

**A preliminary analysis of the perceptions of the five features of emerging adulthood: A comparison of perceived adult status among emerging adults in Malaysia**

**Abstract**

This study took place in December 2014 at the University of Malaysia, located in the district of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. This is a preliminary study on investigating emerging adulthood phenomenon in the context of Malaysian culture. The development and diversification of Emerging Adulthood in different countries and cultures around the world has resulted in important and interesting topics creating new emerging scientific fields such as Emerging Adulthood. Thus, the present preliminary study aimed at filling the gap by examining emerging adulthood in different countries, specifically in the multi-ethnic, non-western country - Malaysia. The aims of this study were to examine the five features of emerging adulthood among first year students in the Universiti Malaysia Sabah. Furthermore, perceived adult status was also identified in order to examine its effect on the five features of emerging adulthood. A total of 108 first year students (39.8% male, 60.2% female) in Universiti Malaysia Sabah were taken as the respondents with mean age of 21.00, S.D: 0.862. Results indicated that the highest mean with 0.846 has instability/negativity dimension, whereby the lowest mean with 0.583 fell in-between dimension. In answer to the question "Do you believe you have gotten to adulthood?" 27.8% indicated "yes", while 5.6% indicated "no" and 66.7% indicated "in some respect yes, in some respect no". 72.3% of the respondents believed themselves not to have achieved adulthood (emerging adults), while 27.7% perceived themselves to have reached adulthood (self-perceived adults). Only two of the Emerging Adulthood dimensions showed a significance difference between perceived adult status whereby Emerging Adults group engaged in higher identity exploration, meanwhile self-perceived adult group engaged in other-focuses. It was also concluded that there is no gender effect towards Emerging Adulthood dimensions.