

Abstract

Emerging adulthood is a newly defined development stage between adolescence and adulthood. A distinctive feature of emerging adults is that many of the young people do not consider themselves as adults. This study aimed to compare emerging adults with perceived adults to examine a) the difference in mental well-being and b) the difference in the effects of filial piety on mental well-being between the two groups in Chinese society. 87 participants aged 21-30 from Hong Kong were recruited to complete an online survey on their achievement of adulthood, criteria for adulthood, mental well-being and filial piety beliefs. MANCOVA and regression were performed for data analysis. Results suggested that emerging adults were having a lower level of self-esteem than perceived adults. Positive associations of reciprocal filial piety and mental well-being were observed only in perceived adults; and association of reciprocal filial piety and self-esteem appeared to be stronger in perceived adults than emerging adults. This study supported previous research findings that emerging adults are having a lower level of mental well-being, and revealed the different effects reciprocal filial piety has on mental well-being of perceived adults and emerging adults.

Keywords: emerging adulthood, adult status, mental well-being, filial piety