Parenting Changes Across Three Generations and its Influence on Emerging Adulthood

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One hundred fifty college-aged participants (the emerging adults) completed the IDEA Instrument Survey: Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood. This survey assesses emerging adults’ attitudes regarding their current life-stage. Additional background information regarding the participants’ sex, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status was obtained. These emerging adults also completed a questionnaire, developed by the researchers, about their attitudes regarding the dimensions of emerging adulthood and the parenting they received related to these dimensions.

These emerging adult participants from the Psychology Department subject pool provided a parent’s or guardian’s home address. A letter was sent to the parent or guardian informing him or her about the nature of our study. A survey regarding the parental practices they used with their emerging adult children, as well as parenting practices used with them, was included. The survey specifically asked questions regarding how the parent’s themselves were raised and how they in turn raised their emerging adult.

Parents then provided an address or phone number of the emerging adult’s grandparents. A comparable questionnaire was sent to these grandparents, assessing their parenting practices with their children (the parents of the emerging adults).

These surveys are still in the process of being returned. The data from these surveys will be encoded into SPSS and the data will be analyzed to see if there have been parenting changes over the course of these generations. The results of this study will be presented at the Virginia Psychological Association meeting, our departmental Psi Chi Research Symposium, and UMW’s Research and Creativity Day.