

THE ROLE OF MARKERS OF ADULTHOOD IN THE EXPERIENCE OF ADULTHOOD IN YOUNG ADULTS

Beáta Ráczová, & Pavol Kačmár

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Art University of Pavol Jozef Šafarik in Košice (Slovakia)

Abstract

The research study presents the partial results of a larger study investigating the specifics of the transition to adulthood from the point of view of achieving goals. The aim of this part of the research - based on nationwide data collection, which was carried out on 897 respondents aged 18-30 ($M=25.09$; $SD=3.42$, 485 women and 412 men) - is to examine the so-called the role of the main markers of adulthood (residence status, parenthood, work status) in subjective perception of the feeling of own adulthood. The results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis indicated that, apart from age, independent living, partnership, full-time work and parenthood were the most important predictors. The results are briefly discussed.

Keywords: *Markers of adulthood, subjective feeling of adulthood, transition to adulthood, young adults.*

1. Introduction

The period between the 20s and 30s is considered in professional literature (e.g. Arnett & Mitra, 2018; Macek et al., 2016) as a period of transition to adulthood. It is one of the most important life transitions (Schulenberg & Schoon, 2012). Many authors hold the opinion that an individual becomes an adult not only by reaching the age limit (18 or up to 20 years), but also by gradually fulfilling certain criteria (Steinberg 2005). Compared to the past, this process has been significantly prolonged and slowed down (Messersmith & Schulenberg, 2010). Overall, the life cycle is becoming longer and less structured, and there are socially induced changes in the achievement of markers, which are seen as facilitators of the transition to adulthood (Brzezińska, 2013). Markers (or criteria) for reaching adulthood reflect the social roles of adulthood, and during the transition assuming these roles often becomes a normative developmental task of the period (becoming independent, finding a partner, starting a family, becoming a parent, getting a stable job...) (e.g. Shulman & Nurmi, 2010; Arnett et al., 2014). Although, according to several authors (e.g. Arnett & Mitra, 2018; Macek et al. 2016), young people do not consider taking on normal adult roles (being a partner, parent) important for defining themselves as an adult, assuming an adult role can strengthen the subjective perception of oneself as an adult, as it is related to psychosocial maturation (Piotrowski, Brzezińska, Luyckx, 2018). This theoretical background led us to formulate the main objective of the study: to investigate the role of selected sociodemographic parameters, understood as markers of adulthood, in the subjective perception of the sense of own adulthood in the Slovak population of twenty-somethings.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 897 participants between 18 – 30 years old ($M= 25.09$; $SD = 3.42$; thereof 485 females). Participants were approached through social media and their responses were collected online. The participation was voluntary and anonymous. An overview of the individual characteristics of the research sample is as follows: marital status: single (276), in a relationship (452), married (156), divorced (10), widowed (1), did not state (4). Parenthood: parent (182), non-parent (715). Occupational status: students (100), working students (115), employed (482), unemployed (82), maternity/parental leave (72), not stated (46). Residential status: living alone (59), living with parents (421), living with a partner (380), living with another roommate (37).

2.2. Measures and procedure

Participants were administered a complex questionnaire battery (online version carried out using Qualtrics software). Data collection was conducted by the agency throughout Slovakia. Within the currently presented research, the following were selected questions regarding sociodemographic variables: age, gender, marital status (single, in relationship, married), parenthood (parent and non-parent), occupational status (student, working student, employed, maternity/parental leave), residential status (living alone, with parents, with a partner, with another roommate). The subjective feeling of being adult was investigated by choosing from three options: I feel no-adult; I feel somewhere between (adolescence and adulthood); I feel fully adult. In this case, we were inspired by already conducted research, e.g. Oleszkowic & Misztela (2015).

2.3. Statistical analyses

Results were analyzed in jamovi 2.2.5. Descriptive analyses, hierarchical ordinal logistic regression analysis in three blocks (in the first block the predictors were gender, age and parenthood, in the second block the variables resident status and marital status were added and in the third block occupational status was added) and difference statistics (Anova, T-tests) were used.

3. Results

The results of the multiple ordinal logistic regression for the prediction of the feeling of adulthood indicated the significance of all three regression models. However, the first regression model explained only 6% of the variance of the criterion ($R^2=0.06$, $\chi^2=85.33$ $p<0.001$). The second ($R^2=0.10$, $\chi^2=134.82$, $p<0.001$) and third ($R^2=0.11$, $\chi^2=149.26$, $p<0.001$) models explained 10 to 11%. In the 1st block the variables gender, age and parenthood entered the regression as predictors, while age and parenthood proved to be significant predictors that increase the probability of experiencing a sense of adulthood - with increasing age (OR=1.77, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.20]), the sense of adulthood in young people also increased. Those who are parents are more likely to feel adult (OR=2.16, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.36, 1.20]) compared to those who are not parents. Gender did not prove to be a predictor.

In the 2nd block, other predictors entered the regression - marital status and residential status. The results indicate that of the variables from the 1st block, only age remained as a significant predictor (OR=1.12, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.16]) and the added predictors were significant. We found that young people who have a partner (OR=2.26, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.19]) and those who are married (OR=2.35, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.24, 1.48]) are more likely to feel adult compared to singles. Similarly, for those who live alone (OR=2.42, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.26, 1.53]) or with a partner (OR=1.74, $**p\leq 0,001$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.97]) are more likely to feel more adult compared to those who live with their parents.

Table 1. Factors involved in the probability of experiencing the feeling of adulthood - 3st block – after adding occupational status ($R^2=0.11$, $X^2=149.26$, OR – odds ratio, 95% CI – confidence interval [Lower Limit, Upper Limit], $* p\leq 0,05$; $**p\leq 0,001$).

Predictors		B	S.E.	OR	95% CI
	Age	0.07	0.03	1.08*	0.02 - 0.13
Marital status	In relationship - single	0.79	0.19	2.21**	0.42 - 1.17
	Married - single	0.72	0.32	2.15*	0.15 - 1.39
Residential status	Alone – with parents	0.83	0.32	2.29*	0.21 - 1.47
	With partner – with parents	0.48	0.21	1.62*	0.06 - 0.90
Occupational status	Employee - student	0.74	0.28	2.11**	0.20 - 1.30
	maternity/parental leave – student	1.51	0.49	4.54**	0.57 - 2.49
Residential status					

In the last 3rd block the occupational status as predictor was added. The results showed (detailed results are presented in Table 1) that of the variables from the first and 2nd blocks, age, marital status and residential status were again shown to be significant predictors. The added variable occupational status was also shown to be a significant predictor. We found that those who work (OR 2.11) and those on maternity/parental leave (OR=4.54) are more likely to feel more mature than those who study. With some caution, we can also state that there was no difference in the feeling of adulthood between those who

studied, studied, and worked at the same time. Due to the limited scope of the study, we present only a table with selected results of regression analyses after adding variables to the third block. Further results are presented in the text.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The results of the analyzes carried out on the Slovak population in their twenties indicate that, in addition to age, experiencing a sense of adulthood can be considered parenthood, residential independence, partner relationship and work status could be considered as important in predicting experience of adulthood. Achieving these markers increases the likelihood of young people experiencing a sense of adulthood. The findings are consistent with the results of other research that supports the role of parenthood (e.g. Hutteman et al., 2014), residential independence (e.g. Seiffge-Krenke, 2016), partnership (e.g. Adamczyk 2017), work role (e.g. Inguglia, 2015). We perceive the benefit of the research mainly in the fact that data on young people was missing during this period, and several researches are currently being developed within the framework of implemented research projects, which can expand the repertoire of knowledge about the period of transition to adulthood with data related to the Slovak population.

Acknowledgements

The work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency, Contract no. APVV-19-0284 and by the grant agency of The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic VEGA Contract no. 1/0853/21.

References

- Adamczyk, K., & Luyckx, K. (2015). An investigation of the linkage between relationship status (single vs. partnered), identity dimensions and self-construal in a sample of polish young adults. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 46, 616–623.
- Arnett, J. J., Žukauskienė, R., & Sugimura, K. (2014). The new life stage of emerging adulthood at ages 18–29 years: Implications for mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 1(7), 569–576.
- Arnett, J. J., & Mitra, D. (2018). Are the Features of Emerging Adulthood Developmentally Distinctive? A Comparison of Ages 18–60 in the United States. *Emerging Adulthood*, 8(5), 412–419.
- Brzezińska, A. I. (2013). Becoming an adult- context of identity development. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 44 (3), 239–244.
- Hutteman, R., Hennecke, M., Orth, U., Reitz, A. K., & Specht, J. (2014). Developmental tasks as a framework to study personality development in adulthood and old age. *European Journal of Personality*, 28, 267–278.
- Inguglia, C., Ingoglia, S., Liga, F., Coco, A. L., & Cricchio, M. G. L. (2015). Autonomy and relatedness in adolescence and emerging adulthood: Relationships with parental support and psychological distress. *Journal of Adult Development*, 22, 1–13.
- Macek, P., Lacinová, L., & Ježek, S. (2016). *Cesty do dospělosti: Psychologické a sociální charakteristiky dnešních dvacátníků*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Messersmith, E. E., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2010). Goal Attainment, Goal Striving, and Well-Being During the Transition to Adulthood: A Ten-Year U.S. National Longitudinal Study. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, (130), 27–40.
- Oleszkowicz, A., & Misztela, A. (2015). How do young poles perceive their adulthood? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 30(6), 683–709.
- Piotrowski, K., Brzezińska, A. I., & Luyckx, K. (2020). Adult roles as predictors of adult identity and identity commitment in Polish emerging adults: Psychosocial maturity as an intervening variable. *Current psychology*, 39, 2149–2158.
- Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2016). Leaving home: Antecedents, consequences, and cultural patterns. In J. J. Arnett (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of emerging adulthood* (pp. 177–189). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shulman, S., & Nurmi, J. E. (2010). Understanding emerging adulthood from a goal-setting perspective. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 16, 1–11.
- Schulenberg, J., & Schoon, I. (2012). The transition to adulthood across time and space: Overview of special section. *Longitudinal and life course studies*, 3(2), 164.
- Steinberg, L. (2005). Cognitive and affective development in adolescence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9(2), 69–74