EXPLORING THE EMERGING ADULTHOOD EXPERIENCES AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN SABAH, MALAYSIA: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract

The objective of the current study is to explore the emerging adulthood experiences among young people in Sabah. As no similar investigation has been conducted, a semi-structured interview using open-ended questions has been utilized in the current study. A total of five emerging adult ages between 22 and 28-year-old has been recruited in this investigation. The data in this study has been analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Five themes were constructed concerning the criteria of adulthood: individualism, self-control maturity, role transitions, family capacities, and social maturity. This information is useful as a basis to guide local researchers for further study in emerging adulthood research. Besides, the development of the research is beneficial for policy modifications.

Keywords: Emerging adulthood, markers of adulthood, concept of adulthood, preliminary study

Introduction

It all started when Arnett's [1] work found that the majority of young people are ambiguous with their adulthood status as they considered themselves to be adults in some respects but not in others. It has been said that the transition from adolescence to adulthood may last many years due to individualistic and intangible markers of adulthood are gradually and incrementally pursued during the stage of development [1]. Expanding his own work, Arnett [2] ask the question "do you think you have reached adulthood?" to college students aged between 18 and 23 years old pertaining to their perception of adulthood status. Similarly, the majority (63%) indicated they are ambiguous about their adult status. To then, Arnett [3] introduced a new term of emerging adulthood (EA) to specify a growing number of young people that perceived themselves as no longer adolescents, but not yet attained full adulthood. Furthermore, EA has been conceptualized as a developmental stage marked by exploration, increased mobility, ambivalence, and ambiguity for young people typically between the ages of 18 and 30 [3,4,5]. In the meantime, the issue of transition from adolescence to adulthood requires extensive study and is a considerable aspect to be explored clearly.

Since then, a number of replicated studies have been conducted in various developed countries, such as United States [5, 6, 7, 8], Austria [9], Argentina [10], Greece [11], Czech Republic [12], German [13], and Israel [14]. However, studies regarding this topic have been implemented in India [15], China [16, 17], and Africa [18] involving non-college as well as college samples. In Malaysia, this field of human development has risen, but limited, among local researchers [e.g., 19, 20, 21, 22]. Given this, there is a need to explore the conceptions of adulthood among Malaysian emerging adults especially Sabahan.

Emerging Adulthood

Based on primarily work conducted in the United States, Arnett [3, 23, 24] proposed a theory of EA that attempts to characterize the development of young people roughly between ages 18-25 (considered as a "distinct period"). During this period of time young people tend to consider themselves no longer adolescents, but have not yet full-fledged adults [3]. EA is distinguished by

relative independence from social roles and from normative expectations. Besides, EA is having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews. EA also is a time of life when many different directions remain possible when little about the future has been decided for certain when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course.

Further, Arnett's [23, 24] theory describe this period of development with five distinct features from both adolescence and adulthood as the age of identity exploration, feeling in-between, possibilities, focus on the self, and instability. First, EA is the *age of identity explorations* because of Erikson's [25] psychosocial moratorium is now normative and takes place in EA. Second, EA is the *age of feeling in-between* because the majority of emerging adults feel they are no longer adolescents but not yet fully adults [4, 6]. Third, EA is the *age of possibilities* because it tends to be an optimistic time of life, as a variety of potential mates, job opportunities, social causes, and other commitments are perceived by emerging adults as being available. Fourth, EA also the *self-focused age* whereas they concomitantly take on greater independence and responsibility for themselves compared to when they were younger, yet with a sense of considerable personal freedom remaining. It is the age of "focusing on themselves as they develop the knowledge, skills, and self-understanding they will need for adult life" (p.14). Lastly, EA is the *age of instability* which means young people also experience unsettling and some individuals may lack (or feel they lack) the confidence and wherewithal to succeed. While young people exploring life options, and "moving up" to adulthood, they also experience the negative aspects of the transition.

Markers of Adulthood

The transition to adulthood is related to the timing of transition events [2]. Researchers [26] referring this transition events as "social," "demographic," or "role" transitions. Moreover, the transition to adulthood implies the existence of a social idea of what it means to be an adult. According to sociologists, marriage is the major criteria in the transition to adulthood, along with other transition events such as finishing education, entering labor force (full-time employment), establishing an independent household, marriage, and parenthood [2, 26, 27, 28, 29].

Anthropologists stated that most traditional cultures focus on marriage as a criterion of transition to adulthood [30]. Marriage is not only an event that unites two people and their families in a relationship with a variety of mutual obligations but an event that marks the attainment of adult status. Apart from that, the process of preparing for marriage involves cultivating capacities for fulfilling a variety of family responsibilities [4]. Scholars describe this capacity as gender-based roles, with males and females assigned differently but complementary [30, 31]. For male adolescents, preparation for the transition to adulthood involves developing capacities such as providing economically for family and protecting family physically, while female adolescents required to develop capacities for running a household and caring for children [30, 32]. But, for both gender equally, these capacities weighted as possible criteria for the transition to adulthood [2, 4].

However, psychologist found that young people values qualities of character that share a common emphasis on individualism as the most important criteria for the conception of the transition to adulthood [2, 6]. Specifically, studies have found the most prominent criteria of adulthood including accepting responsibility for one's self, making independent decisions, financial independence, establishing a relationship with parents as an equal adult, and compliance with social norms [1, 2, 4, 6, 33].

In describing these markers of adulthood, Arnett [34] acknowledges that both economic/demographic and cultural factors influence the existence of the features of EA. He stresses that EA is a period of life that restricted to certain cultures especially in high industrialized or postindustrial countries [4]. There is now a rather extensive amount of work supporting the

notion that culture plays a role in the extent to which young people feel like an adult and the criteria they have for adulthood. Findings from studies so far indicate that while similar criteria of adulthood are shared across many cultures, young people value those markers differently depending on their societal and cultural perspectives of their socioeconomic status (see [4, 5, 16, 18, 35] for review). Research conducted in different countries, such as China [16], among specific subgroups within the continent country with larger cultures, such as Nigeria and Ghana [18], and cross-cultural study (e.g., [35]) also show that culture plays an important role in how young people perceived themselves as adults.

Despite the amount of work regarding EA that has been done in various countries and cultures around the world, little attention has been directed toward exploring young people's perceptions of adulthood in Sabah, Malaysia. The state of Sabah is the second largest state in Malaysia with diverse traditional values and culture. In addition to traditional culture, other factors such as education, urbanization, economic, social and cultural globalization might lead to significant social and cultural transformations throughout the state. There might be possibilities that young people are making the transition to adulthood within a cultural context [18]. There is so much that needs to be learned about how young people between the ages of 18 and 30 in Sabah experience the transition to adulthood. In fact, very little known regarding how young people view their status as adults or what young people think is needed in order to become an adult in Sabah. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of the markers (i.e., criteria) of adulthood among emerging adults in Sabah. What does the conception of adulthood look like from the perspective of Sabahan emerging adults? This question is the focus of the present study.

Method
Research Design
This qualitative study implies the grounded theory methodology to generate theories from collected qualitative data concerning emerging adults' experiences of adulthood. Grounded methods generate a theoretical basis of extensive data sets through systematic comparisons [36].

Participants
The current study involving five participants (1 male and 4 female students) ages between 23 and 28-year-old attending university in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Based on the interview records, all participants identified as Dusun ($n = 4$) and Bajau ($n = 1$). Participants were including undergraduate (second and third year) and postgraduate (third year) students majored in psychology.

Procedures
Permission to implement the study in a university setting was obtained from the university before any data collection procedure. Participants were recruited through the psychology subject pool from investigators' university's psychology department. Advertisement flyers were posted throughout the department to invite students to participate in the study. Students who are interested to participate in the study are then welcome. During data collections, participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and all the data obtained will be used confidentially. Participants were then asked to fill in the consent form and upon their agreement to participate in the study. Data were gathered using in-depth interview (using the Malay language) which took roughly in an hour. The interview was conducted in the face-to-face method. Upon completion, participants were provided the opportunity to withdraw as well as delete information as they wished.

Material
As mentioned above, this study implies in-depth interview using semi-structured questions to obtain qualitative data regarding participants' EA experiences. All interview questions were

open-ended to allow participants to provide fresh commentary concerning their experiences and opinions [37]. The interview protocol was started by asking participants to introduce themselves as a way of rapport. Then, the interviews go on with questions such as "What is it like being (age) years old?", "Do you think you have reached adulthood?", "What signified/would signify that you had reached adulthood?", and "What did you see as important criteria of adulthood?" The interview was voice-recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The transcribed data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and validated through the process of investigator triangulation and member-checking [38].

Results

The current study objectified to explore the EA experiences among young people in Sabah. It is found that all respondents are ambiguous with their status of adulthood which is they considered themselves as an adult in some ways but not in others. A thematic analysis was used on the transcripts of the interviews. It was found that the participants' views about criteria of adulthood could be classified into five major dimensions: individualism, self-control maturity, role transitions, family capacities, and social maturity.

    i.   *Individualism*

The individualistic criteria were found to be prominently-endorsed in the interviews. The theme of individualism was strong in the interviews as well. The analyses reveal that self-decision making, self-responsibility and no longer depend on the family is the characteristics of a person to gain the status of adulthood.

"I made my own decisions" – A reason of grown-up. A good self-decision-making would make one feel adult. The self-decision making is considered as a criteria of adulthood whereas one can decide what is good or bad for him/herself. Decision-making enables young people to think and determine properly about what needs to be done for him/her. A 23-year-old female participant (R03) stated:

> My parents were divorced. That's the most painful about all things. But it made me feel like an adult. Though my relations with my mother and father is OK, but it is not as close as any other families. Then, it's rare to keep in touch. I'm on my own world. I made my own decisions…And I always thought that there was a bad influence coming to me but I did reject it.

> I'm very lucky for joining the financial program. If I did not participate in the program, I probably did not know how to save money. I might just think of having fun [clubbing]. But, I'm used to any beneficial program for me. It gave me experiences. I categorize it as a reason for grown-up where I can make my own choices to follow what's good for me.

> In term of thinking, the most important thing is our experiences. From the experiences, we will think. Then we made our decisions, whether the decision is good for ourselves, whether the decision benefits us.

Another 23-year-old female participant (R05) also stated:

> If an adult, he/she can make their own decisions and they can do whatever they want. For example, I can't make my own decisions. I if made my own decisions,

then I must inform about it to my family. And, they will comment about it. So, I feel that they didn't expect me as an adult. Actually, I wish to change to be an adult, but they are likely not supporting me because they still expecting me as a child. Though I'm 23 years old. And no one [among family members] even knows that I have a boyfriend. Because if I tell, they were indeed can't accept it. Because I used to have a boyfriend, but they said "First, you have to finish your study. So, you are not worth for it yet."

"We are responsible for ourselves" – In achieving maturity. In addition, self-responsibility is also seen as an important criteria of adulthood to achieve the goal of life. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

Maybe, I will achieve maturity when I finish my study. Then I will have a job and my own family, children. Maybe, I think I'm grown-up with that. Maybe maturity is not just that for me. Maybe the way we think. The maturity is like having such responsibilities. We are responsible for ourselves. We have such goals.

A 24-year-old female participant (R02) stated:

If he/she thinks and understand his/her responsibilities, he/she will do what is need to do for his/her life. He/she will think about what should and shouldn't. And he/she will not, for example, adult people are more focused on working rather than just hang out with friends. What I mean of this 'hang-out' is not once seen a while like students who finished their study. Sometimes we saw them [adult people] hang-out at the coffee shop because they think that this time is for them to relax. But, if he/she thinks that he/she has responsibilities, he/she will be more focused on finding jobs he/she is got to do for his/her life. Then, he/she would have to think about how to earn money for his/her life. He/she already knew what he/she needed and should do for parents or family.

"No longer depend on family/I can leave my family" – Being apart and financially independent is a way of becoming an adult. Being apart with family is considered as a way of becoming an adult. Besides, when the children are far away and are no longer living with the family, they indirectly tend to depend on oneself such as get their own financial resources. A 23-year-old female participant (R03) stated:

Not only for your own good but others can see that "Oh…she can earn money herself. Can support [financially] her family. And no longer depend on family." And it gives happiness to me if the job that I do is on my decision. I feel happy with that work.

One more thing is if I'm an adult I can leave this place [original place of residence] without my family. I mean far away from family. For example, I'm planning to work in Singapore.

ii. *Self-Control Maturity*

Self-control maturity is also seen as an important criteria of adulthood. One is considered as an adult if he/she have good self-control that is associated with how an adult controls him/herself. The analyses reveals that positive-rational thinking, emotion, and behavioral control is the specific characteristics of a person to be an adult. Perhaps, the self-control is among the typical markers of adulthood among young people.

"It is rational thinking" – The way of thinking of an adult. The first characteristic of self-control is positive-rational thinking. Mature thinking accompanied by positive-rational views is an obvious characteristic for an adult. Perhaps grown-up people tend to think so as to solve and avoid further consequences if they think in the opposite ways. A 24-year-old female participant (R02) stated:

> I think it is rational thinking.

A 23-year-old female participant (R04) also stated:

> In term of positive views. Because before this we are more than negative. That's what makes us more emotionally. So, maybe we can control that emotion with positive views.

A 23-year-old female participant (R05) stated:

> In term of thinking. For instance, my friend, I think she is matured because of her thought. She's a student and she has a lot of problems, especially the problems with her friends. But I like her because, despite the many problems she has, she thinks that if she has problems with her friends she will let it be so as long as she has apologized even if she is wrong or not, let it be. Then she can control herself. For example, despite having problems, she is not stressed. If she was me when there is a problem with other people I will be stressed out because I think too much. But my friend is steady. She can control her thinking. She can study, she still is able to concentrate on her studies.

"Adult people can control their emotion" – A criteria of adult people. Apart from positive-rational thinking, emotion control also characterized as an important criteria of adulthood for young people. One who can manage his/her emotion is considered as an adult in line with his/her status who supposed to control his/her emotion well. A 23-year-old female participant (R05) stated:

> For me, first is emotion. For me, adult people can control their emotions despite having lots of problems with friends or anyone, they can control their emotions so they do not over-thinking about the problems.

Besides, a 23-year-old female participant (R02) also stated:

> Maybe when you can control your emotions. I don't think that an adult person can't be angry at all. I mean in term of emotion control, the small matters that are so trivial that one does not get angry. For example, when you lost your stuff in the house and it was gone because of my own mistake, misplace it, but I get angry at people at home. Like I put the blame on others. Though it was my own fault I can't accept it. So, I can't control my emotions. But, if someone capable to control his/her emotions, she knows that the stuff was lost, to get it back she needs to look for it but don't simply get mad. Yes…I think that self-control is the criteria of adult people.

"Though there are many problems she can control her behaviors" – A kind of behavior of an adult. Another self-control which is thought to be important criteria by young people is behavioral control. The behavioral control is typical for an adult in compromise with life problems. This behavioral control is also accompanied by the beneficial effects of such behavior. A 23-year-old female participant (R05) stated:

The behavior in adulthood aspect, for example of my friend, as I said before though there are many problems she can control her behaviors. Usually, all my friends that are under my age change their behaviors when they feel stressed or quarrel with others. For instance, the behavior of the person changes such does not say hello, full of hate and depressed. That's not matured. But for an adult, like my close friend, though she has a lot of problems she is OK. For example, if she's got a serious problem, she thought it was common. Nothing has changed her. She can live her life as usual despite having problems. For example, she was just experiencing the death of her father. Usually, someone who lost his/her family members directly changed his/her behavior such as becoming a silent person and did not say hello to others. But, this friend of mine is really cool. Like a normal situation. She seems familiar to get that kind of problem.

Another 23-year-old female participant (R03) stated:

Like I said just now between fun and program. I tried to invite my friends to join the program [financial management program]. But, they seems to put more important on enjoyment rather than knowledge.

iii.   Role Transitions
"Get married and having family" – In achieving the status of adulthood. The role transitions described by young people also important as a criteria of adulthood though not as important as individualism. In terms of marriage and family, young people especially young male needs to get married and have their own family in order to gain the status of adulthood. They also attribute others' views that marriage and family is an important criteria for young people to achieve adulthood status. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

For someone who has a job, others will say "Ah…one more thing you did not achieve. You need to get married first." It is a culture. Like a must. One must get married to achieve adult status. That's more to the perceptions of society to determine it. That's what I understand.

For me, this adult status is like having a job, family and all of that.

People around me such as people in my village views those who have a family as those who gained their adult status…An adult person must have a job, family and legal responsibilities. He/she can support his/her family financially.

"An adult person must have a job." Employment is one of the criteria of adulthood expressed by young people. They stated that adult people should have at least a job to support their family economically. Therefore, young people are bound to responsible for employment to get financial resources. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

People around me such as people in my village views those who have a family as those who gained their adult status. Those who are no longer under their family's responsibilities. And having their own job…An adult person must have a job, family and legal responsibilities. He can support his family financially.

A 24-year-old female participant (R02) also stated:

I think it is one of [the criteria of adulthood] but not that very important because we still need to explore what we really need to do in our life until we found the suitable one. But, my friend started to work at a younger age than I was. She is working after finish STPM (Malaysian High Education Certificate). But she said that wasn't the field of work she preferred and wasn't the job she wanted to do. But she thinks she needs to work with that job to stabilize her family's economic status, to help her siblings, so she remains with that job even she doesn't like it.

"Finish my study" – A way of achieving adulthood. Finish their study is also characterized as one of the role transitions to achieve the status of adulthood. For young people, finish the study in university is regarded as criteria of adulthood for completed the phase and move to the next phase that is more challenging such as working and get married. Perhaps, finis study is the starting point of adulthood when it comes to responsibilities for self and family. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

I will achieve my adult status when I finish my studies [degree level]. Then I will have a job and my own family, children. I think I will gain adulthood status when I have all of it.

iv. *Family Capacities*

"Sacrifice our own desire and fulfilling what needs to be done for family" – Adulthood responsibilities. Family capacities are somewhat important for young people to achieve adulthood status probably because young people are more prefer individualism and less importance in marriage and family. However, young people also view family capacities as an important criteria of adulthood which is they have the responsibilities over their family especially in helping and supporting the family economically. Young people who sacrifice their own desires and fulfill what needs to be done for a family is seen as an adult. Perhaps this can be seen when young people are able to think matured enough to prioritize the needs of the family rather than his/her own needs. A 24-year-old female participant (R02) stated:

But, my friend started to work at a younger age than I was. She is working after finish STPM (Malaysian High Education Certificate). But she said that wasn't the field of work she preferred and wasn't the job she wanted to do. But she thinks she needs to work with that job to stabilize her family's economic status, to help her siblings. So, she remains with that job even she doesn't like it.

She is willing to sacrifices. For example, she is young and wishes to further study, but she thinks that she has a responsibility with her family and willing to sacrifice her desire to fulfill what she needs for her family instead of fulfilling her own needs. She does what need to be done first.

v. *Social Maturity*

The last criteria of adulthood are social maturity. For young people, to gain adulthood status is not only focusing on self and family but also involve society. Young people are considered as an adult when he/she is able to be part of the community, communicate and socialize as well as contribute ideas in the community especially among the adult community. Perhaps this may be due to their own and others' perceptions that the ability to be part of the community encourages young people to think and behave more mature.

"He has a sense of responsibilities on him" – A community perceptions of adulthood. A communal task within a community is a shared responsibility especially among adults. For adults,

young people who participate in the activities of the community are considered as an adult because they are able to responsible in the community. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

> For me, if you want to work such as communal works in Dusun culture. When they have a communal work, they want to invite everyone. Most of those who came are among adult people and they said "Oh…**he/she** has a sense of responsibilities on him/herself. He/she was able to join our community." So, those who came to the program was considered an adult by the community itself.

The way we communicate with others is also a characteristic of adulthood. For young people, the ability to socialize and communicate with others especially among older people is seen as adulthood. The socialization itself defined as someone has reached adulthood. Perhaps, young people tend to become more mature when socialize and communicate with adults about things that are more adulthood such as one's responsibilities in the community. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

> Perhaps the way we communicate with others is also a characteristic of adulthood. How we socialize with others, especially with people who are older than us. For instance, there are certain people who are matured but less socialize. We expect them as adult people. Actually, his/her way of socialization has not reached adulthood.

"I can contribute my opinions" – A way of adulthood. Other than being part of, socialize and communicate with others in a community, the ability to contribute opinions or ideas in a community also marked as a criteria of adulthood. Young people who can voice out their ideas in their society considered themselves like an adult. This is because young people who can contribute their opinions in the community will be seen as an adult, especially when their opinion is considered by the community. A 28-year-old male participant (R01) stated:

> I can communicate with others where I can contribute my opinions. I can determine what should be done. Which is right and wrong. I can voice out my opinions to people that are older than me such as in a social group. There is a discussion session in my village. So, in my opinion, adulthood is like when you can voice out your ideas, contribute ideas.

Discussion

The current study was intended to explore the EA experiences among young people in Sabah. Firstly, this study revealed that all respondents are ambiguous with their status of adulthood which is they considered themselves as an adult in some ways but not in others. Secondly, a thematic analysis found that the participants' conception regarding the criteria of adulthood could be classified into five major dimensions namely individualism, self-control maturity, role transitions, family capacities, and social maturity.

Specifically, the individualism found to be prominent as the criteria of adulthood among all young people. It is obvious when young people are considering self-decision making, self-responsibility and no longer depend on the family as the criteria of adulthood suggesting the existence of a commonly shared conception of the transition to adulthood among young people in Sabahan culture. This criteria was common in studies of the conception of EA and replicate other studies that endorsing the individualistic criteria was more important than other criteria (see [4, 8, 9, 14]) and contrary to other [11] study. Becoming an adult in local culture might reflecting the meaning of "learning to stand alone" as a self-sufficient individual [4, 5, 6]. Besides, young people in Sabah might prioritize independence criteria including independent decision making,

responsibility for oneself and financial independence, which is more common among young people in developed countries [11].

Besides, the self-control maturity was also an important component in the conception of the transition to adulthood held by the participants in this study. The transitions specified as self-control maturity involve the individual's ability to control him/herself in terms of thought, emotional and behavioral to deal with their life's pressures. This finding is interesting because it is also a commonly shared criteria, which is not proven as important criteria in the previous studies (e.g., [4, 5] for review). However, this finding supports the idea that young people in India value emotional self-control highly as criteria for adulthood [15].

The third important criteria of adulthood perceived by young people are role transitions especially marriage, employment and finish high education. These criteria seems to be important markers of adulthood among Sabahan emerging adult replicating the finding among young Chinese migrant women worker [17]. However, the role transitions such as marriage, parenthood, finish education, employed full-time and settled into career have less significance as markers of adulthood for most young people in other countries such as America [4], Nigeria and Ghana [18], and Greece [11].

In this study, the family capacities perceived as an essential criteria of adulthood. Young people feel that they are responsible for their family by providing financial support. They view the capacities itself such as providing economically for family (parents and siblings) as a characteristic of adulthood. However, this criteria is less in importance among them. There are possibilities that young people in Sabah are more likely to view this criteria as less necessary for adulthood as they tend to be more individualism. This finding is in line with the previous study which indicates that the traditional markers of adulthood – getting married and having child – is the least important criteria among Danes [8]. On the contrary, previous studies found that these criteria are among the top criteria for the transition to adulthood among emerging adults [4, 5, 11, 18].

Lastly, social maturity also considered as the criteria of adulthood. Perhaps, in the views of young Sabahan becoming an adult means having relationships with his/her community by being part of, socialize and communicate, and contribute ideas to the community. Young people perceived themselves as an adult if they were able to be a part of, socialize and contribute ideas in a community especially among older people. However, this expectation is accompanied by society's expectations such as the acceptance of young people as an adult in the community. The older people expect young people to behave in the way acceptable to society. Social maturity refers to the behaviors that conform to the standards and expectations of the adults and the behaviors that are appropriate to the age of the individual under observation [39]. Social maturity also refers to attain maturity in a social relationship which is the process of appropriate attitudes for personal, interpersonal and social adequacies of an individual which are essential for functioning effectively in the society [40]. Yet, social maturation allows more detailed perception of the social environment which facilitate young people to influence the social circumstances and develop stable patterns of social behavior [39].

Limitations of the current study are explained by the preliminary study itself. Thus, the use of interview method using open-ended questions is in a basic protocol that needs (or maybe not) to be modified and adapted for future study. This study also used a small sample size which involved only five (1 male and 4 female) participants identified as Dusun and Bajau. All participants were selected from a university and geographically among the Sabahan students. Yet, this study was objectified to explore the EA experiences among the Sabahan young people.

Based on the limitations discussed above, it is suggested that future studies regarding this issue, particularly in Malaysia, should consider a representative sample from a wide perspective focusing on both urban and rural young people with variations of age between 18 and 29-year-old. It is also important for further studies to comprehensively consider other aspects of EA such as the factors that influence the delay in achieving adulthood. Previous studies noted that the conception of adulthood among young people is influenced by their cultures [5]. Therefore, further qualitative

study needs to look into the cultural-related factors that might influence the conception of adulthood among local young people such as socioeconomic status (SES), ethnic groups and spirituality/religiosity. Besides, that future research may apply other quantitative methods such as survey method using a questionnaire to explain better about this field of development.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study support the idea that the conceptions of adulthood among young people from different cultures share some similarities and differences in some ways. Based on the results, this information is useful as a basis to guide local researchers for further study in EA research. Besides, the development of the research is beneficial for policy modifications.

Acknowledgment

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