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## The Predicting Value of Grit and Helicopter Parenting on Relational Satisfaction

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# Walden University

College of Allied Health

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Ashley Puga

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2026

Abstract

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by

Ashley Puga

MS, Walden University, 2021

BS, University of Northern Colorado, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

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## Abstract

Helicopter parenting has been extensively studied within the emerging adult population. However, previous studies have recruited their participants solely from a university setting. The current literature on grit and emerging adults is limited. Therefore, this study sought to add to the current literature by recruiting emerging adults through multiple platforms, such as multiple social media platforms, to allow non-university participants. This study also sought to add to the current literature on emerging adults and grit. Utilizing the theories of social learning theory and self-determination theory, the purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to determine if helicopter parenting and grit were significant predictors of relational satisfaction in emerging adults. The 85 participants were adults ranging in age between 18 and 25, currently in a romantic relationship, and residing in the United States of America. The participants completed the Helicopter Parenting Scale, Grit Scale, and the Relational Assessment Scale. The results of the multiple linear regression indicated that helicopter parenting was significantly correlated with relationship parenting, though this relationship was considered statistically weak, adjusted  $R^2 = .121$ ,  $F = 6.771$ ,  $p = < .001$ ,  $\beta = -.378$ . However, grit was not found to be significantly correlated with relational satisfaction,  $p = .928$ . The results of this current study may differ from previous studies due to the recruitment process that allowed for a more diverse participant pool in terms of educational level, work experience, geographic location, and age. This study highlighted that the existing literature may need to be re-examined to better reflect the emerging adult experience outside of the university setting.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### Introduction

Many variables can influence the trajectory of one's life (e.g., origin of family experiences, socioeconomic status, and location). Arnett (2000) defined emerging adults as individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. Emerging adulthood is marked by a lack of demographic norms, ambiguity of identity, and risky behavior. In emerging adulthood, parental influence is still prominent, as young adults may seek advice or guidance from their parents (Su et al., 2022). With any development stage of life, parenting styles can be beneficial or detrimental to children, even in emerging adulthood. Helicopter parenting is defined as parental involvement that is developmentally inappropriate (Buchanan & LeMoyné, 2020b). Helicopter parenting is also marked by excessive advice, tangible resources, monitoring, and problem solving (Cook, 2020). Helicopter parenting has been made easier by technology, as parents can monitor their adult children who are away from home (Brown et al., 2024). Parents can text their adult children throughout the day, allowing for frequent communication. Brown et al. (2024) determined that low to moderate levels of texting were not detrimental to emerging adults' sense of autonomy; however, higher levels of texting were reported to harm emerging adults' sense of autonomy.

As with other developments in technology, there are both benefits and drawbacks. Helicopter parenting can have adverse outcomes in areas such as mental health (J. Wang et al., 2021), self-efficacy (Jung et al., 2019), adjustment (Wenze et al., 2019), addiction (Cook, 2020), academics (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017), relationships (McGinley, 2018), and grit (Howard et al., 2019). Grit is another variable that can influence emerging adults as they seek out new academic and career opportunities. Grit is defined as perseverance in and passion for long-term goals

(Duckworth et al., 2007a). Grit has not been examined as a factor in social relationships or, more specifically, romantic relationships. Therefore, the current study examined the relationships between helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction in emerging parents. Helicopter parenting and grit were examined as predicting variables for relational satisfaction in emerging adults. The current literature that explores these three variables is limited, and no previous study has explored the three variables together. The current study is important to ongoing positive social change as it explores variables that can help or hinder emerging adults in their romantic relationships.

In the first chapter, the basics of the current study are introduced, and they are further expanded upon in the later chapters. A brief review of the literature provides context as to why this study was done and how it has added to the current literature. The research questions and hypotheses of the current study are stated followed by the theories used to formulate the hypotheses and how the results have been analyzed. Terms relating to variables, scales, and theories are defined to provide clarification for the current study. Assumptions and limitations are also addressed in this chapter to introduce the possible challenges for this study. The potential significance of the study is discussed before the conclusion of the chapter.

### **Background**

As stated previously, helicopter parenting has been correlated to multiple adverse outcomes in emerging adults, including mental health (Buchanan & LeMoyne, 2020b; Rote et al., 2020), adjustment (Wenze et al., 2019), substance use (Perez et al., 2021), academics (Luebbe et al., 2018), relationships (Richardson et al., 2017), and grit (Howard et al., 2019). However, grit has a positive impact on various areas of life, such as personality traits (Howard et al., 2022), physical health (Allee et al., 2020), and academics (Xu et al., 2020). Relational

satisfaction amongst emerging adults positively influences mental health (Mónaco et al., 2021) and physical health (Madsen et al., 2023). However, there is sparse literature that explores the relationship between grit and helicopter parenting, helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction (Howard et al., 2019), and grit and relational satisfaction. There is no current literature examining the associations among all three variables. Therefore, this study was completed to fill that gap and to provide further information on ways parents can support their adult children. There is little research on the association between grit and helicopter parenting (Howard et al., 2019) or helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction (Candel, 2022).

### **Problem Statement**

The situation or issue that prompted further research was the fact that emerging adults (ages 18 to 25) frequently suffer from anxiety and depression (Wenze et al., 2019). This can be attributable to the new obstacles and challenges associated with young adulthood (job, school, relationships, and other competing factors). Many studies have examined the correlation between various parenting styles and anxiety, depression, and self-efficacy (Buchanan & LeMoyne 2020a, 2020b; Cui, Darling, et al., 2019; Hong & Cui, 2020; Jung et al., 2019; Luebbe et al., 2018; Wenze et al., 2019). Helicopter parenting is defined as parents hovering over their children, ready to swoop in to remove any obstacles the child may encounter (Wenze et al., 2019). Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020b) defined helicopter parenting as overinvolvement of parents that hinders the independence of children. The common findings are that emerging adults who were raised by parents who practice overinvolved parenting styles were not allowed to develop coping skills. Avoidance of life stressors is a coping mechanism often espoused by such emerging adults (Luebbe et al., 2018; Wenze et al., 2019). Helicopter parenting can have implications such as an increase in substance use, a sense of entitlement, difficulty in social

relationships, and decreased motivation (Cook, 2020). In a systematic review of emerging adults and helicopter parenting, helicopter parenting was commonly associated with maladjustment (Cui et al., 2022). Howard et al. (2019) examined the relationship between grit and helicopter parenting and found a negative relationship between the two. Grit is important to one's future when looking at long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Grit is defined as one's continued passion for and perseverance towards a long-term goal. Research on academic and career goals has been conducted. Specifically, grit, helicopter parenting, and academic success have been studied (Howard et al., 2019). Other studies have also looked at helicopter parenting and relationships among peers in emerging adults (Candel, 2022; Cook, 2020). However, no studies have explored the correlation of grit and helicopter parenting on relational satisfaction.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the association of grit and helicopter parenting with relational satisfaction. Some research examines the relationship between child-rearing (Qiu et al., 2021) and parental psychological control (Wei & Liu, 2022) and grit, but none have examined the relationship between grit and helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction. Understanding the relationship among these variables is important for mental health providers who work with this age group to support clients who identify as having both helicopter parenting and low relational satisfaction better.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: Is there a correlation between grit and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H1<sub>0</sub>: Grit has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H1<sub>a</sub>: Grit has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ2: Is there a correlation between helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H2<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H2<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ3: Is there a correlation between both helicopter parenting and grit with relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H3<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H3<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theories that ground this study include self-determination theory and social learning theory. Self-determination theory was developed by psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci in 1985. Deci and Ryan (2000) further explored the intrinsic motivation aspect and proposed that autonomy, relatedness, and competence were primary psychological satisfaction needs that applied to self-determination theory. The review of the literature showed that multiple authors have used self-determination theory to further explain their findings (Cui, Allen, et al., 2019; Perez et al., 2020). Grit is developed by advancing in one's field (Abd Elwahab et al., 2022) or experiencing posttraumatic growth (S. Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be said that grit and the psychological need for competence may be related. As one's grit strengthens, so does one's sense of competence. Self-determination theory can be used as a lens through which to understand better how one's sense of grit influences one's relational satisfaction. Furthermore,

in a systematic review of helicopter parenting and emerging adults, self-determination theory was the most utilized (Cui et al., 2022).

Another relevant theory for this study is social learning theory (Richardson et al., 2017). Social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura (Berk, 2018). Social learning theory combines principles from behavior and cognitive theories. Individuals will observe behavior and, depending on their motivations, will mimic that behavior. Bandura (1979) posited that human behavior was done to achieve a goal or to avoid negative events. Bandura also believed that people used both prior knowledge and previous experience to make decisions that would help them to achieve their objectives. A unique facet of social learning theory is that it was not based on the thought that infants come into this world as blank slates and that from birth, humans are trying to achieve their objectives by using knowledge and experience as they are acquiring both. Social learning theory helped to explain further how the development of grit is influenced by helicopter parenting. Helicopter parenting may increase the tendencies of avoidant types of behaviors (Luebbe et al., 2018; Wenze et al., 2019), and this type of behavior may limit the development of grit.

### **Nature of the Study**

To address the research questions in this quantitative study, the specific research design included questions regarding demographics (age, race, gender, highest level of education, employment status), parental makeup (single parent, divorced, married, remarried), relationship status (currently in an intimate relationship but not engaged or married, engaged, married), length of relationship, Helicopter Parenting Scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007a), Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick et al., n.d.). This was distributed to participants in the form of a survey. The sample size of 68 was determined using

the program G\*Power after the researcher inputted the two independent variables and the type of statistical analysis that was used. The design is a correlational research design as no variables were manipulated. A multiple regression with two independent values was used to analyze the results. A bivariate Pearson correlation was completed to analyze the correlation between helicopter parenting and grit.

### **Definitions**

*Emerging Adults.* Arnett (2000) defined emerging adulthood as being between the ages of 18 and 25. Emerging adulthood begins at 18, as it is the traditional age at which individuals leave the family home, and 25 marks the period in one's life where more stability in terms of vocation, relationships, and living arrangements is achieved. Between the ages of 18 and 25, individuals search for their identities away from their families of origin in terms of worldviews, vocation, experiences, risks, and relationships. However, Arnett recognized that not all countries have a defined period of emerging adulthood. Arnett stated that industrial and postindustrial countries allow for this period, but developing countries may not. Some literature referred to individuals as old as 34 as emerging adults (Gugliandolo et al., 2021; J. Lee & Kang, 2018; Sells & Ganong, 2017; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019) and one article referred to emerging adults as old as 35 (Mónaco et al., 2021). The current study only surveyed individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, as most of the literature reviewed uses this age range (Ashley et al., 2022; Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Chopik et al., 2022; Cook, 2020; Steele & McKinney, 2019; Su et al., 2022).

*Grit.* Grit is a personality trait that is made up of perseverance and passion, and it refers to individuals' perseverance and passion towards new goals (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Perseverance refers to sustained effort towards a long-term goal, and passion refers to interest in a long-term goal.

*Grit Scale.* The Grit Scale is a self-report measure in which individuals rate 12 statements on a Likert-type scale (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Six of the statements measure perseverance, and the other six statements measure passion.

*Helicopter Parenting.* Buchanan & LeMoyne (2020b) defined helicopter parenting as a parenting style that is distinguished by parents' over-involvement in their children's lives, potentially negatively impacting the development of their children. An example of a helicopter parenting style is parents who contact their adult child's college professor on behalf of the student. Helicopter parenting is sometimes referred to as overparenting, and these terms have been used interchangeably throughout the literature review portion to reflect what the original authors of the sources used.

*Helicopter Parenting Scale.* The Helicopter Parenting Scale is a five-item scale that measures helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). It is a self-report measure in which individuals record their answers on a Likert-type scale. The statements examine parental interventions.

*Multiple Regression.* Multiple regression is a statistical function that is utilized when two or more independent variables are used to determine predictability or association with a dependent variable (Warner, 2013).

*Relational Satisfaction.* Relationship satisfaction is one's general satisfaction with one's relationships (Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021). Relational satisfaction is a general term used to look at satisfaction within any relationship (romantic or non-romantic). There are many factors to relational satisfaction, such as quality of relationship, communication, and sense of equity (Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Sells & Ganong, 2017).

*Relationship Assessment Scale.* The Relationship Assessment Scale is a seven-item Likert-type scale that relies on self-report (Hendrick, 1988). The scale is designed for romantic relationships and not developed to measure relational satisfaction in friendships or familial relationships.

*Self-Determination Theory.* Self-determination theory was developed by Deci and Ryan (2000). Self-determination theory uses the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to explain the what and the why behind human motivation.

*Social Learning Theory.* Social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura (Berk, 2018). Social learning theory states that individuals learn by observing the behaviors of others and imitating those behaviors (Berk, 2018). Bandura developed his theory by including a social-cognition aspect to it. Bandura (1979) stated that as humans develop, they become more selective in what they imitate by using knowledge of prior experiences as well as becoming more reflective in their behaviors as they consider possible consequences.

### **Assumptions**

One assumption of this study is that participants have answered honestly and have not engaged in social desirability bias. Social desirability is defined as the tendency for participants to answer in a manner they believe will make them appear more socially acceptable (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). Warner (2013) stated there are four assumptions with multiple regression: (a) an outcome variable with scores that are normally distributed, (b) the relationships between all the variables are linear, (c) the levels of regression from the dependent variable should be the same for all independent variables, and (d) the variance in the dependent scores should be the same for all independent variables.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The primary focus of the study was to determine whether helicopter parenting and grit correlate with relational satisfaction in emerging adults. The secondary focus was to confirm previous, but limited, studies to determine the correlation between helicopter parenting and grit, helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction, and grit and relational satisfaction. The population was limited to individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 residing in the United States. The country of residence was limited, as parenting style can be influenced by culture and may affect how participants respond to the Helicopter Parenting Scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The final number of participants was 85, and therefore generalizability was not accomplished.

### **Limitations**

One limitation to the study was potential social desirability bias amongst participants, as all three variables were quantified by using self-reporting measures. Participants may have underreported helicopter parenting and overreported grit and relational satisfaction. Another possible limitation is the lack of diversity in the sample. In previous studies, the participants were predominantly female and White (Abaied et al., 2022; Candel, 2022; Hong & Cui, 2020; Luebbe et al., 2018). In this study, 50% of the participants identified as White and female.

### **Significance**

There are a limited number of studies examining both grit and helicopter parenting. There are also a limited number of studies examining helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction. Furthermore, helicopter parenting is a trend in parenting styles due to the increased ease of doing so, thanks to advancing technologies that allow parents to keep in contact with and follow up on their adult children throughout the day. The social implication of this study is that it advances the

current literature. Helicopter parenting and its possible correlation with relational satisfaction can help to clarify how helicopter parenting can influence emerging adults outside mental health and academics. Grit is said to be a more accurate measure to determine success in college, military settings, and sports (Duckworth et al., 2007a), and a better understanding of how grit can influence relational satisfaction as well as how grit can be influenced by helicopter parenting may help to explain better how grit can influence multiple areas of life and how grit can be increased or reduced.

### **Summary**

This study expands on the current literature that examines the lasting consequences of helicopter parenting and the role that grit plays in emerging adults and their romantic relationships. The current literature has explored helicopter parenting and the influence it has on emerging adults' mental health (Buchanan & LeMoyné, 2020b; Cardoso Garcia et al., 2022; Carone et al., 2022), but there is limited literature on both grit and relational satisfaction, warranting expansion in these areas. The literature exploring the effect of grit on relational satisfaction is limited as well, with few studies exploring any correlations. This study was done in a quantitative manner using the following scales: (a) the Helicopter Parenting Scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), (b) the Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007b), and (c) the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick et al., n.d.). Self-determination theory and social learning theory were utilized to explain the results. The results were analyzed using a multiple regression analysis. Important terms were defined that are referred to throughout the study, including variables, theories, analysis, and scales. Assumptions that have impacted the results of the study were also explained, as well as limitations to the study. Last, the significance and the potential

social impact of the current study was discussed. Chapter 2 gives a discussion of the current literature on the variables, scales, and theories.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

There have been studies looking at helicopter parenting and its effects on emerging adults' relationships and mental health (Candel, 2022; Wenzel et al., 2019). One study examined the correlation between helicopter parenting and grit (Howard et al., 2019). This study acts as a confirmatory study for Howard et al.'s (2019) study, as well as exploring how helicopter parenting and grit impact emerging adults' relational satisfaction. Grit is a way to determine success in long-term goals such as college and second language learning (Shehzad et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2020). However, grit has not been applied to social constructs such as relationships. This purpose of this study was to begin to close that gap by determining whether grit is a factor in relational satisfaction. In the following literature review, the two theories that were used in this study, social learning theory and self-determination theory, are discussed. Before discussing the specific variables of this study, parenting, common parenting styles, and attachment styles are explored to provide insight into the influences the various styles have on emerging adults. This is followed by a discussion of helicopter parenting and the various influences this parenting style has on emerging adults. Grit is then explored; however, due to a limited number of studies on grit and emerging adults, studies that used late adolescents as their population were reviewed. Last, the various scales that are used in different studies to measure the variables of this study are discussed.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Walden University library and its associated databases were utilized to complete this review. Walden University databases include ERIC, APA PsycInfo, Business Source Complete,

Complementary Index, Academic Search Complete, Sage Knowledge, Medline, and ProQuest.

The key terms are as follows:

1. Emerging adulthood.
2. Emerging adults.
3. College students.
4. Young adults.
5. Young adulthood.
6. Helicopter parenting.
7. Overparenting.
8. Helicopter parents.
9. Grit.
10. Perseverance.
11. Passion.
12. Parenting styles.
13. Permissive parenting.
14. Neglectful parenting.
15. Authoritarian parenting.
16. Authoritative parenting.
17. Attachment style.

Only scholarly articles that were peer reviewed, spanning from 2017 to the present, were utilized to provide background for this study. Research began in 2022, and therefore, only literature from the 5 years before that was used. Initially, the intention was to use only articles that used samples of participants from the ages of 18–25; however, due to cultural differences,

adults in more collectivist cultures stayed at home and deferred to parents later into adulthood.

The variable of grit did not have an exhaustive set of studies, and so for this variable, articles that used late adolescents as participants were also included.

## **Theoretical Foundation**

### **Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura is most often associated with social learning theory (Berk, 2018).

Bandura theorized that children learn by observing the behaviors of others as well as the consequences of those behaviors. If individuals perceive that the observed behavior is reinforced, they will mimic that behavior. As individuals grow and develop, Bandura further theorized that they become more selective in the behaviors that they mimic. This is partly due to the individuals' development of personal standards and a sense of self-efficacy. Social learning theory may be used to understand the findings of the current study, as perseverance needed for grit may be influenced by helicopter parenting. Social learning theory was used to expand on the development that occurred for individuals who experienced helicopter parenting.

Bandura (1979) further explained his social learning theory after publishing his initial article in the *American Psychologist*. One comment on social learning theory was that the theory had only a behavioral component and lacked a cognitive component. Bandura argued that this is not the case as he further expanded on how individuals begin from birth to acquire both knowledge and experience, which they later use to achieve their goals. Bandura further stated that people's self-reflection on their thoughts and behaviors also helps them to make decisions, as it informs them whether they have improved upon themselves or could have made different decisions to get better results.

Social learning theory, or social cognitive theory, as it is sometimes called, has been used in multiple helicopter parenting studies such as Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020b) and Liu et al. (2019), who used social learning theory to explore the development of self-efficacy in emerging adults. Cui, Darling, et al. (2019) based one of their hypotheses that indulgent parenting would be positively correlated with psychological problems in emerging adults on social learning theory. Howard et al. (2019) also used social learning theory to develop their hypotheses with associations between overparenting, grit, and academic success. Both Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020a, 2020b) and Hock et al. (2018) used social learning theory to explore gender differences and the influences of parental style, stating that daughters would model behaviors observed in their mothers and sons would model behaviors observed in their fathers. Perez et al. (2021) discussed social learning theory in the context of overparenting and self-regulating behaviors in emerging adults. Social learning theory was also used to discuss the possibility of a correlation between parental behavior and sexual coercion in college males (Richardson et al., 2017). Social learning theory provided a basis for understanding the influence of helicopter parenting on emerging adult behavior.

### ***Implementation of Social Learning Theory***

Social learning theory provides insight into parenting styles, such as helicopter parenting, which may inform an emerging adults' behaviors, decisions, and actions. Helicopter parenting is characterized by the overinvolvement of parents that hinders the development of independence in their children (Buchanan & LeMoyne, 2020b). Therefore, using social learning theory, the negative impact helicopter parenting has on emerging adults can be better understood. Grit is defined as perseverance in and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Therefore, using social learning theory, the development of grit can be better understood by people's

experiences of overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal and what they learned from those experiences. Last, social learning theory indicates that observed behavior and observed consequences of that behavior can inform individuals' behavior. Therefore, parents' behavior with their adult children may inform emerging adults on how to conduct themselves in other relationships.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory states that there are three needs that motivate human behavior: (a) competence, (b) relatedness, and (c) autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan (1985) stated that self-determination theory is a motivation theory and not cognitive, as it examines the what and why of behavior. Self-determination theory is frequently used in studies of helicopter parenting, and often the need for autonomy is highlighted to explain outcomes in emerging adults (Candel, 2022; Hong & Cui, 2020; Jung et al., 2019; Love et al., 2020; Şimşir Gökalp, 2022; Su et al., 2022). Schiffrin et al. (2021) postulated that autonomy and competence are the two primary needs that are affected by helicopter parenting. However, all three needs are subject to the influence of helicopter parenting (Cook, 2020; Cui, Allen, et al., 2019; Cui, Darling, et al., 2019; Darlow et al., 2017; J. Lee & Kang, 2018; Liu et al., 2019; Scharf et al., 2017). Self-determination theory has also been used by authors to explain the development of grit (C.-L. Lin & Chang, 2017; Wei & Liu, 2022). Self-determination theory provided the framework to explore how helicopter parenting influences motivation and grit and, consequentially, relational satisfaction in emerging adults. Schiffrin, Erchull, et al. (2019) found that maternal helicopter parenting was negatively associated with all three needs identified in self-determination theory. However, paternal helicopter parenting was only negatively associated with adult children's sense of autonomy.

### *The Building Constructs of Self-Determination Theory*

**Autonomy.** Autonomy is defined as behavior that is derived from one's interests and values (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The behavior may be influenced by external forces (friends, family), but individuals initiate the behavior and the behavior is congruent to their values. Autonomy is behavior that does not seek to conform or comply with other people's interests or values. Autonomy and its effects on mental health in emerging adults varies. Parental autonomy support was a positive predictor of adjustment and well-being in Western cultures but not in East Asian cultures (Seong et al., 2023). However, Jung et al. (2020) found that maternal autonomy support was positively associated with life satisfaction in participants from both the United States and Korea.

**Competency.** Competency does not relate to learned skills, but to a sense of confidence in one's capabilities (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Individuals will seek out challenges that will allow them to showcase their abilities. An example would be that a sense of communication competence is positively associated with relational satisfaction in emerging adults (McManus, 2022). Helicopter parenting hinders one's competency or sense of self-efficacy (Buchanan & LeMoyne, 2020a).

**Relatedness.** Relatedness refers to one's sense of belonging or connectedness with others (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Polish young adults reported better health outcomes when they also reported being in relationships, especially in high-quality relationships (Adamczyk et al., 2021). Polish young adults also reported higher levels of well-being when they were in relationships (Adamczyk, 2017).

### ***Implementation of Self-Determination Theory***

Self-determination theory can provide further insight into the impact of helicopter parenting on grit. Helicopter parenting hinders adult children's sense of independence (Buchanan and LeMoyné, 2020b). Self-determination theory's constructs of autonomy and competence are key motivating factors for individuals' behaviors. This theory provides insight into why helicopter parenting does not encourage grit, because the adult children's opportunities to cultivate a sense of autonomy and competence are limited by their parents. Last, self-determination theory states that a sense of relatedness is another key motivator in behaviors. Emerging adults who have a low sense of autonomy and competence may find it hard to relate to others, and more specifically to relate in romantic relationships.

### ***Social Learning Theory and Self-Determination Theory***

Social learning theory addresses how individuals learn to choose what behaviors and decisions to make, based on the observation of others' behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors, as well as their previous experiences (Bandura 1979). Helicopter parenting behaviors hinder the development of adult children (Buchanan & LeMoyné, 2020b). Furthermore, helicopter parenting may impact the development of children's sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which then impacts both their decision-making abilities and the motivation for their behaviors and choices as they go into adulthood.

### **Parenting**

There are parental factors that influence behaviors in emerging adults, such as parental involvement, parental support, and parental psychological control (Su et al., 2022). Su et al. (2022) defined parental involvement as the interest and encouragement parental figures provides to their children. Parental support is defined by how often children will contact their parents for

advice or guidance. Both parental involvement and support seem to be positive influencing factors for emerging adults. As individuals age, they may still turn to parents for advice. An example would be college students who obtain advice about coping skills from their parents (Abaied et al., 2022). Parental warmth is positively related to parental responsiveness (Hua et al., 2022). Parental overprotection and parental rejection are positively related to demandingness. Last, parental rejection is negatively related to parental responsiveness. Identity styles are defined as social–cognitive approaches that people use to seek and process information and are influenced by parents (Skhirtladze et al., 2018). Perceived parental support was positively associated with an information-oriented style, whereas parental behavior and psychological control were highly correlated with a normative style. However, maternal behavioral control was also positively correlated with an information-oriented style.

Latent profile analysis was used to determine five relevant profiles: (a) involved, (b) direct, (c) balanced, (d) indirect, and (e) uninvolved. The direct and involved profiles were associated with adaptive functioning, whereas the indirect and the uninvolved profiles were associated with an increase in maladaptive functioning (Abaied et al., 2022). When Chinese college students perceived both their mothers and fathers as caring, they also reported higher levels of gratitude and positive past and future time perspectives (C.-C. Lin, 2023). In a longitudinal study, Camia et al. (2021) concluded that perceived positive parenting continues to influence young adults' lives by providing secure attachments. Parents continually face the challenge of finding the balance between involvement and independence (Dotterer, 2022). A three-part construct that explains the parental role in emerging adults enrolled in university includes parental support giving, parent–child contact, and parental academic engagement (Lowe & Dotterer, 2018 as cited in Dotterer, 2022). Parental support giving refers to both tangential and

non-tangential items. Parent–child contact refers to the quality of contact and not to the frequency of contact (Dotterer, 2022). Last, parental academic engagement pertains to parents’ interest in and support of the children’s academic progress. Jensen et al. (2023) explored text messages exchanged between emerging adults and their parents and identified four maternal latent profile analyses and two paternal latent profile analyses. One profile identified in both mothers and fathers was reciprocal disengagement, in which neither parent nor child texted frequently (Jensen et al., 2023). The other shared profile between mothers and fathers was reciprocal informational exchange. This profile was described as parents asking for information and their adult children moderately providing information with moderate warmth levels for both parents and adult children. Mothers and adult children dyads had two additional profiles of reciprocal informational exchange, namely practical support, and reciprocal engagement. Culture plays a major role in parental behaviors as well as young adult outcomes (Lansford et al., 2023). Paternal culture influences parental behaviors such as behavioral control of their children and what beliefs and values are emphasized to their children, and these in turn influence their children as they become adults.

### ***Parenting and Mental Health***

Ge et al. (2022) concluded that participants in their high-anxiety group reported significantly lower levels of parental warmth than those in their low-anxiety group. Meyer and Wissemann (2020) stated that error-related negativity is a brain response that shows up in the waveform of an electroencephalogram after an error occurs in a lab setting. Emerging adults who were asked to report on their parents’ parenting behavior and their perfectionism, and who completed a lab task with an electroencephalogram reported more controlling parenting behaviors when they also reported higher levels of perfectionism and when error-related

negativity was observed. Higher levels of parental control negatively affect adversarial growth (Nie et al., 2022). Emerging adults who reported higher levels of autism spectrum disorder traits also reported higher ineffective parenting characteristics, such as harsher discipline and poorer child–parent relationship quality (McKinney, Gadke, & Malkin, 2018). McKinney et al. (2023) utilized latent profile analysis to determine how parental discipline influenced emerging adults' psychological outcomes.

The first profile, termed approving, was described as very high in approving and low in disappointment and abuse, which correlated with the lowest number of reports of psychological problems. The next profile was termed distant and described as very low on all three items. It was correlated with the second-lowest number of reports of psychological problems. The third profile was termed disappointment and described as high in approval, very high in disappointment, and low in abuse. It was correlated with the second-highest number of reports of psychological problems. Last, the abusive profile was described as very low in approval and very high in disappointment and abuse, which correlated with the highest number of reports of psychological problems (McKinney et al., 2023).

Parental psychological control is harmful to an emerging adults' mental health, as parental psychological control often uses manipulation and coercion to influence behavior (Su et al., 2022). Park et al. (2021) found that in American Asian adolescents, parental warmth and control were predictors of depressive symptoms and self-esteem. Parenting characteristics are difficult to categorize as positive or negative in a universal sense. An example would be that autonomy-supportive parenting is a positive parenting characteristic in Western cultures; however, emerging adults from South Korea who reported having socially prescribed perfection

and autonomy-supportive parenting did not see a significant decrease in perceived stress (Seong et al., 2023).

Mothers and fathers may vary in how they impact their adult children's mental health. A perception of autonomy support from mothers best predicted well-being in Turkish, female, young adults, as opposed to emotional warmth from a father being the best predictor of well-being (Wise & Erbahar, 2021). Parenting by lying or lying to have children achieve positive outcomes is positively associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms in young adults (Dodd & Malm, 2023). College students diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and college students without diagnoses of ADHD were surveyed about their maternal perceived parenting styles and mental health measures (Stevens et al., 2019).

College students diagnosed with ADHD reported higher levels of maternal authoritarian parenting style and lower levels of authoritative parenting style than the college students who were not diagnosed with ADHD (Stevens et al., 2019). Accepting parenting was negatively associated with fear-potentiated startle in young adults who reported higher posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, whereas controlling parenting was positively associated with fear-potentiated startle in the general population (Sullivan et al., 2023). Parenting styles that included inductive discipline, expression of affect and communication, and autonomy support were positively associated with higher emotional intelligence in emerging adults (Segrin & Flora, 2019). Emotional intelligence was hindered by parenting styles that included strict discipline and psychological control. Both female and male emerging adults reported higher rates of externalizing problems when parents were congruent in parenting style (McKinney, Brown, & Malkin, 2018).

### ***Parenting and Substance Use***

Paternal psychological control was positively associated with binge drinking and substance use in male emerging adults, and binge drinking, substance use, and driving under the influence in female emerging adults (Yang et al., 2022). Maternal psychological control was only positively associated with binge drinking and substance use in female emerging adults and not in males.

### ***Parenting and Finances***

Financial parenting consists of three constructs: content or what information parents give to their children; access, or what resources a parent can provide; and style, or the communication of finances between parent and children (Vosylis et al., 2023). Financial parenting style can either strengthen or hinder emerging adults' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In a longitudinal study in which college students were surveyed during their first year in college, their fourth year in college, and 2 years after college, the participants reported the transfer of financial responsibility from parent to child and that parent-directed financial behavior declined as self-directed financial behavior increased (Serido et al., 2020). In another study, Rudi et al. (2020) compared first-year students who took out loans with those who did not. Financial communication from parents predicted higher levels of financial self-efficacy in students who did not borrow, whereas financial modeling predicted higher levels of financial self-efficacy in students who did borrow.

### ***Parenting and Academics***

Maternal autonomy support positively correlated with perceived academic control in college students (Hwang & Jung, 2021). Deneault et al. (2020) found that both maternal and paternal psychological control predicted fear of failure in emerging adults, and that fear of failure

negatively predicted academic achievement, satisfaction of academic achievement, academic goal progress, and school satisfaction.

### ***Parenting and Relationships***

Jiao (2021) explored the associations between family communication patterns and attachment orientation. The two patterns for family communication were conversation and conformity, and the attachment orientations for both parent–child and romantic relationships were attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. The family communication pattern of conformity predicted both anxiety and avoidance attachment orientations for both parent–child and romantic contexts. The family communication pattern of conversation only negatively predicted parent–child attachment avoidance; all other attachment orientations were not significant. Parenting by lying or when parents lie to their children to get a positive outcome were associated with lower quality relationships in young adults (Dodd & Malm, 2023). Parents or those in roles of parents, such as foster carers or other guardians, may be impacted by their mental well-being and not be able to provide secure and safe attachments with the children in their care, which may then lead to a sense of perpetual distrust in young adults (Green & Moran, 2022). Among Chinese college students, harsh parental discipline predicted deviant peer affiliation, which predicted cyberbullying perpetration (Chu & Xie, 2023). Parental involvement predicted emotional prosocial and compliant prosocial behavior in young adults (Sondhi et al., 2021). Parental strictness and supervision also predicted compliant prosocial behavior. Perceived parental psychological control was associated with increases in reports of power imbalance in romantic relationships in emerging adults (Whittington & Turner, 2023). Parent-reported high autonomy was associated with prosocial choices in young adults who reported high interdependent self-construal (Yaban & Sayıl, 2020).

### ***Parenting Summary***

Parenting and the impacts of parenting are determined by multiple variables, such as parental involvement, parental support, and psychological control (Su et al., 2022). The interactions between parent and adult children can be impacted by parental factors and can impact their mental health and relationships (Jiao, 2021; Segrin & Flora, 2019). Parental variables can impact the prosocial behaviors of emerging adults either positively or negatively (Sondhi et al., 2021). Last, parental impact can also differ by the gender of the child (Yang et al., 2022). Parental variables are often organized into various parenting styles, which are explored in the following section.

### **Parenting Styles**

There are four parenting styles described in the relevant literature: (a) indulgent or permissive, (b) authoritarian, (c) authoritative, and (d) uninvolved or neglectful parenting (Darling, 1999). Parenting styles are primarily categorized by examining parental responsiveness and parental demandingness to their children's needs and requests. Permissive parents tend to be more responsive than demanding, whereas authoritarian parents are more demanding than responsive. Authoritative parenting is seen equally as both demanding and responsive, whereas neglectful parents are seen as neither responsive nor demanding. Each parenting style affects behavior in emerging adults, and females are more affected by parenting styles than males (Hock et al., 2018; Steele & McKinney, 2019). Stearns et al. (2023) examined parenting styles across the United States and found that the most reported parenting style is high authoritative/authoritarian, with moderately permissive mothers and fathers. Participants in all regions of the United States reported profiles that were high in authoritarian parenting styles for

both parents. Participants in all regions except the western region reported parenting profiles of highly authoritative mothers and highly authoritarian fathers.

### ***Indulgent or Permissive Parenting***

Parents and female emerging adult children were surveyed to determine the predicted value of parental behaviors and depressive symptoms (Love, Cui, et al., 2022). The first finding was that the adult children reported higher levels of indulgent parenting than their mothers. A greater discrepancy between parent and female child reports of indulgent parenting predicted a slower decline in depressive symptoms. Permissive parenting was positively correlated with narcissism (Kılıçkaya et al., 2023). Segrin and Flora (2019) determined that permissive parenting was negatively associated with emotional intelligence. Permissive parenting predicted antisocial behavior (Nnadozie et al., 2018). Mallett et al. (2019) concluded that permissive parenting was associated with higher rates of drinking in college students. Permissive parenting was negatively correlated with effort management and positively correlated with peer learning (Seroussi & Yaffe, 2020). Elekes (2019) found that permissive parenting was positively related to identity diffusion in emerging adults. Paternal permissive parenting predicted a decrease in intrinsic values in adults one year after the 12th grade (Williams & Ciarrochi, 2020). Grossman et al. (2020) stated that permissive parenting was significantly associated with higher rates of risky sexual behavior. Last, emerging adult males reported higher levels of permissive parenting than females (McKinney, Brown, & Malkin, 2018).

### ***Authoritarian Parenting***

**Authoritarian Parenting and Mental Health.** Authoritarian parenting is associated with mental health problems such as internalization (Steele & McKinney, 2019) and depressive symptoms (Hock et al., 2018). College students with diagnoses of ADHD who reported higher

levels of maternal authoritarian parenting style also reported higher levels of inattention, hyperactivity/impulsivity, stress, anxiety, and depression (Stevens et al., 2019). Authoritarian parenting predicted antisocial behavior when 228 graduates were surveyed (Nnadozie et al., 2018). Janik McErlean and Lim (2020) found that authoritarian parenting was positively related to alexithymia and aggression in emerging adults. Authoritarian parenting is positively associated with a prevention regulatory focus (Chen et al., 2022). Williams and Ciarrochi (2020) determined that authoritarian parenting predicted controlled values, particularly extrinsic values, in adults 1 year after the 12th grade. Electroencephalographs were used to measure error-related negativity, which registers a negative deflection in the event-related potential waveform (Banica et al., 2019). Maternal authoritarian parenting was positively associated with error-related negativity in emerging female adults (Banica et al., 2019). Last, authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with self-regulation in both European American and Asian American emerging adults (Shen et al., 2018).

**Authoritarian Parenting and Relationships.** Authoritarian parenting is negatively associated with friendship intimacy (Chen et al., 2022), and positively associated with child abuse risk in emerging adults (Gonzalez et al., 2022). Authoritarian parenting is also significantly associated with a higher rate of risky sexual behaviors (Grossman et al., 2020). Last, authoritarian parenting style in mothers is associated more with commitment in female emerging adults than in participants who reported authoritative parenting in their mothers (Cho et al., 2022).

**Authoritarian Parenting and Academics.** Authoritarian parenting is negatively associated with effort management (Seroussi & Yaffe, 2020). However, authoritarian parenting is strongly correlated with external motivation, test anxiety, and critical thinking.

**Authoritarian Parenting and Substance Use.** Paternal authoritarian parenting is positively associated with cannabis use in individuals between the ages of 14 and 21 (Kokotovič et al., 2022).

### ***Authoritative Parenting***

**Authoritative Parenting and Mental Health.** Authoritative parenting is associated with lower reports of mental health issues (Hock et al., 2018; Steele & McKinney, 2019). College students diagnosed with ADHD who reported higher levels of maternal authoritative parenting style also reported lower levels of hyperactivity/impulsivity, inattention, stress, anxiety, and depression (Stevens et al., 2019). Gender can have a significant impact on parenting styles and the outcomes of adult children (McKinney & Kwan, 2018). Males who reported preferred and perceived maternal authoritative parenting style reported fewer psychological problems than males who reported preferred but not perceived maternal authoritative style. Females who reported preferred and perceived maternal authoritative style reported higher psychological problems than females who reported preferred but not perceived maternal authoritative parenting style.

After a systematic review, Kılıçkaya et al. (2023) determined that authoritative parenting and narcissism in emerging adults were negatively correlated with each other. Authoritative parenting was positively associated with both promotion regulatory focus and prevention regulatory focus (Chen et al., 2022). Maternal authoritative parenting predicted the importance and autonomous regulation of values in emerging adults 1 year after the 12th grade (Williams & Ciarrochi, 2020). However, paternal authoritative parenting predicted a decrease in the importance of extrinsic values in emerging adults 1 year after the 12th grade. Authoritative parenting was positively associated with self-regulation in both European American and Asian

American emerging adults (Shen et al., 2018). Maternal authoritative parenting style was negatively associated with self-esteem in female emerging adults (Szkody et al., 2021). Female emerging adults reported more authoritative parenting than males (McKinney, Brown, & Malkin, 2018). However, when both male and female emerging adults reported high levels of both maternal and paternal authoritative parenting, they also reported high levels of psychological problems, which is contrary to existing literature.

**Authoritative Parenting and Relationships.** Ashley et al. (2022) surveyed 592 emerging adults who were baptized in the Seventh-Day Adventists to examine correlations between parenting style, sexual self-efficacy, and acceptance of double standards. The authoritative parenting style was correlated with the highest levels of sexual self-efficacy when compared to the other three parenting styles. Authoritative parenting was positively associated with friendship intimacy (Chen et al., 2022) and was negatively associated with the risk of child abuse in emerging adults (Gonzalez et al., 2022). Authoritative parenting was also associated with the lowest rate of risky sexual behaviors (Grossman et al., 2020). Last, authoritative parenting in mothers was positively associated with compromise in romantic relationships in female emerging adults (Cho et al., 2022).

**Authoritative Parenting and Academics.** Authoritative parenting is correlated with peer learning and help-seeking (Seroussi & Yaffe, 2020).

**Authoritative Parenting and Substance Use.** Both maternal and paternal authoritative parenting were negatively associated with cannabis use in individuals between the ages of 14 and 21 (Kokotovič et al., 2022).

**Authoritative Parenting and Finances.** Authoritative parenting was positively related to the experience of foreclosure in emerging adults (Elekes, 2019).

### *Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting*

**Uninvolved or Neglect Parenting and Mental Health.** Neglectful parenting is associated with mental health issues such as internalization (Steele & McKinney, 2019) and depressive symptoms (Hock et al., 2018). Maternal neglectful parenting was positively associated with the most reports of cannabis use in individuals aged 14–21 (Kokotovič et al., 2022).

### *Parenting Style and Culture*

Culture has a significant impact on parenting style and how parents are perceived by their children. Smith et al. (2021) studied parents from Australia and parents from South-East Asian cultures. Australian culture is individualistic, whereas South-East Asian culture is collectivist. These parents all had children who had diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder. Parents from South-East Asian cultures reported high rates of mental health well-being and their children's diagnoses being less impactful on their quality of life. Most Sub-Saharan African migrant parents who resided in Australia reported that they maintained parenting styles from their countries of origin (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2020). However, some reported adapting their parenting style due to concerns such as a perceived lack of knowledge of the educational system. All parents identified that their goal in their parenting style was to improve their children's ability to succeed academically and professionally. However, cultural differences cannot be simplified to just individualist and collectivist cultures. Al-Hassan et al. (2021) surveyed Jordanian mothers, and the mothers reported parenting practices that reflected both collectivist and individualist values. Parents from Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, and the United States participated in a study to determine variances in parental attitudes (Lansford et al., 2021). It determined that the variance in parental attitude was better attributed to cultural

differences within each culture, such as progressive mindsets or socioeconomic status. Culture influences parenting style and, therefore, it also influences the attachment styles of children.

### ***Parenting Styles Summary***

There are four main parenting styles—permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and neglectful (Darling, 1999). Each parenting style impacts adult children in various ways. Permissive parenting was associated with higher narcissism and antisocial behaviors (Kılıçkaya et al., 2023; Nnadozie et al., 2018). Authoritarian parenting style predicted antisocial behaviors and difficulty understanding/expressing emotions (Janik McErlean & Lim, 2020; Nnadozie et al., 2018). Neglectful parenting was associated with internalization (Steele & McKinney, 2019). Last, authoritative parenting was negatively correlated with narcissism (Kılıçkaya et al., 2023) and positively correlated with compromise in romantic relationships in females (Cho et al., 2022). Several factors impact parenting style, such as the gender of the child (McKinney, Brown, & Malkin, 2018) and culture (Smith et al., 2021). Parenting styles impact emerging adults' attachment styles as they begin to have relationships of their own. Attachment theory and attachment styles are further discussed in the following sections.

### **Attachment Theory**

Bowlby's ethological theory of attachment has four stages that all occur within the first 2 years of life (Berk, 2018). The first phase occurs within the first 6 weeks. Babies will look for comfort from any adult who will offer it. The next phase happens between 6 and 8 months. During this phase, babies differentiate between familiar caregivers and strangers and act differently towards those they know. In the third phase, babies have a distinct attachment to family members and experience separation anxiety when away from their trusted caregivers. This phase occurs from 6–8 months to 18 months or 2 years. Last, the fourth phase, which begins

between 16 months and 2 years, is when a reciprocal relationship is formed between children and caregivers. The children have further developed social skills and can understand why the caregivers leave. During this last phase, the children have also developed a set of expectations from caregivers about their responsiveness to the children's needs or the caregivers' internal working models. Different levels of attachment are determined by the children's security in their relationships with their primary caregivers.

### ***Secure Attachment***

Secure attachment is when a secure base has been developed between children and caregivers (Berk, 2018). The children have learned that the caregivers will attend to their needs (National Institutes of Health, 2015). Secure attachment in adulthood influences behaviors. Chakroun-Baggioni et al. (2021) determined that insecure men reported drinking more frequently than secure men; however, secure women reported a higher frequency of drinking than insecure women. In another study, paternal secure attachment was positively correlated to happiness in Turkish university students, but not maternal secure attachment (Cihangir Cankaya & Denizli, 2020). Secure attachment was positively correlated with emotional regulation and negatively correlated with stress in undergraduate students (McGinley et al., 2023). Parenting style also influences attachment style. The term *guan* is used when discussing parenting in Chinese families (Ang & Sin, 2021). *Guan* refers to the belief that increased supervision is a way to show love and care for children. The practice of *guan* in childhood was positively correlated with a sense of secure attachment in adults.

### ***Insecure–Avoidant Attachment***

Insecure–avoidant attachment is prevalent when children downplay the need for comfort and tend to distress (National Institutes of Health, 2015). After stressful situations, the children

may avoid their caregivers. As with secure attachment, insecure–avoidant attachment can influence children’s mental health and behaviors later in life. Insecure–avoidant attachment was negatively associated with addressing emotions in first-year university students (Jeong et al., 2024). Insecure–avoidant attachment style was also associated with major depressive disorder in adults (Golshani et al., 2021). In a longitudinal study, infants who displayed behaviors associated with insecure–avoidant attachment displayed behaviors such as callousness and remorselessness at age 15 (Yan & Chen, 2023). A history of childhood trauma and current domestic violence in mothers predicted insecure–avoidant attachment in their children in 1 year (Galbally et al., 2022).

### ***Insecure–Resistant/Ambivalent Attachment***

This attachment style is associated with externalizing behaviors, in which children may become angry at the departure of their caregivers, but upon return, they are not easily consolable (National Institutes of Health, 2015). Both major depressive disorder and severe dissociation were positively correlated to insecure–ambivalent attachment (Golshani et al., 2021). An increase in stress in mothers before conception was a predictor of insecure–resistant attachment (Galbally et al., 2022). Infants with insecure–resistant attachment were more likely than infants with secure attachment to receive a later diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (K. B. Martin et al., 2020). Last, disruption in maternal communication was correlated with ambivalent attachment in infants in Israel (Ariav et al., 2023).

### ***Disorganized/Disoriented Attachment***

This attachment style occurs when there is a disruption in the relationships between children and caregivers (National Institutes of Health, 2015). The children do not know how to signal their needs to their caregivers. The children may approach their caregivers with fearful or

blank expressions. Children in the fifth or sixth grade who had disorganized/disoriented attachment had lower emotional regulation, awareness, and expression (Brumariu et al., 2021). Disrupted maternal communication was correlated with disorganized attachment in infants in Israel (Ariav et al., 2023). Bogdanović et al. (2023) found that disorganized attachment impacted depression by reducing the ability to conceptualize. Disorganized attachment is also positively associated with severe symptoms of prolonged grief (Sekowski & Prigerson, 2022).

### *Attachment Styles Summary*

Attachment style is significantly influenced by the responsiveness of parents/caregivers and is established within the first 2 years of life (Berk, 2018). There are four attachment styles—secure attachment, insecure–avoidant attachment, insecure–resistant/ambivalent attachment, and disorganized/disoriented attachment. One’s attachment style can influence one’s mental health and relationships in adulthood (Golshani et al., 2021; McGinley et al., 2023; Sekowski & Prigerson, 2022). Now that the basics of parenting styles and attachment styles have been discussed, a discussion of the specific variables in this study (helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction) follows.

### **Helicopter Parenting**

Helicopter parenting is defined as parents hovering and remedying any issues their children may encounter (Wenze et al., 2019). Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020b) stated that helicopter parenting can be identified by the overinvolvement of parents that hinders the development of independence in their children. Helicopter parenting is marked by warmth and support, and low autonomy (Wenze et al., 2019). Helicopter parenting has become a more accessible parental style due to technology like phones, which allow parents to stay connected to their children (Wieland & Kucirka, 2020). Nelson et al. (2021) argued that other parental factors

often observed in helicopter parenting, such as parental warmth and parental psychological control, are more accurate indicators of emerging adults' mental health and academic engagement. Nelson et al. (2021) found that parental psychological control is positively associated with depression and delinquency, and negatively associated with academic engagement, whereas parental warmth is negatively associated with both depression and delinquency and positively associated with academic engagement in emerging adults. Not all aspects or behaviors associated with helicopter parenting are associated with negative outcomes in emerging adults. Luebke et al. (2018) found that information-seeking behavior is associated with better functioning in both decision-making styles and academic functioning in emerging adults. The influence of helicopter parenting on independence or autonomy, however, does not begin in emerging adulthood. In adolescents, helicopter parenting was negatively associated with autonomy support (Gagnon & Garst, 2019). However, when emerging adults reported both high helicopter parenting and autonomy support, individuals also reported higher life satisfaction and self-efficacy than participants who reported high helicopter parenting and low autonomy support (Hwang & Jung, 2022). However, as adults age, helicopter parenting decreases (Nelson et al., 2021). Understanding the influences of helicopter parenting on emerging adult behavior is important and has been expanded upon more throughout this literature review.

It is also important to understand why parents engage in helicopter parenting and what influences their decisions to do so. Perfectionism was a possible influence on parents' engagement in helicopter parenting (Segrin et al., 2020). Parents may view their children's failures as a reflection of their parenting and may employ helicopter parenting to avoid any failures of the child. Prevention focus was positively associated with helicopter parenting for both mothers and fathers (Rousseau & Scharf, 2018). However, paternal helicopter parenting

was negatively associated with interpersonal regret. Separation anxiety in both mothers and fathers was positively associated with helicopter parenting behaviors (Brenning et al., 2017). Attachment styles are also a factor in the presentation of helicopter parenting. Anxiety attachment was positively associated with helicopter parenting, whereas attachment avoidance was negatively associated with helicopter parenting (Jiao & Segrin, 2021). Parental anxiety attachment and parental separation anxiety were positively related to parental overprotection in adolescents (Brenning et al., 2017).

Another factor to be considered when discussing why parents engage in helicopter parenting behavior is culture, specifically the effects of individualistic and collectivist cultures. Su et al. (2022) surveyed emerging adults in China and the United States and found that emerging adults in the United States reported higher levels of parental support and involvement, and that emerging adults in China reported higher levels of parental psychological control. Perceptions of emerging adults differ on helicopter parenting behaviors and are influenced by cultural norms; therefore, cultural norms can influence behaviors in emerging adults who report helicopter parenting. A third factor is the mental health of the parents (Cui, Darling, et al., 2019). Cui, Darling, et al. (2019) found that when parents reported higher levels of negative psychological well-being and stress, they also reported higher levels of helicopter parenting behaviors. Parents may also become emotionally codependent on their adult children, considering their adult children as friends or confidants (Elliston-Gittings, 2020).

Another factor in why parents engage in helicopter parenting behaviors is external factors, such as previous experiences. In a quantitative study, adult children of lesbian parents and their parents were surveyed to determine whether homophobic stigmatization and helicopter parenting were associated (Carone et al., 2022). When parents reported that their children had

experienced homophobic stigmatization, the adult children also reported higher helicopter parenting.

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Mental Health***

Some aspects of helicopter parenting are more harmful than others in terms of the mental health of the adult children. One such aspect is felt overcontrol (Rote et al., 2020). When helicopter parenting was associated with felt overcontrol by either mother or father, higher rates of internalizing problems were also observed. Studies focusing on helicopter parenting and mental health issues have found significant correlations between the two (Cui, Darling, et al., 2019; Perez et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2020; Wenze et al., 2019).

Helicopter parenting was positively associated with emotional distress and negatively associated with emotional distress tolerance in emerging adults (Perez et al., 2020). Emotional avoidant coping was also positively associated with helicopter parenting (Carone et al., 2022). Helicopter parenting was positively associated with maladaptive coping skills such as withdrawal, internalizing, and distancing (Segrin & Flora, 2019). Self-regulation was negatively linked with helicopter parenting (Moilanen & Lynn Manuel, 2019). Cook (2020), Moilanen and Lynn Manuel (2019), and J. Wang et al. (2021) found that helicopter parenting was positively correlated with depressive symptoms.

Both anxiety and depression were positively correlated with helicopter parenting in emerging adults (Cui, Darling, et al., 2019; Hong & Cui, 2020; Luebbe et al., 2018; Wenze et al., 2019). Helicopter parenting was positively associated with anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, and emotional dysregulation, but was negatively associated with life satisfaction in both American and Finnish samples (Cui, Janhonen-Abruquah, et al., 2019). In participants

ranging in age from 14–24, who had experienced concussions, helicopter parenting was weakly associated with higher levels of post-concussion anxiety and stress (Trbovich et al., 2022).

Kouros et al. (2017) concluded in a mixed-methods study that females reported less well-being than males when helicopter parenting was reported. This may be due to females' tendency to internalize, as well as parents' tendency to be more protective of their female children than their male children. In another quantitative study, no difference was found in the reports of helicopter parenting and gender; however, gender was a moderating factor in the relationship between helicopter parenting and life satisfaction (Cardoso Garcia et al., 2022). Helicopter parenting is correlated with lower life satisfaction, and when gender was used as a moderator, this was only valid for women. However, Jung et al. (2020) did not find a significant correlation between helicopter parenting and emerging adults' well-being. This difference in findings may be due to only polling university students who had two-parent homes, thus limiting the generalizability of the results. When helicopter parenting is mediated by parent–child affection, lower depressive symptoms are found; however, there is a positive correlation between helicopter parenting and depressive symptoms (J. Lee & Kang, 2018).

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Self-Efficacy***

Female university students with ADHD who reported higher levels of helicopter parenting also reported lower levels of self-efficacy; however, this relationship was not observed in male university students with ADHD (Buchanan & LeMoyne, 2020b). Nevertheless, Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020a) stated that male university students from single households had both higher levels of helicopter parenting and lower levels of self-efficacy, whereas for female university students, helicopter parenting coupled with single-parent homes had little to no impact on self-efficacy. Maternal helicopter parenting was negatively associated with self-efficacy but

not with paternal helicopter parenting in American participants; however, with Korean participants, both maternal and paternal helicopter parenting were negatively associated with self-efficacy (Jung et al., 2019). Overparenting was negatively correlated with self-esteem and leader self-efficacy in Korean adolescents (Liu et al., 2019). Self-mastery was negatively linked with helicopter parenting (Moilanen & Lynn Manuel, 2019). However, Yilmaz (2020) found that both maternal and paternal perceived helicopter parenting positively affected ego inflation in adults ages 24–34. Perceived maternal helicopter parenting accounted for 42.8% of ego inflation and perceived paternal helicopter parenting also accounted for changes in ego inflation.

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Adjustment***

Helicopter parenting can hinder adjustment in emerging adults. Wenzel et al. (2019) determined that helicopter parenting was positively associated with experiential avoidance in emerging adults. More specifically, helicopter parenting, when coupled with felt control, adjustment was most hindering in college undergraduate students (Rote et al., 2020). Helicopter parenting predicts authentic living in emerging adults (Turner et al., 2020). Hayes and Turner (2021) found that helicopter parenting was positively associated with maladaptive perfectionism. Perfectionism may also contribute to decision-making styles. Luebke et al. (2018) concluded that helicopter parenting was associated with less rational and more dependent and avoidance decision-making styles. Helicopter parenting was related to negative implications for vocational identity development, and males were more impacted than females (Lindell et al., 2017). Helicopter parenting was correlated with lower in-depth career exploration and career adaptability and higher reports of career self-doubt (LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022). Helicopter parenting was negatively associated with both life satisfaction and self-control (Hong & Cui, 2020). Mellema and Grigsby (2019) determined that helicopter parenting was positively

associated with indecisiveness. Recovery from concussion took longer when more helicopter parenting was reported (Trbovich et al., 2022). However, J. Lee and Kang (2018) found no significant relationship between helicopter parenting and life satisfaction, even when career expectation was used as a mediator. These differences may be due to the sample being Korean, and therefore cultural considerations should be taken into account. Another explanation may be that this is due to the different age ranges in J. Lee and Kang's study, as they identified emerging adults as those between the ages of 19 and 34, as opposed to the more frequently used age range of 18–25.

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Addiction***

Cook (2020) determined that helicopter parenting was positively associated with substance use in emerging adults. Helicopter parenting and the average number of drinks per day were positively correlated (McGinley & Davis, 2021). Helicopter parenting was positively associated with alcohol-related negative consequences and negatively associated with alcohol-protective behavioral strategies (Perez et al., 2021). However, Cui, Allen, et al. (2019) did not find a significant direct relationship between helicopter parenting and alcohol use, but they argued that because helicopter parenting was negatively related to psychological needs, psychological needs were positively related to self-control, and self-control was negatively related to alcohol use in participants, therefore, helicopter parenting was indirectly related to alcohol use. Helicopter parenting was positively correlated with internet addiction and risqué social media content in female undergrad students (Love, May, et al., 2022). However, Şimşir Gökcalp (2022) stated that maternal helicopter parenting was positively associated with multi-screen addiction, but paternal helicopter parenting was not. Last, helicopter parenting was

significantly related to game and social media addictive behavior in American young adults, but not in Chinese young adults (Hwang et al., 2022).

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Academics***

Howard et al. (2019) found that helicopter parenting and academic success were negatively correlated. Helicopter parenting was negatively correlated to academic achievement (Luebbe et al., 2018; Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). Academic achievement was measured by the four constructs of mastery goals (motivation to learn the most about the subject), avoidance of performance goals (doing well enough to avoid poor grades), perfectionism, and entitlement (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). Helicopter parenting was negatively associated with mastery goals and positively associated with avoidance of performance goals and perfectionism; however, entitlement had conflicting results. Both mothers and adult children were surveyed, and only in the mothers' responses was it found that entitlement was higher.

Darlow et al. (2017) found that helicopter parenting was associated with lower academic performance and lower preference for parental intervention. Paternal helicopter parenting was associated with higher school burnout, but not maternal helicopter parenting (Love et al., 2020). Grade point average (GPA) did not have a significant correlation with either maternal or paternal helicopter parenting in American participants, but both maternal and paternal helicopter parenting were negatively correlated to GPA in Korean participants (Jung et al., 2019). Maternal helicopter parenting, but not paternal helicopter parenting, was significantly and positively correlated to perceived academic control (Hwang & Jung, 2021). However, when college graduate students both reported helicopter parenting and felt overcontrolled by their mothers, academic motivation was higher than when students reported fathers who engaged in both helicopter parenting and overcontrol (Rote et al., 2020). However, Howard et al. (2022) found

that in first-year undergraduate students, helicopter parenting occurred infrequently and was not significantly related to academic motivation.

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Relationships***

Currently, there are conflicting views regarding whether and how helicopter parenting influences relationships in emerging adults. Richardson et al. (2017) found that helicopter parenting was directly positively correlated with a sense of entitlement but not with sexual coercion in college males. However, Richardson et al. also made the argument that because entitlement is significantly correlated to sexual coercion, helicopter parenting is indirectly correlated to sexual coercion. Segrin and Flora (2019) argued that helicopter parenting and the positive association with entitlement and narcissism in emerging adults also led to poor social intelligence.

In another study, helicopter parenting hindered prosocial behaviors and empathy (McGinley, 2018). McGinley (2018) also determined that helicopter parenting was positively associated with public prosocial behaviors but negatively associated with altruistic prosocial behaviors. Schiffrin et al. (2021) found that helicopter parenting was associated with extrinsic motivation to help others. Schiffrin et al. also examined any potential difference between maternal helicopter parenting and paternal helicopter parenting and found that both maternal and paternal helicopter parenting were associated with less empathy for others. However, only with maternal helicopter parenting did emerging adult participants report less perspective-taking and helping others.

Scharf et al. (2017) found that the helicopter parenting behavior of anticipatory problem solving was significantly correlated with higher interpersonal sensitivity in young adults. Helicopter parenting predicted self-alienation and external influence but not acceptance of

external influence in emerging adults (Turner et al., 2020). Helicopter parenting was associated with decreased reports of relational competence in emerging adults (Cook, 2020; Moilanen & Lynn Manuel, 2019). Nie et al. (2022) reported that helicopter parenting increased interpersonal conflict by increasing psychological entitlement and fear of missing out on college students in China. In another study, feeling overcontrolled and not helicopter parenting was significantly associated with discord in the parent–child relationship (Rote et al., 2020). However, Candel (2022) found that helicopter parenting did not have a significant correlation with relational satisfaction or conflict.

### ***Helicopter Parenting and Grit***

Helicopter parenting was negatively associated with grit (Howard et al., 2019).

### ***Summary of Helicopter Parenting***

Helicopter parenting is characterized by warmth and support, but low autonomy (Wenze et al., 2019). Jiao and Segrin (2021) reported that parents engage in helicopter parenting due to their anxiety attachment style, and Segrin et al. (2020) reported that parents' desire for perfectionism also influenced their engagement in helicopter parenting. However, helicopter parenting decreases as adult children age (Nelson et al., 2021). Helicopter parenting negatively affected mental health and well-being in various ways, such as depression and anxiety (Cook, 2020), lower life satisfaction in females (Cardoso Garcia et al., 2022), and increased substance use (Cook 2020). Helicopter parenting was also correlated with lower career adaptability (LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022), and negatively associated with mastery goals (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). Next, helicopter parenting hinders prosocial behaviors (McGinley, 2018), and is associated with less empathy (Schiffrin et al., 2021). Finally, helicopter parenting is negatively

associated with grit (Howard et al., 2019). The concept of grit and its constructs are further expanded on below.

## **Grit**

Grit is made up of two other constructs: perseverance and passion. Grit is specifically used to refer to sustained perseverance and passion towards a long-term goal (Duckworth et al., 2007a). In neuroimaging, grit was associated with functional connectivity density in the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (S. Wang et al., 2023). The two constructs of grit—perseverance and passion—are further expanded on in the following section.

### ***The Building Constructs of Grit***

**Perseverance.** Perseverance is defined as sustained effort towards a goal regardless of difficulty or obstacles (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Perseverance is one of the constructs that make up grit. Perseverance differs from grit in that perseverance does not take passion into account. Perseverance was positively correlated with goal progression and well-being, and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms (Verner-Filion et al., 2020). A growth mindset was associated with an increase in life satisfaction, which in turn was associated with a decrease in perceived distress, which led to an increase in perseverance in effort (Lam & Zhou, 2020). Perseverance served as a buffer against depressive symptoms seen in borderline personality disorder in Thai medical students (Pongpitpitak et al., 2022). Perseverance was linked to an increase in reports of life satisfaction and positive emotions (Datu & Zhang, 2021). Perseverance negatively predicted motivation but positively affected life satisfaction (Hernández et al., 2021). Last, both authoritative and permissive parenting were positively correlated with the perseverance of effort in undergraduate students (L. M. A. Lee & Datu, 2022).

**Passion.** Passion is defined as consistency of interest (Duckworth et al., 2007a). Verner-Filion et al. (2020) defined two types of passion, namely (a) harmonious and (b) obsessive. A harmonious passion is an activity that supports the identity of individuals without any contingencies, whereas an obsessive passion is an activity that is done for the identity that is internalized by someone, such as avoiding feeling guilty or receiving punishment (Verner-Filion et al., 2020). Harmonious passion was positively associated with perseverance, but not with consistency of interest; however, obsessive passion was negatively associated with both perseverance and consistency of interest. Males had a significantly higher correlation in passion than females (Sigmundsson et al., 2020). Finally, passion or consistency of interest was less significant in outcomes than perseverance (Akos & Kretchmar, 2017; Boerma & Neill, 2020; Morell et al., 2021).

### ***Development of Grit***

The discussion of how grit is developed or strengthened has been a priority, as Duckworth et al. (2007a) found that grit was a predictor of success. Hope is significant in the development of grit (Qiu et al., 2021). Grit increases alongside career advancement in the medical field, starting from medical students to non-consultant hospital doctors (Abd Elwahab et al., 2022). Grit may also be strengthened after individuals experience traumatic events, such as the Coronavirus disease of 2019 (S. Wang et al., 2023). Posttraumatic growth and grit had a moderate positive correlation. Family socioeconomic status and self-control were also correlated with grit. Gyamfi and Lai (2020) stated that performance of effort and consistency of interest were influenced by participants' sociocultural contexts. Adverse childhood experiences were significantly and negatively associated with grit in Chinese college students during COVID-19 (Cheung et al., 2021).

**Grit and Personality.** Grit was positively related to competitiveness, proactive personality, and leadership/authority narcissism and is negatively associated with Machiavellianism and vulnerable narcissism (Houston et al., 2021). Grit–perseverance was positively related to both self- and other-oriented perfectionism, and grit–perseverance predicted leadership/authority narcissism, but not Machiavellianism and vulnerable narcissism. Grit–consistency was not significantly correlated with competitiveness, proactive personality, or perfectionism; however, grit–consistency predicted Machiavellianism and vulnerable narcissism but not hyper-competitiveness. Grit was significantly and positively related to openness to experience, extraversion, liability, and adaptive character traits (Ekinici et al., 2021). University students who were learning English as a second language, and who were high in perseverance of effort and low in consistency of interest were high in neuroticism and low in conscientiousness (Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al., 2021).

**Grit and Mental Health.** In university students in Thailand, higher reports of grit were associated with lower reports of depression and anxiety (Musumari et al., 2018). In a sample of college students who self-reported chronic medical conditions, Sharkey et al. (2018) determined that grit negatively correlated with anxious and depressive symptoms and positively associated with emotional well-being. Grit was positively associated with well-being in Portuguese emerging adults (Frontini et al., 2022). Grit–perseverance, and grit–consistency both predicted problematic phone usage in emerging adults (Khoo & Yang, 2022). Grit and emotional intelligence were positively linked among emerging adults (Esin, 2021; Resnik et al., 2021). Grit also predicted the mental health of college students, and a reduction of grit led to an increase in psychological problems (Dong et al., 2023). Grit acts as a mediator between optimism and life satisfaction (Oriol et al., 2020). Grit–perseverance of effort, and grit–consistency of interest were

examined to determine their effects on identity, depression, happiness, and self-esteem (Weisskirch, 2019). Grit–perseverance of effort, and grit–consistency of interest directly affected commitment-making and ruminative exploration identities. However, only grit and perseverance of effort directly affected exploration in depth and exploration in breadth. Both grit–perseverance of effort and grit–consistency of interest directly affected both happiness and self-esteem. However, only grit–consistency of interest directly affected depression. Grit was positively and significantly predicted by resilience in 521 university students (Ghanizadeh, 2022). Finally, grit and positive orientation were significantly associated with each other

**Grit and Physical Health.** Allee et al. (2020) found a significant correlation between university students' reports of grit and lifestyle, meaning that students who reported higher grit also reported healthier lifestyles. Allee et al. also found that grit was a better predictor of lifestyle than chronotype (a person's natural sleep–wake cycle, i.e., night owl versus early bird). In another study, grit was positively associated with healthcare management skills and physical health dimensions in young adults (Sharkey et al., 2017). Young adults with both high grit and high consistency of interest showed lower levels of theta and beta ratios while completing a learning task (Aguerre et al., 2021).

**Grit and Academics/Learning.** Grit predicted success in distance higher education, with consistency of interest predicting higher course credits and perseverance predicting course grades (Xu et al., 2020). Similarly, the grit aspect of perseverance of effort was a more significant predictor of GPA and academic satisfaction than the grit aspects of consistency of interest, self-control, and conscientiousness (Boerma & Neill, 2020). Halperin and Eldar Regev (2021) surveyed 237 nursing students and found that higher passion and grit predicted higher average grades, and that higher perseverance and grit predicted higher clinical grades. Total grit

score predicted GPA; however, like other studies, perseverance of effort was a significant predictor of GPA, whereas consistency of interest was not (Akos & Kretchmar, 2017). Akos and Kretchmar (2017) also determined that total grit negatively predicts a change in major; however, only consistency of interest was a significant predictor. Last, Akos and Kretchmar concluded that total grit, perseverance of effort, and consistency of interest significantly predicted the number of hours completed after the second semester.

Grit and perseverance were positively correlated with GPA in civil engineering students (H. Martin et al., 2022). Morell et al. (2021) examined whether the constructs of perseverance of effort or consistency of interest found in the Grit Short Scale would predict grades in the following samples: (a) U.S. high school students, (b) U.S. college students, and (c) Korean college students. In all three samples, perseverance of effort was a better predictor than consistency of interest. Grit was a significant predictor of both clinical and academic performance in undergrad nursing students (Terry & Peck, 2020). Using the Triarchic Model of Grit Scale, Bozgün et al. (2022) found that grit was positively associated with academic self-efficacy and negatively associated with underachievement. Grit acted as a partial mediator between peer attachment and academic procrastination (Jin et al., 2019). Grit also influenced undergraduate students' goal orientation in that grit correlated with mastery goal orientation more than performance-approach orientation and was negatively correlated with avoidant-approach goal orientation (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020). In Chinese college students, being high in perseverance of effort had a positive effect on job-search intensity, but no effect on job-search clarity (Yu et al., 2022). However, high consistency of interest had a positive effect on job-search clarity but no effect on job-search intensity. Using the L2-Grit Scale, grit significantly

predicted continued vocabulary English learning in Saudi students between the ages of 16 and 18 (Alamer, 2021).

Grit was significantly and positively associated with English as a second language learners' pronunciation self-efficacy beliefs (Shehzad et al., 2022). A language growth mindset weakly predicted perseverance of effort, but not consistency of interest, and therefore, Khajavy et al. (2021) recommended that total grit should not be used to predict success in learning a second language, but that the two subfactors should be used. Finally, using the Foreign Language Grit Scale, grit was a reliable predictor of foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety (Resnik et al., 2021).

However, Muenks et al. (2017) found that regulation of effort was a better predictor of students' grades than grit perseverance, although grit perseverance was a better predictor of students' grades than grit consistency of interest, which aligns with previous studies. Muenks et al. speculated that this difference in findings from other studies was due to the specificity of the scales used regarding the regulation of effort versus the perseverance of effort. Neither perseverance of effort nor consistency of interest predicted college GPA in first-generation college students (Almeida et al., 2021).

**Grit and Parenting Styles.** In high-school students, parental rearing styles are significantly correlated to grit (Qiu et al., 2021). Parental psychological control predicted a decrease in the persistence of both passion and preservation in high school students (Wei & Liu, 2022). Grit and parental emotional support were also positively correlated in a study that surveyed eighth-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022). However, C.-L. Lin and Chang (2017) determined that a democratic parenting style (identified as a

parenting style that allows children to explore and have autonomy), did not predict grit, whereas family influence did predict grit in high-school students.

**Grit and Relationships.** In eighth-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students, it was determined that grit was associated with higher levels of relational satisfaction with teachers (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022).

**Grit Summary.** Duckworth et al. (2007a) defined grit as perseverance towards and passion about a long-term goal. Perseverance is defined as a sustained effort towards a goal despite obstacles, and passion is defined as the consistency of interest. Each construct of grit was explored individually. Perseverance was positively correlated with well-being and negatively correlated with depression (Verner-Filion et al., 2020). Also, authoritative and permissive parenting was positively correlated to perseverance. The construct of passion was then explored. Many studies found that passion was less significant than perseverance in outcomes (Akos & Kretchmar, 2017; Boerma & Neill, 2020; Morell et al., 2021). Grit was then explored. Hope was an important factor in the development of grit (Qiu et al., 2021). Grit influences mental health, and consequently, increased grit was positively linked to emotional intelligence (Esin, 2021), and decreased grit led to an increase in psychological problems (Dong et al., 2023). Grit was also positively correlated with healthier lifestyles in university students (Allee et al., 2020). Grit also predicted success in long-distance higher education learning (Xu et al., 2020). Last, only studies that examined grit and relational satisfaction were completed with high-school students and their student/teacher relationships (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022). The last variable in this study—relational satisfaction—is further discussed below.

## **Relational Satisfaction**

Bühler et al. (2021) performed a systematic review and discovered that relational satisfaction decreases between ages 20 and 40, increases until the age of 65, and it remains constant from that age on. Furthermore, Bühler et al. found the largest decline in relational satisfaction in young adulthood. Bühler and Orth (2022) stated that relational satisfaction rank-order stability increased with the length of the relationship until around the 20-year mark, when a slight decrease was observed.

Attachment styles may also affect relational satisfaction in young adults. Both anxious and avoidant attachment were negatively related to relational satisfaction (Chopik et al., 2022; Hocking et al., 2018; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019). Couples who cohabited with each other reported lower relational satisfaction when one partner deployed strategies to restore equity in the relationship and the other partner resisted these strategies (Charbonneau et al., 2019). Relational satisfaction was associated with lower romantic loneliness and higher rates of resolving intimacy crises in adults ranging in age from 18 to 40 (Adamczyk et al., 2022). In 226 adults ranging in age from 20 to 30, the partner's superiority was the strongest negative predictor of relational satisfaction, and forgiveness of one's partner was the strongest positive predictor (Fupšová & Záhorcová, 2022). Time perception, or the continual flow of information obtained from social and personal events, is used to make meaning of events in temporal categories (Gugliandolo et al., 2021). In adults between the ages of 20 and 34, only present-oriented time perception was correlated with higher couple satisfaction; future- and past-oriented perceptions were not correlated. The importance of romantic relationships, number of previous relationships, and self-compassion were significant predictors of relational satisfaction; however, relationship length, relationship status, and social appearance anxiety were nonsignificant predictors

(Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021). Finally, relational satisfaction and commitment were positively associated with one another (Matotek et al., 2021).

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Mental Health***

The relationship status and well-being of 556 young adults, ranging in ages between 20 and 25, were directly linked by utilizing satisfaction of relationship status and fear of being single as mediators (Adamczyk, 2017). Beffel et al. (2021) examined relational satisfaction in emerging adults and the association between three broad autism phenotypes—aloof personality, pragmatic language deficits, and rigid personality—and found that all three phenotypes were associated with lower relationship satisfaction. Zhou et al. (2022) concluded that partners, regardless of gender, reported higher relationship satisfaction when one or both individuals in the relationship engaged in more mindfulness practices. Relational satisfaction, emotional competencies, and well-being were significantly related; furthermore, relational satisfaction mediated the relationship between emotional regulation and well-being in adults between the ages of 18 and 35 (Mónaco et al., 2021).

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Behaviors***

In college students with an average age of 20 and adults with an average age of 41, the majority of participants reported not seeing partner phubbing—using a phone while physically being with one's partner—as directed at them, but did see this as a social norm (Roberts & David, 2022). However, when partners perceived the phubbing as intentional, they also perceived more relational denigration (Roberts & David, 2022). Cell phone usage in a relationship is not all detrimental. The perceived similarity in texting behaviors among partners correlated with higher levels of relational satisfaction (Ohadi et al., 2018). Relational satisfaction was negatively correlated with restrictive engulfment—a type of psychological control—

amongst emerging adults ages 18 to 28 (Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019). Young adults aged 18 to 29 were exposed to five different vignettes of couples who were either married or cohabiting, with or without children, and five different gender role relationships (Sells & Ganong, 2017). The participants were also required never to have been married, not to be currently cohabiting, and to be child-free. Participants projected that people with egalitarian roles and married couples would have higher rates of relational satisfaction than others. Interestingly, as relational satisfaction increased, linkage or electrodermal activity between young-adult couples reduced (Timmons et al., 2023). Relationship satisfaction was used as a moderating variable between relationship talk with both friends and partners, relational uncertainty or jealousy, and depressive symptoms (So et al., 2022). There were no associations between relational uncertainty and relationship talk when relational satisfaction was high, but when lower relational satisfaction was reported, higher levels of relational uncertainty were also reported. Relational satisfaction did not moderate the association between relationship talk and depressive symptoms. Finally, sexting is not significantly associated with relational satisfaction (Matotek et al., 2021).

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Sex***

Relational satisfaction was indirectly associated with sexual satisfaction when sexual satisfaction was positively associated with communication (Bennett-Brown & Denes, 2023). Women who reported having orgasms also disclosed more positive thoughts and feelings about their partners, which predicted greater relationship satisfaction (Denes, 2021).

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Physical Health***

Sleep can affect relational satisfaction in emerging adults (Madsen et al., 2023). Relational satisfaction was associated with lower sleep efficacy and higher wake after sleep onset. Participants in a longitudinal study reported better physical health during years when they

were in a satisfying relationship than during years when they were single or in unsatisfying relationships (Adamczyk et al., 2021).

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Family of Origin***

Greenwell (2019) examined the relationship between messages about mental health during childhood from other family members and perceived relational closeness. Positive messages about mental health were related to higher perceptions of relational closeness, and neutral messages were related to less perceived relational closeness than positive messages, but more perceived relational closeness than negative messages. In another study, the perceived functionality of the family of origin did not directly affect couple satisfaction, but when time perspective was introduced as a mediating variable, an indirect effect was found (Gugliandolo et al., 2021). Godbout et al. (2017) concluded that early exposure to relationship violence increased the likelihood of violence in relationships amongst both emerging adults and high-school students. In the same study, attachment anxiety and relational satisfaction were mediated by the perpetration of violence with both a significant and an indirect effect.

### ***Relational Satisfaction and Parenting***

The Marital Opinion Questionnaire was altered by removing two questions so that 338 emerging adults could quantify their relational satisfaction with their parents (McManus, 2022). Communication competence in emerging adults, more than parental support, influenced relational satisfaction with parents. In 183 parent–child dyads, parental relationship satisfaction with the child was associated with lower reports of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Hong et al., 2021). Furthermore, Hong et al. (2021) discovered that when reviewing only Hispanic parent–child dyads, the association of both emerging adults’ and parents’ relationship

satisfaction and their anxious and depressive symptoms was stronger than in the non-Hispanic child–parent dyad.

### ***Relational Satisfaction Summary***

Relational satisfaction is lower in emerging adults and increases with age, stabilizing at approximately 65 (Bühler et al., 2021). Anxious and avoidant attachment styles are negatively correlated with relational satisfaction (Chopik et al., 2022; Hocking et al., 2018; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019). When couples engaged in mindfulness practices, relationship satisfaction increased (Zhou et al., 2022). Psychological control was negatively associated with relational satisfaction (Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019). Relational satisfaction, like grit, was also positively associated with better physical health (Adamczyk et al., 2021). Family of origin positive messages about mental health were associated with higher perceptions of relational closeness (Greenwell., 2019). Last, increased communication competence and parental support impacted relational satisfaction between parents and emerging adults (McManus, 2022). Now that all variables have been expanded on, a discussion of the various scales used in previous studies follows in the last section of this chapter.

### **Scales**

#### ***Helicopter Parenting Scales***

**Helicopter Parenting Scale—LeMoyne and Buchanan.** LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) developed the Helicopter Parenting Scale, which asked 10 questions and used a Likert-type scale on which one means strongly disagree and five means strongly agree. The questions covered activities concerning present-day doings and past childhood doings, such as, “My parents supervised my every move growing up,” and “My parents let me figure things out independently.” After completing factor analysis with varimax orthogonal rotation, the authors

excluded the last three questions from the scale to ensure the scale was valid. The authors computed the coefficient alpha to determine reliability and found it to be .71, which meets the requirement of .70 or higher for reliability.

**Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale.** The Helicopter Parenting Scale has been used frequently to decipher whether the respondents had parents who used that style. Schiffrin, Yost, et al. (2019) stated that they had two purposes: the first was to develop the Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale and the second was to use that scale to determine whether helicopter parenting is an influencing factor in how individuals' mindsets pertain to intelligence. Their study included 275 students from a university with an average age of 19.59; there were 74.9% females, and 79.2% of the participants identified as Caucasian. The respondents completed seven scales during an online survey. The scales were the Helicopter and Autonomy-Supportive Parenting Scale, Helicopter Parenting Instrument, Helicopter Parenting, Helicopter Parenting Scale, Over-Parenting Scale, Children's Perception of Parents' Failure Mindset, and Implicit Theory Measure. Five of the scales (Helicopter and Autonomy-Supportive Parenting Scale, Helicopter Parenting Instrument, Helicopter Parenting, Helicopter Parenting Scale, and Over-Parenting Scale) were used to measure helicopter parenting, and the other two (Failure Mindset and Implicit Theory Measure) were completed to measure the mindsets of the individuals. The final scale consisted of all five items from the Over-Parenting Scale, three items from the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and two items from the Helicopter Parenting Instrument.

The authors set out to develop a new helicopter parenting scale that incorporated the most significant items from other existing helicopter parenting scales (Schiffrin, Yost et al., 2019). Though the Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale is an attempt to bring the most significant items of other scales, its validity had not been established. The authors listed this as a limitation

of the study. Therefore, the results of their study cannot be seen as valid until the Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale is established as a valid scale.

**Chinese Paternal and Maternal Overparenting Scale.** In another study, Leung and Shek (2018) determined that the Chinese Paternal Overparenting Scale and Chinese Maternal Overparenting Scale were valid and reliable. Both scales have 44 items and eight dimensions that include children's academic performance, close monitoring, comparison between child and peer achievements, child life and direction, excessive care, overwhelming scheduling of children's activities, excessive involvement, and problem solving. Both scales were reliable, with the coefficient alphas being .95 and .96. The authors completed an exploratory factor analysis. After doing so, they removed eight items from the Chinese Paternal Overparenting Scale and two items from the Chinese Maternal Overparenting Scale. The scales were determined to be valid after significant relationships were found between these two scales, the Chinese Paternal/Maternal Behavior Control Scale, and the Chinese Paternal/Maternal Psychological Control Scale. The authors concluded that both the maternal and paternal overparenting scales provided good psychometric measures; however, they recommended that confirmatory factor analysis should be completed with a larger sample size.

**Helicopter Parenting Scale—Padilla-Walker and Nelson.** Zhang et al. (2020) completed a confirmatory factor analysis for the items on the Helicopter Parenting Scale created by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) and found it both convergent and valid across both the U.S. and Korean samples. The Helicopter Parenting Scale is a five-item Likert-type scale questionnaire.

### ***Grit Scales***

**Triarchic Model of Grit Scale.** The Triarchic Model of Grit Scale is used to measure grit and adaptability for long-term goals (Datu & Zhang, 2021). It is acceptable as a measure in Filipino and Chinese students (Datu & Zhang, 2021) and Turkish students (Bozgün et al., 2022).

**L2-Grit Scale.** The L2-Grit Scale was derived from the Grit Scale and the Academic Grit Scale specifically to measure second language learning (Alamer 2021). It was reliable and valid when examined with Saudi students learning English.

**Academic Grit Scale.** The Academic Grit Scale was adapted from the original Grit Scale to be more specific to academic success and appropriate for youth populations (Clark & Malecki, 2019). It was both reliable and valid when utilized with adolescent participants in Grades 6–8.

**Grit Scale.** The Grit Scale was developed by Angela Duckworth et al. (2007a) to determine whether grit was a better predictor of things like intelligence, conscientiousness, and self-control that are often used to predict success in various programs. The authors utilized six studies to determine whether grit was a predictor in various areas of life. The first study looked at grit and higher levels of education among adults. The conclusion was that higher levels of grit were correlated with higher levels of education. The second study was to determine whether grit was associated with age and educational levels. In the second study, it was determined that those with associate degrees or graduate degrees were higher in grit than those with bachelor's degrees. It was also determined that grit was reported as highest in participants aged 65 and above and lowest in 25- to 34-year-olds. In the third study, which examined the relationship between grit and GPA in undergraduate students, grit was positively correlated with GPA; however, grit was negatively correlated with scholastic aptitude test scores. The authors speculated that grit is a better predictor of GPA than intelligence, as the scholastic aptitude test

scores are a measure of intelligence. Akos and Kretchmar (2017) replicated the findings that grit was a predictor of GPA as well.

In the next study, grit was examined alongside retention at the West Point Academy in cadets' first summer. Grit predicted retention in the program after the first summer, with the findings that cadets whose scores were a standard deviation above average were more than 60% likely to complete summer training, and those who met the average standard were more than 50% likely to complete summer training. However, grit was not a good predictor of GPA within the first year of the academy. The fifth study was a replication of the fourth study, but it also examined whether grit was a better predictor than the Big Five Conscientiousness factors regarding retention after the first summer. It was concluded that conscientiousness was correlated with the current test that West Point used for admissions called Whole Candidate Score, but grit was not. Furthermore, grit and conscientiousness were highly correlated. Last, grit predicted summer retention, while both conscientiousness and the Whole Candidate Score did not. The final study examined grit in finalists in the 2005 Scripps National Spelling Bee. The first aim of the study was to determine whether grit was a predictor of success in extracurricular accomplishment and whether time spent studying would act as a mediator of grit. Grit predicted further advancement in the Spelling Bee rounds, and weekend hours of practicing mediated the factor of grit.

Morell et al. (2021) tested three-factor models for the Short Grit Scale on the following samples: (a) U.S. high-school students, (b) U.S. college students, and (c) Korean college students. The three-factor models consisted of a one-factor model that placed the eight items of the Short Grit Scale on one factor, a two-factor model that had consistency of interest and perseverance of effort on separate but correlated factors, and a bifactor model that placed all

eight items of the Short Grit Scale onto one latent factor and placed perseverance of effort and consistency of interest onto subscales that were found to be uncorrelated. Morell et al. (2021) determined that for U.S. high-school students, the best fit was the correlated two-factor model, while for the U.S. and Korean college students, the best fit was the bifactor model. Morell et al. tested the Long-Term Grit Scale by using the same three-factor models and the same samples. In the high-school sample, both the one-factor and two-factor models were of good fit, and in both the U.S. and the Korean college sample, both the one-factor and bifactor models were of good fit.

The Grit Scale was both reliable and valid for use with both adolescents and university students (Kardas et al., 2022). Luo et al. (2020) conducted a longitudinal study to determine the Grit Scale's longitudinal measurement invariance and found that the longitudinal properties of the Grit Scale were satisfactory. The Grit Scale has been adapted to be used with Portuguese emerging adults (Frontini et al., 2022). The Grit Scale was both valid and reliable in Omani and Arab cultures (Alhadabi et al., 2019).

### ***Relational Assessment Scale***

The Relationship Assessment Scale was developed to measure relational satisfaction in all couples and not just married couples (Hendrick, 1988). Before the Relationship Assessment Scale, the Relational Assessment Scale that was commonly used was the Marital Assessment Questionnaire. The Relationship Assessment Scale was derived from the Marital Assessment Questionnaire, but it changed the word marriage to relationship and the word mate to partner, and it added two more questions to make the scale a total of seven questions. The newly developed scale was administered to 235 undergraduate students. The results were analyzed

using principal-components factor analysis, and most were in the moderate range of 0.573 to 0.760.

A correlational analysis was done between items and concepts. This analysis resulted in a moderate correlation between items and the concepts they were measuring. In the second study, the Relationship Assessment Scale was administered to 57 dating couples along with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Love Attitude Scale. The author used analysis of variance to analyze the results of the Relationship Assessment Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and showed that the Dyadic Adjustment Scale predicted 93% of the couples who were together and 50% of the couples who were apart, and the Relationship Assessment Scale predicted 91% of the couples who were together and 57% of the couples who were apart. The author concluded that with both studies, the Relationship Assessment Scale was internally consistent, measured relevant concepts, and predicted which couples were together and which had separated.

The scales that were used in this study were the Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) Helicopter Parenting Scale, Duckworth et al. (2007b), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988). All scales were both valid and reliable, and they are normed for emerging adults.

### **Summary of Conclusions**

Helicopter parenting is detrimental to prosocial behaviors (McGinley, 2018), entitlement (Richardson et al., 2017), social intelligence (Segrin & Flora, 2019), and relational competence (Cook, 2020). However, helicopter parenting was not significantly correlated with relational satisfaction (Candel, 2022). Helicopter parenting impeded the development of grit (Howard et al., 2019). The only study on grit and relationships examined eighth, 11th, and 12th graders and their relational satisfaction with their teachers (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022). Therefore,

limited research exists on the influences of the three variables: helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction in emerging adults. This study has verified both the results from Candel's (2022) study and Howard et al.'s (2019) study. The current study has further advanced the current literature and also has utilized the construct of grit in a social context to determine whether grit can be used when examining relationships. Many reviewed studies were quantitative, and therefore, a quantitative study has been used to explore these concepts.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The completed study required 80 to 90 participants and utilized scales to measure helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction. Once the information was collected, the data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis, and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for that analysis. The analysis determined whether the independent variables, helicopter parenting and grit, correlated with the dependent relational satisfaction in emerging adults and how each variable relates to the others. This completed study was designed as a quantitative and non-experimental study. Emerging adults are defined as between the ages of 18 and 25, and so that was the population that was surveyed. Participants were drawn from Walden University's participant pool, SurveyMonkey, Amazon's Mechanical Turk, and social media sites such as TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, and X. Therefore, the convenience sampling technique was used to identify participants. Before the survey began, the participants read and signed off on an informed consent form. The three scales, the Helicopter Parenting Scale, the Grit Scale, and the Relationship Assessment Scale, made up a significant portion of the survey along with demographic information. The design, analysis, participant recruitment, and scales have been further explained in the preceding sections.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

In this study, the variables of helicopter parenting and grit were identified as independent variables, and relational satisfaction was recognized as the dependent variable. The research design was a quantitative study with a non-experimental research design. A non-experimental research design is used when no variables are manipulated and when the variables are thought to be related in a meaningful manner (Warner, 2013). A non-experimental research design was used

when examining the relationship between helicopter parenting and grit (Howard et al., 2019), helicopter parenting and relationships (McGinley, 2018; Scharf et al., 2017; Schiffrin et al., 2021), and grit and relationships (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022). Surveys were formulated that included the Helicopter Parenting Scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), the Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007b), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick et al., n.d.).

Participants also answered screening questions to determine whether they were in a romantic relationship, were between the ages of 18 and 25, and resided in the United States, as these were the criteria for participation. Demographic information was collected as well. Multiple linear regression was used to analyze results. Multiple linear regression allows for several predictor variables to be analyzed to determine the predictive value of each variable on an outcome (Warner, 2013). In this completed study, the predicting variables were helicopter parenting and grit, and the outcome was relational satisfaction. The collection of data was done by posting the survey on the Walden University research website, Amazon Mechanical Turk, SurveyMonkey, and social media sites. The use of multiple platforms to obtain participants was intended to create an opportunity for a diverse sample. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 and in a romantic relationship, which posed a challenge to obtaining enough participants. A G\*Power computation indicated that 68 participants were needed; however, Z. Htway (personal communication, August 15, 2022) recommended 80–90 participants in anticipation of information that needed to be excluded for various reasons, such as missing or incomplete data.

This study adds to the current available research, as it has examined the predictor values of helicopter parenting and grit on relational satisfaction in emerging adults. This study also serves as a confirmatory study to Howard et al. (2019) on the relationship between helicopter parenting and grit.

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

The target population was emerging adults. Emerging adults have been defined as individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 25. Emerging adults are also defined as between the ages of late teens and mid or late twenties (Berk, 2018). Emerging adulthood is marked by significant changes in one's life, including changes in intrapersonal and cognitive functioning. A G\*Power computation showed that 68 participants are the minimum required to find significance; however, following a recommendation, the completed study involved 85 participants to account for responses that may need to be excluded due to missing or incomplete data (Z. Htway, personal communication, August 15, 2022).

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

Convenience sampling was utilized to recruit participants. Convenience sampling is when participants are recruited using means that are readily available to the researcher (Warner, 2013). In this study, the means that were readily available to the researcher were social media platforms and the Walden University research participant pool. In this study, the population was emerging adults or individuals aged from 18 to 25, in a romantic relationship, and residing in the United States. The G\*Power computation was completed, and it determined that 68 participants were required to find significance. Many studies have obtained participants solely from recruiting university students (Akos & Kretchmar, 2017; Beffel et al., 2021; Buchanan & LeMoyne, 2020b); however, a goal of this study was to recruit participants who are not university students; therefore, multiple platforms were used to recruit participants. The Walden University research participant pool was still utilized to increase the probability of reaching the recommended participant size of 80 to 90 (Z. Htway, personal communication, August 15, 2022).

Amazon Mechanical Turk, SurveyMonkey, and social media platforms were utilized to recruit participants who may not be university students. Participants were asked to share the survey with anyone known to them who may fit the criteria for the study, and therefore, both convenience and snowball sampling were deployed to recruit participants. Convenience sampling was used to capture a diverse sample, and it allowed for participants across the United States to participate in the completed study. Convenience sampling was also deployed to help to capture emerging adults from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The first inclusion criterion was the participants' age. As this study solely explored emerging adults, any participants who were not within the age range of 18 to 25 were excluded. Another inclusion criterion was the participants' relationship status. Participants who reported not being in a relationship were excluded. This information was used for descriptive statistical purposes. Participants who reported not residing in the United States were also excluded.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Participants were recruited using multiple platforms such as Walden University participant pool, Amazon Mechanical Turk, SurveyMonkey, and social media platforms. Participants were also asked to share the survey with anyone who may meet the inclusion criteria that participants were within the age range of 18 to 25, were in a romantic relationship, and resided in the United States. Additional demographic information was requested for descriptive statistics as well. The additional demographic information was gender identity, race, highest educational level, current employment, and zone improvement plan (ZIP) code. Informed consent was created by utilizing the *Informed Consent* template from Walden University's Office of Research and Doctoral Services website. The finalized informed consent was included in the survey link, and participants were asked and required to complete the informed consent before

continuing to the survey. The informed consent form included the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline, 1-800-662-4357, in the event that the survey caused distress to participants and they felt the need to speak with a mental health professional. Participants were thanked for completing the survey, asked to share the survey with others, and provided a link to view the completed study. There were no follow-up procedures for this study.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

#### ***Relationship Assessment Scale***

The Relationship Assessment Scale was developed by Hendrick in 1988. Hendrick created the scale to measure relational satisfaction in all couples, including unmarried couples. The Relationship Assessment Scale is a seven-item Likert-type scale. Hendrick determined that the Relationship Assessment Scale was both valid and reliable, and it served as a good predictor of couples staying together versus those who would not. This was determined by surveying 235 undergraduate students and completing a principal-components factor analysis. The analysis indicated a moderate range, with item-total variance varying between 0.573 and 0.760 (Hendrick, 1988). The Relationship Assessment Scale was positively correlated with passionate love and altruistic love, and negatively correlated with game-playing love.

Hendrick (1988) completed another study involving 57 couples (114 individuals) in the spring of 1986 at a university. Questionnaires were completed by couples, but they completed separate questionnaires, and they were not allowed to communicate while completing the questionnaires. At the end of the semester, 31 couples were contacted to determine whether they were still dating. After analysis, the Relationship Assessment Scale correctly predicted 91% of the couples who were still dating and 57% of the couples who were no longer dating (Hendrick, 1988). Therefore, Hendrick (1988) concluded that the Relationship Assessment Scale was

consistent and measured the relevant concepts. The Relationship Assessment Scale has been used in multiple quantitative studies to measure relational satisfaction in similar age ranges, such as college or university students (Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019), young adults ranging in age from 18 to 34 (Adamczyk et al., 2021), adults ranging in age from 18 to 40 (Adamczyk et al., 2022), adults between the ages of 20 and 30 (Fupšová & Záhorcová, 2022), and emerging adults between the ages of 20 and 34 (Gugliandolo et al., 2021). Finally, this scale was found on the APA PsycTests database and, for non-commercial research purposes, it did not require permissions (Hendrick et al., n.d.).

### ***Grit Scale***

Duckworth et al. (2007a) developed the Grit Scale. The Grit Scale consists of 12 questions, six that focus on passion and six that focus on perseverance. The internal consistency of the Grit Scale was considered high ( $\alpha = .85$ ) after using the Grit Scale to predict the association of grit and higher educational levels in adults 25 and older. In another study that explored the ability of the Grit Scale to predict retention at West Point Academy, the Grit Scale had an internal reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .79$ . Kardas et al. (2022) also determined that the Grit Scale was both reliable and valid to be administered to both adolescents and young adults. The Grit Scale was used to measure grit in other quantitative studies that recruited participants of similar ages, such as university/undergraduate students (Ghanizadeh, 2022; Houston et al. 2021; Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al., 2021; Oriol et al., 2020; Weisskirch, 2019). Last, this scale was found on the APA PsycTests database and for non-commercial research purposes, it did not require permissions (Duckworth et al., 2007b).

### ***Helicopter Parenting Scale—Padilla-Walker and Nelson***

The Helicopter Parenting Scale is a five-item scale that explores how much parental intervention or interference is occurring in an emerging adult (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The responses are completed on a Likert-type scale. The internal consistency of the Helicopter Parenting Scale was high ( $\alpha = .81, .83$ ) (Nelson et al., 2021). The Helicopter Parenting Scale was both valid and reliable (Zhang et al., 2020). Multiple previous quantitative studies have utilized the Helicopter Parenting Scale to measure helicopter parenting in similar populations, such as college/university/undergraduate students (Cook, 2020; Jung et al., 2019; McGinley & Davis, 2021; Turner et al., 2020; J. Wang et al., 2021). Finally, this scale was found on the APA PsycTests database, and for non-commercial research purposes, it did not require permissions (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The data analysis for the study was completed using the SPSS. The data were entered into SPSS, and a multiple regression was completed to determine the correlations between helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction. A linear regression was completed to determine the correlation between each variable: helicopter parenting and grit, helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction, and grit and relational satisfaction. A multiple regression was also completed to examine the constructs of grit (passion and perseverance) independently for their predictive values on relational satisfaction and helicopter parenting. Data were cleaned and screened before the analysis was completed, and missing and incomplete data were addressed using SPSS. SPSS can address missing data in two ways: by exclusion or by estimating missing values. For this study, missing data were excluded.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: Is there a correlation between grit and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H1<sub>0</sub>: Grit has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H1<sub>a</sub>: Grit has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ2: Is there a correlation between helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H2<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H2<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ3: Is there a correlation between both helicopter parenting and grit with relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H3<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H3<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

### **Threats to Validity**

An external threat to validity is defined as an impediment to the application of the results, real-life issues, and the generalizability of results (Warner, 2013). In this study, one external threat to validity may be the generalizability of the results. Most studies that examine helicopter parenting are done at universities, and most of their samples are described as White and female (Cui, Darling et al., 2019; Darlow et al., 2017; Hayes & Turner, 2021). Therefore, if this study has different sample demographics, generalizability may not be possible. Internal threats to validity can include causal inference, temporal precedence, or rival explanations (Warner, 2013).

The completed study may have incurred an internal threat to the validity of causal inference. An example would be that helicopter parenting causes lower relational satisfaction, or that grit causes an increase in relational satisfaction.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Amazon Mechanical Turk, SurveyMonkey, and social media platforms were used to recruit individuals. The consent form was displayed before the participants continued the survey. By continuing the survey, the participants consented to participate in the study. They were notified in the consent form that they did not need to finish the survey if they chose not to (see Appendix A for the consent form). Also, on the consent form, there was the number for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. No information was collected that could identify individual participants to allow for anonymous participation. Financial compensation was provided according to the terms of the survey panels (SurveyMonkey and Amazon Mechanical Turk), and no additional compensation was provided.

### **Summary**

In the study, emerging adults (ages 18–25) were recruited by using Amazon Mechanical Turk, SurveyMonkey, and social media platforms, and a convenience sampling method was utilized. The survey collected demographic information such as age, ethnicity, and gender. Inclusion criteria were being between the ages of 18 and 25, in a current romantic relationship, and residing in the United States. The rest of the survey was comprised of the Helicopter Parenting Scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick et al., n.d.), and the Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007b). Results were analyzed using multiple regression, and surveys with missing data were removed. Participants reviewed a consent form

that detailed how the information would be kept confidential and how they could access resources if necessary. Chapter 4 presents the data and the analysis of the data.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether grit and helicopter parenting could predict relational satisfaction in emerging adults. The research questions and hypotheses were as follows:

RQ1: Is there a correlation between grit and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H1<sub>0</sub>: Grit has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H1<sub>a</sub>: Grit has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ2: Is there a correlation between helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H2<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H2<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting has a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

RQ3: Is there a correlation between both helicopter parenting and grit with relational satisfaction in emerging adults?

H3<sub>0</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

H3<sub>a</sub>: Helicopter parenting and grit have a correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

In the following pages of this chapter, the data collection is discussed, followed by a discussion about the demographics of the participants, and last, an analysis of the data is presented.

### **Data Collection**

The survey was open for responses from February 9, 2025, until June 18, 2025. The survey was created using the SurveyMonkey platform. After the creation of the survey, the survey was shared on Amazon Mechanical Turk, LinkedIn, Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, Nextdoor, and Bluesky. Social media posts requested individuals to share the post on their pages. The survey was also posted on the Walden University Participant Pool. The survey was further shared on the American Psychological Association website, and it was also sent through a ListServ. A total of 118 responses were collected; however, some responses were excluded from the final study due to participants not meeting the inclusion criteria or not responding to all the questions.

### **Changes to the Proposed Study**

There were no changes to the initially proposed study that impacted the final analysis. A total of 118 responses were collected; however, only 85 of those responses could be analyzed. The 33 other responses were excluded because the participants did not fit the inclusion criteria or did not answer all the questions. The Grit Scale had items that had to be reversely coded, so this variable was manipulated to provide accurate analysis. Tables 1–7 reflect the demographics of the participants. It is noted that some participants typed in their responses; therefore, some demographic information was duplicated. The data were manually consolidated to reflect a more cohesive presentation of the data. For example, if a participant typed in Woman or Female, the gender was recorded as female. The following tables reflect the demographics collected in this study.

**Table 1***Age*

Age	Count	Percentage
18	5	5.9%
19	7	8.2%
20	8	9.4%
21	6	7.1%
22	14	16.5%
23	13	15.3%
24	13	15.3%
25	19	22.4%

*Note.* The majority of the participants were in the age range of 22–25.

**Table 2***Gender Identity*

Gender Identity	Frequency	Percentage
Female	51	60.0%
Male	28	32.9%
Non binary	2	2.4%
Trans Woman	1	1.2%
Unknown	3	3.5%

**Table 3***Race*

Race	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1.2%
Asian or Asian American	4	4.7%
Black or African American	18	21.2%
Hispanic or Latino	9	10.6%
Middle Eastern or North African	1	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	50	58.8%
Another race	1	1.2%
Decline to answer	0	0.0%
Missing responses	1	1.2%

*Note.* As in previous studies, the majority of the participants identified themselves as White.

**Table 4***Highest Level of Education*

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Associate's degree	7	8.2%
Bachelor's degree	26	30.6%
GED	1	1.2%
High-school diploma	19	22.4%
Master's degree	7	8.2%
Some college	17	20.0%
Some graduate school	6	7.1%

*Note.* The most frequent response was bachelor's degree, with high-school diploma being the second most frequent and some college coming a close third.

**Table 5***Current Employment Status*

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	60	70.6%
Not employed	7	8.2%
Stay-at-home parent	1	1.2%
Student	15	17.6%
Unknown	2	2.4%

*Note.* Most participants reported current employment.

**Table 6***Rural vs. Urban Areas*

Type of Area	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	7	8.2%
Unknown	8	9.4%
Urban	70	82.4%

*Note.* Rural and urban areas were determined using the United States Census Bureau (n.d.) criteria, which consider populations of 5,000 or less rural. Most participants reported ZIP codes that had populations over 5,000.

**Table 7***States of Participants*

State	Frequency	Percentage
AL	1	1.2%
CA	18	21.2%
CO	23	27.1%
CT	2	2.4%
FL	2	2.4%
HI	1	1.2%
IL	5	5.9%
KY	1	1.2%
MI	4	4.7%
ND	1	1.2%
NJ	3	3.5%
NV	1	1.2%
NY	3	3.5%
OH	1	1.2%
PA	1	1.2%
RI	1	1.2%
TX	4	4.7%
VA	2	2.4%
WA	2	2.4%
WY	1	1.2%
Unknown	8	9.4%

*Note.* Most participants reported residing in the states of Colorado or California.

The demographic information depicts differences in the sample from previous studies, such as ages being older than in previous studies, some participants with high-school level education or graduate level education, some participants being in the workforce, and participants

residing in multiple states as opposed to one university setting. However, the sample is limited in size, and the results cannot be generalized to all emerging adults residing in the United States.

## Results

Some of the results of this study were significant; however, the relationships among variables were not strong. Regarding the three hypotheses previously stated, the first null hypothesis that grit does not correlate with relational satisfaction in emerging adults was accepted. However, the second null hypothesis that helicopter parenting has no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults was rejected. Last, the third null hypothesis that helicopter parenting and grit would not be significant predictors of relational satisfaction in emerging adults was accepted. Grit was further examined by isolating the grit–passion and grit–perseverance items on the Grit Scale to determine their individual predictive values for both relational satisfaction and helicopter parenting. The analysis determined that neither grit–passion nor grit–perseverance predicted relational satisfaction, and that only grit–passion predicted helicopter parenting. This study also found statistical significance between grit and helicopter parenting, as seen in the previous study of Howard et al. (2019). In the following paragraphs, the tables that reflect the analysis are displayed, in addition to discussions of what each table reflects.

**Table 8**

*Regression Model Summary*

<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
.376	.142	.121	4.30017

*Note.* Predictors: (Constant), Grit, Helicopter Parenting.

**Table 9***ANOVA Summary for the Regression Model Predicting Relational Satisfaction*

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	250.407	2	125.204	6.771	.002
Residual	1,516.299	82	18.491		
Total	1,766.706	84			

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Relational Satisfaction. Predictors: (Constant), Grit, Helicopter Parenting.

**Table 10***Regression Coefficients for Predicting Relational Satisfaction*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	St. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.355	3.863		8.376	< .001
Helicopter Parenting	-.365	.101	-.378	-3.614	< .001
Grit	-.008	.084	-.010	-.091	.928

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Relational Satisfaction.

Tables 8 through 10 depict the multiple linear regression analysis. The adjusted  $R^2$  value is 0.121, which indicates that the 12.1% of the variance in the dependent variable of relational satisfaction was explained by the total of the two independent variables—helicopter parenting and grit. Furthermore, the adjusted  $R^2$  value indicated that the model has predictive power, but that the predictive power is weak. Therefore, other variables influence relational satisfaction in emerging adults that are not represented in this study. Table 9 depicts the values from the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The  $F$ -value indicated that one or both independent variables significantly predicted relational satisfaction. Information displayed within Table 10 shows that grit is not a significant predictor of relational satisfaction ( $p = .928$ ). Therefore, the first null

hypothesis was accepted. However, helicopter parenting has a significant and negative relationship with relational satisfaction ( $\beta = -.378, p < .001$ ). Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected. Last, because only helicopter parenting was a significant predictor of relational satisfaction, the third null hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 11**

*Regression Model Summary for Perseverance and Passion as Predictors of Relational Satisfaction*

<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
.158	.025	.001	4.58324

*Note.* Predictors: (Constant), Perseverance, Passion.

**Table 12**

*ANOVA Summary for the Regression Model Predicting Relational Satisfaction*

Model	Sum of Squares	<i>Df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	44.207	2	22.104	1.052	.354
Residual	1,722.498	82	21.006		
Total	1,766.706	84			

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Relational Satisfaction. Predictors (Constant): Perseverance, Passion.

**Table 13***Regression Coefficients for Predicting Relational Satisfaction*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	St. Error	Beta	<i>T</i>	Sig.
(Constant)	24.106	3.830		6.294	< .001
Passion	-.045	.118	-.042	-.384	.702
Perseverance	.192	.136	.154	1.412	.162

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Relational Satisfaction.

Grit consists of two constructs—perseverance and passion (Duckworth et al., 2007a). These constructs were isolated so they could be independently analyzed. Tables 11 through 13 reflect the multiple regression analysis, which indicated a weak correlation ( $R = .158$ ), as only 2.5% of the variance in relationship satisfaction is explained by grit–passion and grit–perseverance. Furthermore, the findings were not statistically significant ( $p = .354$ ). Last, neither grit–passion ( $p = .702$ ) nor grit–perseverance ( $p = .162$ ) were significant predictors of relational satisfaction.

**Table 14***Pearson Correlations Between Helicopter Parenting and Grit*

		Helicopter Parenting	Grit
Helicopter Parenting	Pearson correlation	1	-.213
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.050
	<i>N</i>	85	85
Grit	Pearson correlation	-.213	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	
	<i>N</i>	85	85

Table 14 displays the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = -.213$ ), which indicated a negative relationship between the two independent variables of helicopter parenting and grit. The relationship between helicopter parenting and grit is statistically significant; however, this relationship is weak.

**Table 15**

*Regression Model Summary for Perseverance and Passion as Predictors of Helicopter Parenting*

<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
.318	.101	.079	4.55712

*Note.* Predictors: (Constant), Perseverance, Passion.

**Table 16**

*ANOVA Summary for the Regression Model Predicting Helicopter Parenting*

Model	Sum of Squares	<i>Df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	191.121	2	95.561	4.601	.013
Residual	1,702.926	82	20.767		
Total	1,894.047	84			

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Helicopter Parenting. Predictors (Constant): Perseverance, Passion

**Table 17***Regression Coefficients for Predicting Helicopter Parenting*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	St. Error	Beta	<i>T</i>	Sig.
(Constant)	15.374	3.808		4.037	< .001
Passion	-.353	.117	-.316	-3.018	.003
Perseverance	.057	.135	.044	.419	.676

*Note.* Dependent Variable: Helicopter Parenting.

Tables 15 through 17 depict the regression analysis with grit–perseverance and grit–passion as independent variables and helicopter parenting as the dependent variable. The correlation is moderate ( $R = .318$ ). Approximately 10.1% ( $R^2 = .101$ ) of the variance in helicopter parenting is explained by grit–perseverance and grit–passion. Table 15 shows that the regression model is statistically significant ( $p = .013$ ). However, only grit–passion was a significant predictor of helicopter parenting ( $p = .003$ ). Grit–passion was negatively associated with helicopter parenting ( $\beta = -0.316$ ).

### Summary

Though some of the results were statistically significant, only helicopter parenting was a predictor of relational satisfaction, but the predicting power was weak. The first null hypothesis that grit had no correlation with relational satisfaction in emerging adults was accepted. However, the second null hypothesis was rejected as helicopter parenting has predictive value for relational satisfaction. Therefore, because grit cannot be considered a predictive value of relational satisfaction, the third null hypothesis was accepted. The correlation between helicopter parenting and grit was weak. Grit–passion and grit–perseverance were independently analyzed to determine whether either variable had predictive value for helicopter parenting or relational

satisfaction. Only grit–passion had significant predicted value for helicopter parenting. The results of this study may differ from other studies due to the differences in participants, such as age, education level, and how recruitment was executed. These possibilities are further discussed in the final chapter.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the association of grit and helicopter parenting to relational satisfaction in emerging adults. This was done by creating a survey using the Helicopter Parenting Scale, Grit Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale. A total of 118 responses were collected; however, only 85 responses were suitable for analysis. Analysis of the data indicated that there were some statistically significant results, but only helicopter parenting had predictive value for relational satisfaction. Helicopter parenting was negatively correlated with relational satisfaction. However, this relationship was statistically weak, unlike in previous studies that found strong relationships between helicopter parenting and various relational factors. This difference may have been due to the way participants were recruited as well as the ages, education levels, and employment status of participants. This is further discussed in the current chapter, which also discusses limitations, recommendations for future studies, and what these results may imply for research on and possible treatment of emerging adults.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings of this current study indicated that helicopter parenting is significantly and negatively related to relational satisfaction; however, this relationship was weak. The relationship between helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction was similar to the previous studies that indicated that helicopter parenting influences relational factors in emerging adults, such as a negative correlation of between helicopter parenting and empathy (Schiffrin et al., 2021), helicopter parenting predicting self-alienation (Turner et al., 2020), and helicopter parenting being negatively associated with relational competence (Cook 2020). However, the current study indicated statistically significant results, but not a strong correlation between

helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction. The results of this study may not be strongly correlated for various reasons, such as the geographic locations of participants, workforce experiences of the participants, or age of the participants.

### **Differences in Participants' Demographics**

#### ***Geographic***

A notable difference within this study is the geographic locations of the respondents. The participants reported being from multiple states, and therefore, the responses were not limited to one state or one university setting, as in previous studies, such as Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020b). Subcultures found within each state may also influence the results of this study, which may impact parenting practices.

#### ***Work Experience***

Work experience was higher in this study than in previously conducted studies. One reason for this could be the way the survey was distributed. In many previous studies, such as Beffel et al. (2021) and Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020b), responses came only from university campuses, limiting the sample to university students. The survey for this current study was distributed using Walden University's participant pool as well as on multiple social media platforms such as Facebook, Reddit, TikTok, and Instagram. One of the purposes of this study was to recruit participants who may have entered the workforce upon completion of high school. The population of emerging adults who immediately entered the workforce has not been studied to the same extent as emerging adults who are currently attending university. This may explain the weak correlation within this study. Emerging adults in the workforce may gain further independence from their families of origin as they begin to make their own money and become more financially independent. This growing financial independence may lead emerging adults to

seek independence in other areas, such as living arrangements. Another factor that may lead to a decrease in helicopter parenting being experienced by those in the workforce is the sense of self-competence. The emerging adults may grow in their sense of self-competence both in the workplace and, if living independently, in a personal sense as well. This sense of self-competence may also allow for more independence from their families of origin. Emerging adults who immediately enter the workforce after completion of high school may be less likely to have parent(s) who engage in helicopter parenting.

### *Age*

Another difference in the demographics of this study is the age of the participants. The majority of participants in this current study were at the higher age end of emerging adults (22–25 years). Nelson et al. (2021) stated that as adults age, helicopter parenting behaviors of parents decrease. The older ages of participants may speak to a level of independence as they graduate from university and enter the workforce, as well as more time away from home. Parents can engage in helicopter parenting at any age; however, it may become more difficult to engage in those practices as children age. Upon the completion of university, parents lose a resource to track the success of their adult children. For example, university students may provide their login information to their university portals to their parent(s) to provide an opportunity for their parent(s) to monitor their academic progress. However, upon completion of university, this is no longer an option. Though some workplaces may have portals to allow employees to review their annual performances, this is not always the case, and performance is often more difficult to quantify, as there are no individual assignments or tests that easily determine work performance. The goals of helicopter parenting in the later ages of emerging adulthood become more ambiguous as goals like graduating and obtaining a job are achieved. Therefore, the parent(s)

engaging in helicopter parenting may find it difficult to identify goals they can continue to monitor effectively.

### ***Differences and Social Learning Theory***

Examining these two differences, work experience and age, within social learning theory, it could be argued that as individuals enter the workforce and get older, they learn from their previous behaviors and others' behaviors and begin to develop their sense of self-efficacy. Emerging adults who are older or are active participants in the work field may be exposed to more individuals who think and behave differently from their family of origin. As individuals age, they also acquire more life experiences. Therefore, using social learning theory, the behaviors or decision-making styles of older emerging adults, or those who have entered the work force, may increasingly differ from those of their families of origin. The family of origins' ways of behavior or decision-making may be less influential as the emerging adults are exposed to more experiences that help to inform their behaviors and decisions. As emerging adults experience more life events, they may be exposed to more individuals outside their families of origin. This may also increase the differences between family of origin-normed behaviors and decision making. More simply, as both time and experiences are acquired, individuals may defer less to their parents, which hinders the parents' ability to engage in helicopter parenting.

### ***Differences and Self-Determination Theory***

Examining these two differences within self-determination theory, emerging adults who are in the workforce or who are older may increase their sense of autonomy due to the demands placed on them both in the workforce and as they grow into adulthood. As their autonomy increases, their sense of competency may increase as well, as they may seek out opportunities to challenge themselves (Deci & Ryan, 1985). As emerging adults strengthen their sense of

competency and autonomy, they may seek connection with peers and not be so reliant on their connections with their families of origin for their social needs. A stronger sense of autonomy may also reduce their need to rely on others for support and improve their competency in their relational skills.

### **Findings of the Current Study**

An unexpected finding of this study was that grit was not a significant predictor of relational satisfaction. Furthermore, the grit constructs of passion and perseverance were further explored independently. Neither grit–passion nor grit–perseverance was a significant predictor of relational satisfaction. However, the only literature that examined grit and relational satisfaction examined the relationship between high-school students and their teachers (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2022). Therefore, it is not clear whether the results of this study are consistent with previous studies, as no studies examining the predictive value of grit for romantic relational satisfaction were found during the literature review. However, the items of the Grit Scale may not relate to relationship challenges or goals as the scale is currently written. For example, the first item, “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge,” can loosely refer to relational challenges, such as a fight being a setback and working to forgive another person to achieve the goal of a long-lasting relationship. However, this may be a far-fetched interpretation and may be why this particular scale was not able to capture the essence of grit needed for long-lasting relationships.

### ***Grit and Theories***

The conclusion that grit is not related to relational satisfaction is not supported by either social learning theory or self-determination theory. Social learning theory was established by Albert Bandura (1979). The basis of social learning theory is that individuals learn from

observing and later engaging in behaviors. The consequences of the actions are then evaluated to determine whether the behavior had a positive outcome. As individuals get older, they are more selective in their behaviors. The initial conceptualization of the relationship between grit and relational satisfaction was that grit is developed by persevering and overcoming to achieve goals, such as relational satisfaction. Therefore, as grit increases, so does the likelihood of relational satisfaction. However, this conceptualization cannot be applied to the current findings relating to grit. Last, self-determination theory is based on three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These three psychological needs motivate behaviors. Initially, grit and its relationship to relational satisfaction was conceptualized such that an increase in grit would increase a sense of competence in relationships and therefore, increase a sense of relatedness. However, as with social learning theory, this conceptualization does not align with the current findings.

This study is consistent with the previous study of Howard et al. (2019) in that grit was negatively correlated with helicopter parenting. This current study also examined the grit constructs of grit–passion and grit–perseverance independently. Grit–passion was a significant predictor of helicopter parenting, but grit–perseverance was not. There was a negative relationship between grit–passion and helicopter parenting; when grit–passion increased, helicopter parenting decreased. Consistency of passion may be thwarted by helicopter parenting, as parental psychological control is a component of helicopter parenting (Nelson et al., 2021). As with any study, this study had its limitations, which are discussed below.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As discussed in Chapter 1, one possible limitation of this study is social desirability bias. The study was done anonymously, and this was done in the hope of reducing the tendency to

respond in a socially desirable way. As with previous studies, this study was limited in the diversity of the respondents, as the majority of the respondents were female and identified as White. However, the United States Census of 2020 indicated 61.63 % of the United States population identifies as White, and 50.9% of the respondents identified as female. Therefore, this study is congruent with the population of the United States. Another limitation was that the majority of participants reported ZIP codes that are considered urban areas due to their population being 5,000 or more (United States Census Bureau, 2024). These four factors may impact how participants responded. Therefore, in the following section, recommendations for further studies are discussed.

### **Recommendations**

As discussed in the previous section, differences in demographics collected in this study may explain the differences in the findings from this current study from those of previous studies. Therefore, many recommendations address that, such as including individuals who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth. This researcher attempted to do so, but one limitation is that gender was not a predefined response. Therefore, it is unknown whether individuals reported their gender as assigned at birth or if it was how they identified their gender when they participated. In future studies, it may be beneficial to define gender selections to reflect cisgender, transgender, and non-binary to determine whether there are any significant relationships between gender identity and the current variables. This is a population that has not been studied previously, and it may be beneficial to understand further how individuals who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth are impacted by helicopter parenting practices. It would also be of interest to know whether helicopter parenting is a way for parents to protect their more vulnerable adult children or if helicopter parenting thwarts emerging adults' ability to

define their gender identities. Additionally, it might be of interest to know whether gender identity impacts the sense of grit, as those identifying with a gender other than the gender assigned at birth may face more challenges and may need to develop a stronger sense of grit than their cisgender peers. As for relational satisfaction, gender identity may have an influence on roles of each partner in a romantic relationship.

ZIP codes were collected to determine whether participants were in rural or urban settings. However, the descriptive analysis indicated that the majority of the participants reported ZIP codes in urban areas. Therefore, future studies should examine these variables exclusively in rural areas to identify any possible impact this factor has. A rural home environment is an unexplored subculture in most studies. This subculture may impact parenting practices, the development of grit, and the perception of relational satisfaction. As this current study concluded, various aspects of emerging adults' identities may factor into these variables and further understanding of how emerging adults' various identities develop can better inform both treatment and research.

There are many differences within the sample of the participants in this current study. One difference is the representation of participants who reported a high-school diploma as their highest level of education. This specific population is often not represented in the current literature. Therefore, a recommendation would be to complete a study looking at how grit and helicopter parenting may differ among emerging adults who did not continue their academic journeys. Another difference in the participants within this study is between those in the workforce and those identifying as students. One recommendation would be to survey only participants who are in the workforce and not currently students to examine how emerging adults in university settings and emerging adults in the workforce differ in their responses. This

population may have different needs than their peers who attend university, and therefore, a better understanding of the experience of emerging adults who do not continue in their academic careers and instead enter the workforce immediately following high school is warranted.

Lastly, grit was not a predictive value of relational satisfaction. The Grit Scale was developed to examine goals related to academics or occupation, not goals related to romantic relationships. A recommendation may be to adapt the current Grit Scale to reflect challenges and goals that are directly related to romantic relationship goals. An adapted Grit Scale may provide more accurate information regarding the relationship between grit and relational satisfaction in romantic relationships. The development of a grit scale that is specific to romantic relationship goals would help to explain what characteristics of individuals may contribute to long-lasting relationships. This scale can then be used to re-examine the findings of this study to provide further understanding of the three current variables and further to understand the experiences of emerging adults.

### **Implications**

Though the results included statistically significant, if weak, correlations, this study still contributes to the current literature. The study does not indicate a strong correlation, as previous studies did, between helicopter parenting and relational factors. However, this difference may be influenced by how participants were recruited. The recruitment was not done solely in a university setting, which allowed for emerging adults who were not attending university to be included. This recruitment also allowed emerging adults who may have completed their studies to participate. Therefore, an implication for this study is that there may be a significant difference between emerging adults within the workforce but not currently in school and those in school but not currently in the workforce. This is a population worth studying more in depth, as

it is often not included in the current literature. This possible implication may also inform how emerging adults in the workforce but not in school, may develop in their sense of autonomy, competency, and relatedness differently from their peers currently enrolled in school. This may help to inform treatment in therapeutic settings as well as to identify challenges specific to them.

Another difference in the participants is the age of the participants. The majority of participants were in the higher age range of emerging adults (22–25). Therefore, emerging adults who are older than typical undergraduate students, who are the usual research subjects, may not be as influenced by their family origin due to the time that has passed since they lived in the family residence. Their acquired life experience may influence their sense of autonomy, competence, and relational ability with others. They may rely less on their parent(s) and more on themselves or others outside their families of origin to inform their decisions. The findings of this study exemplified that emerging adults' needs and experiences are influenced by their experiences. Furthermore, emerging adults are not a homogenized population, and the subcultures that may exist within the emerging adults need to be examined further to understand this population fully.

Another implication of the findings is that helicopter parenting negatively impacts romantic relational satisfaction in emerging adults. This study can serve as information for parents to consider when determining the parental practices in which they want to engage. This study can also help to inform treatment, particularly if emerging adults are engaging in therapy to address relational concerns with romantic partners. Last, this study can help to inform treatment for parents of adult children who may engage in helicopter parenting and the potential harm their helicopter parenting may cause.

## Conclusion

The results of this study were statistically significant; however, the correlation between the variables was weak. The results may be generalized to older emerging adults with work experience for applications to improving treatment approaches for that population. There was an inverse correlation between helicopter parenting and relational satisfaction, which indicated that the second null hypothesis could be rejected. This correlation was weak. However, there was no statistically significant correlation between grit and relational satisfaction, and therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted. Last, the third null hypothesis was accepted as neither grit nor helicopter parenting was strongly correlated with relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

The current findings may indicate the therapeutic needs of emerging adults who are non-students and, in the workforce, which may differ from their peers who are attending school. Emerging adults who are in the later ages of emerging adulthood (22–25 years old) may also differ from the typical university students who make up the majority of participants in the existing literature. This study highlighted that there are many factors to consider when examining emerging adults. These factors may have a significant impact on the established relationships among various variables for emerging adults that are found within the current literature. These findings also emphasize the limitations within the literature, such as recruiting participants solely from university settings and indicate that there is a great need to include non-university-attending emerging adults in studies to gain a better understanding of this developmental period.

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## Appendix A: Consent Form

### CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction in emerging adults. This form is part of a process called informed consent to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

The researcher seeks 80–90 volunteers who are:

- Between the ages of 18 and 25.
- Residing in the United States.
- In a romantic relationship.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Ashley Puga, who is a student at Walden University.

#### **Study Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of helicopter parenting and grit on relational satisfaction in emerging adults.

#### **Procedures:**

This study will involve you completing the following steps:  
You will complete a survey that should take you 15–20 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

My parents solves any crisis or problem I might have.  
I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.  
How well does your partner meet your needs?

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.  
If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

#### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study should pose minimal risk to your wellbeing. If this study triggers you or you feel you need to speak with a mental health professional, please call the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at 1-800-950-6264.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by contributing to the existing literature on helicopter parenting, grit, and relational satisfaction. The hope is to understand factors that can contribute or hinder relational satisfaction in emerging adults better. Once the analysis is complete, you can click on the following link <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/> and search for the results of this study by searching the title of the study: The Predicting Value of Grit and Helicopter Parenting on Relational Satisfaction or Ashley Puga.

**Payment:**

Participants will be paid according to the terms of the survey panel (SurveyMonkey or Amazon Mechanical Turk).

**Privacy:**

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court ordered (very rare). The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You can ask questions of the researcher by emailing Ashley Puga at [Ashley.puga@waldenu.edu](mailto:Ashley.puga@waldenu.edu). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative aspects of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-05-25-0899559. It expires on February 4, 2026.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

**Obtaining Your Consent**

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by clicking the next button, which will begin the survey.

## Appendix B: Scales

***Helicopter Parenting Scale***

1. My parent makes important decisions for me (e.g., where I live, where I work, what classes I take).
2. My parent intervenes in settling disputes with my roommates or friends.
3. My parent intervenes in solving problems with my employers or professors.
4. My parent solves any crisis or problem I might have.
5. My parent looks for jobs for me or tries to find other opportunities for me (e.g., internships, study abroad, etc.).

***12- Item Grit Scale***

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Please respond to the following 12 items. Be honest—there are no right or wrong answers!

1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
  - Very much like me
  - Mostly like me
  - Somewhat like me
  - Not much like me
  - Not like me at all
  
2. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.\*
  - Very much like me
  - Mostly like me
  - Somewhat like me
  - Not much like me
  - Not like me at all
  
3. My interests change from year to year.\*
  - Very much like me
  - Mostly like me
  - Somewhat like me
  - Not much like me
  - Not like me at all
  
4. Setbacks don't discourage me.
  - Very much like me
  - Mostly like me
  - Somewhat like me
  - Not much like me
  - Not like me at all

5. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.\*

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

6. I am a hard worker.

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

7. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.\*

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

8. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.\*

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

9. I finish whatever I begin.

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

10. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

11. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.\*

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me

- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

12. I am diligent.

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

Scoring:

1. For questions 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 12 assign the following points:

5 = Very much like me

4 = Mostly like me

3 = Somewhat like me

2 = Not much like me

1 = Not like me at all

2. For questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 11 assign the following points:

1 = Very much like me

2 = Mostly like me

3 = Somewhat like me

4 = Not much like me

5 = Not like me at all

Add up all the points and divide by 12. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty), and the lowest score on this scale is 1 (not at all gritty).

### ***Relationship Assessment Scale***

Please mark on the answer sheet the letter for each item which best answers that item for you.

How well does your partner meet your needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Poorly		Average		Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?

A	B	C	D	E
Poor		Average		Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Never		Average		Very Often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:

A	B	C	D	E
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

How much do you love your partner?

A	B	C	D	E
Not much		Average		Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Very few		Average		Very many

NOTE: Items 4 and 7 are reverse scored. A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, E = 5. You add up the items and divide by seven to get a mean score.