

Abstract

The monograph *Emerging Adulthood: Current Trends and Research* focuses on the characteristics of the developmental period of emerging adulthood and presents contemporary insights into the universal characteristics and intercultural differences in the lives of emerging adults. The book consists of seven chapters: (1) Different Perspectives of Becoming an Adult, (2) Challenges Regarding the Concept of Emerging Adulthood, (3) Individuation in Relation to Parents and Its Measurement in Emerging Adulthood, (4) Development and Significance of Basic Personality Dimensions in Emerging Adulthood, (5) University Study and Career Expectations in Emerging Adults, (6) Money Management and Life Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood, and (7) Social Media Use and Emerging Adulthood.

The first chapter, *Different Perspectives of Becoming an Adult* by Maja Zupančič and Ulrike Sirsch, introduces different criteria for becoming an adult and various patterns of attaining adulthood across several European cultural contexts (Mediterranean, Central European, Nordic, and Eastern-European countries). In doing so the authors describe different background conditions and circumstances young people have to cope with to reach adulthood in their respective countries. Thus, statistical data on objective milestones for achieving adult social roles (productive and reproductive) coming originally from the sociological tradition are displayed in the first part of the text. Taking into account Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood, defined as a normative, distinct period of the lifespan for young people from 18 to 25 years of age, which he has prolonged to 29 later on, selected empirical results on becoming an adult from this perspective are also presented. Arnett based this developmental period on subjectively perceived criteria of adulthood and several defining features (e.g., feeling in-between an adolescent and an adult), and determined that many young people in different (postmodern) countries perceive individualistic criteria most important to the definition of adulthood. Following Arnett's focus, the authors portray research findings on young people's self-perceived adult status and subjectively important criteria in selected European countries in the second part of this chapter.

The second chapter, *Challenges Regarding the Concept of Emerging Adulthood*, written by Ulrike Sirsch, presents several criticisms of Arnett's concept of emerging adulthood. First, the author describes the (new) stage theory by Arnett and then proceeds to discuss whether or not the period of emerging adulthood is a new phenomenon by considering some older findings from longitudinal studies. Additionally, she describes the developmental tasks for this period of life and questions

whether or not a stage theory is justified, taking into account recent neurobiological evidence of adolescent brain development. Second, the author portrays the importance of acknowledging socio-economic conditions and different educational tracks that possibly influence the subjective perception of this period. Arnett explains that American emerging adults have a highly optimistic view of the age period. Is this also the case for young people in European countries? In some selected European countries, living conditions for young people are getting worse. The question therefore becomes, does European society allow for a phase of emerging adulthood or is it hindering young people from becoming adults? To encourage the discussion regarding these questions the author presents recent findings from Austria and Slovenia, as well as bilateral research from both countries. The author concludes that portraying emerging adulthood as a normative period in life in selected European contexts today is questionable, and possible negative outcomes are highlighted.

The third chapter, *Individuation in Relation to Parents and Its Measurement in Emerging Adulthood*, written by Maja Zupančič and Luka Komidar, focuses on the intrapsychic process of separation-individuation in parent-child relationships as delineated by the individuation theory and the autonomy-relatedness perspective. The authors describe and explain the process of the second individuation process, i.e. gaining autonomy while maintaining relatedness to parents, which unfolds over adolescence and beyond, at least in postmodern societies. Addressing the progressive course of individuation, they provide a glimpse at differences between developmental contexts of adolescence and emerging adulthood, as well as differences between adolescents' and emerging adults' psychological resources. Then, they continue with a comparison of the components of individuation proposed by six distinct models, and compare the instruments used to reflect each model. Based on several weaknesses of the instruments used to assess individuation in emerging adulthood, they present the construction and validation of the Individuation Test for Emerging Adults (ITEA), and its short version (the ITEA-S). Furthermore, they present developmental trends in several aspects of emerging adults' individuation, and outline the differences in those aspects by emerging adults' gender, gender of the parent, as well as by the transitional markers of adulthood (e.g., moving out of parental home). In particular, they discuss the differential role of five robust personality traits in predicting individual aspects of individuation as assessed by the ITEA. The authors also highlight the importance of successful individuation for emerging adults' concurrent and later developmental outcomes, such as psychosocial maturity, adjustment, and different components of subjective well-being.

In the fourth chapter, *Development and Significance of Basic Personality Dimensions in Emerging Adulthood*, Tina Kavčič and Maja Zupančič discuss emerging adulthood as a period of a relatively marked personality change. First, they present the Big Five model of personality traits: Extraversion refers to positive emotionality, sociability and activity; agreeableness depicts the motivation for positive relationships with others; conscientiousness encompasses traits associated with impulse control; neuroticism taps mainly negative emotionality; and openness to experience refers to intellectual curiosity and imagination. They continue with the presentation of recent findings on structural stability, mean- and individual-level consistency/change in the five robust personality traits, as well as their temporal rank-order and ipsative stability over emerging adulthood. Plausible mechanisms of personality change and continuity are also highlighted. Furthermore, associations of personality traits with selected outcomes are shown, as well as their directionality. Specifically, the authors present and explain empirical findings on the relationships of emerging adults' personality traits with (i) background characteristics such as gender, living arrangement, and intimate relationships, (ii) characteristics of emerging adults' individuation in relation to parents, (iii) significant life events experienced by the emerging adults, and (iv) the three components of subjective well-being (emotional, psychological, and social well-being) as proposed by Keyes.

In the fifth chapter, *University Study and Career Expectations in Emerging Adults*, Melita Puklek Levpušček presents the social, educational and motivational contexts of emerging adults' university study, their career goals, and career optimism. In recent decades, education at the tertiary level is becoming a self-evident lifestyle decision of young people who (along with their parents) perceive higher levels of education as an opportunity for better career opportunities and a more comfortable life. The author focuses on the characteristics of academic motivation, which she presents primarily from the perspective of the theory of self-determination (SDT). The results of research on Slovenian students show that students report above-average levels of both internal and external motives for continuing their education. Among the internal motivations, the most common is an intrinsic motivation to improve one's knowledge, while the common external motives include a better preparation for one's future career path (identified regulation) and further education as a means to obtain a well-paid and a more prestigious job later on (external regulation). In accordance with the SDT, the author identifies satisfying the basic psychological needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy as a necessary condition that enable high-quality study. The chapter continues with student centred learning (SCL) as an educational approach that enables more active participation of students, learning autonomy and taking responsibility for one's own

learning. It also presents the meanings of education for university students and their representations of outstanding teaching in higher education. In the second part of the chapter, the author focuses on the career goals and career optimism of young people in emerging adulthood. It presents the results of Slovenian studies which show that young people primarily appreciate career goals that relate to a quality work environment and challenging work tasks. They want to achieve positive effects on society with their work and develop their professional competences. They ascribe greater importance to internal than external career goals, although external goals are also quite highly expressed. The career optimism of young people in this lifetime is quite high, and somewhat more pronounced in younger than older university students. Students who have higher intrinsic career goals are more career-optimistic. The final part of the chapter presents the circumstances and work expectations of emerging adults entering the labor market.

Chapter 6, *Money Management and Life Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood* by Maja Zupančič, Ulrike Sirsch and Mojca Poredoš, focuses on subjective views of emerging adults on their financial socialization and management of personal financial matters, representing an important developmental task over the pre-adult years in (post)industrial societies, which is usually not mentioned in the developmental literature. The authors present the significance of financial socialization of youth by which individuals attain and develop knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and personal standards that contribute to their subsequent financial practices. Since learning how to manage personal financial matters is part of the transition to adulthood as emerging adults gradually become financially independent from their parents, the authors portray the respective issues from the perspective of emerging adults and their parents. In addition, they introduce and explain findings of an ongoing international survey about subjective views of emerging adult students and their parents, tapping into the students' past and current financial socialization/education, work experiences, present positive financial behaviors, self-perceived financial knowledge, money management and behavioral control of money management, parental financial support, satisfaction with personal money management and its contribution to the students' overall life satisfaction. Though the research outcomes are concentrated more on the data obtained with Slovene students and their parents, the authors also present comparisons between the respective Slovene and Austrian students' views on their financial socialization and personal money matters.

Chris Bjornsen contributed the last chapter entitled, *Social Media Use and Emerging Adulthood*. This chapter is a review of the most recent research on the topic of social

media use in emerging adulthood. Social media (SM) refers to software (apps) that allow users to communicate and socialize by sending text messages, posting comments, and sharing photographs, videos, and links to websites through apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter. After a brief discussion of the overall rates of SM use and its importance as a critical context of socialization and identity formation among emerging adults, more specific topics are discussed that follow the recent trends in the literature. The chapter examines the impact of SM use on educational achievement and interpersonal relationships, followed by the manner in which positive and negative personality traits relate to types of SM use. In accordance with the heavy emphasis in the literature on negative outcomes of SM use, the chapter continues with an examination of addictive use of SM, the secretive viewing of the personal SM information of others ('creeping'), and more invasive or harmful SM use such as partner monitoring, cyberstalking, false identity use ('catfishing'), and creating a false self to self-cyberbully or secretly cyberbully others ('fictitious cyberbullying'). The chapter concludes with coverage of the latest evidence regarding the connections between SM use and psychological disorders and neurological functioning. The literature suggests that the i-Generation of emerging adults is responding in both positive and quite negative ways to a context of socialization that is unique to their generation.