

Emerging Scholar Best Article Award, 2013

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The editors of the Journal of Youth and Adolescence are pleased to announce the 2013 recipient of the Emerging Scholar Best Article Award. To be eligible for the award, the article's first author must be an "emerging scholar," which we interpret as being non-tenured (e.g., a graduate student, post-doctoral scholar, research scientist, or assistant professor). A random group of editorial board members, with potential recipients excluded, select the award's recipient. The winner receives a plaque as well as a small financial award generously provided by Springer, the journal's publisher.

The 2013 winner is Christens, for his article entitled "The Role of Empowerment in Youth Development: A Study of Sociopolitical Control as Mediator of Ecological Systems' Influence on Developmental Outcomes" (Christens and Peterson 2012). Given that the journal publishes 12 issues per year, each containing about 11–12 manuscripts, the editors view the award as a considerably distinctive accomplishment, one exemplifying the journal's distinguished history of supporting emerging scholars (see Levesque 2011, 2012).

The "best" article for 2012 was selected from a large pool of very strong articles. As we have done in the past, we like to review briefly these articles to highlight their competitiveness as well as showcase the type of research being conducted by the next generation of researchers studying the adolescent period. Notably, all manuscripts highlight contextual aspects of development, and most adopt longitudinal approaches. The topics still range widely but, unlike prior years, schools and educational concerns figure prominently, moreso than, for example,

matters dealing with ethnicity and mental health. Despite this shift in topics, all articles still highlight developmental issues of great social consequence ranging, for example, from obesity, discrimination, drug testing, violence and delinquency to self-evaluations of mental health functioning and adjustment.

Eichen et al. (2012) provided a fascinating study examining how disordered eating behaviors and substance use play a role in the development of serious psychopathology and health concerns in adulthood. Her longitudinal study of over 11,000 adolescents found that overestimation of weight among normal weight adolescents and accurate perceptions of weight among overweight adolescents were associated with higher rates of disordered eating behaviors. She also found that, in normal weight adolescents, the use of three substances (tobacco, binge drinking, and cocaine) was associated with each disordered eating behavior. In contrast, she found differences for overweight adolescents between the type of substance use and disordered eating behavior.

Sznitman et al. (2012) presented the results of a nationally representative sample of 943 high school student survey of student drug testing and the effects of school climates. The results of her study revealed that both male and female students in schools with positive climates reported lower levels of personal substance use. Drug testing was associated with lower levels of personal substance use in positive school climates, but only for female students. There was no relationship between drug testing and male students' substance use. The findings highlighted the importance of considering school climates before implementing drug-testing programs in high schools.

Hafen et al. (2012) examined factors that influence student engagement in classrooms, a critical contributor to school success. Their study followed 578 diverse students

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from the start to the end of a course, across 34 classrooms. They found that students who perceived their classrooms as allowing and encouraging their own autonomy in the first few weeks increased their engagement throughout the course. That engagement continued, unlike the engagement of students demonstrated in other classrooms that had students with less autonomy.

Demant and Van Houtte (2012) examined schooling from the schools—as-communities perspective. That perspective explains school-disruptive behavior as resulting from failed school bonding; it also presents feelings of school belonging as a method to prevent misconduct. Their study, based on a sample of 11,872 students (51.4 % female) in 85 Flemish schools, revealed that not all types of feelings of belonging lead to reductions in misconduct. Overall school cohesion did not associate with school misconduct levels; rather misconduct associated with students' individual feelings of bonding with peers, teachers and schools. In addition, while higher perceived teacher support and school belonging related to less school misconduct, higher peer attachment associated with higher rates of school misconduct.

Siffert et al. (2012), in a study of 176 two-parent families longitudinally examined early adolescents' appraisals of threat and self-blame, as well as perceived parenting quality, as mediators of the link between early adolescents' perception of marital conflict and their self-evaluations (self-esteem and scholastic competence). Their analyses indicated that parenting quality and early adolescents' perceived threat provided indirect pathways between marital conflict and early adolescents' self-esteem 1 year later when controlling for their initial level of self-esteem. With respect to scholastic competence, only fathers' parenting was an indirect link. Self-blame did not play a role. Their study raised important implications for understanding the mechanisms by which exposure to marital conflict predicts early adolescents' maladjustment.

Huynh (2012) examined ethnic microaggressions that form everyday, interpersonal discrimination that are ambiguous and difficult to recognize as discrimination. Her study compared Latino ($n = 247$) and Asian American ($n = 113$) adolescents ($M_{age} = 17.18$, $SD = .75$; 57 % girls). She found that Latino adolescents reported more frequent microaggressions that dismiss their realities of discrimination and microaggressions characterized by treatment as a second class citizen than Asian Americans, but similar levels of microaggressions that highlight differences or foreignness. She found, however, no ethnic differences in the extent to which adolescents were bothered by microaggressions. Importantly, she also found that even supposedly innocuous forms of discrimination are associated with elevated levels of anxiety, anger, and stress, which may increase feelings of depression and

sickness. She concluded that microaggressions should be recognized as subtle discrimination that acts similar to overt discrimination and can evoke powerful emotional reactions and may affect mental health.

Deutsch et al. (2012) investigated the effects of ethnicity, parenting practices and neighborhood on adolescent delinquent behavior. Using a large sample of 2,277 African American and 5,973 European American youth residing in high-risk and low-risk neighborhoods. She hypothesized that parenting practices (parental control and maternal support) would influence adolescents' participation in delinquent behavior through their affiliation with deviant peers. Her study's results found support for the mediational model and found few neighborhood differences between high and low risk neighborhoods. Her study highlighted the need to look at the joint influence of neighborhood context and ethnicity on adolescent problem behavior as well as what happens in families.

Mahatmya and Lohman (2012) sought to understand the developmental precursors to civic involvement in emerging adulthood. They used three waves of the from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health ($n = 7,209$, 54 % female, 63 % white, 18 % African-American, 11 % Hispanic) to examine pathways that link childhood neighborhood attributes, changes in family and school social capital during adolescence, and civic involvement. Their findings revealed that increases in family and school social capital during adolescence had direct influences on emerging adult's civic involvement 7 years later. They also found that the expression of family and school influences on emerging adult's civic involvement was found to differ by neighborhood groups, gender, and race. The results illustrated the importance of examining multi-contextual as well as demographic influences on civic involvement.

Bissell-Harvan et al. (2012) examined family influences on the college attendance of sisters versus brothers in an ethnically diverse sample of 522 mixed sex sibling dyads from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. After controlling for family background factors, the average of siblings' reports of maternal treatment, and differences between siblings' grades, their results revealed that it became more likely that only the sister rather than only the brother in the family attended college when sisters reported greater maternal educational expectations than their brothers. Similar, but non-significant, patterns held for the difference between brothers' and sisters' reports of their mothers' educational involvement and their odds of attending college. The study suggested that within-family social comparisons may play a role in sisters' and brothers' choices about attending college.

Nichols and Loper (2012) examined the effects of household adults' incarceration on the school outcomes of

youth. Using data from 11 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth: Child and Young Adult ($n = 3,338$, 53 % female), their analyses indicated that youth who experienced a household members' incarceration evidenced more socioeconomic challenges, more frequent home adversities, and lower cognitive skills relative to youth who did not experience a household members' incarceration. The findings also revealed that youth with a household member who has been incarcerated report extended absence from school and are less likely to graduate from high school relative to those youth who did not experience a household members' incarceration. Importantly, their study also found that the incarceration of an extended family member being in the household was the only relation significantly associated with worse school outcomes. Their study suggested that efforts to address the needs of children with incarcerated parents need to extend to incarceration of any household member.

Estrada-Martínez et al. (2012) note that, despite identified associations among stress and negative behavioral and mental health outcomes, little remains known about the link between the nature of stressors, their accumulation over time, and the risk for externalizing and internalizing outcomes. To address the lack of studies examining these links, her study examined whether different kinds of stressors are equally salient in the risk for violent behaviors and depressive symptoms, as well as the effects of accumulated stress, among 604 African American adolescents (53 % female) from the 9th grade until they transitioned into adulthood. She and her colleagues found that exposure to perceived daily stress and racial discrimination stress increased the risk for violent behaviors during young adulthood, and exhibited a nonlinear relationship between the accumulation of stressors and risk for violence. Moreover, exposure to perceived daily stress, financial stress, neighborhood stress, and racial discrimination stress increased the risk of depressive symptoms and led to a linear relationship between the accumulation of stressors and risk for depressive symptoms. Her study concluded that identifiable stressors can persist over time to influence risks at young adulthood.

Lastly, Christens and Peterson (2012) examined psychological empowerment among 629 high school students (65.8 % female; 96.5 % non-white). They examined the role of perceived sociopolitical control—an indicator of the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment—as a mediator between ecological support systems and developmental outcomes. They found that social support in family, peer, and school settings, and family cohesion positively predicted self-esteem and perceived school importance, which, in turn, had protective effects on psychological symptoms, violent behaviors and substance use. They also found, however, that sociopolitical control

mediated the relationships between ecological supports and risk factors and developmental outcomes, leading to the conclusion that perceived efficacy in the sociopolitical domain, and youth empowerment, more generally, appear to be a core element of the ecology of human development. It was these findings, and the strength of the study itself, that led the editors to select it as the most outstanding for the 2013 award.

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