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SOONER OR LATER?
PARENTS’ MARITAL HORIZONS
FOR THEIR EMERGING ADULT CHILDREN

by

Chad D. Olson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master’s of Science

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

School of Family Life

Brigham Young University

April 2008

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRAUDATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Chad D. Olson

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

Date	Richard B. Miller, Chair
Date	Jason S. Carroll
Date	Laura Padilla-Walker

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Chad D. Olson in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

SOONER OR LATER? PARENTS' MARITAL HORIZONS FOR THEIR EMERGING ADULT CHILDREN

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Master of Science

Researchers have studied emerging adults' attitudes regarding the three components of the marital horizon theory, namely their desired age for marriage, the importance they place on marriage, and the criteria they endorse as necessary before being marriage ready. Up to this point, no studies have looked at parents' marital horizons nor have comparisons been made with their emerging adult children. The goal of this study was to determine parents' views regarding the three components of the marital horizon theory. Using hierarchal linear modeling, parents' responses were compared with their emerging adult children regarding ideal timing of marriage, marital importance, and criteria for marriage readiness. The participants for this study were 536 emerging adults, 360 fathers and 446 mothers. On average, parents' ideal age for marriage was later than emerging adults. Parents and emerging adults did not statistically differ regarding the sequencing of specific events (e.g., career, college) relative to marriage—they agreed that

education or a career should come before marriage at this time of their life. However, emerging adults placed more importance on overall importance of marriage. Mothers consistently placed a greater premium on fulfilling certain criteria (e.g., interpersonal competence, role transitions, family capacities) when compared with fathers and emerging adults. Fathers placed more importance on these criteria compared to their emerging adult children, but were lower than mothers. Implications for clinicians are discussed.

ACKNOWELDGEMNTS

I would like to thank the many people who assisted me in completing this thesis. First and foremost, I am grateful to my loving wife, Janae. She has been very supportive throughout my pursuit of a graduate degree. I appreciate her patience and understanding during long days and late nights spent at the clinic. I love her desire for knowledge, and I express my gratitude for supporting me in my quest for advanced education. I would also like to thank my beautiful daughter, Aubrey Jaelynn. She is a sweet blessing and has brought increased joy in my life.

I couldn’t have completed this thesis project without the guidance and direction of Jason Carroll. I have appreciated working with him for almost four years on numerous research projects. I always looked forward to our meetings and our discussions on various topics. He truly is a gifted scholar who has a love for his family, teaching, and research. I also appreciate the input from Rick Miller and Laura Padilla-Walker, who have shown great support and interest in my project.

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Chapter I

Introduction

One of the most dramatic changes in life course patterns in the United States in recent decades has been the emergence of a distinctive period between adolescence and adulthood. Some scholars have identified this period with terms such as “arrested adulthood” (Côté, 2000), “youth” (Keniston, 1971), and “emerging adulthood” (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is coming to be seen as a new stage in the developmental life cycle; however, the period is being defined in multiple ways. For clarity, some scholars have recommended that emerging adulthood is perhaps best defined chronologically, namely as a designated age period such as ages 18 to 25 (Arnett, 2000). Others suggest emerging adulthood is better defined developmentally and exists as a period where young people see themselves as no longer adolescents, but not yet as adults either (Nelson & Barry, 2005). In addition to these definitions that emphasize individual development, others have suggested that it may be useful to conceptualize emerging adulthood as a period within the family life cycle, namely the time period between leaving one’s family of origin and the beginning of one’s family of formation (Carroll, et al., 2007).

With such a range of perspectives on the time period, a diverse field of scholarship is developing around emerging adulthood. Most emerging adulthood research has focused on individual behaviors and development such as high-risk behaviors (Arnett, 1997), sexuality (Arnett, 2006), and identity development (Côté, 2000). However, with a few notable exceptions (Cere, 2000; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001; Hall, 2006; Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001), scholars have largely disregarded the role of marriage during the transition to adulthood because getting married is typically regarded as part of a later stage in young people’s lives. Nevertheless, current research suggests that young people do not necessarily view their development outside of

the context of marriage. Approximately 92% of emerging adults report that they are both planning for and expecting to marry in the future (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; Whitehead & Popenoe, 2004). With many emerging adults getting married at later ages, but still identifying marriage as an important life goal, several questions arise regarding potential linkages between marriage and emerging adulthood. For example, how does this period of extended single life impact emerging adults' readiness for later marriage and family life? Conversely, does the desired timing of marriage influence young people's attitudes and behaviors during the transition to adulthood?

In order to facilitate research on these questions, Carroll and colleagues (2007) have proposed a marital horizon theory of emerging adulthood. Drawing from family development perspectives, this theory posits that emerging adults' perceptions of marital importance, desired marital timing, and criteria for marriage readiness are central factors in determining subgroup differences in the length of emerging adulthood as well as the specific behaviors that occur during this period in the family life cycle. The results from two preliminary studies (Carroll et al., 2007; Carroll et al., in press) support the notion that varying aspects of emerging adults' marital horizons, such as the relative priority they give to marriage during emerging adulthood and their desired timing of marriage, are significantly associated with the length of emerging adulthood and many of the specific behaviors that occur during this period in the family life cycle. Specifically, significant differences were found to exist among young people with relatively close marital horizons (i.e., those who desire marriage in their early twenties) and those who desire marriage in their middle twenties or later. These differences were found in the areas of substance use patterns, sexual permissiveness and family formation values. Significant differences in these areas were also found between emerging adults who place a relatively high

value on marriage and those who are not prioritizing marriage to the same level in their current life plans.

Although the findings of these studies provide some preliminary support for the theoretical and empirical utility of a marital horizon theory of emerging adulthood and family formation, relatively little is known about how emerging adults develop their martial horizons. One area of needed investigation on the development of varying marital horizons is the role that parents may play in shaping and influencing their emerging adult children's views about marriage. No research exists on the marriage ideals parents hold for their emerging adult children, specifically in the areas of ideal marital timing, relative importance of marriage, and the espoused criteria for marriage readiness. The purpose of the current study is to identify parents' marital horizons for their emerging adult children and to compare how these ideals differ from those of their emerging adult children.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Emerging adulthood

Emerging adulthood refers to a period between the time when individuals consider themselves to have begun the transition to adulthood and the time when they consider themselves to have taken on the full responsibilities of being an adult (Arnett & Taber, 1994). This distinct period of life has emerged as a result of demographic shifts that have taken place over the last fifty years, most notably a rise in the average age at which people first marry (Arnett, 2000). Since 1950, the median age of first marriage has substantially increased and is currently at a historic high—25.8 years for women and 27.4 for men (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). Additionally, scholars have noted associated trends of increased non-marital cohabitation and childbirths, as well as a decrease in the number of people married in the population (Heaton, 2002). This tendency to delay marriage has created an extended period in the life cycle that is unique to the rising generation in which most young people have left adolescence and are beginning to view themselves as adults, but have not yet entered into the commitments and lifestyle patterns of marriage and adult family life.

Another contributing factor to the emergence of this developmental time period is the focus on education. The proportion of young Americans obtaining higher education after high school has dramatically risen from about 16% in 1940 to over 60% in the 1990s (Arnett & Taber, 1994; Bianchi & Spain, 1996). It is interesting to note that higher education is no longer a male phenomenon like it was in the early 20th century. In fact, as of the late 1980's, there have been consistently more women entering college out of high school, and more females graduating with undergraduate degrees. Although this focus on education may not be generalizable to the whole

population because of the lack of research with non-college samples, the current literature indicates that the majority of emerging adults believe it is important to finish college before getting married (Carroll et al., in press). In the past, marriage has been seen as a rite-of-passage to adulthood. More research conducted with non-college samples needs to be conducted in order to assess whether or not current findings with college samples can be applied to the general population (William T. Grant Foundation Commission on work, Family, and Citizenship, 1988).

For most young people in contemporary western societies, the years from the late teens through the twenties are a time of significant change and importance (Arnett, 2000; Teachman, Polonko, & Leigh, 1987). During this time, many individuals have experiences that lay the foundation for their future lives in areas such as work, education, and romantic relationships (Barnett, Gareis, James, & Steele, 2003; Cohen, et al., 2003). However, in contrast to past decades and different cultures, the transition into adult roles is no longer a brief period in modern industrialized cultures. Arnett (2000) notes that emerging adulthood is not a universal period, but a period that exists only in cultures that postpone the entry into adult roles and responsibilities until well past the late teens. Western society is a perfect example of a culture in which emerging adulthood exists. International research is currently being conducted to see if emerging adulthood exists among different cultures. Although there is variation in developmental trajectories, becoming an adult is now more typically characterized by an ongoing exploration of and experimentation with possible life directions (Arnett, 2000).

Arnett (2006) proposes five unique phases of emerging adulthood which sets it apart from adolescence or young adulthood. These five features include the age of identity explorations, the age of instability, the most self-focused age of life, the age of feeling in-between, and the age of possibilities. When one thinks of identity exploration, most direct their

attention to the theory and research of Erickson. Erickson (1950) proposed concrete tasks for each developmental time period, and the one associated with adolescence is identity versus role confusion. Arnett notes that even Erickson mentioned the possibility of a “prolonged adolescence” within an industrialized society. The two areas of exploration characteristic of emerging adulthood are love, work, and world views. The choices made in these three areas will have long lasting ramifications for the emerging adult; thus, care is taken to explore different options. This identity exploration is may be applicable to marriage research because Arnett (2006) contends that the emerging adult must first form their own identity in order to choose a compatible partner. Potential negative ramifications that may exist if an individual enters a relationship without having a sense of self are enmeshment or a co-dependant relationship without boundaries. During emerging adulthood, individuals are exploring their interests and developing a sense of self, so that they can potentially enter into a marital relationship with their own identity. Exploring one’s own identity can also be beneficial in choosing a mate, because it may be easier to choose a partner with similar interests, goals, and qualities.

Because of this time period of individual discovery, there is also a sense of instability that is associated with emerging adulthood. This instability is reflected in the fact that emerging adults have the highest rate of residential change. Generally the first move occurs between the ages of 18-19, and there are many possibilities from there. Often, an individual will move home for a couple of months (between semesters at college) or for an extended period of time due to individual circumstance. The emerging adult may relocate due to career possibilities. Often times students transfer schools which would require them to move. Another potential reason for residential change is the high rate of cohabitation. In conjunction with romantic identity

development, an individual may choose to move in with a partner again requiring them to move residents. The high rate of residential change points to the instability of emerging adulthood.

Care should be taken not to interpret Arnett's third feature of emerging adulthood—the "self-focused age"—as a "self-centered" or "egocentric" phase of life. In fact, emerging adults tend to be much more considerate and open toward the feelings of other people. The idea behind this time period of life is that before one can become other-person focused, one must first take care of my self. Emerging adults do not intend to stay in this self-focused stage for an extended amount of time; it simply serves as a time period of discovery so that they can be better prepared to give back to others when the appropriate time comes. This giving back may be manifested in marriage and parenthood, as well as contributions to society through employment.

Stemming from some of Arnett's earliest research, he has asked individuals of all ages whether or not they feel like they have reached adulthood (Arnett, 1997). The three options in answering this question are "yes," "no," or "in some ways yes, in some ways no." He has discovered that nearly 60% of individuals ages 18 to 25 agreed that in some ways they felt they were an adult, yet in other ways they did not. Thus the term "emerging adulthood" came to be because these young individuals were "emerging" their way into adulthood, even though they did not consider themselves to have fully reached adulthood. Thus, there is a sense of being in-between adolescence and adulthood. In studies researching the criteria young adults consider necessary to reach adulthood, the criteria they deemed necessary were gradual events, rather than rite of passage type events. Numerous researchers found that the top criteria for adulthood are accepting responsibility for yourself, making independent decisions, establishing an equal relationship with parents, and becoming financially independent (Arnett, 2001; Nelson and

Barry, 2005). Because these criteria can take a number of years to fully accomplish, there is a sense of being in between stages for these emerging adults.

Finally, Arnett (2006) suggests that the fifth distinct characteristic of emerging adulthood is the age of possibilities. This feature is further divided into two components: great optimism and the opportunity to start anew. First, emerging adults have a great sense of confidence and hope that someday they will achieve their life goals. The lack of life experience may contribute to the fact that 96% of young adults agree with the following statement: "I am very sure that someday I will get to where I want to be in life." Emerging adulthood seems to be a stage in the life cycle where the sky is the limit, and for the first time, individuals have control over their own destiny. This brings us to the second point, which is the opportunity to start a "new" life. Up until this time period, parents have made the majority of important decisions in their life including which school to attend, their standard of living, where they live, etc. When these adolescents finally gain some independence, there is a feeling that they can be transitional characters—especially those youth from a low SES who believe that they will have better lives than their parents. This time period is full of possibilities that were never before available to them, and they intend to make the best of it.

Parenting During Emerging Adulthood

There is an abundance of research on parenting during childhood and adolescence, but there is a lack of scholarly studies concerning the parenting of emerging adults. Despite the deficiency in research, Zarit and Eggebeen (2002) insist that the influence and involvement of parents does not cease when children leave the family home. There is some indication that the parent-child relationship continues to be important during adulthood, especially during times of transition (Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock, 2002; O'Conner, Allen, Bell, & Hauser, 1996). Because

research is in its infancy concerning parenting during emerging adulthood, it is still uncertain what roles parents play in their older children's lives. It is possible that parents play more of a helper role instead of certain parenting techniques characteristic of parenting younger children Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen, & Barry, (2006).

Collins and von Dulmen (2006) also agree that parents continue to influence their emerging adult children. The authors mention that parents, compared to peers, are just as likely to be the primary people from whom emerging adults seek advice. Parents were also reported as the primary individuals on whom emerging adults depended. In other words, parental influence continues throughout emerging adulthood and does not stop after adolescence. Even though emerging adults may seek friends or romantic partners for support, they also continue to rely on their parents. Although most research focuses on parents' influence of their children up through adolescence, there is some indication that emerging adults' relationship with their parents impacts them in many ways. For example, the well-being of emerging adults is closely tied to their ongoing relationships with parents, regardless of whether they still live with parents or have left home (Cooney & Kurz, 1996; Umberson, 1992). Research suggests that family relationships influence emerging adults' psychosocial development, health and risk-taking behavior, identity, and capacity for intimacy (Aquilino, 2006).

Emerging adults' changing relationship with their parents. Since the focus of this study is comparing emerging adults and their parents' views on different aspects of marriage, it is important to review some common changes in the parent-child relationship. During this time period, the relationship between the emerging adult and their parents is changing from a parent-child dyad to a peer-to-peer relationship (Arnett, 2004). In a recent study (Nelson, et al., 2007), both emerging adults and their parents agreed that developing an equal relationship is important.

The parent-child relationship is dynamic, and accommodations must be made as the emerging adult matures. For example, Arnett (2006) suggests that emerging adults are more considerate of other people's feelings and are better at understanding others' point of view when compared to their adolescent years. This quality is manifested in emerging adults' relationships with their parents – emerging adults come to see their parents as persons, not merely parents, and they empathize with them more than they did as adolescents.

Despite this finding, parenting during emerging adulthood presents unique challenges for both parents and emerging adult children (Arnett, 2004). Some of the challenges include (1) parents acknowledging the adult status of the child (consequences that are associated with that status must be paid by the emerging adult), (2) the potential for some support (physical, emotional, or other form) despite living outside of the home for the first time, and (3) the interplay between dependence and independence. The first point about parents acknowledging the adult status of their emerging adult child can be especially important. Blos (1985) theorized that parents' acknowledgment and acceptance of their offspring's adult status is a critical aspect of the maturation process that needs to be settled before childhood can come to a natural termination. Bjornsen (2000) reported that 70% of college students had parents who both acknowledged and accepted their adult status.

As indicated earlier, the average age for marriage in Western Societies has increased dramatically over the past fifty years. One may question what factors are contributing to the delay of marriage. Specifically, are parents encouraging their children to marry later? Because of the increased competition in today's workforce, emerging adults are willing to pursue education longer, which may delay marriage and parenthood. Although this may seem like an isolated decision, it is often the parents' economic support, including co-residence, which enables their

emerging adult children to increase their educational opportunities and aids them in exploring different career possibilities (Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2001). If an emerging adult were to marry during the college years, would economic support be cut off by their parents? Research suggests that parents' opinions vary about whether married or unmarried children deserve more financial support.

Because emerging adults are physically mature, and they are legally adults in most respects, they are likely on the road to self-sufficiency and independence from parents (Dubas & Peterson, 1996). However, most individuals during emerging adulthood admit they are an adult in some ways, and in other ways, they are not adults (Arnett, 1997, Nelson & Barry, 2005). This transitional developmental stage creates a sense of ambiguity in regards to parenting emerging adult children. On one hand, the children may be asking their parents for space in order to create autonomy so they can start their own life as an adult. On the other hand, many emerging adult children are still dependent on their parents (e.g., requesting financial support). This phenomenon may create some ambiguity on behalf of parents deciding how to treat their emerging adult "child," and some preliminary work has been done researching this topic (Nelson et. al, 2007).

Emerging adults have many sources of influence when it comes to value formation. Despite these multiple sources, parents are often cited as children's most important source of value information (Grusec, 2002). Peers tend to be more influential in the more mundane decisions of daily life (clothes, music, daily activities, etc.); however, parents tend to be more influential when it comes to lifetime decisions, such as a career, college, religion, and marriage. Although these values and attitudes are not always overtly expressed, parents still play a major role in their adolescent and emerging adult children's lives.

Intergenerational transmission of values. Emerging adults do not only *seek* advice from their parents, research also suggests that values are transmitted from the parental generation to their emerging adult children. Most of the research of transmission of values has been conducted with children and adolescents; however, there is evidence to show that values learned in youth are displayed through young adulthood (Frensch, Pratt, & Norris, 2007). The process of accepting values and behaviors by actively transforming them is typically referred to as internalization. Internalization is theorized to be a natural developmental process in which children (as well as adolescents and adults) "progressively integrate societal values and proscriptions into a coherent sense of self" (Grolick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997, p. 136). Internalization concerns the "processes by which individuals acquire beliefs, attitudes, or behavioral regulations from external sources and progressively transform those external regulations into personal attributes, values, or regulatory styles" (Ryan, Connell, & Grolnick, 1992, p. 139).

The formation of values continues to develop through adolescence and emerging adulthood, and these values are an integral part of the search for an independent identity. As adolescents and emerging adults are seeking their identity, one could theorize that in many cases, there would be consultation with parents. Specific examples of how this may apply to parents influencing their emerging adult children can be manifested in the congruence of values and beliefs in the areas of religion, education, and high-risk behaviors (Dickie, Ajega & Kobylak, 2006; Bjarnason, Thorlindsson & Sigfusdottir, 2005; Sandefur, Meier & Campbell, 2006).This intergenerational transmission of values may be a helpful construct when studying beliefs and values regarding marriage.

Parental influence on values concerning marriage. In addition to parents influencing their emerging adults' values on topics such as religion, education, and high-risk behaviors,

emerging adults' values about marriage are also impacted by their parents. Contrary to the popular notion that peers and the media are the primary sources for young people's views toward marriage, research suggests that young people get most of their ideas and models of marriage from parents and the parental generation (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2000). Indeed, parents typically play a central role in shaping their adult children's views about marriage as well as their adult children's perceptions of personal readiness for marriage (Larson, 1988; Snyder, Velasquez, Clark, & Means-Christensen, 1997). For example, research has demonstrated that parental attitudes, behaviors, and values significantly impact emerging adults' attitudes and beliefs about marriage (Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Heaton, 2002). Also, research has found that emerging adults who feel that their parents support and approve of their chosen partner are more likely to feel ready to marry (Holman & Li, 1997). These studies indicate that parents can be a strong influence on emerging adults' attitudes toward marriage and their personal sense of readiness for marriage. Yet, nothing is known about what parents believe about ideal timing for marriage, importance of marriage, and what criteria are most important for being ready to marry. Since research indicates that parents play an important part in preparing their adult children for marriage (Holman & Li, 1997; Larson, 1988), studies on parental perceptions of readiness could provide a broader understanding of emerging adults' perceptions of personal readiness for marriage and their beliefs about what makes a person ready to marry.

Emerging Adulthood in the Family Life Cycle

To date, most of the pioneering research on emerging adulthood has been conducted by adolescence scholars and developmentalists who are *reaching forward* to examine *the next step* in the life course. Naturally, these scholars have emphasized aspects of individual development (e.g., identity development, mental health, career directedness) and highlighted how emerging

adulthood can be distinguished from adolescence. Much less research has been conducted using emerging adult theory by marriage and family scholars who are *reaching back* in the life course to examine the *step before* couple and family formation. While emerging adulthood theory defines young people's experiences in contrast to the later life experience of married adults, the theory does not explicitly address how emerging adults' views of marriage may directly impact their current life choices. When reframed with a family development lens (see Rodgers & White, 1993), emerging adulthood is largely defined as a transitional period between a person's family of origin and his or her family of formation. Indeed, within this perspective, the bi-directional relationships between emerging adults' approaches to family formation and their current attitudes and behaviors becomes a central feature of this period of development in the family life cycle.

The marriage culture of emerging adulthood. In previous generations, marriage was regarded as the definitive transition to adulthood (Gilmore, 1990; Schlegel & Barry, 1991). Important responsibilities of adulthood in the past have been summarized as to provide, protect, and procreate - all of which involve duties toward others (Arnett, 1998; Gilmore, 1990). However, recent research reveals that the majority of emerging adults no longer consider marriage and other events (e.g., finishing school, getting a job, becoming a parent) as important markers for becoming an adult (Arnett, 1998; Nelson & Barry, 2005). Instead, young people report more internal qualities as their criteria for adulthood (Arnett, 1998; Nelson & Barry, 2005). In particular, young people believe they have reached adulthood when they accept responsibility for themselves, achieve financial independence, and become autonomous decision-makers (Arnett, 1998; Barry & Nelson, 2005; Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Nelson & Barry, 2005). While these new markers of adulthood have been interpreted as reflecting individualistic values,

in that they emphasize self-sufficiency and self-reliance, a close examination of these indicators suggests they may represent a type of relational maturity that prepares an individual for later marriage and family life (Badger, Nelson, & Barry, 2006).

In addition to being a period of marriage preparation, it is also important to note that emerging adulthood is the time when at least some young people start to marry. While the average age of first marriage has steadily risen over the last 50 years, not all young people postpone marriage until their mid 20s or beyond. In the United States, 25% of women and 14% of men ages 20 to 24 are currently married (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). With a significant minority of young people getting married in their late teens and early 20s, most emerging adults are acquainted with siblings, friends or others in their generational cohort who are getting married or considering marriage. Within this social context a *marriage culture* arises, making marriage a more proximate and possible life choice than it had been during adolescence. Within this setting, emerging adults form *marriage philosophies* consisting of their desire to marry, the ideal age at which they would like to get married, the type of person they would like to marry, and their sense of personal readiness for marriage.

Marital Horizon Theory

Using a family life cycle perspective, Carroll and colleagues (2007) have proposed a *marital horizon theory* of emerging adulthood and marriage readiness. The term “horizon” refers to “the extent of one’s outlook, experience, interest, [and] knowledge” (Neufeldt et al., 1988) or “the range of interest or activity that can be anticipated” (Fellbaum, 2005). The idiom “on the horizon” is used to refer to something that has not yet happened, but is “within view, not too far away” (Ammer, 1997). In this use, horizon is similar to the notion of one’s purview, which is defined as one’s “range of vision, comprehension, or experience” (Pickett et al., 2000).

Therefore, the meta-concept *marital horizon* refers to a person's outlook or approach to marriage in relation to his or her current situation. We propose that there are at least three interrelated, yet distinct, components that constitute and define an emerging adult's marital horizon, namely: (1) the relative *importance of marriage* in one's current life plans, (2) the *desired timing of marriage* in the life course, and (3) the *criteria for marriage readiness* or the types of preparation one believes are needed before being ready to get married. The central thesis of this theory is that emerging adults' perceptions of marital importance, timing, and readiness are central factors in determining subgroup differences in the length of emerging adulthood and the specific behaviors that occur during this period in the family life cycle.

Marital importance. A critical dimension of an emerging adult's marital philosophy is the degree of importance he or she gives to getting married. Although emerging adults do not perceive marriage as a critical marker for adulthood and are increasingly postponing its entry, the majority continue to place great importance and emphasis on marriage and family life (Burgoyne & Hames, 2002; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Over 90% of emerging adults in the United States rate "having a good marriage" as quite or extremely important to them (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001), and 94% of emerging adults state that they personally hope to get married someday (Krane & Cottreau, 1998). In addition, 63% of today's college women say that they would like to meet their future husband at college (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). These findings suggest that marriage is a *teleological goal* for the vast majority of emerging adults, because they are both planning for and expecting to get married.

While most emerging adults report that they personally hope to get married someday, this does not mean that marriage is of equal importance to all young people. The relative importance or priority young people give to marriage in relation to other goals and activities will likely

impact their choices and trajectories through emerging adulthood. Given that there is such little variability in the general importance emerging adults ascribe to marriage as an eventual life goal, variables only measuring global importance of marriage are prone to be poor indicators of variance in actual behavior. Likely it is not the *general importance* that emerging adults place on marriage that impacts trajectories through this time period, but rather the *relative priority* placed on marriage compared to other aspects of their current life (e.g., education, career, or peers). Although most emerging adults value marriage and hope for it in the future, emerging adults who would be willing to prioritize marriage in relation to other goals in life will likely prepare and plan for marriage differently than their peers.

Desired marital timing. Another notable factor to consider when studying marriage in conjunction with emerging adulthood is the perceived proximity or distance of marriage in one's life course. The proximity of marriage can largely be deduced from the ideal age at which emerging adults desire to get married compared to their current age. Desired age for marriage can influence emerging adults' perceptions of personal readiness for marriage because those who desire to marry at relatively younger ages (i.e., have a close marital horizon) will likely prepare for marriage and thus be ready for marriage much sooner than those who desire to marry at relatively older ages (i.e., have a more distant marital horizon). Also, the relative distance of young people's marital horizons is likely associated with the specific criteria they perceive as necessary and important for marriage readiness. Those with a later desired age for marriage will likely endorse different criteria for what makes a person ready to marry than those desiring earlier marriage. Furthermore, degree of experimentation is likely different for emerging adults depending on their relative desired timing for marriage. Given that Arnett (1998) and others have found that emerging adults who marry decrease their risk behaviors (Donovan, Jessor, & Jessor,

1983; Miller-Tutzauer, Leonard, & Windle, 1991), it is possible that emerging adults who hope to marry sooner engage in *anticipatory socialization* (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993) for marriage by decreasing behaviors they feel are incompatible with married life such as binge drinking, unsafe or promiscuous sexual activity, and drug use.

Criteria for marriage readiness. Although some studies have investigated perceptions of general readiness for marriage among emerging adults (Holman & Li, 1997; Larson, 1988; Stinnett, 1969), these studies have focused on the question "Do you feel ready to get married?". It would be beneficial for scholars to go one step further in this line of research and not only ask "Are you ready?" but also "What do you believe will make you ready for marriage?" Hence, research on readiness for marriage needs to extend its analysis and examine the criteria young people perceive as necessary and important for being ready to marry. For example, what level of economic independence is needed to be ready for marriage? What life experiences need to be had? Are the markers centered on aspects of interpersonal competence or on preparation to fulfill adult roles? There are numerous aspects of potential readiness that young people can emphasize or minimize in their personal philosophies of marriage readiness. Young people's criteria for marriage readiness likely influence, and are influenced by, their desired timing and relative importance of marriage. Together, these three dimensions form a marital horizon that most likely varies individually and within subgroups of emerging adults.

The results of a study conducted by Carroll and colleagues (2007) suggest that many of these changes in lifestyle patterns may be initiated when young people begin to anticipate marriage in their near future, even before they actually transition to marriage. In particular, the findings of the Carroll et al. (2007) study support the notion that varying aspects of emerging adults' marital horizons, such as the relative priority they give to marriage during emerging

adulthood and their desired timing of marriage, are associated significantly with the length of emerging adulthood and many of the specific behaviors that occur during this period in the family life cycle. Specifically, the researchers found significant differences among young people with relatively close marital horizons (i.e., those who desire marriage in their early twenties) and those who desire marriage in their middle twenties or later in the areas of substance use patterns, sexual permissiveness and family formation values. Significant differences in these areas were also found between emerging adults who place a relatively high value on marriage and those who are not prioritizing marriage to the same level in their current life plans (Carroll et al, 2007).

Focus of the Study

Emerging adulthood is a relatively new construct, and this meta-concept has been applied to many different topics of study. In reviewing the methods of the studies on emerging adulthood, very few investigate marriage within the emerging adulthood context and only one study includes parents' report (Nelson et al., 2007). Although studies (Carroll et al., 2007; Carroll et al., in press) have been conducted regarding emerging adults' marital horizons, no research to date has examined parents' marital horizons for their children. Therefore, the three research questions for the current study are

1. How do parents compare with their emerging adult children in terms of desired age for marriage?
2. How do parents compare with their emerging adult children on reported importance of marriage?
3. How do parents compare with their emerging adult children on the criteria for marriage readiness?

Chapter III

Method

Participants

Participants for the current study were drawn from a study of emerging adult college students and their parents entitled “Project READY” (Researching Emerging Adults’ Developmental Years). This project is an ongoing, collaborative, multi-site study that is being conducted by a consortium of developmental and family scholars.

The sample used in the current study consisted of 536 undergraduate and graduate students (387 women, 149 men) and their parents (446 mothers, 360 fathers) recruited from five college sites from across the United States. Specifically, students were recruited from a small liberal arts college in the mid-Atlantic; a medium-sized, religious university in the mid-Atlantic; two large, Midwestern, public universities, and a large public university on the West coast. The mean age of study participants was 20.0 years, (*SD* = 1.74, *range* = 18-26) for emerging adults, 48.9 years (*SD* = 4.42, *range* = 38-64) for mothers, and 50.9 years (*SD* = 5.34, *range* = 36-72) for fathers. Eighty-three percent of emerging adults indicated that they were of European American ethnicity, 6% Asian American, 4% African American, 3% Latino American, and 4% indicated that they were mixed, bi-racial, or an “other” ethnicity. All of the emerging adult participants were unmarried (3.6% cohabiting with a partner in an intimate relationship) and 92% reported living outside their parents’ home in an apartment, house, or dormitory.

Procedure

With the IRB approval of each participating university, data were collected using self-report instruments administered via the internet. The use of an online data collection protocol facilitated unified data collection across multiple university sites and allowed for the survey to be

administered to emerging adults and their parents who were living in separate locations. Participants were recruited through faculty's announcement of the study in undergraduate and graduate courses. Professors at the various universities were provided with a handout (*see appendix A*) to give to their students that had a brief explanation of the study and directions for accessing the online survey. Interested students then accessed the study website with a location-specific recruitment code. Informed consent (*see appendix B*) was obtained online, and only after consent was given could the participants begin the questionnaires. Each participant was asked to complete a survey battery of 448 items. Sections of the survey addressed topic areas such as background information, family-of-origin experiences, self-perceptions, personality traits, values, risk behaviors, dating behaviors, prosocial behaviors, and religiosity. Approximately 5% of emerging adult participants were offered monetary compensation for their own participation with the majority receiving extra/course credit for participating. For the majority of emerging adults, parental participation resulted in monetary compensation for the emerging adult (e.g., $10-20 gift certificates). Approximately 30% of students were offered extra/course credit for their parents' participation.

After participants completed the personal information, they had the option to send an invitation to their parents to participate in the study via email. The email invitation included an assigned password and a link to the parents' version of the questionnaire. The parents were directed to click on the link and enter the password. Once the password was entered, an Informed Consent Form appeared and parents then followed the same protocol as the children. If parents did not have an e-mail address, mailing addresses were obtained and questionnaires were mailed to them with self-addressed, pre-paid envelops (this occurred in less than 1% of the cases). Parents completed a shorter battery of 280 items similar to the ones their children completed.

Measures

Participants were administered a demographic questionnaire at the onset of the survey (*see appendix C)*. As indicated in the review of the literature, Carroll et al. (2007*)* suggest three components within the marital horizon theory: Ideal age for marriage, importance of marriage, and criteria for marriage.

Ideal age for marriage. In order to assess the first research question, emerging adults and their parents were asked, "What is the ideal age (in years) for an individual to get married?"

Importance items. At the outset of the data collection process, the questionnaire (READY) included a six-item scale which intended to capture how important marriage is to emerging adults and their parents. As factor analyses were run, the importance subscale did not load as planned. Upon further investigation, the researchers found that the importance scale can be divided into two subsections: general importance of marriage and relative sequencing of marriage. In order to be clear, each item is listed below underneath the correct subsection. Phrases in parentheses indicate the differences on the assessments given to the parents of emerging adults in order to clarify that they were to answer these items with their child in mind, not just their general attitude. The questions which respondents were asked to answer in order to assess general importance included (1) "All in all, there are more advantages to being single than to being married", (2) "Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme conditions", and (3) "Being married is a very important goal that I have (for my child)".

Items which were included to assess the importance of sequencing certain events relative to marriage included (1) "My (child's) educational pursuits or career development should come before marriage at this time (in his/her life)," (2) "Couples in serious relationship while in

college should get married and continue their educations together," and (3) "I would like (my child) to be married now." Responses were given on a 6-point Likert scale where 1 represents very strongly disagree and 6 represents very strongly agree.

Criteria for marriage readiness questionnaire. As part of the READY questionnaire, the participants were administered a 45-item Criteria for Marriage Readiness Questionnaire - CMRQ (Carroll, Nelson, & Badger, 2004), which is a modified and expanded version of Arnett's (1997) Criteria for Adulthood Questionnaire (CAQ). The CMRQ *(see appendix D)* replicates the original criteria from the CAQ, but uses modified language to frame the criteria in terms of marriage readiness rather than adulthood status. The CMRQ was designed to measure six factors of criteria for marriage readiness. Building on the criteria for adulthood literature (Arnett, 1997; Badger, Nelson, & Barry, 2006), the CMRQ assesses criteria in the areas of *Norm Compliance* (e.g., avoid becoming drunk, avoid illegal drugs, avoid committing petty crimes), *Family Capacities* (e.g., become capable of supporting a family financially, become capable of caring for children), and *Role Transitions* (e.g., financially independent from parents and others, finished with education, purchased a house). Based in the marital competence literature (Carroll, Badger, & Yang, 2006), the CMRQ also contains several additional criteria that pertain specifically to couple formation issues such as *Interpersonal Competencies* (e.g., able to express feelings in close relationships, able to listen to others in an understanding way), *Intrapersonal Competencies* (e.g., have good control of your emotions, maintain a positive outlook on life, overcome any personal challenges), and being *Sexually Experienced* (e.g., have lived with partner before getting married, have had considerable sexual experience). In addition to these six scales, the CMRQ also contains six non-scaled items that measure how much importance respondents place on age criteria (i.e., "Reached age 18", "Reached age 21", "Reached age 25",

and “Reached age 30”) and preparation for marriage (i.e., “Have participated in a marriage preparation course”, “Able to pay for own wedding”).

Utilizing the same format as the CAQ, the CMRQ presents respondents with a list of possible criteria for marriage readiness. First, the participants were asked to “indicate whether or not YOU believe the following are necessary for a person to be ready for marriage.” They could respond “yes” (i.e., necessary for marriage readiness) or “no” (i.e., not necessary for marriage readiness). Next, participants were asked to “give your opinion of the *importance* of each of the following in determining whether or not a person is ready to get married.” They could rate each criterion on a scale of 1 to 4 (i.e., “Not at All Important”, “Not Very Important”, “Fairly Important”, and “Very Important”).

With a cutoff of .40 for inclusion of a variable in a factor, all scaled items loaded on to one of the intended six subscales. None of the individual items from the CMRQ cross-loaded, thus giving us confidence that we are measuring separate and distinct concepts. Carroll and colleagues (in press) also demonstrated strong internal consistency for both genders of emerging adults on each of the subscales ranging from .66 to .91, with a mean of .79. Preliminary analyses for the current study mirrored the strong internal consistency from the previous studies. Specifically, alpha scores from each of the subscales are as follows: norm compliance (EA men, α = .74; EA women α = .82; fathers α = .80; mothers α = .78), role transitions (α =.72, .75, .78, .72), family capacities (α =.88, .91, .83, .89), interpersonal competency (α =.82, .76, .82, .86), intrapersonal competency (α =.75, .76, .73, .78), and sexual experience (α =.71, .66, .74, .70).

Chapter IV

Analyses and Results

The analyses for the current study were conducted sequentially to address the three research questions detailed previously. Given the dependent nature of the data, hierarchical linear modeling (employing the MIXED procedure in SPSS) was used to examine differences among ideal age for marriage and importance of marriage reported by emerging adults, fathers and mothers. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is a random coefficient modeling technique that can be used to analyze data collected within groups. The term *hierarchical* refers to the fact that sets of observations are treated as hierarchically nested within other sets. For example, data describing individuals are analyzed as nested within the groups to which the individuals belong (Nezlek & Zyzniewski, 1998). For the purpose of this study, HLM was used to nest individual respondents (emerging adults, fathers, and mothers) within families. For the third research question, additional analyses were done. Specifically, methods used in Carroll and colleagues' (in press) original study on criteria for marriage readiness were replicated to produce comparable results. This entailed computing basic frequencies and descriptive statistics to determine the criteria emerging adults and their parents endorse as necessary and most important for marriage readiness.

Question #1: How do parents compare with their emerging adult children in terms of desired age for marriage?

HLM results revealed a significant main effect of gender for desired age of marriage $F(1, 1025.21) = 8.59$, $p < .01$ (see table 1). On average, respondents reported a later desired age of marriage for emerging adult men than for emerging adult women. Results also revealed a significant main effect of respondent for ideal age of marriage, $F(2, 920.71) = 14.35$, $p < .001$

with emerging adults reporting a significant lower age for ideal timing of marriage when compared with both mothers and fathers. Emerging adults had a mean score of 25.26 years (SD=1.99). Mothers reported a slightly higher mean score of 25.91 years (SD=2.01) and fathers reported the highest mean age of 26.01 years (SD=2.41) as the ideal age for their child to marry.

Question #2: How do parents compare with their emerging adult children on reported importance of marriage?

HLM results revealed a significant main effect of gender for the marital importance item: "I would like (my child) to be married now," $F(1, 1272.62) = 5.30$, $p < .05$ (see table 1). On average, respondents had higher desires for emerging adult women to be currently married than they did for emerging adult men. Results revealed a significant main effect of respondent for the marital importance items: "Marriage is an important goal that I have (for my child)," $F(2, 849.33) = 54.04$, $p < .001$; "My (child's) educational pursuits or career development should come before marriage at this time (in his or her life)," $F(2, 801.58) = 3.29$, $p < .05$; "I would like my child to be married now," $F(2, 877.35) = 36.45$, $p < .001$; and "There are more advantages to being single than to being married," $F(2, 841.06) = 6.33$, $p < .01$. Follow up analyses, using Fisher's least significant difference test, revealed that emerging adults placed higher importance on marriage as a life goal and expressed greater desire to be married now than did both fathers and mothers, who did not differ from one another. However, emerging adults also agreed to a higher degree with the statement that "There are more advantages to being single than to being married" than did both fathers and mothers, who did not differ from one another. Fathers gave higher priority to educational pursuits over marriage for their children than did emerging adults and mothers, who do not differ from one another.

Question #3: How do parents compare with their emerging adult children on the criteria for marriage readiness?

As outlined in Table 2, the criteria for marriage readiness are reported by both emerging adults and their parents. Results are displayed in Table 2 in a rank order fashion of descending importance of the criterion according to parents. Parents and emerging adults agreed on 16 out of 45 necessary criteria before being marriage ready (i.e., a criterion is reported as "agreed upon" if at least 85% of emerging adults and 85% of parents reported a certain criterion as necessary). The majority of the items in which parents and children were in consensus revolved around areas of interpersonal competence (e.g., "Be able to express feelings in close relationships", "Be able to listen to others in an understanding way", and "Be respectful of others when dealing with differences") and family capacities (e.g., "For a woman, become capable of running a household" and "For a man, become capable of supporting a family financially").

Specifically, of parents' and emerging adults' top ten criteria for marriage, they agreed on nine of them, although there was some variation on the percentage that agreed with them. Parents and emerging adults shared 8 criteria from the interpersonal competence scale (e.g., Be able to express feelings in close relationships; Be able to listen to others in an understanding way; Be respectful of others when dealing with differences) and 1 from the family capacities scale (i.e., For a woman, become capable of running a household). The one difference from the top ten was that parents listed an item from the norm compliance scale (i.e., Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting), whereas emerging adults listed another criterion from the interpersonal competence scale (i.e., Make life-long commitments to others).

Despite this high level of congruence for the top criteria, there were a number of items that varied greatly as far as the percentage of emerging adults and parents who agreed with them.

For example, parents placed a greater premium on items within the norm compliance subscale such as avoiding becoming drunk (81% of parents agreed, while only 51% of emerging adults agreed), driving an automobile safely and close to the speed limit (80% of parents agree, while 48% of emerging adults agreed), and avoiding vulgar or profane language (57% of parents agreed compared with 31% of emerging adults). Another item where there was a big discrepancy was the importance of participating in a premarital course prior to marriage. Sixty percent of parents agreed that this criterion is necessary, while just 35% of emerging adults believed that premarital education was a needed prerequisite to marriage.

Another item with a notable difference regarded attitudes about cohabitation. Emerging adults were more than twice as likely to agree with the item, “Have lived with partner before getting married” is necessary before being marriage ready. Thirty-three percent of emerging adults agreed with this item, while only 14% of parents did. It is important to note that this item was not just asking if cohabitation is acceptable, the item was referring to cohabitation being a necessary prerequisite prior to marriage.

HLM results revealed a significant main effect of gender for role transitions, $F(1, 1162.62) = 15.19$, $p < .001$ and family capacities $F(1, 1194.33) = 3.94$, $p < .05$ (see table 3). On average, respondents rated importance of role transitions higher for young men than young women, and importance of family capacities as more important for young women than young men.

Results also revealed a significant main effect of respondent for role transitions, $F(2, 867.68) = 3.48$, $p < .05$; family capacities, $F(2, 847.45) = 7.39$, $p < .001$; norm compliance, $F(2, 896.53) = 105.37$, $p < .001$; intrapersonal competence, $F(2, 832.76) = 8.15$, $p < .001$; and interpersonal competence, $F(2, 867.64) = 15.69$, $p < .001$. Follow up analyses, using Fisher’s

least significant difference test, revealed that mothers rated norm compliance, family capacities, interpersonal competence and intrapersonal competence as more important than fathers and emerging adults, who differed from each other on norm compliance with fathers being higher and interpersonal competence with emerging adults being higher.

Results revealed a significant interaction for intrapersonal competence, $F(2, 832.76) = 4.02$, $p < .05$, and interpersonal competence, $F(2, 867.64) = 12.03$, $p < .001$. Because of hypothesized differences as a function of gender of the child and gender of the parent, contrast follow-ups were used. Three contrasts were conducted for each interaction, the first comparing male and female emerging adults, the second comparing fathers of emerging adult men and fathers of emerging adult women, and the third comparing mothers of emerging adult men and mothers of emerging adult women. For intrapersonal competence, only the second contrast revealed significant differences, with fathers of emerging adult men ($M = 3.25$) rating intrapersonal competence as more important than did fathers of emerging adult women ($M = 3.12$), t(344) = 2.36 p < .01. For interpersonal competence, the first and the third contrasts revealed significant differences, with emerging adult women ($M = 3.82$) rating interpersonal competence as more important than did emerging adult men ($M = 3.70$), t(523) = -4.42, p < .001, and mothers of emerging adult men ($M = 3.86$) rating interpersonal competence as more important than did mothers of emerging adult women ($M = 3.77$), t(419) = 2.32, p < .05.

Chapter V

Discussion

The goal of the current study was to assess parents' marital horizons for their emerging adult children by asking them about the three components of marital horizon theory, which include: (1) ideal timing of marriage, (2) importance of marriage, and (3) criteria for marriage readiness. Studies have already been conducted regarding these tenets of the marital horizon theory by report of emerging adults (Carroll et al. 2007 & Carroll et al., in press), but this was the first study to investigate this theory among parents. Building off of these studies, we also wanted to compare the reports given by parents and their emerging adult children.

Parental support for the delay of marriage. Somewhat surprisingly, the parents of the emerging adults in our sample reported a later ideal age for marriage when compared with their emerging adult children. This finding suggests that contrary to the common stereotype that parents are anxious for their emerging adult children to marry and their children resist, parents' ideal age for marriage is actually almost a full year later than the ideal age reported by their children. This suggests that parents are either supportive of their emerging adult children's desires to marry later, or they are in fact encouraging and socializing their emerging adult children to delay marriage.

The potential ramifications of delaying marriage have been researched and discussed by Carroll and colleagues (2007). The scholars found that emerging adults with a desired age for marriage after the age of 24 engaged in more risk behaviors than did emerging adults with an earlier marital horizon. This finding suggests that there may be a certain degree of anticipatory socialization (Burr et al., 1993) as young people feel they are getting closer to marriage. Emerging adults who still view marriage as a distant event continue to engage in risk behaviors;

whereas, emerging adults who view marriage as a proximal event increase their compliance with adult social norms. Within this context, the later desired age of marriage among parents takes on a potentially paradoxical implication. Most parents may endorse later marriage in an effort to improve their child's chances for a successful marriage. However, this delay in marriage may lead to a delayed transition to adult social norms, thereby extending young people's participation in risk behaviors that have been linked to poor marital outcomes (e.g., having multiple sexual partners, cohabitation, substance abuse).

Marital importance. Out of the six items measuring marital importance, the item rated as most important by both emerging adults and their parents was regarding education pursuits and career development coming before marriage. The age of the emerging adult at the time of the study probably influenced their answer, as well as the answer of the parents. In other words, one would suppose that the younger the respondent, the more likely they would agree that education/career should come before marriage. For the purpose of this study, sub-group comparisons were not conducted, although this may be interesting to look at in the future. Similarly, emerging adults and their parents uniformly disagreed that marriage should take place while emerging adults are still in school. A potential ramification of delaying marriage is a possible continuation of high risk behaviors which are predictive of negative relationship outcomes.

Parents and emerging adults also were very similar in their agreement that marriage is a life long relationship. In a society of prenuptial agreements and so called "starter marriages," divorce rates are at an all time historical high. However, it is interesting to note that emerging adults, as well as their parents, endorse the idea of marriage as a life long relationship, not just an experimental relationship that should be terminated for trite reasons. In other words, it seems that

the respondents in our sample view commitment to marriage and to one's spouse as an important component to marriage. Despite the congruence, emerging adults reported significantly higher importance on viewing marriage as a life long relationship when compared to both mothers and fathers.

Differing views of marriage readiness. Both emerging adults and their parents placed a very high emphasis on interpersonal skills as criteria needing to be met before one is ready to marry. Researchers have studied the effects of communication on marital satisfaction (Burleson & Denton, 1997; Richmond, 1995). Richmond (1995) found that highly satisfied couples engaged in significantly more communication and were able to talk about difficult issues. Couples with lower satisfaction had lower levels of communication and tended to avoid certain issues. An item from the Interpersonal Competence scale asks respondents to rate the importance of "Be[ing] respectful of others when dealing with differences". The fact that both emerging adults and their parents rated this item as being very important before being marriage ready indicates the emphasis put on the necessity of communication. Contrary to what society may say regarding gender differences, interpersonal competence was rated as a necessary criterion by both females and males. Oliver and Miller (1994) emphasize the importance of communication within a clinical setting. The authors suggest that communication is a necessary prerequisite to problem solving and conflict resolution. With all the research and societal expectations about the importance of communication, it is no wonder that both emerging adults and their parents ranked interpersonal competence as the most important in regards to marital readiness. That being said, it is important to highlight that the results of our study reveal significant group differences regarding interpersonal competence with mothers reporting the highest level of importance.

Criteria within the norm compliance scale marked a notable discrepancy between emerging adults and their parents, with parents placing a greater premium on compliance. Research has been done on the implications of high risk behaviors on marital satisfaction. These high risk behaviors may include having multiple sexual partners, drug use, and alcohol consumption (especially while driving). In fact, Collins, Ellickson and Klein (2007) found that married individuals who had elevated levels of alcohol use were at a higher risk for divorce, specifically within the first five years. Drug use, specifically marijuana, was also a predictor of divorce when used in marriage. There appears to be a significant number of emerging adults who do not believe that drug and alcohol use need to be curbed in order to be ready for marriage. Specifically, our data show that 1 in 4 young adults do not believe that avoiding illegal drugs is necessary before being marriage ready. Nearly 1 in 2 stated that avoiding becoming drunk is not a necessary criterion for marriage. Finally, 17% of emerging adults agreed that avoiding drunk driving isn't necessary in order to be ready for marriage.

One notable non-scaled difference was found in the area of cohabitation. Nearly one-third of all emerging adults stated that living with one's partner is a necessary prerequisite for marriage while only 14% of parents agreed that cohabitation was necessary. In an investigation of on the effects of premarital sex on marital outcomes, Teachman (2003) found that cohabitation in and of itself is not predictive of divorce - *if* the cohabiting couple ends up marrying each other. However, if either partner has engaged in sexual relations or cohabitation with another partner, the couple's risk for divorce increases.

Generational or life course difference. An interesting question to consider is whether differences between parents and their emerging adult children with regards to norm compliance are best explained as a life course difference or a generational/cohort effect. Because we do not

have data collected from parents when they were emerging adults, it is difficult to decipher how they would have answered when they were their children's age. If parents would have reported similar numbers as their children (e.g., more accepting of binge drinking, using illegal drugs, etc.) when they were young adults, we could assume that the drop off in accepting high risk behaviors is due to a life course difference – one that changes over time for all generational cohorts. We could then hypothesize that if the emerging adults from our sample were asked the same questions in 30 years, their answers would likely look similar to that of their parents now. On the other hand, the difference could be a generational effect – implying that emerging adults will carry their more permissive norms regarding risk behaviors forward into their adult lives.

Limitations and Future Directions

A potential limitation to this study is that the sample consisted of college students which may not be representative of all emerging adults. However, given that two-thirds of young people in the United States enter college the year following high school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002, Table 20-2), findings from the present study are relevant for a good portion of young people in the United States. Despite the use of college student, this study is unique in that data from parents were used and data were collected from five sites across the country. While this multi-site, multi-informant sample provided several benefits, future studies should be done with non-college samples.

Also, the majority of participants reported being relatively highly educated and of a European American decent. Given that numerous studies have found social economic and ethnic/racial differences in family formation patterns (McLanahan, 2004), additional investigation of differences in these areas is warranted. A longitudinal study may be very

informative in deciphering whether group differences are due to a generation effect or a life course difference.

Also related to the study of college students was our use of extra credit for participant compensation. The use of extra credit for compensation may have resulted in a select sample of college students in terms of academic achievement (Padilla-Walker, Zamboanga, Thompson, & Schmersal, 2005), but there is little reason to believe that these individuals would differ substantially on their criteria for marriage.

The use of Internet questionnaires could be seen as a limitation. Findings related to the limitations and strengths of Internet surveys are mixed, with some researchers arguing that using Internet surveys potentially eliminates participants who do not have access to the Internet and results in low response rates due to respondents' deletion of non-recognizable e-mails (Tuten, Urban, & Bosnjak, 2002). However, given research suggesting that virtually 100% of college students have access to the Internet (Harris Interactive, 2001), and research suggesting that the benefits of using Internet based surveys may improve sampling and reduce missing data, while maintaining a similar covariance structure as do paper and pencil measures of the same variables (Stanton, 1998), it is possible that the use of Internet surveys is equally effective, if not more effective, than typical paper and pencil measures in this population.

Measures of central tendencies were used in this study's analyses. A potential ramification of this method is that individual scores of emerging adults and *their* parents were not assessed. Future research is needed to investigate levels of congruence and incongruence between parents and children in their relative marital horizons. Consensus or conflict around marital timing and pathways of preparation for marriage may be a particularly salient feature of parent-child relations during this period of life. Parents may also accept or reject their children's

romantic partners and peers depending on how much they support or challenge their parental script for marriage.

The purpose of the current study was to compare emerging adults and their parents on the components of the marital horizon theory. We also wanted to discover what influence, if any, parents have on their emerging adult children's responses. There are a number of questions that could be addressed in future studies related to parents' marital horizon. For example, does gender of the emerging adult child affect a parent's report? Another potential question could assess what factors (e.g., education, ethnicity, SES) contribute to parent's marital horizons; however, this question is out of the scope of the current study.

Clinical Implications

There are a number of findings to highlight that are relevant to clinicians and family professionals in their work with young adults preparing for marriage or with premarital couples. Research studies in the past (Lewis & Spanier, 1979) have looked at the associations between social support, specifically parental support, and subsequent marital outcomes. General findings from these lines of investigation suggest that higher levels of support from parents and others are related to better marital outcomes for couples.

In their discussion of social support factors and marital quality, Doxey and Holman (2001) suggest that there are different types of social networks that possibly affect relationship outcomes. Specifically, Surra's (1990) work is cited that describes two types of social networks that play an important part in a couple's relationship. There is an *interactive network* - those people with regular contact and personal interaction with an individual; as well as a *psychological network* - the significant others who are close or important to an individual, even if they do not interact frequently with each other. Given that the sample in our study was college

students, we would suppose that their physical interaction with their parents is much less than that with their co-workers or friends at school. In regards to predicting relationship stability, research indicates that the psychological network support or interference seem to have a stronger association than the interactive network in predicting marital stability.

In reviews of the literature (Surra, 1990; Larson and Holman, 1994), support has been found for the hypothesis that receiving positive support from one's own and the partner's social network is positively associated to measures of love, commitment, relationship satisfaction and stability. It has also been found that perceived support from one's own social network, in comparison to the perceived support from one's partner's social network, has a larger influence on relationship outcomes. Thus, even though one partner's parents may approve of the relationship, there may be problems if the other partner even perceives that their own parents don't approve of the relationship. The parental disapproval may not solely be due to their child's choice of partner. It may be situational where the parents simply don't believe that their emerging adult child is ready for marriage-regardless of the choice of partner.

Applying the previous research findings to the results of this study, one could theorize that if there is congruence between parents and their emerging adult children on their criteria for marriage readiness, the parents would be more likely to support their young adult child's decision to get married. However, if there is incongruence between perceived readiness, the parents may be more skeptical of their child getting married. The implication is that if the parents are not supporting their emerging adult's decision, this may negatively influence the quality of their child's marriage.

Therefore, clinicians should evaluate the congruence level on endorsed criteria for marriage between emerging adults and their parents. This issue should be addressed with both

partners in a premarital counseling situation. Research has shown the importance of parental support on their children's relationship outcomes (Brock, Sarason & Sarason, 1996); thus, emerging adults wanting to get married should understand the potential ramifications of pursuing marriage without their parents' support.

A possible way to determine congruence or incongruence regarding timing of marriage is by using the marital horizon theory. Clinicians could administer the CMRQ to both parents and emerging adults to determine potential differences. Differences could be discussed in a therapy or psychoeducational setting. The first component of the martial horizon theory (i.e., age) could also be a simple way of assessing congruence between parents and children.

As noted before, the social network interference by parents may not be because of their child's choice of partner. It may be that parents do not support the relationship because it is too early in the parent's perceived marital horizon. So if a child reports that the ideal timing for marriage is 23 and the parents' report is 27, there may be some potential problems with parental support if the child pursues marriage in accordance with his or her desired marital timing. Further research will have to be conducted in order to test these hypotheses.

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Table 1. *Differences Between Emerging Adults', Fathers' and Mothers' Views of Marital Timing and Importance by Gender of Child.*

	EA Men *M (SD)*	EA Women *M (SD)*	*F*	(a) EA All *M (SD)*	(b) Fathers *M (SD)*	(c) Mothers *M (SD)*	*F*
Ideal age for marriage	25.51 (2.11)	25.01 (1.92)	8.59**	25.26 (1.99)[bc]	26.01 (2.41)[a]	25.91 (2.01)[a]	14.35***
Marriage is imp. goal	4.81 (1.27)	5.00 (1.15)	1.09	4.90 (1.19)[bc]	4.09 (1.16)[a]	4.19 (1.19)[a]	54.04***
Education/career first	4.81 (1.26)	4.85 (1.18)	2.40	4.83 (1.20)[b]	5.05 (1.15)[a]	4.97 (1.34)	3.29*
Like to be married now	2.51 (1.19)	2.69 (1.30)	5.30*	2.60 (1.27)[bc]	2.04 (1.11)[a]	1.91 (1.10)[a]	36.45***
Married while in school	2.93 (.93)	2.89 (1.0)	.08	2.91 (.98)	2.91 (1.04)	2.88 (1.05)	.08
Marriage lifetime relation	4.47 (1.35)	4.60 (1.21)	.63	4.54 (1.25)	4.59 (1.27)[c]	4.38 (1.36)[b]	2.36
More advantages single	2.77 (1.03)	2.50 (.97)	2.36	2.64 (.99)[bc]	2.43 (1.03)[a]	2.40 (1.06)[a]	6.33**

Note: Means in the same row with differing subscript letters are significantly different from one another based on least significant differences post hoc analyses. Columns labeled "EA men" and EA women" represent emerging adults', fathers', and mothers' combined perceptions of differences between young men and young women.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Table 2. *Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Marriage Readiness Criteria for Parents and Emerging Adults.*

	Parents			Emerging Adults			% Difference
	Necessary %	Mean	SD	Necessary %	Mean	SD	∣Δ∣
Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions IC	99	3.87	0.37	98	3.83	0.46	1
Be able to express feelings in close relationships IC	98	3.75	0.49	99	3.84	0.38	-1
Be able to listen to others in an understanding way IC	98	3.75	0.49	99	3,83	0.4	-1
Be respectful of others when dealing with differences IC	98	3.73	0.51	99	3.82	0.42	-1
Avoid aggressive and violent behavior IC	97	3.81	0.49	96	3.77	0.51	1
Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others IC	97	3.59	0.57	97	3.64	0.54	0
Committed to a long-term love relationship IC	96	3.85	0.47	96	3.87	0.45	0
Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting NC	95	3.82	0.49	87	3.53	0.76	8
Be able to discuss personal problems with others IC	94	3.59	0.64	99	3.78	0.45	-5
For a woman, become capable of running a household FC	94	3.53	0.61	93	3.49	0.67	1
Avoid drunk driving NC	93	3.74	0.59	83	3.5	0.79	10
For a man, become capable of supporting a family financially FC	93	3.62	0.62	92	3.55	0.63	1
Be able to maintain a positive outlook on life IaC	93	3.52	0.6	88	3.4	0.65	5
For a man, become capable of keeping family physically safe FC	92	3.51	0.71	90	3.45	0.72	2
For a man, become capable of running a household FC	92	3.48	0.65	92	3.45	0.7	0
Avoid illegal drugs NC	91	3.74	0.59	77	3.31	0.92	14
Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child NC	91	3.6	0.69	80	3.27	0.88	11
Make life-long commitments to others IC	91	3.57	0.67	93	3.61	0.67	-2
Financially independent from parents and others RT	90	3.56	0.64	93	3.59	0.56	-3
For a woman, become capable of keeping family physically safe FC	89	3.41	0.76	83	3.24	0.83	6
For a man, become capable of caring for children FC	88	3.46	0.7	83	3.36	0.79	5

Table 2 (*continued*)

Learn always to have good control of your emotions IaC	88	3.34	0.66	83	3.31	0.72	5
For a woman, become capable of caring for children FC	87	3.46	0.74	83	3.37	0.79	4
Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult IaC	83	3.26	0.73	84	3.34	0.78	-1
Avoid becoming drunk NC	81	3.32	0.81	53	2.71	1.04	28
Drive an automobile safely and close to the speed limit NC	80	3.22	0.85	48	2.58	0.98	32
For a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially FC	77	3.25	0.76	81	3.29	0.76	-4
Have come to terms with any negative family experiences IAC	77	3.06	0.75	78	3.1	0.78	-1
Reached age 18 NS	75	3.44	0.92	81	3.33	0.91	-6
Reached age 21 NS	75	3.29	0.92	70	3.03	0.93	5
Have overcome any personal challenges IaC	73	3.04	0.72	75	3.1	0.78	-2
Be employed full-time RT	69	3.21	0.82	61	3.02	0.85	8
No longer living in parents' household RT	63	3.03	0.97	77	3.31	0.81	-14
Have participated in a marriage preparation course or some other form of premarital education NS	60	2.81	0.94	35	2.41	1.01	25
Finished with education RT	58	3.07	0.89	45	2.77	0.96	13
Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language NC	57	2.72	0.95	31	2.15	0.96	26
Have fully experienced the "single life" SE	54	2.63	0.92	60	2.71	0.97	-6
Settled into a long-term career RT	42	2.67	0.88	50	2.84	0.85	-8
Reached age 25 NS	39	2.22	1.05	33	2.08	0.96	6
Reached age 30 NS	23	1.87	0.95	19	1.79	0.9	4
Be able to pay for own wedding NS	20	1.93	0.82	34	2.3	0.83	-14
Have had sexual intercourse SE	19	2	0.98	16	1.74	0.91	3
Have lived with partner before getting married SE	14	1.91	0.95	33	2.2	1.05	-19
Purchased a house RT	11	1.97	0.85	22	2.26	0.87	-11
Have had considerable sexual experience SE	5	1.63	0.8	11	1.63	0.82	-6

IC-Interpersonal Competence, NC-Norm Compliance, FC-Family Capacities, IaC-Intrapersonal Competence, RT-Role Transitions, NS-Non-scaled, SE-Sexual Experience

Table 3. *Differences Between Emerging Adults', Fathers', and Mothers' Criteria for Marriage Readiness.*

	EA Men *M (SD)*	EA Women *M (SD)*	*F*	(a) EA All *M (SD)*	(b) Fathers *M (SD)*	(c) Mothers *M (SD)*	*F*
Role Transitions	3.02 (.54)	2.94 (.55)	15.19***	2.98 (.55)^{b}	2.89 (.58)^{ac}	3.01 (.54)^{b}	3.48*
Norm Compliance	2.90 (.59)	3.05 (.62)	2.61	2.97 (.62)^{bc}	3.37 (.51)^{ac}	3.53 (.46)^{ab}	105.37***
Family Capacities	3.33 (.58)	3.43 (.56)	3.94*	3.38 (.56)^{c}	3.39 (.53)^{c}	3.52 (.51)^{ab}	7.39***
Intrapersonal Competence	3.20 (.55)	3.27 (.52)	2.18	3.23 (.53)^{c}	3.18 (.49)^{c}	3.34 (.50)^{ab}	8.15***
Interpersonal Competence	3.70 (.36)	3.82 (.25)	.01	3.76 (.29)^{bc}	3.66 (.36)^{ac}	3.82 (.32)^{ab}	15.69***
Sexual Experience	2.17 (.73)	2.04 (.64)	3.62	2.10 (.67)	2.06 (.67)	2.05 (.67)	.70

Note: Means in the same row with differing subscript letters are significantly different from one another based on least significant differences post hoc analyses. Columns labeled "EA men" and EA women" represent emerging adults', fathers', and mothers' combined perceptions of differences between young men and young women.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Appendix A

Handouts

Dear Participant,

You and your parents are invited to participate in a research study investigating the attitudes and behaviors of young people related to the transition to adulthood and the transition to marriage. You will be asked questions about your attitudes toward marriage and family life, as well as some of your past and/or current behaviors (such as, educational/career pursuits and romantic relationships). You will also be asked questions about your relationship with your parents and how well you communicate with them.

Any student 18-29 years of age is eligible for participation. As an incentive for participation, for each of your parents that completes the survey your name will be entered into a raffle to win a $100 bookstore gift certificate. Thus, if both of your parents participate, you will have twice as many chances to win. Ten gift certificates will be given in all.

Please go to the following website address to begin the survey:

www.projectready.net

You will be asked to give your name, email address, and a course code which is provided at the bottom of this page. The survey takes about an hour to complete. Your instructor will inform you of the amount of extra credit/research credit that you will receive for completing the survey.

You will also be asked to provide an email address for your parents and they will be invited to take part once you complete the survey. *Your parents can only access the survey via an email invitation*. The parent survey takes about a half hour to complete. Your instructor will inform you of the amount of extra credit/research credit you will receive depending on whether one or both of your parents participate.

Your instructor will be automatically notified when you have completed the survey in order to give you extra credit/research credit for your participation. You must finish the survey in its entirety (i.e., in one sitting), so make sure to plan accordingly.

- Please respond honestly to the questions.
- Your responses will be confidential and will not be shared with your parents in any way.
- If you have any questions or concerns please contact your instructor.

Thank you for your participation!

Course Code:

Dear Professor,

Thank you for your willingness to help with Project R.E.A.D.Y. We wanted to offer a few guidelines so as to facilitate a smooth process for you and your students who are participating in this study.

Student Handout

We will provide you with a handout to give to your students that has a brief explanation of the study and directions for accessing the on-line survey. The handout also includes a code for your particular class. The students cannot take the survey without the appropriate code. Please set a deadline for when your students should complete the survey and inform them of this date when you distribute the handout.

Parents

We want the students and preferably both of their parents (or parent-figures) to take the survey. However, we understand that there will be exceptions and some students may not be able to recruit both, or even one, of their parents. If the students are able to recruit one or both of their parents, their parents will be invited to participate in the study via an email invitation once they have completed the survey (they will be asked to provide an email address for their parents). Remind the students that their responses will be confidential and will not be shared with their parents in any way.

Raffle

We are seeking participation from students, ages 18-29 years, and both of their parents. As an additional incentive, for each parent that completes the survey for a student, the student's name will be entered into a raffle to win a $100 bookstore gift certificate. Thus if both parents participate, they have twice as many chances to win.

List of Students

If you would like to access the list of students and parents who have completed the survey, you can go to the following website address: **www.projectready.net/professors**

You will need to enter your user name and password and then click on the course code for the list of students.

User Name:
Password:
Batch Name Description:
Course Code:

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact **Larry Nelson at (801) 422-6711 or <larry_nelson@byu.edu>**.

Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

The Project R.E.A.D.Y. team

Appendix B

Consent Form

Dear Invited Participant (Student):

Since 1970, the median age of marriage in the United States has risen from about 21 years for women and 23 for men, to 25 and 27 for women and men, respectively. This current tendency to delay marriage has contributed to changing views of what it means to become an adult and exactly when that transition takes place. As a result, researchers are working hard to better understand what the rising generation of young people view as the criteria for adulthood and marriage readiness and what pathways emerging adults are taking to make themselves ready for these transitions.

Invitation to Participate

You and your parents are invited to participate in a research study investigating the attitudes and behaviors of young people related to the transition to adulthood and the transition to marriage. You will be asked questions about your attitudes toward marriage and family life, as well as some of your past and/or current behaviors (such as, educational/career pursuits and romantic relationships). You will also be asked questions about your relationship with your parents and how well you communicate with them. This study is being conducted by members of Project READY, which is a consortium of scholars from universities across the country.

Compensation

- **Extra Credit:** If you are doing this as part of a class, your instructor will give you extra credit points (or other compensation) for your participation in this study. When you have completed the online survey confirmation will be sent to your instructor to assure that you receive credit. You may also choose to recruit your parents to participate in the study for additional extra credit points. Directions for involving your parent in the study will be provided for you once you have consented to be a part of this study.
- **Gift Certificate:** If you were recruited for this study through your campus newspaper, you will be given a gift certificate for your participation in this study. When you and your parents have completed the online survey you will be sent an e-mail with your gift certificate code. Directions for involving your parent in the study will be provided for you once you have consented to be a part of this study.

Consent Information to be a Research Subject in this Study

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to complete three steps.

Step 1: Provide personal information (i.e., your assigned course code, name, and email address).

Step 2: Provide information for contacting your parents (i.e., name and email address).

Step 3: Complete an online questionnaire that takes approximately one hour to complete.

Rights as a Research Participant

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your class status, grade, or standing with your university. If you are doing this for a class and you choose not to participate, your instructor will provide you with an alternative extra credit assignment. If you decide to participate you are free to skip questions; however, you must complete all sections of the questionnaire to receive compensation. While there are no known risks involved in completing this survey, a few of the questions may trigger some discomforting memories.

Your participation will be confidential and the records of this study will be kept private. **If you choose to have your parents participate in the study, your personal information and responses to the survey will not be shared with them in any way.** Research records will be kept in a locked file; only authorized researchers will have access to the records.

The researchers conducting this study are Jason S. Carroll, Ph.D., and Larry J. Nelson, Ph.D. at Brigham Young University, Carolyn McNamara Barry, Ph.D. at Loyola College in Maryland, and Stephanie Madsen, Ph.D. at McDaniel College. If you have any questions about this study you may contact Dr. Jason Carroll by phone at (801) 422-7529 or by e-mail: jcarroll@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, 422 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602; telephone (801) 422-3873; e-mail: renea_beckstrand@byu.edu.

If you have read the consent information and agree to participate in this study, please press the "I Agree" button located at the bottom of the screen. Clicking the button is your consent to participate in this research study. If you have read the consent information and do not desire to participate in this study, please press the "Disagree" button also located at the bottom of the screen.

Appendix C

Demographics

Please mark the appropriate response or write in the information requested.

1. Your age:

2. You are:
   A) Male
   B) Female

3. How would you describe yourself?
   A) African (Black)
   B) American Indian/Native American
   C) Asian or Pacific Islander
   D) Caucasian (White)
   E) Hispanic/Latino (Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.)
   F) Mixed/Biracial
   G) Other (specify)

4. What year of college or graduate school are you in?
   A) 1st year of college
   B) 2nd year of college
   C) 3rd year of college
   D) 4th year of college
   E) 5th or higher year of college
   F) 1st year of graduate school
   G) 2nd year of graduate school
   H) 3rd or higher year of graduate school
   I) Not currently enrolled in college or graduate school

5. Your religious beliefs/affiliation is:
   A) Conservative Christian
   B) Liberal Christian
   C) Roman Catholic
   D) Greek Orthodox
   E) Latter-day Saint (Mormon)
   F) Jewish
   G) Muslim/Islam
   H) Unitarian
   I) Atheist
   J) Agnostic
   K) Wiccan
   L) No affiliation
   M) Other: (specify)

6. Which best describes your current marital status?
   A) Single (never married)
   B) Cohabiting (living with your partner in an intimate relationship)
   C) Married (first marriage)
   D) Married but separated
   E) Divorced
   F) Remarried
   G) Widowed

Appendix D

Criteria for Marriage Readiness Questionnaire

Please respond to BOTH of the following questions for EACH item: 1) Indicate whether or not YOU believe the following are necessary for a person to be ready for marriage. 2) Please give your opinion of the importance of each of the following in determining whether or not a person is ready to get married.

	Item	Necessary for Marriage Readiness?		Not at all Important	Not Very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important
1.	Financially independent from parents and others	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
2.	No longer living in parents' household	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
3.	Finished with education	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
4.	Settled into a long-term career	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
5.	Purchased a house	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
6.	Avoid becoming drunk	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
7.	Avoid illegal drugs	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
8.	Drive automobile safely and close to the speed limit	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
9.	Avoid use of profanity/vulgar language	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
10.	Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
11.	Not deeply tied to parents emotionally	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
12.	Committed to a long-term love relationship	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
13.	Decided on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
14.	For a man, become capable of supporting a family financially	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
15.	For a woman, become capable of caring for children	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
16.	For a woman, become capable of supporting a family financially	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
17.	For a man, become capable of caring for children	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
18.	For a woman, become capable of running a household	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
19.	For a man, become capable of running a household	Yes	No	A	B	C	D
20.	For a man, become capable of keeping family physically safe	Yes	No	A	B	C	D

21. For a woman, become capable of keeping family physically safe	Yes	No	A B C D
22. Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions	Yes	No	A B C D
23. Have had sexual intercourse	Yes	No	A B C D
24. Be employed full-time	Yes	No	A B C D
25. Avoid drunk driving	Yes	No	A B C D
26. Avoid committing petty crimes like vandalism and shoplifting	Yes	No	A B C D
27. Establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult	Yes	No	A B C D
28. Learn always to have good control of your emotions	Yes	No	A B C D
29. Become less self-oriented, develop greater consideration for others	Yes	No	A B C D
30. Reached age 25	Yes	No	A B C D
31. Reached age 30	Yes	No	A B C D
32. Avoid aggressive and violent behavior	Yes	No	A B C D
33. Be able to express feelings in close relationships	Yes	No	A B C D
34. Be able to listen to others in an understanding way	Yes	No	A B C D
35. Be able to discuss personal problems with others	Yes	No	A B C D
36. Be respectful of others when dealing with differences	Yes	No	A B C D
37. Have participated in a marriage preparation course or some other form of premarital education	Yes	No	A B C D
38. Have fully experienced the "single life"	Yes	No	A B C D
39. Have had considerable sexual experience	Yes	No	A B C D
40. Be able to pay for own wedding	Yes	No	A B C D
41. Have lived with partner before getting married	Yes	No	A B C D
42. Have come to terms with any negative family experiences	Yes	No	A B C D
43. Have overcome any personal challenges	Yes	No	A B C D
44. Make life-long commitments to others	Yes	No	A B C D
45. Be able to maintain a positive outlook on life	Yes	No	A B C D