

An Overview of Reported Hypotheses Concerning the Relationship Between the Markers of
Adulthood Scale and the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood

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This brief summary serves as an overview of the findings of an examination of the relationship between the Markers of Adulthood scale (MoA; Arnett, 2001) and the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA; Reifman, et al., 2007), two measures utilized to capture different constructs related to the transition to adulthood. As a review, the IDEA determines whether an individual identifies with the experiences that characterize emerging adulthood¹. Each dimension of emerging adulthood represents a subscale of the IDEA: negativity/instability, an interest in experimentation/a sense of possibilities, exploration of new identities, a focus on the self, a lack of focus on others, and feelings of being between adolescence and young adulthood (rather than being fully an adult). The IDEA-8 (Baggio, et al., 2014) is a condensed form of the measure that utilizes 2 items from each subscale, except self and other focused, which are omitted from the scale.

The Markers of Adulthood scale² (Arnett, 1998) is more complex because it has not been developed into generalizable subscales, nor does it consistently include the same items across studies. Items of the scale describe characteristics commonly associated with becoming an adult, such as marriage, financial independence, or developing values independently. Items can be used in two ways: to measure what features are important to be considered an adult (importance), and to determine whether someone has reached adulthood (achievement). Thus far, researchers have concluded the MoA has the highest validity when used in its entirety rather than when separated into subscales. However, there are a few common subscales utilized in MoA studies that are

¹ See Arnett, 2000; 2007 for a full discussion concerning the characteristics and theory of emerging adulthood.

² See Arnett, 1998; 2001

variably combined: independence, interdependence, role transitions, norm compliance, biological transitions, chronological transitions, and family capacities.

Norman and Grahe (2020) sought to devise an updated version of the MoA scale that would factor into statistically reliable subscales. As a method of validating the new version of the scale, I configured hypotheses based on a review of all reported correlations between the original MoA scale and the IDEA. To do so, I examined a list of 263 publications generated by Google Scholar that cited the IDEA scale. Within this list, I utilized search terms such as “markers of adulthood,” “criteria for adulthood,” and “adulthood status” to collect 20 studies that included the MoA or relevant items³. Each manuscript was reviewed to determine whether it included any statistical analysis that incorporated both a single MoA item or a full MoA collection *and* one subscale of or any version of the IDEA. This inspection produced 10 studies that included applicable MoA x IDEA hypotheses⁴. Most studies simply correlated the scales, their subscales, or the full IDEA to one MoA item; however, some explored whether certain MoA achievements could predict experiences of emerging adulthood.

Hypotheses regarding the MoA and IDEA scales were separated based on what collection of items researchers used. Often, the entire MoA was not included in a study; rather, a handful of specific achievement markers were included, such as living independently, being married, or having children. In these studies, scores of each IDEA subscale or the entire IDEA scale were correlated with achievement scores for a single MoA item. Most of the analyses in these papers yielded no correlation between IDEA scores and the chosen achievement markers, although financial independence yielded weak correlations to experimentation and feeling in-between (Baggio, et al., 2017; Baggio, et al., 2015; Galanaki & Sideridis, 2018).

³ A list of manuscripts included in this review is available at (osf.io/6ders/).

⁴ A table reviewing all applicable hypotheses curated from this examination can be viewed at (osf.io/dvsu7/).

When the full MoA scale was included in a study, researchers separated the items into a combination of the common subscales stated previously. Interestingly, none of these manuscripts included analyses using the MoA as a full measure without subscales, despite the literature suggesting that separating the items decreased statistical reliability (Faas et al., 2018). IDEA and MoA importance subscales typically had little to no correlation, although some analyses yielded correlations between $r = .2$ and $r = .3$ (Tagliabue, et al., 2016; Faas, et al., 2018; Galanaki & Sideridis, 2018; Carruthers, 2018; Nario-Redmond & Oleson, 2016). Among studies that utilized the achievement construct of the MoA rather than importance, MoA subscales and IDEA subscales had mostly no correlation, with the exception of a few weak correlations similar to those using the importance subscales (Carruthers, 2018; Nario-Redmond & Oleson, 2016). Some miscellaneous hypotheses were explored within the collected literature, most of which were MoA achievements as predictors for IDEA subscales. These included an examination of family-oriented markers of adulthood as predictors of the self and other-focused subscales (Hall & Walls, 2016), living arrangements as a predictor for self-focus and experimentation (Galanaki & Leontopoulous, 2017), and marital and parental status as predictors of scores on the IDEA and its subscales (Lisha, et al., 2012).

My intent with this brief note is to offer a comprehensive list of the reported relationships between the MoA scale and the IDEA, which has not otherwise appeared in reported literature to this date, and to provide a beginning framework for future explorations of this topic. The MoA scale and the IDEA are similar in origin, and measure constructs that are closely related. Often, the two are used together, as they each provide unique perspectives regarding the transition to adulthood. It is consequently reasonable to document and understand the relationship between the two measures for the purpose of future research. Indeed, the collection of these hypotheses

has already been useful in gauging the success of revisions to the MoA (Faas, et al., 2018; Norman & Grahe, 2020).

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