Drink, party, and travel while I'm young: Undergraduates' attitudes on risks to take before adulthood

This presentation will examine the attitudes of undergraduates on risks they are willing to take now because they feel they will not be able to take them later as adults. The study is based on literature on emerging adulthood as a unique developmental period of life, typified by frequent change and exploration (Arnett, 1998; Rindfuss, 1991). A convenience sample of 250 undergraduates from the University of Missouri Columbia completed a survey created by the researchers. Participants were asked, on a 5-point Likert item to indicate “How often do you do or try something because you think you won’t be able to do it later on when you settle down as an adult?” They were also asked in an open-ended question to list those things. In analysis, the researchers developed a set of thematic categories that best fit the undergraduates’ responses. Among the most often cited behavior categories were drinking, partying and traveling. The data presented will include the frequencies and rankings of the most common responses. Comparisons across subgroups of gender and age will also be presented. Results will be useful in better understanding the types of risks undergraduates take because they feel they will not be able to do so as adults.

This project was completed to fulfill a Capstone requirement.