Emerging Adulthood and Its Characteristics in Iranian University Students

Mohammad Reza Fathi[1], Ali Reza Kiamanesh[2*], Farhad Jomehri[3]

1. PhD Student in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2. Professor of Research and Evaluation Methods (PhD), Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
3. Assistant Professor of Psychology (PhD), Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

Abstract

   Purpose: Emerging adulthood (EA) theory has been proposed as a distinct developmental period between adolescence and adulthood by Arnett in 2000. This construct is promptly embraced by contemporary scholars, and research on emerging adulthood increased over the past decade in many countries, but yet questions remained about the universality of emerging adulthood. This article is extracted from a pioneer research on emerging adulthood theory in Iran. The purpose of this study was to investigate applicability of the theory and its five characteristics in Iranian society. **Methodology:** Participants included six hundred ninety four undergraduate students, aged 18 to 25. The Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) was used. **Findings:** Results showed that a majority of Iranian university students viewed themselves as being emerging adults. The five characteristics of emerging adulthood predominantly endorsed by Participants. Some gender and age differences were observed in endorsement of emerging adulthood characteristics. **Discussion:** These findings support existence of the new life stage in Iran. As a result, the applicability of the theory and its dimensions confirmed in this community.

* Corresponding Author email: drarkia@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The process of human development begins from the moment of its fertilization. Today, most scholars believe that development continues throughout life. The scientific study of human development is a process that has always been accompanied by change. The ways of studying and how to explain different issues have been varied from the past. These changes reflect the advances made by the new research, which is rooted in the changes that have emerged in our attitudes. One of these changes has been the revision in development stages. Human development has been classically identified as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood periods. The basic issue about the stages of human development is that, whether these stages are constant, unchangeable and specific phenomena to all times, or not. It should be said that what has happened in the past century does not show this. According to Settersten et al., in the last century, the phases of development have changed increasingly. For example, "Childhood was segmented into early childhood, youth and adolescence, and post-adolescence; adulthood into early adulthood, midlife, and old age"(2015, p.1) and up to the end. Therefore traditional segmentations of the developmental stages will not be useful anymore. Thereupon, it will not be surprising that the new changes will be made for life phases, because of changes in life conditions.

2. literature Review

According to Oinas and Määttä, "old theories emerge as new with respect and regard for the past. Hall, Piaget, Erikson, Levinson, and Havighurst all share an interest in human development found in periods of life" (2011, p.36). One of those who contributed to the creation of new developmental stages is Arnett. Recent social changes and long time between adolescence and adulthood has led Arnett to suggest a stage theory bounded by chronological age, called emerging adulthood (EA) as a distinct period between adolescence and adulthood. Arnett in primary studies on 18-29-year-olds, in 1990s and interview with many groups of young people concluded that they were neither adolescents nor young adults but something in-between, something that required a new term and a new conceptualization (2000, 2015). He has expressed in this regard that: "I have concluded, on the basis of my research that, this period is not really adolescence, but it is not really adulthood either, not even young adulthood. In my view, the transition to adulthood has become so prolonged that it constitutes a separate period of the life course in industrialized societies, lasting about as long as adolescence" (Arnett, 2001b, p. xviii). Arnett first proposed the theory of emerging adulthood in his article in 2000. He had mentioned the term of emerging adulthood briefly in previous articles in 1994, 1997 & 1998 (Arnett, 2000). Arnett presented his theory to describe an extended period of development between adolescence and adulthood (see figure1), typically extending from ages 18-25 (Arnett, 2000, 2015; Tanner & Arnett, 2009). According to Gibbons and Ashdown (2006), "this theory has been hailed by some as the most important theoretical contribution to developmental psychology in the past 10 years" (Hendry & Kloep, 2007, P.74) and now widely known in developmental psychology.
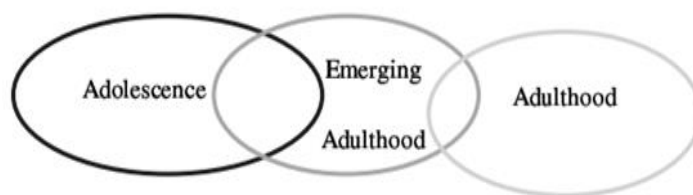
Figure1. Arnett's Conceptualization of Emerging Adulthood (2015)

Arnett does not consider EA as a transitional period. The distinction between Arnett's theory and similar theories, including Levinson (1978) and Keniston (1971), is that Arnett considers EA as an independent and distinct phase from adolescence and adulthood. EA is defined by Arnett (2000, 2015) as a distinct developmental stage between adolescence and adulthood during which people are no longer adolescents but have not yet attained full adult status (Žukauskienė, 2016). Arnett emphasized that the rise of EA is not merely generational shift but is likely to be a permanent addition to the life course (Arnett, 2001a; Arnett & Schwab, 2012). Although, Social commentators have argued that changes have coalesced to create a relatively unique generation of young people, but the founding of a research using a large number of participants(N=477,380) from 1976 to 2006, did not support this idea (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010).

One of the theoretical foundations of Arnett's theory is theory of dominant theorist of the life course in developmental psychology, Erik Erikson. Arnett's theory is in fact an extension of the Erikson's idea about phenomenon of prolonged adolescence and the psychosocial moratorium (Arnett, 2000, 2015). According to Erikson (1968), prolonged adolescence and the psychosocial moratorium granted to young people "During which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society" (Arnett, 2000, p.470). Arnett has stated that several decades later than when Erikson wrote it, the prediction came true and has come about for many young people (Arnett, 2015). Today the process of becoming an adult has been more complex and extended, because of many changes. Therefore the time between adolescence and adulthood has been prolonged (Negru, 2012). In this kind of circumstances, Arnett presented "Emerging Adulthood" as a new phase of development for the period from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on ages 18-25.

Arnett based on his qualitative and quantitative research in two decades, extracted main characteristics for EA (2000, 2015). These characteristics make emerging adults distinct from adolescence and adulthood (Raiua et al., 2014). Indeed, One of Arnett's goals in relation to the proposition of his theory was "to draw attention to the age period from the late teens through the mid-20s as a new period of the life course, with distinctive developmental characteristics" (Arnett, 2007, p. 68). Fully developed proposed theory of EA (Arnett, 2000, 2001b, 2015), is characterized by "five distinctive features: 1. Identity explorations; 2. Instability; 3. self-focus; 4. Feeling in-between; and 5. Possibilities/optimism" (Arnett, 2015, p.9), that briefly explained below.

Identity Explorations: One of the most important and distinctive features of EA is identity explorations, answering the question, "who am I?" and trying out various life options, especially in love and work. In EA period people exploring various possibilities for their lives in a variety of areas, especially love, work, and worldview. Based on this feature, emerging adults clarify their identities. They learn more about who they are and what they want out of life (Arnett, 2000, 2006a, 2015).

Instability: In love, work, and place of residence. The instability feature is partly due to the explorations of the identity in this period. Exploring different possibilities in love, education, and work, lead to frequent changes (Arnett, 2014; Layland, 2013). Emerging adults shifting choices in this life stage make this period unstable (Arnett, 2006a, 2015). Actually, "high level of exploration creates a vast amount of change,

variation, and movement in the lives of emerging adults" (Layland, 2013, pp. 4-5), and these changes in turn, brings a sense of instability and negativity (Arnett, 2006a, 2015).

Self-Focus: "as obligations to others reach a life-span low point" (Arnett, 2015, p.9). EA is a self-focused age, that's mean, "in this time of life, "people have relatively few obligations to others" (Arnett, 2014, p.159). According to Arnett "emerging adults are self-focused in the sense that they have little in the way of social obligations, little in the way of duties and commitments to others, which leaves them with a great deal of autonomy in running their own lives" (2006a, p.10). Arnett has said about the goals of this feature that:

"There is no time of life that is more self-focused than emerging adulthood… By focusing on themselves, emerging adults develop skills at daily living, gain a better understanding of who they are and what they want from life, and begin to build a foundation for their adult lives. The goal of their self-focusing is to learn to stand alone as a self-sufficient person" (2015, pp.13-14).

Feeling In-Between: in transition, neither adolescent nor adults. "One of the reasons I choose the term emerging adulthood (EA) is that it seemed to fit the way people in their late teens and early 20s describe themselves developmentally", Arnett said (2006a, p.12). Because of people in this period tend to consider themselves in a state of being in-between status (Arnett, 2015). According to Arnett, when asked people between the ages of 18 to 25, whether they have reached adulthood, they tend to respond with "in some way yes, in some way no". Therefore, such ambivalence perception that participants have about their own status as adults is one of the most convincing pieces of evidence that they are in EA as a unique period in development (Arnett, 1997, 2001a; Nelson & barry, 2005; Nelson, 2009). Of course, based on research results (e.g. Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2001a, 2012; Seiter 2009; Çok & Atak, 2015) some of 18- to 25-year-olds individuals consider themselves to be adults. Although its extent varies from country to country, but "they are clearly the minority within this age group" (Nelson & Barry, 2005, p. 243). As a result, because of the gradual nature of achieving markers of adulthood, including independence and responsibility, the feeling of being fully adult takes a long time, and for a prolonged period they feel in-between, as if they are emerging into adulthood but not there yet (Layland, 2013; Arnett, 2006a ,2015).

Possibilities/Experimentations: Arnett believes this period is when "hopes flourish and people have an unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives" (Arnett, 2015, p.9). Because of many different futures remain open in this period; Arnett considered this period as an age of possibilities (2015). According to Arnett EA period is a time for testing dreams and looking forward to the future with high expectations (2001b, 2006a). The other reason for this naming is that EA offers a great opportunity for changing dramatically the direction of one's life (Arnett, 2015). Arnett believes that EA is the age of possibilities in two ways:

"One is that emerging adulthood is a time of great optimism, of high hopes for the future. The second way is that emerging adulthood represents a crucial opportunity for young people who have experienced difficult conditions in their family lives to move away from home and to steer their lives in a different and more favorable direction before they enter the commitments in love and work that structure adult life" (2006a, p.13).

Literature review showed that the major factors have contributed to the rise of EA stage. Factors such as, four revolutionary changes in the 1960s and 1970s -the Technology Revolution, the Sexual Revolution, the Women's Movement, and the Youth Movement (Arnett, 2015); globalization and its cross-regional similarities of experiences, its cultural implications, and its impact on the formation of people's lives (Giddens, 2000; Yang et al., 2011; Jensen & Arnett, 2012; Lindström,2015); the socio-economic changes, including the transition from a manufacturing economy to an economy based mainly on information technology and services; and many demographical changes including pursuing longer and longer post-secondary education to prepare people for jobs in the new economy, a prolonged and erratic transition to stable work, later ages of entering marriage and parenthood (Arnett,2000,2007a, 2015; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Macek et al., 2007; & Raiua et al., 2014). According to Arnett (2015) such factors have opened up a space for a new life stage of "Emerging Adulthood" between adolescence and young adulthood. For instance, Bangerter, Grob, Krings in a study on three generations found that the goals of the new generation had

changed from classical formulations of developmental tasks toward new tasks, For example, family-related goals to education-related goals (2001). Although Arnett has pointed out that; "none of these changes is likely to be reversed in the foreseeable future, so for this reason it makes sense to see emerging adulthood as a new life stage rather than as a generational shift that will soon shift again" (2012, p.2).

Theories are a research tools and if a theory produces more research, it's a good theory (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2009). The emerging adulthood as a paradigm inspires a fresh look at the developmental issues and provide new hypotheses. Arnett had predicted that emerging adulthood theory will lead to new research to test hypotheses, (Arnett, 2006b). This prediction has taken place and in a short time, term and the idea of emerging adulthood were quickly embraced by many psychologists and practitioners, and the theory of EA has become widely used, in psychology and in many fields. Arnett attributed the rapid spread of the term of emerging adulthood to the usefulness and the dissatisfaction of scholars in many fields with the previous terms that had been used (2007). Although the field of EA is new, but research on EA is taking place in different parts of the world, including American, European and Asian countries. Therefore, the theory has had the fertility characteristic of a good theory and it has generated many researches, ideas, and critiques that have advanced science and scholarship.

Arnett's theory has had an important advantage in addition to producing many researches around the world. This theory has led to the extension of developmental psychology research beyond the adolescence period. According to Arnett, in the past decades, "research on human development within psychology has always been skewed toward the early years of life, and psychologists had devoted little attention to 18-29-year-olds" (2015, p. vii). Therefore, proposing a new life stage of EA drew attention to the possibilities for research on this period of life. An extensive review of EA research literature revealed that a huge amount of studies have been conducted around the world that provides evidence for the existence of the life period of EA, in many countries. Here are some of the researches and their results:

Emerging adulthood theory come from Arnett's researches on the context of American society and five features proposed in the theory were based originally on his research on various groups in America (Arnett 2000, 2006a, 2006b; Arnett & Eisenberg, 2007). Many of the features of EA, as proposed by Arnett, observed among youth in Europe (Žukauskienė, 2016). Various studies have confirmed the existence of EA and its dimensions in different parts of the world including Asia. Since the propose of the emerging adulthood theory by Arnett in 2000, several studies (e.g. Arnett, 2001a, 2012; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Macek et al., 2007; Sirsch et al.,2009; Willinger, 2009; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Dutra-Thomé & Koller 2014; Chamberlain, 2013; Zhong & Arnett, 2014; Seiter, 2009; Çok & Atak, 2015) have confirmed the existence of the EA phenomenon in many countries and cultures. The results reveal that a high proportion of 18-25-year-olds individuals consider themselves in-between status and not fully adult. Also the results show that EA is widespread in American, European, and Asian developed countries. Research on developing countries with individualistic or collectivistic cultures of around the world revealed that the majority of the 18-29-year-olds viewed themselves as being adults in some ways but not others, as well. However, findings differed according to the extent that young people perceived themselves to be adults and whether or not.

Arnett (2004) proposed five distinctive key features (characteristics) for EA, mainly based on qualitative data from wide-ranging structured interviews. Since introduction of Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) in 2007, many researchers (e.g.Reifman, et al., 2007 & 2016; Arnett, 2012, 2014; Zorotovich, 2014, in USA; Atak & Çok, 2008, in turkey; Arias and Hernández, 2007, among Mexicans & Spaniards; Negru, 2012, in Romania; Dutra-Thomé, 2013, in Brazil; Tagliabuea et al., 2015, in Italiy) was used it to explore the characteristics of EA, in different countries and cultures. The results of these research indicated that the five features of EA were supported by a majority of 18-29-year-olds. Most of 18-29-year-olds people agreed that the age period is a time of identity explorations (this is a time of life for finding out who I really am); is a self-focused age (this is a time of my life for focusing on myself). A majority of people

agreed with the statement of, "I am very sure that someday I will get to where I want to be in life" and ''at this time of my life, anything is possible'' Which implies the confirmation of opportunity/optimism dimension. The results of research also provide support for the instability dimension (''this time of my life is full of changes'' or ''this time of my life is stressful,''). Many of participants described themselves between adolescence and full adults. The majority of respondents select the ambiguous answer of "in some ways yes, in some ways no" to the question, "Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?" According to Raiua et al., "Although 18-25-year-olds may have unique features for a particular country, the features observed in most countries are the same" (2014, p.807) and in other words, similar to those described by Arnett for EA. However, there were differences in the results of the researches that can be attributed to the differences in the studied groups (e.g. student or non-student) and cultural differences. "Cultural background has all an effect on the way people think about adulthood (Raiua et al., 2014).

Developmental process is experienced differently based on demographical factors (Çok & Atak, 2015). Comparative studies have shown differences in EA based on age, gender (Arnett, 1994, 1997; Reifman et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2004; Nelson & Barry, 2005). According to Shanahan, The variables such as gender are significant factors that contribute to inequality in the transition to adulthood (2000). The endorsement of EA dimensions differs depending on demographic variables. Some researchers (e.g. Elm & Schwartz, 2006; McCourt, 2004), have reported that, females have also been found to be more likely than their male counterparts to identify with the themes of EA as a whole (Zaluski, 2012). While Seiter and Nelson (2011) reported gender differences with more males reporting they had reached adulthood than females. A Study with Italian and Japanese university students and young workers showed gender differences in perception of EA (Rosenberger, 2007). According to Zaluski (2012), many researchers reported gender differences in terms of the defining dimensions of EA. Based on these reports, female emerging adults identify more than males with the themes of self-focus (e.g. Elm & Schwartz, 2006), identity explorations (e.g. Elm & Schwartz, 2006; McCourt, 2004), and feeling "in-between" (e.g. McCourt, 2004). Reifman et al., also reported that female emerging adults are more self-focused than males (2007). According to Negru, during university studies females tend to report higher degrees of experimentation, self-focus, and other-focus (2012). In the Japanese sample, females scored significantly higher than males on three out of five dimensions of EA, namely, instability, feeling in between, and self-focus in the 18-21 sample (Tagliabuea et al., 2015). Based on Arnett in the national study of Clark poll, there were few notable differences in the five dimensions by gender (2015).

Different age ranges have been used for EA. However, either 18-25 or 18-29 may be an appropriate age range for EA, depending on the topic or question being addressed (Arnett, 2015). Results indicated that age has an effect on the way people think about adulthood (Raiua et al., 2014). Age comparison showed that participants in 18-29 were higher than younger or older participants on the subscales representing the five features (Reifman et al., 2007: Arnett, 2012, 2015; Arnett & Schwab, 2014). For example the 18-25-year-olds were more likely than 26-29-year-olds to agree with the items pertaining to identity explorations, self-focus (Arnett, 2015) and instability (Zorotovich, 2014; Arnett, 2015). Feeling in-between was substantially skewed by age (Arnett, 2012; Arnett & Walker, 2015). There were age differences on other features as well (Arnett, 2015). 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(62% for18-21-year-olds, 41% for 22-25-year-olds, and 30% for 26-29-year-olds), will provide the ambiguous response, suggesting that they feel their status lies somewhere in-between (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Arnett & Schwab,2012). For two characteristics of experimentation and self-focus, trend is similar for both genders, with a significant increase from high-school to university (Negru, 2012). There was an interaction between age and gender in relation to EA and its dimensions. For instance Reifman et al., (2007) reported gender differences in two of the three age-based studies, with females scoring higher on self-focused items than males. The female students reported lower levels of feeling in-between than high-school females. The male university students though, felt less in-

between than high-school male students. For identity exploration and negativity/instability, no significant differences emerged (Negru, 2012).

According to Elder's theory of life course, development is affected differently depending on the point in which an event occurs during a specific time for people (1998). In the opinion of Arnett, one of two most common trajectories of people after high school is to enter postsecondary education (2015). Zorotovich has pointed out, "differing trajectories affect the extent to which individuals self-perceive as adults, affect the realm of their future possibilities that they envision for themselves, and the degree to which they are either self- or other-focused" (2014, p. 45). Arnett emphasized that, EA exists in cultures that allow young people a prolonged period during the late teens and twenties for exploration (2000), and of course, continuing education after high school offers this opportunity.

Trzesniewski and Donnellan in a comparative study on three generations found that, today's youth have higher educational expectations than previous generations (2010). Today the years of education for many people are prolonged and entrance to higher education gives young people more opportunities to explore (Lindström, 2015). In the opinion of Negru, EA open the door to a new life chapter and a new life domain. This period is less structured and more open to personal choices, and its tenets are closely linked to changes imposed by the educational transition from high-school to university (2012). According to Negru, females report lower level of experimentation and other-focus than males in high-school, but entering to the university has more advantages for girls than boys. Such an evidence, indicate that most characteristics of EA become more prominent as young people make educational transitions (Negru, 2012). Some of youth by pursuing post-secondary education, postpone entry into traditional adult roles, whereas others enter into the workforce or more immediate into traditional adult roles (Zorotovich, 2014). University has been of importance for identity development among emerging adults for many years. Schwartz et al., reported that, "without the psychosocial moratorium afforded by the university setting, less identity exploration might take place" (2005, P.205). The EA time period spans approximately 11 years and individuals follow different educational and work paths in this period. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2013), only 59% of the persons who enter a 4-year college have graduated 6 years later (Arnett, 2014).

Numerous studies have shown that educational attainment has a strong impact on the timing of family formation for both males and females (Winkler-Dworak & Toulemon, 2007). Results showed that perhaps this time period is generally about finding one's path in life. For a large number of young people, higher education experience is important step in the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Raiua et al., 2014). Arnett's research indicated that, only 23% of College students considered themselves to have reached adulthood, while nearly two thirds indicated that they considered themselves to be adults in some respects but not in others (1994).

According to Cote attendance in university has greatly expanded in the past half century in many countries. He interprets this as an assign of the spread of EA (Arnett, 2006). Educational attainment of males and females underwent tremendous changes in the past decades. For instance, Leridon and Toulemon (1995) reported that education levels have risen for both sexes in France, but this increase has been dramatic for females. Therefore, female exceed male in educational attainment at the tertiary level (Winkler-Dworak & Toulemon, 2007; Tanner & Arnett, 2009). All in all, we can say, similar changes have taken place across the majority of countries.

First of all, it should be said that EA is a cultural theory (Arnett, 2011). In Arnett's opinion the specific characteristics of EA were likely to depend on cultural context (Arnett, 2006b; Arnett & Eisenberg, 2007). He emphasized that EA exists only under certain cultural-demographic conditions in some cultures (Arnett, 2011, 2015). Hendry and Kloep (2011) clearly stated the importance of different developmental pathways in different cultures and sub-cultures (Çok & Atak, 2015). Results provide evidence to support the notion that EA is affected by culture. Findings revealed that there are differences between western and eastern

cultures (Nelson et al., 2004; Badger et al., 2006). According to Glossop (1999) in the Middle-Eastern Islamic cultures, including Iran, the basis for identity formation is different from other areas (Holloway et al., 2010). According to Arnett EA exist in developed industrialized societies (2000) and is growing in developing countries all over the world (2011). In his opinion, the forms it takes are likely to vary across cultural contexts, and delineating these "forms is the exciting prospect that awaits researchers on EA in the 21st century" (Arnett, 2014, p.161).

Many researchers believe one of the challenges, the most exciting horizons and intriguing questions inspired by the theory of EA concerns the extent to which it applies to different cultural and national groups especially in developing countries (Arnett & Eisenberg, 2007, Arnett, 2011, 2014; Lindström,2015). Therefore, in recent years, there has been a surge of interest in the developmental period of EA and it has been examined across the world by many researchers. It should be noted that, although all studies reported that EA existed in their sample, it is by no means a universal experience, because of the subjective experience of emerging adults can be different based on country, culture, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Since EA is a socially and culturally constructed period of the life course (Tanner & Arnett, 2009) studies are needed to unravel similarities and differences of EA across and within cultural contexts. In the opinion of Arnett, "the field of EA is off to a promising start, but there is still much to be learned about development during the years 18 to 29" in other countries (2014, p.161). Nevertheless, He has said; "research on the developing countries that comprise more than 80% of the world's population is relatively scarce" (2011, p.264).

Researchers believes, although this construct has been largely embraced by contemporary scholars, questions remain about the universality of EA. Arnett remarked; like all theories, EA is "an imperfect model of real life, and will no doubt be subject to alterations, revisions, and elaborations in the years to come. Especially important will be investigating the different forms it takes in cultures around the world" (2007a, p. 72). He mentioned the theory of EA that "I have presented is offered as a starting point, and I look forward to the contributions and further advances to come, from scholars around the world" (ibid). Arnett claimed that EA is "an international phenomenon" (2014, p.160) and "is growing in worldwide, in demographic terms, yet there is a great deal of variation worldwide in how it is experienced, both across and within countries" (Arnett, 2011, p.265). Although Arnett "committed to EA as a useful term for 18- to 25-year-olds in industrialized societies, but what precisely this period holds developmentally is an exciting question we have only begun to explore" (Arnett, 2006a, p.17). Overall the field of EA is new, and one of its challenges for the century to come is to chart the diversity of paths within EA, among developed countries and also in developing countries as EA expands there (Arnett, 2015).

According to UNESCO (2007), Iran is an Asian developing country in the Middle East (Arnett, 2011). The effective schanges on the emergence of the EA mentioned above, such as prolonged formal education and late marriage have happened in Iran also. The median ages of entering marriage and parenthood have been rising in recent decades, and an increasing proportion of young people have obtained post-secondary education. Social demand for higher education has increased in recent years in Iran (Panahi et al., 2010). According to UNESCO's (Gross Tertiary Enrollment Project) report in 2009, Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education of Iran has been 36% (39% female & 34% male). This rate has been higher than India (13%), China (22%), Mexico (26%), and Brazil (30%) (Arnett, 2011). On the other side, the results show that during 1970 and 2010, the average age of marriage and parenthood has increased in all the countries of Asia, including Iran (Organization for Civil Registration of Iran, 2010). Over the past 30 years (1969-1999), married at the age of 15 to 19 year-olds has reached from 600 people per thousand to 131 people per thousand in Iran, which represents a decrease 4.6 times the number of marriage in the age group (Azam et al., 2007). In 2010, the average age of marriage for urban males (26.9 years) and for urban females (22.7) was reported in Iran (Organization for Civil Registration of Iran, 2010). Such changes have had consequences and problems for the Iranian society. Nevertheless, despite that the EA researches reached to Iran's boundaries, yet no

research has been done on the EA theory and its five dimensions in Iran. Therefore, there is no information from EA phenomenon in Iran, currently. The current study will provide valuable information to identify this phenomenon and solving the problems of this age period.

In the light of earlier discussion, the first purpose of this study was to test of Arnett's EA theory in Iranian university student's society. In this regard, this study examines EA and its five features within the context of Iranian culture. The present study sought to identify the role of demographic factors that effect on the EA, as well. Therefore, the second purpose of this study was to explore whether or not perceptions of EA vary by gender and age of students. More clearly this research seeks to answer these questions; the first question was whether EA exists in Iran? The second question was, do all five features of EA fit in Iranian university students? The third question was, do perceptions of EA differ by gender and age of participants? Fourth, fifth, and sixth questions were; do differences in dimensions of EA between males and females students change depend on the age ranges of the student?, across all two age ranges, is there a difference between males and females students with respect to endorsement of EA dimensions?, and For all of students (Males & Females) do the dimensions of EA differ among 18-21, and 22-25 age ranges?

3. Methodology

In this field study, a cross-sectional survey method of non-experimental research has been used. Participants were 694 undergraduate students (aged 18–25) recruited from Iranian universities in Tehran. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Size by Gender and Age

		Gender		
		female	male	total
Age	18-21	241 34.73%	102 14.70%	343 49.42%
	22-25	223 32.13%	128 18.44%	351 50.58%
	Total	464 66.86%	230 33.14%	694 100.0%

The Inventory of Dimensions of EA (IDEA) developed by Reifman et al., (2007), consisting of 31 items and six subscales was used to measure the degree to which individuals endorsed the EA dimensions in this study. There are five subscales based on the features of EA presented previously in addition to a sixth subscale, other-focused, was created as a counterpoint to the self-focused subscale (Arnett, 2006a). The five subscales of the IDEA instrument were identity exploration (7 items, e.g. "time of finding out who you are"), experimentation/possibilities (5 items, e.g. "time of trying out new things"), negativity/instability (7 items, e.g. "time of confusion"), feeling in-between (3 items, e.g. "time of feeling adult in some ways but not others") and self-focused concerns (6 items, e.g. "time of personal freedom"). Other-focused concerns (3 items, e.g. "time of commitments to others") as a sixth subscale was added as a counterpart to the self-focused subscale. All items were rated on a four-point (1-4) likert scale (with possible answers strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree and strongly agree). For all subscales, higher scores represent greater agreement with the related dimension.

In a series of studies (Reifman et al., 2007), exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported the coherence of the five features. Reifman et al., (2007) report high internal reliability for this instrument, with coefficient alphas for reliability for the defining features ranging from .70 to .85. Reliability (by ordinal theta method) and construct validity (by method of confirmatory factor analyses) of IDEA was also approved in the current study. Ordinal theta Coefficient for reliability ranged from .53 for the feeling in-between subscale,

.65 for being other-focused, .67 for experimentation/possibilities, .70 for being self-focused .74 for negativity/instability, and .81 for identity explorations. The questionnaire also included demographic items.

Through a cluster random sampling, participants were recruited. Participants were asked to describe their current life situation by administration of IDEA. They were asked by research assistants to complete the 31 items of questionnaire used in the study. Participants completed the questionnaire during a portion of a class period. Then the collected data was analyzed. In descriptive analysis, to answer the research questions, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of data were calculated. In inferential analysis to test the hypotheses of the research tests of chi-square and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. In the first analysis, we used the chi-square test to examine group differences in perception of EA. In the second analysis we used a two way MANOVA to study main and interaction effects of gender and age range (18-21 and 22-25) of participants on dimensions of EA. According to Tabachnick and Fidel (2007) MANOVA works acceptably well with moderately correlated DVs in either direction (about $|0.6|$).

4. Findings

To specify whether Iranian university students considered themselves to have attained adult status, participants' responses to the three questions of "Is this period of your life a time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?", "Is this period of your life a time of gradually becoming an adult?", and "Is this period of your life a time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?" were examined. Results showed that respectively, 86%, 86%, and 45% participants responded somewhat agree and strongly agree to the three questions. On overall, these results show that the majority (average=72 %) of Iranian students portrayed a sense of feeling in-between about their adult status and believed that they have not reached adulthood. Therefore, the emergence of EA confirmed among Iranian university students.

To determine the extent of endorsement of EA dimensions, the mean score of the responses of participants (rated on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, pointed 1 to 4, with mean score of 2.5) computed for each dimension. Iranian students' mean scores for five features of EA were 3.21 (identity exploration), 3.21 (experimentation/possibilities), 2.40 (negativity/instability), 3.26 (being self-focused) and 2.92 (feeling in-between). The mean score for other-focused concerns was 3.07. As you see (Table 2), the mean scores of participants in all dimensions of EA [except for the negativity/instability dimension (M=2.40), that is near to average] is so higher than the average of possible responses (2.50). These results reflect the endorsement of the EA dimensions suggested via Arnett, by the Iranian university student.

Table2. Descriptive Statistics for the Scales Employed, on Gender and Age Range

EA Dimensions	Females			Males			Total		
	18-21 Mean (SD)	22-25 Mean (SD)	18-25 Mean (SD)	18-21 Mean (SD)	22-25 Mean (SD)	18-25 Mean (SD)	18-21 Mean (SD)	22-25 Mean (SD)	18-25 Mean (SD)
Identity exploration	3.21 (0.52)	3.25 (0.44)	3.23 (0.48)	3.19 (0.51)	3.15 (0.52)	3.17 (0.51)	3.20 (0.52)	3.21 (0.47)	3.21 (0.49)
Experimentation/Possibilities	3.23 (0.47)	3.23 (0.44)	3.23 (0.46)	3.11 (0.46)	3.20 (0.49)	3.16 (0.48)	3.19 (0.47)	3.22 (0.46)	3.21 (0.46)
Negativity/Instability	2.32 (0.54)	2.39 (0.57)	2.35 (0.55)	2.44 (0.49)	2.54 (0.53)	2.49 (0.51)	2.35 (0.52)	2.45 (0.56)	2.40 (0.54)
Self-focus	3.30 (0.43)	3.32 (0.42)	3.31 (0.42)	3.13 (0.49)	3.20 (0.41)	3.17 (0.45)	3.25 (0.45)	3.27 (0.42)	3.26 (0.44)
Feeling in-between	2.94 (0.55)	2.94 (0.52)	2.94 (0.54)	2.95 (0.52)	2.81 (0.63)	2.87 (0.59)	2.94 (0.54)	2.89 (0.57)	2.92 (0.55)
Other-focus	3.10 (0.56)	3.20 (0.50)	3.15 (0.54)	2.97 (0.57)	2.88 (0.63)	2.92 (0.61)	3.06 (0.57)	3.08 (0.57)	3.07 (0.57)

To explore whether perceived adult status differs by gender, a chi-square test revealed that there are no significant differences between the responses of males and females participants to the dimension of feeling in-between. [$\chi2$ (9, N=694) = 11.214, p = .261)]. Also To explore whether perceived adult status differs by age range, a chi-square test revealed that there are no significant differences between the responses of male and female participants to the dimension of feeling in-between. [$\chi2$ (9, N=694) = 9.693, p = .376.]

To examine differences between groups in the endorsement of EA dimensions, a two way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The independent variables were gender (female and male) and age ranges (18-21 and 22-25). First, equality of error variances for six dependent variables checked. The results of the levene's test revealed homogeneity of variance for the dependent variables of Identity exploration, Experimentation/Possibilities, Negativity/Instability, Self-focus, and heterogeneity variances for the dependent variable of In-between. The Box's M test result was significant, therefor the null hypothesis of equality of variance-covariance matrices among combined depended variables rejected. Then MANOVA done, the results of the interaction effect and the main effects, presented in table3.

Table3. Multivariate Analysis of Variance of IDEA

Source of Variance	Pillai's Trace	Hypothesis df	Error df	Multivariate F	P-Value	partial eta squared
Gender	0.052	6	685	6.214	P =0.001	0.052
Age range	0.018	6	685	2.083	P=0.050	0.018
Gender × Age	0.019	6	685	2.226	p=0.039	0.019

We hypothesized that in both 18-21 and 22-25 age ranges the dimensions of EA differ for females and males. The result of MANOVA revealed that there is a significant interaction effect for participants' gender and age range, [Pillai's Trace = .019, F (6, 685) = 2.226, p =. 039, partial eta squared = .019, Power to detect the effect= 0.786]. The result indicates that participants' gender and age ranges (18-21 versus 22-25) influence together on developmental features of EA. The interaction was further detailed through an analysis of between-subject effects. Follow-up univariate analyses (Table4) indicated that the Gender × Age interaction has a significant effect only on dimension of other-focused [F (1, 690) = 4.859, p < .028, partial eta square = .007, power = .595]. Actually for all dimensions, except negativity/instability, there were interactions between gender and age, but these interactions were not significant.

Table 4. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Interaction of Gender x Age (df: 1, 690)

Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio	P Value	Partial Eta Squared
Identity exploration	.291	.291	1.197	.274	.002
Experimentation/Possibilities	.298	.298	1.387	.239	.002
Negativity/Instability	.012	.012	.043	.836	.000
Self-focus	.068	.068	.368	.544	.001
Other-focus	1.520	1.520	4.859	.028	.007
Feeling in-between	.853	.853	2.806	.094	.004

As displayed in Figure 2, the trend of other-focused dimension for female and male differ as a function of age range of participants. On overall, Females endorsed more than males the dimension of other focused, both 18-21 and 22-25 age ranges. As you see, the trend of other-focused dimension was different for males versus females in two different age ranges. So that for females other-focused increase by age, while in the male other-focused decrease by age.
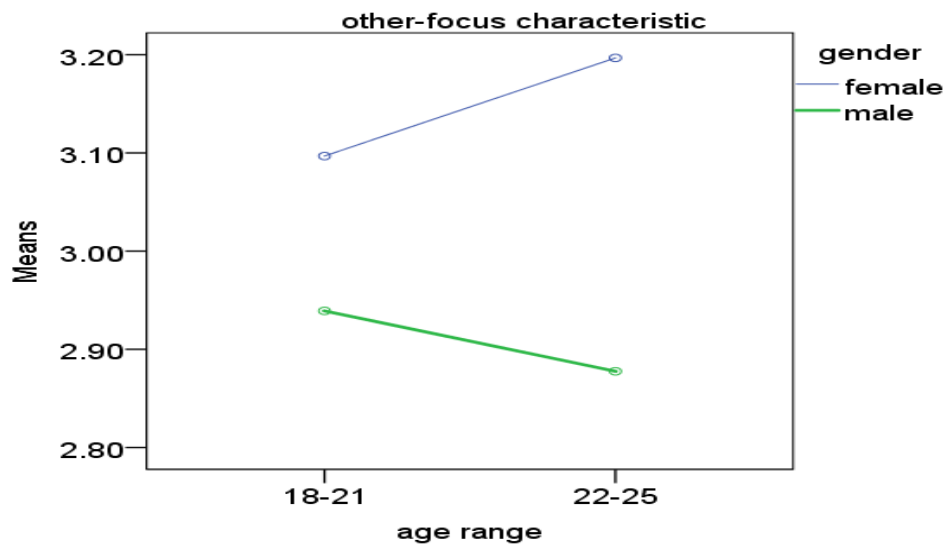
Figure2. Plot of Significant Gender x Age Interaction on Other-focused Dimension

MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate main effect for gender, Pillai's Trace = .052, F (6, 685) = 6.214, p =. 001, partial eta squared = .052. Power to detect the effect was 0.999, thus hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Given the significance of the overall test, the main effect of gender was examined. Follow-up univariate analyses(Table5)indicated that gender have significant effects on two features of EA, namely, Negativity-Instability, F (1, 690) = 9.168, p =.003, partial eta square = .013, power = .856; and Self-focused, F (1, 690) = 17.215, p =.001, partial eta square = .024, power = .985; and other-focused concerns, F (1, 690) = 24.191, p =.001, partial eta square = .034, power = .998. Therefore, two of the five features of EA were significantly different as a function of gender disregarding age range of participants. The Pairwise Comparisons of means showed that males presented higher mean score of Negativity-Instability (M=2.49, SD=0.52) than did females (M=2.35, SD=0.55); females presented higher mean score of Self-focused (M=3.29, SD=0.44) than did males (M=3.15, SD= 0.48). The same pattern was found for other-focused, with females presenting higher mean scores (M=3.15, SD= 0.54) than males (M=2.91, SD= 0.63).

Table5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Gender (dF: 1, 690)

Variable	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio	P Value	Partial Eta Squared
Identity exploration	.507	.507	2.084	.149	.003
Experimentation/Possibilities	.742	.742	3.457	.063	.005
Negativity/Instability	2.657	2.657	9.168	.003	.013
Self-focus	3.205	3.205	17.215	.000	.024
Other-focus	7.566	7.566	24.191	.000	.034
Feeling in-between	.495	.495	1.626	.203	.002

MANOVA yielded a significant multivariate effect of age range, Pillai's Trace = .018, $F (6, 685) = 2.083$, p =. 05, partial eta squared = .018. Power to detect the effect was 0.754. Given the significance of the overall test, the main effect of age range was examined. Follow-up univariate analysis (Table6) indicated that age has a significant effect only on feature of Negativity-Instability, $F (1, 690) = 4.099$, $p <.043$, partial eta square = .006, power = .525. Hence one of the five dimensions of EA was significantly different as a function of age range disregarding gender of participants. Pairwise Comparisons of means showed that 22-25 age range presented higher mean score of Negativity-Instability (M=2.45, SD=0.56) than did 18-21 (M=2.35, SD=0.52).

Table 6. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Age (df: 1, 690)

Variable	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio	P Value	Partial Eta Squared
Identity exploration	.001	.001	.004	.950	.000
Experimentation/Possibilities	.339	.339	1.580	.209	.002
Negativity/Instability	1.188	1.188	4.099	.043	.006
Self-focus	.309	.309	1.660	.198	.002
Other-focus	.002	.002	.006	.936	.000
Feeling in-between	.736	.736	2.421	.120	.003

In an ancillary analysis, the result of a chi square test showed that there was a significant difference between endorsement level of the two dimension of self-focused and other-focused, and consistent with Arnett's theory, the students are more focused on themselves rather than others ($\chi 2 (125, N=694) = 308.475$, p = 0.001).

5. Discussion

This study as a pioneer research on EA theory in Iranian society had two main purposes. The first main purpose was to investigate applicability of the Arnett's EA theory and its dimensions among Iranian university students. The second purpose was to investigate gender and age differences in perception of EA, and endorsement of its dimensions in Iranian young people. This research carried out on the students sample including 694 participants. The Inventory of Dimensions of EA executed for gathering data and achieving to the study purposes. The collected data were analyzed to answer the research questions and test the developed hypotheses. Findings of the research are discussed here.

First, we examined the extent to which Iranian university students of 18 to 25 years considered themselves as having reached adulthood status. The existence of EA is endorsed by existence of feeling in-between status among people. Therefore, in order to determine the existence of EA phenomena in Iranian students, their responses to three questions regarding the dimension of feeling in-between were analyzed (while other studies typically asked participants one question, "'Do you feel you have reached adulthood?' to measure perceptions of having reached adulthood). The results showed that the majority of Iranian students describe themselves in feeling in-between status, between adolescence and adulthood. Eighty-six percent of participants considered this period of life a time of feeling adult in some ways but not others. And again, 86% of participants believed that this period is a time of gradually becoming an adult. More than frothy five percent of participants were not sure they reach full adulthood, as well as. Such ambiguous answers about reaching adult status confirm the existence of EA period proposed by Arnett in the Iranian population. That is, most of Iranian students (On average, about 72%) do not feel themselves to have reached adulthood, and considered themselves between adolescence and adulthood status. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which has highlighted the students' tendencies to report more ambiguity about their adult status (Arnett, 1997).

Therefore, it can be concluded that consistent with the results of similar studies (i.e., Facio and Micocci , 2003 in Argentina; Facio et al., 2007; Seiter, 2009 in India; Chamberlin, 2013 in Australia,; Dutra-Thome, 2013 in Brazil,; Zhong and Arnett, 2014 in China ; Çok & Atak , 2015 in Turkey) in different countries of all over the world, the rise of EA as a new developmental period of life, confirmed in Iranian society by the evidence arise from the current research. According to results of these research, most individuals in their late teens to mid-to-late 20s feel in-between the adolescent and adult statuses. Therefore, it is highly justified to define a developmental period called EA in Iran too. This result can confirm the assumption that EA is not limited to developed countries, and includes developing countries, including Iran, as an Asian developing country in the Middle East. These findings support Arnett's theory and its universality. EA is a global and cross-cultural developmental period (Swanson, 2016).

In explaining such results It can be said that the same causes, including globalization, socio-economic and demographical changes, have led to the rise of EA in developed countries have also affected the Iranian society. According to Giddens, globalization experiences have cross-regional similarities (2000). Lindstorm pointed out, there is an increase of young people having a period of emerging adulthood in developing countries since the increasing globalization gives young people more opportunities to explore and the years spent in school for many are prolonged, at least in urban areas (2015). Based on Arnett, globalization has implications for identity formation in EA (Jensen and Arnett, 2012). According to UNESCO's report in 2009, Gross enrolment rate of Iran for tertiary education, has been higher than India, China, Mexico, and Brazil (Arnett, 2011). The organization for civil registration of Iran was reported the average age of marriage for urban males (26.9 years) and for urban females (22.7), in Iran (2010). Maybe it can be said, as there is a childhood and adolescent period around the world, there can be an EA period. Although such a claim requires more research in different groups in Iran and in other similar countries that EA research has not yet been carried out there. The results showed that there is no significant difference in perception of EA based on

gender and age of participant in this research. Our result about gender difference is in accordance with the finding of Nolan (2006), and about age differences is inconsistent with the findings of Arnett and Schwab (2012); and Cheah and Nelson (2004). Such similarities and differences can be attributed to the differences between western and eastern cultures (Nelson et al., 2004; Badger et al., 2006).

Like emerging adults in the other countries, Iranian emerging adults show high levels of consent regarding the five defining features of EA. Results indicated that, on average, the amount of confirmation of dimensions was so higher than the average of possible responses.These findings are consistent with the results of other studies (e.g. Arias & Hernández, 2007 among Mexicans & Spaniards; Sirsch et al., 2009 in Austria; Negru,2012 in Romania; Zaluski ,2012 in Canada; Zorotovich 2014, in America; Dutra-Thomé , 2013 in brazil; Tagliabuea et al., 2015 in Italy and Japan ;Crocetti et al., 2015, in Italy & Japan). These results are agreement also with the theoretical tenets of EA based on most characteristics of EA become more prominent as young people make educational transitions (Negru, 2012).

The results of current study prepared further support for the theory's proposal that the five features are most prominent during the emerging adults' years (Arnett, 2015). The extent of agreement with five features of EA and other-focused concerns were included self-focused, identity explorations, experimentation/possibilities, other-focused, feeling in-between and negativity/instability, respectively from the highest to the lowest. Similarities and differences in the endorsement pattern of EA features were observed between Iranian students and other countries. Among Iranian students, four features of self-focused, identity explorations, experimentation and feeling in-between had the highest levels of agreement. These results were consistent with the findings of Negro (2012) in Romania, Sirsch et al., (2009) in Austria, Dutra-Thome (2013) in Brazil, and many other countries. Iranian students, such as Italian students (Tagliabuea et al., 2015) had the highest mean score of self-focused feature. The extent of agreement with the two features of identity explorations and experimentation was equal in Iranian students. The feeling in-between feature was ranked fourth in terms of the students' agreement, compatible with American students (Zorotovich, 2014) and Canadian (Zaluski, 2012). The findings of this study had two major differences with other research findings. First, Iranian students had the least agreement with the feature of instability/ negativity (slightly less than the average) among other countries students. This finding shows that Iranian students experience less instability in ages of 18-25 than their peers in other countries. The second difference is related to other-focused features. Unlike the students of other countries, Iranian students have confirmed other-focused concerns more than their counterparts from other countries (Just the opposite of self-focused feature, which were higher than most countries). Perhaps we can attribute these two recent findings to the Iranian collectivist cultural tendencies. The social theory of collectivism emphasizes the interdependence of individuals (Holloway et al., 2010).

Gender differences were found for two of the five features of EA, negativity-instability and self-focused features, regardless of age ranges of participants. In relation to the self-focused feature, comparison of means showed that females had higher mean scores on self-focused feature compared to males. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which has highlighted females' tendencies to report more self-focused. This finding was consistent with the results of many research in the past including, Elm and Schwartz (2006); Reifman et al., (2007); Seiter & Nelson (2011), and Tagliabuea et al., (2015). They reported gender differences, with females scoring higher on self-focused feature, than men. This maybe because of that females are equipped with the skills which may foster a sense of self-focus and personal development (Negru, 2012). For negativity-instability feature, males had higher mean scores compared to females. This finding is incompatible with results of many researches. One explanation for this finding could be that educational transitions have more beneficial for females because of the independence associated with university studies (Negru, 2012). In relation to the other features (identity exploration, experimentation, and feeling in-between) of EA, no significant gender differences were observed. This finding is consistent with Arnett's results. According to Clark poll, he announced that there were few notable differences about EA five

dimensions by gender (2012). Then, these findings partially support study hypotheses that females and males would differ, in endorsement of features of EA. Some of the different results can also be attributed to cultural differences. Cultural variation is an important question to address with regard to EA (Arnett & Eisenberg, 2007).

Regarding influences of age, was found a significant difference only for negativity-instability feature of EA, regardless of gender of participants. Comparison of means showed that 22-25 year-olds participants had higher mean scores on negativity-instability feature compared to 18-21. That's mean, older students experience more instability than younger ones. This finding apparently is contradictory with findings of Arnett (2015) and Zorotovich (2014), upon which younger participants more strongly endorsed the dimension of instability. Zorotovich attributed the high instability of younger participants to their less autonomy and adult assumption (2014). One possible explanation of this result can be that, the younger emerging adults (18-21 age range), due to their less autonomy, may receive more support from their parents, as a result, feel less instability/ negativity. Or maybe, on the contrary, due to the rise of student autonomy, along with increase of age, they will make more changes and consequently experience more instability. There were no significant age differences for other features of EA. While, according to Arnett's theory, the feeling in-between feature, varied substantially by age. In the course of the twenties, feeling fully adult steadily rises, and feeling in-between steadily falls (Arnett, 2015). This can be explained in part by the fact that the personality was found to be moderately stable between ages 17 and 23 (Sturaro et al., 2008).

In the case of some different results of the present study with the results of some previous researches, including lack of difference in some dimensions in terms of age of participants, it is worth noting that in most studies, the age differences comparisons have been made between 18-25 and 26-29 years (comparison of two broad age ranges), while in the present study, the comparison was made between two age ranges of 18-21 and 22-25(comparison of two limited age ranges). This can lead to different, possibly more precise, results. Actually, based on the Arnett's theory, participants in their twenties were higher than younger or older participants on the subscales representing the five features (Arnett, 2015). Given that, the 18-25 is the heart of the age range for EA, lack of differences in perception of EA and its dimensions based on age ranges of participants (18-21 and 22-25) is a confirmation of Arnett's theory as a stage theory bounded by chronological age. Arnett in explaining such observations reminded that; we do not always state, for example, no gender differences were found for every analysis where there was no gender difference. If no group differences are reported, it can be assumed that no statistical difference was found (Arnett & Schwab, 2012), as well as age.

Furthermore, the study examined how the features of EA vary as a function of gender and age ranges of the students. The results showed a significant gender × age interaction. There is a gender × age interaction only on the dimension of other-focused. This interaction effect means that, differences between males and females in other-focused dimension depends on the age ranges of the students. In general, females were more other-focused than men, but trend of the other-focused differ for females versus males as a function of age range of the students. Females tend to focus on others as they grow older, but the case in males is reversed and the focus on others in males decrease with increase of age. Increasing focus on others in females, along with increase of age, is consistent with Arnett's theory upon which, older individuals would endorse more other-focused experiences (Reifman et al., 2007). In an ancillary analysis, the means comparison of self-focused feature, as one of the five main features of EA with the other-focused dimension, as a counterpart of self-focused, revealed a significant differences between two dimensions, so that consistence with Arnett's theory means of self-focused was higher than other-focused.

In conclusion can be said that the present study as the first was conducted to address the questions of EA perception in different social context of Iran as an Asian developing country, and goes beyond and extends previous research in to the Middle East. Based on this research, the existence of EA and its five features were confirmed in the Iranian university students' population. Thus, the study adds further support to a distinctive developmental phase between adolescence and adulthood namely emerging adulthood in developing

countries including Iran. Such results reinforces the universality of Arnett's theory more than ever. However, according to Shanahan (2000), it should be considered that human development is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses combinations of gender, economic and other resources, and such a situation, in turn, led to greatest differences in the life course. Then, future research should continue to explore the cultural and social contexts of EA, seeking to investigate the similarities as well as the variations in various contexts. It should be kept in mind that, in the words of Mawlānā (1207-1273) the Iranian great mystic and poet, many parts of the EA elephant have yet to be glimpsed or grasped. For example, shedding light on the ''Forgotten Half'' (who are not within the higher education system) perceptions of EA could expand the EA knowledge base, that would be the prospect of many fruitful investigations in the years to come.

References

Arias, D. F., & Hernández, A.M. (2007). Emerging adulthood in Mexican and Spanish youth: Theories and realities. Journal of Adolescent Research, 22(5), 476-503.

Arnett, J. (1994). Are College Students Adults? Their Conceptions of the Transition to Adulthood. Journal of Adult Development, 1(4), 154-168.

Arnett, J. J. (1997). Young people's conceptions of the transition to adulthood. Youth & Society, 29(1), 3-23.

Arnett, J.J. (1998). Learning to stand alone: The contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. Human Development, 41, 295-315.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. American Psychologist, 55, 469–480.

Arnett, J. J. (2001a). Conceptions of the transition to adulthood: Perspectives from adolescence through midlife. Journal of adult development, 8(2), 133-143.

Arnett, J.J. (2001b). Adolescence and emerging adulthood: A cultural approach. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Arnett, J.J. (2006a). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In J.J. Arnett & J.L. Tanner (Eds.), Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century (pp. 3-19). Washington, DC: APA Books.

Arnett, J.J. (2006b). The psychology of emerging adulthood: What is known, and what remains to be known? In J.J. Arnett & J.L. Tanner (Eds.), Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century (pp. 303-330). Washington, DC: APA Books.

Arnett, J.J. (2007). EA: What Is It, and What Is It Good For? Journal compilation. Society for Research in Child Development 1(2), 68–73.

Arnett, J.J., & Eisenberg, N. (2007). Emerging adulthood around the world. Child Development Perspectives, 1, 66-67.

Arnett, J.J., & Brody, G.H. (2008). A fraught passage: The identity challenges of African American emerging adults. Human Development, 51, 291-293.

Arnett, J.J. (2011). Emerging adulthood(s): The cultural psychology of a new life stage. In L.A. Jensen (Ed.), Bridging cultural and developmental psychology: New syntheses in theory, research, and policy (pp. 255-275). New York: Oxford University Press.

Arnett, J.J., & Schwab, J. (2012). The Clark University Poll of Emerging Adults: Thriving, struggling, and hopeful (research report). Worcester, MA: Clark University. Available: clarku.edu/clarkpoll. Accessed on [2015-05-25].

Arnett, J.J., & Schwab, J. (2014). The Clark University Poll of Established Adults Ages 25-39 (research report, pp. 1-17). Worcester, MA: Clark University. Available: clarku.edu/clarkpoll. Accessed on [2015-06-11].

Arnett, J. J. (2014). Presidential Address: The emergence of emerging adulthood: A personal history. Emerging Adulthood, 2(3), 155-162.

Arnett, J. J. (2015). Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties (2nd Edition). Oxford university press.

Arnett, J. J. (2015). Padilla-Walker, L. M. Brief report: Danish emerging adults' conceptions of adulthood. Journal of Adolescence 38, 39-44.

Atak, H. & Çok, H. (2008). The Turkish Version of Inventory of the Dimensions of EA (The IDEA). International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic and Management Engineering. 2(4), 392-398.

Badger, S., Nelson, L. J., & Barry, C. M. (2006). Perceptions of the transition to adulthood among Chinese and American emerging adults. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 30, 84-93.

Bangerter, A., Grob, A., & Krings, F. (2001). Personal goals at age 25 in three generations of the twentieth century: Young adulthood in historical context. Swiss Journal of Psychology, 60, 59-64.

Chamberlain, D. L. (2013). Emergent adulthood and Reflexive Modernity: Defining an Adult Identity in Early 21st Century Australia. (Doctoral dissertation, pp.1-353). Available: https://www120.secure.griffith.edu.au/rch/file/717c6f43-aa90-445c-8f47-fdb6257f9f16/1/Chamberlain_2014_02Thesis.pdf . Accessed on [2017-19-06].

Cheah, S. L. C., & Nelson, L. J. (2004). The role of acculturation in the EA of aboriginal college students. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 28 (6), 495–507.

Çok, F., & Atak, H. (2015). Emerging Adulthood in Turkey: Does it (yet) exist? The Online Journal of Counseling and Education, 4(3), 46 − 75.

Crocetti, E., et al., (2015). Perceptions of Emerging Adulthood: A Study with Italian and Japanese University Students and Young Workers. Emerging Adulthood, 3(4), 229-243.

Dutra-Thomé, L. (2013). Emerging adulthood in southern Brazilians from differing socioeconomic status: social and subjective markers (Doctoral dissertation, pp. 1-200). Available: http://www.lume.ufrgs.br/bitstream/handle/10183/76534/000886149.pdf . Accessed on [2017-19-08].

Dutra-Thomé, L., & Koller, S. H. (2014). Emerging adulthood in Brazilians of differing socioeconomic status: Transition to adulthood. Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto), 24(59), 313-322.

Elder, G. H. (1998). The life course as developmental theory. Child Development, 69, 1 – 12.

Facio, A., & Micocci, F. (2003). Emerging Adulthood in Argentina. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development. 100, 21-32.
Available: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01650250444000135. Accessed on [2015-19-07].

Facio, A., Resett, S., & Micocci, F. (2015). Emerging Adulthood in Argentina. Science, Teaching and Technology – Supplement, 5(5), 99-104.

Giddens, A. (2000). Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hendry, L., & Kloep, M. (2007). Conceptualizing Emerging Adulthood: Inspecting the Emperor's New Clothes? Child Development Perspectives, 1, 74-79.

Hendry, L. B., & M. Kloep. 2010. "How Universal Is Emerging Adulthood? An Empirical Example."Journal of Youth Studies, 13 (2): 169–179.

Holloway, M., Holloway, G., & Witte, J. (2010). Individuals and Families: Diverse Perspectives (Unit 2, Ch5, Issues in Emerging Adulthood). Available: https://www.mheducation.ca/web_resources/sch/Chapter_5_final.pdf . Accessed on [2017-21-05].

Jensen, L. A., & Arnett, J.J. (2012). Going Global: New Pathways for Adolescents and Emerging Adults in a Changing World. Journal of Social Issues, 68(3), 473-492.

Layland, E. K. (2013). European Emerging Adults in the Context of Free Time and Leisure. All Theses and Dissertations. Paper 3701. (Master's thesis, pp.1-140). Available:
http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4700&context=etd . Accessed on [2015-27-11].

Lindström, E. (2015). The Relationship between Identity Development and Religiousness in Swedish Emerging Adults (Master's thesis, pp. 1-19). Available: http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-118367 Accessed on [2015-27-10].

Macek, P., Bejček, J., & Vaníčková, J. (2007). Contemporary Czech emerging adults: Generation growing up in the period of social changes. Journal of Adolescent Research, 22(5), 444-475.

Mohammad, K., Azam, K., Karimloo, M., & Nourbala, M. A. (2007). The Trend of Changes at the Age of first Marriage for Women based on Information of Health and Disease National Project in Iran (1999). Payesh Quarterly, 6(2), 89-97.

Negru, O. (2012). The time of yourlife: Emerging adulthood characteristics in a sample of Romanian high-school and university students. Cognition, Brain, Behavior. An Interdisciplinary Journal, 16(3), 357-367.

Nelson, L., Badger, S., & Wu, B. (2004). The influence of culture in emerging adulthood: Perspectives of Chinese college students. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 28(1), 26-36.

Nelson, L. J., & Barry, C. M. (2005). Distinguishing features of emerging adulthood: The role of self-classification as an adult. Journal of Adolescent Research, 20(2), 242 -262.

Nelson, L. J. (2009). An examination of emerging adulthood in Romanian college students. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 33(5), 402-411.

Nelson, L. J., & Padilla-Walker, L. M. (2013). Flourishing and floundering in emerging adult college students. Emerging Adulthood, 1(1), 67-78.

Nolan, A. M. (2006). An examination of features of emerging adulthood (Master's thesis, pp. 1-98). Available: https://curve.carleton.ca/12b0f0c3-fae5-4078-9343-f8c648c19960 . Accessed on [2016-13-02].

Oinas, O., & Määttä, K. (2011). Emerging Adulthood in the Historical Life-story, Study of Finnish Writer Arvi Järventaus in Lapland. Review of European Studies, 3(1), 35-42.

Olson, M. H., & Hergenhahn, B. R. (2009). An introduction to theories of learning. (A. A. Saif, Trans, 2010). Tehran: Dowran.

Organization for Civil Registration of Iran. (2010). an analytical report on recording the incidence of marriage and divorce in Iran, with an emphasis on national and international demographic indicators. Available:
https://www.sabteahval.ir/Upload/Modules/Contents/asset99/n-et-89.pdf . Accessed on [2016-15-02].

Panahi, M. H., Sadeghi, E., & Sabeti, M. (2010). Effective socio-economic factors, the sex ratio of students .Journal of social sciences, 4(3), 7-29

Raiu, S-L., Roth, M., & Hărăguş, T-P. (2014). Emerging Adulthood in Romania: Comparison between the Perceptions Twelfth Graduates and Students about Maturity. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 149, 803 – 807.

Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. J. (2007). Emerging adulthood: Theory, assessment and application. Journal of Youth Development, 2(1), 37-48.

Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. (2016). The IDEA: Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (Extended analyses to accompany Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007, Journal of Youth Development). Technical Report, Available: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.3547.6886, Accessed on [2016-19-03].

Rosenberger, N. (2007). Rethinking Emerging Adulthood in Japan: Perspectives from Long-Term Single Women. Child Development Perspectives, 1(2), 92-95.

Schwartz, S.J., Cote, J.E., & Arnett, J.J. (2005). Identity and agency in emerging adulthood: Two developmental routes in the individualization process. Youth & Society, 37, 201-229.

Seiter, L. N. (2009). Emerging Adulthood in India (Master's thesis, pp.1-92). All Theses and Dissertations. Paper 1978. Available: http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2977&context=etd . Accessed on [2015-15-08].

Seiter, L. N., & Nelson, L. J. (2011). An examination of emerging adulthood in college students and nonstudents in India. Journal of Adolescent Research, 26(4), 506-536.

Settersten, R. A., JR., Ottusch, T. M., & Schneider, B. (2015). Becoming adult: Meanings of markers to adulthood. In R. A. Scott & S. M. Kosslyn (Eds.), Emerging trends in the social and behavioral sciences (pp. 169-191, published online). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
 Available: DOI: 10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0021? Accessed on [2015-21-05].

Shanahan, M. J. (2000). Pathways to adulthood in changing societies: Variability and mechanisms in life course perspective. Annual review of sociology, 26(1), 667-692.

Sirsch, U., Dreher, E., Mayr, E., & Willinger, U. (2009).What does it take to be an adult in Austria? Views of adulthood in Austrian adolescents, emerging adults, and adults. Journal of Adolescent Research, 24 (3), 275 – 292.

Sturaro, C., Denissen, J. J. A., Van Aken, M. A. G., & Asendorpf, J. B. (2008). Person-environment transactions during emerging adulthood: The interplay between personality characteristics and social relationships. European Psychologist, 13, 1-11.

 Swanson, J. A. (2016) Trends in Literature about Emerging Adulthood Review of Empirical Studies. Emerging Adulthood, 4(6), 391 – 402.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). Using Multivariate Statistics. Fifth Edition. Pearson Education. Inc. United States of America.

Tagliabue, S., Crocetti E., & Lanz, M. (2015). Emerging adulthood features and criteria for adulthood: Variable- and person-centered approaches. Journal of Youth Studies, 19(3), 374-388.

Tanner, J.L., & Arnett J.J. (2009). The emergence of "emerging adulthood": The new life stage between adolescence and young adulthood. In A. Furlong (Ed.), Handbook of youth and young adulthood (pp. 39-48). New York: Routledge.

Trzesniewski, K. H., & Donnellan, M. B. (2010). Rethinking ''Generation Me'': A Study of Cohort Effects From 1976–2006. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(1) 58–75.

Winkler-Dworak, M. And Toulemon, L. (2007). Gender Differences in the Transition to Adulthood in France: Is There Convergence Over the Recent Period? European Journal of Population, 23(3–4), 273–314.

Yang, D. Y.-J., Chiu, C.-Y., Chen, X., Cheng, S. Y. Y., Kwan, L. Y.-Y., Tam, K.-P., & Yeh, K.-H. (2011), Lay Psychology of Globalization and Its Social Impact. Journal of Social Issues, 67: 677–695.

Zaluski, S. D. (2012). Emerging Adulthood: a mixed method comparative analysis across vocational setting (Doctoral dissertation, pp.1-249). Available:
https://ecommons.usask.ca/bitstream/handle/10388/ETD-2012-06-380 . Accessed on [2016-16-02].

Zhong, J., & Arnett, J. J. (2014). Conceptions of adulthood among migrant women workers in China. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 38(3), 255-265.

Zorotovich, J. R. (2014). "Five Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood: A Comparison between Students, Nonstudents, and College Graduates." (Doctoral dissertation, pp.1-68). University of Tennessee.
Available: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2881 Accessed on [2015-16-07].

Žukauskienė, R. (2016). Emerging Adulthood in a European Context. London: Psychology Press. Available:
https://www.book2look.com/embed/9781317612704. Accessed on [2017-02-03].