

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FAMILY RITUALS IN EMERGING ADULTS: LINKS TO COPING, LIFE SATISFACTION,
FAMILY CLIMATE, AND FUTURE RITUAL INITIATION

by

Melody McCormick

A thesis

Presented to the faculty of

Towson University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Arts in Experimental Psychology

Department of Psychology

Towson University

Towson, Maryland 21252

May, 2015

APPROVAL PAGE

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Melody McCormick entitled Family Rituals in Emerging Adults: Links to Coping, Life Satisfaction, Family Climate and Future Ritual Initiation has been approved by the thesis committee as satisfactorily completing the thesis requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Experimental Psychology.


Chairperson, Thesis Committee Signature Type Name

4-27-15
Date


Committee Member Signature Type Name

4-27-15
Date


Committee Member Signature Type Name

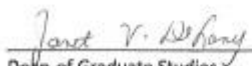
4-27-15
Date

Committee Member Signature Type Name

Date

Committee Member Signature Type Name

Date


Dean of Graduate Studies Type Name

5-8-15
Date

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been as smooth and successful without the support of many people. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jonathan Mattanah, for his continued help all along the way; he has served as a wonderful advisor and someone I feel I can really look up to. Next, I would like to thank the remainder of my thesis committee, Dr. Justin Buckingham and Dr. Kim Shifren; I appreciate your constructive feedback and interest in my topic. Additionally, I would like to thank my fantastic group of research assistants, Diamond Johnson, Aaron Jones, Christine Klapka, Natalie Krenz and Yelena Salkowitz. You have been so helpful and professional all along the way, helping with data collection and data coding. I couldn't have done it without you. Thirdly, I would like to thank my incredible fiancé, Mark Smith, for supporting me through these last two crazy years and being so understanding and sweet through it all. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for cheering me on through all of my milestones and being there for me when things got hard and overwhelming. I love you so much and I am grateful for you both.

Abstract

FAMILY RITUALS IN EMERGING ADULTS: LINKS TO COPING, LIFE SATISFACTION, FAMILY CLIMATE, AND FUTURE RITUAL INITIATION

Melody McCormick

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between family rituals and a number of adjustment outcomes, and to determine whether family climate would moderate this relationship. Survey measures, focusing on life satisfaction, coping mechanisms, aspects of family rituals and family cohesion/adaptability, were completed by participants to collect this information. An interview was also developed to glean information about specific family rituals. A sample of 100 participants with a mean age of 19.46 years old was included in the final analyses. The interviews were coded into quantitative subscales and correlations and multiple regression analyses were performed to test the relationships between the various measures. The results indicated that there is a positive relationship between family rituals and adjustment outcomes specific to this study and this relationship was moderated by family cohesion. Discussion focuses on the implications of these findings for the importance of rituals within the family.

Keywords: family rituals, positive adjustment, future ritual initiation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
The Importance of Family Rituals to Patterned Family Life.....	4
Links between Family Rituals and Psychosocial Adjustment in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood.....	8
The Present Study.....	17
3. METHOD.....	18
Participants.....	18
Procedure.....	18
Measures.....	19
4. RESULTS.....	24
Correlations between Family Ritual Meaning and Quality, and Satisfaction with Life, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation.....	24
Family Climate as a Moderator of Family Ritual Meaning and Quality and Life Satisfaction, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation.....	24
Multiple Regression Examining Incremental Effects of Family Rituals after Controlling for Family Climate.....	26
5. DISCUSSION.....	28
Review of Findings.....	28
Limitations.....	31
Future Directions and Conclusions.....	32
APPENDICES.....	34
APPENDIX A: LIST OF TABLES.....	35
APPENDIX B: LIST OF FIGURES.....	39
APPENDIX C: FAMILY RITUALS INTERVIEW.....	44
APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	49
APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM.....	50

REFERENCES.....	52
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	55

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Correlations between Family Ritual Meaning and Quality, and Satisfaction with Life, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation.....	36
Table 2	Hierarchical Regression Analyses Examining Adjustment Outcomes as Predicted by Family Cohesion, Adaptability, Ritual Meaning, and Ritual Quality.....	37

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Satisfaction with Life.....	40
Figure 2	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Positive Coping.....	41
Figure 3	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Future Initiation of Rituals.....	42
Figure 4	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Future Initiation of Rituals.....	43

1.

INTRODUCTION

Family rituals are an important aspect of family life, as they provide a sense of belongingness and closeness within the unit and a feeling of family identity. Emerging adulthood, including individuals between the ages of 18-29, is an important time period in which to study family rituals, as this is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2007), when the meaning and purpose of these rituals are questioned in regard to starting new families. Additionally, it is important to determine whether emerging adults consider family rituals influential on their health and well-being. Therefore, the goal of the current study is to look at the impact of family rituals on emerging adult coping and satisfaction with life and to examine those factors that influence the transmission of ritual behavior from one generation to the next. These goals and the rationale for studying them are reviewed below.

According to Wolin and Bennett (1984), family rituals, such as vacations, holidays and family dinners, are those interactions between family members that facilitate bonding and a sense of family identity and meaningfulness. They have been classified as “a symbolic form of communication that is acted out in a systematic fashion over time” (p. 401). Rituals have also been defined as family-centered, frequent, interactive and emotional components of family life. This construct was originally studied within the context of families with an alcoholic family member and ritual transmission was determined by the level of ritual protection and consistency that was implemented to keep the children resilient. Disruption of family rituals can lead to a loss of identity within the family and the loss of a healthy family unit. Participation in rituals can signify bonds and relationships within the group, providing a learning experience for individuals, whether they are participating or observing.

Researchers have examined a number of components of family rituals, which can vary from family to family, and which can enhance or detract from the meaningfulness of rituals to family life. Family rituals can be characterized by an emotional component, where family members enjoy the time spent together and want to relive those experiences every time that celebration comes around again. For example, an annual family vacation or reunion may hold meaning for a particular family, and therefore each family member is looking forward to the next year so that they can relive that experience. Communication is another component that is regarded as an important aspect of family rituals. Effective communication leads to the emergence of a safe environment for each member to express their opinions and symbolic communication gives meaning to rituals, such as including specific items in different celebrations that will always be there. Third, stabilization is the family's way of staying consistent in their rituals, even as developmental changes are occurring. There is a balance between those types of rituals that are always the same, and those that have room for change.

A final component of family rituals that makes way for future implementation and a sense of belongingness and cohesion is the level of commitment the family feels toward enacting them. Those families expressing high commitment show more use of references to the past regarding their current rituals, the rituals are made sure to be taught to the younger generation so they can be passed on, and the family demonstrates adaptability in the implementation of rituals according to developmental changes in different family members. There is a better chance of transmission of family rituals in this case, as each member finds enjoyment and meaning in participation. Families exhibiting low commitment to rituals show less of a need to look to the past to influence present rituals, less symbolic meaning is attributed to the enacted rituals, and stressors or changes can cause family rituals to dissolve, since they weren't very strong to begin

with. In this case, rituals can become more routinized, leading to less enjoyment and transmission to the next generation.

2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Family Rituals to Patterned Family Life

There have been a number of studies focused on the importance of family rituals in daily life, as they can give families a sense of closeness and identity that can help them to be resilient in the face of stressors. Many studies have used the recently adapted Family Rituals Questionnaire (Fiese and Kline, 2007) to assess the frequency and presence of family rituals. Other studies have also used narrative techniques to search for the meaningfulness of family rituals and the likelihood that they will be implemented as new families are created. According to Wolin and Bennett (1984), there are three types of rituals: family celebrations, family traditions, and patterned family interactions. These are referenced throughout family ritual research. Family celebrations are general annual celebrations, such as holidays and marriages that are socially accepted, family traditions are repeated within the family, such as family vacations and gatherings, and patterned family interactions are activities that allow for family discussion, such as eating dinner together.

To start, Smit (2011) focused on the maintenance and symbolic meaning of family rituals. She distinguished family routines from family rituals by stating that “routines are repetitive tasks that are performed daily, while rituals are symbolic in that family interactions are needed to perform them” (p. 355). Family rituals are meaningful in that they create solidarity and allow for successful intergenerational transmission of traditions and rituals to new families. Family rituals are important for those large events, such as births and funerals, and even those repeated activities that are associated with the family unit, such as dinnertime conversations. In

her study, Smit (2011) looked at young adults' perceptions of these rituals and family memories, while predicting that there is less young adult participation in family rituals and more participation in activities within their peer group, in comparison to older adults. She wanted to see what types of rituals young adults are a part of and what symbolic meaning they hold for these interactions. A sample of 40 college students was recruited for this study. They were asked to complete open-ended questionnaires asking for detailed accounts of the family rituals they participate in, the symbolic meaning they give to those rituals, and whether these rituals were considered to be important to them.

The results indicated that most of the respondents reported taking part in different family rituals that were easily categorized into either family celebrations, family traditions, or patterned family interactions (Smit, 2011). There are both family memories that are passed down through generations and those that are unique to the family of origin. It was found that stronger rituals make way for future implementation and that these rituals allowed for busy families to keep in touch with extended family and friends through holidays and family gatherings. Rituals bind family members together with positive emotion bonds and allow for resilience through good and bad times as a reminder of family support.

An overall theme of positive meaning was associated with the reported rituals, having a positive impact on participants' lives as individuals and as family units. Though Wolin and Bennett's (1984) categories were typically followed, patterned family interactions were found to be more symbolic in the participant's reports. It was concluded that family rituals and memories can be helpful in keeping family members connected, and that they provide a meaningful and emotional bond between parents and their children. Family heritage is brought forth to continue through the generations, connecting the past, present and future of these families. The

implementation of family rituals allow for a strong sense of family memory and a higher likelihood of the maintenance of family rituals in the future.

In a study concerning young adult's attitudes toward the future implementation of family rituals, Friedman and Weissbrod (2004) wanted to examine the meaning of family rituals to emerging adults individually, rather than as part of their family sample. They predicted that women would be more likely than men to initiate rituals and that other gender related variables, such as openness to others and initiation by a same sex parent, would contribute to this gender difference. Specific variables that were tested included various instrumental and expressive personality traits, such as communion, or openness to others, and agency, or self-assertion. Same sex parents may teach rituals by example and children of the same sex may model their behavior. The quantity and quality of the parent's initiation is also thought to be a contributing factor, as rigid implementation can lead to less meaningful rituals and more resentment toward the family, while caring family behavior would show the opposite effects, meaning that low intrusiveness and high cohesiveness would lead to more ritual initiation. A sample of 95 undergraduates were recruited to participate in this study and they filled out a number of questionnaires, including the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, measuring agency and communion with stereotypically male, female, and mixed items, and the Parental Bonding Instrument, measuring care and overprotection in parental behavior toward the child. They also used the Family Rituals Questionnaire to measure dimensions of family rituals across different settings and the quality of family interactions during these times. Finally, they were asked how responsible their mothers and fathers were for the initiation of family rituals (planning, getting others involved) and how likely they think they would be to take responsibility for implementing family rituals in the future.

The results indicated that men were less likely to personally initiate rituals, though there were no differences in meaningfulness between genders. Parental care was also a significant predictor of ritual meaningfulness, as those with married parents saw more cross-parent responsibility for initiation and more caring, and in these cases there were no differences in meaningfulness or likelihood of initiation. There were similar levels of meaningfulness for both males and females, though women saw more responsibility based on their same sex parent's responsibility. It was therefore concluded that direct observation of who is in charge, for example the mother, may give the air of initiation, though it could be beneficial to know how the participants approached their reasons for parent initiation. The finding of parental care as a strong predictor may also relate to the idea that caring parents may not implement rigid ritualization because they adapt to the needs of different family members. Finally, the researchers suggested that there could be more differences in attitudes toward the continuation of family rituals between genders, and it would be important to continue looking for these differences in the future.

It is important to consider the fact that maintenance of family rituals from one generation to the next may currently be at risk, with the rise in social media use, less face to face interaction, and society's influence on changing interests. According to Schneiderman and Barerra (2009), family tradition transmission is at risk, not only because of divorce, but from failing to transmit traditions from one generation to the next, when traditions are usually taught to a family's children's children. They emphasized an example of this risk, which is the loss of family business ownership over time because of different interests and various outside influences. Over time, the families become more spread out and less centered on generational transmission. It is important to maintain family traditions between generations, since a family unit can provide

stability and order to its individual family members and an environment that is a safe place for problems to be sorted through. Trauma from past generations may also influence future generations and this is when resilience is important in forming a stronger family structure to band together in the face of stressors. The authors also underscored the influence of authoritative parenting on the resiliency of the family unit; when there is a closer family structure, there is a better chance of family acceptance of values and traditions and healthier intergenerational transmission. Failure to transmit traditions between generations can be linked back to conflict within the family and the inability to transmit the values and beliefs that were intended to be passed on. Therefore, family communication is important when sorting through conflicts and stressors, as well as the need for adaptability to new societal changes in the modern world.

Links between Family Rituals and Psychosocial Adjustment in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

Throughout the family ritual literature, there has been a general consensus that consistent and meaningful involvement in rituals is associated with adaptive child behavior outcomes and well-being. Researchers have suggested that family rituals provide a place for safe and open expression of emotion, which, in turn is linked to positive adjustment. An aim of the current study is to explore the relationship between the importance of family rituals and adolescent and emerging adult development and psychosocial adjustment. I review a number of studies below that have looked at this relationship among families with clinical and non-clinical children, as well as exploring possible mediators of the relationship between ritual involvement and adolescent development.

A study was conducted by Kiser, Bennett, Heston and Paavola (2005) in which family rituals were studied in relation to adolescent well-being between a clinical (exhibiting behavioral

disturbances) and non-clinical sample of parent-child pairs. They expressed the idea that deliberateness is an important aspect of the maintenance of family rituals, in that parents plan the rituals they want to enact within their families and then carry out those rituals when the time comes. If everyone is involved in the enactment of family rituals, with an adaptability to change and disruptions, there should be a healthy level of connectedness among family members, and therefore a greater sense of well-being among the younger generation. The authors therefore hypothesized that there would be differences in the impact of family rituals between families with clinical and non-clinical adolescents, that specific aspects of family rituals would be connected to adolescent behavior problems, and that family ritual functioning, such as parenting practices and positive affect, would also be connected to adolescent behavior problems. A sample of 42 families was recruited to participate, with a split of 21 clinical families and 21 non-clinical families, with children ranging from 11 to 18 years of age. Clinical families were identified as having a child that expressed behavioral disturbances that affected family functioning. The participants were administered questionnaires concerned with child and family functioning, including the Child Behavior Checklist and the Youth Self Report, measuring for behavior problems, and the Family Environment Scale, measuring for dimension of family life, including relationships, personal growth, and system maintenance. Family ritual data was collected from both the adolescents and parents through the Family Ritual Interview, which measured for religious activities, storytelling, a deliberateness in ritual planning, people resources (reaching out to others in times of stress), and detailed routine and ritual descriptions.

The results indicated that there were clear differences between the two samples regarding problem behaviors, with more instances and concern coming from the clinical sample. Differences between the two samples were also found based on family ritual functioning and the

people resources subscale. Correlations were found between rituality and problem behaviors among the clinical sample, along with the people resources subscale. Therefore, people resources and family rituals have a connection with behavior problems beyond family functioning in that more people resources and family ritual implementation could eventually be correlated with less behavioral problems. The results contribute to existing research linking routine and meaning to family rituals in regard to protective factors relating to healthy family functioning. The additional component of people resources show that the implementation of a support system, both within the family of origin and outside, can contribute to the strengthening of coping and resiliency factors in the face of behavior problems. Repeated family interactions make way for meaningful and important family rituals that can support healthy well-being for members and extended family can provide additional support for family members during stressful times. The authors suggested that family problem solving is also an important aspect of family rituals in that a supportive environment is being provided for family members to work together to overcome disruptions in daily rituals and family functioning. Therefore, understanding the different aspects of family rituals can help sort out the protective elements that can help strengthen connectedness and adaptability among family members.

Additionally, Santos, Crespo, Silva and Canavarro (2012) conducted a study that focused on the connections between family ritual meaning, cohesion, conflict, health-related quality of life and emotional and behavioral problems of youths with asthma. Family rituals can serve as protective factors that may apply to different outcomes and a positive family environment can provide stability and security, leading to better social skills, self-esteem and a sense of belonging and well-being in youths living with chronic illness. Low family cohesion can lead to more behavioral and emotional problems and more family conflict, which can ultimately lead to more

exacerbated symptoms. Therefore, a mediational model was used to test the hypothesis that family rituals' contribution to well-being and adjustment may be mediated through a positive family environment and that more predictability through rituals can lead to a greater sense of security and cohesion and less conflict. Family rituals were therefore predicted to be linked to higher cohesion and lower conflict, leading to better health-related quality of life and fewer adjustment issues concerning emotions and behavior. A sample of 149 Portuguese children and adolescents diagnosed with varying degrees of asthma severity were recruited for this study and a number of questionnaires were administered to each participant. Family ritual meaning was measured by the dinnertime and annual celebrations subscales of the Family Rituals Questionnaire, cohesion and conflict were measured using the cohesion and conflict subscales of the Family Environment Scale, and health-related quality of life was measured using the DISABKIDS Chronic Generic Model, assessing the effects of their condition on their lives. Health-related quality of life in general was measured using the KIDSCREEN-10, focusing on information from their last week about their emotions and abilities, emotional and behavioral problems were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which helped to assess general psychopathology, and asthma severity was measured using the Global Initiative for Asthma Program guidelines, characterizing the participants as either suffering from intermittent or persistent asthma.

The results indicated that ritual meaning was positively correlated with cohesion and quality of life and negatively correlated with conflict and emotional and behavioral problems. Cohesion was positively correlated with quality of life and negatively associated with emotional and behavioral problems, and conflict was negatively correlated with quality of life and positively correlated with behavioral and emotional problems. Asthma severity was negatively

correlated with quality of life and positively correlated with behavioral and emotional problems. Using cohesion and conflict as mediators, it was found that these variables mediated the relationship between ritual meaning and quality of life, ritual meaning and behavioral and emotional problems, and conflict was linked to quality of life via family ritual meaning. Santos et al. (2012) therefore concluded that when young people see more frequent and symbolic rituals being carried out within their family, they also perceive their family as more cohesive and report less family conflict. Rituals contribute to a sense of belonging, support and positive interactions, as these interactions are a time to sort through problems and work together. Ritual meaning was associated with improved health-related quality of life, meaning support and organization within the family can support a healthy adaptation to chronic illness, as rituals promote stability and security in the face of unpredictable symptoms. Cohesion within these families also acts as a protective factor for individuals with chronic illness, as this environment led to better quality of life and psychological adjustment. Therefore, family rituals have the potential to become an important aspect of interventions with young people dealing with chronic illness, as a stronger family environment can help young people with chronic illness to better cope with the stressors related to their symptoms.

Furthermore, Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor and Jose (2011) focused their study on the relationship between family rituals and adolescent well-being, using family cohesion as a mediator variable. Family rituals can lead to healthy development if they are meaningful and symbolic. Family cohesion can help to mediate this relationship through the maintenance of family bonds, which has been found to lower stress and behavioral problems in adolescents and strengthen relationships outside of the family of origin. The authors therefore hypothesized that family ritual meaning would predict adolescent well-being and that family cohesion would

mediate this relationship. A longitudinal study was conducted with data collection from both parents and adolescents to search for a bidirectional link between family ritual meaning and cohesion for both the parents and the adolescents. They also predicted that adolescent's perceptions of cohesion would influence their parent's ratings of family ritual meaning and that parent perceptions of family ritual meaning and cohesion would predict adolescent well-being. A sample of 713 parent-adolescent pairs was recruited for this study, consisting mostly of mothers. The Family Rituals Questionnaire was used to assess family ritual meaning, focusing on the dinnertime and annual celebrations subscales, family cohesion was measured using an adapted version of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale to focus on family connectedness, and the Ryff Well-being Scales were used to assess adolescent's well-being, aspirations, confidence and relations with others.

The results were analyzed using correlations and a multistep mediational model and it was found that there was high parent stability over time for cohesion and ritual meaning and also high stability for adolescents over time concerning cohesion and well-being. Family ritual meaning was found to predict family cohesion and vice versa, supporting the hypothesis of a bidirectional link between the two constructs. Parent perceptions of family ritual meaning and cohesion did not successfully predict adolescent well-being, but well-being was predicted by family cohesion perceptions by the adolescents themselves. The mediational model for cohesion found indirect effects of family ritual meaning on well-being, where family ritual meaning had an effect on family cohesion, and family cohesion, in turn, was associated with adolescent well-being. Regarding gender differences, parent cohesion to adolescent cohesion perceptions were found to be higher for girls, meaning that girls may be more influence by their parents and pay more attention to their views.

Additionally, a study was conducted by Eaker and Walters (2002) in which psychosocial development, or the formation of a sense of self in relation to others, was studied in relation to adolescent satisfaction with family rituals. The researchers outlined the importance of considering the perceptions of individual family members along with the whole family unit when exploring family ritual meaning. They also looked at family boundaries in relation to rituals, as they are helpful in the healthy development of autonomy and connectedness. Measures of cohesion (help and support) and intrusiveness (dependency and lack of differentiation) were used to explore the concept of family boundaries, as more cohesion and less intrusiveness make for more positive ritual experiences. The authors therefore hypothesized that adolescent discontentedness within the family would be negatively related to ritual satisfaction and appropriate family boundaries, and that appropriate family boundaries would be positively related to ritual satisfaction. The researchers also predicted that boundaries would mediate the relationship between discontentedness and ritual satisfaction and would be positively related to psychosocial development and ritual satisfaction. Finally, they predicted that rituals satisfaction would mediate the relationship between boundaries and psychosocial development. A sample of 159 late adolescent women were recruited for this study, and they filled out a number of questionnaires. The Adolescent Satisfaction in Family Rituals Scale was used to measure for personal experiences concerning holidays or routine events, and the Family Intrusiveness scale was the first scale used to measure for family boundary appropriateness, followed by the Cohesion subscale of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale II, which measured the degree of separateness or connectedness between family members. Discontentedness was measured using the neuroticism (anxiety and self-conscious) domain of the International Personality Item Pool, and psychosocial development was measured using the individual adequacy dimension of

the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory, which looked at aspects of self-reliance, identity and work orientation, among others.

The results indicated that discontentedness was negatively related to ritual satisfaction, as negative affect led to less satisfying rituals. Discontentedness was also positively related to family boundaries, meaning there were lower levels of cohesiveness and higher levels of intrusiveness within these families. Family boundaries that were high in cohesiveness and low in intrusiveness were found to be positively related to ritual satisfaction, and family boundaries also mediated the relationship between discontentedness and ritual satisfaction. Finally, psychosocial maturity was negatively related to inappropriate boundaries and positively related to ritual satisfaction. Eaker and Walters (2002) therefore concluded that individual perceptions of family rituals are different from family effects, as they provide insight into the idea that psychosocial maturity thrives when there is connectedness, but not too much intrusiveness within the family and makes for more family ritual satisfaction. Positive interactions between family members through rituals stimulates appropriate boundaries between family members and a family's adaptability to the developmental changes of adolescent members makes for more ritual satisfaction and psychosocial maturity than in those families exhibiting high control and intrusiveness, which are more rigid in their rituals and less accepting to change. Family rituals are one of the many complex interactions that families have, therefore it is important to consider variables such as family boundaries and psychosocial development when enacting and planning new rituals within an ever-changing family structure.

The overall family climate may be an important variable to consider when exploring the effects of family rituals on emerging adult development. Family climate can be described as the levels of warmth, belongingness and cohesion found within a family that help to facilitate

positive relationships and healthy communication. As indicated above, a number of studies have examined family climate an important mediator of the effects of family rituals on adolescent development. Although this makes sense, a goal of the current study was to further explore the role of family climate as a potential moderator of the relationship between family rituals and emerging adult coping, life satisfaction, and future ritual implementation. In this way, we could focus on the different levels of family climate as they influence the strength of this relationship, rather than the idea that family climate explains this relationship. We hypothesized that students who experience their family rituals in the context of high family cohesion would be more likely to engage in the future and find those rituals helpful for their overall development than students who experience family ritualizing in the context of less overall family cohesion.

The current study was developed in order to advance previous research that has been done on the importance of family rituals to emerging adult development. Specifically, previous researchers have noted that future research would benefit from larger samples, a comparison of the responses of those emerging adults who have left home with those who still reside at their family home, a more in-depth look at emerging adult's perceptions of future ritual initiation, more cultural and ethnic representation, a more specific focus on the factors contributing to both sides of ritual transmission, and the relationship of emotion regulation between the family and the individuals within it. The overall goal of the present study was to address a number of these limitations by providing an in-depth examination of emerging adults' perceptions of the rituals they have grown up with. A semi-structured interview was used to glean a sense of meaning and importance of family rituals to the lives of emerging adults. Additionally, survey methodology was used to attempt to link these perceptions of ritual importance to overall coping and life satisfaction, as well as future ritual initiation.

The Present Study

The present study aimed to test three hypotheses concerning the effects of family rituals on emerging adult's current and future perceptions. The first hypothesis was that more instances of meaningful and rich family rituals would predict a greater likelihood of the implementation of these rituals in the future. The second hypothesis was that more instances and richness of family rituals would predict greater life satisfaction and better coping skills in response to stress. The third hypothesis was that more instances and richness of ritualization would predict a greater sense of cohesion and adaptability within the family of origin. We also hoped that family climate would serve as a moderator of the relationship between family ritualization, coping, life satisfaction and the likelihood of future ritual implementation. Overall, it was predicted that measuring all of these constructs together within an emerging adult sample would provide greater insight into the effects of family rituals on future implementation and general stability in a crucial developmental stage.

3.

METHOD

Participants

An original sample of 103 participants was collected, but because of missing data, a sample of 100 participants was used in the final analyses for the current study. The sample was composed of 94 females and 6 males with a mean age of 19.46 years old, representative of an emerging adult sample. The ethnic breakdown of the participants included 66.6% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, 19.2% African American, 5.1% Asian, 1% Native American and 4% Other (mixed, Arab and Indian). The participants were recruited through Towson's researchpool website and they were required to be at least 18 years of age. The ideal emerging adult age range is from 18-29 (Arnett, 2007), though two participants were outside of the emerging adult age group, aged 32 and 36.

Procedure

When the participants arrived at the lab, they were greeted by either the Principal Investigator or a research assistant. They were given an informed consent form outlining the purpose and expectations of the study and their participation, which told them that they would be there for an hour to participate in a family rituals interview and they were to complete a number of questionnaires measuring family ritual frequency and meaning, coping skills, life satisfaction, family climate, and ideas about emerging adulthood. Then the participants were interviewed to collect qualitative data about two specific instances of family rituals within their life, with a focus on the meaning behind them, enjoyable or hollow aspects, and whether they felt they would implement these rituals in the future, among other variables. The interviews were audio recorded and a team of research assistants coded them at a later time. After the interview, the

participants completed a series of questionnaires covering life satisfaction, perceptions of emerging adulthood, family rituals and future implementation, coping strategies and family climate. The questionnaires were completed through a secure survey website, SurveyMonkey.com, and the participants were assigned a number at the beginning of the study to ensure their confidentiality throughout. After they completed the questionnaires, the participants were given a debriefing form and had the opportunity to ask any questions or express any concerns they may have had about the study. The participants were then released and received credit for their participation and time. Two individual participated during each slot, therefore the order of the activities were counterbalanced between the participants, with one starting with the interview and finishing with the questionnaire, and vice versa.

Measures

Family Rituals. The frequency, perceptions and meaning behind family rituals were assessed using two methods of measurement, the Family Rituals Questionnaire and the Family Rituals Interview, which was developed for the current study. The Family Rituals Questionnaire (Fiese & Kline, 2007) asks about the different types of rituals that participants took part in during their childhood and adolescence based on different categories, such as dinnertime, yearly celebrations, and cultural and ethnic traditions. This questionnaire also looks at the level of enjoyment and meaningfulness found in the past and present, and whether they will engage in these rituals in the future. The family rituals section consists of 56 questions on a 3 point rating scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 3 (*very true*), and the enjoyment and meaningfulness section consists of 35 questions on a 5 point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Some example questions from this measure include “In our family, dinner time was pretty much the same over the years” and “In our family, special celebrations had deep meaning for the family”. The

Cronbach alpha in previous uses of this measure ranged from .71 to .92 across the various subscales. The current study used a summary variable of overall Family Ritual Meaning, averaging across respondent's scores for the subscales of affect, symbolic significance, attendance and deliberateness, along with past and present ritual meaning and enjoyment. This summary variable showed good internal consistency in our sample, $\alpha = .76$.

The Family Rituals Interview was adapted for the current study and was inspired by Pratt, Norris, Hebblethwaite, and Arnold's (2008) narrative measure of family values; this measure focused on many of the same coding aspects that will be addressed in the Family Rituals Interview, but asked participants to reflect on a value teaching story, rather than a family ritual experience. That being said, the interview focused on the qualitative side of family rituals, allowing for the participant to elaborate on specific rituals that they found to be meaningful and helpful to their development. The interviewer asked the participant to describe two specific instances of family rituals and used a number of follow up questions to gather more details about different elements of these rituals such as the enjoyment, consistency, anticipation, and family involvement associated with the interactions the participants described (see Appendix C). An example follow up question is "Do you feel like these rituals bring you family closer together? Why or why not?"

The questions and narratives were coded on Likert scales by a small group of research assistants, and covered elements such as family closeness, change over time, and future initiation. Each research assistant, including myself, was given a subsection of the interviews to code, approximately seventeen each. No double coding was completed for any of the interviews, aside from two practice interviews that were checked for consistency across coders. In order to simplify data analysis, I created a summary variable for the Family Rituals Interview that

summed across the anticipation, consistency, enjoyment, reliance, and closeness subscales. This summary variable captured the overall quality of family rituals as reported by the participants and showed good internal consistency, $\alpha = .71$.

Coping/Resiliency. Coping and resiliency skills were measured using the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985). Participants are asked to think about a stressful situation and then answer each question based on how they would deal and what strategies they would use within that situation. This measure assessed eight subscales associated with the different ways of coping with a stressful situation. These subscales included confrontive coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planned problem solving and positive reappraisal. The scale consists of 65 questions rated on a 4 point scale from 0 (*does not apply or not used*) to 3 (*used a great deal*). Some example questions from this measure include “I went on as if nothing had happened” “I kept others from knowing how bad things were” and “I wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with”. Examples of the types of coping measured in this scale includes confrontational coping, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, and planned problem solving. The original Cronbach alpha for this measure ranged from .70 to .88. Additionally, the Ways of Coping subscales were all highly inter-correlated, with the exception of one subscale, seeking social support. Therefore, we combined the subscales into a Positive Coping summary variable and included this in the analyses, rather than the eight subscales separately. The Cronbach alpha for this reduced summary variable was .77.

Life Satisfaction. Satisfaction with life was measured using Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin’s (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). This is a global scale, rather than a measure of positive or negative affect and consists of five items rated on a 7 point scale from 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). An example question from this measure is “The conditions of my life are excellent”. The original Cronbach alpha reported for this measure was .85. The Cronbach alpha reported for the current study was .87.

Family Climate. Family climate was measured using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III (FACES III), which was updated by Olson, Portner and Lavee (1985, 1986) and measures perceptions of adaptability level (chaotic, flexible, structured, or rigid) and cohesion level (disengaged, separated, connected, or enmeshed) within the family of origin. The scale consists of 40 items asking the participant to describe their family now and to describe their ideal family, with 20 items focused on cohesion and 20 focused on adaptability. For the purpose of the present study, only the first 20 items concerning current family descriptions were used. These items are on a 5-point rating scale from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). Some example questions from this measure include “When our family gets together for activities, everyone is present” (cohesion) “Our family changes its way of handling tasks” (adaptability) and “Family members feel very close to each other” (cohesion). The original Cronbach alphas for this measure were .78 for adaptability and .81 for cohesion. The Cronbach alphas reported for the current study were .75 for adaptability and .85 for cohesion.

Ideas about Emerging Adulthood. Perceptions of emerging adulthood was measured using the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (Reifman, Arnett & Colwell, 2007). This measure focuses on emerging adulthood as a specific time in a participant’s life and is focused on six subscales including identity exploration, experimentation, instability, other-focused, self-focused, and feeling in-between. The scale is comprised of 31 items rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Some example questions from this measure include “Is this period of your life a time of independence?” and “Is this period of your life a

time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?” The original Cronbach alpha for this measure ranged from .70 to .85. The Cronbach alpha reported for the current study was .72 and .87 across the subscales.

4.

RESULTS

Correlations between Family Ritual Meaning and Quality, and Satisfaction with Life, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation

Table 1 represents the correlations between family ritual meaning, family ritual quality, satisfaction with life, positive coping, future ritual initiation and perceptions of emerging adulthood. According to Table 1, participants reported that family ritual quality, but not family ritual meaning, was related to their happiness. The opposite relationship was found for positive coping, where family ritual meaning, but not family ritual quality, was related to positive coping in response to stress. Additionally, both family ritual meaning and family ritual quality predicted participant's reports of likelihood of future ritual initiation, as reported on both the questionnaire and interview measures. Among the dimensions of emerging adult perceptions, only self-focus was related to family ritual quality.

Family Climate as a Moderator of Family Ritual Meaning and Quality and Life Satisfaction, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation

Family climate (family cohesion) was examined as a moderator between family ritual meaning and quality, and the positive outcomes included in our previous analyses. In a multiple regression procedure, we examined the family ritual quality variable and the cohesion variable as predictors of satisfaction with life, followed by the interaction of these two variables. Cohesion was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual quality and satisfaction with life, Change $R^2=.04$, $F(1,96)=5.64$, $p<.05$. As can be seen in Figure 1, this moderator effect indicated a significant effect of family ritual quality on satisfaction with life when participants reported high levels of cohesion within their family, but no relation between

family ritual quality and satisfaction for those low in family cohesion. Cohesion was not found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual meaning and satisfaction with life.

For positive coping, the same stepping procedure was used, substituting satisfaction with life with positive coping. Cohesion was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual meaning and positive coping, Change $R^2=.04$, $F(1,96)=5.00$, $p<.05$. As can be seen in Figure 2 and similar to above, this moderator effect indicated a significant effect of family ritual meaning on positive coping when participants reported high levels of cohesion within their family, but no relation between family ritual meaning and positive coping for those low in family cohesion. Cohesion was not found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual quality and positive coping.

Concerning future ritual initiation, the same stepping procedure was used, substituting positive coping with the interview-based future initiation variable and then the questionnaire-based future initiation variable. For the interview variable, cohesion was not found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual quality or family ritual meaning and future ritual initiation. Regarding the questionnaire measure, cohesion was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual meaning and future ritual initiation, Change $R^2=.05$, $F(1,95)=6.91$, $p<.05$, as well as a significant moderator of the relationship between family ritual quality and future ritual initiation, Change $R^2=.08$, $F(1,95)=12.44$, $p<.05$. As can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, though this moderator was significant for the questionnaire measure of family rituals, the model suggests that students lower in cohesion reported a stronger association between family ritual meaning and quality and future

initiation of rituals, rather than high levels of cohesion, a result opposite to what was hypothesized. Therefore, this finding should be approached with caution and explored further.

Multiple Regression Examining Incremental Effects of Family Rituals after Controlling for Family Climate

A multiple regression model was used to examine whether family ritual meaning and quality would add to the prediction of life satisfaction, positive coping, and future ritual initiation, after controlling for family climate. See Table 2 for the results of these regressions, including total R^2 , change in R^2 and beta weights for each predictor. For satisfaction with life, family cohesion and adaptability were stepped in first, followed by family ritual quality and family ritual meaning. The results indicated that family cohesion but not adaptability significantly predicted satisfaction with life. Neither family ritual meaning nor family ritual quality added unique information to this model. For positive coping, the same stepping method was used, with family cohesion and adaptability stepped in first, followed by family ritual quality and meaning. On step one of the equation, family cohesion but not adaptability again predicted positive coping. Additionally, family ritual meaning was significant in the second step of this model, indicating that family ritual meaning adds additional information to this model, above the contribution of family cohesion. Family ritual quality was not found to contribute to this model.

For future ritual initiation based on the interview, cohesion again predicted likelihood of future initiation, and family ritual quality added incremental variance to the prediction of future initiation. A similar pattern was found for future ritual initiation based on the questionnaire report, with cohesion predicting greater reports of initiation on step one, and both family ritual meaning and family ritual quality added unique information on step two. In this final model, we see that an interview-based measure of ritual quality adds unique information to the prediction of

a relevant outcome (self-reported future ritual initiation), after controlling for a self-report assessment of ritual meaningfulness.

5.

DISCUSSION

Review of Findings

The results of the current study provide a good amount of support for the hypotheses initially proposed regarding the connection between family rituals and a number of positive adjustment outcomes. Specifically, the presence of family rituals were found to have connections to satisfaction with life, positive coping, and future ritual initiation. The correlation found between family ritual quality, (their levels of enjoyment, anticipation and closeness), and satisfaction with life showed that when participants reported on their perceptions of the quality of the rituals within their family, they were also likely to report more satisfaction with life. Interestingly, for positive coping, it was family ritual meaning, (positive affect and symbolic significance), but not overall quality, that was found to be more strongly connected to the enactment of positive coping strategies. Additionally, both family ritual quality and meaning had a positive correlation with future ritual initiation, which may mean that the presence of high quality perceptions of rituals within the family, coupled with a high sense of meaning, helps to contribute more strongly to the initiation of rituals with these individual's future family endeavors.

The current study unfortunately did not find but one connection between participant's perceptions of emerging adulthood in relation to family rituals, meaning that there were very few clear relationships found between the way participant's feel about this current time in their life and how they feel about the rituals that take place in their family. Perhaps individuals in this age group are more focused on who they are becoming as members of society and may not be

participating as actively in the rituals that were present in their youth, as is reflected in the finding of a self-focused ideation.

Family climate, particularly the level of cohesion within the family, was also found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family rituals and the positive adjustment outcomes described above. This finding suggests that family climate helps to predict how family rituals are connected to life satisfaction, and positive coping. Specifically, I found that ritual meaning and quality were only connected to life satisfaction and positive coping when cohesion levels were at least moderately high, suggesting that students do not reap the psychological benefits of these rituals when they experience their family overall as not particularly cohesive. However, regarding the future initiation of rituals, cohesion did not serve as a significant moderator, suggesting that the decision to engage in rituals in the future is more directly tied to the experience of meaningful, high quality rituals. The exploration of family climate as a moderator, contrary to the use of mediation in past literature, helps to extend our knowledge of the contribution of family cohesion by taking a different perspective. The results of the current study suggest that not only does the presence of family climate in relation to family rituals and adjustment matter, as was suggested in previous research, but that the strength of family cohesion in particular helps to predict positive outcomes in emerging adults. The current findings also elude to the idea that perhaps the use of either mediation or moderation can help to explain the contribution of family climate in relation to family rituals research in general.

Finally, hierarchical multiple regression analyses suggested that family cohesion was an important predictor of all outcomes assessed in this study, satisfaction with life, positive coping and future ritual initiation. Clearly, family climate is an important factor to consider in relation to positive adjustment. However, after controlling for family climate, ritual quality was found to

predict a greater likelihood of future ritual initiation, by both self- and interview-report. These results suggest that ritual quality is a unique predictor of a greater likelihood of future ritual initiation, and not simply an artifact of coming from a more cohesive family. Additionally, the unique contributions made by the interview measure of family rituals supports the value of using a multi-method approach to studying an in-depth area, such as the rituals that take place within a family, and how they may contribute to positive adjustment.

The findings of the current study connect back to a number of points made in the previous literature. The contribution of family rituals in connection to positive adjustment outcomes relates back to Wolin and Bennett's (1984) description of family rituals, in that a positive enactment and environment can provide many opportunities for family closeness, a greater sense of symbolic significance and a more enjoyable family experience. Additionally, the finding for the contribution of family ritual meaning to positive adjustment outcomes relates back to the work done by Smit (2011), relating to the symbolic meaning associated with family rituals. As was found in the current study, family ritual meaning was associated with positive emotional bonds, a stronger family memory and a greater likelihood of future ritual initiation. Support for similar levels of family ritual meaningfulness between genders in the current study was also found in Friedman and Weissbrod's (2004) examination of family rituals, suggesting that family ritual meaning could serve as an overarching construct relating to future ritual initiation, and possibly to other positive outcomes. The current study also contributes to previous research pertaining to psychosocial adjustment in relation to family rituals. In reference to the research conducted by Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor and Jose (2011), family cohesion was found to support the relationship between family ritual meaning and well-being, which relates to findings in the current study supporting the link between family ritual meaning and positive

coping. Eaker and Walters (2002) also found similar results relating family cohesion to positive adjustment, where high levels of cohesiveness can be positively linked to ritual satisfaction. This relates back to the current study, in that participants who reported higher levels of cohesiveness within their family also reported greater satisfaction with life and more positive coping strategies.

Limitations

Though the current study has many strengths, and can provide unique information to the realm of the meaning of family rituals in relation to positive adjustment outcomes, a number of limitations should be discussed. First, the use of an interview measure strengthened the results obtained from the analyses and added information beyond that obtained from self-reports, though the remainder of the measures used in the current study were self-report. Self-report measures always leave room for bias or inaccuracy, as participants may be trying to please the researcher in some way. Suggestions to amend this limitation will be discussed soon. Concerning the interview, another limitation of the current study was that inter-rater reliability between the coders of the interview was not obtained. In order to consider the possibility of publication, collecting this data would be beneficial in order to strengthen the implications of the use of an interview measure in this area of research. Another limitation of this study was the sample size, as it did not quite reach the preferred N proposed originally. Obtaining a larger sample size could help strengthen the effects of the analyses performed and provide more generalizability for the college-aged population, as fewer males were included in the analyses than expected. Finally, few to no connections were made between perceptions of emerging adulthood and the meaning or quality of family rituals and this was an unfortunate finding. Perhaps those who are in this

stage of their life are not considering the implications of rituals within their family, and are instead trying to figure themselves out in the context of their own futures.

Future Directions and Conclusions

Future research may benefit from using a more qualitative approach to studying family rituals in relation to adjustment by obtaining data through a more structured interview, or perhaps even a focus group setting. The use of an interview or focus group approach may allow for the collection of data that could then be broken down thematically or focused more specifically on what about family rituals contributes to positive adjustment. The interview used in this study provides a nice starting framework for delving deeper into the meaning and quality of family rituals in young adult's lives and it would be interesting to see how outcomes, such as life satisfaction and coping, could be applied more qualitatively to the study of these rituals. Future research may also benefit from exploring different age groups in relation to family rituals, perhaps from a longitudinal perspective. In this sense, researchers could follow participants from their first accounts of rituals within their family and their thoughts about future ritual initiation, until these participants actually start their own families. Interviewing the participants again on their perceptions, after they have established their family structure, could provide some interesting data pertaining to a realistic or unrealistic transmission of family rituals, from the family of origin to new branches of the family tree.

In conclusion, the current study and its findings provide important implications for the connection between family rituals, particularly quality and meaning, and future ritual initiation, among other positive adjustment outcomes. The conclusions of the current study show that various aspects of family rituals, such as symbolic significance, family closeness, anticipation and positive affect related to the ritual, can have a positive influence on satisfaction with life,

positive coping strategies and an increased likelihood of future ritual initiation. The contribution of family cohesion to the results of the current study suggests that perhaps taking a deeper look in to the effects of family structure, communication, and emotional connectivity may help us to get a better sense of what it is about family rituals that makes for a positive outlook on life. The use of a qualitative measure along with self-reports also made a unique contribution to the relationship between family rituals and positive outcomes. Therefore future research could benefit from looking at family rituals and adjustment in a more descriptive and multidimensional way, as well as with the examination of different developmental stages in relation to the actual initiation of past rituals and positive adjustment. Family rituals play an important role in family structure, and the meaning and quality of these rituals can really have an effect on young lives. It may be beneficial to consider family rituals in the context of family health, in order to provide emerging adults, and other developmental subgroups, with a more stable and supportive environment in which they can mature and learn.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Correlations between Family Ritual Meaning and Quality, and Satisfaction with Life, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation.....	36
Table 2	Hierarchical Regression Analyses Examining Adjustment Outcomes as Predicted by Family Cohesion, Adaptability, Ritual Meaning, and Ritual Quality.....	37

Table 1: Correlations between Family Ritual Meaning and Quality, and Satisfaction with Life, Positive Coping, and Future Ritual Initiation

	Family Ritual Meaning ¹	Family Ritual Quality ²
SWLS ³ Mean	.188	.326**
WCQ ⁴ Positive Coping	.273**	.081
Future Initiation - Questionnaire	.314*	.479**
Future Initiation - Interview	.774**	.408**
IDEA ⁵ Self-Focused	.171	.201*

*p<.05, **p<.01

¹Based on the Family Rituals Questionnaire

²Based on the Family Rituals Interview

³Satisfaction with Life Scale

⁴Ways of Coping Questionnaire

⁵Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Examining Adjustment Outcomes as Predicted by Family Cohesion, Adaptability, Ritual Meaning, and Ritual Quality

Predictors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Satisfaction with Life			
Step 1	.255**		
Cohesion			.532**
Adaptability			-.061
Step 2	.285**	.044	
Family Ritual Meaning			-.201
Family Ritual Quality			.157
Positive Coping			
Step 1	.061		
Cohesion			.098**
Adaptability			.183
Step 2	.103**	.05**	
Family Ritual Meaning			.259**
Family Ritual Quality			.020
Interview-Based Future Ritual Initiation			
Step 1	.079**		
Cohesion			.317**
Adaptability			-.099
Step 2	.268**	.189**	
Family Ritual Meaning			.215
Family Ritual Quality			.429**

Questionnaire-Based Future Ritual Initiation

Step 1	.213**		
Cohesion			.462**
Adaptability			-.002
Step 2	.650**	.437**	
Family Ritual Meaning			.784**
Family Ritual Quality			.239**

p<.05**

APPENDIX B: LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Satisfaction with Life.....	40
Figure 2	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Positive Coping.....	41
Figure 3	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Future Initiation of Rituals.....	42
Figure 4	The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Future Initiation of Rituals.....	43

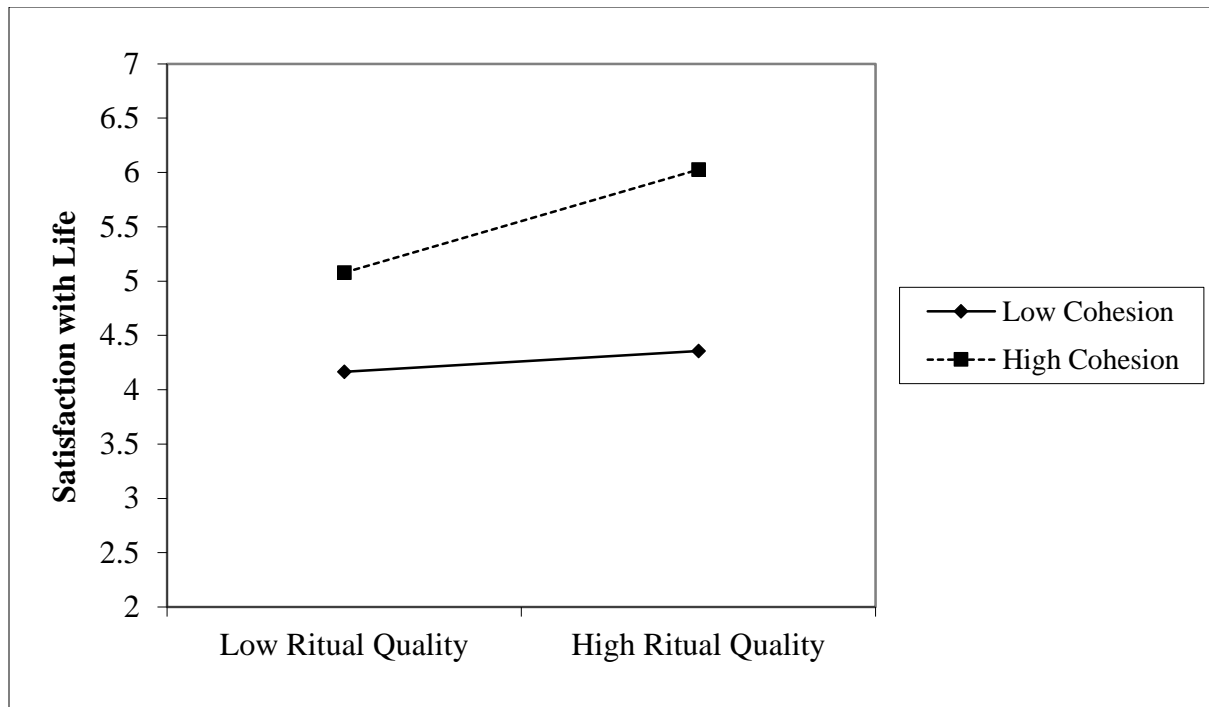


Figure 1. The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Satisfaction with Life.

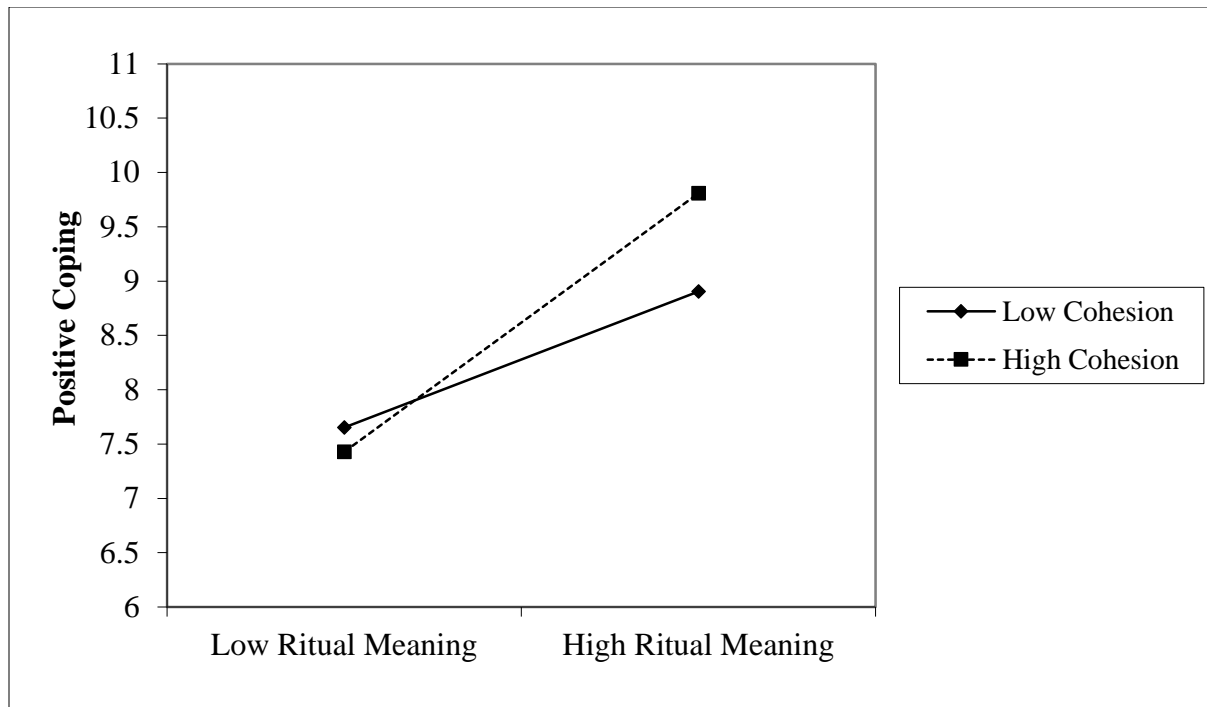


Figure 2. The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Positive Coping.

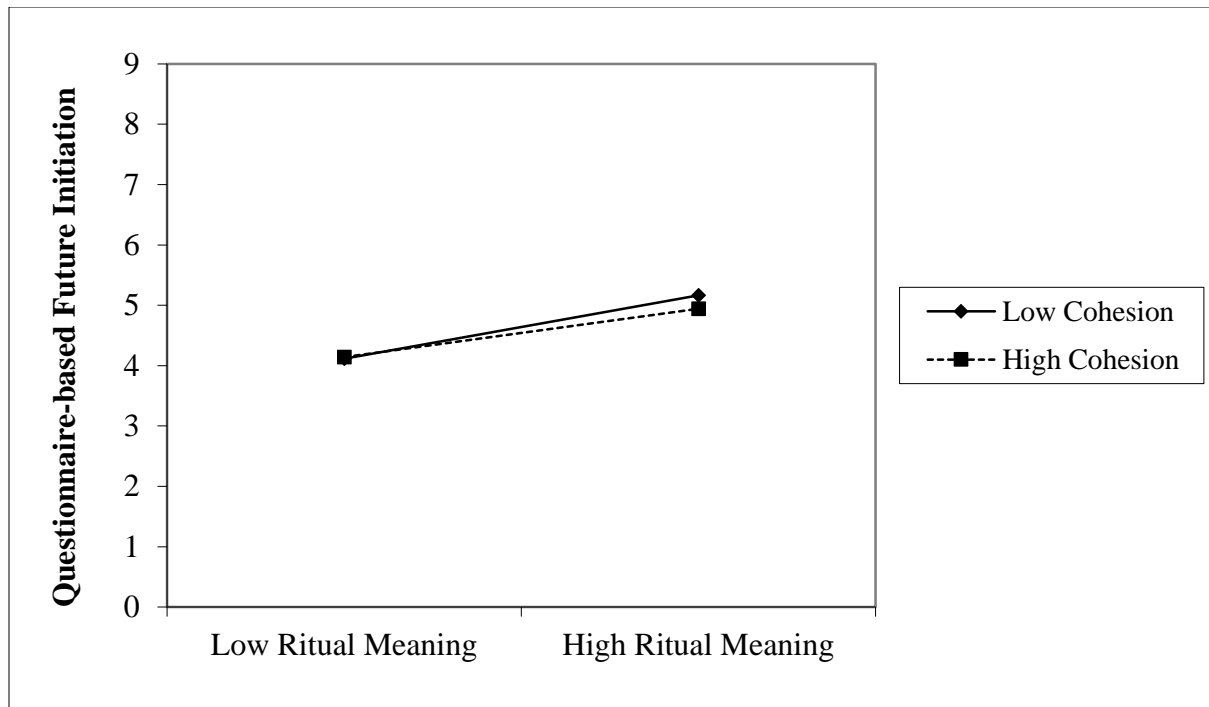


Figure 3. The Moderating Effect of Family Cohesion on the Relationship between Ritual Meaning and Future Initiation of Rituals.

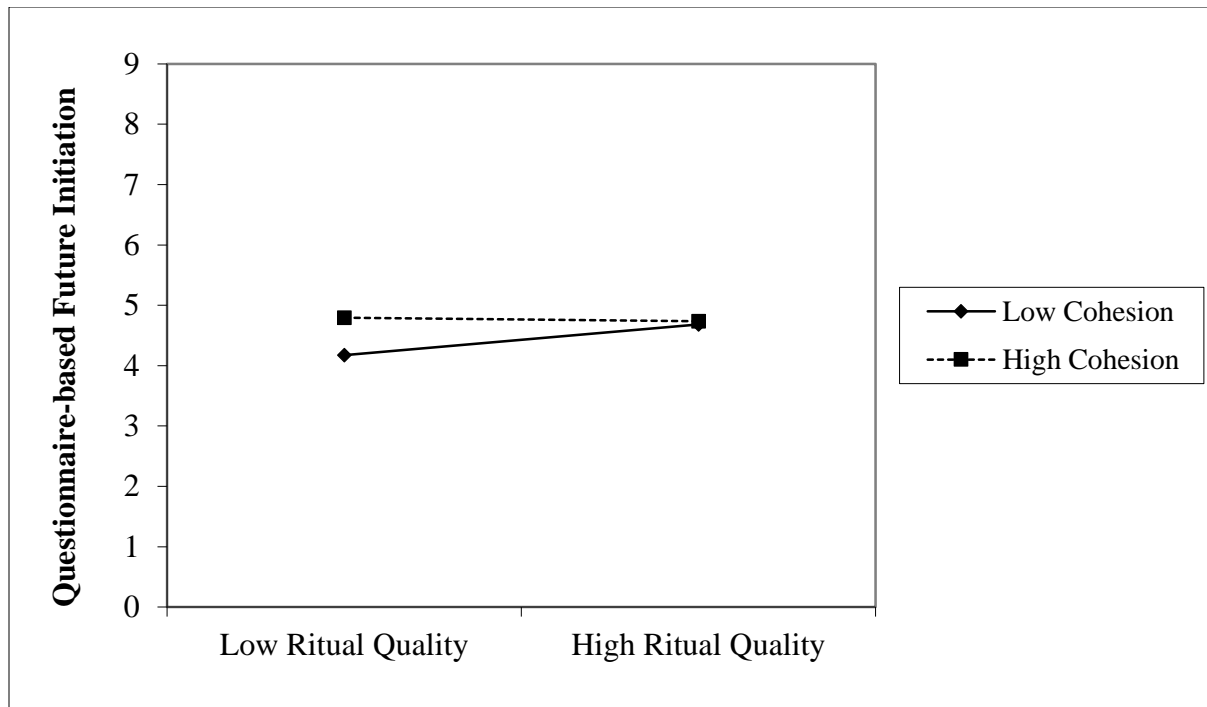


Figure 4. The Moderating Effect of Family Rituals on the Relationship between Ritual Quality and Future Initiation of Rituals.

APPENDIX C: FAMILY RITUALS INTERVIEW

We are going to start with a discussion of the rituals that take place within your family. I would like you to think about two instances of family rituals that you can remember, either from the past or the present. You can choose to talk about family celebrations, family traditions or patterned family interactions.

Family celebrations are general annual celebrations such as holidays and marriages.

Family traditions are repeated within the family such as family vacations and gatherings.

Patterned family interactions are activities that allow for family discussion, such as eating dinner together.

I would like for you to describe two distinct instances of family rituals that you can remember with detail.

Please describe the first family ritual you have chosen to me now.

Now I would like to ask you some follow up questions to get some more details about this ritual.

1. To what extent do you consider this ritual to be meaningful to you? What about this specific instance stood out for you?

2. Did you find this ritual to be more enjoyable or more forced? Why more forced and less enjoyable or vice versa?

3. How much of your family was involved in this ritual? How do you think this would be carried out differently if more/less family members were involved?

4. Who in your family was more involved in the initiation of this ritual? What have you learned from observing this ritual being carried out?

5. How consistent is this ritual in your family? Does it happen every day/week/year? How much has it changed since you were little? What has changed?

6. How much do you look forward to this ritual before it occurs? What do you anticipate the most?

7. Do you feel like this ritual brings your family closer together? Why or why not?

8. How much does this ritual make you feel that you can rely on your family to help you through stressful times? Why is that?

9. Based on this experience, how likely do you think it is that you will carry this ritual into the development of your future family? Why is this?

Please describe the second family ritual you have chosen at this time.

Now I would like to ask you some follow up questions to get some more details about this ritual.

1. To what extent do you consider this ritual to be helpful to you? What about this specific instance stood out for you?

2. Did you find this ritual to be more enjoyable or more forced? Why more forced and less enjoyable or vice versa?

3. How much of your family was involved in this ritual? How do you think this would be carried out differently if more/less family members were involved?

4. Who in your family was more involved in the initiation of this ritual? What have you learned from observing this ritual being carried out?

5. How consistent is this ritual in your family? Does it happen every day/week/year? How much has it changed since you were little? What has changed?

6. How much do you look forward to this ritual before it occurs? What do you anticipate the most?

7. Do you feel like this ritual brings your family closer together? Why or why not?

8. How much does this ritual make you feel that you can rely on your family to help you through stressful times? Why is that?

9. Based on this experience, how likely do you think it is that you will carry this ritual into the development of your future family? Why is this?

We have now reached the end of the interview. Thank you so much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Date: Thursday, September 18, 2014

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

TO: Melody McCormick **DEPT:** PSYC

PROJECT TITLE: *Family Rituals within Emerging Adults*

SPONSORING AGENCY: None

APPROVAL NUMBER: 15-A015

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants has approved the project described above. Approval was based on the descriptive material and procedures you submitted for review. Should any changes be made in your procedures, or if you should encounter any new risks, reactions, injuries, or deaths of persons as participants, you must notify the Board.

A consent form: ☒ is ☐ is not required of each participant

Assent: ☐ is ☒ is not required of each participant

This protocol was first approved on: 18-Sep-2014

This research will be reviewed every year from the date of first approval.


 Stacy Spaulding, Member
 Towson University Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Family Rituals within Emerging Adults

Principal Investigator: Melody McCormick

Phone: (850) 776-4630

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the present study is to explore the connections between family rituals and a number of outcome variables, including coping skills, life satisfaction, family climate, emerging adulthood perceptions and likelihood of future ritual initiation.

Procedures:

In this study, you will be interviewed on specific instances of rituals within your own family and will be asked various questions concerning these rituals. You will then complete a number of questionnaires on a computer that will measure for family ritual frequency and meaning, coping skills, life satisfaction, family climate, and ideas about emerging adulthood. You are free to leave blank any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not wish to answer.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. **If you are not 18 years of age, please return this form now, as you may not consent to participate.**

Risks/Discomfort:

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. If you become distressed at any time while completing the interviews of questionnaires, you may end your participation immediately. You will receive 2 research credits through researchpool for participating. This study should not take longer than 1 hour to complete.

Benefits:

It is hoped that the results of this study will provide us with greater insight into the effects of family rituals on future implementation and general stability during this current time in your life.

Alternatives to Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may discontinue your participation at any time. Refusal to participate will not affect your class standing in any way.

Confidentiality:

All of the information you provide in the interview and questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. Your name will not be attached to any of the data. Identification numbers will be used to identify you.

____ I have read and understood the information on this form and have had all of my questions answered.

Participant Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

If you have any questions, please ask them now or at any time during the study. If you have any additional questions regarding this study, you can call Melody McCormick at (850) 776-4630, Jonathan Mattanah at (410) 704-3208, or the Institutional Review Board Chairperson, Dr. Debi Gartland, Office of University Research Services, 8000 York Road, Towson University, Towson, MD 21252; phone (410) 704-2236.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AT TOWSON UNIVERSITY.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480.
- Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Arnett, J. J. (2007). Emerging Adulthood: What Is It, and What Is It Good For? *Child Development Perspectives*, 1(2), 68-73.
- Crespo, C., Kielpikowski, M., Pryor, J., & Jose, P. E. (2011). Family rituals in New Zealand families: Links to family cohesion and adolescent's well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(2), 184-193.
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 155-159.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R., J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.
- Eaker, D. G., & Walters, L. H. (2012). Adolescent satisfaction in family rituals and psychosocial development: A developmental systems theory perspective. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16(4), 406-414.
- Fiese, B. H., & Kline, C. A. (1993). Development of the Family Rituals Questionnaire: Initial reliability and validation studies. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 6(3), 290-299.
- Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1985). If it changes it must be a process: Study of emotion and coping during three stages of a college examination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 150-170.

- Friedman S. R., & Weissbrod, C. S. (2004). Attitudes toward the continuation of family rituals among emerging adults. *Sex Roles, 50*(3), 277-284.
- Kiser, L. J., Bennett, L., Heston, J., & Paavola, M. (2005). Family ritual and routine: Comparison of clinical and non-clinical families. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 14*(3), 357-372.
- Klapp, O. E. (1959). Ritual and family solidarity. *Social Forces, 37*(3), 212-214.
- Olson, D. H., Portner, J., & Lavee, Y. (1985). FACES III manual. Unpublished manuscript, University of Minnesota.
- Olson, D. H. (1986). Circumplex Model VII: Validation studies and FACES III. *Family Process, 25*, 337-351.
- Pratt, M. W., Norris, J. E., Hebblethwaite, S., & Arnold, M. L. (2008). Intergenerational transmission of values: Family generativity and adolescents' narratives of parent and grandparent value teaching. *Journal of Personality, 76*(2), 171-198.
- Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. J. (2007). Emerging adulthood: Theory, assessment, and application. *Journal of Youth Development, 2*(1), 40-50.
- Robbins, R. J. (1994). *An assessment of perceptions of parental autonomy support and control: Child and parent correlates*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Psychology, University of Rochester.
- Santos, S., Crespo, C., Silva, N., & Canavarro, M. C. (2012). Quality of life and adjustment in youths with asthma: The contributions of family rituals and family environment. *Family Process, 51*(4), 557-569.

Schneiderman, G., & Barrera, M. (2009). Family traditions and generations. *Family and Community Health*, 32(4), 354-357.

Smit, R. (2011). Maintaining family memories through symbolic action: Young adults' perceptions of family rituals in their families of origin. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 42(3), 355-368.

Wolin S., & Bennett, L. (1984). Family rituals. *Family Processes*, 23(3), 401-420.

Melody McCormick

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Education:

Towson University – Towson, MD

Expected Graduation Date: May 2015

MA Experimental Psychology

GPA 3.85

Thesis: Family Rituals in Emerging Adults: Links to Coping, Life Satisfaction, Family Climate, and Future Ritual Initiation, under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Mattanah

University of West Florida – Pensacola, FL

Graduated 2012

Bachelor of Arts Degree, Magna Cum Laude

GPA 3.75

Major in Psychology and Minor in Communication Arts

J. M. Tate High School – Gonzales, FL

Graduated 2008

High School Diploma

Research Experience:

August 2013 – May 2015

Attachment and Human Development Lab

Towson, MD

Student Research Assistant

Directed participant interaction through test administration and interviewing

Managed a team with the purpose of data coding and reliability validation

Worked within a larger team with an overarching objective to collect data and establish reliability of the collected data

Directly designed a new measure to include subscales, scenarios and a coding scheme

Designed a new interview measure to include response prompts, follow up questions and a coding scheme

Utilized SPSS for data analysis, reliability and correlations

Developed a proposal and completed research article on emerging adults and parenting

Completed a Master's thesis on emerging adults and their family routine/ritual experiences

August 2011 – May 2012

University of West Florida

Pensacola, FL

Student Research Assistant

Effectively utilized time to complete time sensitive requirements to increase research boundaries

Interacted efficiently with participants to collect the data needed and creating a positive and comfortable environment

Proctored examinations for participants and ensured the accuracy of the data collected

Learned and utilized advanced Excel techniques to organize and collaborate data between projects

Regularly met with other research assistants to validate the techniques utilized in data collection

Achievements/Recognition:

2012 Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Inducted April 2012
 2012 University of West Florida Psychology Department Senior Excellence Award
 2011 Psi Chi – International Honor Society in Psychology, Inducted August 2011
 2011-2012 President's List
 2008-2010 Dean's List

Skills:

Proficiency in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SPSS
 Experience with R, SAS and Tableau software
 Small Team Management, Data Collection, Manuscript Writing

Conference Presentations:

McCormick, M., Mittell, M., Phillips, P., Lomash, E., Kumar, S., Zhou, J., Daks, J., Salkowitz, Y., Gilman, B., & Mattanah, J. (March 2015). How Would You Handle this Situation? Parenting Beliefs of Emerging Adults are Linked to Their Own History of Parenting and Future Planning. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development 2015 Biannual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

