wspieranie uważnych praktyk jedzenia Strategie oparte na teorii i badaniach, możliwe do wykorzystania w edukacji, poradnictwie, profilaktyce i psychoedukacji. Uczestnicy zobaczą, jak samowspółczucie wspiera regulację emocji, akceptację ciała i prozdrowotne wybory żywieniowe.
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Dla badaczek, badaczy i praktyków pracujących z młodymi dorosłymi, obrazem ciała, zachowaniami żywieniowymi i psychologią zdrowia

Teoria | Psychologia zdrowia | Obraz ciała | Samowspółczucie | Psychoedukacja

Język warsztatu: polski

Projekt warsztatu

Od kontroli ciała do życzliwej uważności

Dwa segmenty warsztatu

1. Wprowadzenie do warsztatu

Pierwsza część wprowadza jedzenie intuicyjne jako nierygorystyczne i neutralne wagowo podejście do odżywiania, zakorzenione w świadomości ciała, zaufaniu do sygnałów wewnętrznych oraz trosce o dobrostan fizyczny i psychiczny. Segment pokazuje jedzenie intuicyjne w kontekście wczesnej dorosłości, samooceny ciała oraz społeczno-kulturowych presji wpływających na obraz kobiecego ciała i praktyki jedzeniowe. Szczególna uwaga zostanie poświęcona badaniom kobiet we wczesnej dorosłości oraz narzędziom psychologicznym, takim jak Skala Jedzenia Intuicyjnego oraz Skala Współczucia dla Samego Siebie.

2. Segment aplikacyjny

Ostatnia część przekłada wyniki badań na praktykę psychoedukacyjną i pomocową. Uczestniczki i uczestnicy będą pracować z przykładami współczujących reakcji na niezadowolenie z ciała, restrykcyjne diety, poczucie winy związane z jedzeniem oraz jedzenie emocjonalne. Segment obejmuje ćwiczenia wspierające uważne rozpoznawanie głodu i sytości, życzliwość wobec siebie w momentach trudności jedzeniowych oraz przechodzenie od wyborów opartych na kontroli do wyborów opartych na trosce.

Prowadząca

dr Julita Wojciechowska

Wydział Psychologii i Kognitywistyki

Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

Obszary zainteresowań: psychologia jedzenia, psychologia edukacji

Język warsztatu: polski

Kluczowe tematy

- jedzenie intuicyjne
- samowspółczucie
- stosunek do własnego ciała
- wczesna dorosłość
- restrykcyjne diety
- uważność i sygnały ciała
- regulacja emocji
- psychoedukacja i profilaktyka

EA 2026 Conference Programme

Emerging Adults on the Road to Maturity

Poznań, Poland | 29 June – 1 July 2026

Conference at a glance

Full conference flow aligned with the programme published at ea2026.org

Three days of research, dialogue and encounter in Poznań

Pre-conference workshop | Poster session | Keynotes | Parallel sessions | Organ concert | Gala dinner | Documentary session

June 29 (Monday)	June 30 (Tuesday)	July 1 (Wednesday)
8:30-9:00 Welcome/Coffee 9:00-12:00 Pre-Conference: Panel 1 - Religious and Spiritual Identity 12:00-13:00 Opening Reception 13:00-14:30 Poster Session 14:30-15:30 Lunch 15:30-16:00 Break and move to Collegium Maius, ul. Fredry 10 16:00-17:00 Keynote I - Jeffrey Jensen Arnett: "The Worldwide Decline in Fertility: Is Emerging Adulthood the Source?" 17:00-18:30 Poznań City / University Tour	9:00-9:30 Welcome/Coffee 9:30-11:00 Parallel sessions 1 11:00-11:15 Coffee Break 11:15-12:45 Parallel sessions 2 12:45-13:45 Lunch Break 13:45-15:15 Parallel sessions 3 15:15-16:00 Break and move to Fara Basilica 16:15-17:00 Organ concert in Fara Basilica 17:00-17:30 Break and move to Collegium Maius 17:30-18:30 Keynote II - Lene Arnett Jensen: "Globalization and Morality in Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural-Developmental View" 19:00-Late Gala Dinner - Collegium Minus	9:00-9:30 Welcome/Coffee 9:30-11:00 Parallel sessions 5 11:00-11:15 Coffee Break 11:15-12:45 Parallel sessions 6 12:45-13:45 Lunch Break 13:45-15:15 Documentary Session - Namibia Up Symposium 15:15-17:00 Networking Drinks

Pre-conference panels | Monday, 29 June 2026 | Main room

Panel 1 9:00-9:50 In Search of Religious/Spiritual Identity in Emerging Adulthood <i>Religious change, meaning-making and professional accompaniment in emerging adulthood.</i>	Panel 2 10:00-10:50 Emerging Adulthood in the Context of Hyperculture. A Philosophical Perspective <i>Identity formation, freedom, belonging and meaning-making in contemporary culture.</i>	Panel 3 11:00-11:50 Self-Compassion and Intuitive Eating in Emerging and Early Adulthood <i>Workshop language: Polish. Self-kindness and rebuilding trust in internal hunger and satiety cues.</i>
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Detailed oral session programme

Session times and rooms follow the online framework programme. Full author lists come from the submission records, with repeated records consolidated by title.

Tuesday, 30 June 2026

Parallel sessions 1 | 1 - Identity Development and Exploration

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Main Room

1	Valences of The Transition to Adulthood Among Young Austrians: Developmental Gains and Burdens Authors: Jan Philipp Amadeus Aden; Eva Dreher Presenting author: Jan Philipp Amadeus Aden
2	Understanding Transitions in Emerging Adulthood: Balanced Time Perspective and Dimensions of Wellbeing Authors: Teresa Maria Sgaramella; Ezgi Cenik Presenting author: Teresa Maria Sgaramella
3	Positive Solitude and Identity Development: A Structural Equation Model on a Sample from Poznań Authors: Zuzanna A. Wasielewska; Oliwier M. Walczak; Zofia Eggebrecht; Gabriela N. Dudziak Presenting author: Oliwier M. Walczak
4	Thirty, Flirty, and Thriving? How Misalignment Between Expectations for Adulthood and Reality Impacts Women in Late Emerging Adulthood Authors: Megan Wright Presenting author: Megan Wright

Parallel sessions 1 | 5 - Migration and Acculturation

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 1

1	The Privilege Paradox: Life Stage and Health Barriers Among High-skilled Venezuelan Migrants in Mexico City Authors: Itzel Eguiluz Presenting author: Itzel Eguiluz
2	Navigating Emerging Adulthood Far from Home: Psychological, Sociocultural, and Academic Adaptation of International Students in Hungary Authors: Dominika Matavovszky; Sebestyén Domján; Orsolya Karner; Lan Anh Nguyen Luu Presenting author: Dominika Matavovszky
3	Acculturation Stress and Onset of Mental Disorders Among Immigrant Emerging Adults in the Kenyan Context Authors: Zipporah Kaaria; Marian Guled Presenting author: Zipporah Kaaria
4	Syrian and Iraqi refugee young adults' affordances and trajectories into adulthood Authors: Guðbjörg Ottósdóttir; Eyrún María Rúnarsdóttir Presenting author: Guðbjörg Ottósdóttir

Parallel sessions 1 | 11 - Loneliness and Social Disconnection

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 2

1	Loneliness Profiles and Identity Development in Emerging Adults: A Latent Class Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling Study Authors: Aleksandra Panek; Jan Matera Presenting author: Jan Matera; Aleksandra Panek
3	Social Withdrawal among Emerging Adults Authors: Michele Wang Presenting author: Michele Wang
4	Longitudinal Relations between Social Support and Compassion and Self-Compassion in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Camille Elder; Ashley Fraser Presenting author: Camille Elder

Parallel sessions 1 | 16 - Theory and Conceptual Work

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 3

1	The Transition to Adulthood - A Proposal for a Multidimensional Approach Authors: Lucyna Bakiera; Monika Wysota Presenting author: Lucyna Bakiera
2	Building Bridges Between Arnett's and Havighurst's Theories: New Developmental Tasks in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Sylwia Jaskulska; Barbara Jankowiak; Emilia Soroko; Karolina Kuryś-Szyncel Presenting author: Sylwia Jaskulska
3	New trends in literature about emerging adulthood: A scoping review of empirical studies on family and home environment Authors: Kaja Korošec; Celia Redondo Pedregal; Joan Swanson Presenting author: Kaja Korošec
4	What does the research say about experiencing parental divorce during emerging adulthood? Not much. Authors: Melissa Landers-Potts; Anna Pierburg; Michael Cataluna Presenting author: Melissa Landers-Potts

Parallel sessions 2 | 2 - Identity and Minority Experiences (Middle East)

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Main Room

1	The Future as a Horizon of Hope and Repair: Future Perception among at risk Young Arab Women Authors: Miraz Hashoul; Yafit Sulimani-Aidan; Haneen Karram-Elias Presenting author: Miraz Hashoul
2	Mizrahi Ethnicity in Motion: Negotiating Identity and Belonging in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Batya Ghatan Presenting author: Batya Ghatan
3	Arab Young Adults' Voices on Intersecting Risks and Identity Formation In Israel: Toward Context-Informed Social Work Practice Authors: Ruba Aburass Mograbe; Prof. Yafit Sulimani-Aidan; Dr. Haneen Elias Presenting author: Ruba Aburass Mograbe
4	The Psychological Outcomes of Online Racism Among Young Adult Arab-Palestinians in Israel: The Moderating Role of Ethnic Identity, National Self-Definition, and Social Media Political Participation Authors: Shira Pagorek-Eshel; Raghda Alnabilsy; Haneen Karram-Elias Presenting author: Shira Pagorek-Eshel

Parallel sessions 2 | 6 - Family and Attachment

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 1

1	Attachment to Parents, Friends and Romantic Partners and their Influence on Mental Health in Emerging Adults: A Longitudinal Mediation Analysis within a Dual-Continua Framework Authors: Omayck Fernando Valarezo Bravo; Mónica Guzmán-González; Fabiola Gómez; Giulia Casu Presenting author: Omayck Fernando Valarezo Bravo
2	Growing Apart or Growing Together? Family and Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood: A longitudinal Analysis of Spanish University Students Authors: Maria del Carmen García-Mendoza; Águeda Parra; Marta Díez; Mari Carmen Reina-Flores; Izarne Lizaso; Inmaculada Sánchez-Queija Presenting author: María del Carmen García-Mendoza
3	The Lasting Impact of Family Social Support Authors: Águeda Parra; María del Carmen García-Mendoza; Enrique B. Arranz; Paula Domínguez-Alarcón; Rocío De la Fuente; Inmaculada Sánchez-Queija Presenting author: Águeda Parra
4	Compensatory Effects of Parental Support on Sense of Belonging to College Amid Psychological Distress: Mixed Methods Study Authors: Kristel Tardif-Grenier; Isabelle Archambault; Véronique Dupéré; Michel Janosz; Christine Gervais; Véronique Menand; Annie Lemieux; Roxanne Fay; Myra Tremblay Presenting author: Kristel Tardif-Grenier

Parallel sessions 2 | 12 - Digital and Media Contexts

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 2

1	“Technology is Advancing Into our Daily Lives”: Emerging Adults’ Use and Perceptions of Ai Authors: Clare Mehta; Linda Lin; Zoe Berg; Taryn Peteet Presenting author: Clare Mehta
2	Social Media Fatigue And Well-Being In Emerging Adulthood: The Role Of Social Media Use Among University Students Authors: Mariya Kuzyan; Alicja Czarnomska; Kamila Komorowska; Hanna Liberska; Natalia Pilarska; Dorota Suwalska-Barancewicz; Aleksandra Wolska Presenting author: Mariya Kuzyan
3	Chronicle Stories as a Context for Development: How the Evolving Lives of Content Creators are Experienced by Emerging Adults Authors: Tabitha Holmes; Alexis Atwater; Alessandra DiMaggio; Elizabeth Diamond; Cameron Livingstone; Malak Serdah; Piper Mascaros; Lucian Martinez; Skar Perrotta; Alyssa Trokie Presenting author: Tabitha Holmes
4	Mass Media and Mental Health in Emerging Adults: The Role of Social Media Mindsets in Psychological Well-Being Authors: Dariusz Krok Presenting author: Dariusz Krok

Parallel sessions 2 | 17 - Methods and Measurement

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 3

1	mHealth Interventions Applied to Cancer Prevention Among Young Adults (Ages 18-39): A Systematic Review Authors: Alexandra Pflanz; Milena Insalaco; Jeffrey Ramos Santiago; Hala Awad; Zeinab Mohamed; Viktor Clark Presenting author: Viktor Clark
2	Hierarchical Card Sort: A Mixed-Methods Tool for Mapping Emerging Adults’ Informational Support Preferences Authors: Josh Anderson; Shephany Escandell; Philip Creighton; Jacqueline Nguyen Presenting author: Josh Anderson
3	Global Identity Formation Scale (GIFS) Validation: Measuring Exploration and Commitment in U.S. College Students Authors: Oscar Baldelomar; Gaby Tjahjono; Riley Hensley; Joanna Tanabu; Wanyi Fu; Sarah Tannous; Daniel Baldelomar; Danica Chavez Presenting author: Gaby Tjahjono
4	Social media addiction among students: predicting mental health and addictive behavior using random forest models Authors: Anita Radziun; Wiktoria Grzelak Presenting author: Anita Radziun; Wiktoria Grzelak

Parallel sessions 3 | S1 - Pathways to Mapping Mental Health in College Emerging Adults

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 13:45-15:15 | Main Room

1	Symposium: Pathways to Mapping Mental Health in College Emerging Adults Authors: María del Carmen García-Mendoza; Águeda Parra; Tülin Şener Presenting author: María del Carmen García-Mendoza; Águeda Parra; Tülin Şener <i>Symposium entry from the online framework programme.</i>
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Parallel sessions 3 | 7 - Parenthood and Life Course

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 13:45-15:15 | Room 1

1	Childfreeness as a Way of Navigating Emerging Adulthood Authors: Petra Coufalová; Hana Přikrylová Kučerová Presenting author: Petra Coufalová
2	Factors Influencing The Desire For Parenthood Among Emerging Adults: A Cross-Cultural Analysis Authors: Paweł Ciesielski; Qing-wei Chen; Petra Coufalová; Silvia Di Battista; Fiona Tasker; Suzanna A. Bono; Su Rou Low; Wen Ting Tong; Afifah Idriss; Jorge Gato Presenting author: Paweł Ciesielski
3	Future Anxiety and Postponing Parenthood: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction and Maturity for Parenthood Authors: Oktawia Zalewska; Małgorzata Szcześniak; Adam Falewicz Presenting author: Oktawia Zalewska
4	From Attachment Styles to Parenthood Timing: The Mediating Roles of Positive Orientation and Antinatalist Beliefs Authors: Michał Meisner Presenting author: Michał Meisner

Parallel sessions 3 | 13 - Work, Career, and Economy

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 13:45-15:15 | Room 2

1	“I Feel Lost”: Career Identity Exploration During Transition-Out in China’s Elite Sport System Authors: Wenting Sun; Steven Krauss; Jordan B. Fleming Sr; Kingsley Wang; Lixin Zhang Presenting author: Wenting Sun
2	“Too Young to Be Taken Seriously”: Ageism and Labor Market Inequality among Portuguese Emerging Adults Authors: Cláudia Andrade Presenting author: Cláudia Andrade
3	Elite Rowers as a Distinct Career Sub-Population: Transition-Out Experiences in China’s State-Sponsored Sport System Authors: Kingsley Wang; Wenting Sun; Steven Krauss; Jordan B. Fleming Sr Presenting author: Kingsley Wang
4	The needs of young people from vocational schools in terms of supporting the development of their employability - research reports Authors: Lucyna Myszka-Strychalska Presenting author: Lucyna Myszka-Strychalska

Parallel sessions 3 | 18 - Relationships and Intimate Life

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 | 13:45-15:15 | Room 3

1	Single, but Ready to Mingle? Financial and Relational Predictors of Relationship Flourishing Among U.S. Unmarried Emerging Adults Authors: Ashley LeBaron-Black; Matthew Saxey; Karlee Call; Melissa Curran; Brian Willoughby; Mason McGee; Tyler Dawes; E. Jeffrey Hill Presenting author: Ashley LeBaron-Black
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2	Choosing Differently: How Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence Shapes Early Adult Decisions Authors: Annie Dumont Presenting author: Annie Dumont
3	Helicopter Parenting and Life Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood: The Mediating Role of Procrastination and Readiness for Parenthood Authors: Małgorzata Szeżeński; Adam Falewicz; Blanka Aleksandrowicz; Lena Aleksandrowicz; Maria Buszyldo Presenting author: Małgorzata Szeżeński
4	The Role of In-Care Experiences in Fostering Care Leavers' Development and Resilience During Emerging Adulthood Authors: Yafit Sulimani-Aidan Presenting author: Yafit Sulimani-Aidan

Wednesday, 1 July 2026

Parallel sessions 5 | 4 - Racism, Stress, and Sociopolitics

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Main Room

1	Experiences of Racism in the Transition from Adolescence into Emerging Adulthood in Sweden Authors: Pär D. Stern; Sofia Berne; Linda P. Juang; Ann Frisén Presenting author: Pär D. Stern
2	Paralyzed by Trump? Sociopolitical stress, mental health, and tobacco use among Mexican American emerging adults Authors: Seth Schwartz; C. Nathan Marti; Liza Talavera-Garza; Bara Bateineh; Caroline North; Qinghua Yang; Dhiraj Murthy; Anna Wilkinson; Alexandra Loukas Presenting author: Seth Schwartz
3	Immigration-Related Sociopolitical Stress, Mental Health, and Tobacco Use Among Mexican American Emerging Adults Authors: Seth Schwartz; C. Nathan Marti; Liza Talavera-Garza; Bara Bateineh; Caroline North; Qinghua Yang; Dhiraj Murthy; Anna Wilkinson; Alexandra Loukas Presenting author: Seth Schwartz
4	From uncertainty to democratic backsliding? Future worries, polarization, and anti-democratic attitudes in emerging adults Authors: Žiga Mekš Recek; Zan Lep Presenting author: Žiga Mekš Recek

Parallel sessions 5 | 9 - Mental Health and Clinical Contexts

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 1

1	Body Image Disturbance and Substance Misuse as Longitudinal Predictors of Psychological Distress in Emerging Adults Authors: Alex Ajayi; Melissa Ertl; Jacob Schachter; Amelia Blankenau Presenting author: Alex Ajayi
2	"Pushed Away Though We Hurt Too": Emerging Adults Facing Unexplained Persistent Physical Symptoms in Poland - Can We Do Better? Authors: Julia Krawczyk; Ali Amiri; Michal Ziarko Presenting author: Julia Krawczyk
3	Cognitive and socio-emotional development in young adults with epilepsy - case report and highlights Authors: Natalia Nowaczyk Presenting author: Natalia Nowaczyk

Parallel sessions 5 | 14 - Structural and Economic Contexts

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 2

1	California's Guaranteed Income Pilot for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care - Impacts at Program Exit Authors: Bridgette Lery; Sarah Benatar; Jaclyn Chambers Presenting author: Bridgette Lery
2	On The Road To Financial Maturity: Recalibrating Salary Expectations And Reducing Financial Anxiety In Emerging Adults in India Authors: Amrut Bang; Prathamesh Dhadse; Megha Shinde Presenting author: Amrut Bang
3	Investigating The Most Impactful Factors For Young Adults To Stay In Family Household By The Example Of Poland In 2022 Authors: Oliwier Walczak Presenting author: Oliwier Walczak
4	Systemic Influences, Sense of Belonging and Pathways Toward Maturity and Wellbeing: Evidence from a Pilot Study Authors: Teresa Maria Sgaramella; Angela Rocca; Yaren Irmis Presenting author: Teresa Maria Sgaramella

Parallel sessions 5 | 19 - Community, Identity, and Contemporary Life

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 9:30-11:00 | Room 3

1	Place matters in developing physical/mental health among Indian Emerging Adulthood Authors: Utpal Roy; Indranil Maity; Karnia Sarkar Presenting author: Utpal Roy
2	Volunteering as a Source of Community Identity in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Ondřej Hruběš Presenting author: Ondřej Hruběš
3	Visible Selves, Uncertain Paths: Experience of Questioning Gender and Gender Identity in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Helena Walasz Presenting author: Helena Walasz
4	Exploring Gender Through Clothing: Identity Development Among Transgender Emerging Adults Authors: Oliwia Maslyk; Klaudia Lubczyńska; Wiktoria Luto; Julia Chudzychowska; Dariusz Drązkowski Presenting author: Oliwia Maslyk

Parallel sessions 6 | 3 - Risk and Resilience (Arab Contexts)

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Main Room

1	Pathways to Resilience: Experiences of At-Risk Arab Young Adults in Israel During Emerging Adulthood Authors: Haneen Karram-Elias; Yafit Sulimani - Aidan; Samah Mahamid Presenting author: Haneen Karram-Elias
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2	Suicidality Among Arab Emerging Adults in Israel: Psychosocial and Cultural Factors Authors: Doaa Daka; Yari Gvion; Sami Hamdan Presenting author: Doaa Daka
3	"Hearing Us Changes the Story": Young Arab-Palestinian Women's Reflections on Research Findings on Childhood Abuse and Barriers to Service Use in Israel Authors: Raghda Alnabilsy; Shira Pagorek Eshel; Haneen Elias Presenting author: Raghda Alnabilsy
4	Risks and Stressors among Care Leavers in Arab Society during Emerging Adulthood Authors: Samah Mahamid; Haneen Karram-Elias; Yafit Sulimani-Aidan Presenting author: Samah Mahamid

Parallel sessions 6 | 10 - Coping and Emotion Regulation

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 1

1	Maladaptive Emotion Regulation and Internalizing Symptoms in Emerging Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study from Uruguay Authors: Gabriela Fernández-Theoduloz; Valentina Begino; Santiago Cancela-Fraga; Leonel Pinazzo; Micaela Piriz; Santiago Rista; Camila Rivas; Valentina Paz Presenting author: Gabriela Fernández-Theoduloz
2	Unpacking the Metacognitive Foundations of Coping Flexibility in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Monique Crane; Hester Xiao; Eyal Karin; Maria Kangas; Penny Van Bergen; Raffael Kalisch; David Forbes; Daniel Gucciardi Presenting author: Monique Crane
3	Loneliness in Emerging Adulthood: Conceptual Ambiguities and Context-Dependent Coping Authors: Hajnalka Turóczy; Luca Verebéli; Ofília Percezel; Zsolt Péter Szabó Presenting author: Hajnalka Turóczy
4	Psychological Well-being and Meaning in Life Among Emerging Adults: The Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience Authors: Marianna Chmiel Presenting author: Marianna Chmiel

Parallel sessions 6 | 15 - Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 2

1	Emerging Adulthood Across Cultures: A Mixed Method Study on Perceived Developmental Processes and Transitions in Lebanon and Italy Authors: Dany Abi Hadir; Anila Shala Presenting author: Dany Abi Hadir
2	Emerging Adulthood Or Transition To Adulthood: Cultural Effects in Mexico Authors: Karen Ortega-Miranda; Sofia Rivera-Aragón; Rolando Diaz-Loving; Pedro Wolfgang Velasco-Matus Presenting author: Karen Ortega-Miranda
3	Perspectives on the Development of Diverse Cultural Values among Indian Emerging Adults Authors: Indranil Maity Presenting author: Indranil Maity
4	Emerging Adults Going Through Transition: Navigating Development Crisis and Future Goals in Post-Conflict Kosovo Authors: Anila Shala; Dany Abi Hadir Presenting author: Anila Shala

Parallel sessions 6 | 8 - Religion and Identity

Wednesday, 1 July 2026 | 11:15-12:45 | Room 3

1	Religious Identity Commitment and Intrinsic Religiosity Predict Substance-Related Attitudes in Emerging Adults Authors: Sarah Remland; Kaitlyn Stetzer; Oscar Baldelomar Presenting author: Sarah Remland
2	The Mediating Role of Light Triad and Reflexivity in Relationship Between Religious Deidentification and Identity Exploration Authors: Adam Falewicz; Maria Czyż; Małgorzata Szcześniak Presenting author: Adam Falewicz
3	Religious Identity Profiles in Emerging Adulthood: A Cluster-Based Analysis of Exploration and Commitment Processes Authors: Anna Wieradzka-Pilarczyk; Alicja Jajko-Siwek Presenting author: Anna Wieradzka-Pilarczyk
4	Religious Support and Postponement of Parenthood: The Mediating Role of Antinatalist Beliefs Authors: Karolina Wojtkowiak; Gabriela Błońska-Czwakiel; Adam Falewicz; Małgorzata Szcześniak Presenting author: Karolina Wojtkowiak

Poster session

Monday, 29 June 2026 | 13:00-14:30 | Faculty of Theology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Wieżowa 2/4, Poznań

Posters are grouped by topic. Each entry lists the full author list from the submission record.

Identity Development

P01	Assessing Emerging Adults' Readiness for Transition to Adulthood Authors: Elaine Van Den Heuvel; Ming Cui; Francis Fincham Presenting author: Elaine Van Den Heuvel
P02	Longitudinal Links Between Identity Distress and Mental Health in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Kamil Janowicz; Jakub Duras; Kamila Skrzypczak Presenting author: Kamil Janowicz
P03	Delayed Adulthood? Gender-Diverse Students and Institutional Recognition in Polish Universities Authors: Jan Galkowski Presenting author: Jan Galkowski
P04	Types and Sources of Social Support and the Transitional and Moratorium Orientations of Young Adults Authors: Zuzanna Karpowicz Presenting author: Zuzanna Karpowicz
P05	Hope and Civic Attitudes as Developmental Assets for Civic Engagement in Emerging Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study Authors: Ashley Fraser; Camille Elder Presenting author: Ashley Fraser
P06	Personality, Values, and Online Behavior in Emerging Adulthood Authors: Barbora Kňážek Považanová; Gabriel Kňážek; Martin Dolejš Presenting author: Barbora Kňážek Považanová
P07	Life Satisfaction and Identity Commitments Among Emerging Adults: The Mediating Role of Meaning in Life and General Self-Efficacy Authors: Julia Koziura; Lucja Januszewska; Marianna Chmiel Presenting author: Julia Koziura
P08	Identity Exploration and Psychological Well-Being in Emerging Adulthood: The Role of Deconversion and Religious Support Authors: Maria Czyż; Adam Falewicz Presenting author: Maria Czyż
P09	Identity Distress, Exploration, and Commitment: Culture and Sex Comparisons Authors: Barbara M. Gfellner; Ana I. Cordoba; Fernanda H. Cordero; Karin Bartoszuk; Jim Deal Presenting author: Barbara M. Gfellner
P10	The Mediating Role of Rumination and Self-Efficacy in Relationship Between Religious Residue and Identity Development Authors: Radosław Rybarski; Adam Falewicz; Małgorzata Szcześniak Presenting author: Radosław Rybarski
P11	Emerging Adulthood in Post-Communist Europe: A Cross-National Comparison Authors: Wanda Zagórska; Iлона Skoczeń; Anna Lipska; Veronika Kohútová; Katarína Millová; Blanka Balogh; Anna Lőrincz; Laura Szabó Presenting author: Wanda Zagórska
P12	Identity Domains and Academic Persistence: The Role of College Stress Authors: Alexis Reimers-Contreras; Emely Covarrubias; Mayra Bámaca Presenting author: Alexis Reimers-Contreras
P13	Mapping Theoretical Alignment and Target Dimensions in Emerging Adulthood Interventions Authors: Gozde Aciker Kurtay; Teresa Maria Sgaramella Presenting author: Gozde Aciker Kurtay

Mental Health

P14	Perfectionism, Anxiety, and Depression: Optimism as a Mediator Authors: Jennifer Feenstra Presenting author: Jennifer Feenstra
P15	Social Media Addiction and Life Satisfaction among Romanian Emerging Adults Authors: Beatrice A. Balgiu Presenting author: Beatrice A. Balgiu
P16	Contributing Factors to Anxiety and Stress among North American University Students Pre-, During, and Post-COVID-19: A Scoping Review Authors: Ayse Turkoglu; Sara Hughes; Constandina Perlinghis; Martin Drapeau Presenting author: Ayse Turkoglu
P17	Stress or Resilience-or Both? Family Resources and Cultural Assets in the Context of Cultural Stress and Psychopathology Among Hispanic Emerging Adults Authors: Seo Woo Lee; Jennifer Unger; Myriam Forster; Su Yeong Kim; Daniel Soto; Stefan Schneider; Duyen Vo; Ryan Lee; Sandy Andres; Monica Pattarroyo; Gabriel Luna; Seth Schwartz Presenting author: Seo Woo Lee
P18	Predicting Internet Addiction in Emerging Adults: Personality and Online Behavior Authors: Gabriel Kňážek; Barbora Kňážek Považanová; Martin Dolejš Presenting author: Gabriel Kňážek
P19	Falling Down the Rabbit Hole - The Link Between Conspiracy Belief and Violent Radicalization in Emerging Adults. A Systematic Review. Authors: Lidia Przybylak; Weronika Stanisławska; Małgorzata Szcześniak; Adam Falewicz Presenting author: Lidia Przybylak
P20	The relationship between anxiety, social support and life orientations in emerging adults with and without disabilities Authors: Małgorzata Budzicz-Rękosiewicz Presenting author: Małgorzata Budzicz-Rękosiewicz
P21	Profiles of Well-being, Stress, and Emotion Regulation in German Emerging Adulthoods: A Person-Centered Approach Authors: Hugo Sanchez-Sanchez; Konstanze Schoeps; Frances Hoferichter; Inmaculada Montoya-Castilla Presenting author: Hugo Sanchez-Sanchez

Religion and Spirituality

P22	“I Owe My Being To The Hills And The Valleys”: The Intersection Of Ecospirituality And Meaning-Making In South African Emerging Adults Authors: Luzelle Naudé; Catherine M Shirima; Wilbert J Gobbo Presenting author: Luzelle Naudé
P23	The Mediating Role of Motivation to Revenge and Anxiety in Relationship Between Religious Deidentification and Life Satisfaction Authors: Weronika Stanisławska; Lidia Przybylak; Małgorzata Szcześniak; Adam Falewicz Presenting author: Weronika Stanisławska
P24	Spirituality and Revenge in Emerging Adults: The Mediating Roles of Intellectual Humility and the Light Triad Authors: Sara Murzyńska Presenting author: Sara Murzyńska

Finance and Economic Independence

P25	Exploring the Determinants of Youth Sustainable Financial Literacy Authors: Eija Juntunen Presenting author: Eija Juntunen
P26	Beyond Income: The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspirations in Emerging Adults’ Subjective Financial Well-being Authors: Rimantas Vosylis; Angela Sorgente; Rasa Erentaitė Presenting author: Rimantas Vosylis
P27	Food Insecurity Among University Students: Coping Strategies and Dietary Outcomes Authors: Zuzanna Wasielewska Presenting author: Zuzanna Wasielewska

Health Promotion

P28	The Link between Child Maltreatment, Health Behaviors, Physical Health, and Chronic Disease in Emerging Adults Authors: Kimberly Rapoza Presenting author: Kimberly Rapoza
P29	Emerging Adulthood in the Shadow of Multiple Sclerosis. The Role of Self-Management in the Quality of Life of Patients Aged 17-25 Authors: Magdalena Brzoza; Agnieszka Maryniak Presenting author: Magdalena Brzoza

Work & Career

P30	Longitudinal Change of Self-Perceived Employability Throughout Emerging Adulthood Authors: Inmaculada Sánchez-Queija; Reyes Vargas; Mario Rodríguez-Pérez; Patricia Macía Guerrero; Klara Smith-Etxeberria; Águeda Parra Presenting author: Inmaculada Sánchez-Queija
P31	Academic Pressure, Procrastination and Burnout in Emerging Adulthood: Evidence from Romania Authors: Sergiu-Lucian Raiu; Oana-Andreea Grosu Presenting author: Sergiu-Lucian Raiu

Parenting and Family

P32	Helicopter Parenting and Postponed Parenthood: The Mediating Effect of Vulnerable Narcissism Authors: Rafał Pietruszka; Małgorzata Szcześniak; Adam Falewicz; Marianna Chmiel; Małgorzata Matecka; Karolina Wojtkowiak; Julia Łoś; Aniela Szczerba; Zuzanna Siedlecka; Joanna Pracka Presenting author: Rafał Pietruszka
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Romantic Relationships

P33	Engaged with the Idea: Marital Horizons and Emerging Adult Well-being Authors: Briella Smith; Larry Nelson; Nathan Leonhardt; Ashley LeBaron-Black; Brian Willoughby Presenting author: Briella Smith
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Mental Health and Wartime Contexts

P34	Interplay Between Personality Values and EI in Emerging Adults Under Wartime Context Authors: Lyudmyla Romanyuk Presenting author: Lyudmyla Romanyuk
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Keynote Speakers

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett is the leading authority in the world on the age period from 18 to 29 that he named emerging adulthood. Dr. Arnett is a Senior Research Scholar in the Department of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. During 2005 he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and in 2017-18 he was a Visiting Professor at the University of Bordeaux, France. He is the author of the book *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties*, now in its 3rd edition, published in 2024 by Oxford University Press. He founded the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (www.ssea.org) and served as its first Executive Director. He has also served as President of Division 1 of the American Psychological Association (General Psychology). Arnett has two children, twins Miles and Paris, born in 1999, and his wife, Lene Jensen, is also a professor at Clark. He has appeared on national television and frequently in print media, including a cover story in the *New York Times Sunday* magazine in August, 2010. His book (with Elizabeth Fishel) for parents of emerging adults, *Getting to 30: A Parents Guide to the Twentysomething Years*, was published in May 2013. For more information, see www.jeffreyarnett.com.



Jeffrey Jensen Arnett
Clark University
Worcester, Massachusetts, USA



Lene Arnett Jensen
Clark University
Worcester, Massachusetts, USA

Lene Arnett Jensen is Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Psychology at Clark University, Massachusetts, USA. She received her Ph.D. from the Committee on Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago. Dr. Jensen is the originator of the “cultural-developmental approach” to theory and research on human psychology. This approach addresses both what is universal and what is culturally distinctive about human development. For example, in *Moral Development in a Global World* published by Cambridge University Press, Dr. Jensen proposes that humans are born with a shared moral heritage and that, as we develop from childhood into adulthood, we branch off in increasingly developmentally diverse directions shaped by culture. Together with students and colleagues, Dr. Jensen has conducted research with diverse religious, ethnic, and socio-economic groups in countries such as Denmark, India, Kenya, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States. Dr. Jensen has edited a number of books, including *The Oxford Handbook of Moral Development* and *The Oxford Handbook of Human Development and Culture*, both published by Oxford University Press. For more than a decade, Dr. Jensen served as Editor-in-Chief of *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*. She and Jeffrey Jensen Arnett currently co-author four college textbooks on child development, adolescence and emerging adulthood, and lifespan development.

FILM SHOWING + DISCUSSION



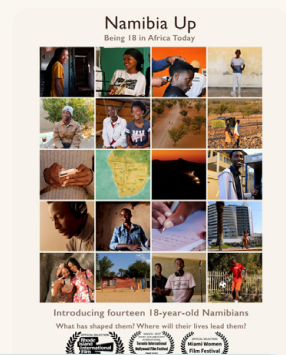
Namibia Up: Being 18 in Africa Today

Film showing & interactive discussion
at the SSEA Thematic Conference, Poland 2026

Meet fourteen 18-year-old Namibians as they imagine adulthood, navigate change and bring African voices into emerging adulthood theory.

A session built around story, culture and dialogue

The documentary follows young people from different parts of Namibia as they describe their upbringing, present lives and hopes for the future. The screening opens a space to ask how trajectories of emerging adulthood are shaped beyond Western settings.



1

Screening
A close look at lives, hopes and transition to adulthood in Namibia.

2

Expert reflections
Panelists connect the film themes with African cultural contexts.

3

Audience Q&A;
Compare youth experiences across regions, traditions and communities.

Official film website

namibiaup.format.com



Watch the trailer

vimeo.com/1092716995



Emerging adulthood through culturally diverse voices

The symposium invites participants to consider how experiences of youth outside Western settings can enrich existing models of emerging adulthood. Grounded in the Namibian context, it creates space for careful cross-cultural dialogue with researchers and practitioners.





Stories, dreams and everyday contexts of young Namibians


Session flow


- 1 **Film screening**
A close look at fourteen young Namibians entering adult life.
- 2 **Expert reflections**
Brief reflections from Namibia, South Africa and Kenya.
- 3 **Audience Q&A;**
Discussion of similarities, differences and regional experiences.
- 4 **Shared takeaways**
A link between culturally diverse stories, theory and practice.

Panel members

 **Byron G. Adams**
Moderator - University of Amsterdam; University of Johannesburg
Focus: identity, diversity, inclusion and well-being in non-Western contexts

 **Luzelle Naude**
Professor of Psychology - University of the Free State, South Africa
Focus: identity development, student transitions and emerging adulthood in African contexts

 **Anne Wairimu Muchiri-Muchai, Psy.D.**
Clinical Psychologist - Blossom Centre for Wellness, Nairobi, Kenya
Focus: culturally responsive mental health care and identity development

 **Selma N. Uugwanga**
Namibian clinical psychologist and researcher
Focus: developmental transitions shaped by cultural and socioeconomic factors

Learn more: [Official film website](#) | [Trailer](#) | [Africa Long Life Study](#)

Namibia Up: Being 18 in Africa Today

Film Showing & Discussion at the SSEA Thematic Conference, Poland 2026

This symposium invites conference participants to engage with the documentary film *Namibia Up: Being 18 in Africa Today*, which explores the lives and dreams of fourteen eighteen-year-old Namibians from different parts of the country as they enter adulthood. Inspired by the longitudinal design of Michael Apter’s “Up” series, and a companion to the Africa Long Life Study (<https://www.africalonglifestudy.org/>), the film intends to revisit its participants every four years, offering unique insight into trajectories of emerging adulthood in a sub Saharan African context. Grounded in the Namibian setting yet echoing broader youth experiences across sub Saharan Africa, the film captures how young people balance traditional values and globalised opportunities as they transition into adult lives.

The screening will be followed by an interactive panel discussion with experts on emerging adulthood from sub Saharan Africa. Panelists from Namibia, South Africa, and Kenya will offer brief reflections on how the film’s central themes resonate within their own national and cultural contexts. The session will then open into an extended audience Q&A, inviting participants to discuss similarities and differences with youth experiences in their regions and to consider what these perspectives contribute to emerging adulthood theory.

The symposium aims to spark reflection on how experiences of emerging adulthood outside Western settings can enrich and expand existing theoretical models through culturally diverse voices. Building on the conversation initiated during the film’s first screening at the SSEA 2025 Charleston Presidential Session, this event places particular emphasis on cross cultural dialogue with the audience and on advancing contributions to both theory and practice.

Panel members:



Byron G. Adams (Moderator) — Assistant Professor of Work & Organizational Psychology, University of Amsterdam; Senior Research Associate, University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on identity, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing in non Western contexts.



Luzelle Naudé — Professor of Psychology, University of the Free State, South Africa; counselling and research psychologist. Her work explores identity development, student transitions, and emerging adulthood in African contexts.



Anne Wairimu Muchiri-Muchai, Psy.D. — Clinical Psychologist and founder of Blossom Centre for Wellness in Nairobi, Kenya. Her scholarship centers on culturally responsive mental health care, emerging adulthood, and identity development.



Selma N. Uugwanga — Namibian clinical psychologist and researcher specializing in emerging adulthood and developmental transitions in sub Saharan Africa. Her work examines how cultural and socioeconomic factors shape youth development in Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Valences of the Transition to Adulthood Among Young Austrians: Developmental Gains and Burdens

Jan P.A. Aden¹, Eva Dreher¹

¹Faculty of Psychology, Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Freudplatz 1, 1020 Vienna, Austria

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Background. In the 21st century, the transition to adulthood is increasingly characterized by individualized life trajectories, expanded choices, and growing uncertainty regarding personal and professional future prospects. Beyond structural conditions, the subjective appraisal of developmental demands has gained importance. The aim of this study is not only to examine which dimensions are perceived as central to becoming an adult, but also to investigate the extent to which these dimensions are experienced as developmental gains or burdens. Based on these findings, implications for supporting young adults during the transition to adulthood are derived.

Method. The sample comprised $n = 187$ young adults living in Austria aged between 18 and 29 years ($M = 21.57$, $SD = 2.58$). An online survey assessed individual meanings attributed to becoming an adult, formative biographical events, positive and negative aspects of this process, and perceived supportive factors. In addition, central dimensions of emerging adulthood were measured using the *IDEA-G2*. These dimensions were further evaluated on a continuum ranging from 0 (burden) to 100 (gain) to capture their subjective appraisal.

Results. In open-ended responses, becoming an adult was primarily associated with autonomy, personal freedom, and identity development. Increased self-efficacy was reported as a particularly positive aspect. Exploratory dimensions were perceived as especially beneficial, reflected in high ratings for experimentation and possibilities ($M = 70.84$, $SD = 13.35$) and self-focus ($M = 64.43$, $SD = 14.09$). The experience of “feeling in-between” showed a slightly positive yet ambivalent pattern ($M = 53.95$, $SD = 12.30$). In contrast, negativity/instability was clearly evaluated as burdensome ($M = 32.10$, $SD = 10.36$), whereas other-focus was rated as rather neutral ($M = 49.26$, $SD = 14.39$). Social support, practical life skills, and opportunities for autonomous exploration were identified as particularly helpful resources.

Conclusion. The findings indicate that the experience of becoming an adult is shaped by differentiated appraisals of transition-specific characteristics. While exploration is predominantly experienced as a resource, instability is perceived as burdensome. The results suggest that support structures should be designed to embed exploratory development within reliable social contexts that provide orientation, stability, and opportunities to strengthen self-efficacy—such as institutionally anchored educational and mentoring frameworks.

Understanding Transitions in Emerging Adulthood: Balanced Time Perspective and Dimensions of Wellbeing

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Emerging adults (EmA) experience significant transitions while attending higher education and entering the world of work, which can influence their psychological well-being and engagement in future construction [1]. Balanced Time Perspective (BTP), defined as the dynamic integration of positive past and optimistic future orientations, has been associated with motivation, well-being, and adaptive functioning [2].

The aim of the present study was to explore how BTP can support emerging adults' well-being and facilitate their transition toward maturity, both during higher education and while navigating the world of work.

Research questions were addressed through additional analyses conducted on subsets of data collected in the last two years within the SEEDS Network. Satisfaction with Life and Flourishing (Diener et al., 2009; 2010) were used as indicators of well-being, and a national version of the Balanced Time Perspective Scale (BTP; Webster, 2011) assessed past-positive and future-positive orientations and identified BTP profiles, namely proposed by Webster namely Time Expansive, Restrictive, Futurists, and Reminiscers. Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (Petrov et al., 2022) was used to assess challenging crisis related experiences.

MANOVAs conducted on a first sample of 300 emerging adults highlighted distinct patterns of relationships between well-being dimensions and distinct BTP profiles when still in education or in the world of work.

Further quantitative analyses on a second sample of 150 emerging adults, including both students and young workers, examined the relationships between time perspective orientations, developmental crises, and well-being. Future Time Perspective significantly mediated the association between the experience of developmental crisis and flourishing. In addition, a thematic analysis of narratives on the subgroup showing a high-transition pattern revealed constructive self-evaluation and positive future thinking, often accompanied by career or educational changes, followed by challenges related to romantic relationships and independence.

Overall, the findings underscore the role of balanced time perspective as a key factor in understanding time-oriented patterns of well-being in emerging adulthood and highlight the dynamic interplay among time perspectives, developmental challenges, and adaptive functioning. These results provide a foundation for targeted interventions and future longitudinal research aimed at promoting well-being during this critical life stage.

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Thirty, Flirty, and Thriving? How Misalignment Between Expectations for Adulthood and Reality Impacts Women in Late Emerging Adulthood

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Adulthood has traditionally been inferred by the attainment of milestones such as marriage, parenthood, home ownership, and career. However, these milestones are occurring less frequently and later in life than ever before. This study aimed to understand whether emerging adults expect to achieve these milestones, and if they perceive a mismatch between their expectations and reality to have an impact on their mental health and well-being.

Seven women in the UK aged 26-29 ($M = 27.57$, $SD = 1.27$) with English ($n = 5$, 71%), Eastern European ($n = 1$), Chinese ($n = 1$), and Indian ($n = 1$) backgrounds were interviewed to gain a better understanding of: (a) whether they expect(ed) to achieve traditional ‘adult’ milestones such as marriage, parenthood, home ownership, and/or career; (b) the source of any expectations or pressures to achieve these milestones; (c) whether they believed their expectations for adulthood aligned with reality; and (d) if (mis)alignment between expectations and reality impacted their mental health or well-being. Reflexive thematic analysis was applied to analyse qualitative data.

Participants described either retaining, reframing, or resisting traditional expectations for adulthood, and discussed (mis)alignment between their expectations for marriage, parenthood, home ownership, and/or career, and their current reality. Participants noted internal and external sources of pressure to achieve traditional milestones of adulthood including societal, cultural, and familial expectations. They also shared how misalignment impacted their well-being, including feelings of failure, embarrassment, frustration, and falling behind their peers. Finally, the career-and-care crunch, the cornerstone of established adulthood, was discussed by multiple participants, indicating the beginnings of the psychological impact of conflicting expectations for career and parenthood at this later stage of emerging adulthood.

Taken together, these results highlight the complexities and individual differences in how emerging adult women view the traditional ‘adult’ milestones of marriage, parenthood, home ownership, and career. While some women rejected traditional milestones, the majority still expected to achieve them but expressed feelings of uncertainty and frustration at societal, economic, and relational barriers. Discrepancies between expectations for adulthood and reality, coupled with the fact that traditional milestones of adulthood are increasingly out of reach for many emerging adults today, leads to a significant impact on emerging adult women’s mental health and well-being. Results could inform therapeutic interventions to support young women’s mental health, and a broader societal reframing of whether these milestones are expectations or optional aspirations for young people today.

The Privilege Paradox: Life Stage and Health Barriers Among High-skilled Venezuelan Migrants in Mexico City

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Background. While migratory studies often focus on economic vulnerability, the intersection of developmental life stages and health access remains under-examined. This study analyzes the migration and health access experiences of high-skilled Venezuelan women in Mexico City, specifically comparing those in emerging adulthood (18–29) and established adulthood (30–45).

Methods. Utilizing a rapid qualitative framework, 25 virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted. The methodology integrated reflexive thematic analysis of the PHQ-9 scale and an evaluation of stressors associated with Ulysses Syndrome. The sample consisted of women with bachelor’s degrees and regular migratory status who arrived by air.

Findings. The analysis revealed that while both groups face “administrative precariousness” due to possible bureaucratic delays, their health-seeking behaviors are distinct. Access to healthcare is primarily navigated through private means, specifically pharmacy-attached clinics, due to systemic difficulties to access and the high cost of formal care. A critical divergence emerged between the two groups: Emerging Adults (18–29) focused on individual integration and navigating the labor market, often exhibiting higher mental health literacy but delayed care-seeking; while for Established Adults (30–45) the experiences were profoundly shaped by motherhood and caregiving roles, which acted as both a primary stressor and a driver for navigating health systems. Despite their high education and regular status, both groups reported significant emotional distress linked to migratory stressors, though established adults faced a higher “burden of care” that complicated their own health maintenance.

Conclusions. The results demonstrate that entering a country as a regular migrant and living there with an educational capital do not eliminate health inequities. Effective public health interventions could be led by recognizing that navigating the health system should be public knowledge. Finally, the transition from emerging to established adulthood fundamentally alters the migratory experience and the specific barriers to mental and physical well-being for this group of women.

Navigating Emerging Adulthood Far from Home: Psychological, Sociocultural, and Academic Adaptation of International Students in Hungary

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The present study examines the developmental and psychological characteristics of emerging adulthood [1] in the context of acculturation experiences among international students in Hungary. Specifically, the aim was to explore how core features of emerging adulthood—identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling “in-between”, and perceived possibilities— together with characteristics of the university environment and acculturation-related factors, are associated with psychological, academic, and sociocultural adaptation [2]. Data were collected via an online questionnaire, and a total of 859 participants (age range 18-28; M age = 23.84, SD = 2.32) took part in the study. The questionnaires included demographic variables, acculturation-related variables, psychological aspects of emerging adulthood, and various measures of adaptation. First, based on our research question, the outcome variables were defined as anxiety and depression (as indicators of psychological adaptation), sociocultural adaptation, and academic adaptation. Structural Equation Models (SEM) were set up and tested to check the connections between different variables based on our working model, informed by literature and regression analyses performed on the dataset. Our results suggest that the dimensions of emerging adulthood play a significant role in mental health and different forms of adaptation, although the strength and direction of these effects varied. Instability demonstrated the strongest predictive value; it was positively correlated with anxiety and depressive symptoms, and negatively correlated with academic and sociocultural adaptation. The feeling „in-between” dimension showed a similar but weaker relationship with mental health indicators. Our analysis also confirmed that instability served as a mediator between feeling „in-between” and both anxiety and depression. Self-focus was identified as a positive predictor of sociocultural and academic adaptation, while identity-exploration was found to predict academic adaptation. These results indicate that emerging adulthood is, in many respects, a sensitive time window. For students studying abroad, acculturation [3] and the developmental psychological transitions of young adulthood merge into dynamically interacting processes. Overall, the study highlights the importance of comprehensive research and developmentally and culturally sensitive mental health support for international students during this transitional life stage.

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Acculturation Stress and Onset of Mental Disorders Among Immigrant Emerging Adults in the Kenyan Context

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Mental disorders constitute a major public health concern among immigrant populations, particularly the emerging adults who are exposed to multiple psychosocial stressors [Bojana & Makovic,2020, Gutwinski et al., 2021, Bryant, 2022 & Sharapova et al.,2023]. This study examined the influence of acculturation stress on the onset of mental disorders among emerging adult immigrants of Somali origin attending Tawakal Medical Clinic in Nairobi, Kenya. The study was guided by Trauma and Cognitive Behavioral Theories.

A cross-sectional descriptive design was adopted, involving 356 Somali immigrants aged 18–30 years. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression to determine the predictive influence of acculturation stress and demographic variables on mental disorder onset.

The findings on onset of mental disorders revealed; depression index ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.75$; age ($\beta = .463$, $p < .001$)), Anxiety index (Mean=2.84, $SD=0.70$) and PTSD index (Mean=2.70, $SD=0.71$). These implied moderate to high levels of mental disorders among the participants. Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that acculturation stress was a significant predictor of mental disorder onset ($r = -0.754$, $p < .001$) and significant beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.746$, $p < .001$).The demographics findings; age($\beta=.463,p<0.001$), gender($\beta=.121,p=0.001$) and length of stay in Kenya ($\beta = .197$, $p < .001$) showed that these variables also exerted a significant influence on mental disorders onset.

The study revealed that the onset of mental disorders among the Somali emerging adult immigrants was shaped by an interaction of psychosocial factors such as acculturation stress and demographic factors. These findings highlight the need for culturally responsive mental health interventions that address acculturation challenges among emerging adult immigrants.

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Syrian and Iraqi refugee young adults' affordances and trajectories into adulthood

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Focal areas of the theory of emerging adulthood involve distinctive circumstances and developmental tasks that individuals aged 18-25/29 in industrialised societies encounter, namely identity exploration, various possible trajectories, a sense of feeling caught between childhood and adulthood, self-focus, and instability [1]. The theory has faced criticism for insufficiently addressing young people's diverse experiences across different socio-cultural contexts and the impact of critical life events, such as migration, on young people's transitions into adulthood [2, 3]. Moreover, the growing literature on young adulthood in Muslim communities draws attention to the role that Islamic faith plays in the lives of young adults, both as part of family relationships and practices over the life course and as a form of guidance into adulthood [4, 5, 6, 7].

In this paper, we investigate how young adults of Syrian and Iraqi refugee backgrounds in Iceland navigate their transitions to adulthood and the affordances they encounter and draw on in this process. By using Nelson's [8] concept of affordability, which focuses on the real, perceived, and socially sanctioned opportunities that environments make available to individuals, we attend to the diverse contexts shaping refugee young adults' lives, including migration and settlement, family practices, and the value of Islam. This lens is especially powerful for refugee populations, as it highlights the affordances societies may offer but that may be restricted or blocked for young refugee adults. We analyse data from the Icelandic project "A Part and Apart? Education and social inclusion of refugee children and youth in Iceland (ESRCI)," which comprehensively examines the education and social inclusion of Syrian and Iraqi refugee children and youth at pre-, compulsory, and upper secondary levels, as well as the structures established for their learning and well-being within their social and educational environments. Our analysis in this paper draws on in-depth interviews with 16 young adult refugees, five parents, and nine school professionals.

Preliminary findings indicate that the young adults are transitioning into adulthood, embracing future aspirations such as higher education, employment, and starting a family. However, their affordances are constrained by their local and transnational family roles and obligations, limited legal status and rights, lack of social networks, and language barriers in their new country. Family values and Islamic faith provide young adults with guidance into adulthood and are a source of resilience in coping with misconceived attitudes in their environment towards the role of Islam in their everyday lives. The findings have implications for policy and practice approaches when working with young adults from diverse migration and socio-cultural backgrounds.

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Loneliness Profiles and Identity Development in Emerging Adults: A Latent Class Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling Study

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Loneliness and identity development are among the most salient psychosocial challenges of emerging adulthood. Despite growing evidence linking social disconnection to difficulties in self-definition, the specific pathways through which distinct dimensions of loneliness relate to identity processes remain underexplored. The present study examined (1) whether Polish emerging adults form latent subgroups based on their loneliness and social profiles, and (2) whether specific dimensions of loneliness predict engagement in identity exploration and commitment processes.

A sample of 593 Polish university students completed the Loneliness Scale (SAM), the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS), and the Positive Solitude Scale (PS). A Latent Class Analysis (LCA) was conducted on item-level responses to identify latent profiles. Subsequently, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) was estimated using the Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) estimator to test the predictive relationships between loneliness dimensions — General Experience of Loneliness (GEL), Dependence on Communication (DC), and Positive Solitude assessed via two correlated operationalizations included per study design: PPS from the SAM and SP from the Positive Solitude Scale — and four DIDS dimensions: Commitment Making (CM), Identification with Commitment (IC), Exploration in Depth (ED), and Ruminative Exploration (RE). Model fit was assessed using CFI, TLI, and RMSEA.

LCA identified three latent classes (Class 1: $n = 170$, 28.7%; Class 2: $n = 181$, 30.5%; Class 3: $n = 242$, 40.8%) differing significantly on all SEM-derived factor scores (all ANOVA $F > 44$, $p < .001$). The SEM demonstrated acceptable fit to the data (CFI = .920, TLI = .914, RMSEA = .067). General Experience of Loneliness (GEL) was a significant positive predictor of Commitment Making ($p < .001$) and Identification with Commitment ($p < .05$), suggesting that internally experienced loneliness may motivate identity consolidation. Dependence on Communication (DC) negatively predicted both Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth (both $p < .05$), indicating that interpersonal distance impedes deeper engagement with identity-relevant questions. Positive Solitude as measured by the PS scale (SP) positively predicted Commitment Making and Exploration in Depth (both $p < .001$), whereas Positive Solitude as measured within the SAM (PPS) was associated with greater Identification with Commitment ($p < .05$). Pathways from loneliness dimensions to Ruminative Exploration were not statistically significant ($p = .09-.10$).

The findings suggest that loneliness in emerging adulthood is not a monolithic construct: its distinct dimensions carry divergent implications for identity development. While General Experience of Loneliness and Positive Solitude may paradoxically support commitment-related processes, Dependence on Communication hinders both identity consolidation and deeper identity exploration. The identification of three empirically distinct latent profiles further underscores the heterogeneity of loneliness experiences among young adults and highlights the need for profile-sensitive developmental interventions. These results extend the theoretical understanding of identity formation in the context of interpersonal experiences during the transition to adulthood.

Keywords: emerging adulthood, loneliness, identity development, latent class analysis, structural equation modelling

Social Withdrawal Among Emerging Adults

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The umbrella term social withdrawal depicts a behavior characterized by solitude and a voluntary withdrawal of oneself from others [1]. Existing research on social withdrawal mostly operates on this definition of social withdrawal, on works by Coplan & Armer [2] as well as on the studies of Asendorpf [3], who is the first researcher to define three distinguishable subtypes of social withdrawal based on low and high approach and avoidance motivations. A deeper dive into the literature reveals obvious parallels to the phenomenon of Hikikomori, sometimes also labelled as severe and/or prolonged social withdrawal, and first investigated and described in Japan [4], [5]. Existing reviews on social withdrawal and Hikikomori with a focus on younger people [6,7,8] are rare and provide only very specific knowledge, marking social withdrawal as a still under-researched phenomenon.

Social withdrawal among emerging adults has multiple and interwoven determinants and outcomes, such as mental health and wellbeing, problems with peers and parents, or difficulties at school. On an impact level, social withdrawal among emerging adults is both associated with positive and negative outcomes, with the latter being the majority. In my dissertation I focus on social withdrawal among emerging adults (18 – 29 years), using qualitative, narrative interviews and Grounded Theory Methodology by Strauss and Corbin [9] to investigate how social withdrawal is manifested in the lives of emerging adults. I am applying a social science perspective, aiming to add an additional and supplementary perspective to a more individually focused and psychological view. Hereby I seek to answer questions related to the surrounding systems and environments of the affected individuals, accounting for a multitude of reasons, causes and consequences.

In my presentation I will give insight into the results of my systematic scoping review [10], which examines 125 studies on social withdrawal of adolescents and emerging adults. I will present findings about types, determinants and outcomes of social withdrawal, as well as axes of inequality and discuss implications for practice. I will also present preliminary findings from my own qualitative research.

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Longitudinal Relations between Social Support and Compassion and Self-Compassion in Emerging Adulthood

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Both compassion for others and self are linked to well-being (Goetz & Simon-Thomas, 2017), yet little is known about how changes in social support contribute to the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal compassion during emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood is a developmental period marked with heightened identity exploration and shifting relational contexts (Arnett, 2000). During this time, social support systems—particularly family relationships—undergo meaningful change and new sources of support are introduced (e.g. Lee et al., 2018; Pettit et al, 2011). The present study examined whether increases in social support from family, friends, and university instructors over time predicted other-oriented compassion and self-compassion.

Participants were 107 emerging adults (64% female; M age = 19.2 years) recruited from a large university in the southwestern United States. Data were collected across three waves spanning two academic years. Self-report measures assessed social support from friends, family, and instructors, self-compassion, and compassion. Multiple regression models were estimated in Mplus to examine whether year-to-year increases in social support predicted other-oriented compassion and self-compassion, above and beyond current levels of support, controlling for gender, trait empathy, and mental health symptoms (anxiety and depression).

Empathy and increase in family support over the prior year were positively associated with other-oriented compassion ($b = .39, p < .001$; $b = .29, p = .002$), controlling for gender, mental health symptoms and current levels of support. Further, increases in family support over the past year, current instructor support, and empathy were positively associated with self-compassion, whereas anxiety symptoms were negatively associated ($b = .32, p = .002$; $b = .09, p = .02$; $b = .16, p = -.21$; $b = ., p = .025$).

Findings suggest that emerging adulthood may represent a dynamic developmental window during which increases in relational support foster growth in both compassionate communication and self-compassion. Notably, increases in family support emerged as particularly salient, underscoring the continued importance of family relationships during this transitional period. Strengthening relational support systems may therefore serve as a meaningful pathway for cultivating compassion for both self and others in emerging adults.

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The Transition to Adulthood: A Proposal for a Multidimensional Approach

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The paper invites reflection on the process of entering adulthood. The key question concerns how to delineate the boundary between adolescence and adulthood. In Western societies, young people increasingly postpone undertaking life tasks that for many years were regarded as attributes of adulthood (e.g., starting a family, leaving the parental home, parenthood, stable employment). Attempts to define the so-called threshold of adulthood by indicating a specific life event prove insufficient in light of contemporary, diversified developmental trajectories. Above all, young people perceive their own adulthood not only in terms of fulfilling social expectations and developmental tasks assigned to this life stage, but also in terms of psychological transformations, particularly the acquisition of specific personal and relational competences.

Psychological and sociological research points to the emergence of a distinct developmental phase between adolescence and adulthood, conceptualized as emerging adulthood [1, 2], as well as to the process of the “teenagization of adults” [3]. The process of attaining maturity and becoming an adult is characterized by considerable individual variation, particularly with respect to the pace and sequence of changes. Therefore, it is postulated that crossing the threshold of adulthood should not be equated either with specific biographical events (e.g., starting a family) or with reaching a particular age (e.g., 18), nor should it be assumed that an individual suddenly and simultaneously acquires all attributes of adulthood. In the absence of clear developmental norms in adulthood, the question of developmental indicators directs attention toward a broad spectrum of adaptive manifestations of progress.

Adulthood constitutes a construct so complex that analyzing it solely on the basis of narrowly defined criteria or from only one perspective (objective or subjective) fails to capture its full multidimensionality. In the paper, we propose an original concept that integrates the social and psychological dimensions of adulthood as well as the objective and subjective perspectives of its conceptualization [4]. The social dimension refers to the fulfillment of social expectations and developmental tasks assigned to adulthood, whereas the psychological dimension encompasses competences regarded as characteristic of an adult individual, such as the ability to build intimate relationships, responsibility for oneself and others, autonomy, and problem-solving skills. Beyond objective events and experiences, adulthood is also manifested in the subjective sense of being an adult, which does not always correspond with social perception. Such a comprehensive understanding of the attributes of adulthood enables the analysis of their variability across subsequent stages of adult life, thereby providing an important complement to classical stage-based conceptions.

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Building Bridges Between Arnett's and Havighurst's Theories: New Developmental Tasks in Emerging Adulthood

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According to Arnett's theory, emerging adulthood is a distinct developmental period. As Havighurst's developmental theory suggests, specific tasks are assigned to different human life stages. The purpose of this study is to identify the developmental tasks characteristic of emerging adulthood.

A sample of 129 students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Spain, Portugal, Japan, Korea, Poland, and the USA, submitted reflective essays describing their personal perceptions and meanings of adulthood. Using both directed and inductive qualitative analytical approaches, the study identified emerging developmental tasks such as social solidarity and openness to diversity, lifelong learning, the development of thinking and knowledge, and building mental resilience.

Tasks consistent with Havighurst's framework were also observed, including socially responsible behavior, emotional independence, getting started in an occupation, and managing a home. Comparative analysis indicated a predominance of tasks characteristic of adolescence compared to those indicative of adulthood and emerging adulthood.

New Trends in Literature About Emerging Adulthood: A Scoping Review of Empirical Studies on Family and Home Environment

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Over the 25 years since emerging adulthood (EA) was first conceptualised, the scope of the field has greatly expanded. The first systematic mapping of EA research trends was conducted by Swanson in 2016 [1]. A decade later, we present an updated scoping review that charts developments in the EA literature from 2015 to 2025 and enables direct comparison with the previous decade. The review characterises the field in terms of the demographic and geographic composition of samples, sample sizes, methodological designs and approaches, types of data collected, and the topics that are being addressed (such as mental health, employment, identity and others).

The aim of this presentation is to describe a subset of this data, namely the studies from the field of EA that address family relationships and home environment.

Using PsycInfo and the Web of Science Core Collection, we systematically searched for peer-reviewed empirical studies using the keyword “*emerging adulthood*” and replicated Swanson’s search and charting procedures while extending them with additional variables. Three reviewers independently screened and charted all abstracts, achieving 95% inter-rater reliability across iterative calibration rounds. The final dataset included 2,429 studies spanning a broad range of disciplines. Across 105 identified topics, “family relationships and home environment” emerged as the most frequently examined topic, appearing in 22% of the studies.

In this presentation, we provide an in-depth analysis of EA research focusing on family, detailing its methodological patterns, demographic coverage, and dominant thematic intersections—such as mental health, identity development, and substance use. We discuss how these trends reflect broader shifts in the conceptualisation of family dynamics during emerging adulthood and outline implications for future research.

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“What does the research say about experiencing parental divorce in emerging adulthood?” Not much

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The majority of research that examines the effects of parental divorce on offspring focuses on its occurrence during childhood and adolescence, with some looking at longitudinal effects of the experience during emerging adulthood following its occurrence in earlier stages.¹ Family demographics have shown that ‘gray’ or ‘late onset’ divorce has increased in recent years, subsequently augmenting the number of young adults who experience parental divorce.² However, there has been scant examination of the effects of parental divorce when it occurs *during* emerging adulthood.¹ Given the dearth of research on the effects of experiencing parental divorce during emerging adulthood, we gathered closed and open-ended question survey data from 211 respondents who were between the ages of 18-25 when their parents divorced on the socioemotional, relational, and financial impact of the experience. Study participants were identified using the online survey platform, Prolific, which has been found to have reliable and valid human behavioral responses and a high attention-check pass rate.³

The present study focused on the ways in which parental divorce at this formative stage of life affected respondents’ mental health, with a particular focus on the impact of social support, parental conflict, and emerging adult’s expectations and perceptions of family life based on their religion. Prior studies have documented the association between parental divorce and worsening mental health in adolescents.⁴ Additionally, research with younger age groups has shown a significant negative trend in child and adolescent adjustment when there is parental conflict throughout the divorce.⁵ Likewise, when religious identity intersects with parental divorce, studies have posited that youth often experience a spiritual trauma.⁶ Additionally, perceived levels of social support are positively associated with mental health, introducing social support as a potential protective factor.⁷ Data analysis revealed that in our sample, self-assessed mental health after divorce was significantly and negatively associated with participant religiosity, being more surprised by the divorce, and having a higher level of family conflict after the divorce. Mental health was positively associated with greater support during the divorce, suggesting its importance at this stage of development. Results from a multiple regression analysis indicated that after controlling for the effects of race, gender, and age at divorce, change in mental health after parents’ divorce was significantly predicted by post-divorce family conflict, levels of support during divorce, respondent religiosity, and level of surprise at divorce. Qualitative survey data about how parental divorce in emerging adulthood affected respondents’ mental health will additionally be analyzed using content analysis and shared to provide additional context for our findings.

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The Future as a Horizon of Hope and Repair: Future Perception Among At-risk Young Arab Women

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Background. At-risk young Arab women in Israel experience multiple layers of oppression resulting from their intersecting identities as members of Arab society, as part of an ethnic minority, as women, and as individuals living in situations of personal and familial vulnerability. Their marginal position shapes both their life experiences and how they view their future. Emerging adulthood is a key developmental stage marked by personal responsibility, decision-making, and forming a desired lifestyle. Research shows this period involves identity formation, setting life goals, and planning steps toward them. Future perception plays a central role in motivation and the ability to act toward goals. This study adopts a context-informed perspective that examines how sociopolitical, sociocultural, and interpersonal contexts shape future perception.

Methods. The sample included 30 Arab young women aged 18–29 identified as being in situations of risk and involved in formal support frameworks such as welfare services or civil-society organizations. Data analysis followed Strauss and Corbin's grounded-theory approach, enabling exploration of the processes through which participants construct and interpret their perception of the future.

Results. The findings reveal four interrelated narratives describing how young Arab women at risk construct their perceptions of the future. The first, Between Overthinking and Avoidance, reflects both fear and hope while striving for control and independence. The second, Independent Personal Future, emphasizes breaking away from restrictive social patterns and building an autonomous, stable life. The third, Future as a Space for Personal Repair, highlights healing for themselves and their loved ones. The fourth, Future as a Path Toward Social Justice and Repair, expresses a wish to transform personal pain into social contribution. Together, these narratives portray the future as a horizon of hope, resilience, and change.

Implications. These findings highlight the need for context-aware interventions that foster autonomy, support goal setting, and strengthen coping capacities. By providing professional and social support, such programs can empower young Arab women at risk to overcome barriers and build safe, independent, and meaningful futures.

Mizrahi Ethnicity in Motion: Negotiating Identity and Belonging in Emerging Adulthood

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This study examines how Mizrahi young adults in Israel experience and interpret their ethnic identity during emerging adulthood, and how these experiences are shaped within intimate, institutional, and structural contexts. Emerging adulthood is a formative period in which questions of belonging, recognition, and future orientation intensify [1]. For members of historically marginalized groups, the process of emerging adulthood may unfold within ethnic power relations.

Mizrahi Jews whose families originate from the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, and Arab countries, occupy a complex social position. They are included within the Jewish majority, yet historically they are situated within an ethnic hierarchy shaped by Eurocentric cultural dominance [2,3]. Against this background, the study explores how ethnic identity is lived, negotiated, and reinterpreted across social arenas.

Fifteen self-identified Mizrahi students (ages 24–29) participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews addressing personal and family histories, formative social experiences, and encounters with educational and welfare institutions. Thematic analysis identified three interconnected arenas shaping ethnic identity: (1) internal processes of self-understanding; (2) family narratives and close relationships; and (3) institutional and structural encounters.

A central finding concerns participants' active reclaiming of a historically stigmatized identity. Rather than distancing themselves from Mizrahiness, many saw it as a source of resilience, pride, and moral clarity. At the same time, this was not a return to the stigmatized Mizrahi identity. Participants articulated hybrid forms of belonging that combined cultural affirmation with critical awareness of inequality. In this sense, Mizrahi identity functioned not only as a marker of difference but also as a lens through which institutional practices and social hierarchies were interpreted and questioned.

These findings suggest that ethnic identity in emerging adulthood is shaped not only through intergenerational transmission or personal reflection, but through ongoing negotiations within institutional spaces that both constrain and enable self-definition. Qualitative inquiry thus makes visible how identity can become an issue of both vulnerability and criticism.

The findings challenge broader reflection on the role of critical qualitative research in the study of marginalized identities during the emerging adulthood phase. Scholars are called to examine marginalized identities without stabilizing the very categories they seek to explore. When participants redefine a historically stigmatized identity as a source of strength while also reshaping its meaning, identity emerges as an active and evolving process rather than a fixed label. Hybrid forms of belonging function not only as personal expressions but also as subtle critiques of existing social hierarchies. These insights highlight identity in emerging adulthood as both developmental and socially embedded, calling for professional practice in social work and education to approach it as dynamic and contextual.

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Arab Young Adults' Voices on Intersecting Risks and Identity Formation In Israel: Toward Context-Informed Social Work Practice

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This study centers the voices of Arab youth at risk in Israel (ages 18–25), who experience intersecting marginalities related to gender, age, socioeconomic status, and ethnic-national identity. Through dialogue, the study explores how youth perceive and navigate socio-political, cultural, and interpersonal risks. As a national minority facing opportunity gaps, governmental neglect, and heightened tensions - particularly amid war - these youth exemplify the urgent need to conduct research with and for marginalized communities, recognizing their agency and deepening understanding of the risk situations they face.

Guided by Emerging Adulthood theory [1] and a Context-Informed Perspective [2], the study employs Grounded Theory methodology [3]. Twenty-five Arab young adults receiving welfare services participated in semi-structured interviews on intersecting risks. I conducted interviews in Arabic, my native language and that of the participants. Data were transcribed, thematically coded, and analyzed using the constant comparative method, supporting the development of categories and theoretical linkages directly from participants' narratives.

Findings revealed complex patterns of identity negotiation and risk perception. Participants navigated conflicting ethnic-national, local, and religious identities, with these challenges intersecting across three risk dimensions: interpersonal (family violence, neglect, isolation, anxiety, and loss of meaning), socio-cultural (gender restrictions, educational barriers, limited opportunities, weak support systems), and sociopolitical (community violence, institutional discrimination, limited trust in authorities, and language-based exclusion).

Listening to these voices builds context-based knowledge and highlights the urgency of designing social work interventions sensitive to both identity and structure. The findings demonstrate that identity and risk are closely linked, shaping ongoing cycles of vulnerability among Arab youth in Israel. These young people confront the dual challenge of personal growth amid a fraught political landscape. This research calls for social work practice and policy that integrate cultural context, promote equality, and foster practical interventions to strengthen resilience, especially during times of crisis.

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The Psychological Outcomes of Online Racism Among Young Adult Arab-Palestinians in Israel

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In the digital era, online racism has become a pervasive stressor for minoritized emerging adults [1]. Young Arab-Palestinians are highly vulnerable to online racism due to their sociopolitical positioning while growing up as a native-born national minority exposed to structural discrimination and contested belonging [2]. Yet the psychological consequences of such exposure among this population have scarcely been examined.

This study examined the relationship between online racism exposure and mental health outcomes among young Arab-Palestinian adults in Israel, focusing on the moderating roles of ethnic identity, national self-definition and social media political participation [3].

A sample of 601 young Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel (aged 18-27) completed measures of perceived online racism, ethnic identity, national self-definition, social media political participation, well-being, and depression [3].

Higher exposure to online racism was associated with lower well-being and higher depression. A more consolidated ethnic identity (stronger sense of belonging to one's ethnic group) was related to higher well-being, while a stronger Arab-Palestinian national self-definition (identifying primarily as Arab-Palestinian rather than Israeli) was associated with higher depression when exposed to online racism. The interaction between online racism and ethnic identity was significant for both well-being and depression. For individuals with low ethnic identity, higher online racism exposure was related to lower well-being and higher depression. This relationship was not significant for those with high ethnic identity, suggesting a protective effect. Conversely, the interaction between online racism and national self-definition was significant only for depression. For individuals with high national self-definition as Arab-Palestinian, higher online racism exposure was associated with higher depression. Additionally, higher social media political participation was associated with lower well-being and higher depression.

These findings highlight the complex interplay between online racism, identity factors, and mental health among Arab-Palestinians in Israel, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive interventions and policies to address online racism and support affected individuals [4].

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Attachment to Parents, Friends and Romantic Partners and their Influence on Mental Health in Emerging Adults: A Longitudinal Mediation Analysis within a Dual-Continua Framework

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Introduction. Emerging adulthood is a pivotal stage in the life course, marked by profound changes in social relationships, during which friends and romantic partners take on a central role with important implications for mental health.

Objective. To examine the direct and indirect associations between parental attachment and mental health, mediated by attachment to friends and romantic partners among Chilean emerging adults.

Methods. A three-measure longitudinal study with a sample of 1,213 emerging adults (M = 22.26; SD = 2.59). Parental attachment, attachment to friends, romantic partner attachment, depressive symptoms, and well-being were assessed. A longitudinal mediation model was tested using a cross-lagged panel approach.

Results. The mediation model was partially supported (Figure 1), maternal attachment influences depressive symptoms through romantic attachment anxiety. Anxiety and avoidance in romantic attachment were associated with greater depressive symptoms, while avoidance was related to lower well-being. Attachment to friends showed a positive association with well-being, and the latter reduced depressive symptoms. Sex and sexual orientation did not moderate the mediation model.

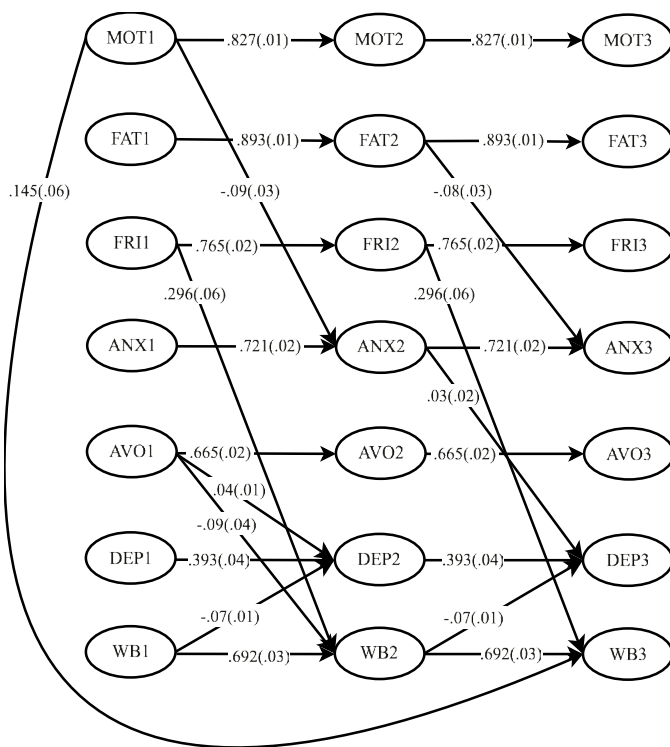


Figure 1. Constrained CLMP

Note. Unstandardized estimates (standard errors) are presented. Only statistically significant paths are displayed. Covariances are omitted from the figure for clarity, but were all statistically significant. MOT = maternal attachment; FAT = paternal attachment; FRI = attachment to friends; ANX = romantic attachment anxiety; AVO = romantic attachment avoidance; DEP = depressive symptoms; WB = well-being.

Conclusions. In emerging adulthood, the role of mothers, fathers, friends, and romantic partners play important yet distinct roles in mental health.

Keywords. Parental attachment, friend attachment, romantic attachment, dual-factor mental health, longitudinal mediated moderation model.

Growing Apart or Growing Together? Family and Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood: A longitudinal Analysis of Spanish University Students

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In recent years, young people have increasingly delayed the adoption of adult roles [1] that has been reflected in the trend for emerging adults to remain in the family home well into their late twenties. Spain exemplifies this trend, as young adults typically move out around the age of 30 [2]. This new reality presents challenges for families and opens up interesting questions for research on household dynamics and the role of the family in offspring adjustment. The first aim is to analyze the continuity and stability in the perception of family relationships among a sample of emerging adults in Spain. The second aim is to explore the associations between family dimensions and emerging adults' flourishing. Data were collected at three measurement points. In 2015 (Wave 1), a sample of 1,502 undergraduate students (M = 20.3 years) completed a series of questionnaires regarding their family relationships and flourishing. Between 2018 and 2019 (Wave 2), 400 participants (M = 23.7 years) from the original sample completed the questionnaires again, and in 2024 (Wave 3), 315 participants (M = 29.0 years) repeated the assessments. Regarding continuity or changes in mean scores for the variables, results demonstrate considerable continuity in parental warmth, involvement and autonomy support, indicating no significant changes in the mean scores of these variables across Waves 1, 2, and 3. However, in the areas of parental warmth, family social support, psychological control, and behavioral control, young adults perceived a decrease in mean scores throughout these years. In terms of rank order stability, results indicate high stability across measurements, not only between the closest intervals (Waves 1–2; Waves 2–3) but also across the longest interval (Waves 1–3). The only exception lies in men's perception of control, as their perception of both psychological and behavioral control in Wave 1 does not correlate with their perception of control in Wave 3. Overall, there are no significant gender differences. Furthermore, results point out a significant and positive association between family dimensions at W1 and W2 and flourishing at W3 without significant gender differences. However, the associations between parental control at W1 and W2 (both psychological and behavioral) and flourishing at W3 were no longer significant, with the exception of psychological control in men at W1, which showed a significant and negative association with flourishing at W3. Our findings indicate a high degree of stability in young adults' perceptions of their family relationships. This stability likely reflects the new equilibrium reached after adolescence. However, in dimensions such as behavioral and psychological control, a decline over the years can be observed, possibly due to the ongoing adjustments parents must make to grant autonomy to young adults.

Table 1. Correlations between family dimensions at W1 and W2 and flourishing at W3.

	Fourishing W3				Fourishing W3		
	Women	Men	Total		Women	Men	Total
Parental involvement W1	.14*	.23*	.175*	Parental involvement W2	.09*	.24*	.15*
Parental warmth W1	.20*	.23*	.22**	Parental warmth W2	.29**	.25*	.28**
Parental autonomy support W1	.14*	.24*	.19*	Parental autonomy support W2	.25*	.19	.24**
Family social support W1	.18*	.25*	.22**	Family social support W2	.25*	.28*	.27**
Psychological control W1	-.16*	-.15	-.16*	Psychological control W2	-.06	-.11	-.10
Behavioral control W1	-.12	-.06	-.10	Behavioral control W2	-.12	-.16	-.12

*p < .05; **p < .001

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The Lasting Impact of Family Social Support

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Emerging adulthood is a high-risk period for depressive symptoms, but also a time when positive resources can make a significant difference. Large population studies show rising distress across recent cohorts, and many young people do not receive adequate help [1]. Various studies have highlighted the importance of family social support and resilience as protective factors against depressive symptoms [2]; however, the long-term impact of these factors on development remains unclear, as do potential gender differences.

The aim of the present study, which draws on data from the TAE Project (Transition to Adulthood in Spain), was to examine the associations between perceived social support from family during the initial stages of emerging adulthood and depressive symptoms at the end of this period, while controlling for the effects of peer social support and resilience. Additionally, this study sought to determine whether these associations differ by gender.

In 2015 (Wave 1), a sample of 1,502 undergraduate students ($M = 20.3$ years) completed a series of questionnaires regarding perceived family social support, depressive symptoms, and resilience. Between 2018 and 2019 (Wave 2), 400 participants ($M = 23.7$ years) from the original sample completed the first two measures again. Finally, in 2024 (Wave 3), 315 participants ($M = 29.0$ years) repeated the assessments. Data collection at T1 was conducted in-person using paper-based surveys during university classes, whereas T2 and T3 were administered online via the Survey Monkey platform. Participants completed the Spanish version (Landeta & Calvete, 2002) of the Family subscale from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988); the depression subscale of the Spanish validation (Bados et al., 2005) of the DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) and the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, et al., 2008).

The results show significant correlations between family and peer social support and the presence of depressive symptoms across the three assessment points. However, when both social support sources measured at W1 were included in a regression analysis with depressive symptoms at W3, the effect of peer social support became non-significant, while family support remained a significant predictor. Furthermore, when the effect of resilience at W1 was added to the regression equation, interesting gender differences emerged: while family social support was the sole predictor of depressive symptoms for males, for females, in addition to family support, both resilience and baseline depressive symptoms also predicted the onset of these symptoms at the end of this developmental stage.

Our findings further highlight the pivotal role of family support as a protective factor against depressive symptoms. This support maintains its effects over the years, appearing particularly significant for male offspring. These results underscore the need for policies that promote positive parenting even during emerging adulthood, ensuring that parents are equipped to serve as a primary source of support for both their sons and daughters.

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“Technology is Advancing Into our Daily Lives”: Emerging Adults’ Use and Perceptions of AI

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AI is becoming more and more integrated into the lives of emerging adults, and many people aged 18-29 use AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude to answer questions and enhance productivity. AI is also increasingly being used to simulate social relationships (e.g. friend.com, Replika, or Character.ai) and therapeutic relationships (e.g. Wysa, Woebot, Abby.gg). While the current generation of emerging adults has some skepticism of AI use [1], our research suggests that many of them are experimenting with AI social companions and therapists. We anticipate that within the next 2-3 years, emerging adults’ use of AI for social support will be common. In this talk, we will present what we currently know about emerging adults’ use and perceptions of AI for productivity, social companionship, and therapy, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data collections undertaken in our research lab.

First, we will present qualitative data collected from two focus groups conducted with 16 emerging adult undergraduate students, aged 18-22 (26% non-white; 64% female). Participants watched a video advertisement for the AI social companion, Friend AI and were then asked to share their thoughts about friend AI and the use of AI more generally. Using thematic analysis we extracted three main themes from the data (subthemes are not reported here due to space limitations). These themes were AI proliferation (e.g. “Robots are going to take over the world”), Dangers of AI Social Companions (e.g. “people that have used chat bot websites, they’ve harmed themselves”), and Good Use Cases for AI (e.g. “it can help with loneliness.”)

We will then integrate this data with findings from quantitative research we have conducted. Using prolific, we surveyed 170 emerging adults on their AI use, perceived social norms for interaction, and a number of measures related to social functioning. In this research we found that AI use for productivity, social companionship, and therapy was positively correlated with emerging adults’ wellbeing.

AI use is gaining momentum and is expanding beyond productivity use cases. While it is tempting to dismiss or vilify AI and to incite moral panic about how it will affect emerging adults’ development, we urge caution. While our research and that of others has suggested that AI may disrupt processes related to intimacy, identity, and community and may threaten privacy and psychological wellness [2], there may also be some benefits to AI use that shouldn’t be overlooked. Our research not only raises questions about how our changing relationship with technology will impact human relationships but also encourages us to entertain the possibility that AI may provide some benefits to emerging adults.

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Social Media Fatigue And Well-Being In Emerging Adulthood: The Role Of Social Media Use Among University Students

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Emerging adulthood (18–29) is a period of life focused on identity development, growing independence, and frequent use of digital technologies, especially social media [1]. Social media activity is important for identity exploration. Social media plays an important role in communication and social interaction among young adults, but its intensive use may also affect psychological well-being [2]. Most previous studies have focused on how much time people spend on social media [3]. However, less attention has been paid to the experience of feeling overwhelmed by online environments. One concept that describes this experience is social media fatigue, understood as psychological exhaustion caused by information overload, constant connectivity, and pressure to stay active online [4]. The present study examines psychological mechanisms that may be associated with lower psychological well-being in emerging adulthood. Exposure to idealized representations of others' lives on social media may increase perfectionism discrepancy, defined as the perceived gap between personal standards and one's actual self. This discrepancy may be related to stronger self-criticism and feelings of inadequacy, which may in turn be associated with lower levels of well-being. The study also examines self-compassion as a potential protective factor. Self-compassion refers to treating oneself with kindness and understanding when facing difficulties or perceived shortcomings [5]. Higher levels of self-compassion may weaken the negative associations between perfectionism discrepancy and psychological well-being. Data are collected from university students aged 18–29 using an online questionnaire including the Social Media Fatigue Scale (SMFS) [5], the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) [6], the Self-Compassion Scale - Polish version (SCS-PL) [7], and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index [8]. The proposed model assumes that social media fatigue is positively associated with perfectionism discrepancy, which in turn predicts lower psychological well-being, while self-compassion moderates this relationship.

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Chronicle Stories as a Context for Development: How the Evolving Lives of Content Creators are Experienced by Emerging Adults

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Young people today exist in a complex sociocultural landscape filled with a glut of media stories. Although there is research on the social, cognitive and psychological effect of consuming stories (e.g., Gottschall, 2012), this work focuses on finite stories that have a beginning, middle and end. In contrast, many of the stories accessed through social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram are “chronicle stories” that evolve and change over long periods of time. This raises interesting questions about how young people engage with and experience these narratives as they themselves are developing and changing. Previous work (e.g., Noon et al.) suggests that social media stories play an important role in identity-related processes, but it is unclear if and how this extends to the life stories of content creators who detail their lives unfolding over real time. With this in mind, this qualitative study was designed to examine how emerging adults: 1.) choose and experience the evolving stories of content creators; 2.) perceive if and how the stories influence how they think, feel, and behave over time; 3.) engage with different types of stories.

Fifty diverse emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 25 participated in this qualitative study. Participants completed a semi-structured interview in which they were asked to select key content creators whose stories they have engaged with over time. They were then asked to: 1.) describe the creator’s life story as if sharing it with a close friend; 2.) describe how the story evolved over time; 2.) consider how the storyteller’s life has influenced them across a variety of domains. All data were analyzed using a Reflective Thematic Analysis (Braun, & Clarke, 2022) and coded by two independent researchers. Current inter-rater reliability exceeds 90%.

Preliminary findings suggest that emerging adults follow the storied lives of content creators that fulfill a variety of functions in their development. Most commonly, participants described and felt most connected to stories centered upon admiration and envy (i.e., upward comparison). These stories appear to serve as a form of motivation and source of what “is possible.” They also described engaging with stories that produce feelings of anger and disappointment. Most notably, these stories tend to center around people who express opinions and world views that do not align with their values. This was most distressing when a content creator shared a view that appeared changed or had not previously been divulged. Finally, some participants described following stories of downward comparison in which the content creators described lives that were unappealing or sad. This appeared to reaffirm or strengthen the participants’ values and commitments and, in some cases, contribute to feelings of gratitude.

In sum, our findings suggest that emerging adults actively seek out and consume chronological stories that contribute to both identity exploration (e.g., stories that affirm what they value) and identity commitment (e.g., stories that affirm what they do not value). We are still in the process of analyzing how these processes are experienced as a function of the changing narratives, and will highlight these findings in our final presentation.

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Mass Media and Mental Health in Emerging Adults: The Role of Social Media Mindsets in Psychological Well-Being

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In recent years, a marked increase in mental health problems has been observed across multiple age groups, including emerging adults. In particular, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a growing prevalence of anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, eating disorders, and other manifestations of psychological distress. From a psychosocial perspective, this trend can be understood as the result of a complex interaction between individual and environmental factors that dynamically influence one another. Although frequent use of social media is often associated with diminished well-being, it may also serve adaptive functions, such as supporting personal development, social connectedness, and the pursuit of individual goals. Against this background, the present study examines the relationships between attitudes toward social media and psychological well-being, with particular emphasis on the mediating roles of Facebook addiction and perceived stress in emerging adulthood. The results indicate that more positive attitudes toward social media are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being. Moreover, Facebook addiction and perceived stress were found to operate as serial mediators in this relationship, suggesting that maladaptive patterns of social media use and elevated stress may undermine the beneficial effects of positive attitudes. These findings highlight the importance of considering both the constructive and detrimental aspects of social media engagement. Importantly, the results suggest that strengthening a sense of agency in emerging adults may reduce the risk of developing problematic social media use, lower perceived stress, and consequently enhance overall well-being and mental health. These outcomes underscore the potential value of interventions aimed at promoting self-regulation, digital literacy, and adaptive coping strategies. In conclusion, the findings support the need for a holistic approach that integrates psychological support with educational and social initiatives. Such an approach may contribute to preventing addictive behaviors, improving stress management, and ultimately fostering mental health and well-being among emerging adults in an increasingly digitalized environment.

mHealth Interventions Applied to Cancer Prevention Among Young Adults (Ages 18–39): A Systematic Review

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Introduction. Approximately 75 million young adults (YAs; ages 18–39) currently reside in the United States, and nearly 90,000 are diagnosed with cancer annually. Across the lifespan, young adult cancer survivors incur more than \$250,000 in personal costs, contributing to over \$23.5 billion in national healthcare expenditures. Strengthening cancer prevention efforts during young adulthood represents a critical strategy to reduce both incidence and long-term economic burden.

Cancer prevention in YAs is shaped by modifiable health behaviors and early adoption of preventive medical services. Vaccination against oncogenic viruses (e.g., Human papillomavirus, hepatitis B), consistent sunscreen use (SPF ≥ 30), tobacco avoidance, and regular physical activity, substantially reduce cancer risk. Mobile health (mHealth) defined as the use of smartphones, tablets, wearable devices, and other wireless technologies to support health practice, has emerged as a scalable mechanism to promote such behaviors.

Although mHealth interventions have been widely applied to medication adherence, mental health monitoring, and symptom management in young adults, less is known about their use in cancer prevention. With rapid advancements in wearable technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and conversational platforms, understanding how mHealth is currently leveraged for cancer prevention in YAs is timely. This systematic review synthesizes the scope of mHealth interventions targeting cancer prevention among YAs and compares representation to adults aged 40+.

Methods. We conducted a systematic review across four databases (PsycINFO, PubMed, Scopus, and TripPro) examining mHealth interventions targeting cancer prevention mechanisms (e.g., tobacco/vaping cessation, diet and physical activity, sunscreen use, HPV vaccination, colorectal screening).

Inclusion criteria required studies to:

1. Be clinical trials;
2. Be published within the past 10 years;
3. Target a cancer prevention outcome as the primary endpoint;
4. Use mHealth as the primary intervention modality;
5. Be conducted among healthy populations (no pre-existing or comorbid conditions);
6. Include participants aged ≥ 18 .

We compared interventions targeting young adults (18–39) to those focused on adults aged 40+.

Analysis. Preliminary analyses examined the distribution of mHealth interventions by age group and categorized studies by cancer prevention mechanism.

Results. Of 150 full-text articles meeting inclusion criteria, 104 targeted adults broadly or those aged 40+, while only 46 focused specifically on young adults (18–39). Across both age groups, smoking cessation and physical activity were the most frequently addressed intervention targets.

Among young adults, HPV vaccination emerged as a distinct, though limited, area of focus. In contrast, colorectal and cervical cancer screening interventions were more commonly represented in older adult populations.

Discussion. Despite young adults' high digital engagement and technological fluency, mHealth cancer prevention interventions are disproportionately concentrated among older adults. This gap is notable given that young adulthood represents a pivotal period for establishing long-term health behaviors that shape lifetime cancer risk.

As AI-enabled tools and adaptive digital platforms continue to evolve, opportunities exist to design developmentally tailored, behaviorally intelligent mHealth interventions that align with young adults' patterns of technology use. Expanding innovation in this domain may represent a scalable pathway to reducing cancer incidence and long-term economic burden in this population.

Hierarchical Card Sort: A Mixed-Methods Tool for Mapping Emerging Adults' Informational Support Preferences

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Emerging adults (EAs; ages 18-29) actively select informational support (advice, guidance) from diverse sources while navigating adult roles [3, 4]. Understanding source preferences across domains (academic/vocational, romantic relational, financial) and cultural context requires methods that capture both hierarchical rankings and underlying rationales. This paper presents a novel Hierarchical Card Sort (HCS) methodology developed for a U.S.–China comparative study. Participants (N=30 U.S., 31 Chinese, undergraduates, ages 18-25) personalize up to 16 role cards (e.g., Parent/Caretaker, Adult Mentor, Non-Family Peer, Romantic Partner) blanks with real people from their social networks. For each domain, they perform iterative forced-choice sorts (“likely” vs. “unlikely,” then subdividing “likely” into “more likely”/“less likely”) while explaining differences between piles and their importance in semi-structured interviews. Sessions last 45–60 minutes; final layouts are visualized as dendrograms/treemaps.

Quantitative outputs include: frequency of roles in top piles, scaled likelihood scores (0–16, standardized to percentages), and peer/adult ratios per domain. These enable cross-cultural comparisons and correlations with additional scales (e.g. Contemporary Filial Piety Scale scores). Qualitative content and thematic analysis of interview transcripts identify valued source qualities (e.g., expertise, appropriate role, trustworthiness) and rationales.

HCS advantages include: participant-driven hierarchies, seamless behavioral and verbal data collection, cultural adaptability via bilingual protocols, feasible small-sample validity (~30 per group), and engaging visual outputs [1, 2, 5]. Pilot testing showed strong engagement, procedural clarity, and declared recognition of the activity’s ability to capture participants’ decision process.

This methodology offers EA researchers a dynamic, mixed-methods tool to reveal evolving support networks and inform autonomy-supportive guidance from parents, educators, and mentors.

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Global Identity Formation Scale (GIFS) Validation: Measuring Exploration and Commitment in U.S. College Students

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Digital globalization is transforming identity development during emerging adulthood by expanding social networks and fostering global belonging beyond local borders. This change is especially important for emerging adults, who are in a critical period for identity exploration and commitment [1, 2, 3]. While various frameworks examine global identity, few measures assess its developmental process. This gap is critical, as today's emerging adults are more globally connected than any previous generation [1]. This paper presents the development and validation of the Global Identity Formation Scale (GIFS), grounded in Eriksonian exploration and commitment theory [2, 3], to assess global identity formation among U.S. college students. We hypothesized a two-factor structure (exploration and commitment).

Study 1 ($N = 402$) used exploratory factor analysis to refine the scale structure. An initial 14-item analysis yielded a two-factor solution explaining 56% of total variance, with strong internal consistency ($\omega = .90$ for both factors). After removing four items with poor loadings, the refined 10-item version demonstrated improved psychometric properties: 63% explained variance (Commitment: 32.1%; Exploration: 30.9%), excellent reliability (Commitment $\omega = .88$; Exploration $\omega = .91$), and strong factor loadings (.66–.88 for Commitment; .75–.89 for Exploration). Study 2 ($N = 705$) employed confirmatory factor analysis to compare three competing models: 10-item, 8-item, and 6-item versions. The 6-item model (three items per factor) demonstrated superior fit ($RMSEA = .033$, CFI and $TLI \geq .95$, $\chi^2/df < 2$, lowest AIC and BIC) while maintaining strong internal consistency (overall $\omega = .88$; Commitment $\omega = .87$; Exploration $\omega = .86$). Standardized factor loadings ranged from .78 to .86, supporting the 6-item GIFS as the optimal balance of parsimony and psychometric quality.

Study 3 ($N = 270$) assessed convergent and discriminant validity. The GIFS demonstrated strong convergent validity with theoretically related constructs, including global awareness ($r = .49$), international connectedness ($r = .46$), and other global identity measures ($r = .57$ –.64). Both subscales showed similar patterns, with Exploration more strongly associated with openness to experience and empathetic awareness than Commitment. Discriminant validity was supported through negligible correlations with nationalism ($r = -.06$), rejection of cultural differences ($r = -.06$), and Christian nationalism ($r = -.02$).

The GIFS is a valid, reliable, and efficient tool for measuring global identity development. Its brevity and strong psychometric properties make it suitable for research examining the impact of globalization on youth identity. By operationalizing global identity as a developmental process rather than a static identification, the GIFS fills a critical gap, expanding classical identity theory into the global domain and enabling longitudinal research on how global identity develops across the emerging adult years.

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Social Media Addiction Among Students: Predicting Mental Health and Addictive Behavior Using Random Forest Models

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Social media use among adolescents and emerging adults has grown substantially in recent years, raising concerns about its associations with mental health outcomes and addictive behavioral patterns [1]. Gen Z reports lower emotional and social wellbeing than other generations, partly due to digital self-comparison and sleep disruption [3]. Emerging adulthood, defined as a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, instability, and heightened sensitivity to social evaluation, is a period in which digital environments may play a particularly influential role in shaping psychological wellbeing. The sample consisted of emerging adults aged 18 - 24. While previous research has documented links between social media use and wellbeing, fewer studies have applied predictive modeling to identify key drivers of these outcomes. This study uses machine learning to identify the strongest predictors of both mental health impact and social media addiction severity among emerging adults.

Data included usage patterns, sleep hours, academic level, relationship status, gender, perceived academic performance impact, social media conflicts, and validated mental health and addiction scores. Two Random Forest regression models predicted Mental Health Score and Addicted Score, evaluated using R^2 , MSE, and MAE, with SHAP values used to interpret feature contributions [2].

Both models showed strong performance: Mental Health Score ($R^2 = 0.79$) and Addicted Score ($R^2 = 0.93$). Perceived academic performance impact was the strongest predictor in both models, while daily usage and sleep hours supported a time-displacement pathway linking social media behavior to poorer mental health. Social media conflicts predicted addiction but not mental health outcomes, and demographic factors had minimal influence. These findings indicate that social media addiction and mental health impact, although correlated, are driven by partially distinct mechanisms during emerging adulthood.

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SYMPOSIUM

Pathways to Mapping Mental Health in College Emerging Adults

How can relational, individual, academic and digital pathways help us understand mental health and flourishing in college emerging adults?

1 Map family relationships and flourishing A longitudinal view of Spanish university students, examining continuity and change in family dynamics and their links with flourishing at the end of emerging adulthood.	2 Understand family support and resilience A focused discussion of the long-term protective role of family social support, peer support and resilience in relation to depressive symptoms.	3 Examine academic and digital pathways An analysis of academic achievement, psychological well-being and the mediating role of social media use among university students in Turkey.
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For researchers and practitioners working with college students, family contexts and young adult mental health

Theory | Longitudinal Research | Family Support | Resilience | Well-being | Social Media | Higher Education

Session details Tuesday, 30 June 2026 13:45-15:15 Main Room Parallel sessions 3 S1	Chair and presenting authors María del Carmen García-Mendoza Águeda Parra Tülin Şener
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SYMPOSIUM DESIGN

From family context to psychological well-being

1. Symposium overview

College emerging adulthood is presented as a developmental period of opportunity and vulnerability. The opening frames mental health in relation to identity, education, family relations, academic demands, financial strain and prolonged dependence on the family of origin.

2. Longitudinal family context

Two contributions from the TAE Project examine family relationships, family social support, resilience, depressive symptoms and flourishing across repeated waves of data from Spanish university students.

3. Academic and digital context

The final contribution examines whether social media use helps explain the association between academic achievement and psychological well-being, connecting academic functioning with digital everyday life.

Chair and presenters

María del Carmen García-Mendoza

Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

Symposium chair; family relationships and flourishing

Águeda Parra

Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

Family social support and depressive symptoms

Tülin Şener

Ankara University, Türkiye

Academic achievement, social media use and well-being

Key themes

- Mental health in college students
- Flourishing and well-being
- Family relationships
- Family social support
- Resilience
- Depressive symptoms
- Academic achievement
- Social media use
- Higher education
- Emerging adulthood
- Longitudinal data
- Prevention and intervention

Simposium: Pathways to Mapping Mental Health in College Emerging Adults

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Emerging adulthood represents a critical period for mental health, particularly among college students [1], as their commitment to higher education often delays the adoption of traditional adult roles and responsibilities. This life stage is marked by profound transitions in identity, relationships, education, and occupational domains. While it offers significant opportunities for growth and self-definition, it is also a period of heightened psychological vulnerability [2]. For college students in particular, these developmental challenges are intensified by the demands of academic expectations, competitive environments, and career-defining decisions, which occur alongside financial strain, shifting family dynamics, and prolonged dependence on the family of origin, factors that can impact mental health. The present symposium brings together three studies that examine key relational, individual, and academic dimensions associated with mental health in emerging adults, providing insights that are essential for both research and intervention.

The first contribution explores mental health within family context. In Southern Europe, particularly Spain, many young adults remain in the parental home into their late twenties reshaping daily family dynamics. Using longitudinal data from 2015 to 2024 (TAE Project), this study analyzes continuity and stability of family dimensions over time and examines how specific family dimensions are associated with flourishing. The second contribution also draws on data from the TAE Project, and explore the relationship between family social support, resilience and depressive symptoms, underscoring the lasting role of family social support as a protective factor against depressive symptomatology. The third contribution analyses the link between academic achievement and psychological well-being among university students exploring the potential mediating role of social media use in this association. Findings point to academic achievement as a protective factor for mental health and that social media use may serve as a potential pathway through which academic performance influences psychological well-being.

Taken together, these three contributions provide a multidimensional perspective by integrating relational, intrapersonal, and contextual dimensions, advancing a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that support mental health in college students during emerging adulthood. Such knowledge is crucial for informing prevention strategies, educational policies, and family-based interventions aimed at supporting emerging adults as they navigate the complexities of the transition to adulthood.

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Oral communication in the symposium

- [1] García-Mendoza, M. C., Parra, A., Díez, M., Reina-Flores, M. C., Lizaso, I. & Sánchez-Queija, I. Growing Apart or Growing Together? Family and Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood: A longitudinal Analysis of Spanish University Students.
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Growing Apart or Growing Together? Family and Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood: A longitudinal Analysis of Spanish University Students

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In recent years, young people have increasingly delayed the adoption of adult roles [1] that has been reflected in the trend for emerging adults to remain in the family home well into their late twenties. Spain exemplifies this trend, as young adults typically move out around the age of 30 [2]. This new reality presents challenges for families and opens up interesting questions for research on household dynamics and the role of the family in offspring adjustment. The first aim is to analyze the continuity and stability in the perception of family relationships among a sample of emerging adults in Spain. The second aim is to explore the associations between family dimensions and emerging adults' flourishing. Data were collected at three measurement points. In 2015 (Wave 1), a sample of 1,502 undergraduate students (M = 20.3 years) completed a series of questionnaires regarding their family relationships and flourishing. Between 2018 and 2019 (Wave 2), 400 participants (M = 23.7 years) from the original sample completed the questionnaires again, and in 2024 (Wave 3), 315 participants (M = 29.0 years) repeated the assessments. Regarding continuity or changes in mean scores for the variables, results demonstrate considerable continuity in parental warmth, involvement and autonomy support, indicating no significant changes in the mean scores of these variables across Waves 1, 2, and 3. However, in the areas of parental warmth, family social support, psychological control, and behavioral control, young adults perceived a decrease in mean scores throughout these years. In terms of rank order stability, results indicate high stability across measurements, not only between the closest intervals (Waves 1–2; Waves 2–3) but also across the longest interval (Waves 1–3). The only exception lies in men's perception of control, as their perception of both psychological and behavioral control in Wave 1 does not correlate with their perception of control in Wave 3. Overall, there are no significant gender differences. Furthermore, results point out a significant and positive association between family dimensions at W1 and W2 and flourishing at W3 without significant gender differences. However, the associations between parental control at W1 and W2 (both psychological and behavioral) and flourishing at W3 were no longer significant, with the exception of psychological control in men at W1, which showed a significant and negative association with flourishing at W3. Our findings indicate a high degree of stability in young adults' perceptions of their family relationships. This stability likely reflects the new equilibrium reached after adolescence. However, in dimensions such as behavioral and psychological control, a decline over the years can be observed, possibly due to the ongoing adjustments parents must make to grant autonomy to young adults.

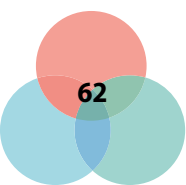
Table 1. Correlations between family dimensions at W1 and W2 and flourishing at W3.

	Fourishing W3				Fourishing W3		
	Women	Men	Total		Women	Men	Total
Parental involvement W1	.14*	.23*	.175*	Parental involvement W2	.09*	.24*	.15*
Parental warmth W1	.20*	.23*	.22**	Parental warmth W2	.29**	.25*	.28**
Parental autonomy support W1	.14*	.24*	.19*	Parental autonomy support W2	.25*	.19	.24**
Family social support W1	.18*	.25*	.22**	Family social support W2	.25*	.28*	.27**
Psychological control W1	-.16*	-.15	-.16*	Psychological control W2	-.06	-.11	-.10
Behavioral control W1	-.12	-.06	-.10	Behavioral control W2	-.12	-.16	-.12

*p < .05; **p < .001

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The Lasting Impact of Family Social Support

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Emerging adulthood is a high-risk period for depressive symptoms, but also a time when positive resources can make a significant difference. Large population studies show rising distress across recent cohorts, and many young people do not receive adequate help [1]. Various studies have highlighted the importance of family social support and resilience as protective factors against depressive symptoms [2]; however, the long-term impact of these factors on development remains unclear, as do potential gender differences.

The aim of the present study, which draws on data from the TAE Project (Transition to Adulthood in Spain), was to examine the associations between perceived social support from family during the initial stages of emerging adulthood and depressive symptoms at the end of this period, while controlling for the effects of peer social support and resilience. Additionally, this study sought to determine whether these associations differ by gender.

In 2015 (Wave 1), a sample of 1,502 undergraduate students ($M = 20.3$ years) completed a series of questionnaires regarding perceived family social support, depressive symptoms, and resilience. Between 2018 and 2019 (Wave 2), 400 participants ($M = 23.7$ years) from the original sample completed the first two measures again. Finally, in 2024 (Wave 3), 315 participants ($M = 29.0$ years) repeated the assessments. Data collection at T1 was conducted in-person using paper-based surveys during university classes, whereas T2 and T3 were administered online via the Survey Monkey platform. Participants completed the Spanish version (Landeta & Calvete, 2002) of the Family subscale from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988); the depression subscale of the Spanish validation (Bados et al., 2005) of the DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) and the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, et al., 2008).

The results show significant correlations between family and peer social support and the presence of depressive symptoms across the three assessment points. However, when both social support sources measured at W1 were included in a regression analysis with depressive symptoms at W3, the effect of peer social support became non-significant, while family support remained a significant predictor. Furthermore, when the effect of resilience at W1 was added to the regression equation, interesting gender differences emerged: while family social support was the sole predictor of depressive symptoms for males, for females, in addition to family support, both resilience and baseline depressive symptoms also predicted the onset of these symptoms at the end of this developmental stage.

Our findings further highlight the pivotal role of family support as a protective factor against depressive symptoms. This support maintains its effects over the years, appearing particularly significant for male offspring. These results underscore the need for policies that promote positive parenting even during emerging adulthood, ensuring that parents are equipped to serve as a primary source of support for both their sons and daughters.

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Childfreeness as a Way of Navigating Emerging Adulthood

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Emerging adulthood is a life stage characterized by openness, exploration, and the negotiation of adult roles. In contemporary societies, the postponement of parenthood and declining fertility rates have made questions about having children increasingly salient for this generation. For many women, emerging adulthood is therefore the period in which assumptions about motherhood are first encountered. Childfreeness therefore offers a unique perspective on how adulthood is shaped during emerging adulthood.

This qualitative study explores how childfree women in emerging adulthood experience and make sense of their childfree lives. Twelve women aged 22–29 ($M = 26.3$) participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Childfreeness was experienced less as a set of reasons against having children and more as a sense of relief linked to the realization that parenthood is not an obligation. This realization disrupted assumed life timelines and opened space for alternative trajectories, becoming particularly meaningful in a life stage still marked by uncertainty and limited long-term commitments. Childfreeness was closely tied to autonomy with participants emphasizing flexibility as necessary for managing adulthood. A further central theme concerned reproductive control, understood as a way of protecting the openness of emerging adulthood from unwanted parenthood. Participants also described navigating persistent pronatalist expectations, particularly within family contexts, and gradually developing boundaries as their sense of adult legitimacy strengthened.

Taken together, the findings show that childfreeness functions as a developmentally salient way of navigating emerging adulthood under contemporary social conditions. By foregrounding women's lived experiences, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of diverse pathways through emerging adulthood beyond dominant reproductive norms.

Factors Influencing The Desire For Parenthood Among Emerging Adults: A Cross-Cultural Analysis

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During emerging adulthood (typically ages 18–29), the transition to independent living and the consolidation of personal and social identity frequently intersect with the evaluation of future family roles[1]. Consequently, proactive decision-making becomes an increasingly salient developmental milestone[2]. Understanding the drivers behind the desire to have children is essential for explaining how contemporary social shifts and psychological perceptions shape the maturation process.

The present study utilised a sample of N=860 childless emerging adults across diverse cultural contexts, including Great Britain, Poland, Portugal, Italy, the Czech Republic, China, and Malaysia. This cross-national approach facilitates an exploration of how shifting cultural norms and varied family models influence reproductive decisions during the transition to adulthood.

The primary objective was to examine the impact of three key psychological factors - perceived pressure to have children, the perception of a child as the essential starting point of a family, and the belief that family happiness is contingent upon parenthood - on both proactive desires and intentions. Consistent with prior literature, these two constructs were evaluated separately to ensure a more nuanced assessment of future childbearing decisions [3][4]. To account for the nested nature of the data, multilevel analysis was performed. Two models were tested for each dependent variable: a baseline demographic model (including age, sex, education, religiosity, and place of residence) and a hypothesis-driven model incorporating the psychological variables of interest.

The baseline models accounted for 17% of the variance in desires and 18% in intentions, with religiosity emerging as a significant predictor in both. However, the hypothesis-driven models significantly enhanced the explanatory power, reaching 51% for desires and 52% for intentions. Fixed effects (excluding country-level variance) accounted for 45% and 47% of the variance, respectively. In the full models, specific demographic factors - namely identifying as male and having attained a higher level of education were associated with lower desires and intentions. Conversely, higher religiosity, living in larger urban areas, and, most critically, the belief that family happiness depends on having a child were significant predictors of higher proactive motivations.

The results suggest that, within the framework of this study, proactive desires and intentions are predicted by similar factors across diverse cultural settings (ICC = .11). While certain demographic features, such as sex and religiosity, are relevant, their individual contributions are relatively modest. Notably, neither social pressure nor the perception of a child as the “beginning” of a family significantly predicted these variables. Instead, the conviction that a child is necessary for a happy family life emerged as a moderate-to-strong predictor (std. beta = 0.68). These findings indicate that for emerging adults, internal visions of family well-being are more influential in shaping reproductive trajectories than external social pressures.

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Future Anxiety and Postponing Parenthood: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction and Maturity for Parenthood

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Background. Future anxiety, rooted in a broader temporal perspective [1], involves uncertainty and threat that may impair professional [2] and personal functioning [3], reducing life satisfaction. Lower well-being can weaken perceived readiness for developmental roles, including parenthood, thereby decreasing maturity and increasing the likelihood of postponing childbearing [4].

Methods. The study comprised 250 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 22.57$ years, $SD = 2.59$; aged 18-29). The following instruments were administered: the Dark Future Scale (DFS) [5], the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) [6], the Maturity to Parenthood Scale (MPS) [7], and the Multidimensional Scale of Motives for Postponing Parenthood (MSMPP-18) [8]. Correlational and mediation analyses were conducted to examine associations and indirect effects.

Results. Future anxiety was positively related to postponement motives ($r = .57$) and negatively to life satisfaction ($r = -.39$) and maturity ($r = -.26$). Life satisfaction correlated positively with maturity ($r = .38$) and negatively with postponement ($r = -.25$), while maturity was negatively associated with postponement ($r = -.46$), all $p < .001$. Serial mediation analysis revealed a significant direct effect of future anxiety on postponing parenthood (*Direct effect* = 1.42, 95% CI [1.16, 1.68]). Once serial mediators were introduced into the model (life satisfaction, maturity to parenthood) the relationship between future anxiety and postponing parenthood became weaker (*Indirect effect* = .12, 95% CI [.06, .21]).

Conclusions. These findings indicate that future anxiety influences the decision to become a parent and is partly indirectly linked to postponement through life satisfaction and parenthood maturity. They clarify the mechanism of postponing parenthood and the role of future anxiety in shaping maturity for parenthood.

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From Attachment Styles to Parenthood Timing: The Mediating Roles of Positive Orientation and Antinatalist Beliefs

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Background. The transition to adulthood is increasingly characterized by shifts in partnership timing and delayed childbearing [1]. Although most emerging adults intend to become parents, they often postpone this transition until certain relational conditions, particularly a stable partnership, are met [2]. Because attachment orientations shape expectations regarding relationships and future planning, they may also influence reproductive decision-making. This study examined whether positive orientation and antinatalist beliefs mediate the relationship between attachment styles and postponement of parenthood.

Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 215 adults ($M_{age} = 23.86$; $SD = 2.86$; range = 18–29; 84.7% women). Participants completed the Attachment Style Questionnaire [3], the Positive Orientation Scale [4], the Short Antinatalism Scale [5], and the Multidimensional Scale of Motives for Postponing Parenthood [6]. A serial mediation model (PROCESS Model 6) with 5,000 bootstrap samples was used to test indirect effects.

Results. Secure attachment was positively related to positive orientation, whereas insecure styles were associated with lower positivity and stronger antinatalist beliefs. Positive orientation was negatively associated with both antinatalist beliefs and postponement, while antinatalist beliefs were positively related to postponement. Mediation analyses showed that attachment dimensions were indirectly linked to postponement: security predicted lower postponement via greater positivity and fewer antinatalist beliefs (95%CI [−0.2038;−0.0600]), whereas anxious-ambivalent (95%CI [0.0707;0.1983]) and avoidant attachment (95%CI [0.0656;0.2205]) styles showed the opposite pattern.

Discussion. The findings suggest that attachment security is associated with more positive orientation and fewer antinatalist beliefs, which may facilitate readiness for parenthood, whereas insecure patterns are linked to reduced positive orientation and more negative beliefs, contributing to postponement tendencies.

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“I Feel Lost”: Career Identity Exploration During Transition-Out in China’s Elite Sport System

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Emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is an age period marked by intensified identity exploration and the gradual consolidation of a coherent sense of self [1]. Within elite sport, this period corresponds to a developmental phase in which athletes begin to question meaning, motivation, and future direction following prolonged early specialization [2]. In China, elite athletes constitute a distinct sub-population of emerging adults whose identity development unfolds within highly structured, state-sponsored sport systems that organize education, daily routines, and social relationships around athletic performance from an early age, thereby influencing later opportunities for career identity exploration and perceived future direction.

From a bioecological perspective, identity development occurs through proximal processes, defined as regular and sustained interactions between individuals and their immediate environments over time [3], yet identity research has traditionally emphasized exploration and commitment while often overlooking the formative role of these processes [4]. In China’s elite sport system, early and prolonged proximal processes such as intensive coach–athlete relationships, regimented training schedules, and performance-centered evaluation strongly organize athletes’ identities around the athlete role. Research on athletes’ career development further suggests that self-identity plays a central role in shaping professional identity and intrinsic motivation, which in turn supports career preparation and adaptive transitions beyond sport [5]. When athletes transition out of the Chinese Whole Nation System (CWNS), often during emerging adulthood, the disruption of these long-standing proximal processes may undermine internally driven identity resources, requiring athletes to renegotiate meaning, motivation, and self-concept beyond sport.

This study examines how retired Chinese elite rowing athletes experience identity exploration during transition-out from elite sport, with particular attention to the enduring influence of early developmental contexts. Guided by Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological system, identity change is conceptualized as a dynamic process shaped by interactions between person characteristics, ecological contexts, and developmental timing [3]. A qualitative phenomenological design is employed, drawing on semi-structured interviews with approximately ten former provincial- or national-level rowers aged 18 and above who have transitioned out of elite sport. Data are analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning in athletes’ transition-out experiences and to examine how identity development is shaped through interactions within their ecological contexts [6].

Findings are expected to illuminate tensions between internalized athletic identities shaped through early and prolonged proximal processes and the developmental task of constructing alternative self-concepts following transition-out from elite sport. By foregrounding early experience, ecological context, and developmental timing, this study positions elite rowers as a distinct sub-population within emerging adulthood and advances understanding of how identity development and career identity formation unfold within institutionalized and culturally specific environments.

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“Too Young to Be Taken Seriously”: Ageism and Labor Market Inequality among Portuguese Emerging Adults

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While ageism in the labor market is most often examined in relation to older workers, age-based discrimination affecting emerging adults remains comparatively understudied (FFMS, 2024; Schmitz, et al., 2025). This qualitative study investigates how ageism is produced, experienced, and negotiated by emerging adults during their early labor market trajectories. Drawing on in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty-four Portuguese workers aged 18–30 across diverse occupational sectors, the study explores how youth is socially constructed in relation to competence, legitimacy, and employability. Thematic analysis identifies three interrelated dimensions of ageism. First, emerging adults are routinely characterized as inexperienced, unreliable, or insufficiently committed, limiting their access to stable employment, decision-making power, and career progression. Second, organizational arrangements, such as unpaid or underpaid internships, temporary contracts, and intensive performance surveillance, are normalized for younger workers, institutionalizing their precarious position. Third, participants describe ambivalent self-positioning strategies, oscillating between resisting ageist treatment and internalizing deficit-based narratives to prove their value and professionalism. These findings demonstrate that ageism against emerging adults operates not only through interpersonal interactions but also through institutionalized labor market practices that shape early career opportunities. By centering the perspectives on emerging adults, this study challenges the dominant later-life focus in ageism research and underscores age as a relational, contextual, and life-course–embedded axis of inequality. Implications for labor market policies and future research are discussed.

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Elite Rowers as a Distinct Career Sub-Population: Transition-Out Experiences in China's State-Sponsored Sport System

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Emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is an age period marked by identity exploration, instability, and transitions into education, work, and independent adult roles [1]. For elite athletes as a sub-population of emerging adults, these transitions are shaped by early specialization and prolonged immersion in culturally and institutionally structured performance systems. For Chinese elite athletes, transition-out often coincides with exit from the Chinese Whole Nation System (CWNS), requiring rapid adaptation to open educational and labor-market pathways [2]. China's elite sport system is among the largest in the world, comprising approximately 2,165 sport schools and training institutions and a training population of roughly 530,000 athletes, indicating that elite youth athletes represent a substantial developmental sub-population [3]. Despite the size of this group, little is known about how emerging adults experience career-related transitions when leaving state-sponsored sport systems.

Within this context, rowing provides a particularly informative case. Despite growing institutional support and youth participation, opportunities to progress to the national level remain limited, making transition-out from elite pathways a common experience for rowing athletes during emerging adulthood [4]. Stambulova's Athletic Career Transition Model frames transition-out as a process rather than a single event, highlighting how athletes cope with changing demands and resources over time [5]. The Holistic Ecological Approach extends this perspective by examining how culturally and institutionally structured sport systems shape these transition experiences [6]. Guided by these two frameworks, this study examines how retired Chinese elite rowing athletes experience career transitions during emerging adulthood, with a focus on perceived challenges, coping strategies, and access to resources.

The study adopts a qualitative phenomenological design. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with approximately 10–15 former provincial- or national-level rowers aged 18 and above who have transitioned out of elite sport. Data will be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework [7], to capture athletes' lived experiences and the interaction between individual coping processes and broader social, cultural, and institutional environments. Preliminary insights are expected to highlight difficulties related to career uncertainty, limited educational integration, identity reconstruction, and constrained autonomy during the transition into adult work roles. By positioning elite rowers as a sub-population within emerging adulthood and situating their experiences within a culturally specific sport system, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of work and career transitions beyond general youth samples and aims to inform career counseling, mentoring, and institutional support strategies for emerging adults navigating non-linear career pathways.

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The Needs of Young People from Vocational Schools in Terms of Supporting the Development of Their Employability – Research Report

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Purpose. The purpose of this presentation is to present the results of scientific research on the needs of young people from vocational schools to support the development of their employability. The data presented will be only a sampling of the extensive data obtained in the research project entitled “Employability of Youth from Vocational Schools.”

Research Description. The research was conducted in March-April 2026, involving nearly 1,200 students from third grades of vocational schools of the first degree, first and second grades of vocational schools of the second degree, and fourth and fifth grades of technical schools in twenty selected schools located in the Wielkopolskie, Kuyavian-Pomeranian, and Pomeranian Voivodeships, in towns of varying sizes in terms of population. Purposeful random sampling was used in the research. Schools were purposively selected based on their type (vocational school, technical school, school complex), accessibility (administrative consent to participate in the research), and the size of the town in which they were located. Classes in each school were randomly selected to participate in the research. The study utilized a diagnostic survey method (survey technique). Students completed the survey in the presence of the researcher on their phones or computers, and their responses were collected using Qualtrics. Data collection ensured participant anonymity, and participation in the study was voluntary. The collected data will be statistically analyzed using SPSS.

Conclusions. The empirical data collected suggest that the youth surveyed demonstrate a significant need to learn directly about potential jobs and build professional networks through visits to workplaces, meetings with professionals in their chosen profession, and conversations with potential employers. Identifying the relationships between the specific needs expressed by the youth surveyed and their socio-demographic characteristics will allow for the development of both implementations of educational practices to support their transition from education to the labor market and to address the issue of cooperation between schools and potential employers.

Single, but Ready to Mingle? Financial and Relational Predictors of Relationship Flourishing Among U.S. Unmarried Emerging Adults

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Being married—especially being happily married—is associated with greater physical and mental health, longevity, happiness, and wealth [1,2]. While marriage used to be the “cornerstone” to build one’s adult life, the median age at first marriage in the United States continues to rise, and marriage is now often viewed as a “capstone” of adulthood, occurring after other life decisions and domains have been fully explored and established [3]. Marrying later (i.e., beyond the mid-20s) does not appear to increase marital success but, rather, may be a slight risk factor for a lower quality, less stable marriage [3]. Although the marriage age is rising, this does not mean that emerging adults do not want to marry. The vast majority of emerging adults expect and desire to marry at some point in the future, albeit later than previous generations [4]. These changing marital trends raise the question: What factors are prompting emerging adults to expect to marry later, and what association does this expectation have with emerging adults’ current romantic relationships? We sought to test financial and relational predictors of unmarried (but partnered) emerging adults’ relationship flourishing and whether expected marriage age helped explain these associations. Specifically, drawing from marital paradigms theory [5] and using structural equation modeling, we tested whether financial independence, materialism, and marital centrality are associated with romantic relationship flourishing—and whether these associations are mediated by expected marriage age—for a diverse sample of 1,063 U.S. emerging adults (aged 18-30) in unmarried romantic relationships (35% White, 21% Black, 20% Latinx, 13% Asian, 10% Multiracial or other).

Higher marital centrality (i.e., the importance one places on marriage relative to other life endeavors) was associated with higher relationship flourishing, partially mediated by earlier expected marriage age. Higher financial independence was associated with higher relationship flourishing. Materialism was not associated with relationship flourishing among unmarried emerging adults, but in a post hoc analysis with engaged and married emerging adults, higher materialism was associated with lower relationship flourishing. Finally, when emerging adults expected to marry later, this was associated with less flourishing dating relationships. In sum and in support of marital paradigms theory, relational and financial contexts are associated with emerging adults’ expected marriage age and the flourishing of their current relationship. Additionally, emerging adults who subscribe to the popular (but not research-supported) belief that marrying later is inherently better may be inadvertently sabotaging a dating relationship that could otherwise have long-term potential. On the other hand, those who expect to marry younger may be more likely to actively pursue serious relationships (in the ultimate pursuit of marriage) and to behave in ways in those relationships that cultivate long-term potential. In other words, expected marriage timing may be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Choosing Differently: How Exposure to Violence in the Family of Origin Affects Decisions Made in Emerging Adulthood

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This presentation examines how exposure to violence in the family of origin shapes young people's experiences, choices, and trajectories as they enter adulthood. Exposure to violence occurring between parental figures remains a major social and public health issue [1], with effects that extend well beyond childhood and adolescence. While previous research has extensively documented the consequences of exposure to violence in the family of origin, its specific implications for young adulthood remain underexplored and are often diluted in samples combining adults across a wide age range [2].

This study builds on the foundational principles of life course theory, particularly on the principle of agency, which focuses on individuals' decisions and actions and the meaning they give to them [3]. Moreover, within this theory, transitions are commonly understood as a period of change in an individual's roles, statuses, or life contexts. This shift from one state of equilibrium to another, involving adaptation and internal reorganization, and it is precisely the period of change between adolescence and adulthood that constitutes the focus of the present study.

This study is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 35 young adults aged 18 to 25 who were exposed to violence in the family of origin. Participants were recruited from university and community settings across two recruitment phases (2016 and 2019), and interviews were supported by a qualitative adaptation of the Life History Calendar [4].

Findings indicate that exposure to violence in the family of origin does not merely result in later-life consequences but also plays a structuring role in shaping decisions made during emerging adulthood across multiple life trajectories. In romantic, educational, and occupational domains, young adults adjust their choices through strategies aimed at protection, stability, and the avoidance of violence, thereby altering the pace and form of their commitments. Overall, exposure to violence in the family of origin emerges as a structuring factor in the transition to adulthood, simultaneously influencing life trajectories, transition pathways, and identity processes characteristic of this stage of the life course.

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Helicopter Parenting and Life Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood: The Mediating Role of Procrastination and Readiness for Parenthood

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Background. In recent years, parental involvement in the lives of young people has increased, raising concerns that some parents adopt overly involved and developmentally inappropriate parenting practices [1]. One form of such overinvolvement, commonly referred to as helicopter parenting, has been linked to various developmental outcomes during emerging adulthood [2]. Meta-analytic structural equation modeling [3] indicates that helicopter parenting is negatively associated with satisfaction and positively associated with psychological need frustration. However, the mechanisms through which helicopter parenting may relate to well-being remain insufficiently understood. Given that previous research suggests that excessive parental involvement may affect young adults' self-regulation and readiness to assume adult roles, the present study examines whether procrastination and readiness for parenthood mediate the relationship between helicopter parenting and life satisfaction.

Methods. The study included 198 young adults aged 18–29 years ($M = 21.50$, $SD = 2.64$). Most respondents currently lived in two-parent families (76.3%), while 15.7% lived in single-parent families and 8.1% in patchwork families. The majority (79.8%) reported growing up in two-parent families, and most participants were students (59.1%), with 43.9% remaining financially dependent on their parents. Participants completed self-report questionnaires assessing helicopter parenting, procrastination, readiness for parenthood, and life satisfaction. A parallel mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4; Hayes, 2022) with 5,000 bootstrap samples to test the indirect effects.

Results. Pearson correlation analyses showed that maternal helicopter parenting was positively associated with procrastination ($r = .27$, $p < .001$) and negatively associated with readiness for parenthood ($r = -.19$, $p = .007$). Procrastination was negatively related to life satisfaction ($r = -.23$, $p = .001$), whereas readiness for parenthood was positively related to life satisfaction ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). Contrary to expectations, helicopter parenting was not significantly associated with life satisfaction. A parallel mediation analysis (PROCESS model 4) further indicated that neither the total nor the direct effect of helicopter parenting on life satisfaction was significant. However, significant indirect effects were observed through procrastination ($\beta = -0.11$, 95% CI $[-0.21, -0.04]$) and readiness for parenthood ($\beta = -0.10$, 95% CI $[-0.20, -0.02]$), indicating an indirect-only mediation pattern.

Discussion. The findings suggest that helicopter parenting in this study does not directly affect life satisfaction in young adulthood but may affect well-being through developmental and self-regulatory mechanisms. Specifically, increased procrastination and lower readiness for adult roles may constitute pathways linking overinvolved parenting with lower life satisfaction. This result can be interpreted in the context of Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness for optimal psychological functioning.

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The Role of In-Care Experiences in Fostering Care Leavers' Development and Resilience During Emerging Adulthood

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The transition to adulthood among care leavers is frequently characterized by complex challenges and comparatively poorer outcomes in education, employment, and housing. While existing research has primarily focused on objective indicators of well-being, less attention has been paid to the subjective experiences that shape care leavers' developmental trajectories. Grounded in life course theory, the present study explores how experiences during out-of-home care influence care leavers' development and resilience during emerging adulthood, and how these experiences contribute to their ability to navigate the transition to independent living.

The sample consisted of 47 care leavers aged 18–29 who had resided in residential care facilities or foster care. In-depth semi-structured interviews explored participants' personal and familial backgrounds and their perceptions of the ways in which their in-care experiences affected their lives and development. Data were analyzed using theoretical thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's approach.

Findings revealed two overarching themes. The first theme highlighted care as a developmental environment that fostered self-growth and skill acquisition. This included: (1) enhanced self-improvement and personal development; (2) strengthening of interpersonal competencies; and (3) increased utilization of rights and pursuit of higher education. The second theme depicted out-of-home placement as a source of belonging and emotional restoration, encompassing: (1) regaining a sense of trust and stability, and (2) the influential role of peer relationships within care settings.

The findings demonstrate that in-care experiences can exert a positive and enduring impact on both tangible and intangible aspects of care leavers' development, including self-confidence, relational capacity, and inner strength. These results underscore the importance of viewing out-of-home placement not solely as a protective measure but as a critical developmental context supporting the tasks of emerging adulthood. Practically, the study highlights the need to strengthen resilience-oriented and future-focused interventions, and to recognize the pivotal role of staff and peer relationships in cultivating a sense of belonging, agency, and well-being among care leavers.

Experiences Of Racism In The Transition From Adolescence Into Emerging Adulthood In Sweden

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Racism continues to be an ugly and pernicious part of the modern world, and its consequences are far-reaching and related to lower levels of psychological well-being as well as other negative health outcomes for individuals with minority ethnic backgrounds [1]. While racism is a part of everyone's life, its effects are felt most palpably by individuals with minority ethnic backgrounds and previous research has explored age-related changes in how the awareness and understanding of racism develops [2, 3]. However, the specific development in the transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood is currently not well understood. This despite the period being characterized by identity exploration and many changes of contexts which have potential to lead to development [4]. Therefore, this study seeks to qualitatively explore the development of how individuals with minority ethnic backgrounds perceive, describe, and relate to instances of racism in this transition.

Twelve participants living in Sweden, self-identifying with a minority ethnic background and reporting that their ethnicity was central to their sense of self were interviewed twice. The first interview prior to leaving high school (*Age*=18.2), and the second interview six months hence, after they had transitioned into emerging adulthood (*Age*=18.8). The interviews were inductively coded and analyzed longitudinally, using a combination of the case study [5] and thematic analysis [6].

The thematic analysis yielded three themes. The first theme "Re-evaluating Past Experiences of Racism with a New Understanding" described how the participants have revisited past instances of racism and seen them with new eyes. The second theme "Increased awareness of racism in relation to being perceived by others as being Swedish or not" concerned how the participants, either personally or vicariously, showed an increased awareness of being treated differently due to their ethnicity, and increased awareness of having to navigate other people's normative expectations of how a Swedish person is supposed to look and act. The last theme, Increased Focus on the Possible Presence of Racism in their Future, pertained to the participants focus on the role racism could potentially play in their future careers or further education.

The study's findings suggest that the transition between adolescence and emerging adulthood has coincided with the participants gaining a deeper, more nuanced understanding of racism and how it relates to them and their social worlds, in their past, present, and future. This development is potentially due to the changes in context brought about by the transition, such as new employment, attending further education, and the new experiences within those new contexts.

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Paralyzed by Trump? Sociopolitical stress, mental health, and tobacco use among Mexican American emerging adults

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Background. Sociopolitical stress associated with the Trump administration is of particular concern vis-à-vis Hispanic individuals, who are being disproportionately targeted for detention and deportation. Even U.S.-born Hispanics are often concerned about being apprehended by immigration enforcement officers, or about having family members or close friends deported. Such stress may be associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety, and ultimately with tobacco use. Indeed, Montero-Zamora et al. (2023) found that, among Hispanic adolescents in Los Angeles and Miami, sociopolitical stress associated with the first Trump administration predicted elevated depressive symptoms and anxiety a year later. However, there is a paucity of research examining how sociopolitical stress is associated with mental health problems and substance use among the Hispanic *emerging adult* population. Emerging adults represent the age group that is most likely to be detained and deported in the United States and in many European countries, suggesting that examining the effects of sociopolitical stress among emerging adults is essential. In the United States, Mexican Americans represent the largest Hispanic group, and the group that has been targeted most consistently by the Trump administration.

It is also well known that emerging adults often use tobacco products to self-medicate against symptoms of depression and anxiety. Accordingly, the present study was designed to examine the extent to which, within a sample of Mexican American college students, sociocultural stress would be linked with tobacco use indirectly through symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Method. A sample of 997 Mexican American college students in Texas completed measures of sociopolitical stress, depressive symptoms, anxiety, and cigarette and e-cigarette use between June and August 2025. Three-quarters (76%) of participants reported that one or both parents were born in Mexico. These participants had been taking part in a longitudinal study of tobacco use and social media engagement. Sociocultural stress items included feeling more fearful because of the Trump administration, being afraid of what would happen to oneself or to one's family, worrying that family members or friends would be deported, and worrying about attacks against Hispanic communities.

Results. More than 75% of participants agreed/strongly agreed with the sociocultural stress items (mean 4.11 on a 1-5 scale). Sociocultural stress was associated with both depressive symptoms and anxiety. The indirect effect of sociopolitical stress on past 30-day e-cigarette use through anxiety symptoms (GAD-7) was statistically significant, $b = .02$, 95% CI = (0.01, 0.04). The indirect effect of sociopolitical stress on past 30-day cigarette use through depressive symptoms (PHQ-9) was statistically significant, $b = .01$, 95% CI = (0.005, 0.015). The indirect effect of sociopolitical stress on past 30-day e-cigarette use through depressive symptoms (PHQ-9) was statistically significant, $b = .02$, 95% CI = (0.01, 0.03)

Conclusions. Mexican American emerging adults appear to be distressed by the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies, and this distress is associated with mental health challenges and with use of tobacco products as a coping mechanism. Services need to be made available for these individuals, and the harmful effects of nativist policies on immigrant-descent emerging adults require further study.

Immigration-Related Sociopolitical Stress, Mental Health, and Tobacco Use Among Mexican American Emerging Adults

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From uncertainty to democratic backsliding? Future worries, polarization, and anti-democratic attitudes in emerging adults

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Emerging adulthood is typically characterized by high sense of possibilities and optimism about the (personal) future. However, as emerging adults (EAs) today navigate key developmental tasks (e.g., entering the labor market and becoming civically engaged) they do so in a context marked by profound uncertainty [1], possibly hindering EAs' positive development. Many societies around the globe are increasingly characterized by political polarization, declining democratic norms, and growing support for authoritarian leaders [2]. These conditions shape emerging adults' lives and are reflected in their concerns about both personal and societal future [3]. Described uncertainty may heighten the perception of threat and can generate significant worry, but not all EAs are able cope with these tensions constructively. One of the possible uncertainty-reduction strategies is the adoption of conservative ideological explanations that simplify complex social realities and offer seemingly immediate solutions to perceived threats [4]. Rising support for right-wing parties among youth, however, has often coincided with democratic backsliding across Europe [3] and while negative psychological consequences of worry are well documented, less is known about its broader societal implications. Using responses of a representative sample of 8,929 participants aged 14–29 residing in 12 Southeast European countries (53% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.91$, $SD = 4.60$) drawn from the Youth Study SEE 2024/2025, we examined whether worries about the future predict EAs' anti-democratic attitudes (ADA), and if this relationship depends on the societal context. Specifically, we tested whether country-level ideological polarization and ideological asymmetry moderate the association between worries and ADA. A random-intercept mixed-effects model explained 6% of the variance in ADA, with most variation occurring within countries ($ICC = .03$). EAs who reported greater concern about the future held stronger ADA ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < .001$). In contrast, country-level worries did not predict individual attitudes ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = .59$), suggesting that worry operates primarily as an individual psychological process shaped by personal perceptions rather than by the general climate. Higher country-level polarization was associated with stronger ADA ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = .04$), indicating that environments characterized by deep divisions may foster democratic disengagement. Perhaps because polarized contexts are experienced as threatening and unstable, encouraging reliance on simplified ideological narratives that promise order and clarity. Moderation analyses revealed that contextual characteristics shape how worries translate into ADA. In countries with stronger ideological asymmetry to the right, worries were more strongly associated with ADA ($\beta = .03$, $p = .02$), suggesting that right-leaning ideological climates may facilitate the conversion of insecurity into anti-democratic preferences. In contrast, higher overall polarization weakened this relationship ($\beta = -0.05$, $p < .001$). This attenuation suggests that anti-democratic views may become normalized in highly polarized societies, leading individuals to adopt such attitudes regardless of their personal level of concern. In contrast, ADA may emerge primarily as defensive responses to perceived threats in less polarized environments. Therefore, ADA may reflect stable ideological commitments shaped by identity-based alignment, elite cues, and dominant political narratives only in highly polarized environments. This distinction is particularly relevant for emerging adults, whose political identities are still forming – they may rely more on salient social identities than on personal anxiety when forming political attitudes in polarized contexts. This makes worries less predictive of anti-democratic orientations and fight against polarization a key issue in combating not just democratic backsliding but also crafting a more stable social environment affording psychological security to emerging adults.

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Body Image Disturbance and Substance Misuse as Longitudinal Predictors of Psychological Distress in Emerging Adults

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Body image disturbance is widespread during emerging adulthood and has been associated with psychological distress, disordered eating, and substance use [1,2]. This developmental period is marked by heightened identity exploration, shifting social contexts, and increased exposure to appearance-related pressures, all of which may contribute to vulnerability to body image concerns and maladaptive coping behaviors [3-5]. Although prior research has documented cross-sectional links between body image disturbance, mental health symptoms, and substance use, limited longitudinal research has clarified whether these factors function as reciprocal processes or distinct pathways influencing psychological distress in diverse emerging adult populations.

This preregistered longitudinal study examined directional associations among body image disturbance, psychological distress, and substance misuse over one year in a community sample of 365 emerging adults ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.77$; 54% participants from racially and ethnically minoritized backgrounds; 30% LGBQ+). Participants completed measures of body image disturbance, psychological distress, alcohol use, and substance misuse at baseline and one-year follow-up. Cross-lagged panel modeling was used to test bidirectional relationships while controlling for age, race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Findings indicated that higher levels of body image disturbance at baseline predicted increased psychological distress one year later, even after accounting for initial distress levels. Substance misuse at baseline also predicted later psychological distress. In contrast, psychological distress did not predict subsequent body image disturbance or substance misuse. No significant longitudinal associations were found between body image disturbance and later substance use outcomes. Group differences were observed at baseline: LGBQ+ participants reported greater psychological distress and substance misuse than heterosexual peers, while women reported higher body image disturbance and distress than men. Men reported higher substance misuse. These differences were not sustained longitudinally.

Results suggest that body image disturbance and substance misuse function as independent risk factors for later psychological distress during emerging adulthood rather than as reciprocal processes. Findings highlight the importance of early prevention and intervention efforts targeting body image concerns and substance use to support mental health in diverse young adult populations. This study contributes to understanding developmental pathways influencing psychological distress during the transition to adulthood and underscores the need for integrated, culturally responsive approaches to promoting well-being among emerging adults.

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“Pushed Away Though We Hurt Too”: Emerging Adults Facing Unexplained Persistent Physical Symptoms in Poland – Can We Do Better?

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Background. Emerging adults constitute one of the largest groups experiencing persistent physical symptoms (PPS) of unknown etiology. They simultaneously face elevated risks of impaired quality of life, mental health problems, and suicidality caused by symptom burden [1]. Research on this phenomenon in Europe remains limited [2], especially regarding the underexplored role of basic psychological needs satisfaction and frustration (autonomy, competence, relatedness) [3] in shaping well-being and coping among young adults with unexplained PPS [1]. Greater insight into this issue would enable broader discussions on more effective interventions adjusted to PPS and young adulthood context.

Methods. To address this gap, we conducted a small-scale qualitative study. Participants were recruited via social media and included five anonymous individuals from Poland (four females, one male; aged 18–29) who met inclusion criteria: experiencing unexplained PPS for ≥ 6 months with a significant worsening of mental well-being in the face of these symptoms. Data were collected through online semi-structured interviews exploring health history, current daily functioning, and factors influencing well-being and coping. Ethical approval was obtained prior to study. Thematic analysis, framed by Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) [3], identified themes of need satisfaction and frustration.

Findings. Need frustration predominated across all three basic psychological needs (Imposed Health Governance, Diagnostic Dissonance and Intervention Futility, Stigma of Being a Troublesome Other and Being Left Behind) though satisfaction emerged through supportive social interactions (Endorsed Decision-Making Autonomy, Empowered Self-Management Competence, Sustained Relational Presence and Understanding). Autonomy was thwarted by external decisions from health professionals, employers, or university administrators; competence eroded due to conflicting diagnoses, failed interventions despite reassurances, and risks of job or academic loss; relatedness was strained by stigmatization, discrimination, judgment, and experiences of losing close relationships. Conversely, endorsement of personal health choices, practical self-care advice, and steady non-judgmental presence with invitations to social activities, enhanced better outcomes amid daily struggles.

Conclusions. BPNT offers a valuable framework for understanding psychosocial resources and barriers influencing well-being and coping among emerging adults with unexplained PPS. Interventions that foster need-supportive environments could enhance young adults' resilience; however, further research is needed to validate this approach.

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Cognitive and socio-emotional development in young adults with epilepsy – case report and highlights

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Given the multitude of individual, environmental, and health-related factors, we know less about the impact of neurological disorders on the development of mental and social functions in young adults. The challenges of early adulthood must be considered in the context of a long-term illness and its often highly varied and individualized course. One such neurological disorder is epilepsy, which, depending on the type, dynamics, and treatment, produces a diverse and challenging set of symptoms that impede harmonious learning, building social relationships, and engaging in new activities with full responsibility [1]. In this presentation, I will present current research results on epilepsy beginning in childhood and persisting into early adulthood, with a lifelong prognosis. I will also discuss a case study of a patient diagnosed with and treated for drug-resistant epilepsy, who has been under the constant care of a neurologist and neuropsychologist for 10 years. I will present the results of the neuropsychological examination [2] and the effects of neuropsychological therapy for the aforementioned patient in late childhood [3], as well as the latest results of the neuropsychological diagnosis, EEG examination, and the effects of neuropsychological therapy in emerging adulthood. The patient's clinical symptoms do not prevent her from striving to meet the needs closely related to the challenges of this period, but they are variable and persistent enough to require continuous work on her part, together with her family and all those involved.

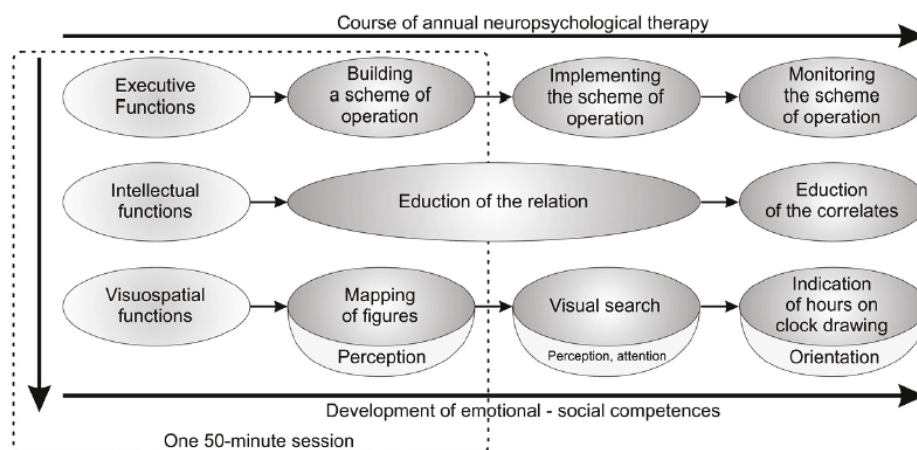


Figure 1: Model for improving mental functions by using specific strategies

Source: own elaboration

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California's Guaranteed Income Pilot for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care – Impacts at Program Exit

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Objectives. This study aims to investigate the impact of unrestricted guaranteed income (GI) cash payments for young adults aging out of foster care at age 21 – a group who experiences unique complexities and highly unequal outcomes compared with their peers who were not in foster care at this critical life transition point.

Most young people transition to adulthood gradually, continuing to receive financial and emotional support from family well into adulthood. In contrast, young people who are in foster care primarily receive support through the foster care system and this support ends when they “age out” of the system. However, depending on their state of residence, young people still in the system on their 18th or 21st birthday lose access to these critical services and face a benefits cliff.

In 2023, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) began administering a state-legislated intervention to provide former foster youth (FFY) unrestricted monthly GI payments of \$750 for 18 months. This study examines whether GI improves outcomes for FFY across a range of outcomes including health, mental health, financial well-being, housing, food security, employment, and education.

Method. This study employs a randomized controlled trial design (RCT) across two sites enrolling FFY (N=776). Data sources include a longitudinal survey using validated scales and administrative data. The survey was designed in collaboration with the study's Guidance Committee comprised of former foster youth and other community members. The survey is being administered at baseline, 3 months post-randomization, 9 months post-randomization, program exit, and 6 months post-program exit. Last year we reported outcomes from the 3-month survey and here we offer findings at program exit, discussing the extent to which impacts have sustained and how we handle non-response bias which presents an increasing problem – particularly for members of the control group – as additional survey waves are fielded.

Results. Results from the exit survey indicate that some outcomes from the 3-month survey sustained, while others attenuated. Similar to the 3-month outcomes, youth in the treatment group are less likely to have experienced homelessness/couch surfing in the past 12 months at program exit compared to youth in the control group during the same time period (30% vs. 41%, $p<0.05$). However, at 3 months youth were less likely to report financial stress (60% vs. 79%, $p<0.001$), have higher current wellbeing scores ($p<0.001$), and have lower perceived stress scores ($p<0.05$), but these impacts were no longer statistically significant at the time of the exit survey.

Conclusions. Young adults aging out of foster care at age 21 face greater challenges compared to their peers who are not child-welfare involved. This study suggests that 18 months of guaranteed income may help them achieve more housing stability. It may not help sustain improvements in financial stress, wellbeing, and stress, although measurement at program exit may be capturing the same, though delayed resource cliff they faced when leaving foster care. Future survey waves will examine these outcomes at six and 12 months after program exit.

On the Road to Financial Maturity: Recalibrating Salary Expectations And Reducing Financial Anxiety In Emerging Adults in India

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Emerging adulthood (18–29 years) is a developmental period characterized by identity exploration, future orientation, and evolving definitions of financial independence [1]. Financial expectations during this stage may function as part of emerging adults' "possible selves," shaping career decisions, goal-setting, well-being, and perceived readiness for adulthood [2]. Unrealistic income benchmarks may contribute to financial anxiety and psychological distress [3], while financial capability [4] and perceived financial well-being has been shown to predict broader life satisfaction and adjustment [5]. In India, home to 261 million emerging adults, youth often construct salary expectations influenced by peer comparison, media exposure, parental pressure and limited awareness of economic realities.

The NIRMAN Youth Development Program aims to nurture flourishing, purposeful and pro-socially oriented emerging adults through a five-day residential training workshop in which youth from across India participate. The present study examines whether participation in the five-day residential NIRMAN Youth Development Workshop is associated with shifts in salary expectations and financial anxiety. A total of 1221 participants (M age = 22 years, SD = 2.72; 54% female) completed pre–post assessments on the first and last day of their workshop. Participants reported the monthly salary at age 30 that would make them feel "financially secure". Paired t-tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests conducted to assess change in mean and median salary expectations respectively; effect sizes were calculated. Multiple regression examined predictors of post-workshop expectations. A subset of 373 participants from the above sample also rated financial anxiety on a 5-point Likert scale by responding to the statement "I feel anxious about fulfilling financial aspirations / ambitions of my life". To capture meaningful anxiety, responses rated 4 or 5 were considered "feeling anxious". Proportions of responses rated 4 or 5 before and after the workshop were compared using proportion tests and the effect size estimated using Cohen's *h*.

Mean monthly salary expectations decreased from ₹185,898 to ₹92,690 (–50.14%, $p < .001$, $d = -0.33$). Median expectations declined from ₹100,000 to ₹65,000 (–35%, $p < .001$). Subgroup analyses showed statistically significant reductions in both males & females, as well as among participants from medical & non-medical educational backgrounds. Regression analyses indicated that post-workshop salary expectations were significantly predicted by baseline expectations, age, educational background, and intention to work full-time in the social sector ($R^2 = .14$, $p < .001$). Among the subset reporting on financial anxiety, the proportion of participants feeling anxious decreased from 67% to 29% ($p < .001$, $h = -0.78$), reflecting a large effect. The change was similar in size and significance when tested separately for males ($n = 169$) and females ($n = 204$).

Findings suggest that structured youth development interventions may facilitate financial expectation recalibration while substantially reducing financial anxiety. By aligning income expectations with emerging adults' values and career intentions, such programs may support psychological aspects of financial maturity. The findings indicate that such interventions may influence how emerging adults conceptualize financial security and adulthood markers. By moderating expectations while reducing anxiety, such programs may create psychological space for prosocial career choices and intrinsic goal pursuit. Longitudinal research is needed to examine whether these shifts persist and translate into behavioural outcomes such as career trajectories, savings, sustainable lifestyle choices and subjective financial well-being.

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Investigating The Most Impactful Factors For Young Adults To Stay In Family Household By The Example Of Poland In 2022

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Leaving the parental home is one of the expected milestones for young people who have completed their education, reached a certain age and are about to enter the labor market, as a natural step toward adulthood and full social independence [1]. Contrary to these expectations, young Poles are increasingly delaying the decision to move out [2]. A significant group of them are so-called “nesters” (Polish: gniazdownicy) - aged 25 to 34 who are single, childless, and continue to live with their parents in one household. While most have finished their education and have entered or plan to enter the labor market [3], they remain in a period of acquiring the competences necessary for independent living [4], exploration and discovering their own paths. Consequently, they find themselves in the stage of „emerging adulthood“, which Jeffrey Jensen Arnett identifies as a distinct phase of life. During this stage, young people experience greater independence and freedom in decision-making on one hand, while facing significant uncertainty regarding their future and a sense of necessity to focus on self-development to better prepare for autonomous functioning on the other [5]. These factors should not be omitted while discussing the decision-making process regarding relocation.

The aim of this study was to develop a model to identify the factors that significantly contribute to the prevalence of the „nesting“ model as an alternative to leaving the parental home. Furthermore, the author discusses the potential consequences of young people delaying the transition to independence, defined here as living in a separate household. The dependent variable here was the share of „nesters“ among people aged 25-34 in each county.

The analysis utilized county-level (powiat) data for 380 Polish counties obtained from the Local Data Bank of Statistics Poland. Furthermore, the study incorporated data provided to the author by Statistics Poland from Experimental Statistics, which served as the basis for the 2024 report „Pokolenie Gniazdowników w Polsce“. To account for potential spatial heterogeneity in the relationships between socio-economic factors and the prevalence of nesting, Geographically Weighted Regression (GWR) was applied. This method allows regression coefficients to vary across space by estimating local models for each county, weighting observations by geographic proximity.

The results indicate that the prevalence of the nesting model is most strongly associated with regional labor market conditions and socio-demographic structure. The most influential variables include median earnings, the number of national economy entities per 10,000 of the working-age population, the employment rate, the number of marriages per 1,000 population and county type.

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Systemic Influences, Sense of Belonging and Pathways Toward Maturity and Wellbeing: Evidence from a Pilot Study

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Professional Growth Processes in emerging adults are complex and particularly critical for vulnerable groups. Employment provides financial support, enhances psychological well-being, and serves as a protective factor against isolation and psychosocial vulnerability (1). Being engaged and confident in a personal professional pathway fosters a sense of belonging, a core psychological and social factor influencing connections within groups (2) and well-being.

This study aimed to explore pathways of systemic influences and sense of belonging in emerging adults, with a specific attention to stories of individuals thriving with psychological wellbeing. Twenty-eight Italian emerging adults were involved, 21–29 years old, with 8-17 years of education. The participants including six emerging adults living in residential therapeutic communities, as instance of emerging adults for substance abuse were involved.

Participants completed the adult version of the interview My System of Career Influences (3), a qualitative tool guiding visual reflections on identity, relationships, society, and life trajectory. Maps generated during the interviews help participants identify key influences, develop a system of support, and create action plans moving toward future goals.

The large corpus of narratives produced by participants was analysed using Iramuteq software to employ Lexical, Similarity, Hierarchical Clustering, and Correspondence Analyses.

The MSCi reflective process increased self-awareness and emphasized the role of professional guidance and community support in shaping future plans. Social and family dynamics strongly influenced personal pathways and aspirations. Work emerged as central to social inclusion and belonging. The rehabilitation community was experienced as transformative, offering mentorship and recognition while it could also heighten isolation and disrupt belonging. Belonging reflects a delicate balance between internal psychological fit and external social acceptance, with a particular emphasis for emerging adults striving for psychosocial complexities in their life.

Overall, the results suggest that sense of belonging in emerging adults is best understood as a multidimensional and systemic construct (4), embedded in and shaped by developmental, motivational, sociocultural, and relational factors, enabling emerging individuals to move from being cared for to becoming active members within their social contexts.

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Place matters in developing physical/mental health among Indian Emerging Adulthood

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The emerging adulthood is a critical developmental phase, and transitional physical/mental health becomes an inevitable event during emerging adulthood (18-29) period (Barlett et al., 2020). Emerging adults physical and mental health are shaped by the social resource, physical space, and neighbourhood environment (Tan et al., 2024). By capturing the place context, it is possible to understand the importance of contextual dynamics of place on successful or unsuccessful health transition on emerging adults' developmental phase. For the huge portion of Indian emerging adults' health (physical/mental); whether they are successful or unsuccessful in health transition, has almost been empirically unknown and no such kind of study is conducted so far. Therefore, present study examines the health transition of Indian emerging adulthood and how their health is shaped by the different spatial and non-spatial components of living environment. Here we employed features and criteria of emerging adulthood with concept and measures of physical/mental health, and various place attachment to understand how these place factors are related to internalising and externalising behaviour in emerging adulthood. To address this objective, participants were 605 college-university students, who have various residential places as native residence (276), migrated residence (149), daily commuter (180) from West Bengal, India (M age = 21.85, SD = 2.05, Male= 25%, Female=75%). The result showed that majority of Indian young people belongs to emerging adulthood status and daily commuters are the common features among them. In addition, majority of Indian emerging adults characterized by loneliness, familiar with vulgar language, smoking, and drinking habit and they also showed a sign of high anxiety followed by depression and hypertension. Furthermore, young people who live in native place at Kolkata showed their matured 'adult' nature, but migrated young people are more susceptible to unhealthy habits and daily commuters face more depression. This study might help grasping the negative impacts of socio-cultural transition to make more room for wellbeing and competence.

Keywords: Developmental transition, physical and mental health, Aloneness, Native resident, Neighbourhood ecosystem

Volunteering as a Source of Community Identity in Emerging Adulthood

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Within the context of reflexive modernization, the younger generation faces existential uprooting and the necessity of constant choice from an (seemingly) endless array of possibilities. Coupled with growing feelings of an uncertain future, this often leads to feelings of paralysis, isolation, and ontological insecurity [1, 2]. This sociological paper explores in depth the role that involvement in volunteer communities plays in this turbulent era and how are the emerging adults coping with it.

The research is based on a narrative thematic analysis of 20 in-depth biographical interviews with young adults (aged 18–27) who have long-term experience with volunteering and are in various stages of emerging adulthood: dealing with instability and an overabundance of options, lacking fixed social structures and exploring their own identity with varying intensity [3, 4]. An inductive narrative thematic analysis [5], grounded in social constructivism, was employed to code the mechanisms of identity formation and subjective meanings. This approach provided detailed insight into how informants narratively construct their volunteering experience against the backdrop of their life trajectories [6, 7, 8].

The findings show that volunteer communities function as a specific psychosocial habitat for young adults, a kind of “fluid anchorage”. By providing a crucial reference point and a sense of belonging [9], this space offers them a safe and bounded environment for experimenting with roles, forming a reflexive identity, and building resilience against the pressures of post-industrial society [10]. While initial motivations for entering volunteering often carry highly individualized and reflexive traits (seeking competencies, escaping isolation, impulsive decisions) [11], the process of socialization in the community leads to identity transformation through the internalization of shared values and meaning. The patterns of collective and reflexive volunteering [12] are thus not mutually exclusive in the informants’ narratives, but dialectically complement each other. This paper thus offers a new conceptual perspective on volunteering not merely as a form of altruism, but as a key transitional tool that enables young people to bridge the tension between unlimited freedom and the need for broader civic and social anchoring [13].

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Visible Selves, Uncertain Paths: Experience of Questioning Gender and Gender Identity in Emerging Adulthood

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Questioning one's gender and gender identity remains underexplored in psychology, despite a growing body of research on transgender and non-binary populations [1]. This paper presents preliminary findings from a qualitative study examining how individuals in emerging adulthood—conceptualized as a developmental period marked by intensive identity exploration [2]—make sense of questioning their gender and/or gender identity, with particular attention to moments of social body visibility.

The study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and includes 14 participants aged 20–27 living in Poland who identify as questioning their gender and/or gender identity. Data were generated through semi-structured individual interviews and personal diary entries. Their triangulation enabled the exploration of both retrospective narrative accounts and ongoing, embodied experiences across time.

Preliminary findings suggest that questioning gender is experienced as a dynamic, embodied, and relational process unfolding between exploration and the search for coherence. Social body visibility emerges as a central dimension of this process: participants describe heightened awareness of their bodies as socially “read,” alongside tensions between authenticity and self-protection within normative gender contexts [3].

The findings further indicate that, in emerging adulthood, questioning one's gender and gender identity may constitute a specific form of developmental work, in which private and socially recognized selves are actively negotiated through the lived body. In doing so, the study advances understanding of this developmental process as contextual, embodied, and non-linear, situated within the broader developmental dynamics of identity exploration [4]. These insights have potential implications for clinical practice and supportive interventions, highlighting the importance of attending to embodied experiences and social visibility in facilitating gender exploration.

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Exploring Gender Through Clothing: Identity Development Among Transgender Emerging Adults

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According to Jeffrey Jensen Arnett's theory, emerging adulthood is a stage characterized by intense exploration, instability, and the search for one's own identity [1]. The development of identity is one of the fundamental psychosocial tasks of emerging adulthood [2]. This period is also associated with an elevated risk of developing mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders [3]. Transgender individuals face additional psychosocial stressors and experience higher levels of psychological distress compared to cisgender individuals [4]. Consequently, psychological resources that support transgender individuals in the process of identity development and coping with minority stress take on particular significance.

This qualitative study aimed to explore how transgender individuals in emerging adulthood use clothing in the process of exploring and constructing gender identity during gender transition. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 individuals aged 18–29 who identify as transgender and have undergone gender transition across psychological, social, and legal domains.

A reflective thematic analysis of the interviews revealed the significant role of clothing in the gender transition process. Participants described clothing as a tool for adapting the body with gender identity, as well as for regulating the relationship between their own identity and social functioning. Clothing fulfilled a symbolic role— serving compensatory, identity-forming, and expressive functions [5] — at various stages of transition, with its role being particularly evident in the initial phases of the process. Greater certainty in one's gender identity, however, was associated with greater stability in clothing choices and a reduced role of clothing in identity development during later stages of the transition.

The study resulted in the development of the Clothing and Gender Experience Questionnaire, measuring the role of clothing in the gender transition process.

The findings highlight the importance of clothing practices in the process of identity development among transgender individuals during emerging adulthood and indicate that clothing can play a significant role as a psychological resource supporting identity consolidation and social adaptation.

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Pathways to Resilience: Experiences of At-Risk Arab Young Adults in Israel During Emerging Adulthood

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The period of emerging adulthood presents unique developmental tasks that are further complicated for at-risk Arab young adults in Israel, who navigate multiple intersecting challenges across interpersonal, sociocultural, and socio-political domains. While exposure to adversity is often associated with compromised outcomes, a growing body of research highlights the capacity for resilience among young people facing structural disadvantage. This study seeks to advance understanding of the mechanisms through which resilience is fostered among at-risk Arab young adults in Israel, focusing on how they achieve positive adaptation and cope with ongoing stressors during their transition to adulthood.

The study's sample comprised 35 at-risk Arab young adults aged 18–29 who were receiving formal support from the Ministry of Social Services and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Data were collected through in-depth qualitative interviews and analyzed using Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory approach, including open, selective, and theoretical coding, integrating both inductive and deductive processes.

The findings revealed two interconnected resilience pathways. The first, personal resilience processes, reflected participants' efforts to overcome barriers through internal resources and proactive agency, including challenging restrictive cultural norms, developing self-reliance and responsibility, and engaging in reflexive meaning-making. The second, contextual resilience processes, highlighted the central role of supportive relationships, particularly the emotional and practical support provided by mothers and the guidance and advocacy of social workers.

The findings suggest that sustained exposure to risk within marginalized sociopolitical contexts may strengthen both individual agency and the strategic use of environmental resources, reinforcing reliance on culturally embedded and community-based coping strategies. These insights underscore the importance of interventions that foreground the strengths, capacities, and relational assets of at-risk Arab young adults at both personal and ecological levels. Such an approach is crucial for promoting adaptive functioning and well-being during the critical developmental stage of emerging adulthood.

Suicidality Among Arab Emerging Adults in Israel: Psychosocial and Cultural Factors

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Suicidality is a significant mental health concern among emerging adults, particularly within minority populations. This study explored psychological, social, and cultural factors associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors among Arab emerging adults in Israel, a population facing developmental transitions alongside identity-related tensions linked to bicultural integration and minority-group status.

Data were collected from 788 Arab emerging adults aged 18–25 in Israel using validated self-report measures. The study examined associations between emotion regulation strategies, perceived social support, depressive symptoms, insomnia, social media disorder, and suicidal behaviors, while also investigating the moderating role of identity crisis.

Results indicated both direct and indirect associations between emotion regulation, social support, and suicidal behaviors. Insomnia emerged as a significant mediator linking these factors to suicidality. Although depressive symptoms and social media disorder were directly associated with suicidal behaviors, they did not function as significant mediators. Identity crisis did not significantly moderate these relationships.

These findings provide an integrative perspective on suicidality among Arab emerging adults by combining cultural, psychological, psychobiological, and digital factors. The results highlight the importance of culturally adapted prevention strategies that strengthen social support, enhance adaptive emotion regulation, and address insomnia as a key mediator to promote mental health during emerging adulthood.

“Hearing Us Changes the Story”: Young Arab-Palestinian Women’s Reflections on Research Findings on Childhood Abuse and Barriers to Service Use in Israel

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Young Arab-Palestinian women abused in childhood often stand at the intersection of vulnerabilities related to gender, age, class, minority status and socio-political marginalization in Israel. Their perspectives on how abuse is embedded in family, community and institutional relations – and how services respond or fail to respond – are still underrepresented in scholarship and practice. This presentation examines a participatory component within a mixed-methods study on childhood abuse and its consequences among Arab-Palestinian young women in Israel. The study combined a nationwide survey of 482 young women aged 18–25 with qualitative interviews with 20 young women and 20 social workers, exploring prevalence and meanings of abuse, barriers to help-seeking and the role of social and institutional contexts.

Two focus groups (n=20) were conducted in two localities in Israel and included participants who were receiving community-based services for young women at risk at the time of participation. In each meeting, researchers presented core quantitative findings and selected interview excerpts on cultural, familial and institutional barriers to disclosure and help-seeking. Participants were invited to share their responses, situate the findings in their own lives and local realities, and formulate recommendations for families, communities and state institutions.

Qualitative analysis of the focus group protocols yielded three themes. First, from individual tragedy to collective social problem: hearing the prevalence data and narratives led participants to reframe abuse from a private family issue to a structural problem linked to patriarchal norms, family honor, socio-economic marginalization, access to weapons and institutional neglect. Second, from silencing to conditional voicing: participants described long-standing fear of disclosure but also viewed sharing and listening to others’ stories as a pathway from vulnerability to strength, highlighting admiration for survivors’ courage and the potential of testimony to generate change. Third, from abstract rights to concrete demands: discussion moved from general references to “mentality” to demands for continuous accompaniment from early childhood, enforcement of compulsory education, safe and confidential services and state responsibility for Arab-Palestinian young women’s safety.

The analysis suggests that inviting marginalized Arab-Palestinian young women to react to research findings about their group creates a space in which interpretive authority is shared, context-informed understandings of abuse and resistance are articulated, and grounded recommendations for practice and policy are developed from within their lived realities. This participatory component illustrates how research encounters can document the consequences of childhood abuse while nurturing political awareness, a sense of entitlement to rights and safety, and more responsive frameworks in social work and related fields.

Risks and Stressors among Care Leavers in Arab Society during Emerging Adulthood

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Care leavers are widely considered a high-risk population facing multiple barriers and challenges, and for those from ethnic minority backgrounds these difficulties are often compounded by additional disadvantage and marginalization [1,2]. Drawing on social exclusion theory, this exploratory study aims to examine the risk factors and challenges faced by care leavers from Arab society in Israel, with particular attention to their ethnic minority status and cultural context. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with 18 Arab care leavers. The analysis followed the three-stage approach of grounded theory [3], comprising open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding, and involved both inductive and deductive reasoning. The findings revealed three overarching themes: (1) Cycles of family risk, highlighting how pre-existing family adversities persist and often resurface upon returning home after care; (2) “Children of care,” which illuminates experiences of stigma and labeling linked to their history of out-of-home placement, particularly within the traditional and cultural context of Arab society; and (3) Loss and unbelonging after leaving care, which exposes the profound gap care leavers experience between the structured support and emotional guidance provided in care and the realities they encounter once they transition out of it. Arab care leavers experience multiple dimensions of social exclusion that are deeply rooted in their cultural context and ethnic minority status. Culturally responsive interventions are recommended to better support young adults from ethnic minority backgrounds as they transition out of care.

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Maladaptive Emotion Regulation and Internalizing Symptoms in Emerging Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study from Uruguay

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Emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is a developmental stage characterized by ongoing neurobiological maturation, identity exploration, and increased exposure to psychosocial stressors, which together confer heightened vulnerability to mental health problems [1,2]. During this period, internalizing symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress reach peak prevalence [1,3]. Transdiagnostic approaches emphasize the role of shared underlying mechanisms, particularly emotional dysregulation and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, in the development of psychopathology [4,5]. However, longitudinal studies examining these processes concurrently remain scarce, especially in Global South contexts [6]. The present study examined the longitudinal effects of emotional dysregulation and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies on internalizing problems in Uruguayan emerging adults. A three-wave longitudinal design was employed, with assessments at baseline (T1), six months (T2), and twelve months (T3). The sample consisted of 124 participants aged 18–29 years residing in Montevideo and its metropolitan area. Measures included symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress (DASS-21), emotional dysregulation (DERS), and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies: experiential avoidance (AAQ), emotional suppression (ERQ), and rumination (RRS). We run longitudinal regression models controlled for baseline symptom levels. Results indicated that higher experiential avoidance at T1 predicted increases in depressive ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = .034$) and stress symptoms at T2 ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = .038$). Greater difficulties in emotional clarity at T1 were associated with increases in depressive symptoms at both T2 ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = .008$) and T3 ($\beta = 0.32$, $p = .012$), indicating a stable longitudinal effect. Difficulties with impulse control predicted increases in depressive symptoms at T3 only ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = .016$), suggesting a delayed effect. Rumination at T1 consistently predicted increases in depressive symptoms at T2 ($\beta = 0.07$, $p = .008$) and T3 ($\beta = 0.07$, $p = .013$), and increases in stress symptoms at T2 ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = .007$). No other emotion regulation variables were significantly associated with symptom change once baseline levels were accounted for. These findings underscore the central role of specific maladaptive emotion regulation processes—particularly experiential avoidance, rumination, and deficits in emotional clarity—in the longitudinal course of internalizing symptoms during emerging adulthood. The study provides novel longitudinal evidence from a Latin American context and highlights the relevance of targeting transdiagnostic emotion regulation mechanisms in prevention and early intervention efforts.

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Unpacking the Metacognitive Foundations of Coping Flexibility in Emerging Adulthood

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Emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is a developmental period marked by increasing independence, identity exploration, and exposure to novel stressors [1]. Successfully navigating these transitions requires coping flexibility; the capacity to abandon ineffective coping strategies and adopt alternatives that better fit situational demands [2]. Although coping flexibility is recognized as a key resilience process, existing models provide limited insight into how this capacity develops, particularly during emerging adulthood. We propose that coping flexibility develops through repeated exposure to stressors when specific metacognitive mechanisms are engaged.

This longitudinal study examines coping self-reflection and coping-related insight as mechanisms underlying coping flexibility in emerging adulthood. Drawing on the Systematic Self-Reflection Model of Resilience Strengthening [7studies have indicated a resilience-strengthening role for stressors.]\nObjectives: This paper introduces a unifying model, including five testable hypotheses regarding how resilience can be strengthened progressively via exposure to life-stressors.]\nMethods: We review and synthesize relevant scholarship that underpins the Systematic Self-Reflection model of resilience-strengthening.]\nResults: The model highlights the importance of a specific meta-cognitive skill (self-reflection on one’s initial stressor response), we propose a reciprocal growth model in which reflection on developmentally normative stressors generates coping-related insights that support flexible coping, while flexible coping experiences, in turn, foster further insight and reflection.

Participants were 147 emerging adults aged 18–25 who completed online surveys across three waves over six months. Measures assessed coping self-reflection, five domains of coping-related insight (e.g., understanding the time course of stress reactions, awareness of coping repertoire), and coping flexibility operationalised as coping adoption and abandonment. Bayesian multilevel cross-lagged models were used to distinguish within-person dynamics from stable between-person differences and to test reciprocal and indirect pathways over time.

Results indicated that associations among self-reflection, coping-related insight, and coping flexibility were driven primarily by between-person effects. Higher average self-reflection was associated with greater coping-related insight, which was in turn associated with higher coping flexibility. Coping-related insights consistently mediated the relationship between self-reflection and both coping adoption and abandonment. Reciprocal effects further supported a cyclical process, whereby coping flexibility promoted subsequent reflection through increased insight. Within-person cross-lagged effects were small and largely non-significant, suggesting these processes may be relatively stable and change over longer periods of time.

This study advances theory by identifying coping-related insights as the cognitive content linking reflective processes to coping flexibility, extending existing regulatory flexibility frameworks. The findings position coping flexibility as a recursively developing capacity shaped by iterative cycles of reflection, insight generation, and behavioural adjustment during emerging adulthood. Applied implications include identifying coping-related insight as a promising leverage point for intervention. Structured reflective practices that facilitate insight generation may support the gradual consolidation of flexible coping capacities during this formative life stage.

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Emerging Adulthood Across Cultures: A Mixed Method Study on Perceived Developmental Processes and Transitions in Lebanon and Italy

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Emerging adulthood is commonly understood as representing a period of life that is marked by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities (Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell, 2007). However, its applicability across different cultural and social contexts has been questioned by several scholars arguing that it primarily focuses on western and industrialized societies and may fail to account for the sociocultural context (Hendry & Kloep, 2007), underlining the need for more studies in diverse cultural contexts. For example, a prolonged sense of exploration may reflect a socio-economic and cultural privilege rather than a universal pattern characterizing 18 to 29 years old individuals; life transitions can be altered by timing, historical context, and even the social network of the individual (Elder, 1998). Additionally, cultural and social contexts are thus crucial elements to explore especially when considering the identity exploration dimension of emerging adults, as the context can either prolong or even compress this exploration. Such change can have certain psychological consequences, where a compression in identity exploration coupled with long term ambiguity in adulthood transitions may intensify into a developmental crisis (Robinson, 2020).

This study aims to describe perceived developmental processes and transitions in emerging adults across two different cultural contexts and their association with subjective experience of developmental crisis. Italy and Lebanon are proposed as contrasting sociocultural contexts with Italy representing a comparatively stable Western European context and Lebanon as a culturally plural society shaped by political and economic instability and geopolitical tensions. About 160 participants ranging from 18-50 years old take part in this study representing diverse range of educational and professional backgrounds. Participants are proposed the Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (DCQ-12; Petrov et al., 2022), and two open ended questions inspired by the IDEA questionnaire (Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell, 2007) that explore their current perceived life stage, uncertainty, and future outlook. Participants were grouped into five-year age intervals to examine different developmental patterns within emerging adulthood. Patterns of identity exploration and developmental crisis were examined, and comparisons were made to determine if these patterns vary across age groups and cultural contexts. In doing so, the study evaluates the extent to which emerging adulthood varies across different sociocultural contexts. The study shows the role sociocultural contexts characterized by relative cultural and social stability or marked by cultural pluralism and instability may play in shaping adult developmental processes, including timing of transitions, identity exploration and ambiguity. These patterns, in turn, can influence the duration and intensity of developmental crisis as well as whether transition are structured, delayed, or uncertain. Findings of this study further contribute to developing a more culturally sensitive approach to emerging adulthood that also highlights the psychological implications that culture can have on shaping adult transitions.

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Emerging Adulthood Or Transition To Adulthood: Cultural Effects In Mexico

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Emerging adulthood has been studied as a developmental period characterized by identity exploration, instability, and increasing autonomy. Most research has been done in Western contexts and has paid less attention to the sociocultural beliefs that shape how young people understand the transition to adulthood. In Latin American contexts, culturally shared beliefs about life transitions may play a central role in understand what it means “become an adult”. One way to approach these beliefs and norms is through the concept of historical- sociocultural premises (PHSC) [1].

This study explores the sociocultural premises about the meaning and expectations of emerging adulthood among adults in Mexico City and contributes to the development of a culturally grounded perspective for understanding this moment of life.

A qualitative approach was used following grounded theory, semi- structured interviews were conducted with 215 adults aged 18- 65 (M=27; DE= 8.8) living in Mexico City and its metropolitan area. Participants were invited to think on their perceptions of the transition to adulthood, the expectations associated with this moment, and the social and family norms that guide these transitions. This interview guide included 20 open questions based on previous research [2,3,4,5,6,7]. Data were analyzed through open and axial coding to identify recurring meanings and relationships across answers [8]

Results indicate that emerging adulthood is interpreted through culturally shared expectations related to responsibility, autonomy, family obligations and life planning [1]. Rather than describing the transition to adulthood as a clearly defined stage, participants’ narratives suggested a more gradual and contextual process shaped by family expectations, socioeconomic conditions, and personal trajectories. These meanings reflect tensions between traditional norms and contemporary socioeconomic conditions shaping young adults’ trajectories [1,2].

These results match life- span and developmental systems perspectives, emphasizing as a dynamic process influenced by multiple contextual factors rather than a fixed sequence of stages [1]

By identifying sociocultural premises that frame emerging adulthood in Mexico, this study highlights the importance of culturally grounded approaches for understanding developmental transitions beyond Western frameworks (SECIHTI; CVU 926125).

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Perspectives on the Development of Diverse Cultural Values among Indian Emerging Adults

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The process of developing diverse cultural values continues during the emerging adulthood period, and it plays a crucial role in preparing emerging adults for their transition to adulthood. (Arnett & Jensen, 2018). According to the ecological theories of development, family, cultural, and environmental contexts significantly influence the individual developmental outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Like many cultures, India follows universal cultural development pathways e.g., moral development, prosocial behaviour (Pandya & Bhangaokar, 2015). However, the study of cultural values and the forces (e.g., social media, westernisation, urbanisation, etc.) that shape Indian emerging adults, remains underexplored. This attempts to examine (a) the diversity of cultural values and the forces that create conditions in developing such standards and (b) the comparison across different spatial units i.e., the rural, town and metropolitan city in terms of magnitude of cultural values and impact of these forces. We applied a person-place dynamics approach and Geographical Information System (GIS), along with utilizing appropriate sampling and statistical analyses i.e., descriptives and binary logistic regression. Participants ($N = 450$, $M_{age} = 21.5$ years), include college and university students from villages ($n=176$), towns ($n=131$), and metropolitan cities ($n=98$) in West Bengal, an eastern state of India, were surveyed. Results reveal the cultural values, based on family traditions are more or less similar among spatial units, though social values vary due to modernization, westernisation, social transformation. Moreover, the top five rated values included 1) parents' care in future, 2) necessity of social morality, 3) importance of family 4) importance of society 5) value of social interaction, have been considered to measure the diversity of cultural value in different spatial units. The family related cultural value (such as, *take care of parent in future*) was endorsed most rated and similar in gender and irrespective of spatial units. Overall findings reveal that social values are undergoing transition through the influence of various modern factors such as lack of beliefs on people (OR = 3.20 99% CI 1.69 - 6.08), higher use of social media (OR = 3.28 95% CI - 1.29 - 8.30), lack of traditional cultural practice (OR = 2.19; 95%, CI - 1.05-4.58), following western culture (OR=3.22 99% CI-1.82-5.7), indifferent about society (OR = 3.25 99% CI - 1.62 - 6.5), increasing of selfish tendencies (OR = 3.25 99% CI - 1.62 - 6.5) and all are almost alike throughout spatial scales. Findings support emerging adulthood theory and suggest an increasing cultural homogeneity across urban and rural areas in developing countries. This changing cultural climate with numerous prospects and lifestyles choices in proximity impacts adulthood transition, in turn, generating an amorphous assortment of 'flourishing and floundering' pathways, as currently predominant among the middle and upper-class millennials in India.

Keywords: Cultural values, Person-place dynamics, GIS, Family traditions, Modernization, India

Emerging Adults Going Through Transition: Navigating Development Crisis and Future Goals in Post-Conflict Kosovo

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Emerging adulthood is the period of life when different domains of life are in transition, like identity exploration, instability in love, work, and place of residence, self-focus, feeling in-between, and vision for the future (Arnett, 2024). This study aims to explore the future goals of emerging adults in Kosovo and the challenges they encounter, taking into account Kosovo's post-conflict context and its ongoing social, economic, and institutional transitions. This study is particularly relevant given that Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe, making the transition to adulthood a central concern for both individuals and society. In particular, what developmental challenges do emerging adults in Kosovo experience when transitioning to adulthood, and which future goals do they prioritize most.

Participants in the study are 150 emerging adults. The Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (Petrov, Robinson, & Arnett, 2022) was used to describe the experience of transition and turning point, disconnection and distress, lack of clarity and control; a qualitative tool was used to address future goals, supports, and challenges participants envisage across different life domains.

Several patterns emerge with participants reporting moderate to high levels of developmental challenges. The degree and experience of developmental crisis influence goal clarity and future time perspective, as well as the content of future aspirations and career-related goals, with a dynamic interplay across life domains. Furthermore, comparative analyses of emerging adults in education and those transitioning into or already in the workforce reveal distinct patterns in future orientations, expectations, and concerns. These findings are particularly meaningful in the context of Kosovo, where overall unemployment, and especially youth unemployment, remains persistently high (Bellaqa & Gollopeni, 2021), and provide critical insights into conditions that may shape developmental pathways during this pivotal period of life.

In a post-conflict context, such as Kosovo, ongoing societal transitions may prolong or intensify the experience of developmental crisis, thereby affecting how emerging adults imagine, plan, and commit to their future lives. The results are anticipated to contribute to mental health services, policy planning, and the educational guidance system.

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Religious Identity Commitment and Intrinsic Religiosity Predict Substance-Related Attitudes in Emerging Adults

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Substance use is prevalent in emerging adulthood, and use of gateway substances—alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco—is associated with later illicit drug use [1, 4]. Although religious involvement and religiosity may protect against substance use [2, 3], less is known about how specific religious identity statuses relate to substance use and attitudes towards substances. We hypothesized that religious identity statuses characterized by commitment would be associated with higher religiosity, lower substance use, and more negative substance-related attitudes. We also hypothesized that non-organized religious activity (NORA), among the domains of religiosity, would have the largest influence on substance-related attitudes and use and would account for variance beyond that explained by religious identity commitment.

A sample of 140 emerging adult students (18-29) completed measures assessing substance use, substance-related attitudes, religiosity (NORA, Intrinsic Religiosity (IR), and Organized Religious Activity (ORA)) [5], and religious identity status [6]. The *Adaptive Measure of Identity Statuses* (AMIS)—grounded in Marcia’s identity status model—was used to classify participants into religious identity statuses, indicating higher or lower levels of identity commitment [6]. MANOVAs tested associations between identity commitment statuses and (a) domains of religiosity and (b) substance-related attitudes and use. Multiple linear regression analyses evaluated which domains of religiosity predict substance-related attitudes and use. Hierarchical regression analyses tested whether religiosity domains accounted for variance in substance-related attitudes and use beyond that explained by religious identity commitment.

As hypothesized, religious identity statuses characterized by commitment were associated with higher religiosity, $F(1,138) = 30.2, p < .001$, and more negative attitudes towards alcohol and marijuana (alcohol: $F(2,137) = 5.06, p = .01$, marijuana: $F(2,137) = 3.95, p = .02$). There were no significant associations between committed identity statuses and attitudes toward tobacco, and no significant associations between religious identity commitment and composite or individual drug use. We hypothesized that NORA would have the strongest association with negative attitudes towards drugs and less drug use, but results indicated that IR had a stronger association than NORA with composite attitudes towards drugs ($\beta = .51, p < .001$). Contrary to our hypothesis, results indicated that IR, not NORA, explained a significant portion of the variance in attitudes towards drugs beyond what religious identity commitment accounted for ($\Delta R^2 = .05, p = .004$). No tested domain of religiosity (ORA, NORA, or IR) explained variance in drug use beyond what was accounted for by religious identity commitment. Based on these results, internalized beliefs (IR) appear more strongly associated with substance-related attitudes than organized or non-organized religious practices in this sample. Although behavioral differences were not observed, potentially due to a homogeneous sample, these results contribute to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of how religious identity and religiosity relate to substance-related beliefs in emerging adulthood. Future research should involve more religiously diverse samples.

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The Mediating Role of Light Triad and Reflexivity in Relationship Between Religious Deidentification and Identity Exploration

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Background. Emerging adulthood is a period of identity exploration and worldview change, including reappraisal of inherited religious beliefs [1]. Religious deidentification may co-occur with a more cautious interpersonal stance that reduces reflective capacity and constrains identity exploration [2,3]. This study examined whether religious deidentification predicts lower identity exploration *via* Light Triad traits and reflectiveness.

Methods. The sample comprised 160 participants (28 men; $M_{age} = 22.56$, $SD = 2.85$; aged 18-29). Variables were measured with the Multidimensional Scale of Religious Deidentification (MSRD-12) [4], Light Triad Scale [5], Rumination–Reflection Questionnaire (RRQ) [6], and Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) [7]. Correlational analyses and serial mediation (PROCESS Model 6) were conducted in SPSS 25 using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% confidence intervals.

Results. Religious deidentification correlated negatively with faith in humanity ($r = -0.31$, $p \leq .001$) and humanism ($r = -0.20$, $p \leq .05$). Faith in humanity and humanism correlated positively with reflectiveness ($r = 0.27$ and 0.26 ; both $p \leq .01$) and exploration in depth ($r = 0.33$ and 0.36 ; both $p \leq .001$), and reflectiveness was also related to exploration in depth ($r = 0.30$, $p \leq .001$). Indirect effects were significant *via* faith in humanity \rightarrow reflectiveness (*Indirect effect* = -0.002 , 95% CI [-0.0044 , -0.0004]) and *via* humanism \rightarrow reflectiveness (*Indirect effect* = -0.001 , 95% CI [-0.0026 , -0.0001]), with no direct deidentification–exploration link.

Discussion. Results suggest that religious deidentification may indirectly reduce exploration in depth by weakening prosocial, trust-based orientations (lower faith in humanity/humanism), which in turn relate to lower reflectiveness [8]. Thus, Light Triad facets and reflectiveness may constitute key psychosocial pathways linking religious identity change to reduced deep identity work in emerging adulthood.

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Religious Identity Profiles in Emerging Adulthood: A Cluster-Based Analysis of Exploration and Commitment Processes

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The formation of religious identity constitutes an important developmental task in emerging adulthood, particularly in contemporary societies characterized by increasing religious pluralism and secularization [1]. While previous research has conceptualized religious identity as a dynamic process involving exploration and commitment, relatively few empirical studies have examined the latent profiles of religious identity processes among young adults. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to investigate the multidimensional structure of religious identity and identify distinct identity profiles based on exploration and commitment processes.

The study was conducted on a sample of 359 participants aged 18–34 years ($M = 21.72$, $SD = 3.79$), predominantly female (62.4%). Participants represented diverse educational backgrounds and places of residence. In terms of religious affiliation, 62.4% identified as Roman Catholic, while 27.6% described themselves as baptized non-believers, reflecting the increasingly heterogeneous religious landscape among young adults.

Religious identity was measured using the Religious Identity Scale (STR), grounded in the identity development framework emphasizing exploration and commitment processes. The scale comprises five dimensions: exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, ruminative exploration, commitment making, and identification with commitment [2]. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency across all subscales (Cronbach's α ranging from .823 to .961). Confirmatory factor analysis supported the five-factor structure of the scale with acceptable model fit indices (CFI = .876, TLI = .866, RMSEA = .080).

To identify patterns of religious identity development, k-means cluster analysis was conducted on the five STR dimensions [3]. Four distinct profiles emerged: Diffusion, External, Internalized, and Seekers. These clusters differed significantly across all identity dimensions (one-way ANOVA, $p < .001$). The most discriminating dimension was ruminative exploration, which significantly differentiated all clusters. The Internalized profile was characterized by high levels of commitment making and identification with commitment, indicating a well-integrated religious identity. In contrast, the Diffusion profile exhibited low levels of both exploration and commitment. The Seekers profile reflected high exploratory activity with relatively low commitment, suggesting an ongoing identity search.

The results support the conceptualization of religious identity as a multidimensional and heterogeneous developmental process, highlighting that young adults differ substantially in the ways they explore, internalize, and negotiate religious beliefs. Importantly, deeper exploration processes were strongly associated with internalized commitment, suggesting that mature religious identity may emerge through reflective engagement with religious meanings rather than through unexamined adherence.

The findings contribute to the psychology of religion and identity development by empirically demonstrating distinct profiles of religious identity formation in emerging adulthood. Moreover, the study offers practical implications for psychological counseling, religious education, and pastoral practice by providing a framework for understanding diverse pathways of religious identity development in contemporary young adults.

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Religious Support and Postponement of Parenthood: The Mediating Role of Antinatalist Beliefs

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Background. Emerging adults tend to postpone life transitions that are perceived as difficult to reverse, particularly decisions such as becoming a parent, which carry significant long-term consequences [1]. Although religiosity has been linked to family-related values and reproductive behavior [2], the psychological mechanisms underlying these associations remain insufficiently understood. Antinatalist beliefs, reflecting negative attitudes toward procreation [3], may represent an important cognitive pathway connecting religious support with reproductive decision-making. The present study examined whether antinatalist beliefs mediate the relationship between perceived religious support and postponement of parenthood.

Methods. Data were obtained from 191 emerging adults ($M = 23.95$; $SD = 2.47$; 79.1% women). Participants completed the Religious Support Scale [4], the Short Antinatalism Scale [5], and the Multidimensional Scale of Motives for Postponing Parenthood [2]. Indirect effects were examined using mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Results. Religious support was negatively associated with both antinatalist beliefs ($r = -.182^*$) and postponement of parenthood ($r = -.222^{**}$), whereas antinatalist beliefs were positively related to postponement ($r = .404^{***}$). Mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of religious support on postponement through antinatalist beliefs (95%CI [-0.1040;-0.0152]), alongside a remaining significant direct effect ($c = -.178^{**}$; $c' = -.123^*$). Higher perceived religious support was linked to weaker antinatalist beliefs, which in turn were associated with lower tendencies to postpone parenthood.

Discussion. The findings suggest that religious support is associated with reproductive decision-making both directly and through cognitive belief systems. Individuals perceiving greater religious support tend to endorse fewer antinatalist beliefs, which may facilitate readiness for parenthood. These results highlight the importance of psychosocial and belief-based mechanisms in understanding fertility-related decisions and suggest that religious contexts may also shape reproductive timing through individual attitudes toward procreation.

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POSTER PRESENTATION

Assessing Emerging Adults' Readiness for Transition to Adulthood

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Background and Objective. Emerging adulthood, spanning ages 18–29, is characterized by delayed attainment of traditional adult roles, extended identity exploration, and continued reliance on parental, educational, or institutional supports [1]. As pathways to adulthood have become increasingly diverse and prolonged, understanding emerging adults' perceived readiness to assume adult responsibilities has become an important developmental and applied concern. While existing measures assess perceptions of adulthood or specific milestones, there remains a lack of comprehensive instruments that directly assess readiness for the transition to adulthood across multiple life domains, particularly for individuals navigating higher education and other institutional contexts. Aligned with the conference theme *Road to Maturity*, this study proposes the development and evaluation of a multidimensional scale assessing emerging adults' readiness for the transition to adulthood.

Methods. A 42-item pool was created from various sources to assess emerging adults' readiness for transition to adulthood (Transition to Adulthood Readiness Scale -TARS) across multiple life domains: job and career readiness, financial independence, life skills, civic engagement, social and interpersonal relationships, and romantic relationships. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. An initial sample of 575 undergraduate students within the emerging adulthood age range were recruited from a large university in the southeastern region in the U.S. Participants were asked to complete an online survey including TARS, related measures for testing the psychometric properties of TARS, and demographic information. Proposed analyses included exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and correlations testing the reliability and validity of TARS (e.g., reliability alpha, convergent and discriminant validity) [2].

Results and Implications. First, EFA was performed on the 42-item pool using the initial sample of 575 participants. Preliminary results of the EFA suggested a six-factor solution (Eigenvalue > 1). Upon taking a closer look at the pattern matrix, decisions regarding the selection of items were made based on the magnitude of the loadings (e.g., the highest loaded items in each domain were kept) as well as the exclusiveness of the loadings (i.e., cross-loaded items were removed). As a result, 24 items from six domains were kept from the initial EFA. Results from EFA on the 24 items suggested a clean four-factor solution with some of the domains combined: job and career (4 items) and finance (4 items), life skills (4 items), civic engagement (4 items), and social/interpersonal relationships (4 items) and romantic relationships (4 items). The findings provided preliminary support for TARS as a brief assessment tapping into multiple life domains, suggesting that emerging adults perceive transition readiness in interconnected yet distinct domains. Preliminary reliability and validity analyses are also performed. The next step is to recruit a separate sample to conduct CFA and assess additional psychometric properties. Overall, this study provides preliminary support for a developmentally informed measurement assessing emerging adults' transition readiness across multiple life domains.

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Longitudinal Links Between Identity Distress and Mental Health in Emerging Adulthood

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Identity formation is a key developmental task in adolescence and emerging adulthood. With increases in complexity, diversity, and pluralism in modern Western societies [1], the transition to adulthood and the development of a mature identity have become more challenging for many youths. Simultaneously, there is a growing body of literature [2] suggesting that emerging adulthood is the period of the highest prevalence of various mental health problems, particularly mood disorders, anxiety, and substance misuse. However, the number of longitudinal studies examining bidirectional associations between identity formation and mental health in emerging adults remains limited, and further research on this topic is highly recommended [3]. Thus, we conducted a two-wave longitudinal study with 309 Polish emerging adults aged from 18 to 25 years old ($M = 21.50$; $SD = 2.20$) and adopted Cross-Lagged Panel Model (CLPM) analyses to investigate longitudinal and reciprocal associations between identity distress, anxiety symptoms and depressive symptoms. There are four main findings of our research. First, at both stages, stronger identity distress and its negative impact on emerging adults' daily functioning were positively (moderately to strongly) related to stronger anxiety and depressive symptoms. Second, we found positive (weak to moderate) correlations between changes in the intensity of identity distress and the intensity of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Third, we found that stronger initial identity distress predicts the increase in the intensity of depressive symptoms, but not anxiety symptoms. Fourth, a stronger initial intensity of depressive (but not anxiety) symptoms predicted the increase in the intensity of identity distress and its negative impact on emerging adults' daily functioning. Altogether, our study suggests bidirectional associations between identity distress and depressive symptoms in emerging adults. Problems with identity development may undermine emerging adults' mental health, and conversely, those who experience serious mental health problems may struggle with resolving their identity crisis.

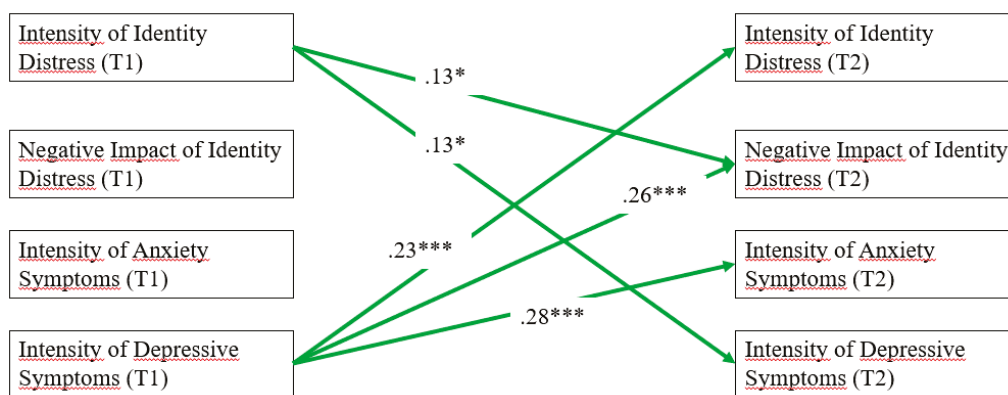


Figure 1: Bidirectional Longitudinal relationships between identity distress, anxiety symptoms and depressive symptoms.
 Note. For clarity, stability paths were hidden.

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Delayed Adulthood? Gender-Diverse Students and Institutional Recognition in Polish Universities

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Emerging adulthood is conventionally understood as a developmental phase marked by increased autonomy, identity exploration and gradual consolidation of adult roles [Arnett 2014]. However, this model presumes the possibility of stable identity recognition. Drawing on Arnett's concept of emerging adulthood and Zielińska's notion of "adult youth," [Zielińska 2020] this proposal examines how gender-diverse students in Poland experience the transition into adulthood within university settings.

The paper is conceptual and theoretical, grounded in mixed empirical material collected in Poland: in-depth interviews with gender-diverse university students, survey data, and policy analysis of selected universities, including Jagiellonian University and the University of Rzeszów (used illustratively). It addresses three questions: (1) How do gender-diverse students experience the transition into adulthood in higher education? (2) How do Polish universities respond to their needs? (3) How should universities act in light of their institutional responsibilities?

Findings indicate that identity misrecognition – especially the compulsory use of legal names and gender markers inconsistent with students' lived identities – functions as a structural barrier that delays social adulthood and negatively affects psychological well-being. Although students formally cross key thresholds of adulthood (legal majority, secondary education completion, voting rights), the inability to use their desired name and pronouns restricts full participation in academic and social life. Informal accommodations by staff are inconsistent and insufficient to compensate for systemic legal and administrative gaps.

Using the ASBiR Recommendations [*Rekomendacje ASBiR*, 2025] as a normative benchmark, the paper argues that Polish universities fail in their duty of care toward gender-diverse youth. Institutional recognition emerges as a central precondition for equitable transition to adulthood in higher education.

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Types and Sources of Social Support and the Transitional and Moratorium Orientations of Young Adults

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The period of emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is a unique developmental stage characterized by identity exploration and the transition into adult roles. During this time, young adults may adopt different life orientations: moratorium, focusing on self-discovery and experimenting with roles without immediate commitment, or transitive, viewing youth as a preparatory phase for adulthood. Understanding the mechanisms of social support in this period is crucial, as it significantly determines the success of identity consolidation and the effective management of the increasingly complex challenges of modern adulthood. The primary aim of this study was to examine how various types of social support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) and their sources (family, friends, and significant others) relate to these orientations. The study also explored how age and social participation types differentiate these developmental paths.

The research was conducted among young adults (N = 173) divided into two age groups: 18–24 and 25–29 years. Several standardized diagnostic tools were used: the Berlin Social Support Scales (BSSS) to measure types of support, The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to identify support sources, and the Family Influence Scale (FIS) to assess family-specific support. Additionally, the Social Participation Questionnaire (KPS) was used to determine the four types of social participation based on the levels of transitive and moratorium orientations.

The study revealed that the most dominant social participation type in the sample was the segregative type (30.6%), followed by the assimilative type (27.7%), while the integrative type was the least frequent (19.1%). Statistical analysis confirmed that age significantly differentiates orientations: younger individuals (18–24) more frequently adopt a moratorium orientation and report higher levels of family support compared to the older group (25–29), who lean towards a transitive orientation. Furthermore, the results suggest that emotional support is positively linked to a constructive moratorium, whereas instrumental and informational support are more closely associated with the transitive orientation and the implementation of adult roles.

The findings highlight the crucial regulatory role of social support in the transition to adulthood. While family remains a primary and stable source of support, its adequacy and quality are more important than the intensity of parental involvement. The results emphasize that effective social support can facilitate the shift from exploration (moratorium) to commitment (transitive), helping young adults navigate the uncertainties of emerging adulthood and successfully consolidate their professional and personal identities.

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Hope and Civic Attitudes as Developmental Assets for Civic Engagement in Emerging Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study

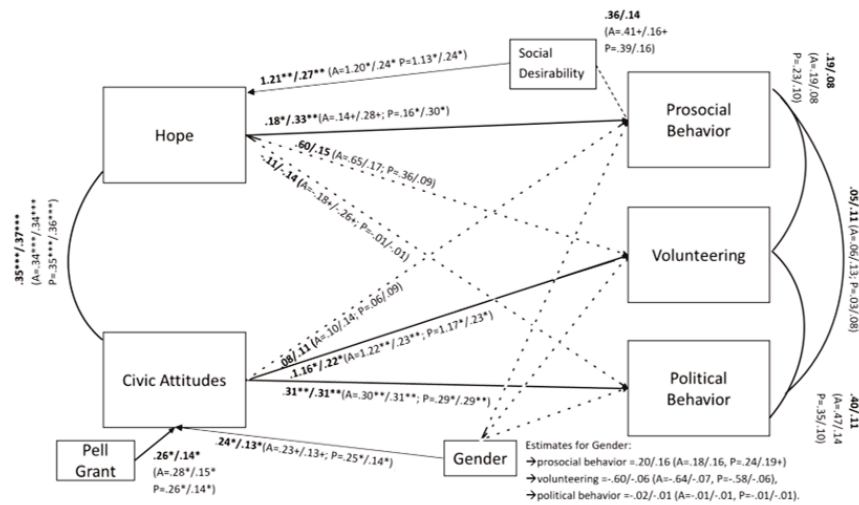
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Emerging adulthood is a developmental period marked by identity exploration, instability, and increasing civic responsibility [1]. Although emerging adults are expected to engage meaningfully in civil society, rates of political participation and community involvement remain historically low [2]. Drawing from Positive Youth Development and Hope Theory (Snyder, 2002), the present longitudinal study examined hope and civic attitudes as cognitive-motivational assets predicting civic engagement across early emerging adulthood. Participants were 217 emerging adults (M age = 19.2 at Time 1; 64% female) recruited from a large university in the southwestern United States and followed across three waves spanning two academic years. Hope (agency and pathway thinking) and civic attitudes were assessed at Times 1 and 2; interpersonal prosocial behavior, volunteering, and political behavior were assessed at Time 3. Structural path models tested transactional relations between hope and civic attitudes and direct and indirect effects on civic outcomes. Results indicated strong stability in hope and civic attitudes across time but no significant cross-lagged effects between constructs. In longitudinal path models, hope uniquely predicted later interpersonal prosocial behavior, whereas civic attitudes uniquely predicted volunteering and political engagement. Agency and pathway thinking demonstrated similar predictive patterns when examined separately. Indirect effects were not supported. Findings suggest that hope and civic attitudes represent distinct developmental assets that promote different forms of civic engagement in emerging adulthood. Whereas hope may facilitate relational prosociality within close social networks, civic attitudes may be more directly tied to broader community and political participation. Emerging adulthood may therefore represent a critical window for cultivating both intrapersonal motivational strengths and other-oriented civic beliefs.



Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$; B/β for hope were bolded. Post-hoc analyses included estimation of agency and pathway thinking separately in additional models. Resulting parameter estimates are indicated in the figure in parentheses (A= model using agency thinking, P=model using pathway thinking).

Figure 1: Path Model of Hope and Civic Attitudes Predicting Civic Engagement.

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Personality, Values, and Online Behavior in Emerging Adulthood

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Emerging adulthood is a pivotal developmental phase for solidifying one's core beliefs, long-term goals, and moral compass [1]. Today, this crucial process of value formation unfolds heavily within the digital landscape. While previous research has predominantly focused on how personality traits affect overall internet addiction and screen time, the specific ways in which an emerging adult's personal values dictate the qualitative nature of their everyday digital routines—such as online authenticity, toxic behaviors, or digital transparency—remain largely uncharted. Investigating these associations provides valuable insights into how intrinsic motivations drive digital interactions.

To address this gap, we conducted a quantitative cross-sectional study focusing on emerging adults from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The analytical sample comprised 1,193 participants aged 18 to 29 (mean age = 22.76, SD = 3.26; 81.6% women). The research battery evaluated participants' sociodemographic background, their personal values using The Values Mapping Scale (VMS) [2], and specific online activities via The Internet Use Questionnaire (DPI; from Czech *Dotazník používání internetu*) [3]. The Big Five Inventory 10 (BFI-10) [4] was also administered to assess fundamental personality traits alongside the values.

Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlations and multiple linear regressions, highlighted personal values as robust predictors of distinct digital habits. Rather than merely affecting the amount of time spent online, the data revealed that values directly shape the quality of virtual behavior. A stronger affinity for internal values was significantly linked to a reduction in unacceptable and risky online activities ($r = -.22, p < .001$). Furthermore, higher scores in internal values ($r = .19, p < .001$) and external values ($r = .15, p < .001$) predicted a significantly higher tendency for authentic self-presentation on social media networks. Additionally, the results revealed a compelling pattern of “digital transparency”: emerging adults with strong internal values ($r = .19, p < .001$) and higher conscientiousness ($r = .21, p < .001$) were significantly more open with their relatives regarding their online activities.

These findings demonstrate that an emerging adult's personal values directly shape their digital footprint in terms of behavior quality. Specifically, the data indicate that prioritizing internal values naturally decreases the tendency to engage in toxic online activities while simultaneously promoting a more authentic and transparent digital identity within their family systems. Understanding this relationship between an individual's value system and their specific online behaviors provides mental health professionals with a novel perspective for designing effective psychoeducational programs tailored specifically for emerging adulthood.

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Identity Distress, Exploration, and Commitment: Culture and Sex Comparisons

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Identity development involves exploring and evaluating relevant options in the process of making choices and commitments to personal values and life goals. It is often a turbulent period of emotional upheaval in various life domains that reflect distress with identity issues (identity distress) among emerging adults. For some the distress or uncertainty over salient life domains may be overwhelming and cause considerable discomfort and dysfunction to seriously interfere with normal functioning (identity impact). However, there is a lack of consistent findings for sex differences and culture in identity distress research.

Considering these ambiguities, this study investigated differences in sex and culture differences in identity distress (i.e., identity domains and impact) and associations with identity processes among university students in Canada, Spain, and Ecuador.

Overall, 1833 university students in Canada (n=1005; 21% female), Spain (n=410; 16% female), and Ecuador (n=418; 34% female) completed the Identity Distress Scale (IDS) [1] and Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) [2,3] in online surveys. Data analysis included Country by Sex ANOVAs and correlations between the variables by country.

Table 1. Mean (SD) for DIDS and Identity Distress Variables by Country

Variable	Canada	Spain	Ecuador	F-Value	Eta
	N = 1005	N = 410	N = 418		
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Identity Dimensions					
CM	3.71 (.93) ^b	3.70 (.75) ^b	4.00 (.78) ^a	16.83****	.05
IC	3.74 (.92) ^b	3.69 (.70) ^b	4.00 (.77) ^a	14.19****	.01
EB	3.70 (.70) ^b	3.83 (.64) ^a	3.87 (.66) ^a	14.55****	.06
ED	3.53 (.73) ^b	3.58 (.60) ^{ab}	3.69 (.62) ^a	11.86****	.07
RE	2.93 (.88) ^b	3.29 (.74) ^a	3.20 (.95) ^a	20.17****	.02
Identity Distress					
IPS10m	2.28 (.74) ^b	2.63 (.69) ^a	2.29 (.63) ^b	12.40****	.03
Domains	2.18 (.72) ^b	2.62 (.78) ^a	2.25 (.64) ^b	37.20****	.04
Impact	2.52 (1.1) ^b	2.67 (.85) ^a	2.41 (.85) ^b	4.00**	.01
IPD3	2.94 (1.1) ^b	3.22 (.98) ^a	2.86 (.83) ^b	13.73****	.02
IPD4-7	1.62 (.71) ^c	2.17 (.89) ^a	1.79 (.69) ^b	42.20****	.05

Notes. ** p < .01; *** p < .001; **** p < .0001

Table 1 shows the mean comparisons by country. Consistent with prior research Spanish students reported the highest identity distress scores for domains, impact, and overall. Ecuadorian students' scores exceeded those of Canadian contemporaries only for the least salient domains (IDS4_7). The Sex by Country ANOVAs achieved significance for Total identity distress (IDS10), Domains, and IDS3 (future goals, career choice, friendships). Overall sex was significant for distress impact, $F(2, 1715) = 8.18, p < .004, \eta = .001$, and for IDS4_7, $F(2, 1705) = 11.16, p < .0009, \eta = .01$. Women reported greater impact ($F: M = 2.55, SD = .97; M: M = 2.38, SD = .96$) and distress with Domains 4_7 ($F: M = 1.75, SD = .76; M: M = 1.87, SD = .83$) than men.

Table 2. Means (SD) for the IDS Items by Country

Item	Canada M (SD)	Spain M (SD)	Ecuador M (SD)	F-Value	Eta
Domains					
1. Long-term goals	3.12 (1.2) ^b	3.36 (1.2) ^a	3.10 (.93) ^b	4.41**	.01
2. Career choice	2.93 (1.4) ^b	3.25 (1.2) ^a	2.86 (1.2) ^b	10.14****	.01
3. Friendships	2.70 (1.3) ^b	3.07 (1.3) ^a	2.61 (1.1) ^b	12.97****	.02
4. Sexual orientation	1.54 (1.0) ^b	1.98 (1.3) ^a	1.45 (.85) ^b	26.71****	.04
5. Religion	1.47 (.92) ^b	1.76 (1.2) ^a	1.65 (.99) ^a	7.92***	.04
6. Values and beliefs	1.74 (.98) ^c	2.45 (1.2) ^a	2.13 (1.1) ^b	40.64****	.07
7. Group loyalties	1.72 (1.0) ^c	2.55 (1.2) ^a	1.91 (1.1) ^b	52.98****	.09
Impact					
8. Discomfort, distress	2.65 (1.2) ^a	2.78 (1.0) ^a	2.28 (.99) ^b	14.11****	.03
9. Uncertainty	2.49 (1.2) ^b	2.87 (1.1) ^a	2.77 (.95) ^a	19.82****	.02
10. Length of time	2.42 (1.4) ^a	2.36(1.3) ^{ab}	2.18 (1.3) ^b	2.95*	.01

Notes: ** p < .01; *** p < .001; **** p < .0001

Table 2 provides the breakdown of IDS items by country. Values, beliefs and group loyalties were the only significant differences between countries. Students in Spain had the highest scores followed by those in Ecuador, and subsequently Canadian students. In terms of impact, distress was lowest among Ecuadorian students and uncertainty was lowest for those in Canada. The length of time distress was experienced was greater among Canadian than Ecuadorian student and Spanish students were similar to these extremes.

Table 3. DIDS and Identity Distress Correlations by Country

Variable	IC	EB	ED	RE	IDS10m	Domains	Impact	IDS-3 ¹	IDS4-7 ¹
CANADA									
CM	.90 ^a	.28 ^a	.62 ^a	-.43 ^a	-.24 ^a	-.24 ^a	-.17 ^a	-.24 ^a	-.16 ^a
IC		.32 ^a	.65 ^a	-.44 ^a	-.31 ^a	-.29 ^a	-.26 ^a	-.28 ^a	-.19 ^a
EB			.63 ^a	.42 ^a	.11 ^b	.11 ^b	.11 ^b	.16 ^a	.03
ED				.06	.01	.01	.02	.38 ^a	-.01
RE					.40 ^a	.39 ^a	.33 ^a	.43 ^a	.22 ^a
IDS10						.94 ^a	.85 ^a		
Domains							.63 ^a		
Impact								.63 ^a	.42 ^a
IDS-3 ¹									.43 ^a
IDS4-7 ¹									
SPAIN									
CM	.79 ^a	.38 ^a	.47 ^a	-.16 ^c	-.04	.00	-.12 ^d	.03	.02
IC		.32 ^a	.43 ^a	-.18 ^b	-.09	-.02	-.18 ^b	-.003	-.04
EB			.59 ^a	.51 ^a	.20 ^b	.15 ^b	.20 ^a	.21 ^a	.05
ED				.35 ^a	.22 ^a	.17 ^b	.22 ^a	.24 ^a	.06
RE					.40 ^a	.32 ^a	.37 ^a	.32 ^a	.22 ^a
IDS10						.95 ^a	.72 ^a		
Domains							.45 ^a		
Impact								.46 ^a	.31 ^a
IDS-3 ¹									.41 ^a
IDS4-7 ¹									
ECUADOR									
CM	.88 ^a	.11 ^d	.51 ^a	-.47 ^a	-.37 ^a	-.29 ^a	-.39 ^a	-.28 ^b	-.22 ^a
IC		.12 ^c	.50 ^a	-.46 ^a	-.40 ^a	-.32 ^a	-.41 ^a	-.33 ^b	-.23 ^a
EB			.48 ^a	.53 ^a	.20 ^a	.18 ^b	.18 ^b	.13 ^c	.13 ^d

Variable	IC	EB	ED	RE	IDS10m	Domains	Impact	IDS-3 ¹	IDS4-7 ¹
ED				.11 ^d	.04	.05	.002	.04	.04
RE						.41 ^a	.48 ^a	.40 ^a	.31 ^a
IDS10						.94 ^a	.80 ^a		
Domains						-	.55 ^a		
Impact							-	.45 ^a	.49 ^a
IDS-3 ¹									.47 ^a
IDS4-7 ¹									

Notes. ¹ 2 separate domains for CFI in Canada; ^d = p <.05 ^c = p <.01; ^b = p <.001; ^a = p <.0001

Table 3 shows the correlations for the DIDS processes and identity distress by country. As expected, commitment correlated significantly with the identity distress variables among Canadian and Ecuadorian students but only with Impact for Spanish students. Differences were found in the ED-RE and identity distress correlations. The expected positive associations were found between ED with RE and the IDS measures (except D4-7) for students in Spain; ED with IPS3 for those in Canada; and ED with RE for Ecuadorian students. As seen in Table 3, these differences were salient for religion, values and beliefs (D6, D7, D9, and uncertainty (D10). Findings highlight the role of country, context, and sex differences in identity development.

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The Mediating Role of Rumination and Self-Efficacy in Relationship Between Religious Residue and Identity Development

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Background. Religiousness is a salient developmental context in emerging adulthood, and contemporary identity-development models suggest that religious deidentification may shape how young people consolidate a coherent adult identity [1]. Building on the concept of religious residue—the persistence of religion-related cognitions and behaviors after deidentification—this study tested whether residue from prior religious identification predicts multiple dimensions of identity development in emerging adults, and whether these associations are mediated by ruminative thinking and general self-efficacy.

Methods. Participants were 160 emerging adults (82.5% women; $M_{age} = 22.56$, $SD = 2.85$). Measures included the Multidimensional Scale of Religious Deidentification (MSRD-12) [2], the Rumination–Reflection Questionnaire (RRQ) [3], the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE-6) [4], and the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) [5]. We conducted correlational analyses and tested serial mediation using PROCESS Model 6 in SPSS 25 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% confidence intervals.

Results. Religious residue was positively associated with rumination (recurrent negative thinking) and with ruminative exploration. Rumination was positively related to exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, and ruminative exploration, and negatively related to self-efficacy, commitment making, and identification with commitment. Self-efficacy was positively associated with commitment making, identification with commitment, and both adaptive exploration dimensions, and negatively associated with ruminative exploration. Serial mediation analyses indicated that the positive association between religious residue and ruminative exploration was indirectly transmitted *via* higher rumination and lower self-efficacy (bootstrapped 95% CI [0.0001, 0.0059]). The associations between religious residue and (a) commitment making (95% CI [−0.0086, −0.0001]) and (b) identification with commitment (95% CI [−0.0080, −0.0001]) were indirect-only, operating through the same rumination → self-efficacy pathway but showed the opposite pattern.

Discussion. The findings suggest that religious residue is linked to greater identity difficulty primarily through higher rumination and, in turn, lower self-efficacy. This pattern is consistent with a process in which recurrent negative thinking may undermine perceived competence, thereby hindering commitment formation and strengthening ruminative exploration in emerging adulthood. Practically, interventions that reduce rumination and bolster self-efficacy may help support adaptive identity consolidation among emerging adults navigating religious deidentification.

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Emerging Adulthood in Post-Communist Europe: A Cross-National Comparison

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Emerging adulthood (EA) is conceptualized as a developmental period characterized by identity exploration, experimentation with possibilities, self-focus, instability, and a sense of being in-between adolescence and adulthood. While most empirical work has focused on Western societies, less is known about how these dimensions manifest in post-communist countries undergoing rapid socio-political and economic transformation.

The present study examined the factorial structure and cross-national differences in emerging adulthood experiences in post-communist Central Europe, i.e. in Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The sample consisted of 6,034 young adults aged 18–29 ($M = 22.75$, $SD = 2.73$) who completed the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA).

Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis supported configural, metric, and scalar invariance across the four countries, indicating that the construct of emerging adulthood is conceptualized similarly across these cultural contexts. Latent mean comparisons revealed significant cross-national variation across all dimensions of emerging adulthood. Hungarian participants reported the highest levels of identity exploration, experimentation, self-focus, and feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood. Slovak participants exhibited higher negativity/instability and other-focused orientation. Polish emerging adults showed the lowest levels of instability and in-between feelings, suggesting a relatively more settled developmental profile, whereas Czech participants reported comparatively lower identity exploration.

These findings support the cross-cultural validity of emerging adulthood while also highlighting culturally patterned developmental pathways across post-communist Central Europe. The results emphasize the importance of incorporating socio-historical context into developmental theory and contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the universality versus cultural specificity of emerging adulthood.

Identity Domains and Academic Persistence: The Role of College Stress

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Background. One’s sense of self-esteem, ethnic-racial identity, academic self-efficacy, and sense of belonging can promote academic success and persistence [1-2]. However, college stressors, such as academic and social stress, may be a risk for not achieving academic success [3]. We follow Tinto’s theory of student departure which describes how a person’s experience in academic and social systems modifies their goals and commitments to their institutions which affect one’s academic persistence [4].

Purpose. We examined whether self-esteem, ethnic-racial identity, academic self-efficacy, and sense of belonging would predict greater academic persistence. Next, we tested to see if academic and social stress would be a risk factor in this association.

Method. The sample comprised of 270 Latine undergraduate students (64% first-generation attending) in the Central Valley of California. We assessed their ethnic-racial identity (6 items), self-esteem (10 items), self-efficacy (21 items), sense of belonging (18 items), college stress (15 items), and academic persistence (13 items).

Results. With academic stress as a moderator, academic self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and self-esteem all predicted more academic persistence. With social stress as a moderator, academic self-efficacy and self-esteem predicted more academic persistence. Interaction effects indicated that academic and social stress modified the association between self-esteem and academic persistence. For example, at low levels of self-esteem, those with high levels of academic stress had the highest persistence; however, at high levels of self-esteem, those with high levels of academic stress had the lowest persistence [Figure 1]. Additionally, at low levels of self-esteem, those with moderate levels of social stress had the highest persistence; however, at high levels of self-esteem, those with low levels of social stress had the highest persistence [Figure 2].

Discussion: The findings point out the necessity of making appropriate resources available to enhance college students’ ability to achieve their educational goals by reducing their stress levels.

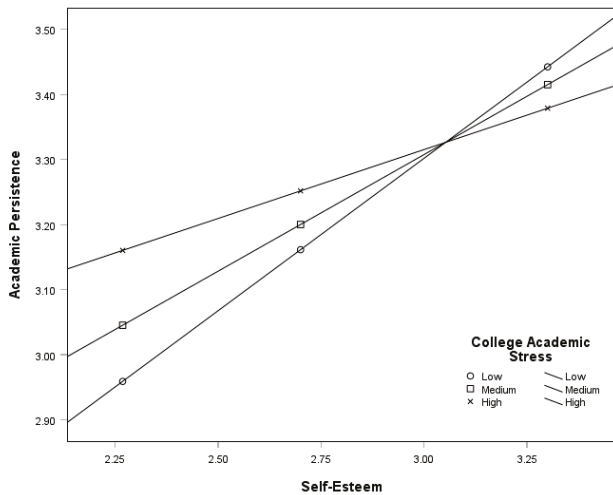


Figure 1: Academic Stress as a Moderator

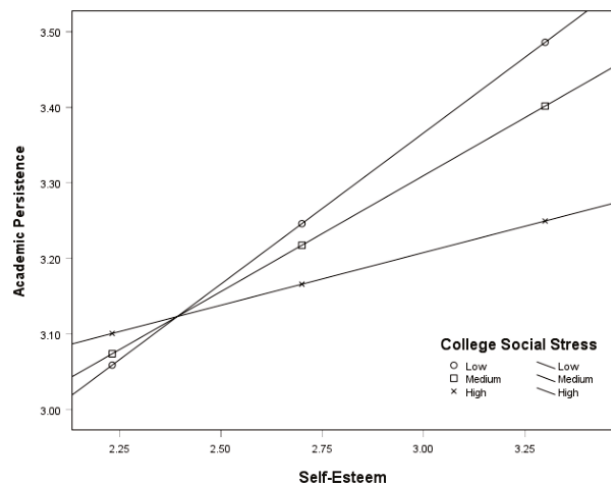


Figure 2: Social Stress as a Moderator

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Mapping Theoretical Alignment and Target Dimensions in Emerging Adulthood Interventions

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Emerging adulthood is a transitional developmental period marked by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism [1]. While these dimensions have shaped research and practice for young adults, preliminary evidence suggests that interventions often prioritize identity exploration and reflective self-focus, while instability, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism are less frequently addressed [2,3,4]. Given that instability and transitional ambiguity are central to emerging adulthood, such an imbalance may indicate a developmental–intervention mismatch. To date, no systematic effort has mapped how interventions align with these theoretical dimensions. This study aims to systematically map intervention targets in emerging adulthood research. Specifically, it examines which developmental dimensions are most frequently targeted, and whether identity-focused targets are disproportionately represented compared to instability, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism. A systematic mapping review is conducted. Eligible studies include peer-reviewed empirical articles (2005–2025) with participants aged 18–29, describing structured interventions targeting psychosocial, developmental, identity-related, or adjustment outcomes. Sources are PsycINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholar using terms such as “emerging adulthood,” “young adults,” “intervention,” and “program.” Studies included explicitly target one or more of the five developmental dimensions: identity exploration, self-focus, instability, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism. Only targets explicitly stated in study aims, theoretical framing, or intervention descriptions will be coded. Findings reveal potential developmental–intervention mismatches and highlight neglected theoretical dimensions, offering guidance for designing more balanced, developmentally sensitive interventions. Interventions should better support young adults’ navigation of transitional challenges, foster adaptive coping with instability, and promote future-oriented optimism. By mapping gaps between theory and practice, this study provides a foundation for advancing interventions that are both empirically grounded and aligned with the full spectrum of emerging adulthood development.

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Perfectionism, Anxiety, and Depression: Optimism as a Mediator

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As emerging adults break away from parents and begin their adult lives, the impact of problematic parenting can become evident in tendencies toward perfectionism [1,2,3]. Perfectionism is related to negative outcomes in many studies, particularly evaluative concerns perfectionism [4,5]. The present study examined whether optimism serves as a mediator between perfectionism and depression and perfectionism and anxiety for emerging adults. The study replicated the work of Black and Reynolds [6] in establishing whether optimism served as a mediator or moderator for the relation between perfectionism and depression and extends beyond the original study to also include anxiety as an outcome variable. A sample of 149 emerging adults enrolled in a U.S. university participated. As expected, optimism did serve as a mediator between evaluative concerns perfectionism and depression. Optimism was also a mediator between evaluative concerns perfectionism and anxiety. Contrary to expectations, optimism was not correlated with perfectionistic strivings and, therefore, could not mediate the relationship between perfectionistic strivings and either depression or anxiety. Understanding perfectionism in emerging adults is important as perfectionism impacts decisions with lifelong consequences, such as career choice [7].

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Social Media Addiction and Life Satisfaction among Romanian Emerging Adults

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This study investigates the psychological mechanisms linking social media addiction to life satisfaction among Romanian emerging adults. Building on research on well-being [1,2] and self-regulation in the digital environment [3] a structural model (PLS-SEM) was tested in which social media addiction was conceptualized as a distal predictor, self-esteem as a cognitive-evaluative resource, and positive affect as a proximal emotional mechanism underlying life satisfaction.

Research question: Are self-esteem and positive affect key mechanisms linking social media addiction to life satisfaction among emerging adults?

Participants: 598 emerging adults (Mean_{age} =19.33; 269 females).

Measures: 1. Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS); 2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS); 3. Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE); 4. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).

Results: Social media addiction was negatively associated with self-esteem($\beta=-0.358$), which in turn predicted higher positive affect ($\beta=0.649$) and life satisfaction ($\beta=0.432$).; positive affect further predicted life satisfaction ($\beta=0.397$), and partially mediated the self-esteem–life satisfaction link. The model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in life satisfaction ($R^2=0.572$) (Figure 1). These results reveal that, during emerging adulthood, problematic social media use does not directly diminish life satisfaction, but rather through its impact on the evaluative core of the self and the capacity to experience positive affect. The findings highlight the central role of self-esteem as the mechanism through which digital experiences shape global life evaluations, suggesting that what matters to emerging adults is less what they immediately "feel" about social media and more what they come to believe about themselves.

Conclusions: For emerging adults, social media does not pose an immediate threat to life satisfaction; vulnerability arises when digital life begins to erode self-esteem.

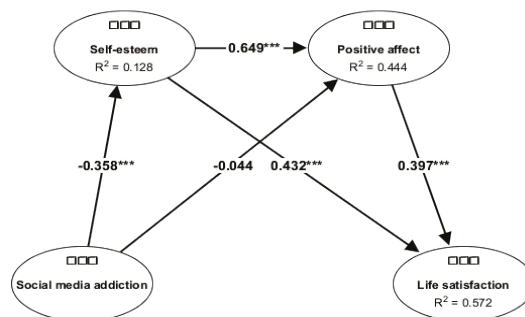


Figure 1 Serial mediation model

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Contributing Factors to Anxiety and Stress among North American University Students Pre-, During, and Post-COVID-19: A Scoping Review

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In Canada [1] and the US [2], the majority of postsecondary students are between the ages of 18 to 29. This period, defined as emerging adulthood by Arnett [3], involves many changes in relationships, employment, education, living environments, and social roles [4], which give rise to uncertainty and instability with important implications for mental health [5]. While the first onset of mental disorders occurs in childhood or adolescence [6], life changes that coincide with attending university may worsen pre-existing mental health symptoms or trigger initial onset [7]. Recent research [8] shows a rising prevalence of psychological distress among university students globally, with many reporting increases compared to previous years. A longitudinal perspective on factors affecting students' mental health across the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods is therefore critical. This study examined contributing factors to anxiety and stress among North American university students using studies published four years pre-COVID-19 pandemic, during the pandemic, and four years post-pandemic. A scoping review following Arskey & O'Malley's [9] five-step framework identified 54 studies. In the pre-pandemic period (2016), 33.7% of anxiety and stress factors were related to identity, safety, and relationships. During the pandemic (2020), 42.3% of factors centered on health concerns, COVID-19, and lifestyle changes. Only two post-COVID-19 studies were identified, examining stress and anxiety factors linked to the pandemic, environmental conditions, and relationships. Overall, students experienced a broad range of stressors across all three periods, with 29.5% of factors primarily related to health, COVID-19, and relationships. Results highlight the need for further research on factors driving anxiety and stress among North American university students post-pandemic, especially given the potential for long-term impacts on mental health.

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Stress or Resilience—or Both? Family Resources and Cultural Assets in the Context of Cultural Stress and Psychopathology Among Hispanic Emerging Adults

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Research has indicated that cultural stressors predict mental health symptoms, including internalizing and externalizing symptoms, among Hispanic emerging adults [1]. Beyond their influence on negative outcomes, this literature further suggests that cultural stress erodes family resources, such as family functioning, as well as cultural assets, such as bicultural identification, which reflects strong identification with both the U.S. and one's heritage culture. However, less attention has been paid to how these family resources and cultural assets confer resilience against mental health symptoms in the context of cultural stress. Drawing on resilience frameworks [2], resources and assets contribute to resilience through two distinct mechanisms: (a) a compensatory process, where promotive factors predict mental health symptoms independently of stressors, and (b) a buffering process, in which promotive factors weaken the association between stressors and mental health symptoms. We examined the potential compensatory and buffering roles of family functioning and bicultural identification vis-à-vis internalizing and externalizing symptoms among Hispanic emerging adults, accounting for the influences of cultural stress on these family resources and cultural assets, as well as on mental health symptoms.

Data were drawn from 190 Hispanic emerging adults aged 18-21 years ($M_{\text{age}}=18.77$, $SD=.76$; 73.2% female) residing in the Los Angeles metro area, collected between June 2023 and October 2025. All study variables were assessed via self-report. Cultural stress was measured in terms of the negative context of reception, discrimination, and bicultural stress. Family resources were indexed as positive parenting, parental involvement, and family cohesion. Cultural assets were measured as American identity and ethnic identity. Cultural stress, family resources, and cultural assets were modeled as latent variables. Internalizing symptoms were assessed as depressive symptoms, and externalizing symptoms as aggression/rule-breaking behaviors. Buffering processes were tested using a latent moderated structural equation.

Results indicated that cultural stress positively predicted both internalizing ($\beta=.31$, $p<.001$) and externalizing symptoms ($\beta=.27$, $p<.01$). In addition, cultural stress negatively predicted family resources ($\beta=-.27$, $p=.002$), but positively predicted cultural assets ($\beta=.23$, $p<.05$). Adjusting for cultural stress, family resources negatively predicted internalizing symptoms ($\beta=-.23$, $p<.05$). Unexpectedly, family resources exacerbated the association between cultural stress and internalizing symptoms, such that this association was stronger for those with greater resources ($\beta=.16$, $p<.05$). Cultural assets buffered the cultural stress-externalizing symptoms link, such that this association was weaker for those with lower cultural assets ($\beta=-.36$, $p<.001$). These findings underscore the need for mental health interventions accounting for the distinct roles of family resources and cultural assets vis-à-vis internalizing and externalizing outcomes under conditions of cultural stress.

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Predicting Internet Addiction in Emerging Adults: Personality and Online Behavior

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Emerging adulthood is a critical developmental period characterized by identity exploration, instability, and an increased reliance on digital environments [1]. As young people navigate these complex life transitions, problematic internet use and internet addiction have become significant clinical and social concerns, potentially hindering their psychosocial development and overall well-being. Understanding the underlying individual factors that contribute to these behavioral patterns is essential for developing effective prevention and targeted intervention strategies.

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between underlying personality traits, specific daily internet usage patterns, and the risk of internet addiction among emerging adults in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed. The sample consisted of 1,193 emerging adults within the age range of 18 to 29 years (81.6% female; 76.1% CZ, 23.9% SK; mean age = 22.76, SD = 3.26). Data were collected using comprehensive self-report measures, including sociodemographic questionnaires, the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10) [2] to assess fundamental personality traits, the Internet Use Questionnaire (DPI; from Czech *Dotazník používání internetu*) [3] to evaluate daily digital habits, and the Internet Addiction Disorder Short Questionnaire (IDS) [4] to measure the severity of internet addiction symptoms.

Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to examine the associations between the selected variables. Conscientiousness showed a moderate negative correlation with internet addiction scores ($r = -.38, p < .001$), while neuroticism ($r = .29, p < .001$) and time spent on social media during typical workdays ($r = .21, p < .001$) were positively correlated with addiction risk. A subsequent multiple regression model significantly predicted internet addiction ($R^2 = .22, p < .001$). The model demonstrated that conscientiousness ($\beta = -.31$) was the strongest independent protective factor, whereas neuroticism ($\beta = .24$) and daily social media use ($\beta = .12$) remained significant risk predictors even when controlling for other personality traits.

These empirical findings highlight the complex interplay between relatively stable personality traits and modifiable digital habits in the manifestation of internet addiction during emerging adulthood. High neuroticism and low conscientiousness, when combined with excessive engagement in social media, constitute a distinct vulnerability profile [5]. The study underscores the necessity of considering both inherent personality traits and context-specific internet usage behaviors when designing clinical and psychological interventions for this vulnerable age group.

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Falling Down the Rabbit Hole - The Link Between Conspiracy Belief and Violent Radicalization in Emerging Adults. A Systematic Review

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Background. Conspiracy theories have been defined as explanations for important events that involve secret plots by powerful and malevolent groups [1]. Among sociodemographic factors, age appears to be particularly influential, with research indicating that younger individuals are more prone to endorsing conspiracy beliefs [2]. Given the rise in conspiracism over recent decades - which has been linked to both political extremism and support for political violence [3], this systematic review aimed to understand pathways and mechanisms that facilitate the transition from conspiratorial belief to violent radicalization among emerging adults.

Method. Studies were retrieved from PubMed, ResearchGate, and PsycNet using keywords like “conspiracy beliefs” and “young adults.” Inclusion criteria targeted empirical articles (2019–2025) using standardized tools to examine emerging adults (ages 18–29) or overlapping age groups, consistent with the flexible conceptualization of this construct in the literature [4].

Results. A total of 5 studies meeting the eligibility criteria were included. The results of the review revealed that younger age was significantly associated with higher levels of conspiracy endorsement and radicalization outcomes further characterized by hallucinatory symptoms [5]. While Machiavellianism and the “odd beliefs/magical thinking” dimension of schizotypy - likely a control-seeking mechanism - predicted conspiracy belief, neither grandiose nor vulnerable narcissism emerged as significant [6]. Additionally, psychological distress was a key moderator between COVID-19 conspiracy endorsement and sympathy for violent radicalization [7].

Discussion. Despite low mean levels of violent radicalization, a distinct 35% “high-conspiracy” subgroup emerged, demonstrating significant susceptibility to alternative narratives, that warrants closer attention [8]. Political engagement appeared to play a protective role: low institutional trust increased conspiracy beliefs, whereas higher political interest enhanced self-efficacy and reduced endorsement of conspiracy beliefs [9].

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The relationship between anxiety, social support and life orientations in emerging adults with and without disabilities

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Social participation in the concept of Heinz Reinders and Petra Butz [1] is defined as a strategy of participation in the social life by young people and as the attitude of young people towards adulthood. It is expressed in two dimensions (life orientations): moratorium orientation and transitional orientation. Transitional orientation refers to attitudes toward adulthood and the taking of actions whose consequences will be visible in adulthood, preparing for the transition to adulthood (undertaking new developmental tasks) and acquiring competencies to assume new social roles. Moratorium orientation refers to attitudes toward and the taking of actions whose goals and gratifications are not deferred in time, recognizing the value of the activity itself. Previous empirical studies confirmed personal and social determinants of the orientations as well as their dependence on age in people both with and without intellectual disabilities [2, 3, 4]. The aim of the study was to verify the hypothesis about the trait of anxiety and social support as correlates of emerging adults' life orientations. The study included 314 participants aged 19-26, with ($n = 94$) and without varying disabilities ($n = 220$). The exclusion criterion was intellectual disability. The *Social Participation Questionnaire* [5], the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* [6] and the *Interpersonal Support Evaluation List* [7] were used. Both anxiety and social support were found to be associated with life orientations in emerging adults. The results revealed small but significant differences between individuals with and without disabilities.

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Profiles of Well-being, Stress, and Emotion Regulation in German Emerging Adulthoods: A Person-Centered Approach

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Emerging adulthood is a developmental stage characterized by elevated distress and increased risk for mental health difficulties. The present study aimed to identify distinct mental health profiles among emerging adults, considering psychological well-being, perceived stress, and emotion regulation strategies. A sample of 419 German university students ($M = 20.12$, $SD = 2.34$; 49.8% female) completed the Kindl Test (Physical and psychological well-being, and self-worth), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and the Emotion Regulation Questionary (ERQ). A Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was conducted to identify subgroups based on these indicators. The model fit indices supported a three-profile solution with good classification quality (Entropy = .82) and high posterior probabilities ($\geq .90$), and information criteria (AIC = 6437.71; BIC = 6558.85; SSA-BIC = 6463.65) showed better fit for the three-profile model compared to two- and four-class solutions. Three distinct profiles emerged: a risk profile (15%), characterized by low well-being and life satisfaction, high perceived stress, high suppression, and lower use of reappraisal; a vulnerable profile (47%), showing moderate levels across all indicators; and a well-adjusted profile (37%), marked by high well-being and life satisfaction, low perceived stress, lower suppression, and higher use of reappraisal. These findings highlight the heterogeneity of psychological mental health among university students during emerging adulthood and underscore the central role of well-being, perceived stress, and emotion regulation in mental health configurations. The results have important implications for the development of targeted interventions aimed at promoting well-being during this critical developmental stage, particularly in response to contemporary challenges faced by emerging adults in university contexts, such as academic stress and academic burnout. Moreover, the identification of distinct profiles suggests the need for differentiated intervention strategies tailored to varying levels of vulnerability.

Keywords: Emerging adulthood, Well-being, Perceived Stress, Emotion Regulation, Latent Profile Analysis.

“I Owe My Being To The Hills and The Valleys”: The Intersection of Ecospirituality and Meaning-Making in South African Emerging Adults

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Emerging adulthood is a developmental period characterised by identity exploration, meaning-making, and the search for purpose and belonging. Within African contexts, these processes may include spiritual and ecological dimensions that remain underrepresented in emerging adulthood research. The present qualitative study explored African emerging adults' perspectives on their relationship with the universe and the spiritual significance they attach to the natural world.

Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews with eight South African emerging adults and analysed using thematic analysis. Participants described a profound physical, psychological, and spiritual connection to nature's beauty, wonder, and vastness. This connection was closely tied to developmental experiences of reflection, self-discovery, and a growing sense of purpose during the transition to adulthood.

Participants expressed strong ecospiritual awareness, linking the creation, messages, and rhythms of nature to a higher power. Engagement with the natural world was experienced as emotionally restorative and psychologically therapeutic, associated with peace, rejuvenation, deeper reflection, enhanced self-awareness, and insight into personal life direction. For many, nature served as a space for coping with stress and negotiating challenges related to emerging adulthood. These sacred connections also shaped participants' developing values and responsibilities. Emerging adults reported increased mindfulness of their ecological footprint and emphasised respect, care, and environmental stewardship as part of their moral and spiritual growth.

The findings foreground ecospirituality as a meaningful and culturally situated dimension of holistic well-being in emerging adulthood. This study contributes to a more contextually grounded understanding of emerging adult development by illustrating how relationships with nature and spirituality may support identity development, well-being, and pro-environmental commitment among African youth.

The Mediating Role of Motivation to Revenge and Anxiety in Relationship Between Religious Deidentification and Life Satisfaction

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Background. Emerging adulthood is marked by intensive identity exploration, including re-evaluation of childhood religious identities [1]. Deconversion and religious deidentification may erode meaning-based coping and intensify relational strains, fostering revenge motivation and anxiety that undermine life satisfaction [2]. The present study aimed to test the association between religious deidentification and life satisfaction and to examine revenge motivation and anxiety as serial mediators.

Methods. The sample included 179 participants (65 men; $M_{age} = 22.24$, $SD = 2.83$; aged 18-29). Measures were MSRD-12 [3], TRIM-12 [4], Direct Behavior Rating–Scale Items [5], and SWLS [6]. Correlations and serial mediation (PROCESS Model 6) were tested in SPSS 25 using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% CIs.

Results. Results supported the hypotheses. Religious deidentification correlated positively with revenge motivation ($r = .42$, $p \leq .001$) and anxiety ($r = .32$, $p \leq .001$), and negatively with life satisfaction ($r = -.40$, $p \leq .001$). Revenge motivation related to higher anxiety ($r = .29$, $p \leq .001$) and lower life satisfaction ($r = -.31$, $p \leq .001$); anxiety was related to lower life satisfaction ($r = -.57$, $p \leq .001$). Serial mediation analysis revealed a significant direct effect of religious deidentification on life satisfaction (*Direct effect* = -1.31 , 95% CI [$-.86$, $-.40$]). Once serial mediators were introduced into the model (revenge motivation, anxiety), the relationship between religious deidentification and life satisfaction became weaker (*Indirect effect* = -0.71 , 95% CI [$-.28$, $-.22$]).

Discussion. Higher religious deidentification was linked to lower life satisfaction in emerging adults. Greater deidentification was associated with stronger revenge motivation, which in turn related to higher anxiety and lower life satisfaction. This pattern may reflect diminished meaning-based religious coping and forgiveness scripts following deidentification, consistent with Park's framework [7,8]. Interventions promoting adaptive responses to interpersonal harm may be especially important when religious frameworks are no longer salient.

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Spirituality and Revenge in Emerging Adults: The Mediating Roles of Intellectual Humility and the Light Triad

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Background. Revenge is a retaliatory response to perceived interpersonal harm and is often associated with hostility and the desire to restore justice [1]. Psychological research has increasingly focused on factors that may reduce revenge motivations and promote more prosocial responses to interpersonal transgressions. One such factor is spirituality, which has been linked to moral values and greater self-regulation in social behavior [2]. Although prior research suggests a relationship between spirituality and forgiveness, the psychological mechanisms underlying this association remain understudied. One mechanism explaining this link may be intellectual humility, defined as the recognition of the limits of one's knowledge and openness to others' perspectives, which may reduce hostile judgments in interpersonal conflicts. Spirituality may also promote Light Triad traits, reflecting benevolent and prosocial orientations toward others. Therefore, the present study aimed to examine whether intellectual humility and the Light Triad of personality mediate the relationship between spirituality and revenge tendencies.

Methods. A sample of 246 emerging adults completed measures of spirituality, intellectual humility, Light Triad traits, and forgiveness. A serial mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Model 6 (Hayes, 2022) with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Results. Results indicated that spirituality was positively associated with intellectual humility ($\beta = .19, p = .002$) and with the Light Triad ($\beta = .42, p < .001$). In turn, both intellectual humility ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$) and the Light Triad ($\beta = -.18, p = .007$) were negatively related to revenge tendencies. Spirituality also retained a significant negative direct effect on revenge ($\beta = -.17, p = .010$), indicating partial mediation. Bootstrap analyses revealed a significant total indirect effect of spirituality on revenge ($\beta = -.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.21, -.05]$). Significant specific indirect effects emerged through intellectual humility, through the Light Triad, and through the sequential pathway from spirituality to intellectual humility to the Light Triad and subsequently to revenge.

Discussion. These findings suggest that spirituality may reduce revenge motivations partly by fostering epistemic humility [3] and prosocial personality orientations, highlighting the importance of humility and benevolent interpersonal attitudes as psychological pathways linking spiritual orientation to lower retaliatory tendencies.

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Exploring the Determinants of Youth Sustainable Financial Literacy

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In 2023 less than a fifth of European citizens aimed the high level of financial literacy [1]. Financial literacy covers objective knowledge, subjective confidence, and the ability to apply knowledge in practice, and it is closely linked to both economic and general well-being. Today's young people must operate in complex economic environments where technology, social media, and overflowing consumption options create new challenges for financial decision-making [2, 3]. Although financial education provided by schools and family support are important [3, 4], personality factors such as self-confidence are the strongest predictors of competence, according to previous research. Consumption also related to responsibility: how individuals' financial choices effect to society and environment [5].

Sustainable financial literacy in this study means individual's financial stability and as well as the consideration of the ecological and social impacts of financial decisions (e.g., responsible consumption, sustainable investing) [6, see also 7].

Young Finnish people have high financial literacy skills [4], however, less is known how they reflect young people's sustainable economic choices, as well as the possible influence of demographic factors. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the following research question: How socioeconomic background, channels for learning financial literacy, and consumption attitudes predict young people's sustainable financial literacy in 2024? The variables used include background factors (gender, age, parents' education level), channels for learning financial literacy (web-based knowledge, people-based knowledge – formal channels, informal channels) and consumption attitudes (materialism).

The theoretical framework of the study is based on OECD's [8] definition and scales of financial literacy and to the following behaviour theories: The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory of environmental psychology [9], Theory of Planned Behaviour [10], and Capability Approach theory [11]. Also, ESG thinking brings an ecological dimension to financial decision-making: products and investment opportunities are assessed based on their environmental impacts. Although ESG is not a theory, it serves one perspective on young people's ecological financial choices. [6]

The data was as part of the OP The financial literacy barometer for young people. The survey was conducted using questionnaires. In 2024 there were 1,886 respondents from 72 different educational institutions across Finland participating in the study. The study examines the predictors of sustainable financial literacy using structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM allows for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect effects among multiple variables [12]. The analysis will reveal which factors explain sustainable financial literacy and how much each model contributes to explanatory power.

Financial agency is built in youth. It is also the time of life when young people are training their financial independence [13]. Based on the research findings, it will be possible to 1) provide information for the implementation of the national and EU-wide financial literacy strategy, particularly to integrate the perspective of sustainable development, 3) design digital tools aimed at youth (e.g., applications) that support both financial decision making and responsibility, and 4) understand how young people obtain information about financial matters (family, school, social media) and develop communication targeted at youth accordingly.

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Beyond Income: The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspirations in Emerging Adults' Subjective Financial Well-being

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Emerging adulthood is characterized as a paradoxical developmental period. On the one hand, it is marked by unparalleled fun, while on the other, it is a time of profound instability across key life domains, including residence, work, relationships [1], and personal finances. Furthermore, current global economic volatility has intensified these pressures for emerging adults, underscoring the need to identify factors that protect or impair their financial well-being during this transition [2]. Accordingly, the current study investigates how intrinsic and extrinsic life aspirations predict satisfaction with one's financial situation and perceived financial stress, over and above the levels of personal income. Drawing on links between extrinsic goals and chronic dissatisfaction [3], research on materialism that associates these values with adverse financial behaviors [4,5], and resilience literature [6], we hypothesize that intrinsic aspirations act as protective factors, exerting compensatory and buffering effects on subjective financial well-being. Conversely, extrinsic aspirations are expected to act as a vulnerability factor, having additive and exacerbating risk effects.

Data for this study come from the first wave of a short-term, three-wave longitudinal study conducted between 2020 and 2022. The current analysis utilized a sample of 600 emerging adults ($M_{\text{age}} = 24.94$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.03$, range 19–29 years; 52.3% women) recruited from an online survey panel using a controlled quota sampling strategy. Life aspirations were measured with a short version of the Aspiration Index. Financial stress was assessed using three subscales targeting financial need, insecurity, and burden, while financial satisfaction was measured using four adapted items from the Multidimensional Subjective Financial Well-being Scale.

Results from hierarchical regression analyses indicated partial support for our hypotheses. Controlling for baseline income, intrinsic aspirations exerted a compensatory effect by reducing financial stress, alongside a significant buffering effect that moderated the impact of income on both financial satisfaction and stress. In contrast, while extrinsic aspirations operated as an additive risk factor that significantly heightened financial stress, they did not exacerbate the effects of income as anticipated. This suggests that the protective nature of intrinsic goals is interactive, whereas the risk associated with extrinsic goals is direct. These findings suggest that cultivating intrinsic goals equips emerging adults with psychological resilience against financial instability, whereas prioritizing extrinsic goals inherently strengthens financial stress regardless of actual income.

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Food Insecurity Among University Students: Coping Strategies and Dietary Outcomes

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Despite growing international evidence on student food insecurity, research in Central and Eastern Europe remains limited. This study fills this gap by examining how scarcity influences coping behaviour and dietary outcomes among university students in Poland, integrating scarcity theory with the Food Choice Process Model. A cross-sectional survey of 532 students in Poznań measured food insecurity using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), coping behaviours through ten adapted items, and dietary outcomes with a short food frequency questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis identified three coping domains—economic compromises, restrictive intake, and social reliance—explaining 64% of the variance. Regression analyses showed that higher HFIAS scores were associated with lower dietary diversity, reduced odds of daily fruit and vegetable consumption and greater likelihood of fast-food consumption. Economic and restrictive coping predicted poorer diet quality, whereas social reliance exerted a small but buffering effect. These findings reveal a coping paradox: some adaptive behaviours under scarcity exacerbate nutritional decline, whereas social reliance mitigates it. Food insecurity among students in this region thus reflects not only economic hardship but also cognitive and social adaptation. Viewing food insecurity as a cognitive-behavioural phenomenon highlights the need for interventions that address both material constraints and the psychological experience of scarcity in higher education contexts.

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The Link between Child Maltreatment, Health Behaviors, Physical Health, and Chronic Disease in Emerging Adults

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The literature reveals a compelling link between various forms of child maltreatment and enduring impacts on adult health and chronic diseases [1]. Current health data indicates that chronic disease and poor health are manifesting earlier among adolescent and young adults [2]. Collectively, the literature emphasizes a robust link between different types of child maltreatment and health but calls for a more nuanced examination of the attenuating effects of mediating variables, particularly unhealthy behaviors [3]. Given the emerging health crisis among young adults, investigating preventive and intervention points is especially important. Health risk behaviors may be mediators of the relationship between child maltreatment and poor health, and this study will explore this relationship for emerging adults, a group neglected in research and health policy, as compared to adolescents [4].

The sample of n=258 university students was predominantly 18-21 (86%), female (79.1%), Hispanic (45%), and Caucasian (33.9%). Most participants were born in the US (84.5%) and from a working (38.8%) or middle-class (41.5%) background. They completed the Comprehensive Child Maltreatment Scales (i.e., physical abuse, psychological abuse, witnessed abuse, and neglect); parts of the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey (i.e., tobacco and cannabis use, sleep duration and trouble, exercise, routine health care visits, and chronic diseases); parts of the WHO STEPwise measure (i.e., fruit, vegetable and salt intake); the AUDIT-C for hazardous alcohol use; and the Memorial Symptom Assessment Scale for general physical health.

Significant positive correlations were observed between physical health symptoms and physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, witnessed abuse, total experienced maltreatment, hazardous alcohol use, cannabis use, tobacco use, and sleep trouble. Physical health symptoms also increased with less sleep duration. Independent t-tests found physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, witnessed abuse, sleep trouble and total experienced abuse were significantly higher in the group with at least one chronic disease than the non-chronic disease group.

In model 1, a multiple mediation analysis was conducted with Hayes PROCESS Macro 4 with five health behaviors (i.e., hazardous alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, sleep trouble, and sleep duration). After controlling for demographics, total childhood maltreatment was significantly related to all five health behaviors. When examining direct effects, childhood maltreatment was a significant predictor of physical symptoms. Finally, for indirect effects, sleep trouble significantly partially mediated the relationships between child maltreatment and physical symptoms. In model 2, a multiple mediation analysis was conducted with chronic disease (binary). After controlling for demographics, childhood maltreatment was significantly related to sleep trouble. There were no significant direct effects between child maltreatment and chronic disease, and no significant mediating (indirect) effects were found.

Overall, the study found support for associations between substance use and sleep behaviors and worse physical health symptoms. Mediation analyses found childhood maltreatment directly predicted physical symptoms and indirectly affected them through sleep trouble, but it did not directly or indirectly predict chronic disease, indicating the health behavior model may be more robust for general physical health, as compared to chronic disease in emerging adults.

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Emerging Adulthood in the Shadow of Multiple Sclerosis. The Role of Self-Management in the Quality of Life of Patients Aged 17–25

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Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disease. Through damage to the myelin surrounding the axons of neurons in the brain and spinal cord, nerve conduction becomes impaired. This may cause a range of symptoms, including visual disturbances, problems with balance and motor function, fatigue, and cognitive impairments. The course of the disease varies depending on the individual, as well as the location and severity of the lesions [1].

The process of self-management, which is of particular interest in this study, refers to managing one's own treatment, symptoms, and lifestyle changes associated with living with a chronic illness [2], that is, patients taking an active role in their care. Previous research indicates that interventions focused on strengthening this process lead to improvements in subjectively perceived quality of life [2].

However, relatively few studies concern individuals living with MS during the period of emerging adulthood. At this stage of development, individuals face typical developmental challenges while simultaneously coping with the consequences of living with a chronic illness [3]. In my study, based on The Individual and Family Self-Management Theory [4], I aim to test the hypothesis that self-management behaviors are determinants of quality of life among individuals with multiple sclerosis during emerging adulthood.

I will present the results of a quantitative study using purposeful sampling of individuals with MS aged 17–25. The study employs several questionnaires, including the Multiple Sclerosis Self-Management Scale-Revised (MSSM-R), the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA), and the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory™ (PedsQL™).

The findings of this study may be used in the development of intervention programs aimed at improving self-management among individuals with MS during emerging adulthood. Awareness of predictors of desirable behaviors could increase the effectiveness of such interventions.

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Longitudinal Change of Self-Perceived Employability in Emerging Adulthood

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Introduction. Self Perceived Employability (SPE) is an individual's subjective perception of their ability to obtain and maintain employment. It comprises Internal Employability (skills and attributes) and External Employability (labor market perceptions) [1]. The job instability and changes, characteristic of emerging adulthood, make the study of SPE crucial, especially among university students who struggle to translate education into a meaningful and stable work trajectory [3]. This study examines the longitudinal stability and predictors of SPE in a Spanish emerging adult sample.

Method. This longitudinal study collected data of emerging adults across three time points: T1: $N = 1,452$ university students (576 men, 876 women; Mean age = 20.32), T2: $N = 376$ participants (123 men, 252 women; Mean age = 23.66); and T3: $N = 299$ participants (100 men, 199 women; Mean age = 28.99). Data collection at T1 was conducted in-person using paper-based surveys during university classes, whereas T2 and T3 were administered online via the Survey Monkey platform. Attrition analysis indicated no significant differences in baseline Internal or External Employability between continuing participants and those who withdrew from the study, although the attrition rate was proportionally higher among men than women.

Results. Absolute stability was assessed using GLM. Although mean scores increased over time for both Internal (from 3.48 to 4.08) and External Employability (from 2.97 to 3.43), absolute stability was confirmed once initial age and sex were controlled (Internal: $F = 1.94, p = .145$; External: $F = 1.91, p = .304$). Relative stability remained significant across all time points, with correlations ranging from .33 to .47 for Internal Employability and from .44 to .65 for External Employability. Regarding gender, a significant quadratic Time*Sex interaction was found for external employability: men experienced their sharpest increase between T1 and T2, while women showed a more pronounced increase between T2 and T3. No other significant Time*Sex interactions were found. However, men reported significantly higher SPE than women across all waves for External SPE, and at T2 and T3 for Internal SPE. Finally, regression analyses identified Sex as a consistent predictor for both internal and external SPE across time. Family social support also emerged as a significant predictor for internal SPE at T2 ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) and T3 ($\beta = .17, p < .05$), and for external SPE at T2 ($\beta = .16, p < .01$).

Conclusion. While general levels of SPE remain stable, the developmental trajectory of External SPE differs by gender. Men develop early confidence in the labor market, while women's perceptions increase more significantly in later stages of emerging adulthood. Social support, particularly from family, remains a vital resource for fostering Self-perceived employability during emerging adulthood.

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Academic Pressure, Procrastination and Burnout in Emerging Adulthood: Evidence from Romania

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The purpose of the study was to investigate how academic pressure influences the experience of stress, procrastination, and burnout, as well as to identify the coping strategies used by respondents. The research questions focused on: (1) the extent to which the frequency of perceived academic pressure is associated with procrastination and burnout symptoms, and (2) the reactions and coping strategies that predominate in situations of academic stress.

The objectives of the research were to analyze the frequency of academic pressure and its relationship with behavioral reactions to stress, procrastination, and burnout, as well as to identify the main strategies for managing academic stress. The research used a sociological survey based on a self-administered online questionnaire, applied to a sample of 156 participants, members of the target group of the COACH USV Center for Guidance, Association, and Counseling in Research Careers, a structure of the University "Ștefan cel Mare" in Suceava, which serves the entire north-eastern region of Romania. Of the respondents, 150 reported their age, with an average of 26.68 years, ranging from 19 to 35 years.

The results indicate a high level of academic pressure: 42.9% (67 people) feel it often, and 21.8% (34 people) feel it almost constantly; 33.3% (52 people) feel it sometimes, and 1.9% (3 people) feel it very rarely. The dominant reactions include active mobilization (47.4%; 74 people) and procrastination (34.6%; 54 people), followed by seeking support (10.3%; 16 people) and temporary blockage (7.7%; 12 people). Procrastination is often functional (54.5%; 85 people), but 17.9% (28 people) report negative effects. Burnout symptoms are widespread: 47.4% (74 people) occasionally, 23.7% (37 people) repeatedly, 18.6% (29 people) rarely, and 10.3% (16 people) not at all. The dominant coping strategies are organization and planning (32.7%; 51 people), relaxation (25%; 39 people), reactive procrastination (21.8%; 34 people), and social support (18.6%; 29 people). The results of the study can contribute to the development of burnout prevention programs, the optimization of academic and psychological counseling interventions, and the development of institutional strategies focused on time management, self-regulation, and strengthening psychosocial support for young people in academic and professional training.

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Engaged with the Idea: Marital Horizons and Emerging Adult Well-being

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The average age of first marriage in developed countries is continually increasing, now breaking into the fourth decade of life, at an average of 32 years for women and 34 years for men [6]. The delay of marriage suggests a societal decline in the importance of marriage; however, most emerging adults (ages 18-29) report that marriage is important and they eventually want to marry [2, 3, 5]. Research shows that young people tend to differ in the beliefs they have about when one should marry and the importance placed on marriage, and differences in these beliefs are tied to the choices they make and the experiences they have in emerging adulthood [4]. For example, those who place high importance on marriage and want to marry in the early twenties reported significantly less risk-taking factors than those who place less importance on marriage and anticipate marrying much later [1]. Unfortunately, little if any work has examined longitudinally how beliefs about marriage in early emerging adulthood might be related to outcomes later in emerging adulthood. The purpose of this study was to (1) employ latent class analysis to identify groups of individuals in their early twenties who may differ in beliefs about marriage (e.g., importance they place on marriage and desired marital timing), and then to (2) examine how these groups differed five years later on aspects of well-being (e.g., regret, depression, and life satisfaction). Utilizing a sample of 1,318 young adults, we examined the marital horizons held by emerging adults. At Time 1, approximately 19 years of age, 68.48% of the sample was female. Time 2 data was collected five years later. Latent Profile Analysis was used to explore how marital salience and desired marital timing created unique patterns among emerging adults. Five groups emerged based on the desired timing of marriage and the importance they placed on marriage. At Time 2, it was found that the groups differed on indices of well-being. Most importantly, those who wanted to delay marriage the longest and placed the least importance on marriage generally had higher regret, higher depression, and lower life satisfaction five years later. Additional analyses will be conducted to examine if the groups differ on other indices of well-being. Taken together, preliminary analyses suggest that the beliefs one hold about marriage early in the twenties may shape the trajectories they experience in the twenties regarding well-being.

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Interplay Between Personality Values and EI in Emerging Adults Under Wartime Context

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The developmental phase of emerging adulthood, spanning individuals aged 18 to 25, is characterized by profound transformations in identity formation, value prioritization, and overall well-being. Central to these processes is the interplay between personality values and emotional intelligence (EI), which serves as a pivotal mechanism for personal growth and socio-emotional development during this stage. Emerging adulthood is notably defined by the «maturity principle,» where individuals demonstrate marked increases in values of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability as they advance toward greater psychological and emotional maturity.

The nexus between authenticity, values, and trait alignment, underpinned by neurological integration, constitutes a critical dynamic during this life stage. Emotional clarity plays a significant role in fostering congruence between one's actions and core values, thus facilitating the development of an authentic and mature identity. Research suggests that trait EI might operate as a proxy for the General Factor of Personality (GFP), with traits such as conscientiousness and extraversion emerging as robust predictors of high EI. These traits enhance self-regulation and promote social awareness, both of which are essential for navigating interpersonal and emotional challenges. From a neurological perspective, the maturation of the prefrontal cortex during this period strengthens connections with the limbic system, enabling emerging adults to harmonize personality-driven impulses with emotionally intelligent decision-making processes.

The convergence of stable personality values and elevated EI yields substantial implications for key life outcomes, including academic achievement, overall well-being, and interpersonal relationships. High EI levels foster academic success by promoting self-efficacy and confidence, which contribute to enhanced feelings of competence. In terms of psychological well-being, elevated EI serves as a protective factor against adverse emotional states, mitigating the impact of traits like neuroticism on conditions such as anxiety and depression. Furthermore, EI enriches relationships by enhancing empathy and interpersonal conflict resolution skills, beneficial within both professional contexts and familial settings, such as sibling interactions.

Studies exploring gender disparities consistently reveal that females in emerging adulthood exhibit higher scores in both emotional intelligence and traits such as agreeableness compared to their male counterparts.

The empirical research aim is investigating gender and age-based variations in personal values and emotional intelligence during wartime conditions. The analysis of a sample comprising 425 emerging adults—categorized by gender (male vs. female) and age group (18–21 years vs. 22–28 years)—used Schwartz's inventory of ten basic values (Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self-direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power) alongside Hall's instrument for measuring emotional intelligence. The latter provided an overall EI score as well as evaluations of its specific components: emotional awareness, emotion regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and recognition of others' emotions.

Analysis revealed that while the general level of EI tended to be lower across the sample, variation existed in the profiles of individual EI components between gender and age subgroups. Pearson correlation analyses identified statistically significant associations between personal values and EI dimensions across the broader sample and specific subgroups. Most notably, recognition of others' emotions and emotional awareness demonstrated strong positive correlations with humanistic values such as Universalism and Benevolence. Additionally, value categories indicative of openness to change (e.g., Self-direction) and conservation (e.g., Security) also exhibited notable associations with EI elements. Such patterns tended to be more pronounced among females, particularly in the linkage between Security-oriented values and EI components. The findings underscore the integral relationship between socio-emotional sensitivity and the prioritization of personal values among emerging adults living under wartime conditions.

Keywords: emerging adulthood; wartime context; personality values; emotional intelligence; gender differences; age group comparisons; personal values; socio-emotional development



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