

**Abstract**

Emerging adulthood is a transitional period, and China has relatively little research on it. The purpose of this study is to (a) analyze the specific differences between perceived adults and perceived emerging adults and (b) study the specific correlation between endorsed criteria for adulthood and depression. Participants included 200 Chinese university students in Guangzhou between the ages of 19-22. They completed four questionnaires about background information, the self-perceived status of reaching adulthood, endorsed criteria for adulthood, and measures of depression. The results show that (a) perceived adults and perceived emerging adults have significant differences in "age" and "contact with parents via phone calls/text messages"; no significant difference in the endorsed criteria for adulthood and depression; (b) for perceived adults, biological transitions, norm compliance, and chronological transitions in endorsed criteria for adulthood are negatively correlated with the depression level; (c) for perceived emerging adults, interdependence in endorsed criteria for adulthood is negatively correlated with the depression level.

First, the background of the participants was remarkably similar, so that it may lead to unreliable results. Future work should test the current findings in a more diverse population, perhaps comparing students with a non-student sample. Secondly, culture affects the endorsed criteria for adulthood, so it is necessary to research more diverse cultures. Finally, the self-reported data collection method can also lead to biased results. Although this study has limitations, it still helps us understand emerging adults and analyzes the relationship between endorsed criteria for adulthood and depression.