

Introduction

- Casual sex is defined as having sex outside of a committed relationship.
- A majority of emerging adults (18-25) have a casual sexual experience before entering adulthood (Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2009; Lyons, Manning, Giordano, and Longmore 2013).
- Little research has examined how identity influences causal sexual behavior.
- The current study fills this gap in the literature by examining if subjective adult identity is associated with later casual sexual behavior.

Theoretical Frameworks

- Life course Theory and Emerging Adulthood**
 - Historical variations in lives (Elder 1996)
 - Creation of emerging adulthood
 - Some scholars have argued that sexual exploration is associated with the emerging adult years (Arnett 2004).
- Subjective Weathering and Emerging Adulthood**
 - Young adults who come from less advantaged backgrounds are more likely to feel older and have more casual sex compared to their advantaged peers (Johnson, Berg, and Sirotzki 2006; Lyons et al. 2013)

Prior Literature

- As research studies have indicated, casual sexual behavior appears to be associated with the emerging adult life course stage. In a sample of undergraduate students (N =12,925), Armstrong, England, and Fogarty (2009) reported that 67% of sexually active seniors had at least one casual sexual partner.
- One of the main criticisms of the emerging adulthood literature is it may only explain the experiences of a select few 18-25-year-olds.
- The young adult years are diverse (Rindfuss 1991).
- It appears that some emerging adults may experience subjective “weathering” or feel older compared to their peers.
- Foster, Hagan, and Brooks-Gunn (2008) state that adolescent stress exposure and demographic role transitions may be related to feeling older compared to one’s peer group.

Current Investigation

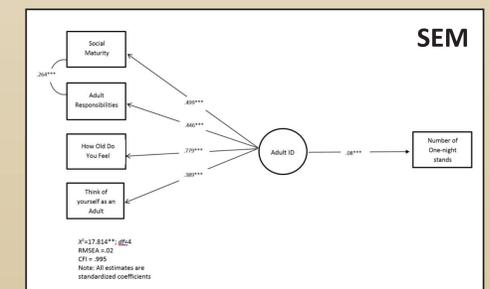
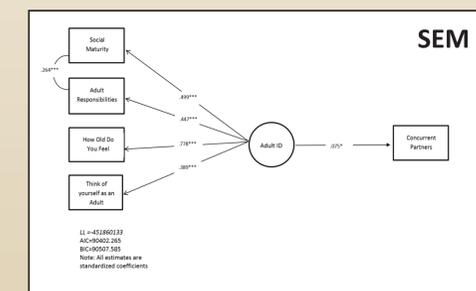
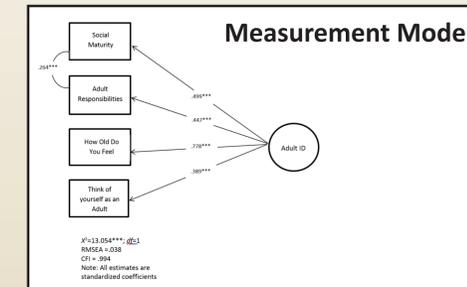
- Emerging Adulthood: feeling older is negatively associated with casual sex
- Subjective Weathering: feeling older is positively associated with casual sex

Data and Methods

- Waves III and IV of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health)
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
- Maximum Likelihood Robust Estimators
- Mplus 7

Measures

- Dependent Variables**
 - Recent concurrent sexual relationships (Wave IV)*
 - “In the past 12 months, did you have sex with more than one partner at around the same time?” Responses were 0 = “no” and 1 = “yes.”
 - Number of one-night stands (Wave IV)*
 - “Considering all types of sexual activity, with how many partners, male or female, have you had sex with on one and only one occasion?” Responses ranged from 0 to 650 partners.
- Latent Independent Variables**
 - Subjective Adult Identity (Wave III)*
 - “Some people grow up faster than others, some grow up slower. In terms of social maturity, would you say grew up faster, slower, or at about the same rate as other people your age?” (reverse coded)
 - “In terms of taking on adult responsibilities, would you say you grew up faster, slower, or at about the same rate?” (reverse coded)
 - “In general, how old do you feel compared with others your age?” (reverse coded)
 - “How often do you think of yourself as an adult?”
 - Responses were coded such that higher numbers on the scale were associated with being more adult-like.



Major Findings

- Confirmatory factor analysis showcases that the four items significantly load onto one factor. Three of the four factors load strongly.
- The latent factor is significantly and positively related to both measures of casual sex.
- The older one feels the more likely they are to have casual sex.

Conclusions

- The current findings highlight the importance of including identity variables when investigating casual sexual behavior.
- In support of the subjective weathering hypothesis: Feeling older than your peers at ages 18-25 was associated with higher rates of casual sexual behavior at age 24-32.
- The two measures of casual sexual behavior utilized were just two aspects of casual sex and in no way all inclusive of such behavior.
- The current study does not distinguish between opposite sex and same sex casual sexual relationships.
- Further research is needed that examines both of these types of casual sexual relationships.