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Spanish version of the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA-S)

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to validate the IDEA questionnaire in Spain. The IDEA questionnaire is the only validated measure for assessing the characteristics of the Emerging Adulthood period. A Spanish translation of the IDEA was administered to a sample of 1,435 Spanish undergraduate students. Three confirmatory factor analyses were tested: the six-factor model proposed in the original scale by Reifman et al. (2007), a second model with five factors proposed in the initial conception by Arnett (2000) and a third model excluding the instability/negativity dimension. All three were found to have acceptable fit. The results support the validity of the questionnaire in the Spanish context, thus enabling cross-cultural comparisons.

The concept of Emerging Adulthood (EA) was first proposed by J. J. Arnett in the USA in the year 2000, and refers to a new development stage between the ages of 18 and 29 (Arnett, 2000; 2004; 2015). This stage emerged as the result of a series of social and economic changes that delayed the acquisition of the roles of adulthood, including a stable job, long-term partnership, and parenthood (Arnett, 2015). The concept quickly gained acceptance among the scientific community, giving rise to a fertile new area of research.

In 2007, Reifman, Arnett and Colwell developed the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA), a questionnaire which evaluates the five characteristics of EA proposed by Arnett. This instrument has since been translated into several different languages and has been validated in a number of different contexts. However, prior to the present study, the IDEA had not been validated in Spain. Validating the factor structure of the IDEA questionnaire in Spain would promote cross-cultural comparisons of the characteristics of EA and would help Spanish-speaking societies gain a better understanding of this population group.

Arnett (2000, 2004) proposed that, for young people in developed countries, the later timing of entering the roles of adulthood has created a situation from the late teens through the twenties in which they are no longer adolescents but are not yet adults. Arnett (2004) argues that a new developmental stage has emerged in developed countries, called emerging adulthood, with five characteristics: feeling in-between, identity explorations, instability, selffocus and possibilities/optimism. Emerging adulthood is a time for exploring possibilities in a variety of different areas, especially love and work, and is therefore an age of *identity* explorations. Paradoxically, the wide range of possibilities available to them and their shifting choices in love and work also plunge young people into a time of *instability*, in which they are forced to revise their life plan, often changing educational directions, partners, jobs and places of residence. Because they are more autonomous than they were as adolescents yet they have not yet entered stable adult roles, most emerging adults feel that they are no longer adolescents but are not yet fully adult. This is why it is the age of *feeling in-between*. Furthermore, this period of life is also *self-focused*, with greater scope for independent decisions than in other life stages. Finally, emerging adulthood is proposed as an age of possibilities/optimism, a period in which many different futures are perceived as open and a wide range of potential commitments (social causes, potential mates, etc.) are perceived as being available.

The IDEA (Reifman et al., 2007) is the only validated scale for measuring the emerging adulthood concept. It is a 31-item questionnaire which demonstrates the existence of the 5 factors outlined above and has strong internal consistency and high test-retest reliability. Following the publication of the original version, further validation research has been carried out in different contexts (see Table 1), but although the authors of the different studies conducted with the IDEA questionnaire have all endorsed the EA construct on the basis of their findings, no one has yet managed to exactly replicate the results achieved by Reifman et al. (2007). In all studies, the item-factor correspondence was achieved on the basis of exploratory analyses, without any of the factor structures proposed in any of them being replicated in any other. This prevents cross-cultural comparisons of the values obtained on the scale by people from different cultural contexts. The present study aimed to validate the original structure proposed by Reifman et al. (2007), in order to obtain a measure that can be used not only to evaluate the characteristics of emerging adulthood in Spain, but also to carry out cross-cultural studies.

As Arnett has emphasized, in order to understand emerging adulthood it is vital to adopt a cultural approach (Arnett, 2013, 2015), since this stage cannot be understood without taking the context in which it takes place into account. In this sense, Spain is an interesting context in which to study this construct. The youth unemployment rate in this country is 40.5%, the second highest in the EU (Eurostat, 2017), which means that many young people experience a great deal of instability in the labor market during their twenties. Also, young Spanish people leave home at an average age of 29.4, three years later than the European mean (Eurostat, 2017b), and Spanish women are second-highest in Europe in the age at which they have their first child (30.4) (Eurostat, 2017b). These data reflect a context that is very different from those found in the USA and most other Northern and Central European countries, and highlight the need to analyze whether the characteristics which define emerging adulthood in other countries are applicable also in Spain.

Table 1. Previous adaptations of the IDEA Questionnaire

Citation	Method	Result
Atak & Çok (2008)	 N = 296 Turkish volunteer students Mean age = 24.2 (range = 15-34) 57. 1% female EFA 	Three factors: Negativity/Instability: items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12. Identity, Exploration and Feeling in-between: items 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Experimentation and Self-Focused: items 2, 15, 16, 19,

		21, 22, 23.
Pérez, Cumsille & Martínez (2008)	 N = 162 Chilean young adults (91% college students) Mean age = 19,90 (SD = 3,37, range 18-26) 64% female EFA 	Four factors: Identity exploration / Feeling in between: items 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Negativity /Instability: items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 16, 21. Experimentation / possibilities: items 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 20. Self/other focused: items 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23.
Lisha, et al., (2014)	 N = 1676 "at risk", Latino, older adolescent in Southern California (USA) Mean age = 16.8 (SD = .90, range = 14-21) 42,2% female EFA 	Three factors: Identity exploration: items 7, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Experimentation –possibilities: items 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 16, 21. Independence: items 15, 19, 23.
Hill, et al. (2015) Baggio et al. (2015)	 N = 970 Dutch, Moroccan, and Dutch Antillean origin young adults residing in Amsterdam Mean age = 20 (SD = 1.44, range = 18-21) 54 % female) EFA N = 4816 enrolled during conscription to Swiss national military recruitment centers Mean age 21.26 (SD = 1.23). No women were included EFA and Cross- validation CFA. 	Six factors: Self-Focus: item 7, 15, 19, 22. Negativity / Instability: item 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 20. Identity Exploration: sense of self. Items 12, 24, 31. Identity Exploration: future self. Items 19, 26, 27. Experimentation /possibilities: items 1, 2, 4, 16, 21. Other-focus: items 14, 18. 8 item Short form: Experimentation/possibilities (items 1, 2). Negativity/Instability (items 8, 11). Identity Exploration (items 24, 27). Feeling in-between (items 29, 30). Self-focus and other-focus
Lisha et al. (2015)	 N = 1676 continuation high school students in Southern California Mean age = 16.8 years (SD = .90). 42.2% female. Starting from a 21 item questionnaire, an EFA and longitudinal invariance analysis were conducted. 	were removed. 5-item model: Independence, defining yourself, seeking a sense of meaning, deciding on your own believes and values, and learning to think for yourself.

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Leontopoulu, Mavridis & Giotsa (2016)	 N = 592 Greek graduate students Mean age = 21 70.7% female CFA and EFA 	Three factors: Identity exploration/feeling inbetween: items 12, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Experimentation/Possibilities-Self-focused: items 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 16. Instability/Negativity: items 3, 8, 9, 11, 20.
Wider, et al. (2016)	 N = 568 first year University students from Malaysia. Mean age = 20,81 (SD = 0,90, range 18-26) 63,2% female EFA and Cross- validation CFA. 	Three Factors: Identity Exploration / Feeling in between: items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. Instability: items 9, 11. Experimentation / Possibilities: items 1, 2, 4.
Dutra-Thomé (2017)	 N = 547 Southern Brazilians Mean age = 22 (range = 18-29) 64,2% female EFA 	Six factors: Identity exploration: items 12, 24, 26, 27, 28. Experimentation / possibilities: items 1, 2, 4. Instability/Negativity: items 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 20. Self-focused: items 5, 7, 13, 15, 19, 22, 23, 25. Feeling in between: items 29, 30, 31, 32. Other-focused: items 14, 18.

Thus, the main aim of the present study was to test the factor structure of the IDEA in a sample of Spanish university students. The objective was to test whether the defining characteristics of emerging adulthood included in the original model proposed by Arnett (2004) can be replicated in this context. If they can, then the IDEA questionnaire may be useful not only for identifying individual differences in EA, but also for carrying out crosscultural comparisons. Moreover, testing the factor structure of the IDEA in Spain in an applied manner will help clarify the meaning of emerging adulthood in this country, which in turn may help families, professionals and policy makers gain a better understanding of this new life stage.

Method

Participants

The sample comprised 1,502 university students (40% men, *Mean* age= 20.32, *SD* age= 2.13, *Range* age= 18-29) from the University of Seville (US) and the University of the Basque Country (UPV /EHU). An effort was made to recruit participants from different fields of study in a proportional distribution (MECD, 2015): 9% from arts and humanities, 32% from social sciences and legal studies, 24% from engineering and architecture, 29% from health sciences and 7% from the other sciences.

Missing values were eliminated from the IDEA questionnaire (listwise deletion) and the final analysis was conducted with 96% of the total sample group, N=1,435. Attrition analyses revealed age differences with a small effect size between those who completed all IDEA items and those who did not (t(75.76)=2.38, p=.02, d=.20). The mean age of those who completed all IDEA items was 20.35, whereas that of those who did not was 19.85. No differences were observed between groups in relation to gender $(\chi^2=.96, p=.19)$ or university $(\chi^2=2.23, p=.33)$.

Instruments

A professional English to Spanish translation was performed on the original 31-item version of the IDEA (Reifman et al., 2007, see Appendix 1). This translation was checked in detail by the research team to ensure that it faithfully reflected the concepts contained in the original version. The IDEA assesses the five emerging adulthood characteristics described by Arnett (2004), by asking *Is this period of your life a...:* time of identity explorations (7 items, e.g. *time of learning to think for yourself?*), time of instability/negativity (7 items, e.g. *time of many worries?*), self-focused age (6 items, e.g. *time of focusing on yourself?*), time of feeling in-between (3 items, e.g. *time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?*), or an age of possibilities (5 items, e.g. *time of trying out new things?*). The original IDEA questionnaire also includes a supplementary non-conceptual subscale called "other-focused" (3 items, e.g. *time of responsibility for others?*). Unlike with the other subscales, other-focus is theoretically expected to be low during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Responses are given on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 4. There are no reversed items.

Procedure

The data collection process took place during the second semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. During the initial phase, faculty from different knowledge areas within the two

universities were contacted in order to request their consent and to arrange to gather the data during class time. Specially trained members of the research team collected the data from participating students during one hour of class time. All participants were informed of the aim of the study and assurances were given that the survey was both anonymous and confidential. All students participated voluntarily. The study was approved by the Andalusia Biomedical Research Ethics Committee.

Data analysis

In order to evaluate the fit of the data with the original IDEA structure (Reifman et al., 2007), a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using maximum likelihood estimation, with Lisrel 8.8. CFA is the most appropriate method for cross-validating the factor structure of a test (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989).

The indexes used were the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the normed fit index (NFI), the non-normed fit index (NNFI) and the comparative fit index (CFI). As a general rule, for all three relative fit-indexes, values greater than 0.90 are considered to indicate good fit (Hoyle, 1995). In the model comparison, CFI increments of .01 were taken to indicate significant changes (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Internal consistency was evaluated by computing Cronbach's alpha.

Results

The first step was to conduct a CFA testing the 6-factor model proposed by Reifman et al. (2007). The CFA model encompassed the six factors corresponding to the proposed model, i.e. the five characteristics of Emerging Adulthood: feeling in-between (3 items), identity explorations (7 items), instability/negativity (7 items), self-focus (6 items) and possibilities (5 items), plus the other-focused non-conceptual subscale (3 items). The results revealed a good fit between the data and the theoretical model in accordance with the RMSEA and CFI indicators. The NFI and NNFI indexes had a value of 0.89, similar to the cutoff value of .90.

In model 2, the "Other focused" subscale was eliminated. This decision was based on a conceptual criterion, since the subscale was not included in Arnett's theory of Emerging Adulthood (2000, 2004). Following this step, as shown in Table 2, all the aforementioned indexes reached the recommended cutoff value. It can therefore be stated that the data for this sample also fit the original theoretical model developed by Arnett (2004, 2015), according to

which EA is a stage characterized by: *feeling in-between, identity exploration, instability, self-focus* and *possibilities/optimism*.

Table 2. Model fit

14016 2. 1/10461 110	DMCEA	NIET	NINIEL	OEI.
	RMSEA	NFI	NNFI	CFI
	(90% CI)			
Model 1. Six factors: feeling in-between, identity explorations, instability/negativity, self-focused, possibilities, other-focused.	.079 (.077081)	.089	.089	.091
Model 2. Five factors: feeling in-between, identity explorations, instability/negativity, self-focused, possibilities.	.082 (.080085)	.090	.090	.091
Model 3. Four factors: feeling in-between, identity explorations, self-focused, possibilities.	.083 (.079086)	.092	.092	.093

Nevertheless, we also tested a third model which excluded the Instability/Negativity subscale. This decision was taken because while the original conceptualization of EA identifies this period as one of instability, in which emerging adults make frequent changes in their lives in terms of love partners, jobs and place of residence, negativity was only added to the dimension by the seminal IDEA questionnaire, with items such as "time of many worries" being grouped with "time of instability". The seven items which together make up this subscale were also grouped into a single factor in the sample of this present study (NNFI= .88, NFI= .92, CFI= .92), which prevents any separate exploration of the relationship between instability and negativity. Thus, given that the negativity component of the Instability/Negativity subscale evaluated aspects that did not form part of the theoretical conceptualization, and that, furthermore, in Jeffrey Arnett's original proposal (2004, 2015), Instability/Negativity is not a central dimension of EA (Lisha et al. 2014), we decided to test a model in which this subscale was removed. The fit of this new model was also found to be acceptable, with a $\triangle CFI = .02$.

Table 3. Standardized factor loadings of the three evaluated models.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Subscale
Item 1. Time of many possibilities	.67	.67	.68	Possibilities
Item 2. Time of exploration	.71	.71	.71	Possibilities
Item 3. Time of confusion	.58	.59		Instability/Negat
Item 4. Time of experimentation	.65	.65	.65	Possibilities
Item 5. Time of personal freedom	.60	.61	.60	Self-focused
Item 6. Time of feeling restricted	.44	.44		Instability/Negat
Item 7. Time of responsibility for yourself	.47	.47	.49	Self-focused
Item 8. Time of feeling stressed	.74	.74		Instability/Negat
Item 9. Time of instability	.66	.67		Instability/Negat
Item 10. Time of optimism	.48	.47	.45	Self-focused
Item 11. Time of high pressure	.69	.69		Instability/Negat
Item 12. Time of finding out who you are	.61	.61	.61	Identity
Item 13. Time of settling down	.63			Other-focused
Item 14. Time of responsibility for others	.38			Other-focused
Item 15. Time of independence	.57	.56	.57	Self-focused
Item 16. Time of open choices	.69	.69	.69	Possibilities
Item 17. Time of unpredictability	.32	.32		Instability/Negat
Item 18. Time of commitments to other	.49			Other-focused
Item 19. Time of self-sufficiency	.57	.56	.57	Self-focused
Item 20. Time of many worries	.72	.71		Instability/Negat
Item 21. Time of trying out new things	.65	.66	.65	Possibilities
Item 22. time of focusing on yourself	.46	.47	.48	Self-focused
Item 23. Time of separating from parents	.19	.19	.18	Identity
Item 24. Time of defining yourself	.73	.73	.74	Identity
Item 25. Time of planning for the future	.54	.53	.53	Identity
Item 26. Time of seeking a sense	.68	.68	.68	Identity

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of				
meaning				
Item 27. Time of deciding on your own beliefs and values	.69	.69	.69	Identity
Item 28. Time of learning to think for yourself	.65	.66	.66	Identity
Item 29. Time of feeling adult in some ways but not others	.50	.51	.50	Feeling in between
Item 30. Time of gradually becoming an adult	.71	.71	.73	Feeling in between
Item 31. Time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood	.38	.39	.36	Feeling in between

Means, standard deviations, correlations between the EA subscales and their internal reliability values are presented in Table 4. The mean values obtained in each subscale were similar to those obtained by Reifman et al. (2007). In both cases, the lowest values were obtained for the Instability/Negativity subscale, while the highest values were observed in the Possibilities subscale. Feeling in-between, a subscale comprising 3 items, had the lowest Cronbach's alpha, and the Possibilities subscale had the highest one.

Table 4. Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Cronbach's alpha and correlations between the theoretical dimensions of EA

		Cronbach's	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	M	alpha						
	(SD)	(number of						
		items)						
Identity exploration (I)	3.15 (.52)	.76 (7)	-	.27**	.51**	.48**	.50**	.35**
Instability/Negativity (II)	2.67 (.60)	.79 (7)		-	007	.29**	.12**	.16**
Self-focused (III)	3.30 (.46)	.69 (6)			-	.21**	.61**	.37**
Feeling in-between (IV)	2.96 (.66)	.55 (3)				-	.28**	.21**
Possibilities (V)	3.43 (.51)	.80 (5)					-	.30**
Other-focused(VI)	2.81 (.61)	.54 (3)						-

Discussion

In the present study, the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) was administered to a large sample of undergraduate students in Spain. A series of CFAs were conducted in order to test the original factor structure of the questionnaire proposed by Reifman et al. (2007). All three models tested were found to have acceptable fit, and future studies may therefore use the six, five or four-subscale questionnaire (IDEA-S) in accordance with their specific research interests.

When the Other-focused subscale, which did not form part of Arnett's original theory of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004, 2015), is eliminated, the model continues to be valid. In fact, other focused is considered a supplementary non-conceptual subscale that enables researchers to determine whether self-focus is negatively related to other-focus (Lisha et al., 2013; Reifman et al., 2007). Indeed, of all the EA models that have arisen from the IDEA questionnaire (see Table 1), other-focused only appears in the Brazilian version (Dutra-Thomé, 2017), and even then it only comprises two items and cannot therefore be technically considered a subscale in that work.

Unlike in the study by Reifman et al. (2007), in the present study the self-focused and other-focused dimensions were positively related. This positive correlation may be explained by the difference between individualistic and collectivistic societies (Kagitcibasi, 2017). Whereas the United States is usually classed as an individualistic country, in which being focused on oneself may be opposed to being focused on others, Spain has a more collectivistic society, with a strong Catholic tradition, in which value is only attached to individual advancement within the group, particularly the family group, and in which individual achievements are seen as collective ones. In contexts such as this, it makes sense for there to be a positive correlation between EA as a time for assuming responsibility for oneself (self-focused item) and as a time for assuming responsibility for others (other-focused item).

The collectivistic nature of Spanish society may also explain the low loading of item 23 "time of separating from parents" on the identity exploration construct in our sample. In Spain, young people often do not feel the need to separate from their parents in order to develop their own identity, as has previously been shown in both adolescents and emerging adults (Parra, Oliva, Sánchez-Queija, 2015).

Although the Instability/Negativity subscale is included in the IDEA-S, it is nevertheless the one with the lowest mean values and the fit of the model improves when it is

left out. It is possible that the collectivistic nature of Spanish society and the custom of remaining in the family home until getting married (Moreno, 2008) make Instability/
Negativity the dimension with the poorest fit to the theoretical model. In Spain, it is likely that the instability derived from changes in place of residence may be generally less intense or even disappear, and living in the family home may reduce the negativity associated with instability in education, work, or love, since young people live in a protected context. It is also possible that this result is due to the characteristics of the sample itself, which was comprised exclusively of undergraduate students. It may well be that young people who have completed their studies and no longer have such a clear short-term goal as undergraduates (i.e. to earn their degree) do indeed see these years as being characterized by a greater degree of instability and/or negativity. Similarly, it is likely that young people who do not enter higher education and are forced to confront the difficulties posed by the "real world" at the age of 19 or 20 consider this period to be one of instability and/or negativity, especially bearing in mind the high youth unemployment rate in Spain.

Whatever the case, it is important to bear in mind that, although in the IDEA negativity is included in the same dimension as instability (Reifman et al., 2007), Arnett's original theory (2000) included only instability, not negativity. Arnett (2004, 2015) argues that instability does not automatically imply troubles, since emerging adults view it as part of the process of finding their place in the world, and this search does not necessarily generate negativity. It would be interesting for future research to continue exploring the role played by instability/ negativity in emerging adulthood in different cultures and social groups, and to analyze negativity and instability as separate dimensions.

The reliability indexes obtained in the subscales varied between alpha=.55 and alpha=.80. In general, more than three items are required to obtain measures with construct validity or good reliability indexes (Marsh, Hau & Wen, 2004). In this study, the Feeling in-between subscale, which had only three items, had the lowest Cronbach's alpha. This modest alpha coefficient most likely reflects the small number of indicators in the subscale. The remaining subscales had good internal reliability.

The fact that the entire sample group was drawn from a university setting is the main limitation of this study. Indeed, replicating these results in a non-university sample group would provide strong validity for the measure and would enable the different characteristics of emerging adulthood to be compared within Spanish culture itself. This in turn would

answer, for instance, the question regarding whether or not instability and/or negativity is greater among the non-university population of emerging adults than among undergraduates.

Having a sample group of over 1,400 emerging adults drawn from different fields of study, coupled with the fact of having replicated, for the first time, a factor structure similar to that proposed by Reifman et al. (2007) in the USA in another context, renders the study both interesting and valuable. In this sense, based on the findings of the present study, the IDEA-S can be considered a valid measure for evaluating emerging adulthood among university undergraduates in the Spanish context. This will doubtless encourage both researchers and Spanish society in general to pay more attention to this period, which is such a vital time for both individual and societal development, since the young people of today will be the adults of tomorrow.

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Este periodo de tu vida es un tiempo de	l Muy en desacuerdo	2 Algo en desacuerdo	3 Algo de acuerdo	4 Muy de acuerdo
1. Muchas posibilidades	O	O	O	O
2. Exploración y búsqueda	O	О	O	O
3. Confusión	O	O	O	O
4. Experimentación	O	О	O	O
5. Libertad personal	O	O	O	O
6. Sentirse limitado/a	O	O	O	О
7. Responsabilizarte de ti mismo/a	O	O	O	O
8. Sentirte estresado/a	O	О	O	O
9. De inestabilidad	O	O	O	O
10. Optimismo	O	О	O	O
11. Mucha presión	O	O	O	O
12. Descubrir quién eres	O	О	O	O
13. Establecerte	O	O	O	O
14. Responsabilizarte de otras personas	O	O	O	О
15. Independencia	O	O	O	O
16. Muchas opciones y oportunidades	O	O	O	О
17. Tiempo impredecible	O	O	O	O
18. Compromiso con los demás	O	O	O	O
19. Autosuficiencia	O	O	O	O
20. Muchas preocupaciones	O	O	O	О
21. De intentar cosas nuevas	O	O	O	O
22. Centrarte en ti mismo/a	O	O	O	О
23. Distanciarte de tus padres	O	O	O	O
24. Definirte a ti mismo/a	O	O	O	О
25. Planificar el futuro	O	O	O	O
26. Buscar un sentido o significado	O	O	O	О
27. Decidir tus creencias y valores	O	O	O	O
28. Aprender a pensar por ti mismo/a	O	О	O	О
29. Sentirse adulto/a en algunos casos y en otros no	O	O	O	O
30. Ir convirtiéndote en adulto/a	O	O	O	O
31. Sentir inseguridad sobre si has llegado definitivamente a la adultez	O	О	O	O