

EMERGING ADULTHOOD:
A MIXED METHOD COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS ACROSS
VOCATIONAL SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

The current study employed a mixed methodology to investigate whether emerging adulthood differs based on vocational setting. Quantitative questionnaires were completed by 18-29 year-olds from university, vocational college/trade school, and the labour force (without post-secondary) to examine conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, identity development, identification with themes of emerging adulthood, and the importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood. Qualitative interviews exploring the same areas were undertaken with a subset of participants.

Results revealed few associations between vocational setting and conceptions of adulthood or perceptions of having reached adulthood, with most emerging adults feeling ambiguous about their adult status and viewing independence as the most important marker of adulthood. Those from the labour force did perceive reaching independence, role transitions, and family capacities to the greatest degree; earlier adverse circumstances seemed relevant in reaching these markers. Fewer than expected from the labour force had achieved identities, yet identity development appeared to be a gradual process for all. Participants generally identified with themes of emerging adulthood, although university students did so to a greater degree in some ways. Emerging adulthood was identified as a time of fewer possibilities and diminished agency for those from the labour force. Unique life experiences and social interactions were also deemed important factors in emerging adulthood. Together, findings largely support emerging adulthood as a valid theory of development, while also suggesting some diversity in its full expression across vocational settings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Emerging Adulthood

There is a new way of thinking about those in their late teens and twenties. In a landmark paper, “Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties”, Arnett (2000a) proposed a new phase of life to conceptualize the experiences and development of young people between the ages of 18 and 29. He called this period *emerging adulthood*. This was a term that first appeared in 1994 when Arnett and Taber suggested it be used to describe “a developmental status that is in some ways beyond adolescence and in some ways not fully adult” (p. 534-535).

Since its introduction, theoretical understandings of emerging adulthood have grown alongside empirical findings, suggesting that it is a time of life distinct from adolescence and adulthood “demographically, subjectively, and in terms of identity explorations” (Arnett, 2000a, p. 469). Concerning this theory, Arnett (2000a) highlights three points. First he writes that emerging adults experience demographic unpredictability during this time in their lives, for example moving often. Second, he proposes that 18-29 year-olds are in a place where they no longer feel like teenagers but have yet to feel like adults. Third, these young people face a unique “opportunity for identity explorations in the areas of love, work, and worldviews” (p. 472). From these ideas, emerging adulthood is defined as the age of identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and sensing possibilities for the future (Arnett, 2004).

Many theorists have studied or described this life stage in the past (e.g., Baumrind, 1991; Côté, 2000; Cowan, 1991; Erikson, 1950, 1968; Keniston, 1968, 1971; Levinson, 1978, 1986, 1996; Mead, 1928/1961). In particular, the works of Erikson (1950, 1968), Levinson (1978), and Keniston (1971) were instrumental in laying the theoretical foundations of emerging adulthood

(Arnett, 2000a). Yet, Arnett was the first to offer a conceptualization that enabled focused empirical research on 18-29 year-olds (Arnett, 2000a).

Key factors behind emerging adulthood as a new phase of life are economic, social, and demographic changes that have swept through industrialized and postindustrial nations (Arnett, 2000a). In comparison to the first half of the twentieth century, currently the years of the late teens and twenties are marked by prolonged education, an increase in the age of marriage and first child birth, and instability in home-leaving and career trajectories (Arnett, 2000a). But because of differences in industrialization around the world, this phase of life is not considered applicable to all young people. As Arnett (2000a) explains, emerging adulthood really only exists “in cultures that postpone the entry into adult roles and responsibilities until well past the late teens” (p. 478).

Other cultural factors that shape the extent to which young people experience an emerging adulthood include religious affiliation and rural versus urban living (Arnett, 2004). Over the last several years, researchers have carried out comparative analyses to look at differences in emerging adulthood based on age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion (e.g., Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003; Barry & Nelson, 2005; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2004; Nelson & Barry, 2005; Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007; Stern, 2004). At this point, evidence suggests that aspects of emerging adulthood differ depending on these factors.

But what about vocational setting? Does one’s trajectory after high school affect whether an individual experiences emerging adulthood? According to Arnett (2004), the spread of post-secondary education has played a central role in the creation of this distinct life stage. As Arnett states, college “is a social island set off from the rest of society, a temporary safe haven where

emerging adults can explore possibilities in love, work, and world views with many of the responsibilities of adult life minimized, postponed, kept at bay” (p. 140). Implied in that statement is the idea that this phase of life may look different among those enrolled in university or academic college compared to those attending vocational college/trade school or those working in the labour force where “the responsibilities of adult life” may no longer be far off.

In part because of the difficulties in recruiting non college students for research (Arnett, 2000a), questions about vocational setting during emerging adulthood remain unanswered and largely unexplored. Only a small number of studies have compared university or college students to their non-student peers or have looked for differences in emerging adulthood based on level of educational attainment (e.g., Arnett, 1997, 1998; Reifman et al., 2007). Although results suggest that both similarities and differences exist, findings are limited by methodologies that could be improved. As shall be evidenced in the pages ahead, research is lacking on those who have not followed the trajectory from high school to university or academic college (Arnett, 2000a). This research gap is problematic for a theory aiming to capture the experience of most 18-29 year-olds in industrialized nations.

Statement of the Problem

As introduced thus far, and as will be evidenced more clearly in the pages ahead, current conceptualizations of emerging adulthood have been based predominantly on depictions of individuals following the route through four-year university or academic college. However, many emerging adults do not spend their emerging adult years in university; rather there are numerous trajectories that can be embarked upon after high school, including enrolling in vocational college/trade school or enlisting in the labour force with no post-secondary credential. Thus, past research reveals little about what emerging adulthood looks like in young people

outside universities, and it fails to speak to any similarities or differences between those who attend university and those who follow other vocational trajectories.

Purpose of Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to understand whether emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood differed across young people from different vocational settings, namely university, vocational college/trade school, and the labour force. The research questions focused on potential differences between vocational settings in the following areas: conceptions of what marks adulthood; perceptions of having reached adulthood; perceptions of having reached specific markers of adulthood; identity development; identification with themes of emerging adulthood; and the perceived importance of vocational setting in shaping the transition to adulthood. The second purpose was to apply a mixed method to the research questions to obtain rich data on a gap area in the research literature. Thus, surveys were used to collect quantitative data for a comparative analysis of 204 18-29 year-olds from the three vocational settings. Additionally, interviews were used to gather qualitative data from 12 participants that further explored similarities and differences and that aimed to help extend and explain what was discovered quantitatively. The third purpose was to contribute to a discussion of whether emerging adulthood is a viable theory of development as currently conceptualized by Arnett (2000a, 2004).

Theoretical Perspective

The idea that context may influence the developing person has been popular since Johann Nicolas Tetens first wrote about sociocultural factors in 1777 (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998; Müller-Brettel & Dixon, 1990). A current model that considers the shaping influence of context is Bronfenbrenner's (2001/2005c) bioecological paradigm. Recently revised, this theory of

development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001/2005c) is considered a holistic interactionist model (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998) because it places importance on the human being as an active agent in his or her environment and it introduces the influence of time, the *chronosystem* (Bronfenbrenner, 1988/2005a), as another important context to consider.

For several reasons, the bioecological model is well suited for application to the study of emerging adulthood. First, Arnett's (2000a) theory implicates social and economic changes (i.e., the chronosystem of the bioecological paradigm) as having immersed young people into a culturally and historically unique environment. Second, like the bioecological model, Arnett's (2006) theory recognizes the importance of agency and other personal qualities in shaping development. Third, the paradigms of bioecology and emerging adulthood are complementary; while Arnett's (1994) theory spans across the domains of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, Bronfenbrenner's model "lies at the point of convergence among the disciplines" (Bronfenbrenner 1979/2005b, p. 58).

The bioecological model, also referred to as the *person-process-context-time* model (Bronfenbrenner, 2001/2005c) defines humans as developing through "progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active evolving human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (p. 6). The levels in an individual's environment are described by Bronfenbrenner 1979/2005b), as follows. The *microsystem* is the context that immediately surrounds an individual, including, for example, the individual's family, school, and friends. The microsystem also refers to the interactions an individual has with the features in this level of the system. Next is the *mesosystem*, which consists of the interactions that take place between microsystem elements. Moving out to the next level in the model, there is the *exosystem* which refers to environments that an individual "may never enter

but in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment" (p. 54). At the outermost realm exists the *macrosystem* which is the "overarching pattern of ideology and organization of the social institutions common to a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1988/2005a, p. 81).

Regarding operations within a given macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner (1979/2005b) explained that "the structure and substance of micro-, meso-, and exosystems tend to be similar, as if they were constructed from the same master model, and the systems function in similar ways" (p. 54). Yet, because the macrosystem "level of aggregation may simply be too gross to capture the influence of environmental dimensions or other characteristics at the institutional level" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 81) it is important not to overlook the potential the more embedded systems have for influencing individuals. This line of reasoning indicates that emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood may look different in young people across vocational settings (i.e., at the microsystem level). Capable of capturing many of the factors that might influence behavior, the bioecological paradigm provides the theoretical backdrop to the current study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Vocational Settings

Holding across race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, most adolescents expect to earn at least a four-year undergraduate degree (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). However, the way in which lives unfold after high school shows that obtaining such a credential is not the trajectory in store for most young people. For example, with an education attainment level lower than the national average (McCall, 2007), in Saskatchewan only 16.8% of the labour force have a degree, while 31.3% have a certificate or diploma and 24.6% have just a high school education (Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). However, because the labour force consists of individuals from many age groups, to best understand today's emerging adults it is important to consider *current* enrollment in different vocational settings. In 2005/2006, 5350 people in Saskatchewan obtained an undergraduate or graduate degree while 5236 completed a diploma, certificate, or apprenticeship program (Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). Thus, there are just as many individuals in Saskatchewan who obtain certificates, diplomas, and journeyperson tickets as there are individuals who earn a university degree.

University. Although the majority of emerging adults do not obtain a four-year degree, most high school graduates do enroll in such university and degree granting colleges in the autumn after high school (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000; Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). In the current study, university is defined as a predominantly four-year post-secondary institution that grants degrees in various academic fields of study.

As a vocational setting, universities and academic colleges have been argued to be “the best examples of a full-fledged social institution that shapes the lives of young adults”

(Furstenberg, Rumbaut, & Settersten, 2005, p. 20). Indeed, consider Arnett's (2004) portrayal of academic college life as the ideal backdrop for identity explorations:

You have two years to try different courses before you commit yourself to a major. Even after you choose a major, you can switch to another major if you find something you like better. As you try out different courses and different majors, you explore a variety of different ideas that help you develop your worldview. Meanwhile you are exploring possible directions for your work future and possible ways of looking at the world, there are hundreds, probably thousands, of other people around you everyday, having experiences similar to your own, few of them married, all of them with a considerable amount of unstructured time – the perfect setting for explorations in love. (p. 140)

One can imagine a similar scene on many Canadian campuses. Consider, for example, the University of Saskatchewan, located in Western Canada. Its commitment is to ongoing learning through “intellectual, cultural, social and physical activities that support the development of the individual,” offering “a rich array of challenging academic programs” (University of Saskatchewan, 2007, ¶5). Similarly, other universities and academic colleges have been depicted as all-encompassing in their provision of “shelter, directed activities, adult and peer support, health care, and entertainment” (Furstenberg et al., 2005, p. 20). Working together, the activities, goals, and missions promote individuality, with the focus being placed on the learner and his or her needs and aspirations.

Vocational college/trade school. One year after high school, 24% of graduates attend vocational colleges and trade schools (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000), which have been described as “the fastest growing segment of higher education” (Person, Rosenbaum, & Deil-

Amen, 2005, p. 126). In the current study, vocational college/trade school is defined as a post-secondary institution that grants certificates, diplomas, and journeyperson tickets.

In contrast to universities, vocational colleges/trade schools are more focused on the “immediate goal of obtaining employment” (Person et al., 2005, p. 136). Concerning this idea, Person et al. (2005) write:

Unlike community colleges that encourage students’ propensities for change and exploration, occupational colleges actively endeavor to focus students’ efforts and minimize change...rather than accepting instability or exploration as normative, occupational colleges view them as counterproductive and something to be avoided. (p. 136)

This focus on the end goal of securing a job is accomplished by expecting vocational college/trade school students to commit to a career path at the onset of their enrollment in the setting, a commitment the college in turn supports through its “clear and relatively structured path” towards employment (Person et al., 2005, p. 137). Within Canada, consider the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). This institution proclaims to offer “progressive programs and courses that emphasize relevant, employable skills” (McCulloch, n.d., ¶1). Vocational colleges/trade schools elsewhere are similarly structured to “provide efficient pathways toward distinct career goals” (Person et al., 2005, p. 137). Accordingly, vocational colleges/trade schools may not foster explorations or an extended transition to adulthood to the same degree as universities.

Labour force. Another group of emerging adults venture into the labour force without a post-secondary credential. In the current study, the labour force is defined as consisting of individuals of age to work for pay. They have either taken no form of post-secondary education

or stopped attending a post-secondary institution before completing all requirements to obtain a credential. According to Arnett (2000a), these individuals have been named “the forgotten half” because they are often overlooked by researchers and policy makers.

Approximately 21% of high school graduates do not enlist in any form of higher education one year following high school graduation (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). Of them, 85% take on employment while the remaining 15% either look for work or take this time to enlist in the military or travel (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). These numbers roughly match those of the U.S. Department of Labour, 2002 (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006) and suggest that, after high school, a sizeable portion of emerging adults follow this non-higher education trajectory into the workplace.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, through their late teens and twenties most Americans will work at an assortment of seven or eight jobs (Arnett, 2004). Although focusing mostly on college students, Arnett (2004) borrows the term “McJob” from Coupland’s popular novel, *Generation X*, to explain that “emerging adults often hold a series of ‘McJobs’ (i.e., ‘low paying, low prestige, low-dignity, low-benefit, no-future job in the service sector’) in their early twenties while they look for something that will be more satisfying” (p. 143). What may be problematic, especially for those who are not on-course to obtain a post-secondary credential, is that “McJobs” tend not to pay well. Indeed, the finest jobs today are those that require post-secondary education, leaving the forgotten half to face a labour market that Arnett (2004) describes as “in some ways formidable” (p. 145). Others have described emerging adulthood as “haphazard” (Furstenberg et al., 2005, p. 20-21) and “without comparable benefits” (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006, p. 267) for those in the labour force with no post-secondary credential.

Summary of Vocational Settings

There are many trajectories that emerging adults can follow after high school. Some of the possible avenues are to enroll in a university or vocational college/trade school, or to join the ranks of the larger labour force. Although more is known about emerging adults in certain vocational settings, each setting has unique features and aims, thereby, according to the bioecological theory of development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001/2005c), shaping what emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood looks like in young people.

In their examination of two-year colleges, Person et al. (2005) discovered it was the organizational structures and missions of the different institutions that made their mark on students unique. Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) wrote that the shaping effects from post-secondary settings reflect “differences in institutional context – the organizational policies, practices, and interpersonal climate” (p. 261). However, they also proposed that emerging adults are shaped more by the act of *going* (or not going) to a post-secondary setting, rather than by enrolling in a *particular* institution. This latter point highlights the worth of venturing beyond the walls of post-secondary settings to understand how those out in the labour force with no post-secondary credential experience emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood.

Currently, frontline emerging adulthood research focuses on understanding 18-29 year-olds’ conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, and identity development. It also focuses on the degree to which young people identify with emerging adulthood themes. Accordingly, these focal elements comprise the dimensions of interest in the current study. They will be discussed in turn below.

Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood and their Relation to Vocational Setting

Conceptions of what marks adulthood. One key area of research focuses on emerging adults' conceptions of what marks adulthood. For example, what signifies that an individual has crossed the threshold into adulthood? Questions like this have long intrigued researchers, particularly sociologists and anthropologists (e.g., Condon, 1987; Schlegel & Barry, 1991), who historically identified marriage (Arnett, 1998) and other transitional markers like home-leaving (Rotundo, 1993) as key indicators of adulthood. Also, before emerging adulthood was outlined, most markers of adulthood were identified by researchers rather than by the individuals experiencing them (Arnett, 1998). To learn more about the subjective experience, investigations (e.g., Arnett, 2001) have shifted to ask individuals in their late teens and twenties what they *themselves* consider to be important markers of adulthood.

Integrating anthropology, sociology, and psychology findings, Arnett (1994) initiated such research by creating a list of 40 transitional criteria (e.g., *Have first Child, Committed to a long-term love relationship*) which were later categorized (Arnett, 2003) into seven subscales. Arnett (1994) then asked 346 college students (ages 18-21) to identify which of the criteria they deemed necessary for a person to be considered an adult. The top three criteria were: *Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions; Decide on beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences; and Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult.* Arnett interpreted these criteria to reflect intrinsic, individualistic qualities related to self-sufficiency, independence and responsibility that develop slowly over many years (Arnett, 1994). Criteria deemed least important were those related to role transitions (e.g., *Marry, Buy a house*).

Arnett (1998) later used structured interviews to ask 140 emerging adults (ages 21-28) the following questions: “*Do you feel like you have reached adulthood?*”; “*In what ways do you*

feel you have reached adulthood?”; “What would you say makes a person a woman, as opposed to a girl?”; and “What would you say makes a person a man, as opposed to a boy?” (p. 304). By coding interview responses according to a categorical system developed from his list of 40 criteria, Arnett (1998) again found that individualistic criteria were the most important markers. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a 24 year-old male who indicated “that becoming an adult means ‘just being accountable for your actions and being responsible. I describe it as taking care of your own actions, and not looking to other people to help you along’” (p. 306). Like Arnett’s (1994) quantitative results, these qualitative findings point to independence and self-sufficiency as notably important markers of adulthood. What is not known is whether the finding varies across vocational settings.

Comparative analyses. Conceptions of what marks adulthood have been examined in individuals younger (Arnett, 2001; Galambos, Barker, & Tilton-Weaver, 2003) and older (Arnett, 2001) than emerging adults. Findings reveal that, regardless of age, individualistic criteria reflecting independence and self-reliance are the most highly endorsed; comparatively speaking, criteria reflecting role transitions are deemed unimportant. Looking at gender differences, findings are mixed. Many studies suggest that gender does not impact the importance placed on independence (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001; Galambos et al.; Mayselles & Scharf, 2003). Elsewhere, though, it has been discovered that females place more importance than males on this criterion (Stern, 2004) in addition to norm compliance (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Mayselles & Scharf, 2003; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, & Willinger, 2009; Stern, 2004). In contrast, males place more importance on biological transitions (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Mayselles & Scharf, 2003).

In Canada, Molgat (2007) conducted qualitative research with Quebecois emerging adults by examining written responses to the following question: *Do you have the impression that you are an adult?* He discovered that in addition to valuing independence and responsibility, these emerging adults viewed transitional markers such as having children and leaving home as significant. From Molgat's perspective, emerging adults offered transitional markers when pinpointing exactly when it was that they felt they had reached adulthood, and he believed this related to the open-ended nature of the questions. In Manitoba, Cheah and Nelson (2004) examined First Nation emerging adults' conceptions of what marks adulthood. In comparing the responses of First Nations' college students (n=69) to those of their European Canadian peers (n=132), they found no difference in what is deemed most important in marking adulthood; for all, even among those highly acculturated to traditional First Nations heritage, the most important marker was *Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions*. Yet, other comparisons revealed that role and biological transitions were more highly endorsed by First Nations emerging adults. Also found was that those highly acculturated to their traditional heritage placed more importance on norm compliance than both their less acculturated First Nations peers and their European Canadian counterparts.

Despite the reality that all emerging adults follow some sort of vocational trajectory after high school, little research has examined vocational settings alongside conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood. One scholar to do so was Arnett (1997), who examined differences between emerging adults enrolled in college and their non-student peers. First, he asked 346 college students to indicate whether each criterion was important for marking adulthood. Nearly all of the students were Caucasian, single, and without children; 46% worked part-time and 52% worked full-time and most students' fathers had earned at least a college

degree. The most widely endorsed criteria reflected independence and the least endorsed reflected role transitions. Arnett also gave 140 emerging adults of more varied backgrounds the same task. Of this group, 65% were not in school, 28% were in school full-time and 8% were in school part-time. As well, 40% were single, 60% were married, and 27% had one or more children. Emerging adults from this group endorsed criteria in a similar manner to the college students described above, again placing more importance on independence. Coded interview responses (Arnett, 1998) also indicated vast similarities between these groups.

Arnett (1997) also assessed the relationship between level of educational attainment (representing social class) and conceptions of adulthood in this diverse group of emerging adults, finding that, compared to the more educated, the less educated were more likely to endorse that it was important for men and women to be capable of supporting a family financially to be considered adult. Arnett used a cross-tabulation to compare current students to non-students on the criterion *Finished with education*; this comparison yielded no difference in importance. In Argentina, emerging adults with no more than a high school diploma placed more importance on role transitions, family capacities, and chronological transitions than those with at least a college degree (Facio & Micocci, 2003).

Although these investigations begin to examine the relationship between vocational setting and views on what marks adulthood, methodologies are limited in bringing clear attention to the forgotten half and other emerging adults who don't attend a four-year post-secondary institution. First, an examination of Arnett (1997, 1998) reveals that the data pertaining to individuals whose level of educational attainment was high school or less (16%) were not a focal part of the reported data analysis, beyond as a representation of social class. Second, the students were not entirely distinct from the non-students because 32% of the heterogeneous sample had

already obtained a college degree (19%) or more (13%) (Arnett, 1998, p. 302). Accordingly, these two samples may not have been that different in terms of their trajectories after high school. A third methodological limitation in these studies is that educational status was distinguished among participants in the following manner: *In school full-time, In school part-time, Not in school*. By differentiating educational status in this way, nothing is revealed about whether emerging adults attended a university/academic college or a vocational college/trade school, and its potential impact on their conceptions of adulthood. This was also a limiting factor in the work of Facio and Miccoci (2003). Arnett also differentiated employment status among emerging adults as: *Full-time, Part-time, None*; and although it was noted that 9% of the heterogeneous sample were neither working nor enrolled in school, it remains unknown if these individuals had ever attended college.

A final limitation regarding the manner in which conceptions of adulthood have been measured focuses on Arnett's (1998) structured interview. The method involved the coding of responses based on pre-determined categories created from Arnett's list of criteria rather than based on themes that naturally emerged from participants responses. A similar issue has been raised by Horowitz and Bromnick (2007) who claimed that the commonalities found when views on what marks adulthood have been assessed may be artifacts caused by research methods that involve the "pre-coding of quantitative responses into a limited set of options and the post-coding of qualitative responses into mutually exclusive broad themes" (p. 213).

In this spirit, Horowitz and Bromnick (2007) conducted a study in which adolescents were provided with open-ended sentences (e.g., "*You know you're an adult when...*") to which they were to respond with paper and pencil. Although they did find the marker of *Independence* to be the most frequent response, participants conjured up 33 different markers of adulthood.

From this qualitative approach, they claim “a very different image of the transition to adulthood from that proposed by Arnett and followers (Arnett & Tanner, 2005)” (p. 216), one that is much more variable in the range of criteria that mark adulthood. As evident in this section, current understandings are limited by methodological shortcomings in previous studies. Thus, clearly differentiating between vocational settings and including an open-ended interview are advised.

Perceptions about having reached adulthood. Another area of emerging adulthood research focuses on views about having reached adulthood. In Canada, most adolescents expect that by the age of 20 or 21 they will have reached adulthood (Barker & Galambos, 2005). But do 18-29 year-olds believe they have reached markers of adulthood and do they actually see themselves as adults? When asked if they think they have reached adulthood and given response options “*Yes*”, “*No*” or “*In some respects yes, in some respects no*” most emerging adults will provide the ambiguous response, suggesting that they feel their status lies somewhere in-between (Arnett, 1994; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Kreyszig, 2007; Nelson & Barry, 2005). Arnett (1994) first posed this question to college students, finding that 63% provided the ambiguous response. In contrast, 27% saw themselves as adults and 10% did not see themselves as adults at all. Thus, it has come to be accepted that a trademark of emerging adulthood is to feel subjectively ambivalent about having reached adulthood (Arnett, 2000a). Again, however, little is understood about whether this trademark perception varies in popularity across vocational settings.

Comparative analyses. Although most begin to have mixed views about their status during the teenage years, the vast majority of individuals beyond the age of 30 respond unambiguously that they *have* reached adulthood (Arnett, 2001). It may be that the question of having attained adulthood becomes “obsolete” (Meulemann, 2003, p. 58) later in life when most transitions to adult roles have occurred, when much of the instability of the twenties has settled,

and when long-term commitments and responsibilities have been assumed. An indicator, though, that reaching adulthood is a truly slow and un-measurable process (Arnett, 2004) is that nearly one third of Americans in their late twenties and early thirties continue to have mixed feelings about their adult status (Arnett, 2000a).

Perceptions about having reached adulthood do not appear to differ based on gender in America or Argentina (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998; Facio & Micocci, 2003). In Canada, more females than males feel they have reached specific markers of adulthood reflecting compliance with societal norms (Cheah & Nelson, 2004), such as abstaining from crime and profanity. In Cheah and Nelson's (2004) study of Canadian First Nations emerging adults, First Nations college students were more likely than their European Canadian peers to view themselves as adults and, among those most highly acculturated to their traditional heritage, even greater proportions perceived themselves as adults. More specifically, they were more likely to see themselves as having met markers reflecting biological transitions and, for females only, markers reflecting family capacities. Those of First Nations descent who were highly acculturated to their traditional heritage were also more likely than others to perceive themselves as having met criteria reflecting independence and interdependence and, again for females only, criteria reflecting role transitions.

Also in Canada, Galambos, Turner, and Tilton-Weaver (2005) examined subjective and chronological ages in university students, finding that older emerging adults feel younger than their actual age while younger emerging adults (i.e., under 25.5) feel older than their actual age. These findings do not speak exactly to views on having reached adulthood, but findings were attributed to a shift in one's comparison population over the emerging adulthood years. In Molgat's (2007) qualitative research of 45 Quebecois emerging adults, 24 participants perceived

themselves as adults, 15 felt ambiguous about their status, and just six did not think they had reached adulthood at all. For those in the latter category, they did not sense they had enough responsibilities to be considered adults; and this was by choice for most who instead preferred a happy-go-lucky lifestyle. Notably, this group consisted entirely of males. For most who felt ambiguous about their adult status, a sense of longing for adult status was conveyed whereby they wished they could meet certain transitional markers of adulthood (e.g., regular employment, sound salary, home-leaving). For a small proportion of those feeling ambiguous, however, they were happy and had also simply chosen to keep adult responsibilities at bay.

Like views on what marks adulthood, views about having reached adulthood have not been comprehensively examined across vocational settings. In his series of studies, Arnett (1997, 1998) found that emerging adult college students were more likely to feel ambiguous about their adult status in comparison to a heterogeneous group of 21-28 year-olds (63% of whom perceived that they had reached adulthood). In Argentina, Facio and Micocci (2003) reported no differences in views about having reached adulthood based on educational attainment. As outlined in the previous section on conceptions of adulthood, the ways in which these studies fail to bring light to emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood for those attending vocational college/trade school or those in the forgotten half indicate that thorough comparative analyses across vocational settings remain needed. In Arnett's research, findings do not adequately speak to emerging adults without a post-secondary credential (e.g., many from his heterogeneous sample of non-students had already obtained a post-secondary credential). Neither do his findings nor those of Facio and Micocci differentiate between those enrolled in different types of post-secondary institutions.

Although their research did not look explicitly at conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood within the context of emerging adulthood research, Person et al. (2005) used a mixed method approach to compare how two-year public community colleges and private occupational colleges shape the American transition to adulthood. Quantitative analysis revealed that students attending private occupational colleges were more likely to live independently of parents, have a child, be a member of an ethnic minority, and have a parent who obtained less than a high school education. Framing these findings within emerging adulthood conceptualizations, these occupational college students were more likely to have reached markers of adulthood reflecting independence (i.e., living arrangements) and role transitions (i.e., parenthood) than those attending community college. They also appeared to be of lower socioeconomic status.

In contrast, Person et al. (2005) found that public community colleges were associated with more delays in educational progress; this would be considered a role transition in emerging adulthood conceptualizations. These researchers attributed this finding to more flexibility in the institution's structure. To this end, qualitative analyses revealed that occupational college students experienced and appreciated stricter rules (e.g., dress codes, attendance, etc.), which they found helped "them to identify with their eventual profession" (p. 144). Although some community college students enjoyed the flexibility and freedom within their setting, others saw it as a costly hazard that could delay transitioning into the workplace. The authors concluded that occupational college promotes "more timely progress in attaining the markers of adulthood" (p. 146). Unfortunately, these findings do not include a group of young people out in the labour force with no post-secondary credential as a further source of comparison about reaching markers of adulthood. Again, what is missing is a large-scale comparison between all three post-

high school trajectories (i.e., university, vocational college/trade school, labour force) that would enable deeper understandings of the transition to adulthood.

Identity development. A more traditional marker of adulthood examined in the context of emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood is ego identity development. The following is what Marcia (1993) writes about the importance of ego identity formation:

The formation of an ego identity is a major event in the development of personality. [...] the consolidation of identity marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Identity formation involves the synthesis of childhood skills, beliefs, and identifications into a more coherent, unique whole that provides the young adult with both a sense of continuity with the past and a direction for the future. (p. 3)

This is an important area of study in the context of emerging adulthood because of the argument that issues of identity formation are key to 18-29 year-olds (Arnett, 2000a; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Indeed, Schwartz et al. write that “identity issues have a prominent role” in the theory of emerging adulthood (p. 202). Thus, in examining young people across different vocational settings, a discovery that Erikson’s (1968) psychosocial moratorium (i.e., Arnett’s [2004] age of identity explorations) does not apply to those of a particular vocation setting would have implications for the viability of emerging adulthood as a theory of development.

Identity formation was historically believed to take place during Erikson’s fourth stage of the life cycle which is marked by the identity versus role confusion conflict (Erikson, 1950). Although Erikson (1968) described the conflict as a “crisis”, Kroger (2003) explains it to be more of “a critical turning point” (p. 207). Nevertheless, its resolution is believed necessary before one can move on to experience intimacy (Erikson, 1950, 1968). Previously, this task was deemed central to adolescence (Erikson, 1950, 1968). Today scholars accept that it takes place

somewhat later (Arnett, 2000a; Côté, 2006; Marcia, 1980; Schwartz & Pantin, 2006; Waterman, 1999), with Arnett (2000a, 2004) proclaiming emerging adulthood as the preeminent period for identity explorations to occur.

Marcia (1966, 1967, 1980) drew from Erikson's ideas to operationalize a status model of identity development that, despite criticisms (e.g., Côté & Levine, 1988; Lewis, 2003; van Hoof, 1999; see Waterman, 1988, 1999 for counterarguments), remains popular today (Côté & Levine, 1988; Kroger, 2003). This model, focusing on exploration and commitment levels, is well suited for cross-sectional comparisons (Marcia, 2001), and its construct validity has been shown in the domain of vocational setting (Waterman, 1988). To assess how individuals cope with the task of forming an identity, Marcia (1966) developed a semi-structured interview measuring commitment and crisis across occupational and ideological domains. Today, researchers can utilize various identity status surveys (for example, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, [Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995], or the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status, [Bennion & Adams, 1986]), rather than the more time-consuming interview.

According to the identity status model, an emerging adult can adopt one of four identity statuses that vary on the continuums of commitment and crisis across domains (Marcia, 1980). A crisis reflects a state in which the emerging adult is still choosing among various options while commitment reflects a decision to invest in one of the alternatives. Marcia describes the four statuses as follows. Identity achievement reflects a commitment to a sense of self following a period in which alternatives were explored. Identity foreclosure indicates that the emerging adult has made commitments before undergoing any exploration of alternatives. Moratorium depicts emerging adults who are actively exploring alternatives for their sense of self, and identity diffusion describes emerging adults who are neither exploring nor making commitments. On a

continuum from most to least “sophisticated” status, moratorium and foreclosure fall in the middle with diffusion being the least advanced and achievement being the most advanced (Waterman, 1999, p. 603). Although some research exists on this topic, there remains an unclear understanding of the relationship between vocational setting and identity development.

Comparative analyses. Concerning the developmental aspect of identity formation, research has revealed that, between 18 and 24 years of age, achieved and moratorium identities appear in increasing numbers for males while foreclosed and diffused identities are outgrown (Meilman, 1979). In college, younger students display higher levels of foreclosed and diffused identities (Lewis, 2003), and over four years of college more students move into (vs. move out of) achieved identity status (Waterman, Geary, & Waterman, 1974). However, a recent meta-analysis revealed that only 13-49% of individuals develop or maintain achieved identities between assessment points (Kroger, 2007). Hence, results are equivocal.

Similarly, while some findings suggest similarities across genders (Kroger, 2003), other findings are mixed. For example, Stern (2004) found males to display more developed ideological and interpersonal identities than females while Lewis (2003) found males to display higher levels of diffusion and foreclosure in the interpersonal domain.

Within the field of emerging adulthood research, Stern (2004) found a positive relationship between perceptions of having reached adulthood and scores on a measure of identity achievement. Also discovered was a positive relationship between the importance placed on markers of adulthood reflecting norm compliance and family capacities and scores on a measure of identity foreclosure. Elsewhere, it has similarly been discovered that emerging adults who perceive that they have reached adulthood are more likely to exhibit “a better sense of their overall identity” (Nelson & Barry, 2005, p. 255).

A few studies have examined vocational settings in relation to identity status. For example, Morash (1980) found that apprentices (defined as working youth in the study) were more likely than their college peers to have achieved or diffused identities (with the difference reaching significance with diffused). In Canada, Munro and Adams (1977) discovered that working young people were more likely than those in college to have achieved identities in the domains of religion, politics, and ideology. Conversely, Archer and Waterman (1988) found college students to be more likely to have achieved identities.

More recently, Danielsen, Lorem, and Kroger (2000) discovered that college students have more advanced identities in comparison to their working and unemployed peers. Although Danielsen et al. took the important step of shedding particular light on those who are unemployed, they did not speak to potential identity status differences between those attending different types of post-secondary institutions (i.e., university vs. vocational college/trade school). This was also a limitation of the earlier studies mentioned above, whose differing results may also have reflected the various ways in which workforce participants were selected (Waterman, 1993). Danielsen et al.'s study is similarly limited by the fact that the employed participants had all obtained apprentice post-secondary training. With such conflicting findings, those in the labour force with no post-secondary credential remain in many ways forgotten in terms of understanding their ego identity development, and much remains unknown about potential differences between university students and those in other vocational settings. These equivocal findings and methodological limitations indicate the need for further research on whether identity status differs across vocational settings, with a focus on clearly defining those settings in question. In turn, such a study would foster deeper understandings of whether university does indeed stand out as “as one of the most felicitous institutionalized moratorium settings of our

culture” (Côté & Levine, 1988, p. 162), or whether identity explorations are a more equally widespread element of industrialized and post-industrialized cultures (Arnett, 2000a, 2004).

Themes of emerging adulthood. Beyond their trademark ambiguous stance regarding their adult status and their strong endorsement of independence as marking adulthood, emerging adults are characterized as being in an age of identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and sensing possibilities for the future (Arnett, 2004, 2007a, 2007c). As the *age of identity explorations*, emerging adulthood is characterized by various pursuits “in the areas of love, work, and worldviews” (Arnett, 2000a, p. 473). As the *age of instability*, it is characterized by volatility in love, work, identity, education, and residential status (Arnett, 2000a, 2007a, 2007c). For example, Molgat (2007) found that over half of Quebecois emerging adults move back in with their parents at least once after leaving home; elsewhere this proportion lies around 40% (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994). Accompanying the volatility is unease about what such explorations will bring (Arnett, 2004). According to Arnett (2004), emerging adults “experience both excitement and uncertainty, wide-open possibility and confusion, new freedoms and new fears” (p. 3) during this period. These fears and confusions have also led to emerging adulthood being conceptualized as the age of *negativity/instability* (Reifman et al., 2007).

As the *age of self-focus*, emerging adulthood is a time when young people “focus on themselves as they develop the knowledge, skills, and self-understanding they will need for adult life” (Arnett, 2007a, p. 14). This focus is considered a positive aspect of development, not to be confused with selfishness or egocentricity (Arnett, 2007b, 2007c); rather it is an independence that will be outgrown as adult roles and responsibilities are taken on (Arnett, 2007a). Hence, it is

during this period that “people have more freedom to decide for themselves how to live than they have ever had before or will ever again” (Arnett, 2007c, p. 132).

As outlined earlier, being the age of *feeling “in-between”*, emerging adulthood is a period when individuals no longer perceive themselves as adolescents, but do not yet consider themselves adults (Arnett, 2007a). Showcasing this ambiguity is an excerpt from an interview with a 25 year-old female (Arnett, 2004):

Sometimes I think I’ve reached adulthood and then I sit down and eat ice cream directly from the box, and I keep thinking, “I’ll know I’m an adult when I don’t eat ice cream right out of the box anymore!” That seems like such a childish thing to do. But I guess in some ways I feel like I’m an adult. I’m a pretty responsible person. I mean, if I say I’m going to do something, I do it. I’ve very responsible with my job. Financially, I’m fairly responsible with my money. But sometimes in social circumstances I feel uncomfortable like I don’t know what I’m supposed to do, and I still feel like a little kid. So a lot of times I don’t really feel like an adult. (p. 14)

As the *age of possibilities*, emerging adulthood is a time when young people perceive that their future holds many possibilities (Arnett, 2007a). For example, most believe they will enjoy as much or more success than their parents in the realms of love, work, and finance (Arnett, 2000b, 2004), and this optimism is said to exist regardless of factors related to educational attainment or occupational success (Arnett, 2004). In fact, it has been suggested that the most optimistic emerging adults are those who herald from a *lower* socioeconomic status (Arnett, 2000b). It is believed that emerging adults carry these beliefs because they have yet to experience the struggles that are certain to lie on the road ahead and they are also free from any shackles that may have held them back when they were more closely intertwined with their

family of origin (Arnett, 2007a). In fact, this positivity prevails despite having a rather cynical outlook on the future of their entire generation (Arnett, 2000b).

Comparative analyses. Reifman et al. (2007) created a scale, the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA), to operationalize these five defining features of emerging adulthood and to understand differences in their expression at the individual and group level. Studies using this measure have found that, compared to older individuals, those between 18 and 23 are more likely to identify with the emerging adulthood themes of identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, and negativity/instability (Reifman et al., 2007). Concerning negativity/instability, Maclean (2008) found that, while older adults are more apt to narratively present themselves “in terms of stability”, emerging adults construct themselves in terms of “change” (p. 260). Further, Elm and Schwartz (2006) found that emerging adults who had moved out of their parents’ home two or more times identified more with negativity/instability than those who had moved out only once. Compared to adolescents, emerging adults also more strongly identify with identity exploration, other-focused, self-focused, and feeling “in-between” themes (Reifman et al., 2007).

Concerning gender, it has been found that female emerging adults identify more than males with the themes of self-focus (Elm & Schwartz, 2006; Reifman et al., 2007), identity explorations (Elm & Schwartz, 2006; McCourt, 2004), and feeling “in-between” (McCourt, 2004). Females have also been found to be more likely than their male counterparts to identify with the themes of emerging adulthood as a whole (Elm & Schwartz, 2006; McCourt, 2004).

Thus far, Reifman et al. (2007) have been the sole investigators of any association between vocational setting and the extent to which themes of emerging adulthood are identified. In a pilot study, Reifman et al. compared college students to their non-student counterparts (who

completed high school but did not attend college). Their analysis revealed just one difference, wherein college students identified more with the theme of experimentation/possibilities than their non-student peers. However, their methodology was limited because their non-student sample was notably small ($n = 26$), it was recruited in a manner that limits generalization (i.e., student participants recruited non-students), and it included not only those working in the labour force, but also those travelling and those enrolled in post-secondary trade school and the military. The researchers acknowledged that findings drawn from this pilot study are limited, writing that the carrying out of comparative studies involving post-secondary students and their non-student peers remains an essential endeavor for researchers.

With this new measure of emerging adulthood themes and preliminary findings beginning to emerge, the opportunity is at hand for a broad and comprehensive examination of the potential impact that vocational setting has on the identification with themes of emerging adulthood. Such a study will contribute important understandings concerning the viability of emerging adulthood characterizations, even within the predominant North American culture.

Summary of Literature Review

What has been carried out in research thus far suggests that emerging adults generally place the most importance on markers of adulthood that are intrinsic, take shape slowly over many years, and reflect independence (Arnett, 1997, 1998). In contrast, they do not place much importance on markers that reflect traditional role transitions (Arnett, 1997, 1998). This is interpreted to be a sign of the Western value of individualism (Arnett, 1998; Arnett & Taber, 1994) that is slowly gaining strength across the world due to globalization (Fazio & Micocci, 2003). It thus seems reasonable to expect a similar finding to be discovered across emerging

adults from various vocational settings, especially given that conceptions of adulthood are not accepted as processes driven entirely from within (Arnett, 1994; Arnett & Taber, 1994).

It also appears that individuals of the North American majority culture who follow the trajectory from high school to college feel ambiguous about their adult status. Outside of mainstream American culture, views about adult status shift to reflect the structures and values of particular religions (Nelson, 2003), traditional cultures, and even countries (Nelson et al., 2004). With imperfect research methodology, Arnett (1997, 1998) also found perceptions being shaped by differing vocational settings within mainstream America; thus, it is reasonable to expect that a well-planned examination across vocational setting will discover even greater variations that reflect microsystem level influence. Indeed, although not convinced that context plays a significant role in shaping emerging adults' conceptions of what marks adulthood, Arnett (2006) recently proclaimed that, when it comes to perceptions about reaching adulthood, "structural factors matter more" (p. 116).

Within the body of literature examining identity development, while some view the workplace as a setting that fosters identity achievement (Morash, 1980; Munro & Adams, 1977), others see college as more conducive to identity achievement (Archer & Waterman, 1988; Danielsen et al., 2000). Arnett (2004) offers a third perspective, asserting that identity explorations take place on college campuses and in the workplace, just with different foci. Thus, how college students compare with their non-student peers in this task remains unclear (Danielsen et al., 2000; Schwartz et al., 2005; Waterman, 1999), making it a particularly important avenue for research when Arnett's (2000a, 2004) theory proclaims emerging adulthood to be the age of identity explorations. Last, early investigations of the themes of emerging adulthood appear to largely uphold Arnett's theoretical propositions (McCourt, 2004;

Reifman et al., 2007). Now the stage is set to “build a literature base on the psychometric properties and correlates of emerging adulthood characteristics” (Reifman et al., 2007, p. 8 [supplemental analyses]), for example, by clarifying distinctions between young people following different vocational trajectories after high school. As well, this quantitative tool can be used as a further verification of Arnett’s (2004) qualitative findings on this topic.

Rationale for Current Study

Theoretical rationale. As reviewed above, it has been over a decade since the theory of emerging adulthood was introduced to the field of developmental psychology. Since its proclamation as a distinct phase of life (Arnett, 2000a), research has been conducted to varying degrees in the following areas: conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood; perceptions of having reached adulthood; perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood’ identity development; and identification with emerging adulthood themes. This research has revealed similarities and differences in emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood based on different levels of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979/2005b) bioecological model, for example, age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and living arrangements (e.g., Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003; Barry & Nelson, 2005; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Elm & Schwartz, 2006; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003; Nelson et al., 2004; Nelson & Barry, 2005; Reifman et al., 2007; Stern, 2004). However, as evidenced in the literature review, a comprehensive image of emerging adulthood across vocational settings has yet to emerge.

Moreover, the theory of emerging adulthood as a unique developmental status has also incited debate, with criticisms offered about its viability as it is currently conceptualized (Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Bynner, 2005; Côté & Bynner, 2008; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007;

Molgat, 2007; Wyn & Woodman, 2006). For example, Bynner (2005) argues that too much emphasis is placed by emerging adulthood proponents on “individual agency” (p. 372) and that not all emerging adults experience a prolonged transition into adulthood due to the influence of institutional and structural factors (e.g., “how the transition from school to work is managed” [p. 372]). In response, Arnett (2006) acknowledged that “structural factors are important” (p. 115) but added the following:

The question of interest is ‘just how important are they?’ The question of the importance of structural factors in the lives of emerging adults should be a hypothesis to be investigated rather than being assumed. We may find that they are more important in some areas of life than in others and more important for some individuals than others. (p. 115)

From Arnett’s perspective, more research is needed to wholly understand the experiences of emerging adults from various “circumstances and pathways” (p. 120). This debate suggests that the field is at a crossroads in terms of emerging adulthood being recognized as a distinct phase of life. To move forward, the field requires deeper understandings of whether structural factors such as vocational settings impact emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood, for example, by accelerating or slowing it down. In other words, the time is at hand to conduct a well-planned and comprehensive investigation of what emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood looks like across vocational settings.

Methodological rationale. To comprehensively examine the association between trajectories after high school and emerging adulthood, researchers must accurately define vocational setting to ensure the proper construct is measured. Although studies have delved into this area, research has been able to offer only pilot study results or findings limited by protocols

that failed to adequately differentiate between those in the labour force with no post-secondary credential and those in the labour force who have already attended and graduated from a post-secondary institution. Indeed, methodological improvements are needed to elucidate how those in the labour force might differ from post-secondary students because they too have been potentially shaped by the institution and their experiences there. Moreover, there appear to be no studies that have performed a comparison that includes all three groups: university students; vocational college/trade school students; and those in the labour force. While smaller combinations of these three settings have been examined (e.g., Person et al. [2005] compared public community college students to private occupational college students), there lacks an understanding of how all three settings are similar and different for emerging adults. In fact, there appears to be no research at all that has focused on what emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood looks like in vocational college/trade school students.

Similarly, any study that wishes to speak to the viability of emerging adulthood theory, particularly in relation to the potential impact of structural factors, must include young people who are out in the labour force with no post-secondary credential. Indeed, it is crucial that any theory proclaiming a unique developmental status for 18-29 year-olds have a working knowledge of how such a theory would apply to these individuals introduced earlier as the forgotten half. In the year 2000, Arnett wrote that 10 years had passed since the forgotten half was introduced and that these young people remained absent from research. In debating emerging adulthood theory with Bynner (2005) in 2006, Arnett again discussed the issue of the forgotten half, writing that he believed most of them experienced emerging adulthood (although perhaps in a fleeting form), but acknowledging that “this is a fascinating question, worthy of extensive investigation” (p.

120). It is now 20 years later and the forgotten half still largely remains forgotten from emerging adulthood conceptualizations.

Because so little is understood about emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood among vocational college/trade school students and those in the labour force with no post-secondary credential, research delving into that area would benefit from casting a wide net and learning as much as possible about the experiences of these young people. Thus, it is important to ask about all key areas in the literature, namely conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, identity development, and identification with themes of emerging adulthood. With the same aim of comprehensiveness and completeness (Bryman, 2006), it is also important that research contain an exploratory component, as can be accomplished through new quantitative questions and the addition of an open-ended qualitative component. Such a diverse approach can lead to the discovery of the views of emerging adults, themselves, about the importance of vocational settings in shaping the transition to adulthood (Bryman, 2006). Indeed, through such exploratory investigations, new perspectives on emerging adulthood and development may be brought to light and findings will be more comprehensive.

Based on the above points, a suitable approach for studying this topic matter would be to conduct a mixed method study that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses. Additional reasons for combining the two approaches include being able to balance each method's inherent strengths and weaknesses (Bryman, 2006). For example, a quantitative component using existing measures enables larger data collection, results better suited for generalization beyond the recruited sample, as well as straightforward communication amongst scholars using a common language already established in the field. At the same time, a

qualitative component involving individual interviews with emerging adults enables more in-depth data collection that gives participants a voice and also has the potential to uncover intimate details and new thematic material that cannot easily be conveyed through questionnaires.

As further justification for mixing methods, while quantitative surveys would enable a clear investigation of *whether* relationships exist between vocational setting and different aspects of emerging adulthood, qualitative interviews would enable the investigation of *how* being part of a particular vocational setting relates to emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. According to Bryman (2006), the above example illustrates the “process” advantage inherent in combining methods, whereby the survey data “provides an account of structures,” while the interview data “provides sense of process” (p. 106). Related, combining methods could enable qualitative data to expand upon, illustrate, and explain survey findings (Bryman, 2006). From another perspective, an advantage of a mixed method approach is that it enables the verification (through confirmatory quantitative analyses) and generation (through exploratory qualitative analyses) of theory at the same time (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Another reason to combine a qualitative research component with a more traditional quantitative approach is that a mixed strategy would enable broad survey results and detailed interview findings to be triangulated (Bryman, 2006). More specifically, a concurrent mixed method approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time is the model of choice when the aim is “to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings” (Creswell, 2003, p. 217). Confirmation of findings through such an approach would be particularly beneficial for the current study, given the ongoing debate about the validity of emerging adulthood theory. Further, because it has traditionally been difficult to recruit those from the labour force as research participants (Arnett, 2000a), it makes economical sense to learn

as much as possible, and again be able to cross-validate findings, from available participants. In short, this strategy would enable efficient data collection while also producing findings that are “well-validated and substantiated” (Creswell, 2003, p. 217). Standing as a final rationale for employing a mixed method approach for this topic matter, the current academic environment is one in which a preeminent journal in the field of emerging adulthood, the *Journal of Adolescent Research*, has set a publication standard or “criterion” that strongly encourages scholars to submit only research that combines quantitative and qualitative data (Arnett, 2005, p. 5).

In sum, the existing literature in emerging adulthood points to a need for research that makes a deliberate effort to examine the potential impact of the microsystem level vocational setting on emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. Such a study needs to be both comprehensive and in-depth in terms of the domains of emerging adulthood assessed if it wishes to make a significant contribution concerning the validity of the emerging adulthood theory. Likewise, it must be deliberate in defining and differentiating between vocational settings if the desire is to shed clear light on the lives of those in the labour force with no post-secondary credential and to clearly speak to similarities and differences in their experiences as compared to the experiences of their student peers, both at university and at vocational college/trade school. Last, because this is a nascent area of study, it necessitates the inclusion of exploratory and qualitative components that could reveal new perspectives and insights yet to be conceptualized. In short, this line of reasoning points to a mixed method study. As Arnett (2005) himself states about using mixed methods when studying emerging adults: “I like to think of quantitative data as the bones and qualitative methods as the flesh. Both are required to make a whole human being” (p. 4).

The current study met the above challenges by conducting a mixed method investigation focused on the aspects reviewed above that dominate the literature. Through quantitative data and more exploratory measures, including qualitative interviews, it provided the first glimpse of what emerging adulthood looks like not only in the forgotten half but in vocational college/trade school students as well. More importantly, it focused on similarities and differences at this microsystem level, which speaks to the key issue of whether all 18-29 year-olds, even those within the majority North American culture, actually experience this so-called distinct phase of life. Such a finding holds the potential to influence whether emerging adulthood is truly valid as a theory of development.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Below are the research questions of the current study¹. Because research in this area is of emerging adulthood is limited, because many existing findings provide conflicting results or rise from imperfect methodologies, and because the current methodology contains exploratory components, theory-driven hypotheses are possible in only some cases. Following each research question below, predictions are offered in those cases where findings can be expected based on the literature.

1. Across vocational settings, are there differences in emerging adults' *conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood*? Due to the overarching influence of an individualistic mainstream society (Arnett, 1997, 2001; Arnett & Taber, 1994), it was hypothesized that markers reflecting independence would be viewed as more important to emerging adults than markers reflecting role transitions. Directional predictions were not offered

¹ As indicated by the hypotheses, interest was primarily on the relationship between vocational setting and the dependent variables. However, in the service of conducting research that is more informative and comprehensive, gender was additionally included in most analyses to also allow an examination of its relationship with the dependent variables.

concerning group differences across vocational settings in the importance of each marker of adulthood, due to limited research in this area.

2. Across vocational settings, are there differences in emerging adults' *perceptions of having reached adulthood*? Based on Arnett's (1997, 1998) finding that college students felt more ambiguous about their adult status than a more heterogeneous group of emerging adults, and extending into the labour force Person et al.'s (2005) finding that occupational college students were in a position to reach adulthood markers sooner than community college students, it was hypothesized that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would be more likely to perceive themselves as having reached adulthood than university students.

3. Across vocational settings, are there differences in emerging adults' *perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood*? Aligned with the previous prediction, it was hypothesized that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would also view themselves as having reached most of the markers of adulthood to a greater extent than university students.

4. Across vocational settings, are there differences in emerging adults' *identity development*? With the literature showing contradictory findings in this area (e.g., Danielsen et al., 2000; Morash, 1980), a definitive directional hypothesis was not made regarding differences across vocational settings in identity development, represented quantitatively by identity status. However, given the second hypothesis above, alongside discoveries of a positive relationship between perceptions of having reached adulthood and identity development (Nelson & Barry, 2005; Stern, 2004), it may be that those from the labour force will exhibit more developed identities.

5. Across vocational settings, are there differences in emerging adults' *identification with themes of emerging adulthood*? Based on the predictions above, and given that universities and academic colleges have been described as “the emerging adulthood environment par excellence” (Arnett, 2004, p. 140), it was hypothesized that university students would identify more with emerging adulthood themes overall, and with the specific identity explorations, self-focused, and feeling in-between themes, than vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force. Likewise, it was hypothesized that participants from the labour force would identify more with the non-emerging adulthood theme of other-focused than university students and vocational college/trade school students. It was also hypothesized that participants from the labour force would identify more with the negativity/instability theme than university students and vocational college/trade school students, given the depicted hardships in the current labour market for those without a post-secondary credential (Arnett, 2004; Fursternberg et al., 2005; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006). Given that educational attainment, occupational success, and lower socioeconomic status do not appear as limiting factors on the bright aspirations that emerging adults hold for their futures (Arnett, 2000b, 2004), it was hypothesized that participants from all vocational settings would strongly identify with the experimentation/possibilities theme.

6. What importance do emerging adults place on vocational setting as a shaping influence in their transition from adolescence to adulthood? This research question was purely exploratory, thus no hypothesis was offered.

Chapter 3: Method

Mixed Method Study Overview

Approached from an objective post-positivist theoretical perspective (Creswell, 2003), the current study employed a mixed method design combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. While there are several styles of mixed method research, this study involved a concurrent triangulation strategy (see Figure 1) in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time to answer the research question(s) (Creswell, 2003).

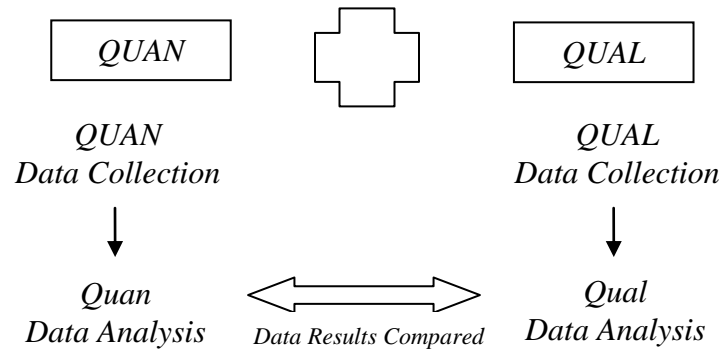


Figure 1. Concurrent triangulation strategy. Reproduced with permission from *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.), by J. Creswell (2003) p. 214. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

According to this methodology, the current study involved survey data that was analyzed quantitatively. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a subset of the participants who completed surveys. The vocational settings compared were *university*, *vocational college/trade school*, and *labour force*, and group comparisons focused upon the following areas: (1) conceptions of what marks adulthood; (2) perceptions of having reached adulthood; (3) perceptions of having met specific markers of adulthood; (4) identity development; (5) identification with themes of emerging adulthood; and (6) importance placed on vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. As per the standard for

presenting mixed method research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tahsakkori, 2009), the following sections outline each of the study's two components in turn. Similarly, results for the quantitative and qualitative components will be provided separately in Chapters 4 and 5, with the final chapter's discussion providing an integrated perspective on all results.

Quantitative Component Methodology

Participants. For the quantitative data collection portion of the study, participants consisted of 98 university students (56 males, 42 females), 58 vocational college/trade school students (19 males, 39 females), and 48 labour force participants (28 males, 20 females). Among university students, 93.9% were enrolled full-time, and 91.8% were focused on an undergraduate degree. Among vocational college/trade school students, 91.4% were enrolled full-time, and 51.7% were focused on a diploma. Among labour force participants, 51.9% worked 40 or more hours per week, and 40.4% were employed in the sales and service industry. Table 1 describes other demographic information, some of which was used to create a measure of adulthood described below (see also Appendix A for additional demographics that were collected as part of a larger study and that may also be of interest in future research).

In terms of the degree to which participants in the current study accurately represented their respective populations, some comparative information is available. Across 2007-2008 Canadian university undergraduate populations, demographics were largely similar. While females outnumbered males, 92% were enrolled full-time, 6% were parents, 19% were of a non-Caucasian background, 3% identified as being of First Nations ethnicity, 28% lived with parents or similar figures, 40% had at least one parent with a university education, and most started their post-secondary education four years earlier (PRA Inc., 2008). In terms of vocational colleges/trade school students, research from the United States indicates that they tend to be an

Table 1

Demographic Variables across Vocational Setting

Variable	University (n = 98)	Vocational college (n = 58)	Labour force (n = 48)	All groups (N = 204)
Gender				
Male (%)	57.1	32.8	58.3	50.5
Female	42.9	67.2	41.7	49.5
Age				
18-20 (%)	39.8	44.8	25.0	37.7
21-24	43.9	29.3	29.2	36.3
25-29	15.3	25.9	43.8	25.0
Ethnicity				
Aboriginal/Metis (%)	1.0	12.1	6.3	5.4
Black	3.1	1.7	2.1	2.5
Chinese/South Asian/South East Asian	7.1	6.9	0.0	3.5
White	85.7	77.6	87.5	83.8
Other	3.0	1.7	2.1	2.5
Marital status				
Married (%)	5.1	5.2	10.4	6.4
Common-law	10.2	22.4	16.7	15.2
Single	83.7	65.5	58.3	72.5
Other	1.0	6.9	14.7	5.9
Number of children				
0 (%)	99.0	89.7	85.4	93.1
1	0.0	3.4	10.4	3.4
2 or more	1.0	6.8	4.2	3.5
Father's education completed				
High school or less	30.6	51.7	60.4	43.6
Some post-secondary but less than graduate	8.2	5.2	2.1	5.9
Post-secondary credential	58.1	39.6	27.1	45.6
Residential status				
Live with parents (%)	24.5	29.3	22.9	25.5
Live in rental accommodation	48.0	51.7	45.8	48.5
Live owned residence	11.2	15.5	22.9	15.2
Other	15.3	1.7	8.4	9.8
Hours employed per week				
0 (%)	48.0	48.3	2.1	37.3
1-19	39.8	39.7	2.1	30.9
20-39	11.2	8.6	39.6	17.2
40 or more	1.0	3.4	54.2	14.2
Length of time in vocational setting				
Less than 1 year (%)	30.6	67.2	8.3	35.8
1-3 years	49.0	27.6	37.5	40.2
4 or more years	20.4	3.4	52.1	23.0

Note. Not all percentages sum to 100% due to missed items in the questionnaire.

ethnic minority, less well-off financially, and older than their university counterparts (Bailey et al., 2003; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006). In addition, they tend not to begin post-secondary immediately after high school, they are less likely to be enrolled full-time, and 30% already have some form of post-secondary credential (Bailey et al., 2003; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006). In Canada, more women than men had college diplomas in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008). Based on these available data, vocational college/trade school students in the current study seem more representative of their larger populations in certain areas than others. Being the forgotten half, research has rarely described those who are out in the labour force without a post-secondary credential (Arnett, 2000a). However, aligning with differing enrollment rates in the current study, Statistics Canada (2008) reports that First Nations individuals more commonly had either no post-secondary education (58%), a college diploma (17%) or trade certification (13%) than a university degree (7%) in 2006.

Measures.

Conceptions of what marks adulthood. Arnett's (1997, 1998, 2001, 2003) survey was used to assess the importance placed on markers of adulthood. At its inception, the survey contained 40 items (Arnett, 2007); in 2001, Arnett removed 2 items (*Reached age 25; Reached age 30*) and arranged the remaining 38 into seven subscales. According to Arnett (2001), items pertaining to role transitions came from sociology, items pertaining to family capacities came from anthropology, and items reflecting individualism (now known as independence) came from his own (1997, 1998) theory on the transition to adulthood. In 2003, Arnett added one criterion (*Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others*) to his survey and renamed the seven subscales, which are now *Independence; Interdependence; Role Transitions; Norm Compliance; Biological Transitions; Chronological Transitions; Family Capacities*. In Arnett's

(2003) version of the survey, participants could only respond with “*Yes*” or “*No*” to indicate whether they thought each criterion must be achieved to be considered an adult. In the current study, participants completed an adaptation (see Appendix B), whereby they were presented with the randomly ordered 39 criteria (e.g., *Financially independent from parents*; *Employed full-time*) but were asked to indicate how important each criterion is for a person to be considered an adult. Responses could range on a four-point Likert-type scale (1= *Very Important*; 4 = *Very Unimportant*). Data were reflected at time of analysis for ease of interpretation so that a higher score meant that a participant placed more importance on an item.

Alpha levels for all measures used in this study can be found in Table 2². For markers of adulthood, alpha values are similar to those Arnett reported in 2003 (.42 for *Independence*, .64 for *Interdependence*, .88 for *Family Capacities*, .83 for *Norm Compliance*, .76 for *Biological Transitions*, .67 for *Chronological Transitions*, and .73 for *Role Transitions*), and are stronger than certain values obtained by Cheah and Nelson (2004), who, for example, found the *Independence* subscale to display an especially low internal consistency (alpha = .35). For Cheah and Nelson, the range of internal consistencies for the other subscales ranged from .64 for *Interdependence* to .90 for *Family Capacities*.

Perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood. To assess overall views of having reached adulthood, participants were asked, “*Do you think you have reached adulthood?*” to which they could respond “*Yes*”, “*No*”, or “*In some respects yes, in some respects no*” (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2001). Data were reflected at time of analysis for ease of interpretation. Following others (e.g., Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Nelson, 2003; Nelson et al., 2004), participants were also re-administered the criteria of adulthood and were asked to indicate the extent to which each

² Statistics for individual items of each subscale were considered and results showed that deleting individual items would not cause meaningful increases in subscale reliability for any measures.

Table 2

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Subscale	α
IDEA	
Identity Explorations	0.81
Experimentation/Possibilities	0.81
Negativity/Instability	0.82
Other-Focused	0.76
Self-Focused	0.63
Feeling In-Between	0.80
Overall IDEA	0.89
Markers of Adulthood	
Independence	0.54
Interdependence	0.61
Role Transitions	0.83
Norm Compliance	0.86
Biological Transitions	0.79
Chronological Transitions	0.62
Family Capacities	0.93
EOMEIS-2	
Ideological Diffusion	0.59
Ideological Foreclosure	0.81
Ideological Moratorium	0.64
Ideological Achievement	0.63
Interpersonal Diffusion	0.64
Interpersonal Foreclosure	0.83
Interpersonal Moratorium	0.54
Interpersonal Achievement	0.66
Overall Diffusion	0.72
Overall Foreclosure	0.89
Overall Moratorium	0.71
Overall Achievement	0.74

criterion (e.g. *Capable of keeping a family physically safe, No longer living in parents' household*) currently applied to them (see others [e.g., Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Nelson, 2003; Nelson et al., 2004]), participants were also re-presented with the markers of adulthood on importance and were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the criteria (e.g. *Capable of keeping a family physically safe, No longer living in parents' household*) currently apply to them (see Appendix C). Responses could range on a four-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *Applies to me very much* to 4 = *Does not apply to me at all*. Data were reflected at time of analysis for ease of interpretation so that a higher score meant that a participant perceived an item to apply to a greater extent.

Identity development. Bennion and Adams' (1986) Extended Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOMEIS-2) was used to assess identity development (see Appendix C). The EOMEIS-2 is a 6 point Likert-type questionnaire containing 64 items. With response options ranging from 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 6 = *Strongly Disagree*, participants were presented with statements and were asked to indicate to what degree each statement fit their own impressions about themselves. Data were reflected at time of analysis for ease of interpretation so that a higher score meant that a participant more strongly agreed with an item.

This inventory provides a measure of overall identity status, as well as measures of identity status in the interpersonal (32 items focused on recreation, friendship, dating, and sex roles) and ideological (32 items focused on politics, occupation, philosophy, and religion) domains. With 64 items in total, the range of scores in each of the two domains is 8-48; thus, the overall range of scores is 16-96. In each domain, and overall, a higher score means that a particular status is expressed to a greater extent.

In each domain and overall, participants can be categorized as having achieved, moratorium, foreclosed, or diffused identities, based on rules that involve mean scores and cut-off points (Adams, 1998). For example, if a participant obtains a score that falls one or more standard deviations above the mean on the *Achievement* status subscale, and his or her scores on the other three status subscales are below their respective cut-off points, he or she is categorized as having an achieved identity. Participants also obtain continuous scores for each identity status (ranging from 8-48 and 16-96) that can also be used in correlational analyses, with raw scores in each identity status subscale displaying the extent to which that identity status is expressed (Adams, 1998).

In the current study, acknowledging that improvements may simply be a statistical artifact of simply increasing the number of subscale items (Field, 2009), Cronbach alphas improved when ideological and interpersonal domains were combined (see Table 2). Stern (2004) similarly discovered stronger alphas ranging between .70 (*Achievement*) and .92 (*Foreclosure*) when identity statuses were calculated overall rather than by domain (average alpha = .80), while Bennion and Adams (1998) reported Cronbach alphas of .62 for *Achievement*, .62 for *Diffusion*, .75 for *Moratorium*, and .75 for *Foreclosure* in the ideological domain, and alphas of .60 for *Achievement*, .64 for *Diffusion*, .58 for *Moratorium*, and .80 for *Foreclosure* in the interpersonal domain. In terms of validity, Bennion and Adams report correlations between subscales and with other measures (i.e., of self-acceptance, identity, intimacy, social desirability, and authoritarianism) that indicated discriminant, predictive, convergent, and concurrent validity. At the same time, they report an issue with factorial validity, whereby items reflecting moratorium and diffusion loaded onto one factor.

Themes of emerging adulthood. The IDEA, created through a three step process described by Reifman et al. (2007), was used to measure the extent to which participants identified with emerging adulthood themes (see Appendix E). Participants were asked to think about this time in their lives and were then presented with 31 items. For each item, participants were to indicate the degree to which they agreed that the statement describes this time in their lives (e.g. “*Is this period of your life a time of exploration?*”). Responses could range on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*). The inventory has subscales with five emerging adulthood themes (*Identity Exploration*, *Experimentation/Possibilities*, *Negativity/Instability*, *Self-Focused*, and *Feeling “In-Between”*) and one non-emerging adulthood construct (*Other-Focused*), included to offset the *Self-focused* theme. Speaking to the IDEA’s validity, the series of studies completed by Reifman et al. (2007) suggest that the five emerging adulthood subscales “have a reasonable factor structure, generally strong reliability, and some meaningful correlations with existing constructs in the literature” (p. 22 [supplemental analyses]). Convergent validity was demonstrated by associations between particular IDEA subscales and measures of possible selves, well-being, parental control, and future orientation. Of note, however, Reifman et al. report concerns about the extent “to which the IDEA subscales – especially identity exploration and experimentation/possibilities – are truly separate factors” (p. 23-24 [supplemental analyses]) due to correlations discovered between subscales.

The Cronbach alpha values obtained in the current study were satisfactory (see Table 2), with the exception of the *Self-Focused* subscale, which had a value of .63. When Reifman et al. (2007) investigated reliability, they discovered the following alpha values: *Identity Exploration* ($\alpha = .85$); *Experimentation/Possibilities* ($\alpha = .83$); *Negativity/Instability* ($\alpha = .82$); *Other-Focused* ($\alpha = .73$); *Self-Focused* ($\alpha = .70$); and *Feeling “In-Between”* ($\alpha = .80$). McCourt (2004)

reported alpha reliability coefficients for the six subscales to range from .66 for *Self-Focused* to .82 for *Experimentation/Possibilities*. As such, these researchers also found *Self-Focused* to be the least reliable subscale. Kreyszig (2007) found a range of alphas from .49 for *Feeling “In-Between”* to .77 for *Experimentation/Possibilities*. McCourt also created an overall emerging adulthood construct, summing over the IDEA subscales that reflect emerging adulthood themes to measure the extent to which participants globally identify with emerging adulthood. According to Reifman et al., this resulted in “standardized factor loadings for the indicators ranging from .48-.75” (p. 25 [supplemental analyses]).

Demographic and exploratory measures. Participants were also administered a demographics questionnaire (see de-identified examples in Appendix F)³. For example, questions were asked about age, gender, marital status, vocational setting, socioeconomic status, living arrangements, and financial independence from parents. An overall demographic variable that has traditionally reflected attaining adulthood was also created for additional quantitative data analyses. Sociological literature has suggested that the key markers for what has been called the “social demographic transition” to adulthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986, p. 110) include entry to the labour force, marriage, parenthood, and establishing a household independent of parents (e.g., Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999, as cited in Arnett, 2001, p. 134; Hogan & Astone, 1986; Pallas, 1993). Accordingly, responses from the relevant items in the demographic questionnaire were summed to provide a total score that reflected the extent to which participants had attained the social demographic transition to adulthood. To assess labour force entry, university and vocational college/trade school students obtained a score of 0, while those from the labour force obtained a score of 1. To assess marriage, single and engaged participants

³ Identifying information pertaining to specific vocational settings has been omitted and/or made more generic for the purposes of this document.

obtained a score of 0, while those who were common-law, married, separated, divorced, or widowed obtained a score of 1. To assess parenthood, participants with no children obtained a score of 0, while those with one or more children obtained a score of 1. To assess establishing a household independent of parents, participants who lived at home with parents obtained a score 0, while those who lived in other arrangements (i.e., rental, residential hall on campus, property they owned, etc.) obtained a score of 1. These scores were summed so that total scores fell across a range (*0 = No Demographic Transition to Adulthood, 4 = Full Demographic Transition to Adulthood*).

Further, one question explored the importance participants placed on vocational setting in shaping the transition from adolescence to adulthood by asking: *“Based on your experience, in comparison to other vocational settings (i.e., being in the labour force, being a university student, being a vocational college/trade school student, or being a high performance athlete⁴), how important do you think your current vocational setting has been in shaping your transition from adolescence to adulthood?”*. Responses could range from 1 = *Very Important* to 4 = *Very Unimportant*, but were reflected prior to analysis for ease of interpretation (see Appendix G, where an additional open-ended question was also asked as part of a larger study).

Procedure. Upon review and approval of the research by the University Ethics Board, a convenience sample of participants was recruited through various means. University students were recruited from a local university using physical posters and on-line advertisements posted on the university website. Vocational college/trade school students were recruited from various institutions in the province using physical posters, on-line advertisements posted on institution websites, and site visits where students were presented with study information and were offered

⁴ The high performance athlete vocational setting was included as part of a larger study. As well, certain identifying information in the question has been made more generic for the purposes of this document.

an opportunity to participate. Participants from the labour force were recruited through physical posters, newspaper and on-line advertisements, and through employers who presented study information to employees. In addition, participants were invited to tell others about the study.

Participants had the opportunity to enter in one of three draws for a \$200 prize (one draw per vocational setting) for completing the surveys, which took an average of 39 minutes to complete. To boost participation and diminish selection bias, participants had the choice of completing the surveys on-line or with paper and pencil. This choice-based design has been found to yield the highest questionnaire response rates, even across ethnicities (Greenlaw, 2007). For the 93.6% who participated on-line, a private link and password to the survey was provided. For the 6.4% who participated using paper and pencil, surveys were accompanied by a return postage-paid envelope. Following the completion of quantitative surveys, participants were also given an opportunity to withdraw their consent from participating in the study (see Appendix H).

Qualitative Component Methodology

Participants. Qualitative participants consisted of 12 (6 males, 6 females) individuals who completed the quantitative research surveys. Specifically, a purposive sample of two males and two females from each vocational setting was selected, based preliminarily on their interest in participating in such an interview, which they indicated upon completing the surveys (see Appendix I). Interested participants' quantitative responses were then examined to select a rich and diverse sample (i.e., in terms of ethnicity, age, marital status, identity status, perception of having reached adulthood, etc.). This aligns with purposeful sampling whereby participants "are selected because they have experienced the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2003, p. 220). Participants from university consisted of Reigh, Helen, Mark, and Malcolm. Participants from vocational college/trade school consisted of Amelia, Kate, Desmond, and Stewart. Participants

from the labour force consisted of Meathead, Mel, Fabrizio, and Austin. Participant descriptions are provided below and are based on survey responses as well as information discussed during interviews. See Tables 1 through 3 in Appendix J for interviewee responses on quantitative measures, presented alongside respective group means.

University participants.

Helen. Helen was a Caucasian 23 year-old full-time student. After moving out as a teenager to live with her grandmother and then graduating from a city high school, she worked and travelled for three years prior to enrolling in university. At the time of the interview, she was in her final year of earning a double major undergraduate degree in sociology and women and gender studies. She planned to later study social work as well. She had student loans. She was not employed, although she had worked at various jobs over the years. She was engaged to be married, and she paid rent to live in a residence owned by her live-in fiancé and his brother. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded “Yes.” Also, her survey responses indicated that her overall identity status was *Moratorium*, and she reported that being a university student was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Reigh. Reigh was a Caucasian 24 year-old full-time student. After graduating from a religious all-girls high school, she had worked and travelled for one year prior to enrolling in university. At the time of the interview, she was in her final year of earning an undergraduate degree in international studies. She planned to earn a second degree in physiology, with an aim to enter medical school and become a physician. She had a student loan for her final year of undergraduate education. She was not employed, although she was an intern through her studies and had worked at part-time jobs in the past. She had recently ended a romantic relationship. She

lived alone in a residence purchased by her parents, although she paid the monthly condominium and utility fees. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, her survey responses indicated that her overall identity status was *Moratorium*, and she reported that being a university student was “*very important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Malcolm. Malcolm was a black 25 year-old full-time student. After graduating from a city high school, he spent two years working, playing junior football, and upgrading marks at a college, prior to enrolling in university in another province. At the time of the interview, he was nearing the final year of an undergraduate degree in sociology. He planned to earn a graduate degree in the field of public and international affairs. He had student loans. He was not employed, although had played university football and worked at different jobs in the past. He had a girlfriend, and he lived with a roommate in a basement suite. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Achievement*, and he reported that being a university student was “*very important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Mark. Mark was a Caucasian 24 year-old full-time student. After graduating from a city high school at the young age of 16, he spent two years studying mathematics in university, prior to stopping due to difficulties maintaining grades. He then worked at various jobs for two years, prior to re-enrolling in a new major. At the time of the interview, he was studying to finish an undergraduate degree in business. He was not employed, although had worked at different jobs in the past. He was single, and he lived at home with his parents, who supported his education costs. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he

responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Moratorium*, and he reported that being a university student was “*very important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Vocational college/trade school participants.

Amelia. Amelia was a Caucasian 18 year-old full-time student. After graduating from a city high school, she immediately began her current diploma program in chemical technology. At the time of the interview, she was in her second and final year of that diploma program, and she planned to start working in the field thereafter. She was employed at a retail store on a part-time basis. She had a boyfriend and she lived at home with her parents, who supported her education costs. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, her survey responses indicated that her overall identity status was *Achievement*, and she reported that being a vocational college/trade school student was “*very important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Kate. Kate was a Caucasian 24 year-old apprentice. After growing up on a farm and graduating from a religious boarding school, she attended Bible school for a year prior to beginning work in construction. After working in that field for two years as a carpenter’s helper, she registered to become an apprentice carpenter. This required seven weeks of trade school for every 1800 hours of work. At the time of the interview, she worked as a supervisor in construction and was in her second last year of training towards earning her ticket in carpentry. She had student loans in Bible College but reported that apprentice tuition costs were minimal. She was single and she rented an apartment on her own. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded “*Yes.*” Also, her survey responses

indicated that her overall identity status was *Diffusion*, and she reported that being a vocational college/trade school student was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Desmond. Desmond was a Caucasian 27 year-old full-time student. After graduating from a city high school, he spent one year studying aeronautical engineering and then another year studying industrial engineering at a vocational college/trade school, graduating with a diploma in the latter field. He then worked at various jobs for a few years, prior to re-enrolling in a different vocational college/trade school to study computers. At the time of the interview, he was in the second and final year of a computer diploma program. He was employed at two part-time jobs, one with cadets and another with a computer help desk. He was single, having ended a romantic relationship one year earlier. He had returned home to live with his parents, who financially supported his living costs while he paid tuition. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Achievement*, and he reported that being a vocational college/trade school student was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Stewart. Stewart was a 27 year-old apprentice of Ojibwe background. After growing up on a reserve, upgrading at a local college, he graduated from a small town high school and worked at various jobs for a few years, prior to completing two years of a three year library technician program at a vocational college/trade school. Realizing that the library program was not for him, Stewart worked at various jobs before taking on fly-in employment in the mining industry. After working full-time in that field for six months, he registered to become a journeyman parts person, which required online course work to be completed alongside trade hours. Thus, at the time of the interview, he was in his second year of a three year program. His

apprentice tuition costs were paid by his employer, and previous education costs were paid by his First Nations Band. He was single, having recently ended a romantic relationship, and he rented an apartment on his own. He also played music in bands. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he responded “*Yes*.” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Diffusion*, and he reported that being a vocational college/trade school student was “*very unimportant*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Labour force participants.

Meathead. Meathead was a Caucasian 22 year-old working in the labour force. After moving out at age 13 and later graduating from a city high school, she became engaged and worked at various jobs for three years prior to moving across the country for a fresh start. At the time of the interview, she worked night shifts as a receiver in a meat packing factory, having recently quit jobs at a hotel and donut shop. She planned on securing an upcoming position with an organization that assists individuals with a disability, and she volunteered with a number of city organizations. She and her fiancé rented an apartment. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded “*Yes*.” Also, her survey responses indicated that her overall identity status was *Diffusion*, and she reported that being in the labour force was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Mel. Mel was a Caucasian 25 year-old working in the labour force. After graduating from a city high school, she moved to another province and, over the next six years, she worked at various jobs, got married, and travelled. At the time of the interview, she worked full-time in reception as a business administrator for a building supplies company. She and her husband owned a home. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if she thought that she had reached adulthood she responded, “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, her survey

responses indicated that her overall identity status was *Diffusion*, and she reported that being in the labour force was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Austin. Austin was a Caucasian 23 year-old working in the labour force. After moving out in Grade 12 and graduating from a technology-based high school in another province, he worked full-time for a period in web design, worked other jobs, moved in with a girlfriend, and enrolled in a creative gaming diploma program at a private college. A dispute with the college resulted in him leaving the program after four months and returning to the labour force. He worked different jobs over the years, some retail and some web development. At the time of the interview, he worked night shifts at a hotel (e.g., security, bookkeeping, and front desk) and had moved home, where he paid rent to his mother. He had student loans from when he attended college. He was single, having recently ended his long-term common law relationship. He also played drums. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Diffusion*, and he reported that being in the labour force was “*very unimportant*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Fabrizio. Fabrizio was a 23 year-old of Ecuadorian background working in the labour force. He was born in Ecuador and moved between countries while growing up. After graduating from a small town high school, he spent two years working in various jobs, travelling, and taking courses in early childhood development and business at a Bible college. Discovering that those courses were not a fit, he left college after one semester and resumed working at different jobs. He then became a father and eloped into marriage when the woman he had been dating on and off became pregnant. At the time of the interview, he worked two jobs, one as a contractor and one as an image consultant, both of which were his own businesses. He had also moved home,

having separated from his wife approximately one year earlier. He and his mother divided up costs of living. In the quantitative surveys, when asked if he thought that he had reached adulthood he responded “*In some respects yes, in some respects no.*” Also, his survey responses indicated that his overall identity status was *Moratorium*, and he reported that being in the labour force was “*somewhat important*” in shaping the transition to adulthood.

Procedure. Through individual interviews (see semi-structured interview guide in Appendix K), participants were asked open-ended questions focused on the same areas assessed in the surveys (i.e., conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, identity development, identification with themes of emerging adulthood, and the importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood). These questions were embedded within a general request to have participants provide a narrative outlining their lives from the time they were in high school to the time of the interview, including a look ahead to their thirties and beyond as well. Interviews, which were tape-recorded and transcribed, ranged in length from 67 to 113 minutes. At interview completion, participants were given a pseudo-name of their choice and, following interview transcription, participants were provided the opportunity to review the document to add, alter, and delete information as they wished. They were also asked to sign a transcript release form (see Appendix L).

Chapter 4: Quantitative Component Results

Data Analysis

Data was collected from 222 participants. Initially, individual items of subscales were examined for accuracy of data entry and missing values. Seven cases were deleted from all analyses when it was discovered that the individuals could not be accurately placed in one of the three vocational setting based on their survey responses. Another 11 cases were deleted from all analyses because they were missing many data points across variables. Thereafter, no individual items from any subscale had over 5% missing data points per group.

Across each of the remaining 204 participants, where there were a few missing data points scattered throughout items in a multi-item subscale, the overall subscale score was calculated by averaging over the items the participant answered. However, the rule employed was that a subscale score was only calculated if there was just one missing data point. Next, variable subscales were examined per group for missing values. For each group, there were few (< 5%) randomly missing data points on all subscales except for the *Family Capacities* subscale of the Markers of Adulthood measure. Accordingly, it was decided to leave these data points coded as missing⁵. For *Family Capacities*, 5% of data points were missing for the vocational college/trade school group while 6% of data points were missing for the university and labour force groups, respectively. Upon examination of the data, it appeared that several participants misunderstood directions and failed to respond to items that asked about members of the opposite gender (e.g., some females failed to respond to “*if a man, become capable of supporting a family financially*”).

⁵ Statistical comparative analyses were performed on the Family Capacities subscale and on a version of the subscale that only included items where less than 5% of data points were missing. Both analyses resulted in largely similar findings; as such results obtained using the original Family Capacities subscale will be reported.

As described in relevant sections below, data were mainly analyzed using parametric tests that are based on the normal distribution and its assumptions, described by Field (2009). These assumptions state that data from participants be independent and be at least at the interval level, criteria indeed met in the current research. The assumptions also state that data be normally distributed and have homogeneity of variance. Although comparisons using the F statistic can be robust to violations of normality (Field), dependent variables were examined per group for outliers ($p < .001$), distribution normality (e.g., skewness and kurtosis), and homogeneity of variance prior to statistical comparisons (see Appendix M for all measures of normality). When instances of significant skewness and/or kurtosis ($p < .05$) were discovered, variables were transformed; and, with one exception noted in the relevant section below, no differences appeared in results between comparisons using transformed and untransformed data. As such, results using untransformed data (with outliers removed) will be reported. Only one instance of heterogeneity of variance was discovered, and it will also be noted in the relevant section below. Because of discrepant group sample sizes, Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc procedure was used to examine specific vocational setting between-group differences.

Results

Conceptions of adulthood. First, a one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to initially examine the relative importance that participants placed on markers of adulthood, without taking into account vocational setting or gender. The assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(20) = 146.18, p < .001$, therefore Greenhouse-Geisser corrected degrees of freedom ($\epsilon = .79$) were used to assess the corresponding F values. There was a significant effect of conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood, $F(4.72, 897.45) = 128.77, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .40$. Rated most important was *Independence*, followed by *Family*

Capacities, Interdependence, Norm Compliance, Chronological Transitions, Role Transitions, and finally *Biological Transitions*. Further, the differences between all of the markers reached a level of significance ($p < .05$), with the exception of a non-significant difference between *Interdependence* and *Norm Compliance* (see Table 3 for all Bonferroni corrected post hoc test results).

Next, a series of seven two-way ANOVA comparisons was performed to examine group differences in the importance placed on the particular markers of adulthood. The independent variables were vocational setting (university; vocational college/trade school; labour force) and gender (male; female). As shown in Tables 4 and 5, comparisons yielded no significant vocational setting x gender interactions. However, comparisons did yield two significant main effects of vocational setting and two significant main effects of gender.⁶ Specifically, vocational college/trade school students placed more importance than university students on *Role Transitions* and *Family Capacities*, females placed more importance than males on *Norm Compliance*, and males placed more importance than females on *Biological Transitions*. All scores for each marker of adulthood appear in Appendix N.

Perceptions of having reached adulthood. A Pearson Chi-Square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between vocational setting and perceptions about having reached adulthood. For this question, participants were asked, “*Do you think you have reached adulthood?*” and could respond, “*Yes,*” “*No,*” or “*In some respects yes, in some respects no*”. While 5.1% of university students responded “*No,*” only 1.8% of vocational college/trade school students and 0% from the labour force provided that response. This low number of “*No*”

⁶ When the *Norm Compliance* subscale was analyzed using transformed (square root) data, the main effect of gender was no longer significant, $F(1, 198) = 3.90, p = .050$, and the main effect of vocational setting reached a level of significance, $F(2, 198) = 3.16, p = .045$, with vocational college/trade school students placing more importance on norm compliance than university students.

Table 3

Relative Importance of What Marks Adulthood

Marker (I)	Marker (J)	Mean (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Independence	Interdependence	.43	.04	< .001***
	Role Transitions	1.04	.04	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	.51	.05	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	1.21	.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	.82	.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	.28	.05	< .001***
Interdependence	Independence	-.43	.04	< .001***
	Role Transitions	.61	.04	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	.08	.05	1.000
	Biological Transitions	.78	.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	.39	.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	-.15	.04	.015*
Role Transitions	Independence	-1.04	.04	< .001***
	Interdependence	-.61	.04	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	-.53	.05	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	.17	.05	.038*
	Chronological Transitions	-.22	.05	.001**
	Family Capacities	-.76	.05	< .001***
Norm Compliance	Independence	-.51	.05	< .001***
	Interdependence	-.08	.05	1.000
	Role Transitions	.53	.05	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	.70	.07	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	.31	.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	-.23	.06	.001**
Biological Transitions	Independence	-1.21	.06	< .001***
	Interdependence	-.78	.06	< .001***
	Role Transitions	-.17	.05	.038*
	Norm Compliance	-.70	.07	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-.39	.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	-.93	.06	< .001***
Chronological Transitions	Independence	-.82	.06	< .001***
	Interdependence	-.39	.06	< .001***
	Role Transitions	.22	.05	.001**
	Norm Compliance	-.31	.06	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	.39	.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	-.54	.07	< .001***
Family Capacities	Independence	-.28	.05	< .001***
	Interdependence	.15	.04	.015*
	Role Transitions	.76	.05	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	.23	.06	.001**
	Biological Transitions	.93	.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	.54	.07	< .001***

* = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Table 4

Effect of Vocational Setting on Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood

Measure	All groups		University		Vocational college		Labour force		Main effect of vocational setting			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Markers of Adulthood												
Independence	3.22	0.37	3.16	0.35	3.25	0.37	3.28	0.40	197	2.53	0.083	0.03
Interdependence	2.79	0.59	2.70	0.62	2.94	0.52	2.80	0.61	198	2.63	0.075	0.03
Role Transitions	2.19	0.69	2.06 ^a	0.68	2.34 ^b	0.66	2.27	0.71	198	3.25	0.041*	0.03
Norm Compliance	2.70	0.71	2.58	0.71	2.91	0.64	2.71	0.74	198	3.01	0.052	0.03
Bio. Transitions	2.02	0.82	1.98	0.80	2.14	0.87	1.97	0.81	198	1.31	0.273	0.01
Chrono. Transitions	2.39	0.76	2.35	0.70	2.47	0.84	2.40	0.79	198	0.73	0.486	0.01
Family Capacities	2.92	0.74	2.77 ^a	0.80	3.11 ^b	0.64	2.98	0.69	186	3.39	0.036*	0.04

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of vocational setting.

* $p < .05$.

Table 5

Effect of Gender and Effect of Interaction (Vocational Setting x Gender) on Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood

Measure	Male		Female		Effect of gender				Effect of interaction			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Markers of Adulthood												
Independence	3.22	0.41	3.22	0.33	197	0.00	0.982	0.00	197	0.67	0.515	0.01
Interdependence	2.73	0.63	2.85	0.55	198	0.34	0.559	0.00	198	0.56	0.572	0.01
Role Transitions	2.14	0.75	2.24	0.63	198	0.02	0.896	0.00	198	1.21	0.301	0.01
Norm Compliance	2.58 ^a	0.76	2.83 ^b	0.64	198	4.43	0.037*	0.02	198	0.32	0.730	0.00
Bio. Transitions	2.14 ^a	0.83	1.91 ^b	0.80	198	5.15	0.024*	0.03	198	0.13	0.876	0.00
Chrono. Transitions	2.42	0.78	2.36	0.75	198	0.49	0.486	0.00	198	0.15	0.864	0.00
Family Capacities	2.88	0.75	2.95	0.74	186	0.05	0.820	0.00	186	0.56	0.574	0.01

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of gender.

* $p < .05$.

responses violated the assumption that no more than 20% of expected frequencies fall below five for a Chi-Square analysis (Field, 2009). Therefore, the “*No*” cases were deleted from all analyses and a comparison was made between those who were certain they had reached adulthood (i.e., “*Yes*” response) and those who were ambivalent about their adult status (i.e., “*In some respects yes, in some respects no*” response). It was not possible to include both vocational setting (University; Vocational College/Trade School; Labour Force) and gender (Male; Female) in one analysis because cell sizes would become too small and thereby create significant problems with the interpretation of the analysis. As such, Chi-Square analyses were run individually for both independent variables (see Tables 6 and 7).

The Chi-Square analysis was not significant for vocational setting, $\chi^2(2, N = 196) = .36$, $p = .836$, indicating that there is no relationship between vocational setting and whether 18-29 year-olds think they have reached adulthood. The Chi-Square analysis was also not significant for gender, $\chi^2(1, N = 196) = 2.37$, $p = .124$, indicating that there is no relationship between gender and whether 18-29 year-olds think they have reached adulthood.

Perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood. First, a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was performed to initially examine perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, without taking into account vocational setting or gender. The assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(20) = 157.18$, $p < .001$, therefore Greenhouse-Geisser corrected degrees of freedom ($\epsilon = .78$) were used to assess the corresponding F values. There was a significant effect of perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, $F(4.65, 925.24) = 232.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .54$. Participants perceived that they had reached *Chronological Transitions* to the greatest extent, followed by *Biological Transitions*, *Norm Compliance*, *Independence*, *Interdependence*, *Family Capacities*, and finally *Role Transitions*. Of note, the differences between all of these

Table 6

Relationship Between Vocational Setting and Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood

Reached adulthood	Vocational Setting			χ^2	Cramer's V
	University	Vocational college	Labour force		
Yes	31 (-.3)	21 (.4)	17 (.0)	0.36	0.04
In some respects yes; in some respects no	62 (.2)	34 (-.3)	31 (.0)		

Note. Standardized residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

* = $p < .05$.

Table 7

Relationship Between Gender and Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood

Reached adulthood	Gender		χ^2	Cramer's V
	Male	Female		
Yes	29 (-.9)	40 (.9)	2.37	0.11
In some respects yes; in some respects no	68 (.6)	59 (-.6)		

Note. Standardized residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

* = $p < .05$.

markers reached a level of significance ($p < .05$), with the exception of non-significant differences between *Chronological Transitions* and *Biological Transitions*, and between *Norm Compliance* and *Independence* (see Table 8 for all Bonferroni corrected post hoc test results).

Next, a series of seven two-way ANOVA comparisons was performed to examine differences in the extent which groups met markers indicative of adulthood. The independent variables were vocational setting and gender. Comparisons yielded no vocational setting x gender interactions (see Tables 9 and 10). However, comparisons did yield three significant main effects of vocational setting and two significant main effects of gender.⁷ Specifically, labour force participants scored higher than university students in terms of the extent to which they met markers reflecting *Independence*, and both labor force participants and vocational college/trade school students scored higher than university students for *Role Transitions* and *Family Capacities*. In terms of gender differences, females scored higher than males for both *Interdependence* and *Norm Compliance*. All scores for each marker of adulthood can be found in Appendix O.

Identity development. First, a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was performed to initially examine the overall identity status subscale scores, without taking into account vocational setting or gender. The assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(5) = 29.37, p < .001$, therefore Greenhouse-Geisser corrected degrees of freedom ($\epsilon = .91$) were used to assess the corresponding F values. There was a significant effect of overall identity status subscale scores, $F(2.72, 527.38) = 335.51, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .63$. Participants scored highest on the subscale measuring *Identity Achievement* and lowest on the subscale measuring *Identity Foreclosure*. Scores on the subscales measuring *Identity Diffusion* and *Identity Moratorium* fell in the middle

⁷ The *Role Transitions* subscale displayed heterogeneity of variance, $F(5, 196) = 5.20, p < .001$.

Table 8

Relative Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood

Marker (I)	Marker (J)	Mean (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Independence	Interdependence	0.14	0.04	0.046*
	Role Transitions	1.34	0.04	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	-0.03	0.05	1.000
	Biological Transitions	-0.27	0.05	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-0.35	0.05	< .001***
	Family Capacities	0.44	0.05	< .001***
Interdependence	Independence	-0.14	0.04	0.046*
	Role Transitions	1.21	0.05	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	-0.17	0.05	0.009**
	Biological Transitions	-0.41	0.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-0.49	0.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	0.30	0.05	< .001***
Role Transitions	Independence	-1.35	0.04	< .001***
	Interdependence	-1.21	0.05	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	-1.38	0.06	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	-1.62	0.07	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-1.70	0.06	< .001***
	Family Capacities	-0.91	0.05	< .001***
Norm Compliance	Independence	0.03	0.05	1.000
	Interdependence	0.17	0.05	0.009**
	Role Transitions	1.38	0.06	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	-0.24	0.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-0.32	0.05	< .001***
	Family Capacities	0.47	0.06	< .001***
Biological Transitions	Independence	0.27	0.05	< .001***
	Interdependence	0.41	0.06	< .001***
	Role Transitions	1.62	0.07	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	0.24	0.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-0.08	0.05	1.00
	Family Capacities	0.71	0.06	< .001***
Chronological Transitions	Independence	0.35	0.05	< .001***
	Interdependence	0.49	0.06	< .001***
	Role Transitions	1.70	0.06	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	0.32	0.05	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	0.08	0.05	1.000
	Family Capacities	0.79	0.06	< .001***
Family Capacities	Independence	-0.44	0.05	< .001***
	Interdependence	-0.30	0.05	< .001***
	Role Transitions	0.91	0.05	< .001***
	Norm Compliance	-0.47	0.06	< .001***
	Biological Transitions	-0.71	0.06	< .001***
	Chronological Transitions	-0.79	0.06	< .001***

* = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Table 9

Effect of Vocational Setting on Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood

Measure	All groups		University		Vocational college		Labour force		Main effect of vocational setting			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Markers of Adulthood												
Independence	3.11	0.47	2.99 ^a	0.46	3.16	0.44	3.30 ^b	0.47	197	7.75	0.001**	0.07
Interdependence	2.98	0.61	2.88	0.65	3.14	0.54	3.00	0.60	197	2.67	0.072	0.03
Role Transitions	1.77	0.68	1.44 ^a	0.48	1.95 ^b	0.65	2.22 ^b	0.72	196	30.28	< 0.001***	0.24
Norm Compliance	3.14	0.53	3.15	0.55	3.19	0.52	3.06	0.50	196	0.69	0.505	0.01
Bio. Transitions	3.37	0.66	3.41	0.55	3.31	0.77	3.38	0.73	198	0.42	0.656	0.00
Chrono. Transitions	3.45	0.62	3.51	0.55	3.30	0.72	3.52	0.60	198	2.37	0.096	0.02
Family Capacities	2.68	0.76	2.39 ^a	0.66	2.92 ^b	0.75	2.99 ^b	0.77	197	14.17	< 0.001***	0.13

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of vocational setting.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 10

Effect of Gender and Effect of Interaction (Vocational Setting \times Gender) on Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood

Measure	Male		Female		Effect of gender				Effect of interaction			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Markers of Adulthood												
Independence	3.07	0.50	3.16	0.43	197	0.88	0.349	0.00	197	0.64	0.529	0.01
Interdependence	2.86 ^a	0.62	3.10 ^b	0.59	197	5.40	0.021*	0.03	197	0.75	0.473	0.01
Role Transitions	1.72	0.76	1.82	0.59	196	0.05	0.817	0.00	196	0.81	0.448	0.01
Norm Compliance	3.03 ^a	0.55	3.26 ^b	0.49	196	5.93	0.016*	0.03	196	1.65	0.194	0.02
Bio. Transitions	3.44	0.61	3.31	0.71	198	1.20	0.275	0.01	198	0.73	0.482	0.01
Chrono. Transitions	3.46	0.62	3.44	0.62	198	0.10	0.751	0.00	198	0.11	0.896	0.00
Family Capacities	2.62	0.76	2.74	0.77	197	0.04	0.851	0.00	197	2.21	0.113	0.02

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of gender.

* $p < .05$.

and they were not significantly different from one another (see Table 11 for all Bonferroni corrected post hoc test results).

Next, a Pearson Chi-Square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between vocational setting and overall identity status, as measured with the EOMEIS-2. Because Cronbach alpha coefficients improved when identity statuses were calculated overall (vs. by ideological and interpersonal domains), the investigation focused on overall identity status. For foreclosed identity status, only 1.0% of university students obtained scores placing them in that category. Similarly, only 1.8% of vocational college/trade school students and 0% of labour force participants scored as having a foreclosed identity. This low number of foreclosed identity statuses among participants violated the assumption that no more than 20% of expected frequencies fall below five for a Chi-Square analysis (Field, 2009). Therefore, the foreclosed identity status cases were deleted from all analyses, and a comparison was made between those classified as having a diffused identity status, a moratorium identity status, and an achieved identity status. It was not possible to include both vocational setting and gender in one analysis because cell sizes would become too small and thereby create significant problems with the interpretation of the analysis.

As such, Chi-Square analyses were run individually for both independent variables (see Tables 12 and 13). The Chi-Square test was significant for vocational setting, $\chi^2(4, N = 195) = 13.17, p = .010$, indicating that there is a relationship between vocational setting and identity status among 18-29 year-olds. Looking at the standardized residuals ($p < .05$), there were fewer labour force participants than expected ($z = -2.2$) with achieved identities. The Chi-Square analysis was not significant for gender, $\chi^2(2, N = 195) = 4.45, p = .108$, indicating no relationship between gender and identity status among 18-29 year-olds.

Table 11

Relative Scores on Measures of Identity Status

Subscale (<i>I</i>)	Subscale (<i>J</i>)	Mean (<i>I-J</i>)	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
Identity Diffusion	Identity Foreclosure	18.88	0.99	< .001***
	Identity Moratorium	0.16	0.86	1.000
	Identity Achievement	-13.39	1.20	< .001***
Identity Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion	-18.88	0.99	< .001***
	Identity Moratorium	-18.71	0.96	< .001***
	Identity Achievement	-32.27	1.05	< .001***
Identity Moratorium	Identity Diffusion	-0.16	0.86	1.000
	Identity Foreclosure	18.71	0.96	< .001***
	Identity Achievement	-13.56	1.06	< .001***
Identity Achievement	Identity Diffusion	13.39	1.20	< .001***
	Identity Foreclosure	32.27	1.05	< .001***
	Identity Moratorium	13.56	1.06	< .001***

* = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Table 12

Relationship Between Vocational Setting and Identity Status

Identity status	Vocational setting			χ^2	Cramer's V
	University	Vocational college	Labour force		
Diffused	37 (-1.3)	29 (.6)	28 (1.2)	13.17*	0.18
Moratorium	38 (1.0)	12 (-1.5)	16 (.1)		
Achieved	20 (.7)	13 (1.1)	2 (-2.2)		

Note. Standardized residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

* = $p < .05$.

Table 13

Relationship Between Gender and Identity Status

Identity Status	Gender		χ^2	Cramer's V
	Male	Female		
Diffused	55 (1.1)	39 (-1.1)	4.45	0.15
Moratorium	28 (-1.0)	38 (1.0)		
Achieved	16 (-.4)	19 (.4)		

Note. Standardized residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

* = $p < .05$.

For comparative analyses using two-way ANOVA, the four continuous subscale scores (i.e., *Diffusion*, *Foreclosure*, *Moratorium*, *Achievement*) were examined separately. The independent variables were vocational setting and gender. These comparisons (see Tables 14 and 15) yielded no significant vocational setting x gender interactions. However, comparisons did yield one significant main effect of vocational setting and two significant main effects of gender. Specifically, labour force participants scored higher than university students on the measure of *Identity Diffusion*, and males scored higher than females on measures of *Identity Diffusion* and *Identity Moratorium*.

Themes of emerging adulthood. First, a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was used to initially examine identification with the six themes measured by the IDEA, without taking into account vocational setting or gender. The assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(14) = 270.62$, $p < .001$, therefore Greenhouse-Geisser corrected degrees of freedom ($\epsilon = .65$) were used to assess the corresponding F values. There was a significant effect of identification with themes, $F(3.23, 648.86) = 49.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$. Participants identified the most (and equally) with emerging adulthood themes of *Experimentation/Possibilities*, *Self-Focused*, and *Identity Explorations*. It was to a significantly lesser extent that they identified with the themes of *Feeling In-Between* and *Negativity/Instability*, and they identified the least with the non-emerging adulthood theme of *Other-Focused* (see Table 16 for all Bonferroni corrected post hoc test results).

Next, a series of two-way ANOVA comparisons was performed to examine differences in the extent which groups identified with themes measured on the IDEA subscales. The independent variables were vocational setting and gender. These comparisons (see Tables 17 and 18) yielded no significant vocational setting x gender interactions. However, comparisons did

Table 14

Effect of Vocational Setting on Identity Status

Measure	All groups		University		Vocational college		Labour force		Main effect of vocational setting			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Identity status												
Diffusion	52.01	10.78	50.28 ^a	10.53	51.54	10.57	56.22 ^b	10.64	193	4.25	0.016*	0.04
Foreclosure	33.10	11.24	31.89	10.61	35.20	12.91	33.05	10.17	192	1.70	0.186	0.02
Moratorium	51.92	9.76	51.45	9.87	53.16	8.94	51.39	10.52	194	1.60	0.204	0.02
Achievement	65.41	9.82	64.58	10.35	68.08	9.44	63.88	8.64	195	2.52	0.083	0.03

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of vocational setting.

* $p < .05$.

Table 15

Effect of Gender and Effect of Interaction (Vocational Setting x Gender) on Identity Status

Measure	Male		Female		Effect of gender				Effect of interaction			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Identity status												
Diffusion	53.63 ^a	11.17	50.38 ^b	10.17	193	6.44	0.012*	0.03	193	1.67	0.191	0.02
Foreclosure	32.97	11.78	33.23	10.72	192	0.41	0.524	0.00	192	1.17	0.313	0.01
Moratorium	53.40 ^a	9.86	50.37 ^b	9.45	194	9.15	0.003**	0.05	194	1.90	0.152	0.02
Achievement	65.22	10.03	65.60	9.66	195	0.02	0.887	0.00	195	0.37	0.695	0.00

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of gender.

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

Table 16

Relative Identification with Themes of Emerging Adulthood

Theme (I)	Theme (J)	Mean (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Identity Exploration	Experimentation/Possibilities	-0.11	0.04	0.090
	Negativity/Instability	0.34	0.04	< .001***
	Other-Focused	0.62	0.06	< .001***
	Self-Focused	-0.03	0.04	1.000
	Feeling "In-Between"	0.25	0.05	< .001***
Experimentation/ Possibilities	Identity Exploration	0.11	0.04	0.090
	Negativity/Instability	0.44	0.05	< .001***
	Other-Focused	0.72	0.07	< .001***
	Self-Focused	0.07	0.03	0.445
	Feeling "In-Between"	0.36	0.06	< .001***
Negativity/Instability	Identity Exploration	-0.34	0.04	< .001***
	Experimentation/Possibilities	-0.44	0.05	< .001***
	Other-Focused	0.28	0.07	0.002**
	Self-Focused	-0.37	0.05	< .001***
	Feeling "In-Between"	-0.09	0.06	1.000
Other-Focused	Identity Exploration	-0.62	0.06	< .001***
	Experimentation/Possibilities	-0.72	0.07	< .001***
	Negativity/Instability	-0.28	0.07	0.002**
	Self-Focused	-0.65	0.06	< .001***
	Feeling "In-Between"	-0.37	0.08	< .001***
Self-Focused	Identity Exploration	0.03	0.04	1.000
	Experimentation/Possibilities	-0.07	0.03	0.445
	Negativity/Instability	0.37	0.05	< .001***
	Other-Focused	0.65	0.06	< .001***
	Feeling "In-Between"	0.29	0.06	< .001***
Feeling "In-Between"	Identity Exploration	-0.25	0.05	< .001***
	Experimentation/Possibilities	-0.36	0.06	< .001***
	Negativity/Instability	0.09	0.06	1.000
	Other-Focused	0.37	0.08	< .001***
	Self-Focused	-0.29	0.06	< .001***

* = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Table 17

Effect of Vocational Setting on Identification with Themes of Emerging Adulthood

Measure	All groups		University		Vocational college		Labour force		Main effect of voc. setting			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Themes of Emerging Adulthood												
Identity Exploration	3.30	0.52	3.34	0.52	3.31	0.54	3.20	0.50	197	0.96	0.386	0.01
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.40	0.55	3.47 ^a	0.52	3.45	0.52	3.21 ^b	0.58	197	3.53	0.031*	0.04
Negativity/Instability	2.95	0.60	3.05	0.52	2.88	0.62	2.82	0.71	198	3.31	0.039 ^c	0.03
Other-Focused	2.67	0.75	2.55	0.71	2.74	0.77	2.85	0.77	198	2.92	0.056	0.03
Self-Focused	3.34	0.40	3.36	0.39	3.39	0.36	3.22	0.45	196	2.02	0.135	0.02
Feeling “In-Between”	3.03	0.77	3.15	0.72	2.97	0.79	2.88	0.83	198	2.60	0.077	0.03
Overall IDEA	3.22	0.37	3.29 ^a	0.34	3.22	0.37	3.07 ^b	0.38	196	5.52	0.005**	0.05

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of vocational setting.

^c Mean differences between vocational settings were not significant ($p < .05$) when post-hoc comparisons were made.

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

Table 18

Effect of Gender and Effect of Interaction (Vocational Setting \times Gender) on Identification with Themes of Emerging Adulthood

Measure	Male		Female		Effect of gender				Effect of interaction			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Themes of Emerging Adulthood												
Identity Exploration	3.26	0.51	3.33	0.54	197	1.25	0.266	0.01	197	0.53	0.588	0.01
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.35	0.57	3.45	0.52	197	1.54	0.216	0.01	197	0.26	0.772	0.00
Negativity/Instability	2.95	0.59	2.95	0.63	198	0.01	0.926	0.00	198	0.52	0.598	0.01
Other-Focused	2.50 ^a	0.68	2.84 ^b	0.78	198	10.74	0.001**	0.05	198	0.39	0.680	0.00
Self-Focused	3.24 ^a	0.41	3.44 ^b	0.37	196	10.52	0.001**	0.05	196	0.15	0.862	0.00
Feeling “In-Between”	3.05	0.75	3.02	0.80	198	0.20	0.653	0.00	198	0.48	0.620	0.01
Overall IDEA	3.18	0.34	3.25	0.38	196	2.07	0.151	0.01	196	0.10	0.902	0.00

Note. Means with different superscripts show statistically significant differences as a function of gender.

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

yield two significant main effects of vocational setting and two significant main effects of gender. Specifically, university students identified more than labour force participants with the themes of emerging adulthood overall (*Overall IDEA*) and with the specific theme of *Experimentation/Possibilities*, and females identified more than males with the specific theme of *Self-Focused*. Females also identified more than males with the non-emerging adulthood theme of *Other-Focused*.

Importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. A two-way ANOVA was performed to investigate the importance that participants from different vocational settings placed on their settings as a shaping influence in the transition to adulthood. The two-way ANOVA yielded no significant interaction, $F(1, 197) = .54, p = .583, \eta_p^2 = .01$. Neither did the ANOVA yield a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 197) = 1.64, p = .202, \eta_p^2 = .01$, with females ($M = 3.20, SD = .89$) placing no more importance than males ($M = 3.07, SD = .94$) on vocational setting as a shaping influence. However, there was a significant main effect of vocational setting, $F(2, 197) = 4.07, p = .018, \eta_p^2 = .04$. University students ($M = 3.32, SD = .84$) placed more importance than vocational college/trade school students ($M = 2.93, SD = .93$) on vocational setting as a shaping influence in the transition to adulthood. The scores of those from the labour force ($M = 3.00, SD = .99$) fell in the middle.

Additional analyses: Socioeconomic status, age, and the social demographic transition to adulthood. Given that socioeconomic status has been found to relate in varying degrees to some of the variables of interest (e.g., Arnett, 1997; Reifman et al., 2007), Spearman's rho correlations were performed to examine the relationship between all dependent variables and socioeconomic status (as measured by father's education completed). Results indicated a

significant negative correlation between socioeconomic status and perceptions of having reached adulthood, $r(190) = -.18, p = .015$, and perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting *Independence*, $r(191) = -.26, p < .001$, *Role Transitions*, $r(190) = -.28, p < .001$, and *Family Capacities*, $r(191) = -.25, p < .001$. The only other significant correlation was with the emerging adulthood theme of *Feeling "In-Between"*, $r(192) = .20, p = .006$.

To further expand understandings of development in the context of emerging adulthood, Spearman's rho correlations were also performed to examine the relationship between all dependent variables and the social demographic transition to adulthood. Recall that the social demographic transition to adulthood was calculated by summing demographic questionnaire responses regarding entry to the labour force, marital status, parenthood status, and establishment of a household independent of parents. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between the social demographic transition to adulthood and perceptions of having reached adulthood, $r(198) = .23, p = .001$, and perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting *Independence*, $r(199) = .47, p < .001$, *Interdependence*, $r(199) = .26, p < .001$, *Role Transitions*, $r(198) = .54, p < .001$, *Biological Transitions*, $r(200) = .18, p = .013$, and *Family Capacities*, $r(199) = .49, p < .001$. The social demographic transition to adulthood was also significantly correlated with subscale scores for *Identity Diffusion*, $r(195) = .15, p = .033$. Last, it was significantly correlated with the non-emerging adulthood theme of *Other-Focused*, $r(200) = .32, p < .001$, and with the emerging adulthood themes of *Negativity/Instability*, $r(200) = -.17, p = .018$, and of *Feeling "In-Between"*, $r(200) = -.28, p < .001$. It was also significantly correlated with scores on the *Overall IDEA*, $r(198) = -.20, p = .004$, and with the importance placed on vocational setting as shaping the transition to adulthood, $r(199) = -.17, p < .05$.

Finally, because a one-way ANOVA comparison revealed that participants from the labour force ($M = 23.49$, $SD = 3.27$) were significantly older than participants from both vocational college/trade school ($M = 21.84$, $SD = 3.33$) and university ($M = 21.56$, $SD = 2.68$), $F(2, 199) = 6.76$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06^8$, Spearman's rho correlations were also performed to examine the relationship between age and each of the dependent variables. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between age and the importance placed on markers of adulthood reflecting *Independence*, $r(201) = .14$, $p = .049$. Results also indicated that age was significantly correlated with perceptions of having reached adulthood, $r(200) = .36$, $p < .001$, and with perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting *Independence*, $r(201) = .44$, $p < .001$, *Interdependence*, $r(201) = .14$, $p = .046$, *Role Transitions*, $r(200) = .35$, $p < .001$, *Biological Transitions*, $r(202) = .30$, $p < .001$, *Chronological Transitions*, $r(202) = .62$, $p < .001$, and *Family Capacities*, $r(201) = .36$, $p < .001$. Further, there was a significant positive correlation between age and identification with the non-emerging adulthood theme of *Other-Focused*, $r(202) = .31$, $p < .001$. Conversely, there was a significant negative correlation between age and identification with the emerging adulthood themes of *Experimentation/Possibilities*, $r(201) = -.20$, $p = .005$, and *Feeling "In-Between"*, $r(202) = -.24$, $p = .001$. Last, there was a significant negative correlation between age and identification with emerging adulthood themes overall, as measured by the *Overall IDEA*, $r(200) = -.20$, $p = .005$. The values for all correlations involving socioeconomic status, age, and the social demographic transition to adulthood appear in Tables 1 through 6 in Appendix P.

⁸ Levene's test revealed heterogeneity of variance, $F(2, 199) = 3.87$, $p = .022$.

Summary of Quantitative Results

As evidenced above, the results of the quantitative analysis provided support for some hypotheses, but not others, in terms of similarities and differences across vocational settings during emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. As predicted, markers reflecting independence were deemed more important to emerging adults than markers reflecting role transitions. In fact, independence was rated as more important than all other markers, and there were no differences between vocational settings in its importance. While directional predictions were not offered concerning the relationship between vocational setting and the importance of other markers, vocational college/trade school students placed more importance than university students on criteria reflecting role transitions and family capacities.

The hypothesis that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would be more likely to perceive themselves as having reached adulthood than university students was not supported. There were no differences in the extent to which participants perceived themselves as adults, with most holding mixed views about their adult status. For perceptions of having reached specific markers of adulthood, the prediction that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would indicate having met the markers of adulthood to a greater extent than university students was partially supported. In support of the prediction, vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force met role transitions and family capacities to a greater extent than university students, while labour force participants alone reached independence to a greater extent than university students. However, no other hypothesized differences appeared based on vocational setting.

While no firm directional hypothesis was offered in terms of vocational setting differences in ego identity development, fewer labour force participants than expected were

found to have achieved identities, and those from the labour force scored higher than university students on a measure of identity diffusion.

Concerning the predictions about identification with themes of emerging adulthood, findings were mixed. In partial support of predictions, university students did identify more with emerging adulthood themes overall than those from the labour force; however, this was not to a greater extent than vocational college/trade school students. The hypothesis that those from the labour force would identify more with the other-focused and negativity/instability themes than university students and vocational college/trade school students was not supported; there were no differences between vocational settings for these themes. Similarly, the hypothesis that university students would identify more with the identity explorations, self-focused, and feeling “in-between” themes than vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force was not supported, as again no differences appeared between vocational settings. Last, while experimentation/possibilities was one of the most strongly identified with themes among participants, university students did identify with it to a greater extent than those from the labour force.

No hypothesis was offered for the exploratory question about the importance placed by emerging adults themselves on vocational setting as a shaping influence in their transition to adulthood, and results indicated that university students placed more importance than vocational college/trade school students in that regard. Given that gender was not the focus of the current study, neither were hypotheses offered concerning its relationship with the dependent variables. As evidenced in the results above, gender differences appeared in some areas but not others. For example, while there was no relationship between gender and perceptions of having reached adulthood, females perceived having met markers reflecting interdependence and norm

compliance to a greater extent than males. Finally, additional correlational analyses suggested relationships between socioeconomic status and perceptions of having reached adulthood (including markers of independence, role transitions, and family capacities) and identification with the feeling in-between theme. Yet, as detailed in the previous section, both age and the social demographic transition to adulthood were found to have a greater number of significant correlations with the dependent variables.

In sum, quantitative results revealed some specific differences between emerging adults from different vocational settings. At the same time, findings indicate that 18-29 year-olds across vocational settings viewed independence as most important in marking adulthood, perceived themselves as adults in some respects but not in others, and generally identified with the themes of emerging adulthood. More, nearly all differences discovered between vocational settings reflected small effect sizes⁹. Indeed, the magnitude of differences only extended into the medium effect size range for perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting role transitions and family capacities. As such, results in most ways provide support for emerging adulthood as an applicable and viable conceptualization of life for 18-29 year-olds across vocational settings.

⁹The following guidelines (Cohen, 1988, as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 55) were employed for interpreting partial eta squared effect size: small ($\eta_p^2 = .01$); medium ($\eta_p^2 = .09$); large ($\eta_p^2 = .25$).

Chapter 5: Qualitative Component Results

Data Analysis

A theme-based approach was taken to analyze the interview data. Embraced today as a valid and popular methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe & Yardley, 2004), thematic analysis is a way of working with qualitative data that involves “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). A largely deductive approach guided the thematic analysis. Narratives were examined with a focus on thematic similarities and differences between participants from the three vocational settings in the following areas: conceptions of what marks adulthood; perceptions of having reached adulthood; perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood; identity development; and identification with the themes of emerging adulthood. Themes were also examined as they pertained to interviewees’ views on the importance of vocational settings in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. In such a way, the analysis was in principal “theory driven” and thus constructed from existent emerging adulthood literature (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 30-31) and the study’s research questions and hypotheses. This influence began at the stage of creating the interview guide, which posed questions that directly addressed the constructs of interest (see Appendix K). Also, themes from current emerging adulthood theory (e.g., emerging adulthood as a time of *identity explorations*, being *self-focused*, etc.) were held in mind while analyzing interviews. Similarly, when considering the labeling of themes, emerging adulthood theory was employed where appropriate to be consistent in the use of language (e.g., *Independence* was used to identify the marker of adulthood reflecting that construct). This approach was well-suited to enable the triangulation and corroboration of qualitative and quantitative findings. At the same time, in the spirit of being complete and comprehensive, while

also being open to discovering diverse viewpoints and processes that drive relationships between variables, all of which are strengths of the mixed method (Bryman, 2006), new themes or conceptualizations were also included as they emerged from participant narratives. This approach began with the inclusion of broadened interview questions (e.g., *Tell me about any influential people/events?*, *What kind of a person were you back then?*, etc.), and continued through to the exhaustive identification of codes and to the description of novel themes not yet captured by current emerging adulthood theory (e.g., *naivety in earlier sense of self*, *social interactions as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood*). In such a manner, it was possible to discover and present new knowledge about emerging adulthood while also being able directly address, using language familiar to scholars, pressing issues in the field.

More specifically, the following steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were taken to analyze the data. First, the interview transcripts were imported into NVivo 8 software, where they were read several times while initial ideas and notes were written down. Second, codes (i.e., specific instances of meaning and relevant content in the data) were generated by again reading the transcripts and using the NVivo 8 highlighter to identify and collate specific instances of meaning in the data. From there, a search for thematic patterns took place. To accomplish this third step, the identified codes were printed and then, for each research question, they were read and sorted into potential theme piles that combined related data together. In addition to printing off the codes and trying them out in different theme-piles, rough notes, visual thematic maps, and tables were sketched to assist in organizing the data (see Appendix Q for examples of material). For instance, when focusing on perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, tables were drafted to help catalog which markers interviewees reached at different points (i.e., in high

school, after high school, currently, and in the thirties and beyond). As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain, this process involved “thinking about the relationships between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes” (p. 89). Accordingly, it was at this stage that some initial codes began to emerge as more important for their thematic contributions, while others became less salient to the specific research questions. At this point, potential themes were also reviewed for their ability to accurately reflect the data. This fourth stage involved ongoing review of coded excerpts and as well as of the larger data set to ensure that themes reflected what was actually reported by participants. Assisting in this stage, drafts of the thematic analysis were presented to the researcher’s dissertation committee, who provided feedback, for example about repetition of data across themes, which resulted in further review and refinement.

From this iterative process of returning to the original data set, themes were gradually refined, a final thematic map connecting patterns from each research question was created, and the most salient narrative extracts were finalized. A final set of results was then written for each research question, formatted to include theme descriptions interwoven with illustrative excerpts from participants’ narratives.

Validity in Qualitative Research

In comparison to validity issues in quantitative research, issues of validity in qualitative research are distinct (Creswell, 2003). The focus is no longer on generalizing to a universal population or obtaining internally consistent responses, but rather on ensuring that results are valid in terms of their accuracy and faithfulness to the data and the true experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). To ensure that findings from the qualitative research were valid according to this standard, several steps were taken. First, participants were given the opportunity to make changes to their interview transcripts. Second, all illustrative excerpts were

re-visited in the transcripts after results were re-written, as an additional check that themes remained accurate to the words of participants. Third, what Creswell (2003) refers to as “peer debriefing” (p. 196) was used, whereby the researcher’s dissertation committee was presented with drafts of the findings and were able to ask questions and present alternate views. Further, the analysis strove to include exceptional data or that which ran “counter to the themes” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196), recognizing that varied experiences reflect the true reality of research findings.

Results

The qualitative analysis revealed widespread similarities, along with some differences, between interviewees from university, vocational college/trade school, and the labour force. It also revealed some additional findings about emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood that were not investigated in the quantitative analysis. These similarities, differences, and additional findings are reported below.

Conceptions of what marks adulthood. Concerning conceptions of what marks adulthood, the discourse of interviewees pointed largely to similarities across vocational settings. First, markers reflecting independence were the most talked about criteria of adulthood by all interviewees. Second, also commonly talked about were markers reflecting role transitions and interdependence/family capacities. Third, less talked about were markers reflecting chronological transitions, norm compliance, and biological transitions, the latter being discussed least of all. However, although role transitions and chronological transitions were discussed as markers, they were also contested, debated, or spoken about with ambivalence. Last, a number of interviewees discussed having held naive conceptions in the past about what marks adulthood;

emerging adulthood brought a shift in attitude that often gave way to new perspectives about what it actually means to reach adulthood.

Independence. In discussing what marks adulthood, markers reflecting independence were talked about the most across vocational settings. For example, the independence and growing responsibilities of leaving home were talked about by several interviewees. Among those in the labour force, Austin stated that moving out was the one marker he still needed to be an adult. He also said that, to be an adult, “*you have to be able to {pause} provide for yourself first.*” Meathead also spoke of the importance of being independent and responsible, saying that she felt like an adult even as a teenager because of the following:

Well, living on my own. Paying my own bills. I had a dog, so she was my responsibility. I had a girlfriend who all, I felt was partially a responsibility on my part. Getting myself up and out of bed, you know. I was used to it but it was still I felt a part of being an adult because I wasn't relying on anyone. Doing groceries, just stuff like that.

”Maturity” and “responsibility” were important to Meathead in marking adulthood, and “*independence is really – the big one.*”

Among university students, Mark also suggested that adulthood “*requires a level of maturity.*” Malcolm spoke of adulthood being a reflection of becoming more personally responsible for his actions, including “*little things (...) just making your bed, having a clean house. (...) not acting foolish.*” Responsibility and independence were also commented on by Reigh and by Helen, with Helen saying that one of the important signs of adulthood was “*doing it on my own.*” Among vocational college/trade school students, Stewart spoke of independence in terms of both financial security and more basic “*life skills,*” including those related to hunting, fishing, and surviving in the wilderness.

Another aspect of independence talked about was taking charge of decisions and being the initiator in one's own life. This was something Mel from the labour force talked about:

Like, in high school - it's trying to please everyone else. {pause} Because that's what you're supposed to do right, you're supposed to do what your parents say, what everybody says. And now it's like okay. As you transition to adulthood, you have to make your own decisions. About what you want.

Desmond said that knowing his “views” and “values” and making his own choices are part of being adult. Apprentice Kate also spoke of independence in these ways, saying that she feels like an adult because “*I've got my own opinions, I've got my own views, I don't rely on anyone to mould me anymore.*” Similarly for Stewart, who spoke of the importance of “*being able to make my own choices and get around on my own.*” For Reigh, a marker of adulthood was having a “goal” that she herself devised for her future, along with self-confidence to “*stand up*” for herself. Stewart also spoke about confidence, as did Malcolm, who noted that he has “*learned*” not to let people influence his own decisions “*too much.*” Competency and maturity were also discussed. As Austin emphasized when looking back to a time when he had his own company, “*I don't think I was at the point of maturity to consider myself at a, I guess a competent level to be adult.*”

Role transitions. In discussing what marks adulthood, interviewees across vocational settings also spoke often about criteria reflecting role transitions, including purchasing a house or car, becoming employed full-time or taking on a career, securing wealth, marrying, having a child, finishing education, and simply settling down into a routine. For example, Mel described knowing she had reached adulthood because “*I hold down a full-time job that I show up at – every day. Umm. {pause} Two cars, you know. Like the two cars, double garage, house, you*

know. (....) I commute to work.” Other markers she discussed were finishing post-secondary education and getting married. Austin’s view at one point during emerging adulthood was that adulthood would be reached “*when I actually got into my career (...) It was – once I had something solid to depend on for months rather than playing life by month by month I – you know, something solid.*” At different points, he also spoke of completing post-secondary education, owning a vehicle, having a family, and being “*settled down*” as markers.

When Desmond talked about reaching adulthood, important was securing a job for which he was no longer “*on probation.*” Kate referred to role transitions as “*those responsible, money management things,*” including purchasing a house and a car, and investing money. Stewart talked about becoming “*career-oriented*” in a stable job as a marker of adulthood, but he also reflected back on the importance of shooting his “*first moose*” and the pride he felt when his role as a successful hunter was acknowledged in his Ojibwe community.

For university student Malcolm, role transitions that reflected reaching adulthood included having a career, a house, a car, and children. Speaking of ways in which she had not reached adulthood, Reigh said that she did not have a car and still lived in a condominium purchased by her parents. Mark talked about how he saw himself as getting “*closer*” to adulthood after obtaining his high school diploma. Moreover, he too placed importance on being “*productive*” in a “*real job.*”

Family capacities/interdependence. Across vocational settings, interviewees also regularly discussed markers of adulthood reflecting interdependence and family capacities, including becoming less self-oriented, making lifelong commitments to others, prioritizing family needs, becoming involved in the community, and having greater control over emotions.

One of the ways Austin marked adulthood was having lived with a girlfriend, and he described that as a “*long duration*” relationship. He went on to state that being settled in a “*family like setting*” would mark adulthood for him in the future. For Fabrizio, family capacities seemed important. When asked about the ways in which he thought he had reached adulthood, Fabrizio said the following:

I realize what love is. And uh I realize the importance of family, what it means. (....) It is who you're with and what uh loyalty. Honour. (....) Being able, knowing that you will lay down your life for them. No matter what.

Malcolm also spoke of “*having a family*” as a marker of adulthood. For Desmond as well, one of the markers of reaching adulthood was being able to visualize himself “*as a family person*” who is “*responsible enough to have a child.*” Kate also spoke of the relationship between being an adult and being able to care for a family: “*Better not have a family if I'm not an adult.*”

Interviewees also spoke of adulthood being marked by changes in relationships with parents, siblings, and friends. Reigh noted that a “*huge part*” in the transition in both her and her sister’s lives has been growing “*up to a place where we're kinder to each other and we treat each other like adults.*” She also emphasized a key shift in how she related to her father “*on a level that does not even involve my feelings or me.*” Austin spoke of changing relationships with friends as something that shaped his transition to adulthood, explaining that “*life had changed quite a bit and some people I'd lost lots of contact with so I no longer talked to 'em.*” So too did Mel, who said she “*drifted apart*” from a best friend who was “*in a different phase*” of life.

Another aspect of interdependence spoken about was focusing on the needs of others beyond the immediate family. For instance, Stewart talked about teaching the next generation of youth as a marker of adulthood within his First Nations community, explaining that is a “*more*

defined” way of “*passing on knowledge*.” Kate explained that the transition to adulthood involves thinking “*about the bigger picture and something other than yourself*” and, for her, religion was a shaping part of that transition. For Mel, an important marker of adulthood was not only “*trying to take care of*” other people, but even becoming less “*judgmental*” and “*more environmentally conscious*.” For Desmond, “*paying more attention to politics and stuff that’s going on in the world*” was one of the ways in which he felt like an adult.

Further, interviewees spoke of adulthood being marked by a shift in their outlooks and abilities to control emotion. For example, Mark thought that one of the reasons he was approaching adulthood was because his attitude has “*mellowed*” and he no longer had to be “*right about everything*.” For Amelia, part of growing up involved no longer overreacting to things.

Chronological transitions. Less talked about as markers of adulthood were chronological transitions such as age, obtaining a driver’s licence and driving, and being of legal age to drink or pay taxes. Amelia mentioned that becoming of “*legal*” age was one of the ways in which everything was “*changing from adolescence into adults*.” Malcolm commented that, when a person reaches the ages of 15 to 18, driver’s licences and cars can be obtained and the person is “*no longer just a youth*,” in his eyes, that is a time of “*becoming a young adult*.” Malcolm also said that he has “*definitely felt older*” since turning 25. For Reigh, although she did not feel like an adult, she felt like she should have reached “*some semblance*” of it as a 24 year-old. For Amelia and Stewart, the “*twenties*” was also an age that, back in high school, they believed would mark adulthood. Mark also commented that the twenties were ages he “*associated with adulthood*.” Also, Amelia believed “*wisdom*” accompanied age, making age something that “*sort of factors*” into adult status. Paying taxes was also mentioned, spoken about by two interviewees.

For instance, Amelia said that a sign of adulthood was when an individual has to “*do taxes.*”

Norm compliance. Norm compliance was also less talked about in terms of what marks adulthood, and what was shared focused mainly on the use of substances. For instance, Mel spoke of the bar scene and “*drinking every night*” as an example of being immature. Meathead stated that one of the ways in which she didn’t feel like an adult in high school was because she “*drank all the time and smoked cigarettes.*” According to Malcolm and Amelia, using marijuana was another behaviour not acceptable in adulthood. From Amelia’s perspective, “*pot is a high school phase. Or a college phase.*”

Biological transitions. Interviewees rarely spoke of adulthood being marked by biological transitions. Concerning the few instances of such talk, Malcolm spoke of adulthood being something that is reached “*physically*” in addition to “*mentally*” and “*emotionally,*” and Desmond commented that brain development is another indicator of reaching adulthood. Another rare discussion came from Reigh:

I discovered through having a blot clot that I can’t have children so that’s been something else that’s changed me because now (...) I can’t necessarily experience that marker of adulthood.

Questioning the importance of role and chronological transitions. While role and chronological transitions were talked about as markers of adulthood, their importance was regularly questioned and challenged, or at least spoken about with ambivalence. For example, Austin debated the merit of certain role transitions:

I don’t think it makes somebody an adult to have a kid, I know lots of teenagers that have – had kids and it doesn’t make them an adult. So I mean it, you can have a kid and whatever and it’s not going to make you an adulthood.

Meathead also refuted the importance of becoming engaged or married: *“I’m still going to be an adult if I’m single or married or – married to multiple people.”* Neither was it important in her eyes whether one is a parent. Desmond commented that it was mistaken to believe that, simply because a person has reached the age of 19 and can drink, he or she has reached adulthood. Finally, Stewart suggested that money and having a job should not be considered important.

In addition to refuting the importance of role and chronological transitions, some interviewees were even ambivalent in their current views on their importance. For example, Stewart acknowledged that, despite his belief that wealth and jobs should not be important markers, much of his discourse centered on his goals of building up his wealth and job security. As he stated, *“it’s gonna sound dumb ‘cause it’s all I’ve been talking about, but money I don’t think should be important but it is.”* Also for Meathead, who asserted that financial security did not equate to adult status, some of her biggest goals were to purchase a house, *“to be financially stable”* and *“not live cheque to cheque.”* As another example, although Malcolm refuted that having a child or getting married marked adulthood, he also listed those role transitions as markers he will reach. Further conveying ambivalence, he at one point asked, *“What do you define as adulthood?”*

Naivety in past views, and new perspectives about what marks adulthood. While some interviewees discussed how their views on what marks adulthood had not changed since high school, many reflected on how they may have previously held misguided views about what it means to be an adult. For example, Reigh said the following about how her view changed such that she now placed more importance on *“confidence and jobs and job security”* and less importance on *“material markers that people often revert to as markers of adulthood.”*

Because I'd lived in so many places that year I think it – that kind of made me think, 'oh maybe owning a house isn't going to make you an adult'. Because I lived in a condo, by myself, and I was like, I don't feel like – even though I didn't own it, it was still my house, and I was like 'I don't feel like an adult'.

She also went on to explain how attending university has played a role in changing her conceptions: *"I think it's um, chipping away at my initial – or I should say, older ideas of what the markers of adulthood are."* Indeed, Reigh was still *"discovering concepts of adulthood;"* as she explained, *"I truly feel like that is more of a process."* Maturity also replaced role transitions as an important marker of adulthood for Meathead, who explained:

In high school I thought you were – an adult when you could not live paycheque to paycheque or like I guess financially stable. I mean now, I don't think it doesn't make you an adult if you can't put five grand into savings account of whatever. Like I still think I'm still an adult.

Malcolm reported that adulthood became less about *"having a kid, a family"* for him over time, and became more about being personally responsible for his actions. For Desmond, *"paying taxes"* was an erroneous marker that he no longer believed was indicative of reaching adulthood.

For Mark, views changed as well, with new perspectives arising on what it means to reach adulthood:

I think that (...) I may have missed, have missed the mark in how I gauge adulthood in certain ways (...) there's enough variance in – in the – in the manners in which adults live that {pause} that I think it would be inappropriate of me to assume that everything about one's specific sort of adulthood applies to everyone.

Kate also acknowledged uncertainty about what it means to reach adulthood, laughing as she stated, *"I don't know if you can really define it, ultimately like really. 'Cuz yeah I mean I think I'm an adult now, but ten years from now I'll probably be like, 'good grief.'"*

Perceptions of having reached adulthood. Concerning views on having reached adulthood, the thematic analysis revealed a progression towards adulthood that was similar across vocational settings, marked by five key themes. First, interviewees spoke of having felt they had not reached adulthood in high school. Second, they spoke of feeling ambiguous about their current adult status. Third, they spoke of reaching adulthood as they move into their thirties. Fourth, several interviewees spoke of having naively felt that they had reached adulthood in the past. Fifth, some discussed new perspectives about ever reaching adulthood.

Not adult in high school. When interviewees were asked whether they felt like adults in high school, their discourse revealed the overwhelming sense that they did not perceive themselves as adults at that time. Indeed, 10 of the 12 interviewees expressed that clear perspective. In explaining that view, Austin said, *"I didn't really care, so everything in life was just like carefree."* Fabrizio relayed a similar sentiment: *"I was still in high school. Yeah, and I never thought I was an adult until I don't even know. Probably just lately."* Mark said, *"I don't know if I felt like I'd even really reached adolescence for a fair portion of high school,"* while Reigh laughed and said the following when asked if she had reached adulthood in high school: *"No. Not at all. In terms of – mentally, no I don't. I don't think so."*

There were just two interviewees who expressed more mixed views about having reached adulthood in high school, and these were young women who faced significant hardships earlier in life. First was Meathead, who left home as a teenager. Looking back, Meathead responded: *"I mean I was already an adult at 13 I GUESS. But...."* Although asserting her adult status, the

emphasis she placed on “*I GUESS*” and the trailing off of her response conveyed the lingering uncertainty in her perception. Second was Helen, who also left home as a teenager. Her response conveyed a similar ambivalence: “*maybe, I guess maybe, I did know what I wanted so maybe I could’ve reached adulthood in high school. I’m not really sure.*”

Naivety in past views about having reached adulthood. Reflecting on past perceptions of having reached adulthood, the discourse of several participants conveyed beliefs that they had been naive in the past by having unrealistically viewed themselves as adults. For example, Malcolm laughed and said, “*I thought I was an adult*” in high school. Desmond also laughed and exclaimed, “*Probably at the time!*” when asked if he had thought he had reached adulthood in high school. Kate also laughed: “*I think every high school student thinks they’ve reached adulthood when they’re in high school (....) you always think you’re so mature and then you grow up a year and – so not mature!*”

Ambivalence about current adult status. Concerning adult status at this point their lives, interviewees across vocational settings shared responses that were either undecided, in-between, or of two minds. For example, Fabrizio stated, “*I think I’m getting there,*” while Amelia’s view was that “*I’m not fully there.*” Malcolm conveyed his ambivalence by stating “*I feel like I haven’t found all the things I needed to be an adult yet,*” but then countering, “*I don’t want to say that I’m a young adult anymore.*” Helen similarly conveyed uncertainty by offering, “*Umm, I guess, yeah*” and then pausing before adding, “*Umm, I’m not one hundred percent sure.*”

Mark stated his thought that he was “*really getting pretty close*” to reaching adulthood: “*to a certain extent – parts of me are already there.*” For Reigh, it was a forwards and backwards process: “*I don’t know, I think I’m in some phase of adulthood right now, um but (...) when I go home I still revert back.*” Likewise for Kate, who laughed and said that it “*depends on the day.*”

Some days I feel like I've reached adulthood and some days I don't." Mel similarly stated that *"there are still times where I just {pause} I still feel like I'm 13 and I'm not sure what I'm doing."* Austin said that living with his mother was the *"only thing"* keeping him from full adult status. Desmond described a similar perception. He first stated *"I think so"* when asked if he had reached adulthood, but then added, *"Well, if I was – living at home is, this is where I might skew your results.(...) Coming back living at home and that sort of makes it tough."*

Feeling like an adult in the thirties. When interviewees were asked whether they think they will have reached adulthood as they move into their thirties, responses revealed that most believe they will be adults. For example, Meathead, Stewart, and Helen expressed quite simply that they will feel like adults in their thirties. Similarly, Austin was *"very positive"* that adulthood was not far off, stating, *"I could move out tomorrow and that would basically satisfy it."* Malcolm spoke of his expectation of doing so in *"the next ten years."*

New perspectives on reaching adulthood. A small proportion of interviewees expressed lingering questions about reaching adulthood, but this ambiguity was accompanied by self-acceptance or new perspectives on whether adulthood is ever a certainty. For example, Mel expressed her view that adulthood in the thirties may not be a sure thing, stating that *"a lot of people in their thirties are still – immature."* While Mark perceived that he will *"have reached whatever is close enough to adulthood"* in his thirties, he explained that he does not believe *"there is a perfect adulthood"* because *"even adults have a, have their own share of – of lingering – immaturities or, or difficulties with, with certain elements of adulthood."* Reigh's questions about adult status were also evident, as she laughed when stating, *"I kind of wonder, because I thought that I would but I don't. And I'm okay with that. I'm okay with not feeling like*

an adult.” Reigh’s statement was matched by Mark’s prediction that he too will eventually “*come to terms with*” an imperfect adult status.

Perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood. Concerning views on having reached markers of adulthood, the discourse of interviewees revealed key differences in addition to several similarities across vocational settings. Namely, interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting independence, role transitions, family capacities, and some aspects of interdependence. Differences did not appear across vocational settings in the extent to which interviewees spoke of having reached biological transitions, chronological transitions, and norm compliance, with there being too little talk of norm compliance to enable a comparison. Across vocational settings, interviewees spoke of reaching most markers of adulthood as they move into their thirties and beyond.

Independence. Interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting independence, such as being financially independent from parents, not deeply tied to parents emotionally, deciding on personal beliefs and values independently, and accepting responsibilities. For example, among students, Desmond, Mark, and Amelia lived rent-free with their parents, while Reigh lived in a condominium that her parents purchased. University student Helen seemed most independent, living with her fiancé and ensuring that she paid her share of rent. Malcolm also lived on his own, but he acknowledged, “*my mom still helps me when she can or when I ask her to.*”

In contrast, although labour force participants Fabrizio and Austin had each returned home to live with their mothers, they both paid rent. Indeed, Austin felt that he was still largely

independent: *“I’m at the point where I just go when I want to go, I come when I want to come and I don’t get bothered for it so that’s where – that’s my independence.”* Meathead and Mel were living even more independently, both continuing to reside away from their parents, Mel with her husband, and Meathead with her fiancé. Yet, Meathead spoke of *“very hard”* financial times. Austin too was working on getting *“out of debt.”* Even Fabrizio, who had his own businesses, was *“not as financially established”* as he wanted to be. Here, being financially independent from parents did not equate to being financially well-off.

The discourse of interviewees revealed that many of these differences in financial independence were a reflection of adverse circumstances faced by those from the labour force earlier in life. Meathead stated that her father had not been *“in the picture”* and that her mother experienced many *“misfortunes.”* Eventually:

One thing led to another and we had a big argument one day and it was just too much for her to handle (...) and – it’s too much for me to try and take on her plus take care of my brother and go to school. (...) So, basically I – she told me to get out and I had enough of her telling me to get out and then come back and get out so I stayed out.

Austin also spoke about having a *“huge”* fight with his single mother in Grade 12. He explained that his mother was living with a boyfriend at the time and that he and his mother fought *“basically every day.”* Thus, when a friend in another province offered him a place to stay, he *“took that opportunity and left, just packed up and boom, gone.”* As he described, he had to *“worry about myself, worry about everything, my income, my funding, all that stuff and my parents, they didn’t really help me much when I was out there so it was like well, you moved out, ‘bye.’”*

Although university student Helen also left home during high school due to adverse family circumstances, including her mother's alcoholism, she moved in with her grandmother who was supportive, for example, helping her "*buckle down*" and save money to travel after high school. Among other students, it was only apprentice Kate who did not live at home in high school, as she attended a religious boarding school from which she returned home on weekends. While she commented that boarding school was a setting of "*half*" independence, that time was nevertheless a period of "*no commitments, you don't have anything to worry about, don't have to deal with money or bills.*" She assisted on the family farm and when she needed money, her parents asked "*how much do you need?*" and gave it to her.

In contrast, university student Reigh explained that she did not have to work during high school because her parents were "*financially secure*" and wanted her to "*experience extracurricular activities.*" She also said that her parents were very involved when she was a teen, as they "*went to every recital, every concert, every, you know, every competition, everything.*" Amelia also commented on how her family was "*fairly well off*" and she made several references to the support they provided. For example, in high school they bought her a car and she was generally free to spend the money she earned from her part-time job on items she desired. Desmond was also given a car during high school but there was no need for him to even take on a part-time job. As he explained, he was given an allowance and encouraged to "*just focus on school.*" Stewart also laughed as he reflected on his time in high school, noting that his parents provided him with "*a free ride, free rent, and free food at home.*" Malcolm reported that his mother did "*everything*" for him during high school. In contrast, those from the labour force seemed much more thrust into a situation of heavy responsibilities early on. For instance, like Meathead, Mel also described having to take on more responsibilities around the

age of 14, following her parents' separation. She lived "*under the poverty line*" and, as a high school student, she "*took care*" of her siblings while her mother worked evenings.

Considering the extent to which interviewees made decisions independently of parents or other influences, students spoke more of depending on their parents than participants from the labour force. For instance, Reigh explained that her mother "*has always been like 'well maybe we should think about a five year plan here or in ten years, what do you think you might want to do.'*" Amelia spoke as though her mother was similarly involved in her decisions. She reported that her mother was "*always*" telling her to study, and she stated that she asked her mother if she could take a year off prior to commencing work as a chemical technologist. Even for Mark, a past decision to take a break from university involved his parents: "*I think I sort of just wore down my parents with my – bad attitude to the point where they're like okay. Uh take a year off, if that's what you need to do, do it.*" In contrast, those from the labour force spoke much less about their parents' involvement in decisions. For example, although Mel spoke of marital advice her mother had once given her, she said that they had grown more distant over the years.

Similarly, the discourse of interviewees from the labour force revealed that they were not as deeply tied to parents emotionally as both university and vocational college/trade school students. Meathead said that she was only in contact with her mother "*a little bit*" but no longer had "*ties*" to family. Further, her recent discovery of her father's criminal activity had been quite difficult; according to Meathead, her mother did not offer her "*a comforting word*" during that period. Even for Fabrizio, although he reported being "*very close*" with his mother, other family relationships appeared distant. His biological father lived in another country and had kicked him out when he travelled there after high school. He also commented that "*it wasn't a big deal*" when his mother and step-father separated because, "*I never felt like I, like I had a dad. He was*

there but I never felt like I had a father.” Austin had a conflicted past with his mother and seemed similarly distanced from his father, who divorced his mother when he was two years-old: *“I do still talk to him from time to time, but his interests have changed a lot, my interests have changed a lot so when we visit it’s like a two hour visit and then that’s ...”*

In contrast, the discourse of both university and vocational college/trade school students revealed stronger emotional ties to parents. For example, Reigh spoke of sensing *“letting down”* her parents when she resumed dating an ex-boyfriend. Helen reported that her stepfather is now *“very supportive of my decisions in life.”* Malcolm spoke of his mother’s attempt to shelter him from what he suspected were health problems facing his step-father. For Mark, his parents were simply *“the single biggest influence at every period”* in his life. Amelia explained how her mother still strived to have the entire family *“eat supper together.”* Although Desmond spoke of fighting with his mother *“all the time,”* he described family vacations taken since high school and he indicated that he still attempts to *“do family things”* during his spare time. Steward stated that having family there in a *“supportive”* way has been influential on his life since high school. He explained that his parents have been there *“trying to lend some direction,”* for example, *“hinting”* that he should obtain further education. While the role that family continued to play in the life of Kate seemed less active, they remained very important to her: *“they’re always going to be (...) influential.”*

Role transitions. Interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students of having reached markers of adulthood reflecting role transitions. Mel and Fabrizio were married and Meathead was engaged. In recent times, Austin too had been in a *“common-law”* relationship. In contrast, no students were married, and only Helen was engaged. Just one interviewee had a child, and that was Fabrizio, whose recently

separated wife became pregnant when they were dating. Concerning home ownership, only one interviewee, Mel from the labour force, lived in a home she and her husband had purchased.

While all interviewees in the labour force indicated working full-time, only the two apprentices were doing likewise amongst students. Interestingly, however, most from the labour force did not consider their jobs to be careers. Austin explained that his job working nights at a hotel was “*a nowhere job. It’s just to fill air basically.*” At the time of the interview, Meathead worked nights in a meat warehouse and said “*definitely not*” when asked about her job’s career potential. Neither were the two apprentices certain about the long-term career potential of their full-time jobs, with Stewart talking about the possibility of earning his pilot’s licence and following that career path.

Concerning education, none of the university or vocational college/trade school students had finished school and none from the labour force were in school or had earned post-secondary credentials. However, two individuals from the labour force, Austin and Fabrizio, had been post-secondary students for a period before withdrawing. Strikingly, however, all of the labour force interviewees except Fabrizio expressed a desire to still obtain post-secondary education. For example, Meathead emphasized that she “*would love to go*” to school but had not yet done so for the following reasons:

I’ve always had to work really hard to pay for my own stuff so I never had any extra money or (...) any assistance whatsoever and - like I don’t even know how (...) I would apply. (...) Like I’ve never had the initial money to apply, plus I’ve never had any sort of assistance whatsoever. (...) if I have somebody to hold my hand through it, I guarantee I would have gone and exceeded and, you know, maybe gone again. But because it’s just

the initial step, it's just – there's been so much stress with all kinds of other stuff, like I feel that I can't – figure out the process? So it really frustrates me.

Mel explained that going to “college” had been her initial goal after high school but lack of support from an ex-boyfriend had proven to be a barrier at the time. She also explained that post-secondary education would have involved debt and spending tens of “*thousands of dollars*” of her own money. Even though Fabrizio no longer expressed interest in post-secondary education, he also stated that he didn’t further his education right after high school because “*his parents couldn’t afford it*” and he “*didn’t like debt.*” For Austin, his brief academic venture had been partially funded by the grandmother of a girlfriend and, looking ahead, he was concerned about being “*further in debt*” through education.

In contrast, the education-related financial reality of students was different. The employers of apprentices Kate and Stewart paid for their training. While Helen and Malcolm funded their university with student loans, Malcolm also received assistance from his mother and a friend; for Reigh and Mark, it was their families who largely funded their university tuition. Interestingly, however, even several students spoke about continuing their education beyond the credentials they were currently working towards. Helen was completing a double major and had plans to go on to study social work, Malcolm spoke of pursuing graduate studies after earning his degree in sociology, and Reigh was beginning a new degree in physiology to pursue a career in medicine after convocating in international studies. Amelia also wondered about other career directions because she saw herself as being perhaps “*too young*” to begin in a lifelong career in chemical technology.

Family capacities/interdependence. Interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students of having reached markers of

adulthood reflecting family capacities and certain aspects of interdependence, namely those centered on long-term relationships and commitments. Fabrizio spoke of “*trying to work on*” his marriage and the focus he realized he needed to place on being “*a father*” who can “*provide*” for his daughter. Meathead and Mel each also focused energies on their spousal relationships. For instance, Mel said that she spends a sizeable portion of her time “*trying to get my husband to be happy*” and Meathead expressed how “*awesome*” it had been watching her fiancé “*grow as a person*.” In contrast, only vocational college/trade school student Amelia and university students Malcolm and Helen were in committed relationships, with Amelia expressing that she would not marry her current boyfriend. However, Fabrizio’s transition into making a life-long commitment to his infant was not planned and his marriage seemed on tumultuous ground. Moreover, Mel’s history of placing the needs of her romantic partners above her own at times kept her from being where she wanted to be in life (e.g., obtaining post-secondary education). Thus, meeting some of these markers of adulthood did not necessarily signify being in a better place in life. Among students, the only discourse on having reached family capacities was by Helen, who spoke about her fiancé and her cat as “*a little family*.” For example, she said the following about providing for her cat: “*I have never given my love like that before (....) Or care.*”

Considering aspects of interdependence related to becoming less self-oriented, more considerate of others, and more in control of emotions, fewer differences across vocational settings appeared. For example, Meathead spoke of the volunteering she does in the community, sharing that “*giving back*” is an important part of her life. Fabrizio spoke about becoming a more “*thoughtful*” person since high school, and Austin explained that he is now “*less confrontational*,” “*less negative*,” and more patient:

More stuff that I encounter, I don't really approach it as aggressively or as like negatively as I used to, now it's more like okay, well this is what I've been given, now I have to figure out how to deal with it.

Reigh similarly described an important shift that was based on her emotional reaction to her father's cancer diagnosis and her grandmother's impending passing:

I would like to say I became more compassionate in my – I think I grew up a lot that week (...). In times going by whenever something bad had happened I would have been like 'oh how is this affecting me, what's going on in my life' those types of things, but this week it (...) was 'okay what do we need to do to get my dad better, what about my grandma, what can we do'.

She also spoke of discovering that she and her sister now “*like each other's company and (...) we can have that relationship now that we didn't have before.*” Helen spoke of a shift in her relationship with her stepfather, explaining that although they used to fight “*all the time (...)* Now we have like the best relationship, which is really strange, but its good.”

Desmond spoke of a shift taking place when he noticed his father's stress upon being pick-pocketed during a family trip. Reflecting back, Desmond said that he was the one thinking “*just calm down, it happens. We're fine, we have enough travellers' cheques and everything.*”

Stewart also talked about a shift in his relationship with his father, saying they had recently become “*more like buddies.*” He provided the following example of how things changed during a recent hunting trip:

This year was the first time I actually kinda took him out, paid for everything. (...)
Did all the picking the spots and driving and stuff like that. It was kind of different flipping the roles around.

Austin spoke of a change in his relationship with his mother, stating that since he moved back home, they began “*talking more*” and so things “*got a little bit better*” between them. Desmond commented that he could visualize himself as a parent in the future, in part, because he wanted to ensure that his “*mom and dad have that experience*” of having grandchildren. For Stewart, passing on knowledge to the “*younger generation*” of Ojibwe youth was something he now took part in with his nieces and nephews.

Norm compliance. In regards to one’s own compliance with norms, interviewees provided little discourse and there were few differences between vocational settings. One of the few instances of talk came from Malcolm, who described his decreased use of marijuana: “*when I first got to university I was like ‘oh man, I love it! I’ll do it forever!’ . But now that I’m getting older I’m like it’s not something I can do my whole life.*” Kate discussed having become more safety conscious at work, and Meathead stated that she tends to be the designated driver for peers, having lost a friend while a peer was driving under the influence. One other behaviour talked about as a passing phase related to dating; Fabrizio spoke of a period in which he “*went through a lot of girls*” and Desmond spoke of what he called a “*promiscuous stage.*” Although various interviewees did talk more generally about “*partying*”, crime, and the use of drugs and alcohol at various times in their lives, there was little specific discourse about their current behaviours.

Chronological transitions. Interviewees rarely spoke of reaching chronological transitions and their discourses revealed few differences across vocational settings. Most interviewees appeared to have obtained their drivers’ licences during high school, everyone had reached age 18, and all but 19 year-old Amelia had reached age 21. One unique experience belonged to university student Mark, who was only 16 years-old at the time of high school

graduation. As he explained, he struggled socially to be “*on the same level as the rest of the people*” in high school. However, Mark was 24 years-old at the time of the interview so he and everyone else had reached the chronological age to drive, vote, consume alcohol, and complete taxes.

Biological transitions. Interviewees rarely spoke of reaching biological transitions. For instance, one interviewee spoke about having become sexually active during high school, and only Malcolm described reaching adulthood “*physically.*” One other mention of reaching biological markers of adulthood came from Reigh, who discussed learning that she was unable to bear children. Based on participant ages, however, all interviewees were likely of full height and physically developed to the extent that they could have children.

Reaching markers of adulthood in the thirties. Focusing on the future, the discourse of most interviewees across vocational settings conveyed a belief that they would reach markers of adulthood in their thirties and beyond. Others looked to the future with more uncertainty.

Meathead saw herself continuing to remain independent yet more “*settled.*” She also saw herself as married, perhaps with children, owning a house, becoming financially stable, and running a business. Fabrizio predicted that he too will be “*settled,*” as well as running “*very successful*” businesses in his thirties. Helen emphasized that she hopes to still have her independence in her thirties. She also predicted that she will be raising children while working in her thirties, and that she will be a home owner. Malcolm also spoke of his expectations to have a family, a career, children, a house, and “*all that*” in his thirties. Desmond stated that his life will be “*defined*” as he moves into his thirties, and he pictured himself having a “*wife and kids and a house and a career.*” Amelia also saw herself as settled with a family, a full-time job, and a home in her thirties.

Other interviewees were less certain about their futures. For example, Mel was “*not really sure*” what her life will look like in her thirties. However, she predicted that she might have children and will likely have completed post-secondary education before then. While Mark was “*not sure*” how his thirties were “*going to look*” beyond stating “*I’m probably going to have settled down by that point,*” Reigh seemed even less certain, exclaiming “*I don’t know! I don’t know*” when asked what life would look like in her thirties and beyond. She went on to state, however, that she would like to travel and have a career, and that marriage was not an expectation but “*would be great.*” Kate conveyed uncertainty by stating that, while she would “*like to have a house and maybe a family*” when she moves into her thirties, her focus at that time will depend “*on what happens in ten years.*”

Identity development. Concerning identity development, the thematic analysis revealed four themes that reflected a slow progression, which held across vocational settings, towards forming an identity or sense of self. First, interviewees spoke of having a naive sense of identity earlier in life. Second, the discourse of several interviewees conveyed that certain early commitments had been made prior to exploration. Third, interviewees spoke of a period of uncertainty and exploration in which they were on-course to gain perspective, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and direction. Fourth, a number of interviewees vowed that identity explorations would continue in their thirties and beyond.

Naivety in earlier sense of self. Regardless of vocational setting, interviewees generally reflected on a previous period in which they did not know who they were or what they stood for, despite some having naively believed they had a developed sense of self at the time. Many spoke of a period in which they were shy, lacked confidence, and were focused on fitting in. For example, Fabrizio said that in high school he believed that he knew who he was but as he looked

back he realized that “*a person at that age hasn’t gone through enough to really know what life is about.*” As Meathead reflected back on an earlier period of adversity, she said that she “*was kind of naive before and not so much now.*” Back in high school, Mel was not “*in touch with how difficult some things are.*” She also spoke generally of how “*you think you know everything*” as a teenager. When asked to describe the extent to which he knew who he was and what he stood for in high school, Malcolm said, “*compared to now, not that much.*” Mark “*thought*” he knew who he was in high school; upon reflection, however, he had actually been more of “*a blank slate.*” At another point, he said that he sometimes “*had a very naive attitude*” in high school. Reigh avoided stirring “*the pot*” as a teenager and found herself “*adrift*” by some of the things taught at her all-girls religious high school: “*I just didn’t know what kind of things I stood for.*” Desmond said although he had his “*beliefs*” and knew what he wanted in high school, he now looks back and wonders, “*What the hell was I thinking?*” When Stewart was asked if he knew who he was and what he stood for in high school, he laughed and said, “*well I thought I knew.*”

Committing without exploration. The discourse of a number of interviewees revealed that past commitments, along with certain outlooks and opinions, had been made prior to exploration. For example, Kate reported that her “*morals, and such, they haven’t really changed since high school.*” As she explained, it “*worked well for my parents, and why wouldn’t it work well for me?*” For Amelia, the decision to study chemical technology in vocational college/trade school involved “*an amazing chemistry teacher*”:

Everybody’s like oh you have to pick something, you have to pick something and my chemistry teacher actually said ‘oh well if you don’t know what to do go into chemical technology,’ so I just applied there, got in.

That being said, Amelia did like chemistry in high school and asserted that she would have stopped her diploma program if she had not enjoyed the lab work. She also stated that it was a simple expectation in her household that she would enroll in post-secondary education and that she would enroll in the same institution where her mother taught and her siblings attended. For Reigh, it also seemed that initial decisions about university were made prior to exploration:

I didn't really know what I was going to do in university and my mom was like 'there's this program called international studies, what about that?' and I was like 'okay!' so it's lucky that I ended up liking it.

Apprentice Stewart reported that it was his boss who encouraged him to go for his ticket. As he explained, his boss brought the apprenticeship to his attention, and he said “*sure.*”

Finding oneself through exploration. Across vocational settings, most interviewees spoke of a period of exploration that commenced towards the end of high school, placing them on a path towards finding themselves. However, this path involved ups and downs, meanderings, and a period of increased uncertainty about the self.

For example, although Helen knew some of what she “*valued*” as early as high school, she did not immediately enroll in post-secondary education and instead worked and travelled. Looking back on her life after high school, she said, “*I explored what I really needed to explore and find. Which was myself.*” Even her choice to pursue social work at university reflected a desire to understand how she survived her difficult childhood. Stewart also described a period after high school in which he discovered what his “*view on the world was;*” this involved “*travelling a lot, meeting a lot of people and seeing different lifestyles.*” Desmond said that he “*really started to evolve*” during a break he took from his post-secondary education, stating that the experience enabled him to accept that computers were indeed the “*direction*” he wanted to

pursue academically. He referred to that period as a time of “*defining*” himself, saying that he also came to realize he needed to embrace being himself. Mark described searching for a “*set of behaviours (...) that would make things work out socially and professionally.*” At the time of the interview, he reported that he was “*maybe at an all time low for certainty in my views,*” explaining that he had come to “*know just the bare bones*” of who he was and was still “*fleshing it out.*” Amelia was about to graduate with her diploma in chemical technology, and questions about her life direction were coming to mind:

One of the biggest things that bugs me right now is (...) I will graduate when I'm 19 (....) So I could have the career for the rest of my life {pause} while I, when I'm twenty. And that like freaks the crap out of me.

Indeed, at different points in her discourse, Amelia discussed committing to a career at her age, stating that she needs to figure out if she would rather do something different.

For Reigh, explorations in travel, work, relationships, and university, along with challenges and adversity, contributed to her feeling “*more confident*” and focused, with a life “*direction*” that she “*came up with*” on her own. At the same time, despite having “*core ideas about what I feel is right and wrong and what I stand by,*” knowing what she stands for is a “*continual*” process. Malcolm also spoke of changes in his level of self-confidence in relation to his experiences since high school:

I became slightly more confident, I became a little more open about myself. (....) I started to like think about who I am and what I thought. I started building my own knowledge about myself and about what I knew.

Malcolm also predicted that his confidence will continue to grow, for example, in terms of “*what I know and what I'm doing*” as he moves into his thirties and beyond. Kate expressed that her

earlier commitments to certain moral and religious stances were becoming less “*certain*.” These doubts were compounded by questions pertaining to her career as an apprentice carpenter. Yet, for her, explorations did not seem as active as they did for some others: “*I’m not really exploring; I’m not quite as certain as I used to be, but I’m not really exploring either, I’m just coasting.*”

Among those from the labour force, Mel experienced a period after high school filled with travel, love relationships, and jobs. She explained that the purpose of many of the jobs was to “*explore*” options rather than pursue careers. She also said that a trip to Australia involved “*finding*” herself and discovering that she would “*have to be more content*” with what she was doing rather than trying to live up to the expectations of others. In fact, she reported that she was “*still trying to figure out*” what she wanted from life. For Meathead, the period since high school was similarly filled with diverse experiences, including briefly re-connecting with her father. This experience shaped her “*values*” and thrust her into a “*period of questioning everything*.” Yet, she reported that she had “*never really thought about*” whether she was certain in her views. For Fabrizio, the period after high school involved coaching, travel, time in Bible college, and various jobs. He said the following about how important it was to find himself:

Seeing my parents. And what they’re going through. They’re forty years old now. And they don’t know who they are. They don’t know what they want. (...) from observing everything that they, that they have gone through, what they’re going through right now {pause} umm I’m just happy that at 23 I can do it right now instead of doing it when I’m 40.

Fabrizio later explained that he was “*learning*” about himself because “*if you don’t know who you are, if you don’t try to find out who you are, you’re just going to get swallowed up and*

you're going to be screwed." Austin stated that he was still "*all over the place*" in terms of his interests and, although he knew "*who*" he was, he did not know "*exactly everything*". He later stated that, with all of the changes and adversity he faced since high school, "*right now my biggest importance in life is just getting back to, like, square one and finding where to go.*"

Aspirations about future explorations. There was variance, although not related to vocational setting, in the extent to which interviewees spoke with conviction about their future selves, yet many asserted that they will continue to explore who they are and what they stand for as they enter their thirties and beyond. Meathead predicted that she will "*still be open to anything*" in the future because she won't "*shut the door*" to further exploration if she can improve. Fabrizio commented that he will keep exploring because there are "*secrets inside you that'll always be revealed.*" Mel also predicted that her thirties will involve more exploration. While Malcolm could see himself "*getting more stringent on certain things,*" Reigh and Helen foresaw at least some amount of exploration, and Mark commented that there will continue to be a part of him that is "*constantly – questioning.*" Kate predicted that she will "*probably be a little more uptight*" in her thirties and beyond. Amelia stated that, although there "*is a chance*" she will not know who she is and what she stands for in her thirties, she predicted that "*experience*" will shape her to become "*certain*" in her views. Desmond said that he will be "*quite certain in the views,*" yet he predicted that there will always remain "*just a little bit of exploration.*" Stewart said that it "*hard to say*" what his future self will be like because it depends on whether or not he starts a family, yet he did not predict that "*a whole lot's going to change*" in terms of who he is and what he stands for.

Themes of emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood was spoken about by interviewees across settings as a period of instability, experimentation/identity explorations, self-focus, feeling

in-between adolescence and adulthood, negativity and stress, and sensing possibilities about one's future. However, interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students about this period being a time of few current possibilities and low control. Interviewees from the labour force also spoke more than students about focusing on others during this period. The following were some of the first words interviewees used when asked to label this time in their lives: *change, transition, challenge, aspirations, working hard, self examination, stress, running on a treadmill, growth, contentment, more stability and planning ahead.*

Age of instability. Across vocational settings, most interviewees spoke of emerging adulthood as a time of instability and volatility. Nearly all interviewees experienced re-current changes across several areas of life including education, employment, romantic relationships, travel, and living arrangements.

Helen, Malcolm, Stewart, and Reigh all spent time working in various jobs before beginning their post-secondary education. A number of them also travelled extensively. For Kate, Desmond, and Mark, the road after high school was even more variable, as they enrolled in post-secondary for varying periods before stopping to work and then re-enrolling in their current programs of study. Conversely, Fabrizio and Austin spent time at post-secondary institutions before quitting their studies without returning.

Concerning employment, interviewees did not speak of jobs that they viewed as having career potential; rather, many of their jobs were volatile, short-lived, and of low-wage. For example, Stewart laughed as he described part of his work history that included painting, siding, and other jobs in construction: "*I worked at a fast food place, worked at a gas station, (...) I fixed up some computers for the (...) school division, video stores, just all kinds of jobs.*" Meathead,

although having lived in her current city for less than one year, was working at her third job and was already lining up a new one. Mel reported working for a period “*at a fast food restaurant*” and then moving to California for six months to be a nanny. This was followed by work both in market research and at a jewellery warehouse, and Mel said that she disliked both of these jobs and was “*fired*” from the latter. Fabrizio reported that his employment history included working in retail, working for a telephone company, and selling cars and hot tubs, all prior to starting his current businesses in image consulting and contracting. Helen once worked in a casino and at a “*cafe bistro*” before moving to the mountains to work at a resort. At different times, she also worked at a car dealership, a dental clinic, and in retail seasonal positions. Mark once took a break from university to work at a grocery store and then at a survey company. Malcolm spent time at a “*temp agency*” prior to commencing university, work that he said involved “*all kinds of different jobs. I did construction, (...) I went to the factories, warehouses, anything.*”

Concerning living arrangements, instability was similarly evident in the discourse of interviewees. Although Mark and Amelia had continued to live with their parents since graduating from high school, others had left home at least once. Among them, however, it was not uncommon to move in with parents again at least once, as happened for Austin, Fabrizio, Meathead, Mel, and Desmond. While Reigh did not move home after all her travel and work experiences, she moved into a condominium her parents purchased. It was common for interviewees to even move between cities and provinces. For instance, Fabrizio got into his vehicle on the very night of his high school graduation and drove to Ontario for a coaching position. Stewart reported moving to another province “*on a whim.*” As he said, “*A buddy phoned me up one day and asked me if I wanted to move (...). And I said ‘when are you leaving?’, and he said ‘tomorrow’. ‘Sure!’, [laughs] so off I went.*” Meathead similarly

commented that within “*seven days*” of deciding to move to another province, she and her fiancé were on the road. Likewise for Helen, who described her rapid decision to move to the mountains:

There was this ad in the paper that said ‘work in the mountains’, and we go to the mountains every year. I love the mountains, and I was like ‘okay’, so I did my application, resume, and she called me the next day (this is a mountain town) and she’s like ‘well I’m coming to your city tomorrow, I could pick you up’, sweet, like awesome so I packed up and left the next day (....) it was so sudden and so fast I don’t even think I said bye to half my friends.

At another point, Helen decided to move into a house without much consideration, stating that she “*didn’t even look at the place.*” Malcolm similarly described finding a place to live while attending university, stating that he was eager to move into a basement suite without seeing it, and Mel reported having gone from “*sleeping on my dad’s couch*” for three months to moving in with her now-husband after dating only one week.

Interviewees also spoke of instability in terms of romantic relationships. For instance, Fabrizio said the following about his marriage:

During the bad times I’m like ‘I hate this, this is never going to change’ and during the good times I’m like ‘I LOVE this, this is the best.’ So I – because of that I was, I didn’t know how to ride the emotional roller coaster. I just went from extreme highs to extreme lows.

While Reigh experienced an up and down relationship with a boyfriend she dated “*off and on*” in university, Malcolm reflected on a three-year period between high school and university that just generally felt like “*a roller coaster,*” saying that “*some things were definitely really good about*

it and some things were really bad.” For Amelia, it was a current romantic relationship that was volatile; she explained that her relationship was entering a “*rocky area*” because she was beginning to miss some other experiences.

Age of experimentation/identity explorations. As discussed in the previous section on identity development, interviewees across vocational settings talked about emerging adulthood as a period of finding themselves through exploration. These explorations involved meeting new people and trying, for example, different jobs, romantic relationships, living arrangements, world views, post-secondary credentials, substances, and ways of living. For example, while Malcolm experimented with marijuana and working in the labour force, Austin explored the possibility of becoming a professional drummer and Kate tried out different churches. While Mel learned about herself in Australia and Reigh developed self-confidence in Japan and Finland, Stewart found himself by travelling across the country with his brother. Fabrizio and Kate each tried out Bible College, while Malcolm played football at university and Desmond was involved in Cadets. Trying new things was essential in helping interviewees find their place in life, as emphasized by Austin: “*experience is everything. So when it comes down to getting the opportunity to try something new? I usually don’t think twice about it anymore, I usually just do it.*” He encouraged anyone “*confused*” about what to do in life to “*go and experience everything they possibly could.*”

Age of self-focus. Interviewees across vocational settings spoke of emerging adulthood as a period of being focused on themselves. Fabrizio and Stewart described themselves as “*self centered,*” and Desmond said that, because of school, he was “*completely selfish.*” Mark acknowledged that, although he was not as driven towards “*instant gratification*” as he had been

in high school, he was still “*self absorbed*.” Although Mel reported focusing a lot on her husband, she also spoke of a cancer scare that left her reflecting on what she wanted:

That’s when I figured out life’s too short to be miserable. You can’t be unhappy. Like, I mean you can be unhappy for short periods of time ‘cause that’s how things go. But {pause} to be unhappy long-term whether it’s at a job, or with yourself, or whatever – you have to change. And the only person you can change is yourself.

A focus on personal gratification was also apparent in the discourse of Helen, who stated, “*I just always told myself, I’m going to be happy and I’m going to do what I want to do and not miss out on the opportunities in life.*” Even for Amelia, this was a period that included “*me time*” and having fun. Malcolm described having “*a chance to (...) focus on myself*” when he moved to a new province. Helen also reported focusing more on herself after moving away from family after high school, saying: “*I kind of took the worry of my family out of my head.*”

Age of feeling in-between. As discussed in the previous section on views about having reached adulthood, most interviewees across vocational settings talked about feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood. Mark was “*on the verge*” of adulthood, while Reigh was in “*some phase*” of it but sometimes “*reverted*” back from there. Austin and Desmond felt very close to adulthood except for the fact that they lived at home. Mel said that despite marriage and responsibilities, she sometimes still felt like a “*13*” year-old, while Kate said that her view of herself as an adult varied by the day. Meathead stated that perhaps she was not “*a hundred percent*” adult, while Amelia perceived herself as “*75*” percent adult.

Age of aspirations about future possibilities. Regardless of vocational setting, interviewees spoke of future possibilities in a manner that revealed emerging adulthood to be a period of aspirations. For example, despite all of the hardships Meathead had experienced since

leaving home at the age of 13, her plans for her thirties were much brighter. She aspired to start “a no-kill organization” for animals and she described it as follows: “*I’d like to be my own company where I fundraise FOR other companies.*” Austin’s aspirations were similarly bright, as not only had he considered joining the police but:

Right now {pause} I’m settled on finishing, like just saving, getting stuff paid off and while I’m doing that, do my drums. (...) get lots of time in, get better and hopefully be in a band by summer. And maybe take THAT to be my career.

Even though he was back living at home, struggling to “get rid of debt” by working nights at a hotel, a recent win in a video game contest inspired him to consider pursuing a career as a professional drummer. Fabrizio also saw his own future as full of possibility, even though he had recently separated from his wife and child and was again living at home. He predicted that, by age 30, he would be a successful business entrepreneur able to “*just focus on whatever I want to do at that time.*” As he proclaimed, “*I always knew that I will – I’ll be able to, to make it big on my own.*” Similar optimism was evident in the discourse of Mel, a self-proclaimed “*slacker*” for the time being, who said the following about her fifties: “*I have this feeling that I’m – I want to accomplish something great. (...) I mean {pause} great things take time.*”

Among university students, similar aspirational predictions were made. Reigh was about to graduate with a degree in international studies but had decided to begin a new degree in physiology so that she could follow her new dream of becoming a physician. The following excerpt reflects her change of heart:

As an intern I’ve been sitting at a computer all day in an office {laughs} and that’s just not for me, um and I had an experience this summer, I lived in Ecuador with a host family in the mountains teaching English at a school and working at a clinic doing things that

I'm not qualified to do, um and that, I wanted to be more hands on, um, so in January I'm starting a physiology degree um with the goal of getting into medicine {laughs}.

Malcolm also had his sights set high, with plans to enroll in graduate school and later become a diplomat; as he asserted, *"My goals are to [pause] change the world."* Malcolm actually named this period of his life a time of *"aspirations,"* predicting that the next ten years would be *"the best times"* of his life. Helen was aiming to further her studies in social work, following the completion of her current double major in sociology and women and gender studies. Furthermore, she hoped that she would continue to pursue her dreams into her thirties. As she explained:

I see how it is with other mothers and families and they get lost in childcare sometimes, and you know, it's a huge job and some mothers and fathers just, they lose their dreams and their goals because they're raising a family and I just don't want that to be me.

Although Mark was less certain how his life would be in his thirties, he spoke of *"a simple but not undemanding life"* where he would be able to live at his own *"pace."*

Students from vocational college/trade school also spoke of their futures in an aspirational manner. Stewart reported that he now had the confidence *"to shoot a little higher"* and aim for a career that he will *"actually really enjoy."* He also spoke of hopefully having enough savings to take a *"couple of years off work"* for travel. Amelia also looked forward to a future involving travel; even though she was about to earn her diploma, she spoke of wishing to *"eventually try being (...) a flight attendant."* Kate also looked to her future with a certain degree of optimism, hoping to leave behind the jaded attitude she developed from current work frustrations. Desmond saw his thirties as a time of *"trying to win the rat race,"* but he also spoke of living *"the American dream."*

Differences in current possibilities and sense of control. Interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students about this period being a time of few current possibilities and of low felt control, which left some feeling discouraged. For example, Austin stated that, with all the adversity he faced, life during a period of emerging adulthood “*was like a giant ball roll it around and it’ll come up with some random answer, go with it.*” Even at the time of the interview he described feeling “*left behind.*” He was working at a “*nowhere job*” and described this period as a “*time of catch up*” where he was just “*just rebuilding everything that I have lost over the years.*” Fabrizio described this period in his life as a “*challenge*” because, dealing with the struggles of his marital relationship left him in “*a never ending cycle.*” As he explained:

I’m just – learning, learning more about myself and learning how to deal with the stress and learning how to deal with uh with babies and, and kids, children, you know.

When Meathead was asked to describe this period, she sighed and said, “*I feel like I can’t get ahead. So it’s a time of – running on a treadmill.*” She went on:

I can’t get ahead with money, it feels like I can’t get ahead with anything I try and do like for instance, I wanted to (...) get a consolidated loan and lower my interest rates and it just feels like the bank doesn’t want to help me. (...) Sam doesn’t – thinks he can’t help me so he doesn’t even want to try (...) I don’t know. It’s like every day is the same, it’s the repetition you know I’m working paycheque to paycheque, trying to pay stuff off and I’m just not getting anywhere.

Mel’s discourse conveyed similar images. She described one “*really dark*” period: “*it’s like you’re going the wrong way down an elevator. (...) everybody’s moving on and you’re trying to – get off the wrong way.*” Although she viewed her life as having since improved, she said that

“right now it feels like one of those mobile sidewalks you’re just going” and, from her perspective, it was a time to *“just ride the escalator. ‘Cause it’s going on whether you want to or not, right?”*

In contrast, the discourse of both university and vocational college/trade school students revealed that they sensed greater current possibilities and felt more in control at this time in their lives. While this period was also a time of stress, the stress was largely related to school and thus they also seemed encouraged because there was an end in sight. For example, while Amelia spoke of how *“stressed”* she felt as a student, she was sensing success by *“shooting for my goals.”* Desmond also emphasized the *“school stress”* he was feeling; in his words, *“school has stressed me out like NOBODY’s business.”* Yet, he went on to state that *“it’s still fun, I’m enjoying it”* and that he believed the stress to be *“good”* because of the skills it was imparting. As he said, *“it’s going to help me further myself.”* Although Kate reported ongoing stress at work, her discourse reflected determination and a sense that her journey person’s ticket was worth it in the end. For instance, she spoke of being able to earn more *“respect”* with it as well as being able to *“learn”* new things and take on new jobs. Stewart’s discourse also conveyed that this was a time of forward progress. As he explained, he was now *“planning ahead a bit.”* Malcolm spoke about having a *“vested interest”* in his education and said that since moving away for university he has done *“everything that I’ve ever wanted to do”* and was accomplishing *“things I never thought I could do before.”* As he added, *“I can only go forward from here.”* Mark also felt as though he was making *“forward progress”* and had a better idea of the things he *“CAN”* do. Similarly for Reigh, although there was the stress of tuition costs, this was a time of having *“more direction”* about what she wanted to do with her life. As Helen explained, it was a time of encouragement, seeing success, and *“moving on to the next steps.”*

Differences in other-focus. Interviewees from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade school students about this period being a time of other-focus. For example, Fabrizio spoke of focusing on his responsibilities as a first-time father; he expressed wanting to be there for his daughter and for his wife, with working on his “*marriage*” being his top priority. Meathead’s discourse also conveyed the focus she devoted to her fiancé. For example, she spoke of witnessing her fiancé “*evolve as a person*” and she stated that being “*appreciated*” by him was “*enough*” for her. She also she reported that, although it did not matter to her if she married or had children, she would do so if her fiancé wished to: “*Sam sometimes says he’d probably like to have a child before he’s 35 but – I don’t care. If he wants to, I’ll give him one.*” Mel reported focusing a lot on her husband; as she explained, “*if he’s unhappy, it makes me unhappy.*” Austin was single at the time of the interview, but he spoke of having “*been used to living with the same person for (...) several years*” and having thus understood that his actions affected his common-law spouse.

In contrast, most university and vocational college/trade school students did not speak about this period being a time of other-focus. Kate described enjoying her lifestyle free of “*commitments*,” and Reigh seemed content to be focused on her new educational direction, explaining that “*it feels so good*” to no longer be “*connected to*” her ex-boyfriend. Education was also the top priority for Desmond and Amelia, with Amelia emphasizing that her boyfriend would be “*gone*” if he came in-between her and school. Although Malcolm reported that he was in a serious relationship, he did not mention it until the final minutes of the interview. Indeed, it was the engaged student Helen who spoke the most of other-focus.

Importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Concerning interviewees’ own views about the extent to which

vocational settings influence emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood, several themes appeared. Across vocational settings, interviewees reported that social interactions and unique life circumstances and experiences were important influences during emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. However, university and most vocational college/trade school students spoke more than those from the labour force about the importance of their vocational setting as a shaping influence. Last, post-secondary education was discussed, mainly by university students, as a privileged experience.

Unique circumstances and experiences as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. Regardless of vocational setting, unique life circumstances and experiences were discussed by a number of interviewees as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. Indeed, when asked if their vocational setting was important, many interviewees were uncertain and qualified their responses by saying “*it depends.*” For example, Austin said that, although this period was a time of being left behind, he thought it might be different for people in other “*situations.*” Helen concluded that “*it just depends on the person.*” Stewart similarly commented that the extent to which a vocational setting shapes the transition to adulthood would “*really depend on the person*” and his or her “*priorities.*” Meathead’s perspective was also that everyone’s “*priorities*” are different. For Mel, defining this period as a time of contentment depended, not on vocational setting, but on whether she was doing something she liked. For Fabrizio, vocational setting was not important; rather, “*everybody has their own direction, their own time*” for transitioning to adulthood.

Reigh believed that defining this period depended on an individual’s situation, commenting that, although her path through university was a particularly “*long haul*” that left her feeling slowed down in the transition to adulthood, others finish more quickly. Similarly,

Desmond stated that his transition towards adulthood “*would’ve been different*” if he had enrolled in his current program of study immediately after high school.

Social interactions as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. Across vocational settings, social interactions were also discussed as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. For example, Mark commented that getting to “*interact with people (...) with very diverse attitudes and backgrounds*” was important in terms of providing “*examples*” of how individuals “*make their way along in life.*” He also stated that university enabled him to “*get a sense of*” what others (e.g., professors and other students) valued and to compare his adult status with that of the people around him. Helen said that building “*good relationships*” with her professors, in order to “*to know what I have to do to succeed,*” has been one of the biggest things shaping her transition to adulthood. Reigh stated that it was her expanded “*circle of friends*” that led her to internalize new markers of adulthood, while Amelia’s comment was that her “*adult social skills*” were shaped through interactions at vocational college/trade school. Desmond acknowledged that being around vocational college/trade school students with similar “*wants out of life*” helped shape his sense of self. Kate said that she was shaped by conflicts and by “*conversation*” with colleagues, having, for example, developed “*thicker skin*” by virtue of things said in the construction field. Alternately, Stewart commented that his apprenticeship had little influence on his sense of self because it involved online courses that resulted in him “*not really interacting with anybody.*”

Austin believed that it was the people with whom he interacted that were influential, rather than the setting itself. He stated that, although his current job work did not “*really shape*” his sense of self, it exposed him to various “*ideas and (...) viewpoints,*” such as those expressed by hotel guests. Mel also spoke of social interactions but she had a different perspective, stating

that working resulted in her having fewer opportunities than post-secondary students for self-exploration through, for example, meeting new people and trying different courses.

Vocational settings as important in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. University and certain vocational college/trade school students spoke more than those from the labour force about the importance of their vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. For example, Helen explained that university made her feel further along the road to adulthood because it was “*expanding*” her brain and allowing her to learn “*new things about life and the world.*” Malcolm expressed how university was the biggest influence in his transition to adulthood, stating also that it allowed him to “*coordinate and guide*” his own path. Although Desmond was not certain that vocational college/trade school was important in shaping his transition to adulthood, he did credit it with teaching him to realize “*what’s important.*” Amelia thought that vocational college/trade school was influential in imparting on her the importance of securing “*a good career.*” She also stated that it contributed to this period being a time for change by forcing her to “*study and focus*” and take on “*responsibilities;*” through vocational college/trade school, she developed a sense that she “*could actually get through*” it.

Those from the labour force spoke less about the importance of vocational setting. Meathead said that being in the labour force does not impact what she thinks is important in marking adulthood or how she defines this period of her life: “*my person is not my job.*” Yet, she added that it might be different “*if I had a career.*” Fabrizio asserted that being in the labour force did not shape his transition to adulthood: “*all it does is give you a means to an end which means it will get you, either a car or be able to pay your rent*” What seemed more influential

about being in the labour force was that it did not involve student loan debt, which was a comment made by Meathead and Mel.

The view held by the two apprentices was distinct, being more similar to those in the labour force than to students. Kate did not see a difference between being an apprentice and working in construction without a ticket: *“being an apprentice is just a piece of paper,”* and she believed that this period would have *“probably”* been a time of transition regardless of whether she was an apprentice. For her, several experiences in her life seemed *“so equal”* in shaping her that she found it difficult *“to pick one out more than the other”* in terms of importance. Yet, she did see her path to adulthood being sped up relative to university students because she believed that she was more financially independent and better able to manage stress. For Stewart, being an apprentice had little relationship to his *“personal development.”*

Post-secondary education as a privilege. The discourse of a number of interviewees, predominantly university students, conveyed a view that post-secondary education was something privileged. For example, Malcolm spoke of being *“grateful”* for where he was in life, seeing how the lives of some of his non-student peers turned out; he appreciated being in university because earlier experiences taught him that going to school was *“much easier”* than being *“in the real life working.”* Helen commented on how fortunate she was to leave her home situation and ultimately pursue her goal of becoming a social worker, stating that she feels *“welcome and important”* at university. Mark also spoke of coming to appreciate being given the time as a student for *“discovering things and – and learning what you really like to.”* For him, this was *“easier”* than *“working eight hours a day five days a week.”* Further, although he believed that he would likely be *“exploring”* even if he was not in university, the setting was helpful *“in terms of actually providing avenues by which to”* do so. Despite commenting on the

unique “*stressor*” of tuition costs, Reigh viewed university in a similar way, stating that although it had not provided learning opportunities or foundational beliefs beyond those available through other experiences, her extended studies had given her “*some ideas and avenues to explore*” along with “*more time to delay the real world.*” Even among those in the labour force, Austin shared that this might not have been a period of being left behind if he had been “*fortunate enough*” to complete post-secondary education immediately after high school and then move directly into a job.

Summary of Qualitative Results

As evidenced above, thematic patterns from the qualitative analysis point to many similarities, along with a few key differences, across vocational settings during emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. In terms of similarities, what is most evident from interviews is that the process of becoming an adult is a slow and gradual process, shaped by unique life experiences, social interactions, and vocational setting. Across all settings, high school was recalled as a period marked by naive maturity regarding one’s adult status and sense of self and, to some degree, regarding what marks adulthood. Over time, however, naive certainty was replaced by questions and ambivalence as participants entered emerging adulthood. Commonly reported during emerging adulthood was uncertainty and ambiguity about one’s sense of self and one’s adult status. Now debated was the importance of role transitions as a marker of adulthood, with independence replacing it as a key indicator. For interviewees, this period was one of instability and stress, exploration and experimentation, and self-focus. At the same time, interviewees looked to their futures with new perspectives and aspirations. For example, they expressed confidence that they will be adults and reach its associated markers as they enter their thirties and beyond. Likewise, they predicted that they were on-course to gain a

clearer sense of self. However, interviewees also spoke of new perspectives arising from the process of becoming adult. Commonly reported were newer ideas about self-acceptance, ongoing explorations, and about what it actually means to reach adulthood.

Concerning differences between vocational settings discovered by the thematic analysis, they emerged predominantly in the reaching of adulthood markers and in the associated identification with themes of emerging adulthood. By high school, adverse family circumstances experienced by those from the labour force laid the foundation for reaching certain markers of adulthood (i.e., independence, role transitions, family capacities, and some aspects of interdependence) earlier than their student peers. Subsequently, emerging adulthood was then spoken about by those from the labour force as a time of few current possibilities and low control, and as a time of increased focus on others. As such, the thematic analysis indicated that, although those from the labour force felt similarly ambiguous about their adult status, they had been thrust into taking on some adult roles and responsibilities sooner than students. At the same time, reflecting the aspirational nature of emerging adulthood, these young people still looked to their thirties and beyond with visions of achieving their dreams.

Overall, the qualitative analysis revealed that, in a gradual and sequential fashion, naivety, uncertainty, and perspective were largely representative of all interviewees' narratives about high school, emerging adulthood, and the thirties and beyond. It was beneath these overarching themes that the more nuanced thematic similarities and differences emerged between vocational settings. The thematic map (Figure 2) summarizes these qualitative results.

Thus, like the quantitative results, these findings provide general support for the theory of emerging adulthood as currently conceptualized. For example, interviews also pointed to many common themes of emerging adulthood being experienced across vocational settings. Interviews

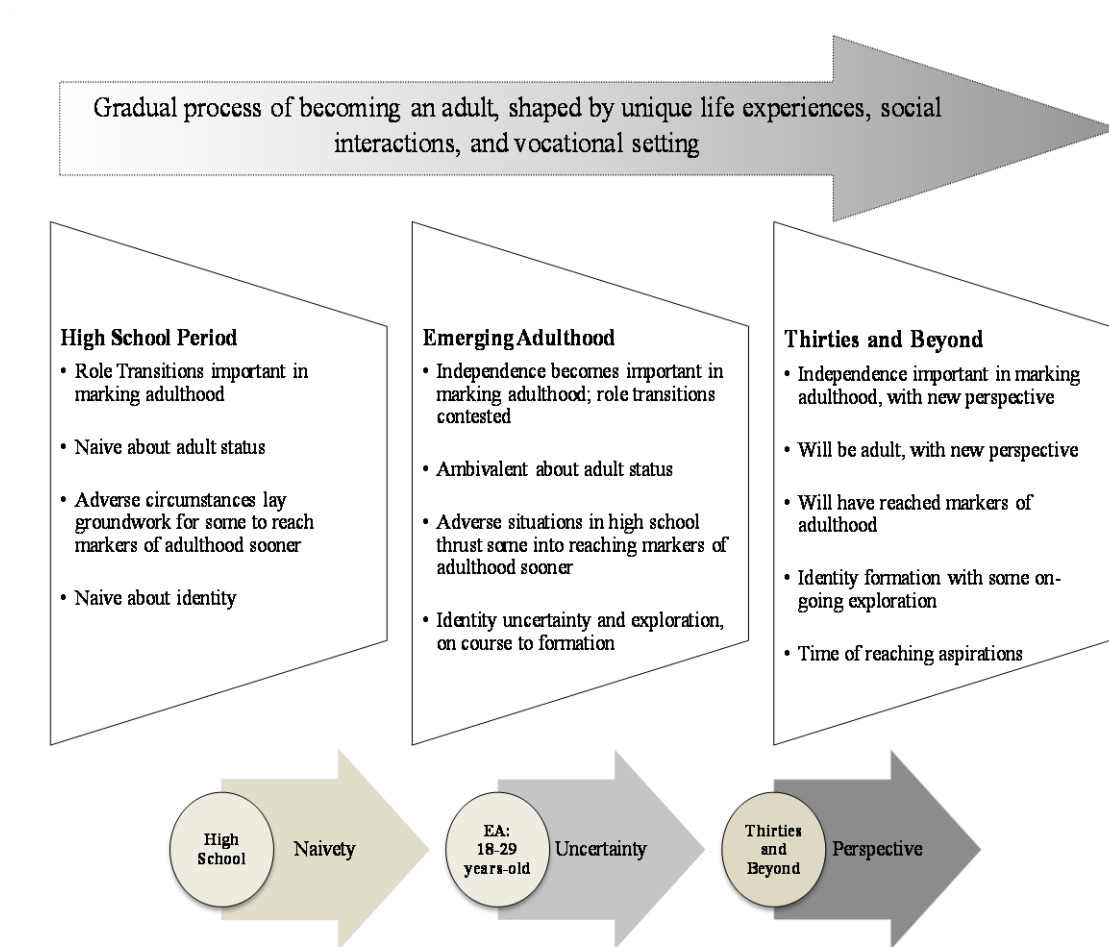


Figure 2. Summary of qualitative results: Emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood across vocational settings

also highlighted the importance of independence in marking adulthood as well as the mixed feelings about adult status and sense of self. Moreover, qualitative findings extended understandings by adding new details about emerging adulthood for those in the labour force and vocational college/trade school, and by outlining key aspects of how the gradual transition from adolescence to adulthood unfolds through high school, emerging adulthood, and into the thirties and beyond.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The current study examined the relationship between vocational setting and conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, identity development, and identification with themes of emerging adulthood. It also explored the importance that 18-29 year-old people place on vocational setting as a shaping influence in emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. In contributing to theoretical conceptualizations, the purpose was to examine whether emerging adulthood differs across vocational settings and to provide a better understanding of what emerging adulthood looks like for those who do not attend degree-granting university after high school, including those of the forgotten half who enter the labour force with no post-secondary credential. In so doing, it aimed to contribute to the debate concerning the importance of structural factors in emerging adulthood, thereby speaking to whether emerging adulthood is viable as a unique life stage and theory of development. A mixed-method research design combining quantitative and qualitative data was employed, and the discussion below will focus on each research question in turn, paying attention also to where quantitative and qualitative results converged and diverged (see Table 19).

Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood

Results from the current study indicate that vocational setting has little association with the conceptions held by emerging adults. In support of the hypothesis that markers of adulthood reflecting independence would be viewed as more important than markers reflecting role transitions, quantitative and qualitative findings converged to show that 18-29 year-olds, whether university students, vocational college/trade school students, or those out in the labour force with

Table 19

Integrated Summary of Main Quantitative and Qualitative Findings across Vocational Settings

	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings
Conceptions of what marks adulthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independence is most important marker 2. Role transitions is relatively unimportant marker 3. Biological transitions is least important marker 4. Vocational college/trade school students place more importance than university students on role transitions and family capacities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independence is most talked about marker 2. The importance of role transitions is contested 3. Biological transitions is rarely talked about as marker 4. No differences between vocational settings in conceptions of what marks adulthood 5. New perspectives replace past naivety concerning what marks adulthood
Perceptions of having reached adulthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most feel ambiguous about having reached adulthood 2. No differences between vocational settings in perceptions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most talk of feeling ambiguous about having reached adulthood 2. No differences between vocational settings in perceptions 3. New perspectives replace past naivety about having reached adulthood, with adult status anticipated in thirties
Perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labour force and vocational college/trade school participants have reached role transitions and family capacities to a greater extent than university students; labour force participants have also reached independence to a greater extent than university students 2. Chronological and biological transitions are the most reached markers; role transition are the least reached markers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labour force participants talk more than students about having reached independence, role transitions, family capacities, and aspects of interdependence; this is related to earlier adverse circumstances 2. Reaching markers of adulthood is anticipated in thirties
Identity development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants score highest on identity achievement; lowest on foreclosure 2. Fewer than expected from labour force have achieved identities. Labour force participants also score higher than university students on identity diffusion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identity development is talked about as occurring in emerging adulthood, and it includes uncertainty, exploration, and growing confidence as one finds him- or her-self 2. Many aspire to continue identity explorations in thirties
Themes of emerging adulthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experimentation/possibilities, self-focused, and identity exploration are most identified with themes; Other-focused is least identified with theme 2. University students identify more with experimentation/possibilities theme and with themes overall than labour force participants 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emerging adulthood is talked about as a time of instability, experimentation/identity explorations, self-focus, feeling in-between, negativity and stress, and aspirations for future 2. Labour force participants talk more than students of emerging adulthood being a time of other-focus, few current possibilities, and low control
Importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University students place more importance on vocational setting than vocational college/trade school students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students talk more than labour force participants about importance of vocational setting 2. Social interactions and unique life circumstances talked about as shaping 3. Post-secondary education talked about as a privilege

no post-secondary credential, place the most importance on markers of adulthood that reflect independence. In contrast, they place the least importance on biological transitions. In fact, quantitatively, it was revealed that independence is more important than all other markers, including role transitions. This key finding supports what has been discovered by other researchers (e.g., Arnett, 1994, 1998, 2001), thereby supporting the current emerging adulthood theory that young people view “intangible, gradual, psychological, and individualistic” (Arnett, 1997, p. 15) markers as best reflecting the transition to adulthood. As Arnett (1997) discussed, individualism in mainstream North American society may play a role in shaping this conceptualization. In such a way, the influence is ideological and lies at the level of the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1988/2005a) rather than at the level of the microsystem (i.e., vocational setting).

In terms of differences between vocational settings in the importance placed on the various markers of adulthood, quantitative and qualitative results diverged. While no differences between vocational settings appeared in interviews, in surveys, vocational college/trade school students placed more importance on role transitions and family capacities than university students. Perhaps this reflects a conception that drives certain individuals to choose to attend a vocational college/trade school rather than a university, a direct and shorter path to earning a post-secondary credential so that they can more quickly move on to reach these markers of adulthood that are important to them. Conversely, perhaps this reflects what is promoted within the vocational college/trade school microsystem, namely the focus on securing a career (Person et al., 2005). Such a focus is different from what is promoted at university, where an aim may be more towards broader discovery and development through ongoing learning (University of Saskatchewan, 2007). Concerning those in the labour force, their views fell in the middle,

suggesting that their conceptions may be more similar to, rather than different from, their student peers. Indeed, the reality in the current study was that many of those in the labour force desired and/or planned to obtain a post-secondary credential. For example, quantitative data revealed that only 17% of those from the labour force did not have plans to obtain further education. In understanding how quantitative and qualitative findings did not align in this area, recall that these sole significant differences were quantified by small effect sizes. Accordingly, perhaps because interviewees were simply asked to talk about important markers of adulthood, they brought up whatever came to mind and thus were not cued to differentiate between such nuanced levels of importance.

Returning to role transitions, while rated in a straightforward way as relatively unimportant in the quantitative survey, qualitative analyses revealed a more complex picture. In interviews, role transitions were talked about as markers of adulthood, though they were debated, spoken about with ambivalence, and challenged in terms of their actual importance. This result offers a different perspective from that reported by Molgat (2007), who concluded that emerging adults value role transitions alongside independence. Qualitative findings in the current study perhaps better reflect the argument of Horowitz and Bromnick (2007), who claim that adult status is a “contestable concept” (p. 212). Using their terminology, the current study showed that role transitions seem to be “matters of contention and dispute” (p. 213) to 18-29 year-olds who may be debating their own status as adults. Perhaps, as Horowitz and Bromnick argue, young people contest traditional markers because such markers prohibit individuals who have not attained them from making an argument that they have reached adulthood. Indeed, as discussed later on, perceptions of having reached role transitions were actually the lowest, relative to all other markers. Thus, in the current study, qualitative findings extended quantitative findings and

add to current emerging adulthood theory by adding details about how emerging adults conceptualize the importance of role transitions.

Interviews from the current study also extended quantitative findings and contribute to theory by revealing that conceptions of what marks adulthood may change over the course of emerging adulthood. This change seems to be marked by a shift away from placing importance on role and chronological transitions and towards placing more importance on independence. To this end, interviewees described a naivety in their past conceptions of what marks adulthood and they also expressed that development may be accompanied by new perspectives on how adulthood is defined. This finding may speak to the theoretical issue that Arnett (2001) describes as “the immediacy of experience” (p. 141), whereby what is most important depends on what an individual is transitioning through at a given point in time. Thus, biological transitions were not important to interviewees because, as indicated by results pertaining to whether they had reached specific markers of adulthood, they had already undergone those transitions some time ago. Similarly, role transitions were unimportant and/or debated because interviewees were not yet attaining them. In contrast, many were in the midst of navigating the path of increased independence and responsibility, making these markers more salient and therefore more important in their eyes.

In the current study, similarities and differences found between vocational settings were consistent for males and females. However, quantitative data indicated that females placed more importance than males on markers of adulthood reflecting norm compliance, while males placed more importance than females on markers reflecting biological transitions. These gender differences reflect small effect sizes, but they have been discovered by other researchers in the past (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Mayselles & Scharf, 2003). Summing these results, any

microsystem influence of vocational setting on conceptions of what marks adulthood seems minor and contained to role transitions and family capacities. As currently conceptualized in emerging adulthood theory, what seems more important is the macrosystem influence of societal individualism that fosters independence to slowly take center stage during emerging adulthood as the most important indication of having reaching adulthood.

Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood

Turning to perceptions of having reached adulthood, quantitative and qualitative results also converged to uphold current emerging adulthood theory. In contradiction to the hypothesis that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would be more likely than university students to perceive themselves as having reached adulthood, vocational setting had no association with perspectives of emerging adults. Rather, most 18-29 year-olds felt ambiguous about their adult status. This perception held equally across genders, which matches what has been found by other researchers in the past (Arnett, 1994, 1997, 1998; Facio & Micocci, 2003). These are individuals who are of two minds on the matter and thus provide Arnett's (1994) trademark response "*in some respects yes, in some respects no*" when asked whether they feel they have reached adulthood. Although this finding of a similarity across vocational settings differs from Arnett's (1997, 1998) results, which revealed a higher rate of ambiguous responses among college students than among a more diverse group of 21-28 year-olds, in Arnett's study the heterogeneous group included those already holding a post-secondary credential.

Interview findings from the current study, in addition to providing confirmation of quantitative results about perceptions of having reached adulthood, add to current emerging adulthood theory by providing further details about how the process of coming to feel like an

adult unfolds. Indeed, qualitative data suggests that reaching adulthood is a slow and gradual process that generally begins after high school and is expected to end as one enters the thirties and beyond. It is a process marked by naivety during high school, ambivalence during the emerging adult years, and more conviction as the thirties approach. Moreover, even for those with lingering questions about ever reaching adulthood, a sense of perspective or self-acceptance seems to temper hesitations about the future.

Integrating results in this area, the microsystem influence of vocational setting appears to have little impact on whether 18-29 year-olds subjectively feel like adults. This conclusion supports emerging adulthood theory and makes sense when considered alongside results pertaining to conceptions of what marks adulthood and perceptions of having reached specific markers of adulthood; 18-29 year-olds are currently in the slow and gradual process of reaching what is most important to them (i.e., independence). Until that crucial marker is met, regardless of vocational setting and even if they have reached (relatively unimportant) biological and chronological markers, they don't feel quite like adults. Speaking to the debate of Arnett (2006) and Bynner (2005), this is an area where structural factors actually do not seem as important.

Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood

Examining perceptions of having reached particular markers of adulthood, some differences between vocational settings appeared, providing partial support for the hypothesis that vocational college/trade school students and those from the labour force would view themselves as having reached markers of adulthood to a greater extent than university students. To this end, quantitative and qualitative results generally converged, with the latter findings also helping to explain how such differences may have come to exist.

With effect sizes that were small to medium in magnitude, quantitative data indicated that those from the labour force reached independence, role transitions, and family capacities to a greater extent than university students. Perceptions of vocational college/trade school students fell in the middle, yet, like individuals from the labour force, vocational college/trade school students also reached role transitions and family capacities to a greater extent than university students. Similarly, in interviews, those from the labour force spoke more than both university and vocational college/trade students about having attained independence, role transitions, family capacities, and romantic aspects of interdependence. That no differences between vocational college/trade school students and university students emerged from qualitative analyses may again reflect a difficulty in capturing more nuanced differences in interviews. Nonetheless, quantitative and qualitative findings generally converged to suggest that the vocational setting microsystem exudes a shaping influence when it comes to reaching certain markers of adulthood. Similarly, results align with the findings of Andres and Adamuti-Trache (2008), who discovered that trajectories after high school predicted “the timing and sequencing of marriage and family formation” (p. 138). In their study, Andres and Adamuti-Trache concluded that structural factors shape “‘choices’ at key transition points” (p. 115). For example, in their study, young people who did not enrol in post-secondary education within five years of finishing high school did not have a strong chance of ever doing so. Such a finding suggests that, for labour force participants in the current study, aspirations to obtain further education may not hold true. Results from the current study also extend the vocational college-trade school focused findings of Person et al. (2005) out into the labour force. It was Person et al. who concluded that occupational colleges promote “more timely progress in attaining the markers of adulthood” (p. 146) in comparison to

public community colleges. Current results suggest that the labour force is an even greater promoter of marker attainment.

In addition to generally converging with quantitative findings, qualitative results also extended what was discovered quantitatively and contribute to emerging adulthood theory by uncovering that differences between vocational settings in reaching certain markers of adulthood tend to stem, not from feelings of readiness or maturity, but from earlier adverse circumstances. For those in the labour force, difficulties heralding from their families of origin seemed to thrust them towards undergoing role transitions and becoming more independent and in charge of families of their own. As well, reaching these markers of adulthood did not necessarily provide stability or increased financial security for these working individuals, nor did it is always equate to being in a better place emotionally. For example, full-time jobs were not viewed as meaningful careers, parenthood was not planned, individuals were moving back in with parents, and spousal relationships had dissolved or were not completely satisfying. In fact, quantitative data revealed that 42% of those in the labour force were employed in the “McJob” sales and service industry, and 56% reported that they would not consider staying with their jobs for a career. These findings match what other researchers have described about where young people today are increasingly finding jobs (White & Wyn, 2004). Further, as discussed in the previous section, those from the labour force did not wish to be finished with post-secondary education. In sum, current results suggest that reaching these markers of adulthood may have been more of a circumstantial outcome, reaction, or matter of necessity than a choice reflecting personal agency, satisfaction, and meaning. This finding holds relevance for the debate about emerging adulthood as a viable theory of development (Arnett, 2006; Bynner, 2005; Côté & Bynner, 2008) because it suggests that reaching markers of adulthood appears to be an area where structural factors are

more important. In comparison to their university student peers, vocational college/trade school students and those in the labour force do not seem to enjoy as much of a prolonged transition into adult roles and family capacities. Neither do those from the labour force seem to experience as much of a prolonged transition into independence (and perhaps some aspects of interdependence). A conclusion would be that, in this area, vocational setting does have some influence at the microsystem level, with the general trend being that the transition to reaching these markers of adulthood is longest for university students and shortest for those in the labour force who have not obtained a post-secondary credential.

Personal agency also seems important in this discussion. Based on the quantitative finding that so many young people from the labour force wished to still obtain post-secondary education and thereby be in a different vocational setting, it seems that their expedited path towards independence and adult roles and responsibilities was not something that was wholly their choice or within their control. For policy makers, then, finding ways to provide opportunities for all young people to obtain post-secondary education seems an important step in ensuring all 18-29 year-olds experience the full benefits of emerging adulthood. At the same time, a review of the mean quantitative scores (see Table 9) tempers this conclusion by highlighting that even individuals from the labour force have not completely reached any markers of adulthood. As such, even these young people appear to be in emerging adulthood, be it perhaps to a different extent than post-secondary students.

The vocational setting differences discovered in the current study were observed to be consistent for males and females, but quantitative data did indicate that females perceived that they had reached interdependence and norm compliance to a greater extent than males. These gender differences reflect small effect sizes but the finding pertaining to norm compliance has

been discovered by other researchers in the past (Cheah & Nelson, 2004). Interestingly, in the current study, differences appeared in the attainment of the same markers (i.e., independence, role transitions, and family capacities) that yielded differences in conceptions of what marks adulthood. Looking closely, in contrast to unimportant markers (i.e., chronological and biological transitions) that everyone has met, crucial and controversial markers that are still to be attained seem more powerful in differentiating university students from vocational college/trade school students and those in the labour force. Further, in tandem with findings concerning subjective perceptions about having reached adulthood, these results suggest that differences in reaching markers of adulthood are not accompanied by equivalent differences in whether one actually feels like than adult.

In sum, the quantitative and qualitative findings in the current study generally converge to support emerging adulthood theory while also highlighting that this is an area that scholars and policy makers need to take note of in terms of developmental differences at the microsystem level. In contrast to the uniform feelings of ambiguity about reaching adulthood, there is more variance in the speed with which specific markers of adulthood are reached across vocational settings. Thus, structural factors do count, but only to some degree in some areas of the transition to adulthood.

Identity Development

Regarding identity development during emerging adulthood, the quantitative component of the current study focused on ego identity status, while the qualitative data explored the process of identity development more broadly. In this area, no directional hypothesis was offered due to heterogeneous conclusions from prior research (e.g., Morash, 1980; Danielsen et al., 2000). Further, results from the two data sets diverged in specific ways. Surveys found that young

people from the labour force were less likely than expected to have achieved identities; similarly, they placed higher than university students on a measure of identity diffusion. These differences were consistent for males and females, although males scored higher than females on measures of identity diffusion and identity moratorium. In contrast, differences based on vocational setting were not apparent in interview data. In considering why the two data sets were at odds, it may be that the small quantitative effect size resulted in differences that were difficult to decipher in interview data. Alternatively, the divergence may reflect a possible difference in how questions were framed to participants, with surveys focused specifically on four identity statuses and interviews gathering data on more general features of identity development. Indeed, this may have been a limitation of the current study.

However, while interview data did not converge with survey data concerning differences in identity statuses based on vocational setting, they aligned with how scores were generally the lowest on quantitative measures of identity foreclosure and highest on measures of identity achievement. Indeed, in interviews adult identities were talked about as being formed in a slow and gradual manner. As with the areas described earlier, young people looked back at a previous time when they held a naive sense of who they were and what they stood for, while in actuality lacking confidence in that regard. For them, an age of self-exploration followed high school, but it was accompanied by doubts, ambivalence, and new uncertainties about themselves. For most, this path of self-discovery involved many ups and downs, yet self-acceptance, confidence, and new perspectives were in sight or starting to take shape. In other words, the two data sets converge to show that emerging adulthood likely is the period when identity development is underway and adult identities are formed. Somewhat surprising is that quantitative scores for identity moratorium were not the highest in surveys; however, as indicated by the qualitative

data, most interviewees conveyed that uncertainties about who they are and what they stand for were being replaced or, at least accompanied, by a sense that they were finding themselves. Interviews also revealed that most emerging adults predict that they will continue to engage in at least some degree of self-exploration even as they move into their thirties with more certain identities. Again, this seems to convey the aspirational nature of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Qualitative findings also speak to a criticism of emerging adulthood theory raised by Côté and Bynner (2008), namely that developmental researchers would ask how Arnett's model explains the manner in which identities are formed during this period. According to the current study, emerging adulthood is a period in which young people sense the importance of forming an adult identity, embark on the task through exploration, and view themselves as somewhere along the path towards finding themselves.

As a point of discussion, it may be that those from the labour force feel "*left behind*" as interviewee Austin expressed and, as a result, lie farther back on that path towards finding themselves as they focus more on "*finding where to go*" on that track. Perhaps such a statement reflects the higher scores of those from the labour force on measures of identity diffusion because, as Marcia (1993) writes, the defining criteria for identity diffusion includes "despairing of being able to impose any direction on" life (p. 11). Indeed, as will be discussed further in the next section, identity diffusion may have been similarly reflected in Mel's description of this being a period of just riding "*the mobile sidewalk*" that takes her along its path. If so, then perhaps apprentices are more like those in the labour force than like their student peers. Considering that possibility, quantitative results (see Appendix J) reveal that both apprentice interviewees had diffused identity statuses overall and, in interviews, apprentice Kate spoke of "*not really exploring...just coasting,*" while Stewart spoke of the laid back manner in which he

simply agreed to enroll for his ticket when his boss mentioned it. Again, as offered above, such possible differences were not initially apparent through qualitative analyses, perhaps because quantitative effect sizes were small or because interview questions did not adequately address the specifics of identity status.

To conclude, much in line with the historical variance in findings (e.g., Morash, 1980; Danielsen et al., 2000), the quantitative and qualitative results from the current study provide divergent conclusions about whether differences exist in identity development based on vocational setting. However, aligned and in support of emerging adulthood theory, current findings suggest that emerging adulthood is the period in which young people are somewhere along the path towards finding themselves. Yet, with the possibility that structural factors may somewhat matter in terms of how far along young people are in forming adult identities, policy makers should again take note and consider how educational opportunities can be provided for all. Striking is that young people in the labour force may be reaching markers of adulthood sooner than university students, but while feeling no more like an adult and actually trailing behind when it comes to having an adult identity. Fortunately, these young people, like their student peers, hold a positive outlook for their futures. Indeed, interviews indicated that they too sense the importance of identity formation, describe a trajectory towards finding themselves, and, as shall be discussed in the following section, identify with this period being a time of identity explorations.

Themes of Emerging Adulthood

Examining identification with Arnett's (2004) themes of emerging adulthood, hypotheses obtained mixed support from quantitative and qualitative results that converged in many ways. Counter to hypotheses, quantitative and qualitative data aligned to indicate no differences based

on vocational setting when it comes to identification with themes of identity exploration, instability/negativity, self-focus, and feeling “in-between”. Offering mixed support to the hypothesis concerning other-focus, while appearing as only a trend in survey responses, in interviews young people from the labour force spoke more than their student peers of this being a time of other-focus. In explaining why this discrepancy appeared between the two data sets, an examination of p values reveals that the quantitative main effect of vocational setting was very near to reaching significance ($p = .056$), making the two data sets actually more similar than they initially appear. Whatever the reason for this slight discrepancy, the finding that other-focus was generally the least identified-with theme supports emerging adulthood as a valid stage of development, as this particular subscale was created as a counter-theme to the actual themes of period (Reifman et al., 20007). It also makes sense that these young people in the labour force are identifying with being other-focused more than students if they are, indeed, taking on more adult roles and responsibilities, as findings from perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood suggest. Indeed, this result appears to reflect the interdependence, family capacities and role transitions reached by these young people, who had dependents and/or relationships with significant others that understandably drew their attention and energy. In other words, here is additional evidence that 18-29 year-olds from the labour force may not experience an emerging adulthood to the same extent as their student peers.

With experimentation/possibilities, the picture emerging from the data appears more complex. In surveys, while participants from all settings somewhat to strongly identified with the theme of experimentation/possibilities, university students identified with the theme more than those from the labour force (with vocational college/trade school students falling in the middle). Qualitatively, experimentation tended to be talked about alongside identity explorations,

resulting in them being categorized together in one theme (where no differences appeared between vocational settings). In terms of the emerging adulthood theme of possibilities, qualitative data revealed a distinction between *current* possibilities and aspirations about future possibilities. Across vocational settings, all interviewees spoke about their futures in a hopeful and optimistic manner, much in line with Arnett's (2004) description of emerging adulthood as a time of aspirations. It was through talk about current circumstances, however, that those from the labour force conveyed that this was a period in which they sensed fewer possibilities within their grasp or control. Compared to students, who reported stress yet who felt encouraged about being on track to succeed, those from the labour force reported discouragement and powerlessness as they conveyed a general sense that they were currently struggling to get ahead with their lives. Vividly conveying this experience were their images of their lives being directed by a giant ball that randomly rolls around, or of their lives seeming like a treadmill, an elevator, or a mobile sidewalk that just keeps going, often in a "*never-ending cycle*." This difference also aligns with what was previously discussed about agency and with what was discovered quantitatively on the IDEA experimentation/possibilities subscale. In trying to make sense of this complex picture, an examination of subscale items reveals no clear indication that items apply to the future (i.e., "*time of many possibilities*", "*time of exploration*", "*time of experimentation*", "*time of open choices*" and "*time of trying out new things*"). As such, items may have been interpreted to apply to more current experimentations, explorations, and possibilities available, which would align with what was discovered both quantitatively and qualitatively.

This difference between students and non-students in identification with experimentation/possibilities was also discovered by Reifman et al. (2007), although in their study non-students included those travelling and those enrolled in trade school and the military.

As well, such a difference in current possibilities and control provides some support to criticisms (Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Bynner, 2005; Côté & Bynner, 2008) that emerging adulthood theorists may place too much emphasis on personal agency. It also speaks to the quantitative differences discussed pertaining to identity status, whereby those in the labour force scored higher on identity diffusion. According to Marcia (1993), individuals with diffused identities do tend to have an external locus of control and are more “defined by their circumstances” (p. 23). The results from the current study seem to support this claim, while also mirroring the conclusion of Schwartz et al., (2005) to some extent, who discovered that “identity exploration and flexible commitment to life alternatives may be especially likely in emerging adults” with greater degrees of agency (p. 223).

That being said, experimentation/possibilities was the sole thematic difference discovered in both quantitative and qualitative data, and its effect size was small. Indeed, it was only on the overall measure of emerging adulthood themes that a similar difference appeared. Also in support of emerging adulthood theory, mean survey responses for all themes of emerging adulthood tended to fall in the “*Somewhat*” to “*Strongly Agree*” range, regardless of vocational setting. Vocational setting differences were observed to be consistent for males and females, but females did identify more than males with the themes of being self-focused and other-focused. While effect sizes were small, the finding of females identifying more than males with the self-focused theme has been discovered by other researchers in the past (Elm & Schwartz, 2006; Reifman et al., 2007). Hence it can be concluded that 18-29 year-olds do identify with and experience an emerging adulthood, be it to different degrees in some respects. Such a conclusion largely supports current emerging adulthood conceptualizations while also shedding light on the forgotten half.

Importance of Vocational Setting in Shaping Emerging Adulthood and the Transition to Adulthood

As an exploration of emerging adults' own views about the importance of vocational setting in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood, no hypotheses were offered. In terms of results, some discrepancies appeared between quantitative and qualitative results. In surveys, university students placed more importance than vocational college/trade school students on vocational setting, with the views of those from the labour force falling in the middle. This difference was observed to be consistent for males and females. Additionally, the quantitative data indicated no differences between males and females in the importance they placed on vocational setting as shaping the transition to adulthood.

Focusing on the higher degree of importance placed on vocational setting by university students, perhaps it reflects the many years that these students spend within their vocational setting, in contrast to both the shorter length of time it takes to earn most vocational college/trade school credentials and the perspective that many from the labour force held that their jobs were not valuable enough to consider staying with as a career. It is also an interesting finding because it reflects a relationship that is opposite to that discovered for conceptions of what marks adulthood (where vocational college/trade school students placed more importance than university students in some areas). Perhaps vocational college/trade school students viewed the role transition of completing their post-secondary education as more important/shaping than the actual experience of attending their vocational setting. At the same time, the quantitative vocational setting effect size was small, mean scores for all vocational settings fell around the “*Somewhat Important*” range, and qualitative findings were more diverse in what they revealed.

In interviews, it was university students and vocational college/trade school students together who placed more importance than those from the labour force on their vocational settings as a shaping influence. Further, for many interviewees, it was not the setting per se that was shaping; rather, it was the time, “*avenues*,” and overall opportunities that their settings provided that were most important. Also, university students spoke of post-secondary school being something that a person was privileged to be able to attend rather than heading out into the “*real world*” as Reigh called it. Qualitative data also revealed that unique life circumstances and experiences are also important in shaping the transition to adulthood, and this is regardless of vocational setting. In making sense of this finding that in some ways contradicts what students proclaimed concerning their vocational setting being an importance influence, it seems to reveal a more complex picture and may also reflect the instability, uncertainty, and ambivalence that seem so thematic of emerging adults and their views at this time in their lives.

This exploratory question also extends current understandings of emerging adulthood by revealing through interviews that social interactions are also deemed important in shaping the transition to adulthood. Interviewees across vocational settings spoke of the growth and development they experience by interacting with others, whether at work or in post-secondary settings. A comparable finding was previously discovered by Holt, Tamminen, Tink, and Black (2009), who examined positive youth development in the context of sport involvement. What Holt and colleagues discovered was that it was the social interactions rather than the simple enrolment in a sport program that counted. For them, “social interactions in youth sport contexts (with peers and parents) were central to how people may have learned life skills” (p. 171), which have been promoted by the World Health Organization (1999) as critical for development. In the current study, emerging adults similarly believed that their development was fostered through

interactions with peers and other individuals (e.g., parents, teachers, bosses) in their particular microsystem. In sum, then, these rich exploratory quantitative and qualitative results suggest that different microsystems, including but not limited to vocational setting, as well as interactions within microsystems, are each important to varying degrees in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood.

Additional Quantitative Analyses: Socioeconomic Status, Age, and the Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

In the current study, socioeconomic status, age, and the social demographic transition to adulthood were briefly examined through additional quantitative analyses for potential associations with emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. The relationships discovered suggest that emerging adults are more likely to feel like adults overall and in the areas of independence, role transitions, and family capacities if they come from a background of less financial means. In another study, Reifman et al. (2007) reported that working class individuals scored marginally higher than those from the upper-middle/upper class in terms of identification with the emerging adulthood theme of negativity/instability. They also found that individuals from the working class scored marginally lower than those from both the middle class and the upper-middle/upper class for identification with the theme of self-focus. In the current study, these correlations were not at all close to reaching a level of significance, which may reflect study differences in participant characteristics (i.e., Reifman et al. studied participants across much of the adult life span) and/or in the way socioeconomic status was assessed (i.e., Reifman et al. simply asked participants to indicate which social class they belonged to). Neither did the current study find support for the associations Arnett (2003) and Stern (2004) found between low socioeconomic status and the importance placed on certain markers of adulthood. However,

differences may again reflect participant characteristics, as the current study did not contain ethnic diversity to the same extent as did the studies of Arnett and Stern. However, current results do support the findings of Arnett (2003) and of Facio and Micocci (2003), who also discovered that emerging adults of lower socioeconomic status were more apt to perceive that they had reached adulthood.

The additional results from the current study also converge with the conclusions drawn earlier about perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood. Recall from surveys that those from the labour force perceived reaching these same markers, namely independence, role transitions, and family capacities, to a greater extent than university students. As well, it was conveyed in interviews how earlier adverse circumstances, hardships that included family of origin financial strains that became a barrier from obtaining post-secondary education, seemed to thrust those from the labour force into reaching these markers of adulthood more quickly than students. Finding here that fathers' income levels (which were used to measure SES) do have a significant association with these same markers provides confirmatory evidence that this family of origin factor seems to have an impact that follows those from the labour force into emerging adulthood. Again, current findings provide support for the view that underprivileged young people face a path towards adulthood that is sped up (Andres and Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Bynner, 2005). In fact, in their British Columbia study, Andres and Adamuti-Trache (2008) discovered social class differences that led them to conclude that "those from advantaged family backgrounds fare best in every way" in the years after high school (p. 140). However, not all transitions are accelerated, as evidenced by the lack of other significant correlations. Further, unlike vocational setting, socioeconomic status did not relate to any aspects of conceptions of what marks adulthood, identity development, or the importance of vocational setting in shaping

the transition to adulthood. Moreover, apart from relating to feeling “in-between”, neither did socioeconomic status relate to identification with themes of emerging adulthood. It can therefore be concluded that socioeconomic status plays an overall smaller role than vocational setting, yet plays a role that is closely intertwined with vocational setting, in shaping emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. For example, findings from the current study seem to reflect the reality that whether one attends and completes post-secondary school in the first place depends on their socioeconomic status (de Broucker, 2005).

Examining findings pertaining to the social demographic transition to adulthood, results generally make sense in the context of the other findings discussed. The closer emerging adults are to reaching criteria traditionally accepted as marking adulthood (i.e., entry to the labour force, marriage, parenthood, and establishing a household independent of parents), the more likely they are to perceive that they have reached adulthood and its specific markers. Similarly, the more likely they are to be other-focused, and the less likely they are to feel “in-between” and identify with emerging adulthood and its associated instability/negativity. While at first glance it may be unclear how there could be a positive association between reaching the social demographic markers of adulthood and having a diffused identity, a clearer picture emerges when considering the population studied. Recall that those who scored highest on the measure of identity diffusion were the same individuals from the labour force who described feeling thrust more quickly than others into adopting adult roles and responsibilities, and who did not necessarily appear better off because of it. It is quite possible that a different picture of identity status would have emerged if respondents included individuals, perhaps in their thirties and beyond, who felt more personal control and satisfaction about attaining these markers of adulthood. Given the respondents, it also makes sense that no association appeared between the

social demographic transition to adulthood and identification with the emerging adulthood themes of identity exploration. For all participants in the current study, this was a period in which they identified with such explorations. Further, they indicated in interviews that they intended to continue such explorations as they enter their thirties and beyond (i.e., as they make the social demographic transition into adulthood).

It is more difficult to interpret the lack of association between the social demographic transition to adulthood and identification with the emerging adulthood theme of experimentation/possibilities. Yet, looking closely at the data, the negative relationship did approach a level of significance ($p = .089$), meaning that the trend was in the expected direction given all that has been discussed already about the forgotten half. The social demographic transition to adulthood was also negatively related to the importance placed on vocational setting and, because this was an exploratory area of research, replication and further study is indicated prior to drawing conclusions. Of all the significant associations discovered, only that involving role transitions represented a large effect size, which makes sense considering the items that comprise these two similar measures. As such, interpretation of the data should take this into account.

Finally, turning to the results concerning age, findings generally make sense within the context of developmental psychology and emerging adulthood theory. In terms of conceptions of what is important in marking adulthood, there was only one significant relationship between age and the dependent variables, namely a positive correlation between age and the importance placed on markers reflecting independence. Such a lack of association between age and what is deemed important in marking adulthood aligns with what was discovered when Arnett (1998, 2001) studied emerging adults of varying ages (i.e., 21-24 year-olds vs. 25-28 year-olds) and

when he examined emerging adults alongside adolescents and young-to-midlife adults. As in the current study, Arnett's findings revealed overarching similarities across age groups; and, together, these results suggest a common conception that is largely irrespective of age. For perceptions of having reached adulthood, however, many more relationships with age appeared. Specifically, an increase in age was accompanied by an increase in perceptions of having reached adulthood and an increase in perceptions of having reached independence, interdependence, role transitions, biological transitions, chronological transitions, and family capacities. Again, Arnett (1998, 2001) discovered similar results in his age group comparisons, wherein he found that older participants were more likely to view themselves as adults. It makes theoretical sense that those who are older perceive themselves to be further along the path towards reaching markers; and, taken together, these results support the idea that the transition to adulthood is a slow and gradual process that takes place over several years (Arnett, 1998).

The other area in which age was found to correlate with the dependent variables centered on identification with themes of emerging adulthood. Given the findings discussed in the previous paragraph, it also makes sense that participants identified less with emerging adulthood themes overall, and in terms of experimentation/possibilities and feeling "in-between", as they grew older and felt more like adults. Aligned with such results, in their series of studies, Reifman et al. (2007) found that 18-29 year-olds identified more with the themes of emerging adulthood than those in their thirties and beyond. It also makes sense that those who were older identified more with the non-emerging adulthood construct of being other-focused, another finding also discovered by Reifman et al. Perhaps more surprising was that that more relationships did not appear in this area. However, some interviewees did state their intentions of continuing to

engage, for example, in identity explorations as they moved into their thirties and beyond. Such results make this area of emerging adulthood research inviting of additional study.

With these significant associations between age and the dependent variables, and given that age was found to differ across vocational settings (i.e., those in the labour force were significantly older than both university and vocational college/trade school students), it is possible that the focal differences discovered across vocational settings reflect age differences rather than vocational setting differences. Recognizing this potential limitation of the current study, overall results were triangulated from both quantitative and qualitative data, with qualitative findings heralding from labour force participants who were all under the age of 26 (range: 22-25 years of age). Nevertheless, at the very least, these brief results concerning age suggest a need for further research aimed at better understanding trajectories throughout the emerging adulthood years. There have been differing categorizations of emerging adulthood, with some literature (Arnett, 2000) focusing emerging adulthood on 18 – 25 year-olds and other literature (Arnett, 2007c) suggesting that emerging adulthood applies more broadly until the late twenties. The current study indicates that important differences based on age may be worth further exploring as the field moves towards theory refinement.

Limitations of Current Study

When discussing the results of the current study, several limitations are important to consider. First, certain subscales (i.e., *Independence*, *Interdependence*, and *Chronological Transitions* of markers of adulthood survey; *Self-Focused* of IDEA survey) had low Cronbach alpha coefficients. Perhaps most troubling was the particularly low reliability for the marker of adulthood reflecting independence, because key results suggested that independence is so important to emerging adults. On that subscale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .54, which

carries serious implications as to whether it reliably and validly measures the underlying construct of independence intended. Considering the implication this has for the results of the current study, it may be that actual differences were masked in regards to the apparent importance that emerging adults from different vocational settings placed on independence as a marker of adulthood. In other words, the measure may not reflect a unidimensional construct of independence. Examining the individual items from the Independence subscale, it does appear that one item relates to finances (i.e., *Financially independent from parents*), another refers to living arrangements (i.e., *No longer living in parents' household*), and others refer to relationships with parents (i.e., *Establish equal relationship with parents; Not deeply tied to parents emotionally*), and personal responsibility and accountability (i.e., *Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions; Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents of other influences*). As such, this subscale may actually tap into different areas in which independence develops. While the low alpha coefficient may have serious statistical implications for interpreting results involving the *Independence* subscale, Arnett (2001) emphasized that the subscales of his measure were never intended to be categorized through statistical procedures such as factor analysis. Rather, subscales were intentionally created by grouping items together theoretically, based on specific literatures. The following is what Arnett wrote about the earliest version of the *Independence* subscale, which was referred to as *Individualism* at the time:

The items on the Individualism subscale have been discussed in previous studies as forming a distinctly American middleclass conception of the transition to adulthood (Arnett, 1997, 1998). Thus it was considered preferable to keep the items from these literatures together in subscales, to enhance discussion and interpretation of the results,

rather than to conduct a factor analysis in which items from the same literature may end up in different categories. (p. 136)

Moreover, helping to offset reliability and validity concerns in the current study is that independence also clearly stood out as the most important marker of adulthood in qualitative interviews, with emerging adults from all vocational settings talking about those intrinsic markers the most.

Of the other two markers of adulthood subscales with low internal reliabilities, the *Chronological Transitions* subscale has only three items, two of which concern age and one of which concerns obtaining a driver's licence. Thus, its Cronbach alpha of .62 may also point to more than one underlying construct, or it may be that actual internal consistency has been diminished by virtue of having few items comprising the subscale. Similarly, the *Interdependence* subscale also has only four items, with two items seeming to reflect an individual's relationships and two items seeming to reflect one's own actions and attitudes.

The final measure presenting with an internal reliability issue was the *Self-Focused* subscale of the IDEA. Examining the six items of this subscale, three items seem as though they could reflect more general freedom, while another item seems to reflect optimism. Possibly then, this measure's Cronbach alpha of .63 may point to more than one underlying construct, which may help explain the odd finding that females scored higher than males on this subscale and also on its purported counterpart, the *Other-Focused subscale*. In sum, the measures employed in the current study presented with some significant reliability concerns. Most concerning were the subscales discussed here and, unfortunately, results pertaining to these measures must be interpreted with some caution because subscale items cannot be assumed to measure a unified construct. At the same time, quantitative results were triangulated with qualitative findings, and

measures were chosen because they are the current accepted standard for research in emerging adulthood, being in most cases the only available instruments that measure the constructs of interest.

A second limitation of the current study is that the cross-sectional design of the research prohibits any statements regarding the direction of the quantitative relationships discovered. For example, it may be tempting to state that attending vocational college/trade school causes emerging adults to place more importance on markers of adulthood reflecting role transitions. However, it is also possible that a belief that role transitions are essential for adulthood causes certain emerging adults to choose enrolment in a vocational college/trade school to help them reach this marker more quickly. Without conducting longitudinal studies to assess the direction of these relationships or being able to measure other variables that potentially affect the results, causal statements cannot be made about development.

Third, while participants were able to participate on-line or using paper and pencil to help offset selection bias, it is possible that those who took part may have been self-selected in a manner that limits the generalizability of the findings. Indeed, although the study has contributed valuable knowledge pertaining to a broad range of emerging adults, certain segments of the population (i.e., those who are particularly marginalized) may have been less accessible based on the data collection procedures. As a similar limitation, the current study did not address the experiences and development of emerging adults from the labour force who have earned a post-secondary credential, although such individuals have already received research attention from scholars in the field (e.g., Arnett, 1997, 1998). Neither did the current study provide findings beyond those applicable to emerging adults from a specific geographical region of Canada. For example, the university setting in the current study was located in a prairie region where most

students commuted to campus rather than lived in residential halls right at the university. This raises the possibility that this university setting may have been distinct from residential colleges studied by emerging adulthood scholars in the United States. However, it is encouraging that results were in many ways aligned with findings obtained from other parts of Canada (e.g., Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Molgat, 2007).

Similarly, the current study relied solely on self-reports, which can make it more difficult to assess the true nature of emerging adulthood and development. Indeed, it was necessary to trust that 18-29 year-olds from the focal vocational settings were indeed the individuals who completed the questionnaires and to trust that interviewees were recalling and reporting their experiences in an honest fashion.

Although the current study included both male and female participants, the sample of vocational college/trade school students was unbalanced in terms of gender (32.8% male vs. 67.2% female). The sample was also ethnically unbalanced within each vocational setting. However, an attempt was made to interview emerging adults of diverse ethnicities, resulting in interviews being conducted with individuals of Caucasian, African-American, Latin American, and First Nations backgrounds. Furthermore, ethnicity was not the focus of the current study and other researchers (e.g., Arnett, 2001; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Stern, 2004) have made important contributions concerning the role of ethnic background in emerging adulthood.

Another limitation of the current study relates to the difficulty completing certain non-parametric statistical analyses due to sample sizes. For example, as explained in the results section, it was not possible to complete Pearson Chi-Square analyses using all three of the original response options when assessing perceptions of having reached adulthood or using all four of the original identity status categories when assessing identity status, because in both

instances the assumption related to expected cell frequencies was violated. As a consequence, conclusions based on these groupings may not reflect results for which the measures were originally designed. However, ANOVA comparisons were also performed to strengthen findings pertaining to identity status. Related, the absence of any significant interactions between vocational setting and gender in factorial ANOVA comparisons may have been a function of low power due to small cell sizes. Thus, future researchers may wish to use larger sample sizes in order to reach a strong conclusion about whether differences between vocational settings during emerging adulthood might vary for males and females. A much larger sample would also be required to include vocational setting and gender together in loglinear analyses to understand how these variables may interact in their relationships with perceptions of having reached adulthood and with identity status. In short, a larger study would enable more comprehensive and informative quantitative analyses to be performed.

Areas for Future Research

Although the current study enriched understandings of emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood, the field remains young and there are still opportunities for much more to be learned about this period of life. For example, what does emerging adulthood look like in high performance athletes, those who are incarcerated, those facing a terminal illness, or those who enrol in the Canadian military? It may also be beneficial to take a closer look at how apprentices experience this time in their lives, helping to clarify whether they are indeed more like those working in the labour force than like their student peers.

Another important step would be to better understand the emerging adult brain. One example of research headed in this direction is Bennett and Baird's (2006) longitudinal study that examined brain changes in emerging adults who left home to attend their first year of academic

college. Using MRI, Bennett and Baird located changes in specific brain structures among those who move away from home for school; these regional changes were deemed to reflect an “interaction between genetically predetermined” (p. 770) processes of emerging adulthood and the new demands faced at post-secondary school. As these researchers acknowledged, it would be important to next study larger populations of emerging adults to understand more about their neurodevelopment. For example, would changes in brain structure be different depending on one’s vocational setting? As Bennett and Baird suggest, “existing research into neural development in young adults has left a number of questions unanswered” (p. 767). As such, research in this direction would better enable scholars to speak to Côté and Bynner’s (2008) criticism that emerging adulthood is not “inherently developmental” (p. 252).

Given that emerging adults in the current study viewed social interactions as important in shaping their transition to adulthood, future research may wish to further investigate just how peers, parents, bosses, teachers and others may foster development through their contact with emerging adults. Similarly, it would be beneficial to gain understanding of emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood from parents and others (e.g., teachers, bosses) who interact with these young people in an apparently influential manner.

Examining findings from the current study alongside the IDEA instrument, going forward it may be beneficial to further differentiate between emerging adulthood as a time of *current* possibilities and emerging adulthood as a time of possibilities for the *future*. Looking at items comprising the *Experimentation/Possibilities* subscale (i.e., *time of many possibilities?*; *time of exploration?*; *time of experimentation?*; *time of open choices?*; *time of trying new things?*), and considering the similarities and differences between vocational settings that appeared on this

scale and in interviews, it seems that *Experimentation/Possibilities* items may be better at capturing identification with current possibilities than at capturing optimism for the *future*.

Finally, given that research findings have the potential to impact policy, the more studies that focus on emerging adults and elucidate their experiences and development, the better. For example, there is a pressing need beginning to be recognized that mental health services should be specialized if they are to best assist emerging adults (Davidson & Cappelli, 2011; Vloet, Davidson, & Cappelli, 2011). According to Vloet et al. (2011), “the greatest financial and institutional weaknesses in mental health services affect individuals between the ages of 16 and 25” (p. 32) who are currently struggling to navigate the interface between pediatric services and those directed at adults. Future research focused on emerging adults can assist policy makers in creating best-care practices. There are already findings indicating that risk behaviour peaks during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000a), and these behaviours can have mental health implications (e.g., substance abuse, traumatic brain injuries, etc.). It has been discovered that young people who more greatly identify with emerging adulthood themes also score more highly on measures of alcohol misuse and on measures of problematic body image (McCourt, 2004). However, there is much room for growth in this area and there remains a particular gap in understanding just what emerging adulthood looks like for those who already present with mental health needs. Indeed, as Bennett and Baird (2006) explain, with improved understanding of development during emerging adulthood, it may be possible to improve prognosis or even prevent certain mental disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, mood disorders) that often first appear during this phase of life.

Conclusions and Implications

Overall, the current study has imparted new and important understandings to the debated field of emerging adulthood. First and foremost, this was the first study to definitively examine how vocational setting relates to emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood. While previous studies have examined how educational attainment relates to certain aspects of development, this was the first study to clearly define vocational setting as a microsystem and comprehensively examine what emerging adulthood looks like in vocational college/trade school students and those working in the labour force with no post-secondary credential. Doing so, this study has shed important light on the forgotten half and others who do not follow the often-researched trajectory through four-year university. The current study has also provided a complete view of emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood by using both quantitative and qualitative methods to address all emerging adulthood conceptualizations (i.e., conceptions of what marks adulthood, perceptions of having reached adulthood, perceptions of having reached markers of adulthood, identity development, and identification with themes of emerging adulthood). As well, this research has added to the literature by including an exploratory component and considering the process of development as well as how additional correlates may be implicated during emerging adulthood (i.e., socioeconomic status and the social demographic transition to adulthood).

Bringing together the quantitative and qualitative results from the current study, it can be concluded that emerging adulthood does exist as a unique phase of life for 18-29 year-olds in industrialized societies (Arnett, 2000a), even for those who follow different vocational trajectories after high school. While there is heterogeneity in the full expression of emerging adulthood at this microsystem level, such differences are mostly minor and focused on identity

status, the reaching of certain markers of adulthood, and identification with particular emerging adulthood themes. Applying these findings to the debated question concerning the importance of structural factors on the transition to adulthood, results point to Arnett's (2006) view that structural factors "are more important in some areas of life than others" (p. 115). At the same time, in those areas in which vocational setting seems to have a more important influence, current results also provide some support for critics' (e.g., Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Bynner, 2005; Côté & Bynner, 2008) views that individual agency may be over-emphasized by emerging adulthood theorists and that the forgotten half may experience a more expedited and challenging transition to adulthood in some respects. Indeed, what appears to stand out is an overall small trend in which university students experience emerging adulthood the most, those from the labour force experience it the least, and vocational college/trade school students fall somewhere in the middle. Also, speaking to the issue of personal control and agency, prior family of origin circumstances (e.g., socioeconomic status) seem related to one's later vocational setting, emerging adulthood experience, and transition to adulthood.

However, even with the discovered differences between vocational settings, becoming an adult has been shown here to be a slow and gradual process that is marked by peak change and uncertainty during emerging adulthood, which contrasts both with earlier naivety and with new perspectives arising as the thirties approach. Further, independence counts the most in marking adulthood and, regardless of how difficult life might be now, the future looks bright. In the eyes of emerging adults, themselves, the vocational setting microsystem does influence this process; however, social interactions and ones' unique circumstances and life experiences also count as influential during the transition to adulthood. In such a way, results of the current study also add a called-for dimension of comprehensiveness (Bynner, 2005) to emerging adulthood theory,

while also reinforcing its existence as a viable conceptualization of development among 18-29 year-olds.

Finally, conclusions from this study carry important implications for researchers, policy makers, and those who work directly with 18-29 year-olds and their families. Researchers should continue to deepen understandings of what life is like for these young people, because this is a theory of development that holds merit. Ten years after its introduction, there are many areas in which findings can shed light on gaps in knowledge, gaps that currently stand as barriers to the full acceptance of emerging adulthood conceptualizations among scholars. Policy makers should turn to research findings to direct services for emerging adults, whether in the health care industry or in the field of education. For example, results from the current study should stand out to policy makers that more needs to be done so that all young people have the opportunity to experience the full expression and advantages of emerging adulthood, as seems available through post-secondary education that is almost universally desired among young people. Those who work with emerging adults directly should use current formulations to help 18-29 year-olds and their families navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood. With an understanding of all that is beneficial, normative, and/or to be expected during this distinct phase of life, service providers (e.g., psychologists and educators) are in a better position to offer practical guidance and support, whether it be to university students, vocational college/trade school students, or those out in the labour force with no post-secondary credential.

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Appendix A

Additional Demographic Variables across Vocational Setting

Variable	University (n = 98)	Vocational college (n = 58)	Labour force (n = 48)	All groups (N = 204)
Parental income				
Less than \$30,000 (%)	13.2	13.8	20.9	15.2
\$30,000 - \$69,999	36.7	48.3	41.7	41.2
More than \$70,000	45.9	37.9	33.3	40.7
Own income				
Less than \$30,000 (%)	95.9	84.4	60.4	84.4
\$30,000 - \$69,999	4.1	12.0	33.3	13.2
More than \$70,000	0.0	1.7	6.3	2.0
Area of residence				
City/Town	100.0	100.0	89.6	97.5
Acreage	0.0	0.0	6.3	1.5
Other	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.5
Number of times moved out of parents' home				
Zero: Still living at home (%)	22.4	31.0	18.8	24.0
One time	51.0	41.4	52.1	48.5
Two or more times	26.5	25.9	29.2	26.9
Credential studying towards				
Applied certificate (%)		3.4		1.0
Certificate		24.1		6.9
Diploma		51.7		14.7
Apprenticeship		8.6		2.5
Other vocational college credential		10.3		2.9
Undergraduate degree	91.8			44.1
Medicine (includes dental/veterinary)	2.0			1.0
Other university degree (e.g., graduate)	5.1			2.5
Year of post-secondary education				
First year student (%)	29.6	67.2		33.3
Second year student	16.3	24.1		14.7
Third year student	33.7	1.7		16.7
Fourth year student	14.3	0.0		6.9
Other	5.1	5.2		3.9
Working towards first post-secondary credential				
Yes (%)	87.8	79.3		64.7
No	11.2	20.7		11.3
Plans for further education				
Yes (%)	57.1	39.7	50.0	50.5
No	10.2	19.0	16.7	14.2
Undecided	31.6	41.4	31.3	34.3
Education completed				
Less than high school degree/diploma (%)	0.0	1.7	2.1	1.0
High school degree/diploma	4.1	12.1	72.9	22.5
Some post-secondary but less than graduation	82.7	62.1	25.0	63.2
Vocation college/trade school credential	4.1	19.0		7.4
University undergraduate degree	8.2	3.4		4.9
University graduate degree	1.0	1.7		1.0

University faculty of study				
Agriculture and bioresources (%)	3.1			
Arts and science	64.3			
Business	6.1			
Education	3.1			
Engineering	10.2			
Kinesiology	4.1			
Law	1.0			
Nursing	1.0			
Pharmacy and nutrition	3.1			
Veterinary medicine	1.0			
Other	3.1			
Vocational college/trade school area of study				
Beauty (%)		15.8		
Health care		22.8		
Business and administration		22.8		
Education		3.5		
Corrections/Youth care		3.5		
Carpentry		1.8		
Science and technology		24.6		
Other		5.3		
Career-type job				
Yes (%)	5.1	12.1	27.1	12.3
No	40.8	37.9	56.3	43.6
Undecided	5.1	1.7	14.6	6.4
Entered vocational setting immediately after high school				
Yes (%)	50.0	31.0	64.6	48.0
No	50.0	67.2	35.4	51.5
Type of employment				
Management (%)	1.0	0.0	6.3	2.0
Business, finance, and administrative	0.0	3.4	4.2	2.0
Health	0.0	8.6	2.1	2.9
Social science, education, government service, religion and related occupations (including any research/university jobs)	13.3	5.2	2.1	8.3
Art, culture, recreation, and sport	5.1	0.0	2.1	2.9
Sales and service (e.g., clerks)	25.5	19.0	41.7	27.5
Trades, transport, equipment operators, and related occupations	3.1	3.4	12.5	5.4
Primary industry (including landscaping, treeplanting, mining, and baking)	0.0	3.4	6.3	2.5
Processing, manufacturing, and utilities	2.0	0.0	16.7	4.9
Unemployed/Nothing	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.5
Unclassified labourer	1.0	1.7	2.1	1.5
Other	0.0	6.9	0.0	2.0

Note. Not all percentages sum to 100% due to missed items in the questionnaire and questions not applicable to all participants (e.g., those not employed for pay did not respond to "Career-type job" question).

Appendix B

Markers of Adulthood

I. Please indicate how important you think it is that the following criteria be achieved for a person to be considered an adult, by placing a check mark in one of the columns for each item:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1. Financially independent from parents				
2. No longer living in parents' household				
3. Avoid committing petty crimes like shoplifting and vandalism				
4. Reached age twenty-one				
5. Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others				
6. Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child				
7. Avoid illegal drugs				
8. Avoid drunk driving				
9. Drive safely and close to the speed limit				
10. If a man, become capable of running a household				
11. Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult				
12. If a woman, become capable of keeping a family physically safe				
13. Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language				
14. Have had sexual intercourse				
15. Reached age eighteen				
16. If a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially				

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
17. Purchase a house				
18. If a man, become capable of keeping a family physically safe				
19. If a woman, become capable of caring for children				
20. Make lifelong commitments to others				
21. Settle into a long-term career				
22. Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions				
23. If a man, become capable of caring for children				
24. Finished with education				
25. Have no more than one sexual partner				
26. Become employed full-time				
27. Grow to full height				
28. Married				
29. Not deeply tied to parents emotionally				
30. Committed to a long-term love relationship				
31. If a woman, become biologically capable of bearing children				
32. Avoid becoming drunk				
33. If a man, become capable of supporting a family financially				
34. Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile				

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
35. Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences				
36. If a man, become biologically capable of fathering children				
37. If a woman, become capable of running a household				
38. Learn always to have good control over your emotions				
39. Have at least one child				

Please go on to the next page.....

Appendix C

Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood

II. Now, please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements *currently* applies to you, by placing a check mark in one of the columns for each item:

	Applies to me very much	Somewhat applies to me	Somewhat does not apply to me	Does not apply to me at all
1. Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences				
2. Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language				
3. Not deeply tied to parents emotionally				
4. Drive safely and close to the speed limit				
5. Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others				
6. Finished with education				
7. Have no more than one sexual partner				
8. Purchase a house				
9. Reached age eighteen				
10. Learn always to have good control over your emotions				
11. Reached age twenty-one				
12. Financially independent from parents				
13. Become capable of supporting a family financially				
14. Committed to a long-term love relationship				
15. Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions				
16. Avoid drunk driving				
17. Have had sexual intercourse				

	Applies to me very much	Somewhat applies to me	Somewhat does not apply to me	Does not apply to me at all
18. Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile				
19. Avoid becoming drunk				
20. Married				
21. Become capable of caring for children				
22. Make lifelong commitments to others				
23. Avoid illegal drugs				
24. Grow to full height				
25. Settle into a long-term career				
26. Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child				
27. Become biologically capable of bearing/fathering children				
28. No longer living in parents' household				
29. Become capable of running a household				
30. Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult				
31. Have at least one child				
32. Avoid committing petty crimes like shoplifting and vandalism				
33. Become capable of keeping a family physically safe				
34. Become employed full-time				

III. Do you think you have reached adulthood?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) In some respects yes, in some respects no

*Please go on to the next
page.....*

Appendix D

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2

IV. Read each statement carefully. Be sure to respond to the total statement and not just a certain part of it. Using the range of responses from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, indicate to what degree each statement fits your own impressions about yourself. Please select only one category per statement.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at what is available until something better comes along.						
2. When it comes to religion I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.						
3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.						
4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.						
5. There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.						
6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.						
7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style." I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.						
8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.						
9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what work will be right for me.						
10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.						

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
11. There's so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.						
12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "life style", but haven't really found it yet.						
13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.						
14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can truly enjoy.						
15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.						
16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.						
17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted.						
18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.						
19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.						
20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.						
21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.						

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.						
23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.						
24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.						
25. I'm not really interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.						
26. I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.						
27. My ideas about men's and women's roles have come right for my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.						
28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.						
29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.						
30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.						
31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.						
32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.						
33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.						

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.						
35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.						
36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self exploration.						
37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.						
38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.						
39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.						
40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.						
41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through their plans.						
42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.						
43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.						
44. My parents' views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.						
45. I've had many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.						

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.						
47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.						
48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.						
49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.						
50. I attend the same church as my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.						
51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways, and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.						
52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.						
53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.						
54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hope of finding one or more I can really enjoy for some time to come.						
55. I've dated different types of people and know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.						
56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.						

	Strongly Agree (1)	Moderately Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Moderately Disagree (5)	Strongly Disagree (6)
57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many possibilities.						
58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.						
59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.						
60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own life style will be.						
61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.						
62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.						
63. I date only people my parents would approve of.						
64. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.						

Please go on to the next page.....

Appendix E

Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood

V. For this survey, please think about this time in your life. By “time in your life,” we are referring to the present time, plus the last few years that have gone by, and the next few years to come, as you see them. In short, you should think about a roughly five-year period, with the present time right in the middle. For each phrase shown below, please place a check mark in one of the columns to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree that the phrase describes this time in your life. For example, if you “Somewhat Agree” that this is a “time of exploration,” then on the same line as the phrase, you would put a check mark in the column headed by “Somewhat Agree” (3). Be sure to put only one check mark per line.

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

<i>Is this period of your life a...</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
17. time of unpredictability?				
18. time of commitments to others?				
19. time of self-sufficiency?				
20. time of many worries?				
21. time of trying out new things?				
22. time of focusing on yourself?				
23. time of separating from parents?				
24. time of defining yourself?				
25. time of planning for the future?				
26. time of seeking a sense of meaning?				
27. time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?				
28. time of learning to think for yourself?				
29. time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?				
30. time of gradually becoming an adult?				
31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?				

Please go on to the next page.....

Appendix F

Examples of Demographic Questionnaires for Each Vocational Setting

University Version of Demographics Questionnaire

VI. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. To respond, circle the answer (e.g., A, B, or C) that applies to you. Please be sure to circle only one answer per question.

1. Your age: _____(please specify)

2. Your biological gender:

- A) Male
- B) Female

3. Your ethnicity:

- A) Aboriginal (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- B) Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)
- C) Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali)
- D) Chinese
- E) Filipino
- F) Japanese
- G) Korean
- H) Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Colombian)
- I) South Asian (e.g., Indian, Sri-Lankan, Nepalese)
- J) South East Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Philippino)
- K) White (Caucasian)
- L) Other: _____(please specify)

4. Your country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify) ➡ If “Other”, please answer this question: **For how long have you lived in Canada:**

- A) Less than 1 month. Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 3-4 years
- F) More than 4 years. Please indicate how many years: _____

5. Your citizenship status:

- A) Canadian citizen
- B) Permanent resident
- C) Minister's permit/Temporary resident permit
- D) Student visa
- E) Work visa
- F) Refugee
- H) Other: _____ (please specify)

6. Your father's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

7. Your father's nationality:

- A) Canadian
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

8. Your mother's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

9. Your mother's nationality:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

10. For how many generations has your family lived in Canada:

- A) One: I am the first generation to live in Canada
- B) Two: my parents were the first generation to live in Canada
- C) Three: my grandparents were the first generation to live in Canada
- D) Four or more generations of my family have lived in Canada
- E) Don't know

11. Your marital Status:

- A) Legally married (and not separated)
- B) Common-law
- C) Separated
- D) Divorced
- E) Widowed
- F) Single (never married)
- G) Engaged

12. The number of children you have:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

13. Your parent(s') family income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

14. Your own income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

15. How much financial support do you receive from you parent(s): _____ %

16. What is your highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma **→ Specify the highest grade you completed: _____**
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree

17. Your father's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

18. Your mother's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

19. Your current living arrangement:

- A) Live with both parents
- B) Live with mother only
- C) Live with father only
- D) Live with mother and stepfather
- E) Live with father and stepmother
- F) Live with other family member (e.g. grandmother, sibling, aunt, uncle)
- G) Live with husband or wife
- H) Live with spouse's parents
- I) Live with romantic partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend)
- J) Live with friend or roommate
- K) Live alone

20. Your current residential status:

- A) Live with parent(s) ➡ **Do you pay rent to your parents?** Yes / No (*circle*)
- B) Live in a residential hall or apartment on a school campus
- C) Live in rental accommodation in the community (e.g., basement suite, room in a house, apartment)
- D) Live in an apartment, condominium or home that you own
- E) Other: _____ (please specify)

21. Where do you currently live:

- A) In the city/town of: _____ (please specify)
- B) On a farm
- C) On an acreage
- D) Other: _____ (please specify)

22. The number of times that you have moved out of your parent(s)/stepparent(s) home in the past 12 years:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

23. How long has it been since you first became a student at your university:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

24. Not including semester breaks and summer holidays, since you first became a student at your university have you ever take a break from your studies where you did not take any courses at all:

- A) Yes → Continue with questions #25-#29 below
- B) No → Skip ahead to question #30 on page 21

.....

25. How many times have you taken a break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies at your university:

- A) One time
- B) Two times
- C) Three or more times → Please indicate how many breaks: _____

26. If you add together all of the times you have taken a break from your studies at your university (not including semester breaks and summer holidays), how long was your total break from your studies:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

27. Not including semester breaks and summer holidays, when was your most recent break from your studies at your university:

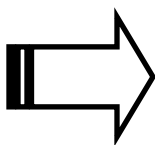
- A) Within the past month
- B) Within the past 2-6 months
- C) Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- D) 1 or more years ago → Please indicate how many years ago: _____

28. How long did your most recent break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies at your university last:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

29. How long have you been back at your university since your most recent break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____



*****Begin here at #30 if your answer to question #24 was "No" and you skipped questions #25 - #29.**
*****Continue here at #30 if your answer to question #24 was "Yes" and you responded to questions #25 - #29.**

30. Did you enroll in your university in the autumn immediately following your high school graduation:

A) Yes

B) No → Please explain your response, indicating why you did not enroll in **your university** in the autumn immediately following your high school graduation: _____

31. Are you currently working towards your first post-secondary credential:

A) Yes

B) No → Please explain your response, indicating any previous post-secondary education (e.g., certificate, diploma, degree, etc.) you have obtained: _____

32. What is your current educational status:

A) Full-time student (i.e., enrolled in at least 60% of a full course load in a session)

B) Part-time student (i.e., enrolled in less than 60% of a full course load in a session)

33. What is your current status, based on number of completed credits towards your current degree:

A) First year student

B) Second year student

C) Third year student

D) Fourth year student

E) Other: _____ (please specify)

34. What college are you in at your university:

A) Agriculture & Bioresources

B) Arts & Science

C) Business

E) Dentistry

F) Education

G) Engineering

K) Kinesiology

L) Law

M) Medicine

N) Nursing

O) Pharmacy & Nutrition

P) Veterinary Medicine

S) Other: _____ (please specify)

35. What is your major: _____ (please specify: e.g., English, Math, unknown)

36. According to your university program descriptions, what is the length of your current program in years: _____ (please specify)

37. Not considering any future educational goals, what type of credential are you currently working towards at your university:

- A) Undergraduate Degree
- B) Doctor of Dental Medicine, Medicine, or Veterinary Medicine
- C) Other: _____ (please specify)

38. Do you plan on obtaining further education (e.g., another degree, a certificate, graduate studies, Medical school, etc.) once you have obtained the credentials you are currently working towards at your university:

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Undecided

39. Please explain your response to question #38: _____

40. On average, what is the cost of tuition each year for your university program: _____

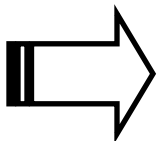
41. Are you a member of your university intercollegiate sport team:

- A) Yes → Please specify what team(s) you play on: _____
- B) No

42. On average, how many paid hours do you work per week:

- A) 0: I don't work outside of school → You are now finished this survey, so please go to page #24.
- B) 1-9
- C) 10-19
- D) 20-29
- E) 30-39
- F) 40 or more

**If your answer is B, C, D, E
or F, please answer
questions #43-47**



*****Continue here at #43 if your answer to question #42 was B), C), D), E), or F).**
*****If your answer to question #42 was "A) 0: I don't work outside of school", you are finished this survey and do not need to answer questions #43 - 47. Please go on to the next page.**

43. How long have you been employed/working at your current job(s):

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

44. At how many jobs do you currently work:

- A) 1
- B) 2
- C) 3 or more → Please indicate how many: _____

45. What type of work do you currently do: _____ (e.g., cashier, sales, construction worker, etc.)

46. Do you see yourself continuing to work at your current job(s) over the longterm (i.e., is it something you would consider staying with as a career):

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Undecided

47. Please explain your response to question #46: _____

Vocational College/Trade School Version of Demographics Questionnaire

VI. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. To respond, circle the answer (e.g., A, B, or C) that applies to you. Please be sure to circle only one answer per question.

1. Your age: _____(please specify)

2. Your biological gender:

- A) Male
- B) Female

3. Your ethnicity:

- A) Aboriginal (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- B) Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)
- C) Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali)
- D) Chinese
- E) Filipino
- F) Japanese
- G) Korean
- H) Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Colombian)
- I) South Asian (e.g., Indian, Sri-Lankan, Nepalese)
- J) South East Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Philippino)
- K) White (Caucasian)
- I) Other: _____(please specify)

4. Your country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify) ➡ **If “Other”, please answer this question: For how long have you lived in Canada:**

- A) Less than 1 month. Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 3-4 years
- E) More than 4 years. Please indicate how many years: _____

5. Your citizenship status:

- A) Canadian citizen
- B) Permanent resident
- C) Minister's permit/Temporary resident permit
- D) Student visa
- E) Work visa
- F) Refugee
- H) Other: _____ (please specify)

6. Your father's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

7. Your father's nationality:

- A) Canadian
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

8. Your mother's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

9. Your mother's nationality:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

10. For how many generations has your family lived in Canada:

- A) One: I am the first generation to live in Canada
- B) Two: my parents were the first generation to live in Canada
- C) Three: my grandparents were the first generation to live in Canada
- D) Four or more generations of my family have lived in Canada
- E) Don't know

11. Your marital Status:

- A) Legally married (and not separated)
- B) Common-law
- C) Separated
- D) Divorced
- E) Widowed
- F) Single (never married)
- G) Engaged

12. The number of children you have:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

13. Your parent(s') family income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

14. Your own income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

15. How much financial support do you receive from you parent(s): _____ %

16. What is your highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma **→ Specify the highest grade you completed: _____**
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree

17. Your father's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

18. Your mother's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

19. Your current living arrangement:

- A) Live with both parents
- B) Live with mother only
- C) Live with father only
- D) Live with mother and stepfather
- E) Live with father and stepmother
- F) Live with other family member (e.g. grandmother, sibling, aunt, uncle)
- G) Live with husband or wife
- H) Live with spouse's parents
- I) Live with romantic partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend)
- J) Live with friend or roommate
- K) Live alone

20. Your current residential status:

- A) Live with parent(s) ➡ **Do you pay rent to your parents?** Yes / No (*circle*)
- B) Live in a residential hall or apartment on a school campus
- C) Live in rental accommodation in the community (e.g., basement suite, room in a house, apartment)
- D) Live in an apartment, condominium or home that you own
- E) Other: _____ (please specify)

21. Where do you currently live:

- A) In the city/town of: _____ (please specify)
- B) On a farm
- C) On an acreage
- D) Other: _____ (please specify)

22. The number of times that you have moved out of your parent(s)/stepparent(s) home in the past 12 years:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

23. Which College or Trade School are you enrolled at: _____ (please indicate)

24. How long has it been since you first became a student at your College or Trade School:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

25. Not including semester breaks and summer holidays, since you first became a student at your College or Trade School have you ever take a break from your studies where you did not take any courses at all:

- A) Yes → Continue with questions #26-30 below
- B) No → Skip ahead to question #31 on page 21

.....

26. How many times have you taken a break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies at your College or Trade School:

- A) One time
- B) Two times
- C) Three or more times → Please indicate how many breaks: _____

27. If you add together all of the times you have taken a break from your studies at your College or Trade School (not including semester breaks and summer holidays), how long was your total break from your studies:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

28. Not including semester breaks and summer holidays, when was your most recent break from your studies at your College or Trade School:

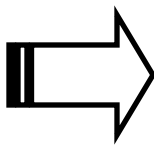
- A) Within the past month
- B) Within the past 2-6 months
- C) Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- D) 1 or more years ago → Please indicate how many years ago: _____

29. How long did your most recent break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies at your College or Trade School last:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

30. How long have you been back at your College or Trade School since your most recent break (not including semester breaks and summer holidays) from your studies:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____



*****Begin here at #31 if your answer to question #25 was "No" and you skipped questions #26 - #30.**
*****Continue here at #31 if your answer to question #25 was "Yes" and you responded to questions #26 - #30.**

31. Did you enroll in your College or Trade School immediately following your time spent in high school:

A) Yes

B) No → Please explain your response, indicating why you did not enroll in your College or Trade School immediately following your time spent in high school:

32. Are you currently working towards your first post-secondary credential:

A) Yes

B) No → Please explain your response, indicating any previous post-secondary education (e.g., certificate, diploma, degree, etc.) you have obtained:

33. What is your current educational status:

A) Full-time student

B) Part-time student

34. What is your current status, based on number of completed credits at your College or Trade School:

A) First year student

B) Second year student

C) Third year student

D) Fourth year student

E) Other: _____ (please specify)

35. What is your current program of study at your College or Trade School:

_____ (e.g., Administrative Assistant, Fashion Design, Esthetics, I.T., Computer Animation, etc.)

36. According to your College or Trade School program descriptions, what is the length of your current program in weeks or years: _____ (please specify, including whether value is in weeks or years)

37. Not considering any future educational goals, what type of credential are you currently working towards at your College or Trade School:

- A) Applied Certificate
- B) Certificate
- C) Advanced Certificate
- D) Diploma
- E) Apprenticeship
- F) Other: _____ (please specify)

38. Are you currently enrolled in a College or Trade School program that will allow you to transfer and extend your program at your College or Trade School or at another college or university:

A) Yes ➡ Please explain your response, noting if you are planning to transfer and extend your studies at your College or Trade School or at another college or university:

B) No

39. Do you plan on obtaining further education (e.g., extending a certificate to an advanced certificate, transferring to a university, obtaining a different certificate or diploma, etc.) once you have obtained the credentials you are currently working towards at your College or Trade School:

A) Yes

B) No

C) Undecided

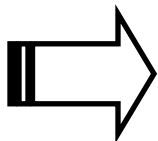
40. Please explain your response to question #39: _____

41. On average, what is the cost of tuition each year for your College or Trade School program: _____ (please indicate)

42. On average, how many paid hours do you work per week, not including paid work that is part of your College or Trade School training:

- A) 0: I don't work outside of school ➡ You are now finished this survey. Please go on to page #24.
- B) 1-9
- C) 10-19
- D) 20-29
- E) 30-39
- F) 40 or more

If your answer is B, C, D, E or F, please answer questions #43-47



*****Continue here at #43 if your answer to question #42 was B), C), D), E), or F).**
*****If your answer to question #42 was "A) 0: I don't work outside of school", you are finished this survey and do not need to answer questions #43 - 47. Please go on to the next page.**

43. How long have you been employed/working at your current job(s):

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

44. At how many jobs do you currently work:

- A) 1
- B) 2
- C) 3 or more → Please indicate how many: _____

45. What type of work do you currently do: _____ (e.g., cashier, sales, construction worker, etc.)

46. Do you see yourself continuing to work at your current job(s) over the longterm (i.e., is it something you would consider staying with as a career):

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Undecided

47. Please explain your response to question #46: _____

Labour Force Version of Demographics Questionnaire

VI. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. To respond, circle the answer (e.g., A, B, or C) that applies to you. Please be sure to circle only one answer per question.

1. Your age: _____(please specify)

2. Your biological gender:

- A) Male
- B) Female

3. Your ethnicity:

- A) Aboriginal (e.g., Inuit, Métis, North American Indian)
- B) Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)
- C) Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali)
- D) Chinese
- E) Filipino
- F) Japanese
- G) Korean
- H) Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Colombian)
- I) South Asian (e.g., Indian, Sri-Lankan, Nepalese)
- J) South East Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Philippino)
- K) White (Caucasian)
- L) Other: _____(please specify)

4. Your country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify) ➡ **If “Other”, please answer this question: For how long have you lived in Canada:**

- A) Less than 1 month. Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 3-4 years
- F) More than 4 years. Please indicate how many years: _____

5. Your citizenship status:

- A) Canadian citizen
- B) Permanent resident
- C) Minister's permit/Temporary resident permit
- D) Student visa
- E) Work visa
- F) Refugee
- H) Other: _____ (please specify)

6. Your father's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

7. Your father's nationality:

- A) Canadian
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

8. Your mother's country of birth:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

9. Your mother's nationality:

- A) Canada
- B) Other: _____ (please specify)
- C) Don't know

10. For how many generations has your family lived in Canada:

- A) One: I am the first generation to live in Canada
- B) Two: my parents were the first generation to live in Canada
- C) Three: my grandparents were the first generation to live in Canada
- D) Four or more generations of my family have lived in Canada
- E) Don't know

11. Your marital Status:

- A) Legally married (and not separated)
- B) Common-law
- C) Separated
- D) Divorced
- E) Widowed
- F) Single (never married)
- G) Engaged

12. The number of children you have:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

13. Your parent(s') family income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

14. Your own income:

- A) Less than \$10,000
- B) \$10,000-\$29,000
- C) \$30,000-\$49,000
- D) \$50,000-\$69,000
- E) More than \$70,000

15. How much financial support do you receive from you parent(s): _____ %

16. Your father's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journeyperson ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

17. Your mother's highest level of education completed:

- A) Less than high school degree/diploma
- B) High school degree/diploma
- C) Some post-secondary education but less than graduation
- D) Vocational school/College certificate, diploma or journey person ticket
- E) University undergraduate degree
- F) University graduate degree
- G) Don't know

18. Your current living arrangement:

- A) Live with both parents
- B) Live with mother only
- C) Live with father only
- D) Live with mother and stepfather
- E) Live with father and stepmother
- F) Live with other family member (e.g. grandmother, sibling, aunt, uncle)
- G) Live with husband or wife
- H) Live with spouse's parents
- I) Live with romantic partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend)
- J) Live with friend or roommate
- K) Live alone

19. Your current residential status:

- A) Live with parent(s) ➡ **Do you pay rent to your parents?** Yes / No (*circle*)
- B) Live in a residential hall or apartment on a school campus
- C) Live in rental accommodation in the community (e.g., basement suite, room in a house, apartment)
- D) Live in an apartment, condominium or home that you own
- E) Other: _____ (please specify)

20. Where do you currently live:

- A) In the city/town of: _____ (please specify)
- B) On a farm
- C) On an acreage
- D) Other: _____ (please specify)

21. The number of times that you have moved out of your parent(s)/stepparent(s) home in the past 12 years:

- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 2
- D) 3
- E) 4 or more

22. Did you graduate from high school with a grade 12 diploma:

A) Yes → **Skip ahead to question #24**

B) No. What was the highest grade you completed at school: _____ (specify)

23. Please answer this question only if you answered “No” to question #22. Do you have a high school equivalency diploma (GED):

A) Yes

B) No

24. Have you taken any amount of post-secondary education since high school:

A) No, none at all → **If no, skip ahead to question #25 on page 20**

B) Yes, some → **If yes, what type of post secondary school were you enrolled in:**

A) Two year or less college or technical institute

B) Four year degree granting college or university

C) Other: _____ (please specify)

If yes, how long were you enrolled in post-secondary education:

A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____

B) 1 - 6 months

C) 6 months – 1 year

D) 1-2 years

E) 2-3 years

F) 3-4 years

G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

If yes, please explain why you stopped attending your post-secondary school before completing the entire program:

If yes, how long has it been since you stopped attending post-secondary education:

A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____

B) 1 - 6 months

C) 6 months – 1 year

D) 1-2 years

E) 2-3 years

F) 3-4 years

G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

25. Do you have plans to obtain further education in the future:

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Undecided

26. Please explain your response to question #25: _____

27. Were you unemployed after your time at high school or post-secondary school but before you first started working in the labour force:

- A) No
- B) Yes ➡ **How long were you unemployed before you first started working in the labour force:**
 - A) Less than 1 month ➡ Please indicate how many days: _____
 - B) 1 - 6 months
 - C) 6 months – 1 year
 - D) 1-2 years
 - E) 2-3 years
 - F) 3-4 years
 - G) 4 or more years ➡ Please indicate how many years: _____

28. Have you ever been unemployed since you began working in the labour force:

- A) Yes ➡ **Continue with questions #29 - #33 below**
- B) No ➡ **Skip ahead to question #34 on page 22**

.....

29. How many times have you been unemployed since you began working in the labour force:

- A) One time
- B) Two times
- C) Three or more times. Please indicate how many times: _____

30. If you add together all of the times you have been unemployed since you began working in the labour force, how long was your total period of unemployment:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

31. When was your most recent period of unemployment:

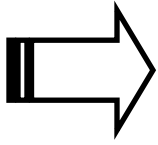
- A) Within the past month
- B) Within the past 2-6 months
- C) Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- D) 1 or more years ago → Please indicate how many years: _____

32. How long did your most recent period of unemployment last:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

33. How long have you been back at work since your most recent period of unemployment:

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____



*****Begin here at #34 if your answer to question #28 was "No" and you skipped questions #29 - #33.
***Continue here at #34 if your answer to question #28 was "Yes" and you responded to questions #29 - #33.**

34. On average, how many paid hours do you currently work per week:

- A) 0
- B) 1-9
- C) 10-19
- D) 20-29
- E) 30-39
- F) 40 or more

35. How long have you been employed/working at your current job(s):

- A) Less than 1 month → Please indicate how many days: _____
- B) 1 - 6 months
- C) 6 months – 1 year
- D) 1-2 years
- E) 2-3 years
- F) 3-4 years
- G) 4 or more years → Please indicate how many years: _____

36. At how many jobs do you currently work:

- A) 1
- B) 2
- C) 3 or more. Please indicate how many: _____

37. What type of work do you currently do: _____
(e.g., cashier, sales, construction worker, etc.)

38. Do you see yourself continuing to work at your current job(s) over the longterm (i.e., is it something you would consider staying with as a career):

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Undecided

39. Please explain your response to question #38: _____

Please go on to the next page...

Appendix G

Importance of Vocational Setting Question

VII. For these final questions, please reflect on your own life experiences.

1. Based on your experience, in comparison to other vocational settings (i.e., being in the labour force, being a university student, being a vocational college/trade school student, or being a high performance athlete), how important do you think your current vocational setting has been in shaping your transition from adolescence to adulthood?

- A) Very Important
B) Somewhat Important
C) Somewhat Unimportant
D) Very Unimportant

2. Please reflect upon your life experiences and use the space below to describe how you *think* your current vocational setting has or has not impacted your transition from adolescence to adulthood: _____

[illegible]

Appendix H

Opportunity to Withdraw Consent from Study

Opportunity to Withdraw Consent to Participate

Thank you once again for completing the surveys today. Again, you are under no obligation to submit your responses from these surveys and if you choose to withdraw your responses they will not be read and you will not be penalized in any way (i.e., you will still be entered in the contest to win the draw prize).

Do you wish to have your survey responses be included as part of the research?

- A) Yes, I would like my responses to be included in the research
- B) No, please destroy my responses

Appendix I

Interview Invitation

Interview Invitation

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the surveys as part of my research. With this study I hope to learn more about what emerging adulthood looks like in 18-29 year-olds from various vocational settings.

In order to collect rich data about your ideas and experiences, I would like to conduct interviews with a small number of individuals who have completed the surveys. Participants will be asked to share personal experiences, views and opinions concerning their vocational setting and their lives as 18-29 year-olds. I will purposefully select interview participants based on your expressed interest and your responses to the surveys you completed today. Because of this, it will be necessary to link your identifying information with your survey responses. However, any information given shall remain confidential. Also, this identifying link between your contact information and your survey responses will be destroyed once the interview data has been collected and participants have signed the transcript release form (only a number will connect data at that point). You are under no obligation to participate in the interviews. If you are selected for an interview, you will be contacted by me within the next several months in order to set up an interview date and time. At that time, I will provide the selected participants with further information. Thanks again.

Are you interested in participating in an interview?

A) No thanks

B) Yes, I am interested in participating in an interview. ➡ **If “yes”, please fill in the following information. Please print:**

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Preferred mode of contact: _____

Best time to contact you: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please go on to the next page...

Appendix J

Mean Responses of Interviewees on Quantitative Measures

Table 1

Mean Responses of University Interviewees

Measure	Group mean	Interviewee			
		Helen	Reigh	Malcolm	Mark
IDEA					
Identity Exploration	3.34	2.57	3.71	3.86	3.71
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.47	3.80	4.00	4.00	3.40
Negativity/Instability	3.05	2.14	3.57	2.29	3.71
Other-Focused	2.55	4.00	1.33	3.33	2.33
Self-Focused	3.36	3.50	3.83	3.00	2.83
Feeling “In-Between”	3.15	2.33	4.00	3.00	4.00
Overall IDEA	3.29	2.86	3.79	3.21	3.50
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood					
Independence	3.16	3.17	3.00	3.83	3.17
Interdependence	2.70	2.75	2.50	2.75	2.50
Role transitions	2.06	2.67	1.50	2.17	1.67
Norm compliance	2.58	2.13	3.13	2.00	2.88
Biological transitions	1.98	2.75	1.50	2.00	1.25
Chronological transitions	2.35	1.67	1.33	1.67	2.67
Family capacities	2.77	3.63	2.13	3.25	3.38
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood					
Independence	2.99	3.83	2.83	2.50	1.83
Interdependence	2.88	3.50	2.00	2.75	1.75
Role transitions	1.44	2.33	1.00	1.00	1.00
Norm compliance	3.15	3.63	3.25	2.25	4.00
Biological transitions	3.41	3.67	4.00	4.00	3.00
Chronological transitions	3.51	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Family capacities	2.39	2.75	2.00	1.50	2.00
Identity Status					
Overall identity status classification		Moratorium	Moratorium	Achievement	Moratorium
Diffusion subscale score	50.28	41.00	44.00	42.00	36.00
Foreclosure subscale score	31.89	19.00	32.00	20.00	30.00
Moratorium subscale score	51.45	38.00	74.00	49.00	77.00
Achievement subscale score	64.58	54.00	55.00	78.00	50.00
Importance of Vocational Setting					
Continuous measure	3.32	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood					
Continuous measure	2.27	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

Table 2

Mean Responses of Vocational College/Trade School Interviewees

Measure	Group mean	Interviewee			
		Amelia	Kate	Desmond	Stewart
IDEA					
Identity Exploration	3.31	-	3.43	3.57	2.57
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.45	-	3.00	3.60	4.00
Negativity/Instability	2.88	1.00	3.00	3.14	2.43
Other-Focused	2.74	1.33	2.00	3.00	1.00
Self-Focused	3.39	-	3.00	3.33	3.83
Feeling “In-Between”	2.97	1.00	3.33	3.00	2.67
Overall IDEA	3.22	-	3.14	3.36	3.07
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood					
Independence	3.25	3.17	3.67	3.33	3.50
Interdependence	2.94	3.75	3.00	3.00	2.75
Role transitions	2.34	2.67	2.33	2.83	2.33
Norm compliance	2.91	2.50	2.75	2.63	2.00
Biological transitions	2.14	1.00	2.50	2.00	2.25
Chronological transitions	2.47	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.33
Family capacities	3.11	3.25	2.88	3.00	3.63
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood					
Independence	3.16	2.33	3.83	3.00	3.83
Interdependence	3.14	3.50	2.75	2.50	2.25
Role transitions	1.95	1.50	2.50	1.00	2.00
Norm compliance	3.19	3.25	3.13	3.00	2.50
Biological transitions	3.31	4.00	3.00	2.67	4.00
Chronological transitions	3.30	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Family capacities	2.92	2.00	1.75	2.50	3.75
Identity Status					
Overall identity status classification		Achievement	Diffusion	Achievement	Diffusion
Diffusion subscale score	51.54	49.00	64.00	50.00	61.00
Foreclosure subscale score	35.20	43.00	45.00	39.00	16.00
Moratorium subscale score	53.16	59.00	60.00	51.00	47.00
Achievement subscale score	68.08	75.00	75.00	73.00	48.00
Importance of Vocational Setting					
Continuous measure	2.93	4.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood					
Continuous measure	2.36	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00

Note. Where indicated by a dash (-), subscale scores could not be computed due to missed items in the questionnaire.

Table 3

Mean Responses of Labour Force Interviewees

Measure	Group mean	Interviewee			
		Meathead	Mel	Austin	Fabrizio
IDEA					
Identity Exploration	3.20	2.43	3.14	4.00	3.71
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.21	3.60	3.80	4.00	4.00
Negativity/Instability	2.82	3.29	3.14	4.00	3.43
Other-Focused	2.85	4.00	2.33	2.33	2.67
Self-Focused	3.22	3.33	3.17	3.50	4.00
Feeling "In-Between"	2.88	1.00	3.33	4.00	2.33
Overall IDEA	3.07	2.89	3.29	3.89	3.59
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood					
Independence	3.28	3.00	3.17	2.50	3.83
Interdependence	2.80	2.75	2.75	2.25	3.75
Role transitions	2.27	1.67	1.50	1.33	3.67
Norm compliance	2.71	2.88	2.75	2.50	3.38
Biological transitions	1.97	1.75	1.00	2.25	3.25
Chronological transitions	2.40	2.00	1.00	1.33	3.33
Family capacities	2.98	1.88	2.50	3.13	3.63
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood					
Independence	3.30	4.00	3.83	2.50	3.67
Interdependence	3.00	4.00	3.00	2.75	3.50
Role transitions	2.22	2.67	2.50	1.50	3.33
Norm compliance	3.06	3.25	3.00	2.88	3.25
Biological transitions	3.38	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
Chronological transitions	3.52	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00
Family capacities	2.99	3.75	3.00	3.50	4.00
Identity Status					
Overall identity status classification		Diffusion	Diffusion	Diffusion	Moratorium
Diffusion	56.22	69.00	64.00	68.00	49.00
Foreclosure	33.05	16.00	24.00	24.00	16.00
Moratorium	51.39	53.00	63.00	65.00	46.00
Achievement	63.88	50.00	63.00	65.00	58.00
Importance of Vocational Setting					
Continuous measure	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood					
Continuous measure	2.35	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

Appendix K

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Introduction: First of all, thank you for participating in the survey portion my study and for agreeing to participate in this next stage of my dissertation research. I hope that once my entire study is complete, we will have a better understanding of what life is like for 18 to 29 year-olds. The purpose of this next part of my study is to learn more about your experiences over the years, starting back when you were in high school, along with what has shaped your transition to adulthood. Through your stories I also hope to understand more about your views on markers of adulthood, reaching adulthood, and sense of self.

1. To begin, let's go back to when you were in high school. Tell me about that period in your life.

Probe questions as needed/relevant to elicit constructs:

- ☐ What kinds of things did you do (e.g., **school, work, family, friends, romance, sports, free-time, travel, etc.**)? **What led to this/Guided your decision?**
- ☐ What was that like for you?
- ☐ Tell me about any influential people/events?
- ☐ What kinds of things were you thinking about/focused on/important to you?
- ☐ What kind of a person were you back then? Was it a good/bad time?

- ☐ What happened next? What led to that? How did you choose/decide?

- ☐ Had you reached adulthood (in what ways yes/no)?
 - When did you think you would reach adulthood?
- ☐ At the time, what did you see as important markers of adulthood?
 - Had you reached any of these markers?

- ☐ To what degree did you know who you were and what you stood for as a person?
 - What made you feel that way about it?
- ☐ Some people feel they are exploring what's important to them, others are quite certain in their views, and others really aren't bothered much one way or the other when it comes to these things. Which of these descriptors described you best when you were in high school? Why is that?

- ☐ Now I'd like you to think of that time in your life and finish this sentence in whatever way you see fitting: "**That period of my life was a time of _____.**"
 - **What else** describes that period of your life? Explain what you mean.

- ☐ What during that period shaped you and your transition to adulthood? What else?
- ☐ At that time, what kind of person did you see yourself becoming over the years ahead?
- ☐ What was your view on your future and the years to come/your goals?

- ☐ Were there any other influential events or things you'd like to share about that period of your life?

2. After your time in high school, what happened next? Tell me about the period in your life between when you left high school and when you entered your current vocational setting (Guide interviewee to tell his or her story covering timeline up to current year)

How did you choose that? what did you do after that?"

Probe questions as needed/relevant to elicit constructs:

- ☐ What kinds of things did you do (e.g., school, work, family, friends, romance, sports, free-time, travel, etc.)? What led to this? Guided your decision?
- ☐ What was that like for you?
- ☐ Tell me about any influential people/events?
- ☐ What kinds of things were you thinking about/focused on/important to you?
- ☐ What kind of a person were you back then? Was it a good/bad time?

- ☐ Had you reached adulthood (in what ways yes/no)?
 - When did you think you would reach adulthood?
- ☐ At the time, what did you see as important markers of adulthood---any changes compared to when you were in high school?
 - Had you reached any of these markers?

- ☐ To what degree did you know who you were and what you stood for as a person?
 - What made you feel that way about it?
- ☐ Some people feel they are exploring what's important to them, others are quite certain in their views, and others really aren't bothered much one way or the other when it comes to these things. Which of these descriptors described you best during that period? Why is that?

- ☐ Now I'd like you to think of that time in your life and finish this sentence in whatever way you see fitting: "**That period of my life was a time of _____.**"
 - **What else** describes that period of your life? Explain what you mean.

- ☐ What during that period shaped you and your transition to adulthood? What else?
- ☐ At that time, what kind of person did you see yourself becoming over the years ahead---any changes compared to when you were in high school?
- ☐ Did your goals or view of your future change? Why?

- ☐ Were there any other influential events or things you'd like to share about that period of your life?

3. Now let's focus on your life today. Tell me about this period of your life; what is it like being ____ years old?

Probe questions as needed/relevant to elicit constructs:

- ☐ What kinds of things do you do (e.g., school, work, family, friends, romance, sports, free-time, travel, etc.)? What led to this/Guided your decision?
- ☐ What's that like for you?
- ☐ Tell me about any influential people/events?
- ☐ What kinds of things are you thinking about/focused on/important?
- ☐ What kind of a person are you? Good time/bad time?

- ☐ **At this point in your life, do you think you have reached adulthood (in what ways yes/no)?**
 - What leads you to think this/how do you know this to be the case?
- ☐ **From your perspective today, what signified/would signify that you had reached adulthood---any changes in what you consider to be important markers of adulthood compared to when you were in high school?**
 - Have you reached any of these markers?
 - Are there things that you don't really think are related to whether a person should be considered an adult?

- ☐ **Describe to me the extent to which you currently know who you are and what you stand for as a person?**
 - What makes you feel this way about it?
- ☐ **Some people feel they are exploring what's important to them, others are quite certain in their views, and others really aren't bothered much one way or the other when it comes to these things. Which of these descriptors describes you best?**
 - Why is that?
- ☐ **Now I'd like you to think of this time in your life (a five year period, with the present time right in the middle). Now go ahead and finish this sentence in whatever way you see fitting: "This period of my life is a time of _____."**
 - **What else** describes this period of your life? Explain what you mean.

- ☐ **What during this period has shaped you** and your transition to adulthood?
 - What else?
- ☐ What are your goals now for the future?
- ☐ Are there any other influential events or things you'd like to share about this period of your life?

4. One of the goals of my study is learn more about 18-29 year-olds from different vocational settings/locations/who are doing different things at this time in their lives, including university students, vocational and trade school students, and people who instead of obtaining a post-secondary credential are working in the labour force. So now I'd like to ask you some questions about your setting/location/what you are doing at this time.

- In the survey you completed in the first part of my study, you indicated thinking that your vocational setting/location, _____ (*insert participant's vocational setting*), has been _____ important (*insert participant's survey response*) in shaping your transition from adolescence to adulthood, and you wrote the following about it (*hand participant his or her written response to review*). Please tell me more about what you mean in your response/why you think that is the case. Does this differ from your thoughts on the importance of settings/locations in shaping the lives of other 18-29 year-olds? For example, you might consider any friends you have in other settings/locations or who are doing something different are this time and how your lives might differ because of it.
- Here are a few more questions about vocational settings/locations in relation to what we talked about earlier:
 - Do you think ____ impacts whether you think you have reached adulthood? Why?
 - Do you think ____ shapes what you think is important in marking adulthood? Why?
 - Do you think _____ shapes how you would finish the sentence "This period of my life is a time of _____."? Why?
 - Thinking about commitments and explorations, do you think _____ impacts the extent to which you know who you are and what you stand for as a person? Why?

5. Finally, let's look for a moment at the future. What do the next 10 years hold in store for you/what will life look like when you move into your thirties and beyond?

Probe questions as needed/relevant to elicit constructs:

- ☐ What kinds of things will you do (e.g., **school, work, family, friends, romance, sports, free-time, travel**, etc.)? **Lead to this/Guide your decision?**
- ☐ Tell me about who you expect to be influential people/events?
- ☐ What kinds of things will you be thinking about/focused on/important?
- ☐ What kind of person do you see yourself becoming over the years ahead—any changes in what you see compared to the view you held of your thirties when you were in high school?

- ☐ Do you think you will have reached adulthood (in what ways yes/no)?
- ☐ At that time, what do you think you will consider to be important markers of adulthood---any changes compared to when you were younger?

- ☐ Do you think you will know who you are and what you stand for as a person?
 - What makes you feel that way about it?
- ☐ Some people feel they are exploring what's important to them, others are quite certain in their views, and others really aren't bothered much one way or the other when it comes to these things.
 - Why is that?
- ☐ What experiences in your thirties might shape you? In what ways?
- ☐ **Now I'd like you to think forward to that time in your life and finish this sentence in whatever way you see fitting: "That period of my life will be a time of _____."**
 - **What else** might describe that period of your life? Explain what you mean.
- ☐ Is there anything else you'd like to share as you think about your life in the future?

6. Is there anything else that you think would be important to share about your past experiences, your current life as an 18-29 year-old, your transition to adulthood, or being part of your particular vocational setting/location?
7. Thank you very much for sharing your story with me; those are all the questions I have. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix L
Transcript Release Form

Copy #1
Save for your records

Transcript Release Form

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, Emerging Adulthood Opinions and Experiences, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Selina Zaluski (maiden: Elm). I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Selina Zaluski to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

OR

I, Selina Zaluski, have made three reasonable attempts (dates of attempts: _____) to contact _____ to review the complete personal interview and/or return a signed transcript release form for this study, Emerging Adulthood Opinions and Experiences. Because I have been unable to contact the individual named above, as consented to by the participant I will de-identify the information provided to the best of my ability and use it in the manner described in the Consent Form.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix M

Normality of Quantitative Measures

Measure	Z-score of skewness			Z-score of kurtosis		
	University	Vocational college	Labour force	University	Vocational college	Labour force
IDEA						
Identity Exploration	-3.83	-3.94	-0.69	1.67	3.03	-0.83
Experimentation/Possibilities	-4.52	-4.12	-0.86	2.09	4.44	-1.41
Negativity/Instability	-0.41	-2.17	-0.69	-1.15	0.75	-0.92
Other-Focused	0.78	-0.19	0.29	-0.76	-1.13	-0.96
Self-Focused	-4.79	-3.40	-2.53	6.55	4.93	0.74
Feeling “In-Between”	-2.51	-2.02	-1.36	-0.03	-0.32	-1.03
Overall IDEA	-2.91	-5.13	-0.94	3.87	9.31	0.55
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood						
Independence	-3.06	-0.84	-2.06	3.02	-0.18	0.19
Interdependence	-1.93	0.05	-1.76	0.76	-0.23	0.77
Role Transitions	2.20	1.53	0.53	0.22	0.17	-1.15
Norm Compliance	-1.54	-0.54	-2.05	-1.00	-0.84	0.25
Biological Transitions	2.06	0.89	1.17	-1.68	-1.43	-1.19
Chronological Transitions	0.37	-0.45	0.17	-0.84	-1.03	-0.85
Family Capacities	-2.79	-2.16	-1.26	-0.08	1.29	0.39
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood						
Independence	-0.57	-2.16	-1.09	-0.99	1.51	-0.96
Interdependence	-0.28	-2.08	-0.59	-1.68	1.67	-0.87
Role Transitions	6.08	2.40	2.29	4.41	1.30	0.00
Norm Compliance	-3.14	-3.63	-2.23	0.96	3.34	0.54
Biological Transitions	-1.97	-3.61	-2.76	-1.59	1.56	0.05
Chronological Transitions	-2.23	-1.78	-2.49	-1.82	-1.35	-0.52
Family Capacities	2.35	-0.78	-2.03	-0.35	-1.50	-0.23
Identity Status						
Diffusion	0.61	-1.02	0.26	-1.77	-1.13	-0.89
Foreclosure	3.48	0.90	2.44	4.02	-0.89	3.05
Moratorium	0.94	-0.51	2.09	0.62	0.00	1.06
Achievement	0.34	-0.28	-0.81	-0.45	-0.92	0.62
Importance of Vocational Setting						
Continuous Measure	-4.50	-2.54	-2.41	1.12	-0.03	-0.33
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood						
Continuous Measure	0.26	0.64	1.84	-0.82	-1.72	-2.48

Measure	Variance		
	University	Vocational college	Labour force
IDEA			
Identity Exploration	0.27	0.38	0.25
Experimentation/Possibilities	0.28	0.37	0.34
Negativity/Instability	0.27	0.38	0.51
Other-Focused	0.50	0.60	0.60
Self-Focused	0.18	0.18	0.21
Feeling “In-Between”	0.52	0.62	0.69
Overall IDEA	0.13	0.21	0.15
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood			
Independence	0.14	0.14	0.16
Interdependence	0.38	0.27	0.37
Role Transitions	0.46	0.43	0.51
Norm Compliance	0.51	0.41	0.55
Biological Transitions	0.64	0.76	0.65
Chronological Transitions	0.49	0.71	0.62
Family Capacities	0.64	0.41	0.48
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood			
Independence	0.21	0.24	0.22
Interdependence	0.42	0.36	0.36
Role Transitions	0.27	0.42	0.51
Norm Compliance	0.30	0.33	0.25
Biological Transitions	0.30	0.59	0.53
Chronological Transitions	0.31	0.52	0.35
Family Capacities	0.44	0.56	0.59
Identity Status			
Diffusion	110.96	111.79	113.29
Foreclosure	137.57	166.55	139.62
Moratorium	97.34	79.99	110.70
Achievement	107.19	89.09	74.70
Importance of Vocational Setting			
Continuous Measure	0.70	0.87	0.98
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood			
Continuous Measure	0.30	0.27	0.23

Measure	Minimum score			Maximum score		
	University	Vocational college	Labour force	University	Vocational college	Labour force
IDEA						
Identity Exploration	1.57	1.00	2.14	4.00	4.00	4.00
Experimentation/Possibilities	1.60	1.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Negativity/Instability	1.86	1.00	1.29	4.00	3.86	4.00
Other-Focused	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Self-Focused	1.50	1.67	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Feeling “In-Between”	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Overall IDEA	1.79	1.14	2.00	4.00	3.93	3.89
Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood						
Independence	1.83	2.33	2.33	3.83	4.00	4.00
Interdependence	1.00	1.75	1.00	4.00	4.00	3.75
Role Transitions	1.00	1.17	1.00	4.00	4.00	3.67
Norm Compliance	1.00	1.25	1.00	3.88	4.00	4.00
Biological Transitions	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.75	4.00	3.75
Chronological Transitions	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Family Capacities	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood						
Independence	1.83	1.50	2.17	3.83	4.00	4.00
Interdependence	1.50	1.00	1.50	4.00	4.00	4.00
Role Transitions	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.33	4.00	3.88
Norm Compliance	1.57	1.25	1.63	4.00	4.00	4.00
Biological Transitions	2.00	1.00	1.33	4.00	4.00	4.00
Chronological Transitions	2.00	1.67	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Family Capacities	1.00	1.50	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Identity Status						
Diffusion	29.00	28.00	36.00	71.00	69.00	78.00
Foreclosure	16.00	16.00	16.00	82.00	70.00	76.00
Moratorium	30.00	29.00	34.00	77.00	73.00	82.00
Achievement	37.00	48.00	40.00	90.00	87.00	84.00
Importance of Vocational Setting						
Continuous Measure	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood						
Continuous Measure	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

Appendix N

Mean Item Responses for Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood

Marker	University	Vocational college	Labour force	Males	Females	All groups
Independence	3.16	3.25	3.28	3.22	3.22	3.22
Establish equal relationship with parents	3.18	3.36	3.27	3.28	3.23	3.25
Financially independent from parents	3.30	3.53	3.65	3.42	3.48	3.45
No longer living in parents' household	3.26	3.34	3.29	3.24	3.34	3.29
Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	1.85	1.86	2.04	1.98	1.81	1.90
Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions	3.82	3.86	3.90	3.83	3.87	3.85
Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences	3.49	3.55	3.56	3.53	3.51	3.52
Interdependence	2.70	2.94	2.80	2.73	2.85	2.79
Committed to long-term love relationship	1.83	2.09	2.04	1.87	2.03	1.95
Make life-long commitments to others	2.82	3.05	2.94	2.28	3.02	2.92
Learn always to have good control over your emotions	2.96	3.31	3.15	3.14	3.07	3.10
Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others	3.20	3.31	3.09	3.12	3.29	3.20
Role Transitions	2.06	2.34	2.27	2.14	2.24	2.19
Finish education	2.05	2.53	2.10	2.16	2.25	2.20
Married	1.50	1.71	1.67	1.57	1.62	1.60
Have at least one child	1.27	1.64	1.54	1.48	1.40	1.44
Become employed full-time	2.67	2.97	3.25	2.88	2.90	2.89
Settle into a long-term career	2.70	2.90	2.81	2.62	2.95	2.78
Purchase house	2.16	2.31	2.27	2.14	2.33	2.23
Norm Compliance	2.58	2.91	2.71	2.58	2.83	2.70
Avoid becoming drunk	2.02	2.14	1.96	1.98	2.10	2.04
Avoid illegal drugs	2.66	3.07	2.83	2.52	3.12	2.82
Avoid drunk driving	3.07	3.52	3.29	3.07	3.44	3.25
Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting	3.17	3.45	3.50	3.23	3.43	3.33
Have no more than one sexual partner	1.99	2.45	2.10	2.13	2.17	2.15
Drive safely and close to speed limit	2.57	2.93	2.75	2.58	2.85	2.72
Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language	2.16	2.52	2.15	2.11	2.42	2.26
Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child	2.98	3.19	3.13	3.04	3.11	3.07
Biological Transitions	1.98	2.14	1.97	2.14	1.91	2.02
Grow to full height	1.95	1.98	1.94	2.07	1.84	1.96
If a woman, become biologically capable of bearing children	2.08	2.38	1.96	2.24	2.04	2.14
If a man, become biologically capable of fathering children	2.18	2.49	2.21	2.41	2.13	2.28
Have had sexual intercourse	1.17	1.67	1.72	1.82	1.58	1.70

Chronological Transitions	2.35	2.47	2.40	2.42	2.36	2.39
Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile	2.38	2.83	2.63	2.62	2.50	2.56
Reached age eighteen	2.54	2.40	2.50	2.54	2.44	2.49
Reached age twenty-one	2.11	2.19	2.06	2.10	2.15	2.12
Family Capacities	2.77	3.11	2.98	2.88	2.95	2.92
If a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially	2.61	2.84	2.87	2.59	2.87	2.74
If a man, become capable of supporting a family financially	2.80	3.26	3.19	3.03	3.02	3.03
If a woman, become capable of caring for children	2.90	3.21	2.89	3.01	2.97	2.99
If a man, become capable of caring for children	2.82	3.21	2.98	2.99	2.95	2.97
If a woman, become capable of running a household	2.68	3.04	3.04	2.75	2.98	2.87
If a man, become capable of running a household	2.88	3.10	3.09	3.02	2.96	2.99
If a woman, become capable of keeping a family physically safe	2.76	3.18	2.93	2.78	3.05	2.92
If a man, become capable of keeping a family physically safe	2.83	3.12	3.06	3.02	2.92	2.97

Note. Range of responses: 1= Very unimportant as marker of adulthood; 4 = Very important as marker of adulthood

Appendix O

Mean Responses per Item for Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood

Marker	University	Vocational college	Labour force	Males	Females	All groups
Independence	2.99	3.16	3.30	3.07	3.16	3.11
Establish equal relationship with parents	3.11	3.42	3.42	3.20	3.35	3.27
Financially independent from parents	2.38	2.86	3.42	2.62	2.90	2.76
No longer living in parents' household	3.00	3.02	3.13	2.84	3.23	3.03
Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	2.20	2.26	2.48	2.36	2.21	2.28
Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions	3.78	3.75	3.81	3.78	3.78	3.78
Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences	3.50	3.50	3.56	3.55	3.48	3.51
Interdependence	2.88	3.14	3.00	2.86	3.10	2.98
Committed to long-term love relationship	2.37	2.74	2.63	2.19	2.88	2.53
Make life-long commitments to others	2.91	3.12	3.00	2.83	3.16	2.99
Learn always to have good control over your emotions	2.97	3.09	3.13	3.16	2.92	3.04
Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others	3.27	3.47	3.25	3.18	3.46	3.32
Role Transitions	1.44	1.95	2.22	1.72	1.82	1.77
Finish education	1.62	2.12	2.17	1.86	1.92	1.89
Married	1.31	1.49	1.65	1.34	1.54	1.44
Have at least one child	1.10	1.54	1.52	1.30	1.35	1.32
Become employed full-time	1.78	2.39	3.56	2.40	2.34	2.37
Settle into a long-term career	1.59	2.42	2.46	1.87	2.19	2.03
Purchase house	1.34	1.72	1.98	1.54	1.65	1.60
Norm Compliance	3.15	3.19	3.06	3.03	3.26	3.14
Avoid becoming drunk	2.58	2.75	2.77	2.55	2.80	2.67
Avoid illegal drugs	3.28	3.17	3.19	2.98	3.48	3.23
Avoid drunk driving	3.60	3.61	3.52	3.50	3.67	3.59
Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting	3.52	3.55	3.58	3.46	3.63	3.54
Have no more than one sexual partner	2.99	3.10	2.77	2.83	3.11	2.97
Drive safely and close to speed limit	3.19	3.07	3.06	3.12	3.13	3.12
Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language	2.56	2.71	2.31	2.36	2.73	2.54
Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child	3.52	3.33	3.27	3.29	3.52	3.41
Biological Transitions	3.41	3.31	3.38	3.44	3.31	3.37
Grow to full height	3.59	3.42	3.57	3.52	3.56	3.54
Become biologically capable of bearing/fathering children	3.45	3.26	3.13	3.62	3.01	3.32
Have had sexual intercourse	3.19	3.26	3.46	3.17	3.39	3.28

Chronological Transitions	3.51	3.30	3.52	3.46	3.44	3.45
Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile	3.83	3.72	3.75	3.88	3.67	3.78
Reached age eighteen	3.88	3.62	3.75	3.69	3.86	3.77
Reached age twenty-one	2.82	2.59	3.04	2.82	2.79	2.80
Family Capacities	2.39	2.92	2.99	2.62	2.74	2.68
Become capable of supporting a family financially	1.58	2.36	2.56	2.05	2.02	2.03
Become capable of caring for children	2.57	3.16	2.92	2.66	2.98	2.82
Become capable of running a household	2.78	3.23	3.31	2.89	3.17	3.03
Become capable of keeping a family physically safe	2.63	2.95	3.17	2.92	2.77	2.85

Note. Range of responses: 1= Does not apply to me at all; 4 = Applies to me very much

Appendix P

Additional Quantitative Analyses: Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood (Transition)

Table 1

Correlation Between: 1) Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood and SES; and 2) Conceptions of What Marks Adulthood and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Independence	Interdependence	Role Transitions	Norm Compliance	Biological Transitions	Chronological Transitions	Family Capacities
SES	-0.05 (191)	0.06 (192)	-0.07 (192)	-0.05 (192)	-0.02 (192)	0.04 (192)	-0.04 (181)
Transition	0.12 (199)	0.00 (200)	0.10 (200)	0.09 (200)	0.01 (200)	0.00 (200)	0.10 (189)
Age	0.14* (201)	-0.05 (202)	0.09 (202)	0.05 (202)	0.01 (202)	0.03 (202)	0.04 (190)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. (2-tailed)

Table 2

Correlation Between: 1) Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood and SES; and 2) Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Perceptions of Having Reached Adulthood
SES	-0.18* (190)
Transition	0.23** (198)
Age	0.36*** (200)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 3

Correlation Between: 1) Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood and SES; and 2) Perceptions of Having Reached Markers of Adulthood and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Independence	Interdependence	Role Transitions	Norm Compliance	Biological Transitions	Chronological Transitions	Family Capacities
SES	-0.26*** (191)	-0.11 (191)	-0.28*** (190)	0.09 (190)	-0.04 (192)	-0.06 (192)	-0.25*** (191)
Transition	0.47*** (199)	0.26*** (199)	0.54*** (198)	-0.07 (198)	0.18* (200)	0.05 (200)	0.49*** (199)
Age	0.44*** (201)	0.14* (201)	0.35*** (200)	0.01 (200)	0.30*** (202)	0.62*** (202)	0.35*** (201)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. (2-tailed)

Table 4

Correlation Between: 1) Identity Status and SES; and 2) Identity Status and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Identity Diffusion	Identity Foreclosure	Identity Moratorium	Identity Achievement
SES	-0.14 (189)	0.07 (186)	-0.08 (189)	-0.06 (189)
Transition	0.15* (195)	-0.05 (194)	0.00 (196)	0.01 (197)
Age	-0.05 (197)	-0.14 (196)	-0.12 (198)	0.13 (199)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. (2-tailed)

Table 5

Correlation Between: 1) Themes of Emerging Adulthood and SES; and 2) Themes of Emerging Adulthood and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Identity Exploration	Experimentation/ Possibilities	Negativity/ Instability	Other- Focused	Self- Focused	Feeling “In-Between”	Overall IDEA
SES	0.02 (191)	0.12 (191)	0.03 (192)	-0.09 (192)	0.07 (190)	0.20** (192)	0.07 (190)
Transition	-0.10 (199)	-0.12 (199)	-0.17* (200)	0.32*** (200)	0.09 (198)	-0.28*** (200)	-0.20** (198)
Age	-0.11 (201)	-0.20** (201)	-0.11 (202)	0.31*** (202)	0.07 (200)	-0.24** (202)	-0.20** (200)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. (2-tailed)

Table 6

Correlation Between: 1) Importance of Vocational Setting in Shaping the Transition to Adulthood and SES; and 2) Importance of Vocational Setting in Shaping the Transition to Adulthood and Social Demographic Transition to Adulthood

	Importance of vocational setting in Shaping the transition to adulthood
SES	-0.02 (191)
Transition	-0.17* (199)
Age	-0.09 (201)

Note. Spearman's rho. Degrees of freedom appear in parentheses.

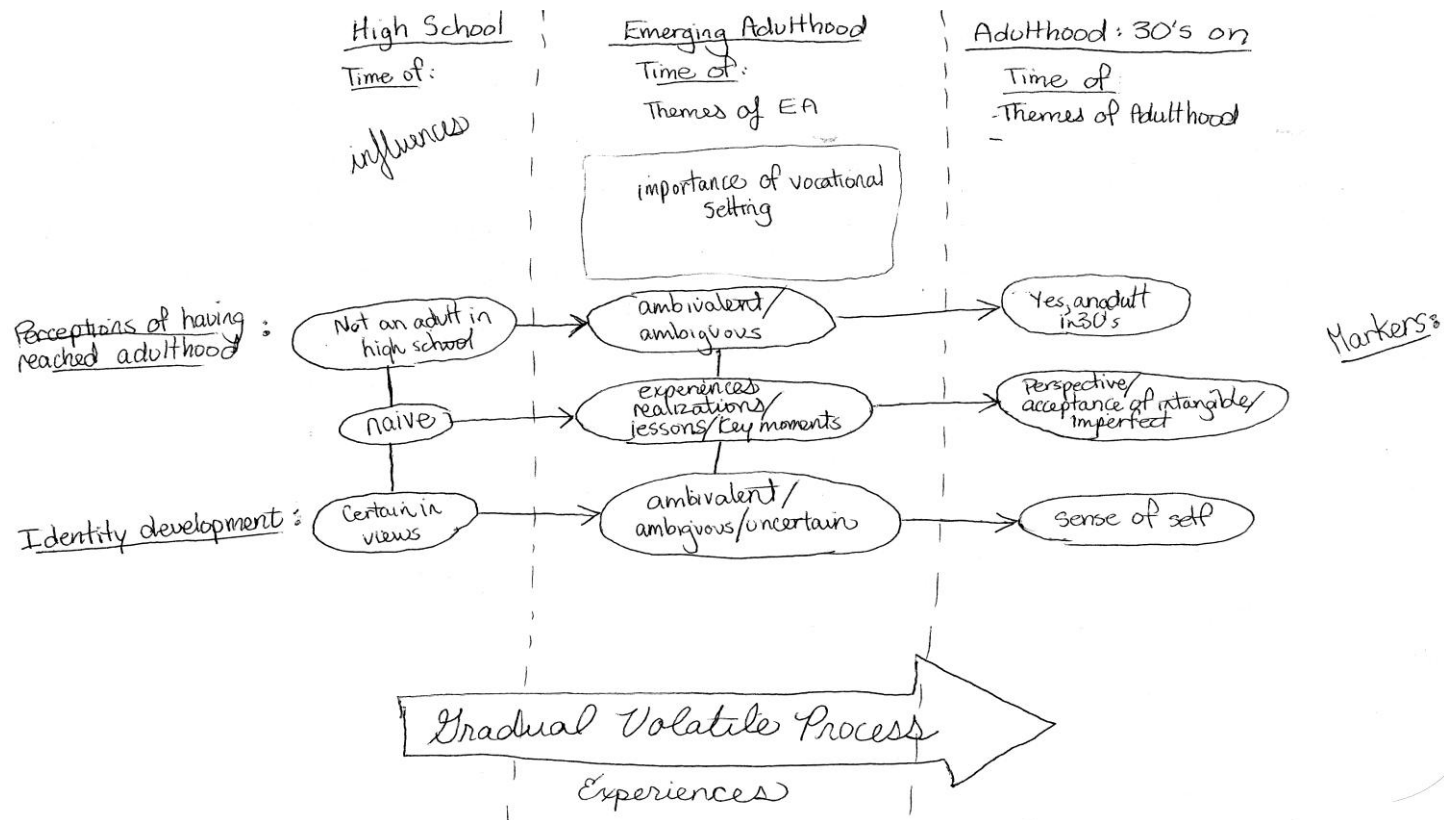
* $p < .05$. (2-tailed)

Appendix Q

Examples of Rough Material from Qualitative Data Analysis

Example 1

Early draft of a thematic map connecting themes related to identity development, emerging adulthood, and perceptions of having reached adulthood



Example 2

A rough table to assist in capturing themes concerning reaching markers of adulthood during high school, emerging adulthood, and into the thirties and beyond

Stewart 27

Criterion	High School	High school until now	Current Now	Thirties
Independence				
Establish equal relationship with parents	no	no	yes	yes
Financially independent from parents	no	no	yes	yes
No longer living in parents' household	no	yes	yes	yes
Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	no	no	no	yes
Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions	getting	getting there	yes	yes
Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences	no	no	getting there	yes
Interdependence				
Committed to long-term love relationship	no	yes	no	yes
Make life-long commitments to others	no	no	no	yes
Learn always to have good control over your emotions	no	getting	yes	yes
Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others	no	getting	yes	yes
Role Transitions				
Finish education	no	no	no	yes
Married	no	no	no	yes
Have at least one child	no	no	no	yes
Become employed full-time	no	no	yes	yes
Settle into a long-term career	no	no	no	?
Purchase house	no	no	no	?
Norm Compliance				
Avoid becoming drunk	no	no	getting there	yes
Avoid illegal drugs				
Avoid drunk driving				
Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting				
Have no more than one sexual partner				
Drive safely and close to speed limit				
Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language				
Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child				
Biological Transitions				
Grow to full height	?	yes	yes	yes
Become biologically capable of bearing/fathering children	?	yes	yes	yes
Have had sexual intercourse	.	?	?	yes
Chronological Transitions				
Have obtained driver's license and can drive an automobile	get.	yes	yes	yes
Reached age eighteen	yes	yes	yes	yes
Reached age twenty-one	no	yes	yes	yes
Family Capacities				
Become capable of supporting a family financially	no	no	?	yes?
Become capable of caring for children	no	no	?	yes
Become capable of running a household	no	no	?	yes
Become capable of keeping a family physically safe	no	no	?	yes

Handwritten Notes:

- LARGELY** (next to Independence section)
- MIXED** (next to Interdependence section)
- NO** (next to Role Transitions section)
- ?** (next to Norm Compliance section)
- YES.** (next to Biological Transitions section)
- YES.** (next to Chronological Transitions section)
- working on it** (next to Family Capacities section)
- still influenced by family** (next to Independence section)
- talk of positive living vs. partying in past.** (next to Norm Compliance section)
- only mentioned he'll be influenced by supporting future family & perhaps bringing back** (next to Family Capacities section)

Example 3

Rough notes to assist in organizing interview data concerning conceptions of what marks adulthood and perceptions of having reached adulthood

<p><u>Perceptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ambivalence (all, but...) • process w/ regrets • pivotal events <p>naïve & perspective</p> <p>Austin</p> <p>once he moves out</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no in high school 2. ambivalent - all but 3. Yes in 30's - just move out 	<p><u>Markers</u></p> <p>maturity</p> <p>worry/take care of self/responsibilities</p> <p>independent/on own</p> <p>job → career</p> <p>committed relationship</p> <p>education/training</p> <p>car</p> <p>own house</p> <p>financial stability</p> <p>family</p> <p>accept self/be happy w/ self/be yourself</p> <p>settled/relaxed/routine</p> <p>positive</p> <p>[Having a kid is NOT a marker]</p>
<p>process "I'm getting there"</p> <p>Fabrizio</p> <p>once he achieves his goals</p> <p>eg. financial</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - No in high school 2 - Getting there now 3 - Yes in 30's 	<p>family & all its responsibilities</p> <p>house</p> <p>kids</p> <p>spouse</p> <p>settled down</p> <p>love</p> <p>financial success</p> <p>positive drinking</p> <p>Finish high school</p>
<p>ambivalence (Yes, but...)</p> <p>process w/ repressed</p> <p>High school - ambivalent</p> <p>know - definitely an adult, but</p> <p>ambivalent</p> <p>independent</p> <p>3 Future - still yes in 30's</p> <p>Heath</p>	<p>independent/on own</p> <p>taking care of self/responsibilities</p> <p>common sense</p> <p>maturity</p> <p>[marriage & financial success are NOT markers]</p> <p>smoking</p> <p>drinking</p> <p>committed relsp</p>