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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG PERCEIVED  
PARENTING STYLES, PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ENTITLEMENT, AND SUBJECTIVE  
WELL-BEING

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Emily A. Dreiling

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education  
Program of Counseling Psychology

August 2015

This Dissertation by: Emily A. Dreiling

Entitled: *The Interrelationships among Perceived Parenting Styles, Psychological Entitlement and Subjective Well-Being*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education, Program of Counseling Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

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Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations. The focus has been on negative consequences mediated by psychological entitlement (PE) and its behavioral manifestations; however, the possible causes or contexts that might facilitate the development of PE are absent from the literature relating to this generation. One purpose of this study was to examine to what extent Millennials endorse entitled attitudes. The findings of this study did not support the contention that Millennials harbor high levels of entitlement. Data from this study contributes to both pedagogical dialogue concerning what entitlement means for this generation and expose a discrepancy between others' observations of Millennials and their endorsement of entitled attitudes. This study illustrates the need for further research in the evolution of both the word "entitlement" and continued modification of its constructs. Further, by utilizing a series of multiple regressions, this study investigated Millennials' perceptions of parenting styles, utilizing Baumrind's parenting styles as well as experiences of helicopter parenting, personal feelings of PE, and the ways that these variables affect subjective well-being. This study affirmed prior research on the impact of Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles as they relate to child and adolescent outcomes (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). Authoritative parenting predicted greater subjective well-being. This study also found that increased

helicopter parenting and permissive parenting predicted increased PE. Though it is too early in the research to draw conclusions regarding the impact of helicopter and permissive parenting as they pertain to PE and subjective well-being, continued research is warranted. Theoretical, research, and clinical implications are also discussed.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In May 2012, David McCullough, Jr., English teacher and son of Pulitzer Prize winning author and historian David McCullough, Sr., delivered a commencement speech to the graduating class of Wellesley High School in Wellesley, Massachusetts. His theme: “None of you is special. You are not special. You are not exceptional.” McCullough addressed the discrepancy between reality in America and the message that the members of today’s graduating classes have been told their entire lives that each graduate is unique, remarkable, and deserving of every opportunity available simply because of who they are. Rather, McCullough noted that each of them was only as remarkable as the other 3.2 million members of the nation’s class of 2012. The praise they have been given and the glory they have been promised by parents, teachers, and a society that has protected them from failure at every turn were, in fact, not a guarantee of success or happiness. McCullough did not leave those departing students mired in hopeless bewilderment at their state of un-specialness but encouraged them not to depend on simply being special to get what they want. He explained to them that they were not entitled to fulfillment; instead, they must seek it (McCullough, 2012). This message echoed a growing sentiment that today’s young adults are ill-equipped to thrive in a society that does not cater to their demands. It is this incongruity between reality and the promises of unearned rewards that has

confused and frustrated today's youthful generation, a generation that has been raised in an environment of passive expectancy and entitlement (Twenge, 2006).

McCullough's (2012) comments attest to an awareness of seemingly growing levels of psychological entitlement (PE) among many of today's young adults (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, & Farruggia, 2011; Markstrom, Berman, Sabino, & Turner, 1998). The definition of PE is an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, modes of treatment, and/or designations when, in fact, one does not (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Kerr, 1985). This trend has led researchers to originate studies on young adults and how their increasingly ubiquitous attitudes about entitlement impact society (Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer & Murphy, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Windschitl, Rose, Stalkfleet, & Smith, 2008). The focus has been on negative consequences mediated by PE and its behavioral manifestations (Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Kerr, 1985); however, the possible causes or contexts that might facilitate the development of PE are absent from the literature relating to this generation. It is this omission in the literature that this study sought to correct, for in order to address the negative consequences of PE, it is important to examine the perspective of young adults the conditions in which it is fostered. This insight may contribute to possibly reducing the presence of PE in our culture (Kerr, 1985; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). A deeper understanding of PE and its consequences for Millennials was one of the goals of this study.

For clarification, the term Millennial reflects that this is the first generation to come of age in the new millennium (Taylor & Keeter, 2010), and this term is used throughout to reference today's young adult population, the population of interest for this study. Though the age range that encompasses Millennials includes all those born after 1982 through 2004 (Howe & Strauss, 2000), research has focused on the behavioral manifestations and societal consequences of entitlement apparent in young adults; hence, the age range for this study was limited to those Millennials, ages 18 to 24. This delineation both narrows the focus of the population and allows for a more accurate description of the developmental stage they share; additionally, it also represents the population upon which the measures used in this study were normed and most frequently used (Buri, 1991; Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Exline & Zell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations. In fact, it has been dubbed both the Entitled Generation (Keller, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) and Generation Me (Stein, 2012) as titular illustrations of the defining characteristic assigned to this generation. Research indicates that Millennials score higher on the Narcissistic Personality Index (NPI) when compared to prior generations (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). In academics, Millennials are noted for inappropriate behaviors, such as demanding grade changes and expecting special treatment by faculty (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009). In the workforce, Lessard et al. (2011) found that Millennials had high expectations for raises, promotions, and praise that were not related to effort. However, the negative

connotation of these labels, especially given that little attention has been given to the psychosocial factors that facilitated this evolution in entitled attitudes, may not accurately describe this population. Yet, the very appellations themselves illustrate the need to address PE among today's young adults.

The role of parenting and its possible relationship to the increasing levels of entitlement among Millennials has become an area of focus in recent years (Allen et al., 2009; Borrello, 2005; Kerr, Stattin, & Özdemir, 2012; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Markstrom et al., 1998). Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud was the first to study PE as a response to parenting (Freud, 1916/1957). The impact of parenting on the development of PE was furthered studied by Gerrard (2002), who hypothesized about the types of parenting that could foster a sense of entitlement in children. Gerrard postulated that entitlement was a response to suffering and lack of nurturance by the mother and wrote of PE as being a defense against feelings of emptiness or helplessness. A paper by Bishop and Lane (2002) also theorized that entitlement “arises in consequence to depriving childhood experiences with parenting figures” (p. 741). These investigations of the role of parenting and entitlement were not based on empirical research, however, but were journalistic accounts of entitlement as it relates to parenting. These studies have not been conclusive in their findings and have not been founded on an empirically supported theory of parenting styles sufficiently researched to validate their conceptualizations of parenting behaviors (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). It was a goal of this study to explore the relationships between parenting styles and PE.

## Theoretical Framework

### Understanding Psychological Entitlement

To elucidate the etiology and impact of PE, it is first necessary to establish a working, etymological definition of this construct. Initially, in social and personality psychology, entitlement was considered a feature of narcissism (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). The early work on narcissism was performed by psychoanalysts who identified a cluster of personality traits that formed the elements of the narcissistic personality, one of which is entitlement (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). It has been noted across studies on narcissism and the components it entails that entitlement and exploitation may be the most maladaptive elements of pathological narcissism (Pryor, Miller, & Gaughan, 2008; Raskin & Terry, 1988). People typified by an excessive sense of entitlement believe they deserve to have their needs and wishes satisfied regardless of others' feelings, needs, and rights (Campbell et al., 2004; Levin, 1970; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011; Twenge, 2006). It is from the narcissism literature that research on entitlement, as an independent construct, was conceived (Campbell et al., 2004).

A significant expansion in the understanding and conceptualization of entitlement came from several researchers (Kerr, 1985; Levin, 1970; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990) who differentiated three types of entitlement: (a) normal, adaptive entitlement; (b) excessive or exaggerated entitlement; and (c) restricted entitlement or non-entitlement. Normal entitlement is characterized by the ability to make reasonable and realistic evaluations of what one can expect from others. It may present as assertiveness without excessive expectations of others or an expectation of



preferential treatment (Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). Excessive entitlement is characterized by a person having extravagant expectations of what one is due, which are not based in reality and are disproportionate to one's efforts. The overall consequence of excessive entitlement is that it reduces one's capacity to realistically evaluate and successfully cope with the world in which one lives (Kerr, 1985).

Restricted entitlement is characterized by a lack of assertiveness and a subordinating of one's own needs and rights (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). For the purposes of this study, excessive entitlement, also defined as high levels of PE, was a focus of exploration. Campbell et al. (2004) defined psychological entitlement as,

a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others. The sense of entitlement will also be reflected in desired or actual behaviors. Our concept of PE [psychological entitlement] is intrapsychically pervasive or global; it does not necessarily refer to entitlement that results from a specific situation. Rather, PE is a sense of entitlement that is experienced across situation. (p. 31)

The presence of PE in an individual may be a pervasive trait; however, Moses and Moses-Hrushovski (1990) suggested that even if exaggerated entitlement is a prevailing trait in an individual, such a sense may surface only in specific situations and relationships. Thus, though an individual's sense of entitlement can shape the dynamics of relationships, the quality and intensity of PE depends on the specific situation or relationship (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). It is important to note that PE has not been identified as an innate trait in the psychological literature; rather, it is a learned manner of interacting with the world (Billow, 1998; Bishop & Lane 2002; Kerr, 1985; Lessard et al., 2011). It is, therefore, essential that in our understanding of PE we explore how these attitudes were learned to address the development of PE appropriately and its modification, if possible.

Previous investigations have explored factors inherent in PE, including unreasonable expectations of others (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), exploitive behaviors (Campbell, 1999), difficulty maintaining close relationships (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), expectations of favorable treatment (Gerrard, 2002), and assuming that one's own needs are more important than others (Lessard et al., 2011). Each of these studies relates to the problems that PE can have on various societal environments, yet do not speak to PE's impact on an individual's functioning. As the research devoted to defining entitlement grew, it became apparent that there were additional elements to identify and classify. Today, researchers have begun to discriminate entitled attitudes in various scenarios. The effect of an entitled attitude on academic, personal, and interpersonal relationships has become an area of interest. In years past, describing, classifying, and understanding entitlement as a cluster of personality traits, as well as designing measures to accurately assess for the construct, were research priorities (Allen et al., 2009; Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Bishop & Haveman, 1978; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline et al., 2004; Freud, 1916/1986; Gerrard, 2002). More recently, the need to examine the etiology of the attitude and the impact of PE on subjective experiences has been posited (Gerrard, 2002; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Lessard et al., 2011; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

As Mr. McCullough illustrated, the belief that one is entitled to the lifestyle of one's choice and that society owes one simply for existing is often met with a reality that expects much more than simply being present. However, what Mr. McCullough and prior researchers have omitted in their definition of PE and their characterizing an entire generation as illustrative of that definition are (a) the belief structure that accompanies entitlement, (b) the internal and interpersonal consequences of PE, and

(c) the complex etiology of not simply a mix of personality traits but a philosophy of life (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell et al., 2004; Twenge, 2006). Thus, the concept of entitlement becomes a more complex mechanism used to navigate one's experiences and relationships and not simply a combination of learned or innate traits (Bishop & Lane, 2002).

The discussion about entitlement and Millennials has been rather one-sided (Twenge, 2006) and has not drawn from the Millennials themselves and if they are indeed entitled. It is an important aspect when discussing Millennials and entitlement that the perspectives of Millennials themselves are included. While research and popular opinion suggests that Millennials are entitled, information and research on the self-awareness and understanding of entitlement from Millennials is lacking. A necessary element to ascertain in this dialogue is if Millennials do, of their own volition, endorse entitled attitudes.

To fully understand both the development of PE and its impact on Millennials, it is important to understand the contextual factors at work. The developmental lens used to conceptualize the Millennial Generation is based upon the work of Arnett (2000) and his theory of emerging adulthood. In his theory Arnett (2000) defined the stage of development between the late teens and mid 20s as a distinct period that is neither adolescence nor adulthood but theoretically and empirically different. He called this stage "emerging adulthood." He observed that during this time an individual is not confined by standard expectations or social rules. It is an era of newly gained independence from adolescence without the substantial responsibilities of adulthood. Arnett (2000) theorized that the bulk of identity development occurs

during this emerging adulthood phase. He perceived that during this phase, a plethora of directions and options are open for pursuit and the future is undecided.

Previous studies validated the premise that in industrialized societies the delaying of taking on adult roles and the prolonging of adolescence is commonplace (Arnett, 2000; Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Markstrom et al., 1998). In generations prior to the Millennial Generation, adulthood was attained through lifestyle markers such as one's age, marriage, occupational placement, having children, and living independently; however, these markers are no longer the identifying achievements that today's young people associate with being an adult (Arnett, 2000). In his 2000 article, Arnett found that it was not the lifestyle markers, such as marriage and children or chronological age that Americans in their late teens and early 20s found as significant qualifications of adulthood; indeed, those demographic markers were at the bottom of the list. Instead, the three most important qualifications for adulthood were characterological, namely, (a) accepting responsibility for one's self, (b) making independent decisions, and (c) achieving financial independence (Arnett, 2000, 2004). Thus, it is attaining self-sufficiency that differentiates emerging adulthood from young adulthood, according to the subjective experience of those individuals navigating the transition themselves.

### **Parenting and Emerging Adulthood**

One of the salient traits of Millennials is their relationship with their parents. Unlike prior generations who differentiate from their parents at the emerging adulthood stage, Millennials remain highly reliant upon their parents into adulthood (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Research suggests that Millennials display a greater reliance on their parents for help in making decisions (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011),

navigating their academics (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Stein, 2012), assisting at the work place (e.g., writing resumes, attending job interviews, and intervening in workplace conflict) (Stein, 2012), and evaluating financial choices (Arnett, 2000; Thomasgard & Metz, 1993). Given the influence that parents exert throughout a child's life and their continued presence in the lives of Millennials, it is necessary to explore the potential role of parenting in the development of PE.

Researchers repeatedly identify two primary contributors to parenting style: (a) warmth, and (b) control (Baumrind, 1971, 1978; Bayer, Sanson, & Hemphill, 2006; Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Fingerman et al., 2012; Villar, Luengo, Gomez-Fraguela, & Romero, 2006). The warmth dimension relates to parental responsiveness, which creates the emotional climate the child experiences. Responsiveness is demonstrated through listening to the child, accepting the child, and attending to the relationship between the child and the parent. It is related to encouraging autonomy and adapting to a child's changing needs. By facilitating a child's emerging independence, while also maintaining safety and security, parents respond to the child's developmental needs and promote self-regulation and self-determination (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). The control dimension refers to parental demandingness. This dimension includes the parents imposing discipline, setting boundaries, and establishing standards of behavior (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Parenting styles are based on Baumrind's (1978) identification of three distinct parenting styles: (a) permissive, (b) authoritarian, and (c) authoritative. Baumrind (1978) described the permissive parent as affirming, accepting, and non-punishing. This type of parent allows the child a high degree of freedom with little guidance and direction. Permissive parents act as resources for their children rather than active

agents in shaping current or future behaviors. The permissive parent does not use authority or power to direct the child, preferring instead to use reason, redirection, and manipulation (Baumrind, 1978). By contrast, the authoritarian parent uses power, punishment, and direction to shape a child. The authoritarian parent employs a strict set of standards that the child is expected to obtain, maintain, and sustain. Reciprocity between parent and child is not encouraged; rather, the child is expected to obey her or his parents without question or hesitation (Baumrind, 1971). Finally, the authoritative parent works to balance the self-direction of the child with discipline and conformity. The authoritative parent sets reasonable standards for the child and directs the child in a rational manner. The child's individuality is recognized and respected, and conversations between parent and child regarding her/his behavior and decisions are promoted. The parents exercise authority and adhere to objectives that the child is coached to reach. Discipline is consistent, age appropriate, and explained to the child in terms he or she can understand (Baumrind, 1971).

Based upon Baumrind's (1971, 1978) constellations of parenting styles, research has found associations with each constellation and child/adolescent outcomes as well as combinations that look to be more or less adaptive spanning childhood and adolescence. The authoritative parenting style, high on responsiveness and high in warmth, has been observed to promote the best outcomes in middle to upper class, Caucasian children (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). Those parents who are involved in their child's world and encourage the child to build independence provide both support and autonomy. However, when parents use control, either behaviorally, psychologically, or emotionally to limit autonomy, children tend to display both internalizing and externalizing difficulties (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). These

difficulties may manifest as behavioral problems in school or with authority figures, problematic relationships with peers, high risk taking behaviors, attention difficulties, hyperactivity, and problems with motivation (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Parenting styles and their effect on children's behavior and future success have long been studied. Recently, increased attention by the media related to over-parenting, also dubbed helicopter parenting (the two terms are used interchangeably), have prompted researchers to begin investigations into the relationship between over-parenting, child behavior, and adjustment (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker, Nelson, & Knapp, 2013). In one of the first studies on over-parenting, Segrin et al. (2012) noted a different form of parental control that was motivated by fervent desires to ensure that their child is successful, does not experience disappointment or failure, and is consistently happy and contented. The manner in which these desires are met and defined is structured in the parent's terms and generally results in the parents attempting to remove any obstacle to the desired goals. In behavioral terms, over-parenting often involves high levels of advice giving and directiveness. Examples of over-parenting are parents who are overinvolved in their child's academics, intrude on schools' curricula, seek to overturn grades, and over assist with homework (Stearns, 2009). The results of these types of intrusion have given rise to the formation of the construct of academic entitlement, defined as anticipations of high returns for modest to minimal effort; expectations of special consideration and treatment by teachers when it comes to grades and evaluations; and impatience, frustration, and anger when needs are not met to satisfaction (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010).

Over-parenting can be understood within the contexts of Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles as described by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) as parenting that is high on warmth/support, high on control, and low on autonomy granting. According to Segrin et al. (2012), over-parenting is a unique combination of elements of Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles; it includes the control and directiveness of the authoritarian parent, though without the authoritarian parent's disregard for his or her child's needs. Instead, over-parenting is overly fixated on the child's needs as perceived by the parent, similar to the permissive parenting style. The combination of overprotection, diffused familial boundaries, and autonomy suppression by parents has had deleterious effects on the developmental process of children. The encouragement to push oneself to try new things, make independent decisions, and differentiate from parents to forge an independent identity decline when the transition into adulthood is delayed (Stearns, 2009).

### **Subjective Well-Being**

To understand the impact that entitlement may have on the subjective life satisfaction of Millennials, it is necessary to articulate a method for understanding subjective well-being as well as those elements that contribute to it. The Diener et al. (1985) construction of subjective well-being consists of three factors: (a) positive affect, (b) negative affect, and (c) life satisfaction. Positive and negative affect represent the emotional component of subjective well-being, while life satisfaction represents the cognitive element. Positive affect consists of pleasurable emotions such as joy, happiness, and contentment, while negative affect includes unpleasant feelings such as fear, sadness, and discontentment. Life satisfaction reflects a cognitive assessment of one's life as a whole. In fact, the judgments that one makes about life



satisfaction often are reflective of the satisfaction one has experienced in life domains. Extensive data corroborate the theory that high levels of life satisfaction and positive affect (i.e., happiness) are related to a wide range of important life outcomes, including physical and mental health. Persons with higher levels of subjective well-being have been found to be associated with (a) stronger social relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002), (b) higher levels of marital satisfaction (Glenn & Weaver, 1988), (c) reduced risk of suicide (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2001), and (d) better physical health (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) than those with lower reported subjective well-being.

In a study by Schimmack, Diener, and Oishi (2002), university students (who were similarly represented in this study) were asked to analyze the sources of their life satisfaction judgments; they reported that the domains of academic performance, romantic relationships, and family relationships were most important. The Schimmack et al. research supported their premise that contentment, satisfaction, and success in these specific domains are highly influential in subjective well-being.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research has shown that the increase in PE is most prevalently found among Millennials when compared to other age groups currently and when compared to prior generations when they were young adults (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). This rise in PE may then put the Millennials at risk for experiencing the negative impact PE can have on relationships and multiple life domains (Stein, 2012; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011; Twenge, 2006; Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2012). It is, therefore, essential that the psychosocial ethos of this population be understood. Without investigation of the

various attitudinal facets of the culture of PE, the factors that facilitate the development of PE and the psychological and interpersonal ramifications of these attitudes, it may not be as possible to thwart the damage that PE can cause (Exline et al., 2004, Gerrard, 2002; Kerr, 1985; Kris, 1976; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). Further, the attribution of PE traits to this generation has not included the assessment of PE from the perspective of Millennials themselves. As the research surrounding Millennials and entitlement continues, it is pertinent that the Millennials' perceptions about entitlement are included. A comprehension of PE is an important element to consider for research surrounding this topic.

The topic of PE has become the core of frequent discussions at social and psychological forums. As rhetoric surrounding PE increases, research via psychology and social sciences has also increased. Studies on PE have been, up to this point, largely focused on defining the term through common personality traits or exploring its social consequences in academia. While research has laid a solid foundation for the study of those factors inherent in PE, what is deficient in the research is an exploration of the impact that PE may have on the life satisfaction of Millennials themselves. Though the research on entitlement within societal contexts has indicated a negative impact (e.g., difficulties accepting criticism in the workplace [Kruger & Dunning, 1999]) and the lowering of academic standards to satisfy the expectations of students (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011), there is no research that has examined the relationship of PE to life satisfaction. The conclusion of research is that PE has a negative impact on society (Allen et al., 2009; Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell, 1999; Campbell et al., 2004; Gerrard, 2002; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Kerr,

1985; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009); however, the influence of PE on the individual has yet to be plumbed.

The etiology of PE in this population is an area that is in its early stages of research. The role of parenting in the development of PE has limited research (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Erol & Orth, 2011, Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) especially for Millennials whose relationship with their parents is unique from other generations (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Segrin, et al., 2012). Further, there have been cultural changes that have influenced parenting style, most notably in the emergence of helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin et al., 2012). The results of these changes in parenting styles, parent-child relationships, and the potential influence the changes have on PE have yet to be researched.

### **Study Rationale**

While a number of studies have explored the etiology of PE (e.g., Bishop & Lane, 2002; Erol & Orth, 2011; Freud, 1916/1957; Kanter, Parker, & Kohlenbert, 2001), little has been done to unite these studies' findings. Indeed, sociologists and psychologists have described the behaviors that may accompany entitled attitudes, especially in the school systems (Chowning & Campbell, 2009), yet their studies have been preempted by behavioral observations (e.g., making demands of teachers) and has not included data that supports that Millennials endorse excessively entitled attitudes. To address this gap in the literature, this study sought to the extent to which Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes. Further this study explored what factors may contribute to PE and the impact that PE has on the lives of Millennials. The cultural and familial contributions to the entitled attitude of the Millennial Generation, as well as the impact of psychological entitled attitudes on

Millennials' interpersonal and general well-being, have yet to be investigated from the viewpoint of Millennials themselves. It is, therefore, essential that in our understanding of PE we explore how these attitudes were learned to address the development of PE appropriately and its modification, if possible.

Parenting styles and their effect on children's behavior and future success have long been studied. Recently, increased attention by the media related to helicopter parenting has prompted researchers to begin investigations into the relationship between over-parenting, child behavior, and adjustment (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). While much of the research has been on the impact of parenting styles on younger children, the recent trend of high parental involvement in the lives of today's young adults has created a need for research on how parenting styles during this phase may facilitate the development of PE (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). Because of the critical nature of the developmental processes and the transitional nature inherent in the emerging adulthood phase (Arnett, 2000), the effects of over-parenting may be profound. Those effects have been only recently researched. The goal of this study sought to assess if over-parenting is a predicting factor in levels of PE. This exploration of the influence parenting styles may have on the development of PE will allow for greater understanding of the etiology of PE. Further, this understanding can provide a guide toward addressing and altering potential parenting styles that facilitate the development of PE before it has lasting negative consequences.

Given what prior research has indicated about the negative effects of PE in the domains of relationships with friends and family (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell, 1999; Kerr, 1985; Levin, 1970) and on romantic relationships (Campbell et al., 2004, Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), PE's presence may adversely impact one's overall well-being. The findings of this study can be utilized to focus on interventions, which can alleviate these negative consequences and may be beneficial both on an individual and societal level (Campbell, 1999; Costa & McCrae, 1980; Emmons & Diener, 1985; Exline et al., 2004; Twenge, 2006).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the belief structures of PE from the vantage of Millennials themselves. In its investigation of perceptions of parenting styles, personal feelings of PE as they pertain to individual and relational contexts, and the ways that these variables affect subjective well-being, this study aimed to enhance the understanding of PE as it is perceived by Millennials and its consequences upon their life satisfaction. This study aimed to ascertain the extent to which Millennials endorse PE attitudes. The second aim was to investigate Millennials' perceptions of parenting styles, to assess Millennials' PE behaviors, and to explore the extent to which these variables affect subjective well-being. The third aim of this study was to investigate mediating factors that parenting styles play in the development of PE using Baumrind's (1978) established theory of parenting styles as well as the recent phenomenon of helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

A final aim of this study was to explore the impact of PE on Millennials' subjective well-being. The literature suggests multiple ways that PE can impact behavioral and contextual difficulties in such areas as academics (Chowning &

Campbell, 2009), occupation (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), and relationships (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), yet there is very limited research on the impact of PE on the subjective experiences of Millennials. To satisfy that need, this study aimed to assess the impact of PE by determining whether or not PE significantly impacts the subjective well-being of Millennials. By analyzing and comprehending the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of Millennials, society may be better prepared to relate to and interact with this population in a way that allows all parties mutual understanding, cooperation, appreciation, and acceptance. Through its thorough examination of the complexities and consequences of PE, this study more vividly illuminates the nature of PE and its role in human functioning.

### **Research Questions**

- Q1 To what extent do Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?
- Q2 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in the level of subjective well-being as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?
- Q3 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, account for in the expression of psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?
- Q4 How much of the variance does psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in subjective well-being, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to this study that warrant discussion. Though this study aimed to gather data from a broad range of students, applying the findings to

populations that do not align with the demographic characteristics of the population of this study should be done with caution so as not to generalize its findings inappropriately. Another limitation was the survey method of data collection this study utilized. The surveys were all self-report measures and assumed honest responses from the participants, though this could not be guaranteed. By informing participants that their identities and responses would be protected, this study hoped to promote more honest responding. Given that the surveys were distributed online, there was the potential that a participant would complete the survey more than once. This research hoped to address this possibility by recording the e-mail addresses of all participants and only allowing a student to access the survey through his/her e-mail address one time.

The fairly recent research into helicopter parenting presented a limitation to both the literature review and presented a lack of empirically supported measurements. This study utilized the Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS) (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), which is a newly developed measure that does not have an extensive empirical support. Lastly, this study might have suffered from a mono-method bias, as only one scale was used to represent each construct. Future research may utilize multiple measures to protect against measurement error and any potential bias inherent in using only one measure to capture the constructs under study.

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Millennials.** The Millennial Generation refers to those born between 1982 and 2004 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Those individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 24, who represent a subset of the Millennial population, were the population of interest for this study.

**Over-parenting or helicopter parenting.** Over-parenting, also referred to as helicopter parenting, reflects parenting that is “high on warmth/support, high on control and low on granting autonomy” (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012, p. 1178). This type of parenting is characterized by high levels of involvement in a child’s life, often attempting to solve all her or his problems and thus stifling the child’s ability to act independently. Helicopter parents are so named because, like helicopters, they hover closely overhead (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

**Parenting style.** Parenting styles were defined by Baumrind’s (1978) three distinct parenting approaches: (a) authoritarian, (b) authoritative, and (c) permissive. They are each described below.

***Authoritarian parenting style.*** The authoritarian parent utilizes a strict set of standards that the child is expected to obtain, maintain, and sustain. Reciprocity between parent and child is not encouraged; rather, the child is expected to obey without question or hesitation (Baumrind, 1978).

***Authoritative parenting style.*** The authoritative parent works to balance the self-direction of the child with discipline and conformity. The authoritative parent sets reasonable standards for the child and directs the child in a more rational manner. The child’s individuality is recognized and respected and conversations between parent and child regarding behavior and decisions are emphasized (Baumrind, 1978).

***Permissive parenting style.*** Permissive parents act as resources for their children rather than active agents in shaping current or future behaviors. The permissive parent does not use authority or power to direct the child, preferring to use reason, redirection, and manipulation (Baumrind, 1978).



**Psychological entitlement.** This is an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, treatment, and/or designation when in fact one does not (Campbell et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985). The PE may manifest in various ways in interpersonal relationships, including difficulty with perspective taking, distrustfulness, demandingness, high and often unreasonable expectations of others, and difficulty empathizing with others (Exline et al., 2004).

**Subjective well-being.** Subjective well-being is “a person’s evaluative reactions to his or her life—either in terms of life satisfaction (cognitive evaluations) or affect (ongoing emotional reactions)” (Diener & Diener, 1995, p. 653). Diener’s construction of subjective well-being consists of three components: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. Positive and negative affect represent the emotional component of subjective well-being, while life satisfaction represents the cognitive element. Positive affect consists of pleasurable emotions, such as joy, happiness, and contentment; negative affect consists of unpleasant feelings, such as fear, sadness, and discontent. Summatively, life satisfaction reflects a cognitive assessment of one’s life as a whole.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Chapter II reviews relevant psychological literature related to this study. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for this study's research. Further, it provides rationale for the research questions used. To accomplish these purposes, the chapter also includes a battery of informational documentation and observations. This information begins with explanation of the developmental stages of Millennials as they grow into adulthood is given, as is the cultural context of the Millennial Generation within that framework. This is followed by a definition and description of the Millennial Generation and contains a brief overview of Millennials' distinctive relationship with entitlement. It is provided to familiarize the reader with the unique aspects of the population of interest within this study. Secondly, the construct of narcissism is reviewed. This section of the chapter also provides information about PE, how entitlement was initially categorized as an element of narcissism, and how it is now understood as a singular construct independent of narcissism.

The theory related to the etiology of entitlement and the cultural significance of entitlement for Millennials is also explored. The potential impact PE may have on subjective well-being and a review of research related to the behavioral manifestations and consequences of PE in various life provinces are examined. Next, the impact of parenting during these stages is analyzed, and a brief summary of the basic concepts of

Baumrind's (1978) theory of parenting and of the impacts that culture have had on parenting styles is presented. Chapter II next addresses the research on over-parenting in the context of its impact on Millennials and the development of PE. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed, an elucidation of the necessary components of the review for the present research, a discussion of the limitations of and implications for this study, and a notation of possible directions for future research.

### **Emerging Adulthood**

Studies involving the developmental process that includes the progression of an individual from infancy, through childhood and adolescence, and ultimately into adulthood have produced various organizational models. Erik Erikson's (1968) psychosocial developmental model described the life cycle in terms of developmental tasks that must be completed, either successfully nor not, to move forward to the next life stage. The model postulates that by successfully resolving the problems associated with one's current stage, a person will then move forward with self-esteem and social approval. However, failing to accomplish or resolve the developmental task may lead to social disapproval, personal disappointment, or frustration and difficulty in successfully meeting and resolving later developmental tasks (Erikson, 1968).

In adolescence, which Erikson (1968) believed to be from ages 12 through 20, the developmental task is, according to Erikson, that of identity versus role confusion. Erikson posits that during this time an adolescent moves toward adulthood by making choices about personal values and vocational goals and resolves the identity crisis that accompanies trying on new roles and experimenting with and exploring various facets

of one's person (Erikson, 1968). Erikson observed that the healthy consequence of this task is the emergence of an identity that society accepts, affirms, and appreciates. On the other hand, if one is unable to complete this task in a manner that is organized and consistent, one's sense of self is un-established (Erikson, 1968).

In Erikson's (1968) model, the stage following adolescence is young adulthood. This is the age that the bulk of Millennials fall into. Though the age range that encompasses Millennials includes all those born after 1982 through 2004 (Howe & Strauss, 2000), the majority of Millennials, at this time, are navigating through the young adulthood stage (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). Erikson perceived that the major dichotomy during this phase, to which he does not assign an age range, is intimacy versus isolation. During this stage, the young adult becomes willing to share his or her identity with others and to commit to partnerships. The individual who successfully manages this stage will experience love; if the stage is resolved in a negative way, the person will experience a fear of intimacy (Erikson, 1968).

Another model concerning young adult development comes from Levinson (1986) who described pre-adulthood as the first era of life. In Levinson's model, pre-adulthood spans those years from infancy to approximately age 22. During pre-adulthood the individual evolves from a highly dependent infant and child into a more differentiated and independent adult. Levinson delineated the years from age 17 to 22 as the period of early adult transition where pre-adulthood merges into early adulthood. Following this transitional phase, the ensuing phase is early adulthood, which lasts from approximately ages 22 to 45. Levinson regarded this stage as the most biologically potent and socially relevant. During this time, individuals begin to establish their place in society, form committed relationships, begin raising families,

and inaugurate the process of realizing major life goals. If done successfully, Levinson noted, this can be a time of fulfillment; if done ineffectively, it can be intensely stressful. Regardless of the outcome of this phase, it is a time individuals spend making important decisions regarding love, children, and vocation, while often encumbered by financial instability and competing influences. Levinson concluded his model as follows:

Early adulthood is the era in which we are most buffeted by our own passions and ambitions from within and by the demands of family, community, and society from without. Under reasonably favorable conditions, the rewards of living in this era are enormous, but the costs often equal or even exceed the benefits. (p. 5)

Arnett's (2000) model of emerging adulthood defined the period of development between the late teens and mid 20s as a distinct episode that is neither adolescence nor adulthood but theoretically and empirically different. During this time Arnett (2000) perceived that an individual is not confined by standard expectations or social rules. It is a time of newly gained independence from adolescence without the substantial responsibilities of adulthood. Unlike Erikson's (1968) stages, which do not include a distinct phase bridging adolescence and adulthood and include identity development in the adolescent phase, Arnett (2000) theorized that the bulk of identity development occurs during the emerging adulthood phase. He noted that during the emerging adulthood phase, a plethora of directions and options are open for pursuit and the future is undecided. He observed that the three areas of identity development that are most salient during this time are (a) love, found in familial, friend, and intimate relationships; (b) work, reflected in a desire to find a profession that is rewarding and financially stable; and (c) worldviews, which

reflects the shift in worldview from those of one's caretakers to one's own life philosophy (Arnett, 2000).

Just as values, attitudes, and experiences are influenced by cultural shifts, so, too, are developmental processes. Researchers have observed that in industrialized societies the delaying of taking on adult roles and the prolonging of adolescence is commonplace (Arnett, 2000; Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Markstrom et al., 1998). The average age of marriage in today's society is older in life than at any other point in history: 25.8 years for women and 28.3 years for men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). More people are attending college and graduate school, thereby delaying their entry into the workforce. Due to medical advances, women are able to have children at older ages. And, finally, individuals entering the workforce are changing jobs and locations more frequently than in the past. All of these factors contribute to individuals delaying committing to long-term adult roles (Arnett, 2000; Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Markstrom et al., 1998; Twenge, 2006). Arnett (2000) marked the transient nature of individuals in the emerging adult phase, where frequent residency changes, new jobs, cohabitation, and entering and exiting universities reflect the protean nature of this developmental stage.

Due to these cultural shifts in attitudes about what constitutes becoming an adult, it is important to understand what Millennials themselves believe adulthood means and what becoming an adult entails. Cultures are equipped with rites of passage that facilitate the transition of people from one stage of life to another (Markstrom et al., 1998). Erikson (1968) stated that societies play an important role in providing the ideological scaffolding that assigns roles and expectations that are required to be considered an adult. In previous generations, adulthood was attained

through lifestyle markers such as age, marriage, occupational placement, children, and living independently; however, these markers are no longer the primary identifying achievements that today's young people associate with being an adult. Indeed, those demographic markers were at the bottom of the list (Arnett, 2000). Instead, the three most important qualifications for adulthood are characterological, namely, accepting responsibility for oneself, making independent decisions, and achieving financial independence (Arnett, 1997, 1998). Thus, for Millennials, it is attaining self-sufficiency that differentiates emerging adulthood from young adulthood, according to the subjective experiences of those individuals navigating the transition themselves.

### **Meet the Millennials**

Of course, to engage in any meaningful discussion about the population studied in this paper, it is necessary to first define and describe the population itself. The most pedestrian definition of Millennial is “a person born between the years of 1982 and 2004” (Howe & Strauss, 2003). And, while the age parameter certainly is important, that uniquely Millennial mix of values, attitudes, and experiences is the crux of this research; hence, a consolidated description of that mix is apropos.

Table 1 is a compilation of significant data from the Pew Research Center's *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next* (Taylor & Keeter, 2010), a publication that explored the values, attitudes, and experiences of Millennials and how those factors compare with previous generations.

Table 1

*Descriptions and Data Related to Millennials*

Topic	Data
Diversity	– Millennials are the most tolerant and racially diverse generation.
Religion	– 25% are unaffiliated with any religion, but report praying as often as their elders did in their own youth.
Education	– Millennials are the most highly educated generation. – 54% have at least some college education. – Millennial women surpass men in numbers graduating from college.
Occupation	– 37% are unemployed. – 90% believe they will likely reach their long-term financial goals. – 60% say it is not likely they will stay with their current employer.
Parent relations	– Millennials report getting along better with their parents than previous generations. – 12.5% have boomeranged back to their parents' home due to the recession.
Technology	– 75% have a profile on a social networking site. – 29% visit their profile multiple times a day. – More than 50% visit their profile at least once a day. – 20% have posted a video of themselves online.
Values	– Both older generations and Millennials agree that older generations are superior in morals, values, and work ethic.
Priorities	– 52% of Millennials say that being a good parent is the most important thing in their lives.
Attitude	– Many Millennials see the world as grim and are pessimistic about the future of society; however, for themselves they are highly optimistic; 96% agreed with the statement, “I am very sure that someday I will get to where I want to be in life” (Hotnblower, 1997, as cited in Taylor and Keeter, 2010).

*Note.* Adapted from *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next: Confident. Connected. Open to Change*, by P. Taylor and S. Keeter, (Eds.), 2010, Washington, DC: Pew Research Trust.



Perhaps, the most defining element of the Millennial Generation as evidenced by the Pew study is the role that technology plays in Millennials' development and lifestyle (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). This is the first generation that has had the Internet available since birth. In his 2012 article on Millennials, columnist Joel Stein noted that this is the first generation that must cope with both continuous social interaction with peers and constant pressure to present a socialized ideal online. Stein remarked that though this interaction is constant, it is rarely face-to-face. Millennials are a pixel generation, more likely to reach out to others via a screen rather than in person. Even though they are in constant communication with others, their ability to truly connect with empathy, prolonged conversation, emotional articulation, and intimacy is poor (Stein, 2012). In his book *iDisorder*, Larry Rosen (2012) discussed the psychological consequences of living in a hyper-connected, social networking world. He stated that the constant checking of status updates, text messages, and posts is a response to high levels of anxiety and fears of missing out. Even when in the physical company of friends, it is common that each person is on his or her phone, texting to see if something better is happening, making it impossible either to connect with those nearby or to enjoy the moment.

### **The Rise of the Individual**

The emphasis on individualism is very recent relative to human history. Self-esteem, personal growth, and introspection did not become objects of interest until the 1950s and 1960s (Twenge, 2006). Before that time, there was little autonomy or concept of the self at all. Marriages were arranged and occupations were determined by parents (for men) or required no decision at all for women, as they stayed home and had children. Society's rules were strict and conforming, and while there were those

who rebelled against social norms, they were but few and certainly not embraced (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Conformity was expected and comfortable. Then, as time passed and social rules became less constrictive, more options concerning the self became available for men and women. People began to make self-directed decisions about their lives and to investigate what they wanted for themselves.

An illustration of this evolution can be seen by analyzing the results of Solomon Asch's famous 1951 experiment. In this experiment, a single participant was placed in a room with six confederates. Four lines of varying lengths were drawn on a chalk board: a medium-length target line, a long line (labeled A), a medium line (labeled B), and a short line (labeled C). The participant was asked to say which of the lines, A, B, or C, was the same length as the target line. The obvious answer was B, but the six confederates answered first, all saying "line C." In the original 1951 experiment, in at least one trial 74% of the participants elected to go with the group and agreed with the obviously wrong answer; 28% of the participants conformed to the confederates' answer in the majority of trials. Asch's experiment illustrated the power of group conformity during this era.

Perrin and Spencer (1980, 1981) suggested that the Asch effect was a child of its time. They carried out an exact replication of the original Asch experiment using engineering, mathematics, and chemistry students as participants. The results were striking: on only one out of 396 trials did an observer join the erroneous majority. They contended that a cultural change has taken place in the value placed on conformity and obedience and in the position of students. In America in the 1950s students were unobtrusive members of society; whereas, now they occupy a free questioning position (Perrin & Spencer, 1980). This transition from desiring social

conformity and acceptance to exerting individuality and self-expression exhibited a shift in cultural priorities (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

In essence, the concept of self-reliance is meant to be empowering: Only by breaking away from ties to the past can one embrace a future of his or her own design. Modern society has taken individuality and raised it to a place of reverence, asserting that to need no one is to be truly free and to succeed means to make it by one's own devices. A gradual transformation in the philosophy of what it means to be independent has occurred in American society—a shift from a community-minded society to a culture preoccupied with the self (Bishop & Lane, 2002). This preoccupation, combined with a culture that promises exceptional lives for exceptional persons if they will only follow their dreams, insists that the relationship to the self is the most important relationship there is; denies the inherent need for others; defines success by income, material possessions, and appearance; and blurs the causal relationship between earning and deserving (Twenge, 2006).

### **Millennials and Entitlement**

Media seem to enjoy labeling generations with clever monikers. The Silent Generation, first referred to in *TIME* magazine in 1951, included people born between 1925 and 1942. They were children of the Depression and known for seeking safety and security (Stein, 2012). The silent label intimates conformism and civic mindedness (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). This generation gave way to the Baby Boomers (coined in 1970 by *The Washington Post*), those persons born between 1946 and 1964, according to the United States Census Bureau. The Baby Boomer Generation grew up in a time of social revolution and international war. Women's rights, Vietnam, and the civil rights movement created a culture of anti-establishment views, of re-evaluation

of traditional values and roles, and of redefining the role and value of the individual (Twenge, 2006). Generation X alludes to people born from 1965 through 1982. This generation is often described as entrepreneurial, savvy, and cynical (Twenge, 2006).

Those born after 1982 were the first to come of age in the new millennium. Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting a significantly greater degree of entitled attitudes than prior generations. In fact, it has been dubbed both the Entitled Generation (Keller, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) and Generation Me (Stein, 2012) as titular illustrations of the defining characteristic assigned to this generation. Research has also found evidence that supports this recognition of the more salient characteristics of PE within the Millennials. In a comparative analysis of 85 samples of 16,275 college students who filled out the NPI between 1979 and 2006, students in 2006 scored 30% higher than the 1979 to 1985 sample average. To put this in perspective, over the last few decades, narcissism among college students (Millennials) has risen as much as obesity: a 30% increase (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

In a national poll of 11,000 teens who filled out similar questionnaires either in 1951 or 1989, between 77% to 80% of teenagers polled in 1989 agreed with the statement, "I am an important person" compared to just 12% of teens in 1951 (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). A 2008 study by the National Institute of Health found that in a nationally representative sample of over 35,000 Americans, 1 in 16 had suffered from symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder at some point in their lives, while 9.4% of Americans in their 20s had experienced narcissistic personality disorder symptoms (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Hence, those children born in the 1980s did not have to flounder in the narcissistic age of the individual; they were born into it.

Regarding entitlement, the self-focus instilled in those born in the 1980s and later and the belief that one is special and important became learned experiences. For Millennials, self-esteem seasoned with narcissism is a curriculum taught by parents and in academia. Authority figures have ingrained in Millennials the idea that Millennials must like themselves simply because “they are.” Self-esteem must not be based on performance (I am a good football player) but, rather on the psyche as a constant trait, unaffected by experiences or effort. It has become an unquestionable truth that you are deserving of all good things, simply by being you. This “truth” is impressed in Millennials through parenting styles, extracurricular activities, and academics (Twenge, 2006).

While the above illustrates the concept that entitlement is largely a learned attitude, that concept, while valid, is incomplete. The following explores the research on PE that began within the study of narcissism and has expanded into understanding entitlement as a unique and independent construct. Further, the impact of PE in various aspects of the lives of Millennials is explored.

### **Discriminating Unique Constructs**

#### **Narcissism**

Initially in social and personality psychology, entitlement was considered a feature of narcissism, one of the oldest psychological constructs in history (Brown et al., 2009). The early work on narcissism was performed by psychoanalysts who identified a cluster of personality traits, which formed the elements of the narcissistic personality (Brown et al., 2009). The pathological understanding of narcissism as a personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, was first identified in 1971 by psychoanalytic theorist Heinz Kohut. In 1980, narcissistic personality disorder was

included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*–3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders –III) (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), narcissism, in its most pathological form as a personality disorder, is characterized by the following: (a) a grandiose sense of self-importance; (b) preoccupation with unlimited success, power, and beauty; (c) belief that he or she is special or unique; (d) excessive admiration; and (e) a sense of entitlement. The examples given for the attributes of entitlement are “unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 669).

As noted by Campbell (1999), narcissism can negatively affect interpersonal relationships. Individuals who present with high levels of narcissistic traits often enter into relationships in pursuit of their own self-enhancement and a desire to meet their own needs. Often, they have difficulty forming and maintaining close relationships with others due to fears of abandonment and self-serving approaches to relationships. Finally, individuals high in narcissism seek admiration from their relationship partners and pursue the company of those they idealize (Allen et al., 2009).

Studies on narcissism and its components note that PE and exploitation may be the most maladaptive elements of pathological narcissism (Pryor et al., 2008; Raskin & Terry, 1988). People typified by an inordinate sense of entitlement believe they deserve to have their needs and wishes satisfied regardless of others’ feelings, needs, and rights (Levin, 1970). Because of the role that entitlement plays in personality pathology, as well as the possible impact of entitlement on the dispersal of societal

assets (Campbell et al., 2004), entitlement is an important construct to conceptualize, independent of narcissism.

### **Defining Entitlement**

The earliest investigations into the presentation of entitled attitudes and traits were done within psychoanalytic literature. In Freud's (1916/1957) paper, "Some Character-Types Met With In Psycho-Analytic Work," the author referred to the exceptions, patients who express their sense of deserving or of having suffered (Gerrard, 2002). Freud (1916/1957) stated that those patients felt they "have a right to be an exception, to disregard the scruples by which others let themselves be held back" (p. 315). Freud discussed patients' fantasies of entitlement, their preoccupation with the self, and the belief in their own exceptionalism to be free of suffering, an exceptionalism, which required giving up the "pleasure for the reality principle" (Bishop & Lane, 2002, p. 740). This attitude was supported by the belief that they had suffered enough, either through a painful childhood, illness, or other perceived unjust injury, and that they should be exempt from any further "disagreeable necessity" (Freud, 1916/1957, p. 320). Thus, the pain of the past should negate pain in the future. Persons surviving difficulty would be entitled to a life without further pain, and, if suffering does occur, persons with entitled attitudes believe that they should be compensated. In this sense, PE may be defined as "those rights which one feels justified in bestowing upon oneself" (Meyer, 1991, p. 223).

While Freud and others began the discourse on the etiology of entitled attitudes, society has evolved and so has the dialogue relating to the presentation of these concepts. Various disciplines in psychology have addressed entitlement in different ways and have acknowledged its presentation as serving multiple purposes.

Social learning theory posits that entitlement might also develop in children through identification with parents who themselves had an exaggerated sense of entitlement. Today, many scholars in the field of psychology believe that an exaggerated sense of entitlement can be a defense against psychic pain and frustration experienced during interactions with insensitive others (Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). In their article “The Dynamics and Dangers of Entitlement,” Bishop and Lane (2002) reported that immoderate entitlement can result in and/or supplement a variety of psychological problems. Bishop and Lane (2002) stated that excessive entitlement is conceptualized as having origins in emotional deprivation in childhood, especially when the child is used as a narcissistic extension by parents. This “special” role becomes a learned attitude and behavior and a defense against the hurt, shame, and fear resulting from this experience.

Another significant contribution in the understanding and conceptualization of entitlement came from several researchers (Campbell et al., 2004; Levin, 1970; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990) who differentiated three categories of entitlement: (a) normal, adaptive entitlement, (b) excessive or exaggerated entitlement, and (c) restricted entitlement or non-entitlement. Normal entitlement is characterized by the ability to make reasonable and realistic evaluations of what one can expect from others. It may present as assertiveness without excessive expectations of others or an expectation of preferential treatment (Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). Excessive entitlement is characterized by having unrealistic expectations of what one is due that are not based in reality and are disproportionate to one’s efforts. Restricted entitlement is characterized by a lack of assertiveness and a dismissing of one’s own needs and rights (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). It is excessive entitlement that aligns



with the more pathological form of entitlement as found in narcissistic personality disorder (Campbell et al., 2004).

As research associated with entitlement and narcissism increased and aggrandized, the need for a measure specifically for what would become known as PE, rather than simply entitlement, became necessary (Campbell et al., 2004). When narcissism became a part of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders -III, the accompanying instrument for measurement was the NPI developed by Raskin and Hall (1979). This scale included several items focused on measuring the entitlement component of narcissism. However, there were a number of limitations to using this subscale as a stand-alone measure of entitlement. Campbell et al. (2004) noted that the NPI entitlement subscale lacked face validity, had too few items to adequately assess entitlement, and had low reliability. Researchers also observed that in most factor analysis studies of the NPI, the set of entitlement items failed to load on a single factor (Emmons, 1984). It was the desire of the reserachers to create a stand-alone, single-factor measure of PE. To that end, Campbell et al. defined psychological entitlement specifically as the following:

[PE is] a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others. The sense of entitlement will also be reflected in desired or actual behaviors. Our concept of PE is intrapsychically pervasive or global; it does not necessarily refer to entitlement that results from a specific situation. Rather, PE is a sense of entitlement that is experienced across a situation. (p. 31)

The presence of PE in an individual may be a pervasive trait; however, Moses and Moses-Hrushovski (1990) suggested that even if exaggerated entitlement is a prevailing trait in an individual, such a sense may surface only in specific situations and relationships. Thus, though an individual's sense of entitlement can shape his or

her connections and views in a variety of situations and relationships, the quality and intensity of a particular entitlement attitude depend on the specific situation or relationship that the individual is involved in and the subjective meaning attributed to it (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). It is important to note that PE has not been identified as an innate trait in psychological literature; on the contrary, it is a learned manner of interacting with the world (Billow, 1998; Bishop & Lane 2002; Kerr, 1985; Lessard et al., 2011). It is essential that, in our understanding of PE, we explore how these entitled attitudes are measured to address appropriately the rise in the development of PE among Millennials.

### **Measuring Psychological Entitlement**

Initially, the most commonly used measure of PE included questions extracted from the NPI as they relate to the PE factor of narcissism. The NPI was designed by Raskin and Hall (1979); it is a 40-item, forced-choice measure of narcissism. Factor analysis of the NPI revealed seven factors: authority, entitlement, exhibitionism, exploitation, self-sufficiency, vanity, and superiority. The six-item entitlement subscale included entries, such as “I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve” versus “I will take my satisfactions as they come”. While it is evident that entitlement is an element of narcissism, the use of the entitlement subscale as a stand-alone measure of PE was problematic in the following ways: (a) a lack of face validity, (b) little effort to empirically validate the entitlement scale as a stand-alone measure, (c) the few items and forced-choice format of the scale may lead to a restriction of range, and (d) the degree of reliability of this subscale is insufficient for a self-report measure, with alphas often far below 0.80 (Campbell et al., 2004).

Recognizing the NPI's deficiencies, Campbell et al. (2004) decided to create a valid stand-alone, single-factor measure of PE. Campbell et al. (2004) conducted a series of studies in the construction and validation of the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES); each utilized undergraduates as participants. The first study had three goals: to select the final items for the PES, to examine the construct validity of the scale by correlating it with conceptually related measures, and to discriminate the PES from the NPI entitlement subscale.

Two hundred sixty-two undergraduate students participated in the first validation study. Participants completed the initial 57-item PES items, the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988), and the Me Versus Other Scale (Campbell et al., 2004). The Me Versus Other Scale was developed for the study to assess the view of self versus others in a visual, nonverbal way. The original pool of 57 PES items was eventually reduced to nine items. The principal components factor analysis of the final nine-item scale produced a one-factor solution. That single factor explained 46% of the variance in the nine items. Due to the factor coefficients being highly dependent on sample characteristics, the nine items were aggregated to form a composite measure. The correlation between items combined using factor weights and items combined using unit weights was  $r = 1.0$ . The alpha coefficient for the composite measure was .85. Separate factor analyses were conducted for men and women, and one-factor solutions were obtained for both groups. There were no significant gender differences reported in this sample (Campbell et al., 2004).

The PES (Campbell et al., 2004) was then correlated with the Self-Esteem Scale (Rotter, 1990), the entitlement subscale of the NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988), and

the Me Versus Other Scale. The PES most correlated with the entitlement subscale of the NPI ( $r = .54, p < .001$ ), the correlation with the self-esteem measure was smaller ( $r = .13, p < .001$ ), and the correlation with the nonverbal Me Versus Other Scale was significant ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ). The correlation of the PES with the Me Versus Other Scale remained significant when the NPI entitlement subscale was parceled out,  $r = .17, p < .001$ , indicating that the NPI entitlement scale and the PES are not redundant (Campbell et al., 2004).

The goals of the second validation study conducted by Campbell et al. (2004) in the development of the PES were to confirm the factor analytic structure of the PES in a larger sample and to determine that the NPI entitlement subscale represents a separate factor from the PES. Further, the second study examined the association between the PES and social desirability as measured by the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991) to demonstrate that scores on the PES were not influenced by that trait (Campbell et al., 2004). Nine hundred eighteen undergraduate participants completed the PES, the entitlement subscale of the NPI, and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991). The mean score for the PES was 31.0 ( $SD = 8.8$ ), and scores did not differ for men and women. The alpha coefficient was .87. The correlation between the PES and the entitlement subscale of the NPI was  $r = .33, p < .001$ . Consistent with study one, the PES and the entitlement subscale of the NPI were found to be better modeled as reflecting two related factors rather than a single factor. The PES was not correlated with global social desirability,  $r = -.06, p < .001$  (Campbell et al., 2004).

The Campbell et al. (2004) third study used in the development of the PES examined its test–retest reliability. Using two independent samples of undergraduate

students, Campbell et al. tested one sample ( $n = 97$ ) over one month and the second sample ( $n = 458$ ) over two months. The one-month test–retest correlation for the PES was  $r = .72, p < .001$ . The two-month test–retest correlation was  $r = .70, p < .001$ . Test results indicated that the PES is stable over time.

The PES has also been used in the development of other measures related to various areas in which PE occurs. In their strategy to develop the Academic Entitlement Scale, Chowning and Campbell (2009) implemented the PES to address the construct validity of the scale. Similarly, Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011) employed the PES in their construction of the Sense of Entitlement in Romantic Relationships Scale. Finally, the PES has also been used to explore different types of entitlement. Lessard et al. (2011) applied the PES to investigate exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement in young adults. They found that both types were highly correlated with an existing measure of entitlement, the PES,  $r = .51, p < .001$ , and  $r = .43, p < .001$ , respectively.

For the purpose of this study, the PES was used to measure PE in a sample of Millennials attending college. The PES has been used extensively in research related to studying the presence of PE in individuals and its impact in various areas of life. The sample populations of the studies that used the PES are almost exclusively college students (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline & Zell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Moeller, Crocker, & Bushman, 2009). In a study by Moeller et al. (2009), the PES was utilized to explore the relationships between PE self-image goals (goals that aim to construct and defend one's positive self-image) and interpersonal conflict. Their data suggest that in their pursuit of self-image goals, people with high levels of PE will create conflict and hostility in their relationships. Exline and Zell (2009) utilized

the PES in their examination of the interaction of entitlement and forgiveness. They found that within the studied undergraduate population, PE emerged as an important moderator, strongly predicting unforgiving responses. The reported internal consistency reliability for the PES ranges from .83 to .89 among college student samples.

### **Manifestations of Entitled Behavior**

This section explores the research that has been conducted on the impact of PE in different areas of life for Millennials: (a) relationships, (b) academics, and (c) occupations. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the negative consequences that have been linked to PE in the lives of Millennials and to introduce the concept of subjective well-being. It was a goal of this study to explore if entitlement, though shown to negatively impact multiple areas in life, negatively affects Millennials' overall sense of well-being.

#### **Entitlement and Relationships**

Research underscores the role of social connections in diverse domains of functioning. When people's sense of social connectedness is threatened, their ability to self-regulate suffers (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011); for instance, their performance on intelligence tests drops (Walton et al., 2012). Feeling lonely can precipitate an early death as much as major health risk behaviors like smoking (Walton et al., 2012). Beyond the effect of cultural norms, writers of psychoanalytic literature suggest that romantic relationships are the main arena where adults expect to meet and negotiate their needs, wishes, and fantasies (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). In their study, "Mere Belonging: The Power of Social Connections," Walton et al. (2012) verified that, as a consequence of small cues of social connectedness, people relatively

automatically acquire goals and motivation even from persons unfamiliar to them. Those small, seemingly trivial, cues cause large shifts in motivation. Their research explained the importance of social relationships as a source of people's interests, inspiration, and broader self-identity. In contrast to other research in psychology that emphasize processes that occur in the insulated minds of individuals, the Walton et al. research illustrated the value of conceptualizing the self and assets like motivation as items arising collectively among networks of individuals connected to one another in social relationships.

Unfortunately, even when armed with realizing the importance of relationships and connection, the messages that Millennials give and receive are often contradictory. The desires to connect and to establish independence can create a conflict of interests, namely self-interest and camaraderie. An emphasis on individual pleasure coupled with lower levels of empathy and social responsibility has led to openness about sexuality and a high demand for instant gratification in relationships (Pryor et al., 2008).

Before reading further, a disclosure: The following paragraphs paraphrase and quote the writers Jerry Rubin and Joel Stein, who write not as researchers per se but as commentators on American culture. Their insightful comments are highly relevant, for they echo the general public's attitude about entitlement and Millennials. Their words presage questions addressed by the researchers cited in this study, questions that this study may in some small way attempt to answer through my research and in this paper. For these reasons, I decided to include their opinions in this study.

The growing tendency to put the self first not only leads to unparalleled freedom but also creates an enormous amount of pressure on Millennials to stand

alone (Twenge, 2006). In her book, *Generation ME: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable than Ever Before*, author and researcher Jean Twenge discussed this conflict. Twenge (2006) wrote that today our ultimate value is not to depend on anyone else. “Commitments imply dependency” wrote Jerry Rubin (as cited in Twenge, 2006) in *Growing (Up) at Thirty-Seven* and added, “A lover is like an addiction . . . [I will] learn to love myself enough so that I do not need another to make me happy” (p. 91). Twenge’s and Rubin’s comments beg the question: Do I fail myself by needing others? Since humans have an innate need from others for acceptance and for love (despite being taught that this need is a weakness), how does one figure out who he or she is, absent the context of others? If two people have been taught that they must prioritize their own needs, how can they come together and maintain a balanced relationship (Twenge, 2006)? To deny the idea that one cares about what other people think or that one can do it “all by myself” is inaccurate and isolating (Twenge, 2006).

Loneliness is a logical, if tragic, outcome of the current generation’s preoccupation of self (Twenge, 2006). Independence and the intra-relationship with one’s self are so highly valued that Millennials are losing the ability to relate to others. This is a generation whose members are more connected than ever via technology, yet their feelings of isolation and loneliness are startlingly high (Twenge, 2006).

Other elements contribute to the loss of connection among Millennials:

- § This is a transient generation that is continually in search of the “best fit,” both professionally and personally, and a more fulfilling environment.



- § The average Millennial will have seven jobs before the age of 26, resulting in low levels of company loyalty and/or job loyalty. This, in turn, can disable a person from creating lasting affiliations or roots in the community.
- § The attention span of emerging adults has shortened. As a result, maintaining interest in a single person for a prolonged period of time has become increasingly difficult (Stein, 2012; Twenge, 2006).

Additionally, Millennials are hyper-informed about their peers through social networking and Instagram pictures but have little true face-to-face connection to them. Moreover, Millennials live in a world of upgrades. The lifespan of material objects, especially technology products, is brief, and the expectation that something better will come along is constantly validated. It is no wonder that, given the ease of getting exactly what they want, Millennials have little practice in compromise, adjustment, and disappointment (Stein, 2012). The idea that one is entitled to what he or she wants simply because he or she wants it is an unfortunate result of Millennials' cultural indoctrination.

Entitled attitudes present as an overtly interpersonal dynamic as they emphasize beliefs about the self and how one should be treated by others, specifically, by being given special and preferential treatment (Exline et al., 2004). Campbell (1999) noted that narcissistic entitlement or excessive entitlement can create substantive problems in relationships. People high in entitlement often have difficulty establishing genuine intimacy with others and pursue relationships for self-enhancement purposes. To elevate the self, individuals high in entitlement seek the admiration and respect of others, but also disparage others. Not surprisingly, then, research data affirm that narcissistic entitlement negatively relates to the need for

intimacy and to such variables associated with intimacy as empathy, the ability to forgive, and agreeableness (Campbell, 1999; Exline et al., 2004).

As a consequence of the impact that entitlement can have on life, work, friendships, family, and intimate or romantic relationships, it is vital to comment on both the cultural contexts and the ways that entitlement manifests itself in committed relationships. Research has concluded that positive and balanced relationships are a vital component of well-being (Diener et al., 1985; Walton et al., 2012). The following section involves the institution of marriage as perceived by American society. Though much of the research referenced has been done in relation to heterosexual couples, the cultural contexts and discussion of expectations for partners are not limited to heterosexual couples exclusively. Additionally, as many Millennials are either married or marriage eligible, how psychologically entitled Millennials view marriage and committed relationships is integral to my study.

### **Marriage and Committed Relationships**

Expectations of what marriage will be and provide are profoundly influenced by the psychological make-up of the individual. As society evolves, so, too, do the meaning and significance attached to the concept of marriage. Sabatelli and Ripoll (2004) proposed that the cultural climate of today, including economics, gender roles, individualization, and education levels, have altered the attractions, barriers, biases, and alternatives that influence marital commitment and stability. Ample evidence supports society's popular belief that today's expectations for marriage have changed dramatically from those of older generations. Previous surveys of college students during the 1950s and 1960s suggest that then marriage was valued for providing a

stable home, financial stability, and the opportunity to raise a family (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007).

More recent studies indicate that Millennials value marriage because they expect it to provide emotional fulfillment, unwavering support, deep love, and personal growth (Twenge, 2006). If a marriage does not meet these expectations, it is often considered a failure, or, in more positive terms, a learning experience that will aid in deterring the person from making the same mistakes in the next relationship. Regardless, the unmet expectations and ensuing disappointment may add to the motivation for divorce (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

As a corollary to the above, today's cultural and technological climate does not promote patience or inspire dedicating hard work to a relationship, a relationship that Millennials expect to be easy and fulfilling. Paul (2002) claimed that if one's satisfaction with his or her marriage mitigates, the Millennial may be unable to patiently work to improve it.

We who are so accustomed to and enamored with speed may not understand that marriage is a series of developments, a never-ending process that is meant to last. . . . We could be coveting something that we're simply not equipped to sustain. (Paul, 2002, p. xv)

Coupled with society's lenient attitude toward divorce, the likelihood of initiating and finalizing the divorce process is high (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). This is not to say that today's 20-year-olds are incapable of commitment; rather, the definition of commitment may no longer include an expectation of permanence (Twenge, 2006).

### **Academic Entitlement**

Academic entitlement, a concept that Millennials were born into, is defined in America as anticipations of high returns for modest to minimal effort; expectations of

special consideration and treatment by teachers when it comes to grades and evaluations; and impatience, frustration, and anger when needs are not met to satisfaction (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010). It is important to note that academic entitlement is supported by many school programs and is not simply the whining of a spoiled child. Schools often participate in social promotion, the policy that no student may be held back an academic year but must be promoted with the rest of his or her class to not endanger social development or self-esteem. As a result, for example, everyone in a senior class is approximately the same age even though some may not be able to read (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). The argument for concentrating on raising self-esteem in children was to help students achieve success; in reality, though school grades have risen dramatically, America's high school students have not significantly improved in academic performance on standardized tests in the last 30 years (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). What the self-esteem push has done is allow students to feel good about themselves, even though they perform poorly (Chowning & Campbell, 2009).

It is not difficult to ascertain why students do not causally relate effort to reward when reward requires no effort. The removal of effort from reward and the removal of challenge from learning have created a school populous that has difficulty handling frustration when confronted with situations that require effort and contain challenge. Students stop trying if a task is difficult; they have been conditioned to attribute success to self and failure to either the universe not granting them the tools needed to be successful or the task not fitting personal abilities (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). Chowning and Campbell (2009), upon observing the pervasiveness of entitled attitudes in academia and students' accompanying inappropriate behaviors,

conducted several studies related exclusively to academic entitlement. Their studies supported their contention that cultural attitude, specifically as it relates to academic entitlement, was a significant contributing factor for students' inappropriate behavior (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). These behaviors included taking no responsibility for work, blaming teachers and professors for not accommodating a student's schedule, and expecting a passing grade merely for attending class without doing other work (Chowning & Campbell, 2009).

In another study devoted to entitlement in academia, Baer and Cheryomuichin (2010) noted similar behaviors as in the Chowning and Campbell studies, especially in the demandingness behavior of students toward their professors. This behavior included demands for higher grades, expectations of special accommodations, and predictions of dire outcomes for grades less than an "A." Additionally, this study focused on the high levels of distress students experience over grades. The study utilized the Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to identify attitudes of entitlement and levels of self-esteem. Baer and Cheryomuichin concluded that those students with high self-esteem are more likely to make demands on professors. The researchers suggested this behavior is a coping response to internal distress. This aligned with opinions regarding the need to protect one's self-image and the distress that can be elicited by negative evaluations. This dismissive attitude toward criticism occurs because the preferred view of the self is threatened (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010). Given the impact entitled attitudes can have in school settings, it is of little surprise that those same attitudes can negatively impact job performance.

## **Entitlement in the Workplace**

Given the power that PE can have in Millennials' scholastic environments, it is of little surprise that those same PE attitudes can negatively impact job performance. Research has found that workers feel rejected when they perceive that another's evaluation of their job performance falls below their own self-perception. For the Millennial Generation whose members have been taught that they are paragons and uniquely wonderful, criticism is neither solicited nor welcomed. If outside evaluations deviate from internal assessment, the evaluations are deemed unjust or inaccurate. This dismissive attitude toward criticism occurs because the preferred view of the self is threatened (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010). The entitled and exceptional self-concept rarely allows room for variant conceptions of the self (Bishop & Lane, 2002). This preoccupation with the self not only restricts the Millennials' ability to manage, organize, and learn from criticism but also creates an inability to assess their performances relative to others' (Lessard et al., 2011). Paradoxically, in an attempt to fortify the self-concept with showers of praise and unyielding sensitivity, the opposite has occurred. Having rarely dealt with negative feedback, Millennials are unprepared to emotionally handle criticism (Twenge, 2006).

Gauging a person's worthiness for reward is most readily based on evaluations of his or her own performance and previously developed schemas about how rewards should be allocated. Major et al. (1984) contended that when individuals reach conclusions about how much reward they are entitled to based on their contributions to a group, they rarely compare their efforts to those of other group members; instead, they scrutinize only their own work against internal standards. To support the Major et al. contentions, Kruger and Dunning (1999) found that when people estimate how

good they are at a task relative to other people, they tend to think egocentrically; that is, they consider how skilled (or unskilled) they are at the task more than how skilled (or unskilled) other people are at that same task (Windschitl et al., 2008).

This entitled attitude renders the allocation of goods not in terms of who among colleagues is deserving of what portion of the reward; rather, entitled workers wish to be rewarded based solely on their individual efforts. For example, the entitled worker may feel deserving of 90% of the reward if he or she believes the work was exemplary, regardless of whether or not another group member contributed twice as much to the project. Although there are variations in these entitlement beliefs, Major (as cited in Lessard et al., 2011) argued that having a sense of entitlement or deservingness that is not “entirely tied to one’s actual level of accomplishment in a given situation” is a wide-spread if not universal phenomenon (p. 523).

Though the research on entitlement within societal contexts has indicated a negative impact, (e.g., difficulties accepting criticism in the workplace [Kruger & Dunning, 1999]) and the lowering of academic standards to satisfy the expectations of students (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011), there is no research that explores the relationship of PE to life satisfaction. Research has determined that PE has a negative impact on society; the impact of entitlement on the individual, however, has yet to be explored. Without understanding this, it is difficult to address with any degree of accuracy the societal implications of PE. To answer that need, this paper explored the prevalence of PE and its effects upon young adults. It was a goal of this study to provide further research on the impact of entitlement by exploring if PE impacts the subjective well-being of Millennials and, if so, to what degree.

## **Subjective Well-Being**

Considerable evidence substantiates the theory that high levels of life satisfaction and positive affect (i.e., happiness) are related to a wide range of important life outcomes, including physical and mental health. Persons with high levels of subjective well-being report stronger social relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002), higher levels of marital satisfaction (Glenn & Weaver, 1988), reduced risk of suicide (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2001), and better physical health (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). College students with higher levels of subjective well-being at the start of a school term experience greater academic success at the conclusion of the term (Borrello, 2005). The elements that bear upon subjective well-being include personality traits, cultural norms, contextual factors, and mood states. Given the importance of subjective well-being, it is vital to include in this study how changes in culture, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations impact the overall well-being of Millennials. The evolution of American society has produced both positive and negative changes; the manner in which these changes are experienced and weighted for importance will generate an overall assessment of quality of life. To comprehend this holistic picture, this study utilized the work of Diener and others, both to conceptualize and to measure subjective well-being.

One of the issues that arises when researchers study subjective well-being is the concern that transient states such as mood and contextual factors will influence the assessment, thus making subjective well-being difficult to precisely measure due to the instability of the variables that form it. However, research justifies the premise that changes in life satisfaction appear to be more systematically tied to changes in chronically accessible domains, rather than being the product of random and transient



contextual factors (Schimmack et al., 2002). Research by Schimmack et al. (2002) found evidence to suggest that people rely on the same types of information to make judgments about life satisfaction. When these steady sources of information change, reported levels of life satisfaction alter as well.

Life satisfaction assessments appear to be based chiefly on chronically accessible information. These chronically accessible sources of information include contentment in important life domains (e.g., relationships, work, and health), as well as a person's moods and emotions; these, in turn, are affected by temperament (Pavot & Diener, 2008). When university students were asked to list the sources of their life satisfaction judgments, they responded that the domains of academic performance, romantic relationships, and family relationships were most important (Schimmack et al., 2002). It follows then that contentment, satisfaction, and success in these domains are highly influential in subjective well-being. It is important to be cognizant of the presumption that what constitutes satisfaction is based on individual and cultural influences (Schimmack et al., 2002).

In terms of temperament and personality characteristics, extroversion and neuroticism have been closely identified with positive and negative affect components of subjective well-being, respectively (Costa & McCrae, 1980). Schimmack et al. (2002) showed that the influence of personality dispositions on life satisfaction is mediated by their influence on a person's chronic moods. In turn, the common influence personality traits have on affect impacts life satisfaction. That life satisfaction is subsequently influenced by important domains, which are also swayed by affect and temperament, reveals the importance of each of these components in well-being.

In the Emmons and Diener (1985) construction, subjective well-being consists of three components: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. Positive and negative affect represent the emotional component of subjective well-being, while life satisfaction represents the cognitive element. Positive affect consists of pleasurable emotions such as joy, happiness, and contentment; whereas, negative affect consists of unpleasant feelings such as fear and sadness. Life satisfaction reflects a cognitive assessment of one's life as a whole. Research has found that these components are only slightly correlated with each other (Bradburn, 1969; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Emmons & Diener, 1985) and represent three independent elements of well-being. Bradburn (1969) found that positive affect was related to social interest, social and family adjustment, and activity, while negative affect was correlated with anxiety, worry, and neuroticism. It is important to note that research suggests that positive and negative affect are independent of each other; the absence of positive affect does not indicate the presence of negative affect and vice versa (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003).

To measure subjective well-being, Diener et al. (1985) developed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The SWLS was designed on the assumption that life satisfaction employs a cognitive judgmental process. Judgments of life satisfaction are based upon a comparison of one's circumstances to an individually based standard. This standard may be influenced by external sources, suggesting what one's life should contain to be considered satisfying (e.g., accumulation of wealth, job security, and the establishment of a family); however, the evaluation of life satisfaction is based upon an internally generated standard (Diener et al., 1985). The first phase of the construction of the SWLS began with a list of 48 self-report items.

A factor analysis of these items delineated three factors: positive affect, negative affect, and satisfaction. Items with factor loadings less than .60 were eliminated, leaving 10 items. Several of the remaining items were too similar semantically, so they too were eliminated, resulting in a 5-item scale. Two examples of items that were retained are: “In most ways my life is close to my ideal” and “The conditions of my life are excellent” (Diener et al., 1985, p. 114).

The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) was normed on 176 graduate students. Two months later, 76 of these students were re-administered the scale. The two-month test–retest correlation coefficient was  $\alpha = .82$ . After the researchers applied a principal axis factor analysis, a single factor emerged, accounting for 66% of the variance (Diener et al., 1985), offering support for the instrument’s construct related validity. Reliability and validity have been further demonstrated in many studies and in many countries (Pavot & Diener, 1993, 2008). Internal consistency of the scale is considered adequate and has ranged between  $\alpha = 0.79$  to  $\alpha = 0.89$  across nine studies (Compton, Smith, Cornish & Qualls, 1996; Lucas, Diener, & Suh., 1996; Pavot & Diener, 1993), and item-total correlations ranging from  $r = 0.51$  to  $r = 0.80$  (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Principal components factor analyses typically identify a single factor model (McDowell, 2010).

Factors such as mood states can influence life satisfaction judgments; however, in survey data collections these effects are small when compared to the stable variance in the measures (Eid & Diener, 2004). Pavot and Diener (2008) concluded that life satisfaction primarily reflects personality traits and longer-term contextual life events, such as unemployment or the loss of a loved one. Temporary mood states do have an influence, “but these ‘noise’ variables generally do not eliminate the ‘signal’ of life

satisfaction” (Pavot & Diener, 2008, p. 140). For the purposes of this study, the SWLS was used to measure subjective well-being, that is, a holistic assessment of one’s satisfaction with life. The SWLS has been used extensively with college students; its use as a research instrument for this study, therefore, was quite appropriate.

Given what has been discussed about entitlement and its presentation in interpersonal relationships, it is clear that PE has the potential to influence subjective well-being. As the previous section verified, entitlement has been shown to impact multiple areas of one’s life. Because of the domains that Millennials reported to be most important in their overall life satisfaction and because of the negative impact that entitlement has been found to have on relationships, academics and occupation, it is possible to hypothesize that entitlement negatively impacts subjective well-being. Although excellent research concerning subjective well-being has been conducted, little has been developed to explore the relationship between subjective well-being and entitlement, even less to explore the relationships among subjective well-being, entitlement, and Millennials. One of the purposes of this study was to determine if PE does, indeed, negatively affect the life satisfaction of Millennials, and, in order to properly assess PE’s effect, if any, an overview of the growth and development of Millennials is germane.

### **Parenting Theory**

The correlation between entitlement and parenting styles has been the subject of much of the research devoted to the etiology of entitled attitudes (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Gonzalez, Greenwood, & WenHsu, 2001; Kerr, 1985). Given the premise that entitlement is a learned set of beliefs that is or was adaptive at some point, analyzing

the role of caretakers in its development may lay a foundation for the understanding of the development of entitled beliefs and attitudes. Recently, the concept of over-parenting, or helicopter parenting as it is referred to in the media, has advanced speculation regarding how the increase in helicopter parents and the rise in entitlement among Millennials may be related (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Stearns, 2009; Stein, 2012). The following section provides brief historical overviews of the ways that parenting practices have evolved in the United States and of the impact parenting styles have on child outcome and, especially for the purposes of this study, Millennials.

A number of parenting models have been formulated throughout research literature. Though these models have variations, researchers from diverse disciplines repeatedly identify two primary contributors to parenting style: warmth and control (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). The warmth dimension relates to parental responsiveness, which creates the emotional climate that the child experiences. Responsiveness is demonstrated through listening to the child, accepting the child, and attending to the relationship between the child and the parent. Responsiveness is related to encouraging autonomy and adapting to a child's changing needs. By facilitating a child's emerging independence while also maintaining safety and security, parents respond to their child's developmental needs and promote self-regulation and self-determination (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005).

The control dimension refers to parental demandingness. This dimension includes the parents' imposing discipline, setting boundaries, and establishing standards of behavior. The motivations behind these demands can vary from child-centered (e.g., helping the child to feel secure, to behave in socially acceptable ways,

and to encourage social skill building) to parent-centered (e.g., demanding order, obedience, convenience, and quiet). Control can also be behavioral or psychological. Behavioral control refers to the methods that parents use to structure and regulate their child's environment. Psychological control refers to the means that parents use to manipulate their child's emotions, thoughts, and relationships (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). It is noteworthy that warmth and demandingness are dimensions, and where parents fall on these dimensions can vary significantly depending upon contexts (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005).

Baumrind's (1971, 1978) typology of parenting styles identified three distinct types of parents: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Baumrind (1971) described the permissive parent as affirming, accepting, and non-punishing. This type of parent allows the child freedom with little guidance and direction. Permissive parents act as resources for their children rather than active agents in shaping current or future behaviors. The permissive parent does not use authority or power to direct the child, preferring to use reason, redirection, and manipulation (Baumrind, 1978). The authoritarian parent uses power, punishment, and direction to shape a child. The parent employs a strict set of standards that the child is expected to obtain, maintain, and sustain. Baumrind (1971) noted the history of these standards was often theologically and religiously motivated; the parent worked as a force to teach the child to do the will of God. Reciprocity between parent and child is not encouraged; rather, the child is expected to obey without question or hesitation (Baumrind, 1971). Using discipline and conformity, the authoritative parent works to balance the self-direction of the child. This type of parent sets reasonable standards for the child and directs the child in a rational manner. The child's individuality is recognized and respected, and

conversations between parent and child regarding behavior and decisions are promoted. The parents recognize their authority and adhere to objectives that the child is coached to reach. Discipline is consistent, age appropriate, and explained to the child in terms he or she can understand (Baumrind, 1971).

Research with ethnically diverse populations has revealed differences in optimal parenting styles. While physical punishment may be viewed as harsh in some contexts, in a study of African Americans Baumrind (1997) found that it was positively associated with warmth and reason. What would be considered restrictive in many middle class Caucasian families may provide necessary and appreciated levels of supervision, support, and protection in neighborhoods with higher incidents of violence. Family and parenting practices must be considered within the larger socioeconomic context, and factors such as socioeconomic status and social support are highly influential. Families with lower socioeconomic status have less access to community resources, report higher levels of marital conflict, and higher incidences of feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and lack of control (Baumrind, 1994). Parenting practices also differ within varying contexts, with higher socioeconomic status positively associated with parent encouragement of autonomy and negatively associated with authoritarian control (Baumrind, 1994).

A significant amount of recent research on parenting and child outcomes has relied heavily on Baumrind's (1978) theory of parenting styles (Bassett, Synder, Rogers, & Collins, 2013; Ejei, Lavasani, Malahmadi, & Khezri, 2011; Georgiou, Fousiani, Michaelides, & Stavriniades, 2013). Using Baumrind's (1978) theory as its foundation, Buri (1991) developed the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) to assess which type of parenting style is most prominent in a parent-child relationship.

The PAQ is a brief assessment that measures parenting practices from the child's point of view and aligns with Baumrind's permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting styles. Participants may fill out two PAQs, one for each parent or whomever they feel was the most prominent caretaker in their life. The PAQ remains a popular measure for research on parenting and parent-child relationships (Bassett et al., 2013; Ejei et al., 2011; Georgiou et al., 2013).

Initially, Buri composed 48 questionnaire items based on the descriptions of the permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles suggested by Baumrind (1971). The items were stated from the point of view of an individual assessing the patterns of authority exercised by his or her parents. This design was based upon the premise that the actual parental behavior to which the individual has been exposed will impact the perception of that behavior. As such, rather than developing a scale that would measure parenting style from the perspective of the parents, Buri designed items to measure the permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritativeness of parents as perceived by their child.

To evaluate the content related validity of the scale's items, 21 professionals who work in the fields of psychology, education, sociology, and social work were presented the 48 questionnaire items. Baumrind's (1971) work was used to generate descriptions of the permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. These descriptions were given to each of the professionals, who were asked to judge the items according to the items accuracy in depicting the styles. If an evaluator found that an item failed to clearly identify one of the three parental styles, the professional was asked to omit that item from all categories. An item was retained for the final pool if 20 of the 21 evaluators agreed that it explicitly represented one of the three



parenting styles. Thirty-six of the 48 items met this criterion, and there was 100% agreement among the judges on two-thirds of these items. From the pool of 36 items, 10 items representing each of the three parenting styles were retained for the final measure (Buri, 1991).

Respondents taking part in Buri's (1991) study were requested to circle the number on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*) that best described how each statement applied to the parental figure they were rating. There were three separate scores generated for each participant for each parenting style subscale: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. Scores on each of these subscales could range from 10 to 50; the higher the score, the greater the perceived use of that parenting style. All subscales of the PAQ reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.74 or higher (Buri, 1991). The test-retest reliability of the PAQ after a two week interval ranged from .77 to .92.

Supplementary studies were conducted to address both the reliability and the validity of the PAQ (Buri, 1991). Reliabilities were listed for mother and father scores in each of the three parenting style categories. Utilizing 185 undergraduate students in his study, Buri (1991) ascertained that Chronbach's alpha ranged from .74 to .87. Test-retest reliability was confirmed after Buri compared the original responses of 61 undergraduate students who completed the PAQ with their responses two weeks later. Test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .77 to .92.

Researchers have used the PAQ extensively in research related to parenting, parent-child interactions, and child outcomes (Bassett et al., 2013; Ejei et al., 2011; Georgiou et al., 2013). The following studies represent a sample of the current

literature, which illustrates the utilization of the PAQ on college student samples. Georgiou et al. (2013) employed the PAQ to examine the existing relationships between cultural value orientation, authoritarian parenting, and bullying and victimization in high school. The results of their examination confirmed that authoritarian parenting is positively associated with bullying ( $r = .22, p < .05$ ) and victimization ( $r = .33, p < .05$ ) at school.

Ishak, Low, and Lau (2012) utilized the PAQ in their study of academic achievement among students using parenting styles as a moderator variable. Results showed that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are most commonly practiced by parents. Ishak et al. concluded that parenting styles moderated the effect of academic self-concept on academic achievement. The authoritative parenting style was found to result in positive impacts in the domains of social competence, academic performance, and psychosocial development of an individual (Ishak et al., 2012). The PAQ was used in this study to identify the parenting styles of Millennial respondents and to deduce if there is a single style or a combination of styles that may be a mediating factor in high levels of PE. Researchers have yet to use an established theory of parenting to explore if and how parenting relates to entitlement. To discern the presence and development of PE in Millennials, the use of Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles as measured by the PAQ served as an organizational tool for this study.

### **Parental Control**

In their study on parental control, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) noted that research on parenting described parenting styles contingent on dimensions, such as warmth/responsiveness, control/demandingness, and acceptance/rejection. Within

these broad categories and building upon the existing research of Baumrind, they qualified three important features of parenting typographies: (a) behavioral control, the goal being to foster mature and respectful behavior; (b) autonomy granting, the goal being to promote self-reliance; and (c) support shown to the child, the goal being to form a connection with the child (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Each of these factors can be seen in Baumrind's (1978) delineation of parenting styles, and parents' adherence to one style is not fixed but lies on a spectrum. Further, operational style may be context, parent, or child specific.

Exercising Baumrind's (1978) constellations of parenting styles, researchers found associations between each constellation and child/adolescent outcomes as well as combinations that look to be more or less adaptive when spanning childhood and adolescence. The authoritative parenting style, high on responsiveness and high in warmth, promotes the best outcomes in children, particularly middle class, Caucasian children (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). Those parents who are involved in their child's world and who encourage their child to build independence provide both support and autonomy through their relationship with the child. However, when parents use behavioral, psychological, or emotional control to limit autonomy, children tend to display both internalizing and externalizing difficulties. These difficulties may manifest as behavioral problems in school or with authority figures, problematic relationships with peers, high risk-taking behaviors, attention difficulties, hyperactivity, and problems with motivation (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). It is then a question of when does parental involvement, affection, control, and protection become inhibitors of their child's development? Thomasgard and Metz (1993) argued that situation and context are what distinguish between appropriate protection and

maladaptive overprotection. Parental overprotection is problematic when it imparts control or involvement that is either developmentally or contextually inappropriate (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

### **Over-parenting**

Parenting styles and their effect on both their children's behavior and their future success have been long studied (Barton & Kirtley, 2012; Baumrind, 1971, 1978, 1994; Bayer et al., 2006; Georgiou et al., 2013). However, the emerging interest in entitlement and its etiology is relatively new. Recently, pop culture references to over-parenting, dubbed helicopter parenting, have prompted researchers to begin investigations into the relationships between over-parenting, child behavior, and adjustment (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). In one of the first studies on over-parenting involving Millennials, Segrin et al. (2012) noted a different form of parental control that was motivated by fervent desires to ensure that their child is successful, does not experience disappointment or failure, and is consistently happy and contented. The methods parents use to ensure that their child's desires are met are structured exclusively by the parents and generally result in the parents attempting to remove any obstacle that might prohibit their child from attaining his or her goals.

In behavioral terms, over-parenting often involves high levels of advice giving and directiveness. As it pertains to their child's school environment, parents may be over-involved in their child's academics, may intrude on a school's curricula, may seek to overturn grades, and may over-assist with homework (Stearns, 2009). In other environments it can be difficult to delineate between the goals of the parent and the goals of the child, in which case the family structure becomes unbalanced. Minuchin

(1974) described the ideal family structure necessary to help both the child and the parents renegotiate their relationship as the child navigates his or her way into adulthood as one having clear interpersonal boundaries, parental hierarchical authority over the child, and a strong parental alliance. Each of these factors is illustrated in the authoritative parenting style which promotes two-way communication, parental support, and appropriate levels of control.

Functional families are cohesive while still maintaining the individuality of the members. However, when parents are overinvolved, the family structure becomes enmeshed. Enmeshment is characterized by family members who are undifferentiated or overly dependent on one another; the emotional and cognitive communications of the parents are so highly intrusive that they oppress the child's sense of separateness (Perosa & Perosa, 1993). From the family systems perspective, over-parenting can be comprehended as a combination of the failure of the parents to adapt and adjust to the changing needs of the child, the enmeshment resulting in blurred boundaries, and the projection of the parents' wants and wishes onto the child (Segrin et al., 2012).

Segrin et al. in their 2012 article on helicopter parenting, succinctly defined and evaluated over-parenting practices:

Although it is likely enacted with the best of intentions, over-parenting is a paradoxical behavior in that it has a higher potential to lead to negative child outcomes than to positive ones. Unlike some other maladaptive parenting practices such as abuse, over-parenting is defined in a matter of degree. That is to say that the behaviors that constitute over-parenting may indeed be adaptive at modest levels. The parenting practice is assumed to be harmful to child development and traits when enacted in excess, hence the term "over-parenting." (p. 238)

Over-parenting can be understood within the contexts of Baumrind's parenting styles as described by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) as parenting that is high on

warmth/support, high on control, and low on autonomy granting. Given these parameters, over-parenting will fall within the dimensions of Baumrind's parenting styles (e.g., responsiveness, control, and warmth), though how those dimensions are prioritized is singular. According to Segrin et al. (2012), over-parenting is a unique combination of elements of Baumrind's parenting styles; it includes the control and directiveness of the authoritarian parent though without the authoritarian parent's disregard for his or her child's needs. Instead, over-parenting is demonstrated by over-fixation on the child's needs as perceived by the parent and is most evident in the permissive parenting style.

The role of parents in the daily lives of Millennials is unique to this generation. Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) have written extensively about the Millennial Generation and members' close attachment to their parents. Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) noted that Millennials often first refer to their parents as friends rather than parents; they value their opinions and rely on their parents to assist in making decisions. And, while it is possible that Millennials who are entering adulthood may benefit from moderate levels of parental involvement, especially if they are in positions associated with dependency, such as being in school or residing in their parents' home (Fingerman et al., 2012), excessive involvement tends to produce more negative outcomes, such as diminished efficacy (Fingerman et al., 2012), struggles in making decisions (Soenens, Berzonsky, Dunkel, & Papini, 2011), difficulty in being empathetic toward others (Segrin et al., 2012), and problems in navigating relationships (Sedikides, Herbst, Hardin, & Dardis, 2002). Naturally, as Millennials age, family dynamics shift. The question is how those shifts can be managed in a way

that facilitates autonomy and personal responsibility as adolescents move into adulthood (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

This time of transition has been coined as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000) and describes the developmental stage of the Millennials who participated in this study. The desire of emerging adults to challenge themselves to try new things, to make independent decisions, and to differentiate from parents to forge independent identities all decline when the transition into adulthood is delayed (Stearns, 2009). Because of its relevance to this study, it is important to understand this developmental process as it uniquely applies to Millennials, for it encompasses that time in life during which enhanced PE becomes a more salient characteristic of this generation (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998).

### **Parental Control and Emerging Adulthood**

In noting the critical nature of the developmental processes and the transitional nature inherent in the emerging adulthood phase, it is apparent that the effects of over-parenting can be of great consequence. The nature of this developmental phase calls for a growing need for independence and autonomy on the part of the young adult and a desire to become self-reliant (Arnett, 2004). Parents are also navigating an evolving definition of their role in their child's life. Parents should seek to balance providing support for their child and allowing him or her autonomy. Evidence suggests that high levels of parental support coupled with control that limits autonomy are related to problematic behaviors, especially as the child ages and reaches emerging adulthood (Segrin et al., 2012).

Research on family relations between emerging adults and their caretakers verifies that for persons entering their early 20s, physical closeness to parents is inversely related to the quality of the emerging adults' relationships with them (Arnett, 2000). Moreover, emerging adults who have the highest level of contact with their caretakers also have the poorest psychological adjustment (Arnett, 2000). If parents are exerting too much control over their child, they can inhibit their child's success in transitioning to adulthood (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Consequently, though the intent of parents in their attempt to control and protect their child may be admirable, it may also, in fact, encourage higher risk behaviors in the child's pursuit of independence (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

While the impact of parenting styles on child behavior has been and continues to be a heavily researched area, the pervasiveness of over-parenting styles in recent times and the difficulty in operationalizing over-parenting have created a new area of study. Lately, researchers have affirmed that Millennials entering the emerging adulthood phase of development take a unique approach to their separation from their parents (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Members of this generation have been characterized as having unusually close relationships with their parents as well as having parents who are highly involved in their lives. Even as emerging adults, Millennials continue to seek guidance from their parents and inordinately depend on their advice to make decisions. Ultimately, they are less driven to individuate from their parents (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Because of the importance of children's renegotiation of their relationship with their parents during the emerging adulthood phase and because of the necessity of identity formation at this time, it is crucial to investigate how parental factors impact Millennials' development. Research on



individuation suggests that the family system that fails to adjust the balance between maintaining appropriate connection and supporting necessary separation can negatively impact the psychological and psychosocial adjustment of the child (Segrin et al., 2012).

To accurately assess the role of parents in the development of PE, especially as research has indicated a rise in over-parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin et al., 2012; Soenens et al., 2011; Willoughby, Hersh, Padilla-Walker, & Nelson, 2013), this study's use of Baumrind's (1971) parenting theory was accompanied by a measurement and exploration of over-parenting and its potential relationship to PE. Although the parenting configurations of Baumrind and the measure created by Buri (1991) addressed the aspects of parental warmth and control, research has only recently begun to try to conceptualize the type of control and involvement that is exhibited in helicopter parenting for Millennials in the emerging adulthood phase (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). For example, recent articles from both the *Cable News Network* (LeTrent, 2013) and *The Huffington Post* (Berman, 2013) highlighted the growing number of parents who are accompanying their adult children to job interviews or completing job applications for their children. Other related headlines have told of parents who petition professors to change their child's unsatisfactory grade or who demand that their child is entitled to special treatment (Stein, 2012). These behaviors indicate parents who are highly involved, highly invested, and extremely concerned about the welfare of their children, however misdirected their actions (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

In their study to develop a measure for over-parenting, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) proposed that over-parenting could be understood as a unique

patterning which, nevertheless, is derived from the basic dimensions of parenting. They argued that over-parenting is high on warmth and support, high on control, and low on autonomy granting. What is unique to over-parenting, as described by Padilla-Walker and Nelson, is its place within the control dimension. Their research suggests that the style of control of parents who are overinvolved in their young adult children is similar to the style of overprotective or over-solicitous parenting found in parents of young children. This type of parenting has been linked to maladaptive outcomes (e.g., shyness, peer difficulties, and anxiety-related difficulties) in young children ages 2 to 5 (Bayer et al., 2006; McShane & Hastings, 2009). Because we know that overprotective parenting of young children is associated with negative child outcomes in early childhood, it is startling that research on how overprotective parenting impacts young adults is so limited (Hastings, Nuselovici, Rubin, & Cheah, 2010). Addressing this omission in the literature is particularly important, given that the developmental stage of emerging adulthood calls for greater autonomy granting by parents (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

To measure the construct of over-parenting, this study employed the work of Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012), who were the first to identify helicopter parenting as a unique construct of parenting and developed the HPS. Helicopter parenting was not identified by Padilla-Walker and Nelson as a new dimension of parenting. Instead, they reasoned that it can be understood within the major dimensions of parenting (e.g., control, autonomy granting, and responsiveness) in a manner similar to Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles. Their study found that the process in which the dimensions are prioritized (high involvement and low autonomy granting) reflects a unique approach to parenting. The HPS, though a new scale, was an important feature of this

study as it assesses a unique aspect of parenting recognized as a common practice among the parents of Millennials (Bayer et al., 2006; Berman, 2013; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

The HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) was normed on college students ( $n = 438$ ) and was designed for use exclusively with college students, as the majority of undergraduate students are currently in the emerging adult developmental phase. In the sample used to create this measure, students completed up to two questionnaires, one for each parent and labeled “mother” and “father.” To build and validate the HPS, several different measures were used to assess the following elements considered salient in helicopter parenting: (a) behavioral control, (b) psychological control, (c) parenting dimensions, (d) helicopter parenting, (e) parent–child relationship, (f) self-worth, (g) school engagement, and (h) perceptions of adulthood and identity. The purpose of the Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) study was to establish a measure of helicopter parenting and (a) examine whether the construct was distinguishable from behavioral and psychological control in emerging adulthood, and (b) examine its correlates with general dimensions of parenting, other aspects of the parent–child relationship, and child adjustment outcomes.

The HPS assessed parental involvement in decision-making. Items on the behavioral control scale assessed parents’ tendency to control their child’s friends, money, and/or activities. Psychological control was assessed using four items assessing psychologically controlling parenting practices. Analyses revealed that helicopter parenting loaded on a separate factor from both behavioral and psychological control for both mothers and fathers. Factor loadings on helicopter parenting items ranged from .49 to .89, and none of the items cross loaded on other

factors with values above .40. Analyses revealed that helicopter parenting was positively associated with behavioral ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ) and psychological ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ) control, but not at levels suggesting complete overlap. Results also revealed that helicopter parenting was positively associated with parental involvement ( $\beta = .19, p < .01$ ) and with other positive aspects of the parent–child relationship, but negatively associated with parental autonomy granting ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ) and school engagement ( $\beta = -.19, p < .001$ ) (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Though the HPS is relatively new, it has been used in several recent studies related to young adults and parent relationships. Willoughby et al. (2013) used the HPS with 779 emerging adult college students (Millennials) to explore the relationship between helicopter parenting and marital attitudes ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Their research suggested that helicopter parenting, while not associated with the general importance placed on marriage, did influence emerging adults' beliefs about the advantages of being single versus being married and their expected age for marriage. A higher report of helicopter parenting among emerging adults was associated with a stronger belief that being single was more advantageous than being married.

Another study relevant to this paper centered on the ways that parents suppress the autonomous behavior of their children, thus depriving them of both the ability to begin to differentiate in order to become self-sufficient and the manifestation of different identity processing styles (Soenens et al., 2011). The Soenens et al. (2011) study found that adolescents who identified with parents whom they perceived as limiting their opportunities to make independent decisions and not supporting age-appropriate autonomy exhibited high normative processing styles. Normative processing is marked by dependence on norms and others' expectations when

evaluating identity-related issues. This suggests that although these adolescents may adopt their parents' expectations and aspirations, they are not likely to adopt these expectations for informed, autonomous reasons. Conversely, normative adolescents may more mindlessly internalize and engage in their parents' ambitions and principles without aligning them with their own personal values. This contrasts with making choices that are personally elected and made with a sense of personal independence (Soenens et al., 2011).

Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) studied how changing factors influenced the developmental trajectory of undergraduate students. They noted that a major developmental task of the college experience involves students breaking away from the standards and opinions of their home community and assimilating the ideas of their new community, that is, the college or institution they are attending. Ideally, after students open up to and evaluate fresh ideas from their college or university through study and experience, they then advance their independence by breaking away from their educational institutions' constructs to form their own. This is done by molding information from various sources and from their own experiences into an understanding of their world—a world that is open to integrating new information as it becomes available (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). However, in their study, Pizzolato and Hicklen also confirmed that this process was not being completed by the end of Millennials' college experience. After analyzing the obstacles that inhibit this process, they suggested that students in their study had few experiences that required independent problem solving skills. Rather, students relied on authority figures, be they parents, faculty members, or institutions to provide them with either answers or formulas to get answers.

Having been insulated from experiencing the process of moving through confusion, dissonance, and discomfort into reassessment, knowledge seeking, and problems solving, Millennials could not make independent decisions. That Millennials as emerging adults lacked the ability to make decisions is not surprising, given their upbringing. Segrin et al. (2012) showed that parents who allow their children to experience difficulties and failures and to learn resilience provide the “true antecedent to developing competencies in the maturing child” (p. 239). Conversely, if parents insulate their children from the need to problem solve by doing it for them, those parents do not foster the development of the skill sets needed for critical thinking (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

### **Conclusions and Support for Research**

The topic of PE, as it relates to Millennials, has become the core of frequent discussions at social and psychological forums. Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998; Twenge, 2006). This rise in PE may then put the Millennials at risk for experiencing the negative impact PE can have on relationships and multiple life domains (Stein, 2012; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011; Twenge, 2006; Walton et al., 2012).

As social rhetoric surrounding PE increases, research via psychology and social sciences has also increased. However, the bulk of this research has not considered the cultural and familial contributions to the entitled attitude of the Millennial Generation, as well as the impact of psychological entitled attitudes on Millennials’ interpersonal and general well-being. In contrast, this study sought to the

extent to which Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes. Further this study explored what factors may contribute to PE and the impact that PE has on the lives of Millennials.

While much of the research has been on the impact of parenting styles on younger children, the recent trend of high parental involvement in the lives of today's young adults has created a need for research on how parenting styles during this developmental stage may facilitate PE (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013).

Recently, increased attention by the media related to helicopter parenting has prompted researchers to begin investigations into the relationship between over-parenting, child behavior, and adjustment (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). Because of the critical nature of the developmental processes and the transitional nature inherent in the emerging adulthood phase (Arnett, 2000), the effects of over-parenting may be profound.

While research has laid a solid foundation for the study of those factors inherent in PE, what is deficient in the research is an exploration of the impact that PE may have on the life satisfaction of Millennials themselves. Given what prior research has indicated about the negative effects of PE in the domains of relationships with friends and family (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell, 1999; Kerr, 1985; Levin, 1970) and on romantic relationships (Campbell et al., 2004; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), PE's presence may adversely impact one's overall well-being. It is, therefore, essential that the psychosocial ethos of this population be understood. Without investigation of the various attitudinal facets of the culture of PE and the

psychological and interpersonal ramifications of these attitudes, it may not be as possible to thwart the damage that PE can cause (Exline et al., 2004, Gerrard, 2002; Kerr, 1985; Kris, 1976; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990).

### **Summary**

This chapter consisted of a comprehensive literature review conducted for this study. Reviewed articles' data have been aggregated and organized to present a comprehensive analysis of the cultural context and developmental stages of Millennials, an explanation of PE and its impact on select facets of Millennials' lives, and an exploration of parenting styles and the helicopter parenting construct. The Millennial Generation and various cultural and unique attributes of this population were identified and examined. Parenting styles were explained through the use of Baumrind's parenting theory, and the new construct of helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) was explored. The various life domains that have been shown to be negatively impacted by PE were delineated, and the potential impact that PE may have on subjective well-being was identified. In summation, the potential influence of parenting style on the development of PE was explored, and the consequential impact of PE on various life domains and its potential impact on subjective well-being was identified. The need for research on the potential relationships between these variables was also explained. Chapter III addresses the methodology for this study including descriptions of the measures used, procedures for participant recruitment and participation as well as a description of the statistical analyses used to address the research questions.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used to explore the relationships among the following variables: (a) psychological entitlement (PE), (b) perceptions of parenting style, (c) over-parenting, and (d) subjective well-being. This study examined how Millennials' perceptions of their parents' approaches to parenting were associated with PE and how both of these variables are related to their subjective well-being. This study recruited undergraduate college students via e-mail to complete a series of surveys through a web-based survey program. In a review of web-based survey protocol validity, Johnson (2005) suggested that web-based measures are similar in accuracy to paper-and-pencil measures with steps in place to prevent invalid participant response patterns. The present study employed the recommended methods for identifying multiple submissions, same-response category inattentiveness, protocol consistency, and patterns of missing data. This chapter includes a description of the instruments, a procedures section delineating the steps involved in participant recruitment, data collection, research questions, hypotheses, and data analysis. Finally the sample population is described.

#### **Participants**

The participants in this study were undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24. They were recruited via e-mail from a medium-sized public university in the Rocky Mountain region ( $N =$  approximately 14,000 students); a small, private

university in Southern California ( $N =$  approximately 3,100 students); and a small, private university in the Upper Midwest ( $N =$  approximately 2,500 students). The three universities involved in this study are in different geographic locations, and the student populations differ from one another in socioeconomic status and ethnic composition. Pepperdine University is a Christian college located in Malibu, California; its student population is predominantly Caucasian and upper class. Luther College is a small liberal arts college located in Decorah, Iowa, and its student population is also predominantly Caucasian. The student population is mostly middle to upper middle class. The University of Northern Colorado is located in Greeley, Colorado, and is composed of an ethnically diverse student population; 22% of the undergraduate population identifies as being an ethnic minority (University of Northern Colorado, 2013). The University of Northern Colorado student body also includes a large population of first generation college students (36%) and students from lower to middle class families (University of Northern Colorado, 2013). By combining these universities, a geographically, socioeconomic, and ethnically diverse population was invited to participate in this study, aiding generalizability of the findings.

### **Procedures**

Prior to participant recruitment and data collection, approval from the host university's Institutional Review Board was obtained (see Appendix A). Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval from the University of Northern Colorado, Institutional Review Board approval was sought from Pepperdine University and Luther College (see Appendices B & C).

All data were collected using Qualtrics, a leading online service specializing in the collection and disaggregation of online survey research data. The measures used in the survey are presented below and were uploaded into the Qualtrics survey format. Participants were first contacted via an e-mail (see Appendix D), which presented a brief description of the study and requested their participation. If students elected to continue, they clicked a link that directed them to the Institutional Review Board approved informed consent document (see Appendix E). The informed consent web page advised potential participants of feasible risks and benefits for participation and informed them that the study would result in minimized discomfort. Participants were informed that if they experienced distress or discomfort during their involvement with the study, they could cease participation at any time without repercussions. Contact information for the students' respective counseling centers was provided as well as contact information for the primary researcher, her dissertation co-research advisors, and each university's Institutional Review Board officers. Students at Luther College were offered extra credit for their participation in this study. All students were informed that their completion of the survey would qualify them to enter into a drawing for six Visa gift cards worth \$25 each.

Students who chose to participate in the survey clicked a "continue" icon, which indicated their consent and directed them to the study survey. Upon completion of the survey, participants were directed to a screen, which included a short debriefing statement (see Appendix F) that restated the purpose of the survey and thanked them for their participation. The debriefing page also included the contact information for the student's home university counseling center as a resource for them to utilize if they felt the need. At this point the participants were invited to enter into the drawing for

the \$25 gift cards by clicking on a link directing them to a separate page to enter their e-mail addresses. This separate link would collect the raffle entries in a database, separate from the survey response database. Students were informed that the e-mail address they provided would not be connected to their survey data. Upon completion of a survey, the data were stored on a Qualtrics secure server and were then downloaded and imported into the statistical software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, on the researcher's computer. Survey data stored on the Qualtrics server were password protected and accessible only by the primary researcher and research advisors.

### **Measures**

Participants were first asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G). Additionally, they were administered the (a) PES (Campbell et al., 2004), (b) PAQ (Buri, 1991), (c) HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), and (d) SWLS (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1985). Permission was obtained to use the PES and the HPS (see Appendix H); the PAQ and SWLS measures did not require permission when used in academic studies. The items of each scale were presented to participants randomly to control for any position effects.

### **Demographic Questionnaire**

Demographic variables included age (direct entry), gender (female, male, transgendered), year in college (direct entry), race/ethnicity (Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, African American, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, multiple races/ethnicities, or other), and university. To estimate socioeconomic status, students' parents' highest level of education students were asked their households annual income: less, than \$25,000, \$25,000 to \$49,999, \$50,000 to \$74, 999, \$75,000

to \$99,999, \$100,000 to \$124,999, \$125,000 to 149,999, 150,000 to 174,999, 175,000 to 199,999, and 200,000 or more (direct entry).

### **Psychological Entitlement Scale**

The PES consists of nine items and conceptualizes PE as a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more resources than others (Campbell et al., 2004). To complete the scale, participants respond to the nine items by using a Likert-type scale (numbered one through seven) that best reflected their own beliefs, with one indicating *strong disagreement* and seven indicating *strong agreement*. Examples of statements include: “I honestly feel I’m just more deserving than others,” and “Things should go my way.” The scores are then totaled, with higher scores indicating a higher level of PE. The PES takes approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete (see Appendix I). For the purpose of this study, the PES was used to measure PE in a sample of Millennials attending college. The reported internal consistency reliability for the PES ranges from .83 to .89 with college student samples. Campbell et al. (2004) examined the test-retest reliability of the PES. Using two independent samples of undergraduate students, Campbell et al. tested one sample ( $N = 97$ ) over one month and the second sample ( $N = 458$ ) over two months. The one-month test-retest correlation for the PES was  $r = .72, p < 0.0001$ . The two-month test-retest correlation was  $r = .70, p < 0.0001$ . Test results indicated that the PES is stable over time (Campbell et al., 2004).

### **Parental Authority Questionnaire**

The PAQ is a 30-item self-report instrument designed to measure parental authority or disciplinary practices from the child’s point of view (Buri, 1991). Participants were asked to answer the questions as they relate to the caretaker they feel

was most influential to them during their childhood (see Appendix J). Buri's instrument measures Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. Of the 30 items, 10 measure each style. Respondents were requested to circle the number on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*) that best described how each statement applied to the parental figure they are rating. Three scores were generated for each participant, one for each of the following subscales: permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritativeness. Scores on each of these subscales can range from 10 to 50; the higher the score, the greater the perceived use of that parenting style.

Additional studies were conducted to provide additional support for both the reliability and validity of the PAQ (Buri, 1991). Reliabilities were listed for mother and father scores in each of the three parenting style categories. Utilizing 185 undergraduate students, Chronbach's alpha ranged from .74 to .87. Test-retest reliability was assessed after Buri (1991) analyzed the responses of 61 undergraduate students who completed the PAQ and their responses two weeks later. These test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from  $r = .77$  to  $r .92$ .

### **Helicopter Parenting Scale**

Helicopter parenting was first assessed using a 5-item scale developed by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012). The five items assessed the degree to which participants believed their parents made important decisions for them (see Appendix K). The term, helicopter parenting, was used in reference to over-parenting when describing this measure as it is the terminology used by the researchers who developed this scale. In their article on the development of the HPS, Padilla-Walker and Nelson

remarked that the term “helicopter” parenting is used rather than “over-solicitous” parenting or “over-parenting” because the term is embedded in popular vernacular; however, the terms are interchangeable.

Participants were asked to answer the questions as they relate to the caretaker they feel is most influential in their life. Participants were asked to select the response that best reflected their observations of their caretaker(s) at this time on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from one (*not at all like him/her*) to five (*a lot like him/her*). Sample items included, “My parent makes important decisions for me (e.g., where I live, where I work, what classes I take)” and “My parent intervenes in settling disputes with my roommates or friends.” Higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived over-parenting. Internal consistency reliability coefficients were found to be for mothers ( $\alpha = .87$ ) and for fathers ( $\alpha = .84$ ) (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

### **Satisfaction with Life Scale**

The SWLS is a brief self-report assessment of an individual’s general sense of life satisfaction. To complete the scale, participants are asked to respond to five life-satisfaction assessment items (e.g., “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing”) using a number from one through seven on a Likert-type scale that best reflected a participant’s level of agreement with each statement (see Appendix L). One indicates *strong disagreement*, and seven indicates *strong agreement*. A score of 23 represented the neutral point; higher scores indicated higher levels of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). The SWLS takes approximately one to two minutes to complete (Diener et al., 1985).

The SWLS was normed on 176 graduate students. Two months later, 76 of these students were re-administered the scale. The two-month test-retest reliability

coefficient was .82, and coefficient  $\alpha = .87$ . After the researchers applied a principal axis factor analysis, a single factor emerged, accounting for 66% of the variance (Diener et al., 1985), offering support for the instrument's construct related validity. Reliability and validity have been further demonstrated in many studies and in many countries (Pavot & Diener, 1993, 2008). Internal consistency of the scale is considered adequate and has ranged between 0.79 to 0.89 across nine studies (Compton et al., 1996; Lucas et al., 1996; Pavot & Diener, 1993), and item-total correlations ranging from 0.51 to 0.80 (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Test-retest reliability over a two-month interval produced coefficients ranging from 0.5 to 0.84 (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Principal components factor analyses typically identify a single factor model (McDowell, 2010). For the purposes of this study, the SWLS was used to measure subjective well-being, that is, a holistic assessment of one's satisfaction with life. The SWLS has been used extensively with college students; its use as a research instrument for this study, therefore, was quite appropriate.

### **Analyses**

The central priority of this study was to investigate the interrelationships between perceived parenting style, helicopter parenting, PE, and subjective well-being. Research questions are stated first, followed by preliminary analyses, and then each primary research question and corresponding statistical analyses are addressed.

### **Statistical Treatment**

All variables assessing individual perceptions of parenting styles, helicopter parenting, and PE were conceptualized as predictor variables (i.e., independent) for inclusion in the primary analyses. Therefore, to aid clarity and facilitate discussion, these variables are initially referred to as predictors regardless of whether they were



ultimately selected for inclusion in the regression analyses. Parenting style was obtained using the PAQ. The parenting style that received the highest score was used. This provided a categorical variable (authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian) for use in analyses. Beyond the categorical value of the PAQ scores, which determined what type of parenting style was experienced by each participant, the PAQ scores also produced an interval variable that indicated the extent to which each parenting style was experienced by each participant with higher scores indicating a more pronounced presence of that parenting style. The PE was measured by the PES and provided an interval variable. The remaining measures were all on interval scales, thus, had values computed by summing raw scores for each measure and then converting the raw scores to a standardized  $z$ -score before being entered it into a regression equation. The interval variables included helicopter parenting, as measured by the HPS and subjective well-being, as measured by the SWLS; permissive parenting style, as measured by the PAQ; authoritative parenting style, as measured by the PAQ; and authoritarian parenting style, as measured by the PAQ.

Variables assessing PE and subjective well-being were conceptualized as outcome variables. The PE served as both an explanatory variable of subjective well-being and outcome variable of parenting practices. Subjective well-being was determined by averaging the sum of the participants' scores on the SWLS to produce an interval variable. As the research outlined in Chapter II suggested, demographic variables, such as socioeconomic status (Baumrind, 1994), gender (Barton & Kirtley, 2012), and race/ethnicity (Baumrind, 1997), have been found to influence parenting styles. Therefore, demographic variables were utilized as control variables.

A power analysis was performed using Green's (1991) formula to determine the necessary number of participants to detect a medium effect size (.25). Power was set at .8 and the alpha level at .05. Based upon these parameters, 100 participants were necessary to meet these standards and answer the research questions. This study attempted to recruit at least 140 participants. All models were only significant if they reached the  $p < .05$  level of significance (Huck, 2012).

To draw inferences from our sample to the population, certain assumptions must be met. According to Osborne and Waters (2002), several assumptions of multiple regression are robust to violation (e.g., normal distribution of errors), and others can be adequately addressed through the design of the study (e.g., independence of observations) (Huck, 2012). The assumption of normality was examined prior to running the analyses by creating histograms and examining the skewedness kurtosis indicators. Two other assumptions of multiple regression are linearity and homoscedasticity. If the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable is not linear, the results of the regression analysis underestimate the true relationship. Homoscedasticity means that the variance of errors is uniform across variables; if this is not present, the findings may be distorted and the possibility of a Type 1 error is increased. An examination of residual plots were utilized to detect non-linearity and homoscedasticity (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

### **Data Cleaning and Preliminary Analyses**

Since “the presence of measurement errors in behavioral research is the rule rather than the exception” and “reliabilities of many measures used in the behavioral sciences are, at best, moderate” (Pedhazur, 1997, p. 172), it is important that researchers be aware of accepted methods of dealing with this issue. Reliabilities

were run on all measures used in this study. The assumption of no multicollinearity concluded that when there is more than one independent variable, there are no perfect linear relationships between any of those variables. To detect near-perfect multicollinearity, squared multiple correlations between a single variable and the others included in each analysis were computed and checked for values greater than .90, which may indicate significant collinearity problems. Further, variance inflation factors were inspected to see how much of the variance of the coefficients is inflated by multicollinearity. Those variance inflation factors that produced values greater than 10 may suggest redundancy among variables or collinearity (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Correlations were conducted between demographic variables and criterion variables (PE and subjective well-being) to determine if demographic variables accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the criterion variables. Those variables that were significant were controlled for in the regression analyses.

As suggested by Kelly and Maxwell (2010), regression imputation was used to account for missing data. According to this method, a plausible value is substituted for missing data. Kelly and Maxwell described this process as utilizing “plausible values” which comes from “an imputation model that uses other data that are available to estimate the data that are not available” (p. 289). A missing item was replaced with a predicted value by regressing the missing item on all other items for participants who had no missing data. Kelly and Maxwell suggested that this method is the preferable method for dealing with a small amount of missing data rather than to disregard data with deletion. Those participants who omitted more than 10% of the items on a questionnaire were omitted from the analyses.

### Statistical Treatment for Each Research Question

- Q1 To what extent do Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?

To assess if the sample population reported being psychologically entitled, the sample population's mean score on the PES was analyzed with the parameters set by the PES scoring instructions.

- Q2 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in the level of subjective well-being as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

A stepwise multiple regression was used to analyze the impact of helicopter parenting, parenting style, and PE on subjective well-being. Only those variables that had significant correlations with subjective well-being were retained for use in the multiple regression analyses. Those demographic variables that were found to significantly impact subjective well-being in the preliminary analyses were controlled for in this regression. In each of the multiple regression models utilized in this study,  $R^2$  values indicate the percentage of variance accounted for in the dependent variable by the combination of all variables in the prediction model. Changes in  $R^2$  are reported in Chapter IV as indices of the amount of unique variance that each predictor accounts for in the model. Magnitude and direction of beta weights ( $\beta$ ) are also reported with an emphasis on presenting in units that are clinically understandable.

- Q3 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, account for in the expression of psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?

A stepwise multiple regression was used to analyze the impact of helicopter parenting and parenting style on PE. Only those variables that had significant correlations with PE were retained for use in the multiple regression analyses. Those demographic variables that were statistically related to our variables of interest were controlled for in this regression.

Q4 How much of the variance does psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in subjective well-being, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

To assess the extent to which participants' PE explained their level of subjective well-being, a stepwise multiple regression was used. Those demographic variables that were statistically related to our variables of interest were controlled for in this regression.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter provides the results garnered in this study. The chapter is broken into three sections with the first section explaining the survey data and the methods used to handle missing data. The second section denotes the reliabilities and descriptive statistics of the sample for each measure. The final section discusses data cleaning, analyses, and outlines the results of the regression analyses used to address the research questions. Statistical analyses were performed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 18.0. An alpha level of .05 was used across all statistical procedures.

#### **Survey Response Data**

Undergraduate students from three universities were invited to participate in this study. Table 2 provides information on the demographic characteristics of this sample.

Table 2

*Demographics for Participant Sample (n = 140)*

Category	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	94	67
Male	46	32
Transgender	0	0
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian	92	63
Hispanic/Latino	16	11
Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic	15	10
Asian American	13	9
African American	4	3
Native American	0	0
Pacific Islander	0	0
Prefer not to answer	0	0
<b>Family Household Income</b>		
Don't know	0	0
\$200,000 or more	24	17
\$175,000 to \$199,999	6	4
\$150,000 to \$174,999	6	4
\$125,000 to \$149,999	8	6
\$100,000 to \$124,999	20	15
\$75,000 to \$99,999	22	16
\$50,000 to \$74, 999	22	16
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19	14
Less than \$25,000	13	9
<b>University Location</b>		
California	90	64
Colorado	14	10
Iowa	36	26

A total of 259 participants initiated the survey and of those participants, 140 completed 100% of the survey, which resulted in a 52% completion rate. A true response rate could not be calculated due to not having an accurate estimate of the number of students who were invited to participate. A total of 159 participants were entered into the raffle for the six \$25 Visa gift cards. A comparison of the demographic information between those participants who completed the survey and those who did not was not possible to conduct because those who stopped the survey did so prior to completing the demographic survey. Fifty-two participants completed only the PES ( $M = 29.81$ ,  $SD = 8.50$ ) and SWLS ( $M = 25.79$ ,  $SD = 5.84$ ). Independent sample  $t$ -tests found no significant differences between completers and non-completers on both the PES,  $t(194) = -1.28$ ,  $p = .20$  and on the SWLS,  $t(194) = .49$ ,  $p = .48$ .

Of the 140 completed surveys, 36 (26%) were from the university in Iowa, 90 (64%) were from the university in California, and 14 (10%) were from the university in Colorado. Analyses were conducted on participants to determine if there were any significant demographic differences between the three locations. Differences in reported family income were assessed using a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The H test was significant,  $\chi^2(2) = 8.85$ ,  $p = .012$ , indicating that the distribution of income levels was not the same across all three universities. Pairwise tests (Mann-Whitney  $U$ ) were conducted, showing that income group was significantly lower for the Colorado university participants than for the California university participants ( $U = -33.24$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .013$ ) or the Iowa university participants ( $U = 34.54$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .016$ ). The California university participants and the Iowa university participants did not differ in income ( $U = 1.30$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 1.0$ ).



This indicates that there were significant differences in reported family income between the Colorado university participants and the California university participants as well as between the Colorado university participants and the Iowa university participants.

Due to the small number of Latino/a ( $n = 16$ ), African American ( $n = 4$ ), Asian American ( $n = 13$ ), Native American ( $n = 0$ ), Pacific Islander ( $n = 0$ ), and Multiple races/ethnicities/other ( $n = 15$ ) participants, the race/ethnicity demographic was condensed into two categories: Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ) and non-Caucasian ( $n = 48$ ). Of the California university participants, 60% identified as Caucasian and 40% identified as non-Caucasian. Regarding the Iowa university participants, 78% identified as Caucasian and 22% identified as non-Caucasian. For the Colorado university participants, 71% identified as Caucasian and 29% identified as non-Caucasian. The relationship between race/ethnicity (dichotomized) and university location was evaluated with a chi-square test. Race/ethnicity was not related to school location,  $\chi^2(2) = 3.83, p = .058$ . A chi-square test was also used to evaluate the relationship between gender and school location. This test was also non-significant,  $\chi^2(2) = 2.08, p = .087$ . In general, more women than men participated in the study. The Iowa university participants included 25 female participants and 11 male participants. For the California university participants, the breakdown of the participants according to gender was: female = 62, male = 28. Of the 14 participants from the Colorado university, 7 identified as female and 7 identified as male. Prior to beginning the survey, participants were asked to only complete the survey if they were between

these ages of 18 and 24. Being within this age range and enrollment in one of the three universities sampled were the only eligibility criterion.

### **Data Cleaning and Preliminary Analyses**

There were 115 participants who omitted more than 10% of the items on the entire survey and were thus omitted from the analyses. The assumptions of multiple regression, linearity, absence of multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity all were tested prior to running the data analyses. Linearity and absence of multicollinearity assumptions were both met. Normality of the continuous variables (PES, SWLS, and HPS scores) was examined through visual inspection of histograms and tests for skewness and kurtosis. Kurtosis levels of the variables were within acceptable limits (Huck, 2012). The PES scores were normally distributed, with skewness of .24 ( $SE = .21$ ) and kurtosis of  $-.39$  ( $SE = .41$ ). The distribution of HPS scores had a positive skew of .82 ( $SE = .21$ ) and kurtosis of .64 ( $SE = .41$ ). The distribution of SWLS scores had a negative skew of  $-.55$  ( $SE = .21$ ) and kurtosis of  $-.52$  ( $SE = .41$ ). The skew in the distribution of HPS scores was adjusted by conducting a log<sub>10</sub> transformation on the data. This transformation had the effect of normalizing the dataset. However, the log<sub>10</sub> transformation did not normalize the SWLS variable, so those data were examined for outliers. Four outliers (cases 13, 23, 43, and 114) were removed from the SWLS dataset. This was done by creating a separate SWLS variable with missing values for these four outlier cases. This process normalized the SWLS data. The transformed HPS (log<sub>10</sub>) and SWLS (outliers removed) scores were used in all subsequent analyses.

## **Descriptive Statistics for the Measures**

### **Parental Authority Questionnaire**

Three separate scores were generated for each participant for each parenting style subscale on the PAQ (Buri, 1991): permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. Each subscale consisted of 10 items. Scores on each of these subscales ranged from 10 to 49; the higher the score, the greater the perceived use of that parenting style by one's parents. Four participants had two or more parenting styles with equally high scores; these participants were excluded from category assignment. Demographic information related to each of the parenting categories is listed in Table 3. Parenting styles are compared within each category.

Table 3

*Sample Demographics According to Parenting Style (n = 136)*

Category	PAQ-P		PAQ-R		PAQ-T	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male ( <i>n</i> = 44)	4	9	9	20	31	70
Female ( <i>n</i> = 92)	2	2	33	36	57	62
Transgender	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Caucasian ( <i>n</i> = 90)	6	7	34	38	50	56
Non-Caucasian ( <i>n</i> = 46)	0	0	8	17	38	83
<b>Family Household Income</b>						
Less than \$25,000 ( <i>n</i> = 12)	1	8	2	17	9	75
\$25,000 to \$49,999 ( <i>n</i> = 17)	1	6	3	18	13	76
\$50,000 to \$74,999 ( <i>n</i> = 22)	3	14	7	32	12	55
\$75,000 to \$99,999 ( <i>n</i> = 22)	0	0	9	41	13	59
\$100,000 to \$124,999 ( <i>n</i> = 20)	1	5	16	80	3	15
\$125,000 to \$149,999 ( <i>n</i> = 8)	0	0	5	63	3	37
\$150,000 to \$174,999 ( <i>n</i> = 6)	0	0	0	0	6	100
\$175,000 to \$199,999 ( <i>n</i> = 6)	0	0	0	0	6	100
\$200,000 or more ( <i>n</i> = 23)	0	0	0	0	23	100
Don't know ( <i>n</i> = 0)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Location</b>						
California ( <i>n</i> = 87)	2	2	31	36	54	62
Colorado ( <i>n</i> = 13)	2	15	6	46	5	38
Iowa ( <i>n</i> = 36)	2	6	5	14	29	81

*Note.* PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative.

Beyond the categorical value of the PAQ scores which determined what type of parenting style was experienced by each participant, the PAQ scores also produced an interval variable that indicated the extent to which each parenting style was

experienced by each participant, with higher scores indicating a more pronounced presence of that parenting style. For the permissive parenting style across all participants ( $n = 140$ ), the mean score was 22.88 ( $SD = 6.04$ ) with a reported range of 10 to 38. For the authoritarian parenting style across all participants ( $n = 140$ ), the mean score was 30.94 ( $SD = 7.92$ ) with a reported range of 13 to 49. For the authoritative parenting style across all participants ( $n = 140$ ), the mean score was 36.14 ( $SD = 6.61$ ) with a reported range of 18 to 49. Internal consistency reliabilities for each of the three singular PAQ subscales were found to be .87 (authoritarian), .82 (authoritative), and .78 (permissive) within this sample. These values are considered acceptable for research purposes and are consistent with the values reported by Buri (1991) in the development of the scale, which found all PAQ subscales to have Cronbach's alphas of .74 or higher. A table of all means, standard deviations, and ranges for each measure can be found in Appendix M.

Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine if any of the demographic variables (gender, race/ethnicity, reported family income, university location) influenced which parenting style category a participant was more likely to belong to. First, no significant differences were found among parenting styles based upon reported family income,  $\chi^2(2) = 11.41, p = .076$ , indicating that reported family income was not related to parenting style. Second, no significant differences were found among parenting styles according to gender,  $\chi^2(2) = .71, p = .4$ , indicating that gender was not related to parenting style. Third, no significant differences were found among parenting styles according to race/ethnicity,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.6, p = .6$ , indicating that race/ethnicity was not related to parenting style.

Fourth, a chi-square analysis was conducted between PAQ parenting style scores and university location. Here, significant differences were found among PAQ parenting style scores based upon university location,  $\chi^2(2) = 8.0, p = .02$ , which indicated that university location was related to parenting style. To further understand these differences, a one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted between university locations: Iowa ( $n = 36$ ), California ( $n = 90$ ), and Colorado ( $n = 14$ ) and PAQ parenting style scores. The results indicated that scores on the PAQ authoritative parenting style (PAQ-T),  $F(2, 137) = 3.34, p = .035$ , and on the PAQ authoritarian parenting style (PAQ-R),  $F(2, 137) = 4.74, p = .01$ , parenting style scores differed significantly by location. Participants from the Iowa and Colorado universities differed significantly on the PAQ-T scores. The participants from the Iowa university had significantly higher PAQ-T scores ( $M = 37.69, SD = 6.09$ ) than did the Colorado university participants ( $M = 32.57, SD = 6.95$ ). This indicates that participants from Iowa indicated a more salient experience of authoritative parenting than did participants from Colorado. Neither the Iowa university participants nor the Colorado university participants differed significantly from the California university participants on the PAQ-T scores. For the PAQ-R scores, the Iowa university participants and the California university participants differed significantly from one another. The California university participants had the highest PAQ-R scores ( $M = 32.37, SD = 7.1$ ), and the Iowa university participants had the lowest PAQ-R scores ( $M = 27.75, SD = 7.68$ ). This indicates that participants from the California university indicated a more salient experience of authoritarian parenting than participants from the Iowa university. Neither the Iowa university participants nor the California university

participants differed significantly from the Colorado university participants on the PAQ-R scores.

### **Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES)**

The PES (Campbell et al., 2004) consists of nine items that are responded to on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The reported range for this sample was 9 to 51. For this sample ( $n = 140$ ) the average total PES score was 27.99 ( $SD = 8.85$ ). A two sample  $t$ -test was conducted between the sample and the sample on which the study was normed ( $M = 30.7$ ,  $SD = 8.1$ ) (Campbell et al., 2004). The results indicated that the current sample's average score was significantly lower than that of the norming sample,  $t(176) = -3.41$ ,  $p < .001$ . The average PES score for the current sample was also significantly lower than that reported by Pryor et al. (2008) ( $M = 31.3$ ,  $SD = 9.08$ ),  $t(287) = -3.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that current sample endorsed significantly less PE than in these prior studies.

For this study, the PES was found to have an internal consistency of Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77$ , which is considered to be within an acceptable range for research purposes. This is lower than the internal consistencies reported by Campbell et al. (2004), Exline and Zell (2009), and Pryor et al. (2008), all of which ranged from .83 to .89 among college student samples. A table of all means, standard deviations, and ranges for each measure can be found in Appendix M.

A two sample  $t$ -test was conducted between males ( $n = 46$ ) and females ( $n = 94$ ) on PES scores. That test indicated no significant differences between genders,  $t(138) = -.33$ ,  $p = .741$ . A two sample  $t$ -test also was conducted on PES scores between Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ) and non-Caucasian ( $n = 48$ ) participants. This found no significant difference on PES scores according to race/ethnicity,  $t(138) = -1.61$ ,  $p =$

.109. A between groups ANOVA was run among the reported family income and PES scores; no significant difference was found,  $F(6, 133) = .99, p = .437$ . Finally, a between groups ANOVA was run between location and PES scores; no significant difference was found,  $F(1, 139) = .22, p = .807$ . Altogether, these analyses indicate that none of the demographic variables (gender, race/ethnicity, reported family income, university location) were related to PES scores.

### **Helicopter Parenting Scale**

The HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) is based on the sum of the responses to five items on a 5-point Likert-type scale. For this sample, the mean score on the HPS was 9.99 ( $SD = 3.88$ ) with a reported range of 5 to 23. In this study the HPS was found to have an internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of .81, which is considered to be within an acceptable range for research purposes. This was lower than the internal consistency reported by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) on their scale development sample which ranged from  $\alpha = .84$  for women to  $\alpha = .87$  for men. This is also a lower internal consistency than that of a comparison study conducted by Willoughby et al. (2013), which used the HPS with 779 emerging adult college students (Millennials) to explore the relationship between helicopter parenting and marital attitudes (Cronbach's alpha = .89). A table of all means, standard deviations, and ranges for each measure can be found in Appendix M.

To determine if any of the demographic variables were related to the HPS scores, between-groups ANOVAs were run on HPS scores between race/ethnicity, location, reported family income and gender. There were no significant differences in HPS scores according to race/ethnicity,  $F(138) = .21, p = .832$ ; location,  $F(2, 139) = .26, p = .773$ ; gender,  $F(138) = 1.32, p = .19$ , or reported family income,  $F(6, 133) =$



.36,  $p = .902$ . Overall, this indicates that none of the demographic variables were related to HPS scores.

### **Satisfaction with Life Scale**

The total score for the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) is based on the sum of the responses to seven items on a 5-point Likert-type scale. For this sample, the average score for participants was 25.89 ( $SD = 6.37$ ) with a sample range of 6 to 35. For this study the SWLS was found to have an internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ . This is similar to the internal consistency ranges which were cited across three other studies (Compton et al., 1996; Lucas et al., 1996; Pavot & Diener, 1993) of between .79 and .89 and is considered to be more than adequate for research purposes. A  $t$ -test indicated that the current sample scored significantly higher than the findings reported by Diener et al. (1985) in their scale development study ( $M = 23.5$ ,  $SD = 6.43$ );  $t(299) = 3.30$ ,  $p < .01$ . A table of all means, standard deviations, and ranges for each measure can be found in Appendix M.

To determine if any of the demographic variables were related to scores on the SWLS, several analyses were conducted between each of the demographic variables and SWLS scores. A two sample  $t$ -test conducted between males ( $n = 46$ ) and females ( $n = 94$ ) indicated that females had significantly higher average SWLS scores,  $t(138) = -3.4$ ,  $p = .001$ , than males. This indicates that females reported feeling a significantly greater degree of subjective well-being than males. Next, a two sample  $t$ -test conducted between Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ) and non-Caucasian ( $n = 48$ ) participants indicated that Caucasians had significantly higher average SWLS scores than non-Caucasians,  $t(138) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .031$ . This indicates that Caucasians reported significantly greater degrees of subjective well-being than non-Caucasians. A

between-subjects ANOVA was conducted among reported family income and SWLS scores. No significant relationship was found,  $F(6, 133) = .70, p = .654$ , indicating that reported family income was not related to subjective well-being.

### Statistical Treatment for Each Research Question

Prior to conducting analyses for the research questions, a correlational analysis was conducted among the 140 participants on PAQ subscale scores, HPS scores, PES scores, and SWLS scores (see Table 4). To further assess the correlations, the predictor variables were centered to the mean, and this correlational analysis was re-run. No differences were found between the centered and non-centered correlations; therefore, non-centered data for the predictor variables was used for this and all subsequent analyses.

Table 4

*Correlational Analysis for Research Variables (n = 140)*

	PES	SWLS	PAQ-P	PAQ-T	PAQ-R	HPS
PES	-					
SWLS	-.20*	-				
PAQ-P	.11	-.17*	-			
PAQ-T	-.12	.36***	.11	-		
PAQ-R	.10	-.07	-.59***	-.21*	-	
HPS	.32***	-.16	-.03	-.05	.21*	-

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Research Question 1 Analysis

- Q1 To what extent do Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?

To address this research question, the sample population's mean score on the PES was calculated. For this sample ( $n = 140$ ), the average total PES score was 27.99 ( $SD = 8.85$ ). According to the developers' instructions (Campbell et al., 2004), this sample's mean PES score was within the average range.

- Q2 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in the level of subjective well-being, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

To address this research question, a stepwise regression analysis was utilized. This method was selected to address this research question because it allows for an understanding of not only which variables are significant predictors and the magnitude of their effects, but also about the structure by which multiple predictors simultaneously relate to the dependent variable (subjective well-being). Further, this analysis allows for the exploration of the role of the predictor variables in the equation without dictation of any specific strength of one variable over the other.

First, a correlational analysis was conducted among the 140 participants on PAQ subscale scores, HPS scores, PES scores, and SWLS scores. Significant correlations were found between PES and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.20, p = .022$ , PAQ-permissive and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.17, p = .045$ , and PAQ-authoritative and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = .36, p < .001$  (see Table 4).

Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variables were PAQ parenting style

subscale scores (permissive, authoritative, authoritarian), HPS scores, and PES scores. The dependent variable was subjective well-being (SWLS scores). Control variables (gender, race/ethnicity, university location) were entered in the first step, with the independent variables entered in the second step. Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis as well as indices to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors (PES scores, PAQ parenting style subscale scores, HPS scores).

Table 5

*Regression Analysis for Research Question 2 (n = 140)*

	Variable	$r^2$	Adj. $r^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Block 1	Model	.13	.11					
	(Constant)			22.51	1.93		11.67	.000
	Gender			4.08	1.08	.30	3.72	.000***
	Race/Eth.			2.86	1.09	.21	2.63	.009**
	Location			-.51	.59	-.07	-.85	.396
Block 2	Model	.278	.234					
	(Constant)			28.99	5.66		5.12	.000
	Gender			3.11	1.06	.23	2.94	.004**
	Race/Eth.			2.13	1.05	.16	2.02	.045*
	Location			-.24	.57	-.03	-.42	.678
	PES			-.08	.06	-.11	-1.34	.182
	HPS			-5.71	3.08	-.15	-1.85	.066
	PAQ-P			-.14	.10	-.13	-1.36	.177
	PAQ-T			.24	.08	.25	3.08	.003**
	PAQ-R			-.12	.08	-.15	-1.49	.138

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

With regard to the control variables of gender, ethnicity, and location (Block 1), the model fit was significant,  $F(3, 136) = 6.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , and accounted for 13% of the variance in SWLS scores when these variables alone were entered in to the equation. Both gender,  $t(133) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , and ethnicity,  $t(133) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .009$ ,

were significant contributors to this block. The predictor variables of PES scores, HPS scores, PAQ-P scores, PAQ-T scores and PAQ-R scores were entered into the second block, and the addition of the predictors created a significant increase in  $R$  squared,  $R^2 = .28$ ,  $F(8, 131) = 6.31$ ,  $p < .001$ . Regarding the independent variables (Block 2), the model fit was significant, indicating that approximately 28% of the variance of the SWLS scores was accounted for by the linear combination of parenting and PE measures. Interpretations of the model were conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. Authoritative parenting style was a significant predictor having a medium positive effect on subjective well-being,  $\beta = .25$ ,  $t(135) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .003$ . This indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in authoritative parenting scores, SWLS scores increased by  $.25$ .

### **Research Question 3 Analysis**

- Q3 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, account for in the expression of psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?

To address this research question, a stepwise regression was utilized. A stepwise multiple regression model was selected as the analysis to address this question because it allowed for an understanding of not only which variables are significant predictors and the magnitude of their effects, but also about the structure by which multiple predictors simultaneously relate to the dependent variable (PE). Further, this analysis allowed for the exploration of the role of the predictor variables

in the equation without dictation of any specific strength of one variable over the other.

First, a correlational analysis was conducted with the 140 remaining participants on PAQ subscale scores (permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian), HPS scores, and PES scores (see Table 4). With regard to the variables that were utilized to answer this research question, significant correlations were found between PES and HPS scores,  $r(136) = .32, p < .001$ ; and PES and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.20, p = .022$ . Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variables were PAQ parenting style subscale scores (permissive, authoritarian, authoritative) and HPS scores. The dependent variable was PES scores. Control variables (gender, race/ethnicity, university location) were entered in the first block, with the main study variables were entered in the second block. In Table 6, the results of the multiple regression analysis are presented as well as indices to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors.

Table 6

*Regression Analysis for Research Question 3 (n =140)*

	Variable	$r^2$	Adj. $r^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Block 1	Model	.02	.000					
	(Constant)			30.79	2.85		10.82	.000
	Gender			.30	1.60	.02	.19	.850
	Race/Eth.			-2.66	1.60	-.14	-1.66	.099
	Location			-.53	.87	-.05	-.61	.546
Block 2	Model	.18	.14					
	(Constant)			4.88	8.33		.59	.559
	Gender			1.87	1.55	.10	1.19	.236
	Race/Eth.			-2.52	1.53	-.14	-1.64	.103
	Location			-.85	.84	-.08	-1.00	.317
	PAQ-P			.35	.15	.24	2.38	.019*
	PAQ-T			-.12	.11	-.09	-1.09	.278
	PAQ-R			.20	.12	.17	1.68	.095
	HPS			16.54	4.30	.32	3.84	.000***

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

With regard to the control variables of gender, ethnicity, and location (Block 1), the model fit was not significant,  $F(3, 136) = .99$ ,  $p = .399$ , and accounted for 2% of the variance in PES scores when these variables alone were entered into the equation. None of these variables were significant contributors in this block of the analysis. The addition of the predictor variables created a significant increase in  $R$  squared,  $R^2 = .18$ ,  $F(7, 132) = 4.18$ ,  $p < .001$ . Regarding the independent variables,



(Block 2), the model fit was significant, indicating that approximately 18% of the variance of PES scores in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of PAQ subscales and HPS scores. An interpretation of the model was conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size, and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. PAQ-P scores and HPS scores each were significant predictors of PES scores. This indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in PAQ-P scores, PES scores increased by  $.35$  points. PAQ-P scores had a small, positive effect on PES scores,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $t(139) = 2.38$ ,  $p = .019$ . HPS scores had a medium, positive effect on PES scores;  $\beta = .32$ ,  $t(139) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ . For every one standard deviation increase in HPS scores, PES scores increased by  $.32$ .

#### **Research Question 4 Analysis**

- Q4 How much of the variance does psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in subjective well-being, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

To address this research question, a stepwise multiple regression was utilized. A stepwise regression model was selected as the appropriate analysis to address this question because it allows for an understanding of how PE might predict subjective well-being (and to what magnitude) and will also allow the analysis to control for necessary demographic variables. Further, this analysis allowed for the exploration of the role of the predictor variables in the equation without dictation of any specific strength of one variable over the other.

First, a correlational analysis was conducted between PES and SWLS scores (see Table 4). A significant correlation was found between these two variables,  $r(136)$

= -.20,  $p = .022$ . Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variable was PES scores and the dependent variable was SWLS scores. The control variables (gender, race/ethnicity, university location) were entered in the first block, and the PES scores was entered in the second block. In Table 7, the results of the regression analysis are presented.

Table 7

*Regression Analysis for Research Question 4 (n = 140)*

	Variable	$r^2$	Adj. $r^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Block 1	Model	.13	.11					
	(Constant)			22.51	1.93		11.67	.000
	Gender			4.08	1.08	.30	3.72	.000***
	Race/Eth.			2.86	1.09	.21	2.63	.009**
	Location			-.51	.59	-.07	-.85	.396
Block 2	Model	.15	.12					
	(Constant)			27.01	2.36		11.46	.000
	Gender			3.61	.97	.30	3.75	.000***
	Race/Eth.			1.71	.98	.14	1.75	.83
	Location			-.41	.52	-.07	-.80	.43*
	PES			-.12	.05	-.18	-2.22	.029*

*Note.* PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

With regard to the control variables of gender, ethnicity, and location (Block 1), the model fit was significant,  $F(3, 136) = 6.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , and accounted for 13% of the variance in SWLS scores when these variables alone were entered in to the equation. Both gender,  $t(133) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , and ethnicity,  $t(133) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .009$ ,

were significant contributors to this block. The addition of the predictor (PES scores) created a significant increase in  $R$  squared,  $R^2 = .15$ ,  $F(4, 135) = 5.77$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model fit was significant, indicating that approximately 15% of the variance of the SWLS scores in the sample was accounted for by PES scores. Interpretation of the model was conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size, and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. The PES scores had a significant, small negative effect on SWLS scores,  $\beta = -.18$ ,  $t(135) = -2.22$ ,  $p = .029$ . This indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in PES scores, SWLS scores decreased by  $.18$ .

### **Summary of Findings**

This chapter described the data analysis for this study, including information about participant demographics, data cleaning and preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics for each measure (PAQ, PES, HPS and SWLS), and an detailed explanation of the statistical analysis used for each research question. Based upon their scores on the PAQ, participants were categorized into one of Baumrind's three parenting styles: permissive, authoritative, or authoritarian. Participants' PAQ scores also indicated the extent to which each participant experienced that particular parenting style, with higher scores indicating a greater intensity of that parenting style that was experienced. Helicopter parenting was a separate parenting variable that could be present in various intensities; higher scores on the HPS indicated a greater intensity of helicopter parenting experienced by the participant. Psychological entitlement (PE) was measured by the PES, with higher scores indicating more entitled attitudes.

Subjective well-being was measured by the SWLS, with higher scores indicating greater overall life satisfaction.

For Research Question 1, the average PES score for the entire sample was calculated. For Research Question 2, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the degree to which parenting style, helicopter parenting and PE predicted subjective well-being. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting predicted subjective well-being. Neither authoritarian nor permissive parenting styles were statistically significant predictors. For Research Question 3, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the extent to which parenting style and helicopter parenting predicted PE. The results indicated that perceived experiences of permissive parenting predicted PE. The results also indicated that perceived experiences of helicopter parenting also predicted PE. For Research Question 4, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the extent to which PE predicted subjective well-being. The results indicated that PES scores had a significant negative impact on and SWLS scores. The clinical and practical relevance of these findings as well as comments on this research study and future research directions are discussed in Chapter V.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

As baby boomers retire and Generation X'ers trade-in their Doc Martins and flannels for executive positions and families, a new generation is now crowding the halls of schools and colleges, crashing into the future while narrating their journeys through Facebook status updates. Meet the Millennials, those young adults born between 1982 and 2004 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations. In fact, they have been dubbed both the Entitled Generation (Keller, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) and Generation Me (Stein, 2012) as titular illustrations of the defining characteristic assigned to this generation. However, the negative connotation of these labels may not accurately describe this population. The attribution of psychological entitlement (PE) traits to this generation appears to have been made without having included an assessment of PE from the Millennials themselves. As the research surrounding Millennials and entitlement continues, it is pertinent that the Millennials' perceptions about entitlement are included in order to facilitate a discussion that approaches entitlement in a more consistent and mutually understood manner.

While initial research has laid a solid foundation for the study of factors inherent in PE, what is deficient in that research is an exploration of the impact that PE

may have on the subjective well-being of Millennials, a deficiency that this study addresses. Prior to the current study, the familial contributions to the entitled attitudes of Millennials, as well as the psychological impact of these attitudes on general well-being had yet to be investigated from the viewpoint of Millennials themselves. In contrast, this study sought to better understand the factors that may contribute to PE and the impact that PE has on the lives of Millennials.

One important factor considered in the present study is parenting style. Parenting styles and their varied effects on children's behavior, emotional, and academic development have long been studied (Baumrind, 1971; Dominguez, & Carton, 1997; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000). Based upon Baumrind's (1971, 1978) constellations of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive), research has found associations with each constellation and child/adolescent outcomes. Parents who are involved in their children's worlds and encourage them to build independence provide both support and autonomy. However, when parents use control, either behaviorally, psychologically, or emotionally to limit autonomy, children tend to display both internalizing and externalizing difficulties (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). These difficulties may manifest as behavioral problems in school or with authority figures, problematic relationships with peers, high risk taking behaviors, attention difficulties, hyperactivity, and problems with motivation (Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Gonzalez, Greenwood, & WenHsu, 2001; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). It is then a question of when do parental involvement, affection, control, and protection become inhibitors of their child's development? Thomasgard and Metz (1993) argued that situation and context are what distinguish between appropriate protection and maladaptive overprotection.

Parental overprotection is problematic when it imparts control or involvement that is either developmentally or contextually inappropriate (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Recently, increased media attention related to helicopter parenting has prompted researchers to investigate the relationships between “over-parenting” and childhood and adolescent behavior and adjustment problems (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). In one of the first studies on over-parenting and Millennials, Segrin et al. (2012) noted a different form of parental control that was motivated by fervent desires to ensure that their child is successful, does not experience disappointment or failure, and is consistently happy and contented. The combination of overprotection, diffused familial boundaries, and autonomy suppression by parents has had deleterious effects on the developmental process of children. The encouragement to push oneself to try new things, make independent decisions, and differentiate from parents to forge an independent identity decline when the transition into adulthood is delayed (Stearns, 2009).

While much of this research has been on the impact of parenting styles with younger children, one of the salient traits of Millennials is their relationship with their parents. The role of parents in the daily lives of Millennials is unique to this generation. Members of this generation have been characterized as having unusually close relationships with their parents as well as having parents who are highly involved in their young adult lives (Howe & Strauss 2000, 2003). Unlike prior generations who differentiate from their parents at the emerging adulthood stage, Millennials remain highly reliant upon their parents into adulthood (Pizzolato &

Hicklen, 2011). Yet the nature of this developmental phase calls for a growing need for independence and autonomy on the part of the young adult and a desire to become self-reliant (Arnett, 2004).

Even as emerging adults, Millennials continue to seek guidance from their parents and inordinately depend on them for advice. Ultimately, they are less driven to individuate from their parents (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). If parents are exerting too much control over their child, they can inhibit their child's success in transitioning to adulthood (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Consequently, though the intent of parents in their attempt to control and protect their child may be well intended, it may also, in fact, encourage higher risk behaviors in the child's pursuit of independence (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Because of the critical nature of the developmental processes and the transitional nature inherent in the emerging adulthood phase (Arnett, 2000), the effects of distinct parenting styles on young adults may be profound.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aspired to realize four aims defined through one research question apiece. The first aim was to investigate the extent to which Millennials endorse PE attitudes. The second aim was to investigate the extent to which Millennials' endorsements of parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian permissive, helicopter) and PE attitudes affect subjective well-being. The third aim was to explore how Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles as well as helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) may contribute to PE. Lastly, this study assessed the degree to which PE influences subjective well-being.



The following research questions were utilized to address each of these goals:

- Q1 To what extent do Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?
- Q2 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in the level of subjective well-being as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?
- Q3 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, account for in the expression of psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?
- Q4 How much of the variance does psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in subjective well-being, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?

### **Discussion of the Results**

For Research Question 1, the mean of the sample population's responses on the PES was calculated. The overall scores on the PES indicated that, according to the scale identified by the PES (Campbell et al., 2004), the sample scored within the normal range. This is an interesting finding as it contradicts prior research and discussion which assessed Millennials as exhibiting excessive degrees of PE (Keller, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). A possible reason for this difference is that prior studies did not survey Millennials but rather utilized observational data about Millennials from professors and teachers (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009), employers of Millennials (Lessard et al., 2001) and partners in relationships commenting on each other (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). This discrepancy between how others view Millennials in terms of PE (Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) and the extent

to which Millennials themselves endorse entitled attitudes suggests that the discussion surrounding Millennials and PE may be more complex than previously assumed. If older generations are concluding that the Millennials are high in PE yet Millennials themselves indicate that they do not hold these entitled worldviews, perhaps the understanding of the concept of PE differs between generations. Historically, younger generations regularly have been assumed or observed to be entitled, lazy, or spoiled by older generations (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Stein, 2012; Taylor & Keeter, 2010; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The results of this study indicate that for the Millennials, this complaint may be inaccurate.

Research Questions 2, 3, and 4 were assessed using stepwise multiple regression statistical analyses. As discussed in Chapter III, higher scores on all measures (HPS, PES, SWLS) suggested higher levels of the related constructs. The PAQ provided three subscales reflecting different parenting styles assessed (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive), with higher subscale scores reflecting higher levels of each particular parenting style.

For Research Question 2, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well parenting style, helicopter parenting, and PE predicted subjective well-being. In combination, the three independent variables accounted for approximately 28% of the variance in SWLS scores. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting predicted the most variance related to subjective well-being,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t(135) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .003$ . This finding is consistent with previous research (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Ishak et al., 2012; Segrin et al., 2012) which found that young adults raised with authoritative parents tend to do better in school (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Ishak et al., 2012), have better interpersonal relationships (Lamborn,

Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 2008), and better self-esteem (Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Hickman et al., 2000; Marsiglia, Walczyk, Buboltz, & Griffith-Ross, 2007). All of these elements are related to overall well-being (Diener & Diener, 1995; McDowell, 2010) and, as such, the findings of this study align with prior research regarding a relationship between authoritative parenting and aspects of subjective well-being.

The results did not indicate that the other parenting styles (authoritarian and permissive) or helicopter parenting were statistically significant predictors of subjective well-being. This is an interesting finding given that prior research has suggested that helicopter parenting may produce more negative outcomes, such as difficulty in being empathetic toward others (Segrin et al., 2012), and problems in navigating relationships (Sedikides et al., 2002). However, these concepts, which highlight difficulties in interpersonal relationships, were not directly measured by the SWLS and thus, may not have been reflected in the results. Further, the influence of permissive, authoritarian and helicopter parenting styles may not have been salient enough in this sample to significantly impact subjective well-being.

In addressing Research Question 3, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well parenting styles and helicopter parenting predicted PE. The analysis indicated that approximately 18% of the variance of PES scores could be accounted for by the PAQ scores and HPS scores. Responses showed that a permissive parenting style was a significant positive predictor of PE,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $t(139) = 2.38$ ,  $p = .019$  indicating that having a more salient perception of permissive parenting predicted greater PE. The results also suggested that the perception of helicopter parenting predicted greater PE,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $t(139) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ . These

results are consistent with prior research (Kerr, 1985; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) which found that the protection of children from negative consequences (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011), overindulgence in children's desires (Fingerman et al., 2012; Soenens et al., 2011) and sheltering children from disappointment (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2009), all aspects of permissive and helicopter parenting, can foster a sense of entitlement (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Lessard et al., 2011; Twenge, 2006).

The findings of this study indicate that there may be elements of parenting common to both permissive parenting and helicopter parenting which could contribute to an increase in PE. In contrast, the findings may indicate that elements unique to permissive parenting and helicopter parenting may contribute to PE in different ways. Further research into the specific elements of these parenting styles will be necessary to determine more accurately what parenting behaviors contribute to PE. Research devoted to linking elements of PE to specific parenting behaviors may also be beneficial in developing treatment plans and interventions designed to interrupt the development of PE.

Research Question 4 focused explicitly on the degree to which PE predicted subjective well-being. A simultaneous multiple regression analysis was utilized, and the results indicated that scores on the PES negatively predicted scores on the SWLS,  $\beta = -.18$ ,  $t(135) = -2.22$ ,  $p = .029$ . This is consistent with prior research on PE (Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985) which noted multiple areas that can be negatively impacted by PE from academics (Chowning & Campbell, 2009), problems in navigating relationships (Sedikides et al., 2002), difficulties in the workplace (Lessard et al., 2011; Twenge, 2006) and self-

esteem (Campbell et al., 2004; Twenge, 2006). Yet, this finding is complicated by the findings of Research Question 2 which, when parenting styles were included as predictors in the regression analysis along with PE, PE was not predictive of SWLS scores. This suggests that parenting style is an important contributor to subjective well-being, above and beyond that of PE.

## **Implications**

### **Theoretical Implications**

Perhaps the most conspicuous finding of this study as it relates to theory is the lack of evidence to support the contention that Millennials harbor high levels of entitled attitudes (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). The findings of this study indicated that the participants fell within the normal range of the PES, suggesting that the Millennials included in this study are not excessively entitled (Campbell et al., 2009). Existing theory and research related to entitlement among Millennials has been observational in nature and most have not utilized self-report measures (Chowning & Campbell, 2004; Exline et al., 2004). The finding that Millennials did not report high PE suggests that while patterns of entitled behaviors have been observed by others to be more common among this generation, the evidence of this study does not support that assertion.

This finding elicits several considerations about entitlement and Millennials. As suggested by Twenge (2006) and Howe and Strauss (2000), it is common for older generations to assert that younger generations do not know how good they have it and are unappreciative of the benefits of progress that the older generation had to do without. A discrepancy between how older generations view younger generations and

how the younger generation views itself is a common feature of an evolving population (Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Yet, to distill the discrepancy between how older generations view Millennials and entitlement and the Millennials' perceptions of themselves to a simple generational disagreement is to lose sight of what research has indicated.

Within the definition of PE, it is specified that the entitled beliefs regarding one's assumed rights are 'irrational' (Campbell et al., 2004). It is perhaps this defining characteristic of PE that is at the heart of the discrepancy between how others view the Millennials and how Millennials view the world. Determining what is or is not an irrational belief can be a very contextually and culturally laden decision. For Millennials, the line between insistence and assertiveness may be less clear than it was for older generations. While insisting that one receive individualized treatment may appear to some like asking for special favors, to Millennials, it could be an expectation grounded in life experiences (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The question is how we determine if what a person wants is rational (unentitled) or irrational and unrealistic (entitled). Based upon the culture in which the Millennials were raised in contrast to the cultures of older generations, what qualifies as reasonable or unreasonable expectations may be very different. Therefore, it is important that we strive toward obtaining a more concrete and agreed-upon definition of the construct of PE.

While much of the research and dialogue on PE has been focused on its presence among Millennials, such dialogue had not yet included the perspective of Millennials. To have a deeper comprehension of PE's presence and impact among Millennials, it is necessary to include them in the discussion. This can be done only

through dialogue as a means to explore the values and experiences on both sides of the interpersonal dynamics at play. For example, if a teacher views a student asking to re-take a test as entitlement, however, the motivations of the student are in response to anxiety about a grade and do not reflect a worldview of expecting others to accommodate them, this may reflect a lack of understanding between the teacher and student. It is important that older generations do not assume that the culture in which they grew into adulthood, which includes parenting norms, educational expectations, and occupational customs, is the same as the current culture. The past cannot necessarily be used as the comparative norm for Millennials; things change. For example, the pressure to conform to the norm and to not question authority was a value of American society in the 1950s and 1960s (Perrin & Spencer, 1980, 1981); however, that value has evolved into one that encourages people to ask questions and to place less importance on conformity (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Perrin & Spencer, 1980, 1981; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Therefore, others' observations that Millennials are not as compliant as prior generations could be accurate; however, this may be more demonstrative of differences in values and upbringing rather than evidence of entitlement (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Differences between the Millennials and older generations are also evident in that generation which is the closest in age to Millennials, Generation X (Rehm & Lamel, 2015). Generation X'ers, born between the early 1960s and the early 1980s (Howe & Strauss, 2000), are known as the latchkey generation, the first generation where the majority of people had both parents working outside the home. For this generation, autonomy was highly valued and incorporated into the family system (Rikleen, 2014). Millennials, by contrast, were not necessarily raised in a manner that

promoted building autonomy, but rather the building of self-confidence (Rehm & Lamel, 2015). This difference may contribute to the evaluation of Millennials as entitled; however, it may also be reflective of differences in generational values and how those values are manifested behaviorally. Adaptability to an evolving population is required from both older generations and Millennials and this can be acquired through the pursuit of understanding, not preconceived notions or assumptions.

As part of the quest to better understand Millennials, it is important not only to understand the current attitudes of this population, but also how those attitudes developed. To begin to better understand how PE evolves in Millennials, this study focused on the role that parenting styles may play in the development of PE. Permissive and helicopter parenting were determined to be predictive of increased PE. However, again it is important to note that the percentage of variance accounted for by both of these predictor variables is small, especially the relationship between permissive parenting and PE. While both permissive parenting and helicopter parenting may be factors in the development of PE, their causal influence should not be over-emphasized. Over-parenting can be understood within the contexts of Baumrind's parenting styles as being high on warmth/support, high on control, and low on autonomy granting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Given these parameters, over-parenting will fall within the dimensions of Baumrind's parenting styles (e.g., responsiveness, control, and warmth), though how those dimensions are prioritized is singular. According to Segrin et al. (2012), over-parenting is a unique combination of elements of Baumrind's parenting styles; it includes the control and directiveness of the authoritarian parent though without the authoritarian parent's disregard for his or her child's needs. Instead, over-parenting is demonstrated by over-fixation on the



child's needs as perceived by the parent and is most evident in the permissive parenting style.

Though often with the best intentions, helicopter parents may inadvertently be creating a need for their children's continued over-reliance on their support and protection from disappointment. This may render children to feel uncertain of their own ability to take care of themselves and may stunt their developing into independent and capable adults (Arnett, 2000; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). The evidence of the predictive quality of helicopter parenting for PE found in this study should act as a catalyst for further exploration of helicopter parenting and its consequences on young adults.

While helicopter parents may foster PE through over-involvement, intrusiveness, and shielding their children from disappointment, permissive parents may cultivate PE through their tendency to not set firm boundaries. Both parenting styles can create an environment where children are accustomed to getting their way. Permissive parenting is a style of parenting in which parents are very involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them (Santrock, 2007). Given the lack of regulation and indulgence of some permissive parents, it is easy to see how a sense of entitlement could be fostered. Studies have found that children of permissive parents tend to engage in more selfishly-motivated activities than do children of those with differing parenting styles (Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007); this style of parenting is believed to directly contribute to low cognitive and emotional empathy development (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). Because this parenting style is completely child-focused, concern for others' feelings and experiences are not of high importance to children of permissive parenting. Parents who indulge a child's desires

without fostering personal responsibility may be catalysts for PE and, consequently, the negative consequences that can accompany PE when the child is no longer in the protection of a non-demanding environment (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans, & Carroll, 2011).

As stated earlier, two aims of this study were to explore the impact of parenting styles as well as PE on subjective well-being. The findings of this study indicated that when parenting styles and PE were analyzed together, only authoritative parenting predicted satisfaction with life: an increase in authoritative parenting predicted an increase in subjective well-being. In the analysis of this research question, PE was not found to have a significant predictive relationship with satisfaction with life. However, when PE was analyzed separately from parenting styles, PE was found to have a significant negative predictive relationship with life satisfaction. Based upon these findings it is important to note that when discussing the impact of PE on satisfaction with life, if one doesn't consider the impact of the parenting style(s) that were experienced, it may be possible to overemphasize the predictive value of PE. Hypothetically, it may be that the most important factors in predicting subjective well-being are such parenting factors. This may occur directly through authoritative parenting. It may also occur indirectly through the ways permissive and helicopter parenting predicts PE and PE predicts subjective well-being. Further deciphering the impact of each variable involved in this predictive relationship necessitates further research. For example, future studies may want to assess for PE as a potential moderator between perceived parenting style and subjective well-being.

## **Research Implications**

The results from this study suggest that the research and conversation related to PE among Millennials needs to continue and expand. As this study found that, on average, the Millennials included in the sample did not score outside of the normative range on the PES, there may be a discrepancy between what others see in this population and the attitudes of Millennials. Further research is needed to explore this difference and what it means about how PE is defined, interpreted, understood, and assessed both through observation and self-awareness.

More diverse and more all-encompassing measures may lead to identifying the attitudes and behaviors of PE that are most problematic in various areas of life such as work, academics, and intimate and social relationships. An understanding of what PE means to the Millennials and how that compares to what PE means to those evaluating the Millennials is an important area to explore. A consistent understanding of PE as a construct is necessary for research and this study's findings indicate that perhaps there are differences in how Millennials and older generations understand PE. With additional research that leads to a better and richer understanding of PE and all its implications, we will be better equipped to address its impact more efficiently and effectively.

The results from this study illustrate the need for further research and dialogue related to both PE and its relationship to both helicopter and permissive parenting. Currently, while helicopter parenting is becoming a more prominent area of discourse among psychologists and sociologists, the lack of empirical research involving this construct leaves any arguments mostly speculative. Helicopter parenting is relatively new within research, and both its value and definition as a construct are continuing to

evolve. A standardized operational definition of helicopter parenting will be necessary for future researchers in order to communicate the language of their studies with any definitiveness. Given that evaluations of parenting styles can reflect the values and culture of a population; it may be necessary to further the definition of over-parenting as it relates to the context and culture of the population of interest. Further research may benefit from including qualitative formats of research to further develop and deepen the understanding of helicopter parenting.

This study found helicopter parenting to be a significant variable in predicting elevated PE; however, helicopter parenting was measured with an instrument (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) that consists of only five questions, which may be an inadequate measure of such a complicated construct. Further development of more comprehensive measures which include additional questions related to parental involvement in social, academic, extracurricular, emotional, and personal aspects of participants' lifestyles would enhance the accuracy of measuring this trait. Through improvement of instrumentation, future researchers may be able to utilize a more comprehensive assessment tool for this construct. Subsequent research in the area of helicopter parenting should also incorporate a cultural component in order to identify the significance that diverse populations may have in the manifestation of helicopter parenting attitudes and behaviors.

The relationship between PE and permissive parenting is also an area for further research. While there is a large amount of research utilizing Baumrind's parenting styles (Baumrind, 1971; Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Hickman et al., 2000), until this study, the relationship between permissive parenting

and PE had yet to be explored. Further, the relationship between permissive parenting and helicopter parenting may also be an area for further research.

Prior research has indicated that helicopter parenting and permissive parenting are similar in their being very child-focused and preoccupied with the happiness of the child (Lamborn et al., 2008; Santrock, 2007; Segrin et al., 2012). Given this study's finding that permissive and helicopter parenting each are predictive of PE, it may be that this common element is an important factor in parenting practices that increase PE. Specific focus on the parental behaviors that are consistent with both helicopter and permissive parenting styles that may contribute to PE will be necessary in order to develop appropriate therapeutic interventions. Research suggests that the style of control of parents who are over-involved in their young adult children is similar to the style of overprotective or over-solicitous parenting found in parents of young children (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). This type of parenting has been linked to maladaptive outcomes (e.g., shyness, peer difficulties, and anxiety-related difficulties) in young children ages 2 to 5 (Bayer et al., 2006; McShane & Hastings, 2009). Research devoted to understanding critical ages and developmental stages where a child or adolescent is the most vulnerable for learning attitudes that may contribute to PE could be a very important contribution to research and clinical interventions. These interventions may then have a positive impact on the relationships between emerging adults and their parents and potentially decrease PE.

By understanding the early development of PE, it may be possible to intervene early on, before some of the negative consequences of PE become evident. For example, research has found that when parents use behavioral, psychological, or emotional control to limit autonomy, children tend to display both internalizing and

externalizing difficulties (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013). These difficulties may manifest as behavioral problems in school or with authority figures, problematic relationships with peers, high risk-taking behaviors, attention difficulties, hyperactivity, and problems with motivation (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Within these difficulties, traits of PE such as difficulty empathizing with others and low frustration tolerance (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell et al., 2004; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) may also be promoted by problematic parental over-involvement. Early interventions that promote autonomy and decrease inappropriate parental involvement may work to eliminate or lessen the potential for traits of PE to develop.

The interactions between parents and their millennial children is another area for future research which could focus on the reciprocal nature of parenting Millennials. This research could explore the roles of both the child and parent and how each contributes to fostering and maintaining the helicopter or permissive parenting responses. Further research that focuses on the distinguishing specific traits of parenting styles and how they relate to PE is also warranted. Comparing the findings of outcome studies related to parenting styles and indicators of PE may deepen the understanding of specifically what factors of each parenting style contribute to PE.

Similarly, this study supports the importance of further research on PE. The psychological and behavioral manifestations of entitlement have evolved, and with that, the instruments and constructs used in research on entitlement must evolve as well. A construct that is as complicated as PE calls for multiple and varied measurement approaches including self-report and observational measures. Research

which utilizes only self-reports, such as this study, may inadequately capture the relational elements of entitlement (Huck, 2012; Johnson, 2005); further, elements such as impression management, social desirability, and lack of awareness may also hamper more precise measurement of PE. For example, the PES consists of seven items which directly address entitlement measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement (Campbell et al., 2004). Because of their wording, PES items such as, “I honestly feel I’m just more deserving than others” and “I feel entitled to more of everything” may not capture more nuanced attitudes of PE. Less obvious statements such as, “I would expect my professor to arrange for me to take an exam on a different date if I wanted him/her to,” “I expect to get a promotion or a bonus at work every six months for doing my job,” and “I would expect my partner to take off work to take care of me if I was ill,” may elicit a more complete assessment of entitled attitudes. Further, a behavioral component of the measure may also be helpful in assessing behavioral responses to situations that may reflect entitlement. Items that reflect frequency of behaviors such as: “In the past month, how often have you called a customer service line to register a complaint?” or “In the past month, how often have you cut in line or not waited for your turn?” may better reflect the behavioral aspects of PE. Because of its intricacy and the relational nature of PE, instruments that address various areas where entitlement may present as problematic, areas such as relationships, work, and academics, may give a more comprehensive portrait of PE in an individual.

Subsequent research must also target the definition of PE. In this study and in prior research, PE is defined as “an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, treatment, and/or designation when in fact one does

not” (Campbell et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985). The word “irrational” must be defined as it relates to the culture of the Millennial population. Instruments that measure traits such as PE should be attuned to the evolving cultural norms of the population of interest. It may be beneficial to build upon the research that has been and is being conducted on constructs that may encompass elements of PE to build a more holistic definition. Exploring the variables related to such constructs as privilege, demandingness, and deservingness may provide additional information and research directions related to PE. It is apparent that in order to have an accurate and open dialogue about PE among Millennials, a definition based upon context must be devised.

The findings of this study regarding parenting styles, PE, and how these variables predict satisfaction with life lay the foundation for further exploration into these variables’ interactions. This study found that when analyzed together, only authoritative parenting was a significant positive predictor of subjective well-being; however, when PE was analyzed separate from parenting styles, it was found to be a significant negative predictor of subjective well-being. To utilize these findings, future research may seek to understand the patterns of behavior related to authoritative parenting and how those elements contribute to subjective well-being. Similarly, research that identifies which specific elements of PE predict decreased subjective well-being is also needed. When these behaviors and elements are identified in parenting styles as well as PE, research into how these elements interact to contribute to subjective well-being can be assessed more holistically.

As in all psychological and sociological research, attention to cultural differences is an essential component for disseminating data and generalizing findings (Gall et al., 2007; Huck, 2012). The relatively new construct of helicopter parenting



as well as the rise in interest in PE among younger generations generates the need to explore how culture may influence Millennials. The data compiled from this study's relatively homogenous sample illustrates the need for future research to seek more diverse samples. Further research that includes a more diverse sample in terms of both race/ethnicity as well as reported family income would lead to more generalizable findings.

### **Practice Implications**

**Counseling parents and families.** This study suggests several implications for counseling psychologists to consider. Because of the growing attention to PE in Millennials, practitioners' understanding of the developmental aspects of this trait and the role of parenting in its emergence is essential. Evidence from this study related to the interactions of parenting styles, PE, and subjective well-being underscores the continued need to understand clients from a systemic perspective and, when possible, treat the family system collectively. If a clinician determines that parenting style may be a factor in what is causing distress, it is first necessary for the clinician to conduct an assessment of the family system which would include exploring parenting styles, cultural factors, and client goals.

Since helicopter parenting often may be the result of good intentions on the part of parents, clinicians could discuss the long-term consequences of helicopter parenting with parents and teach them the importance of allowing their children to make their own decisions, live with the consequences, and, ultimately, take responsibility for their actions. However difficult it is for them, helicopter parents must learn to modify their behavior in order to ensure that as their children grow and enter emerging adulthood, they feel self-sufficient, competent in making decisions,

and comfortable seeking counsel when necessary. Parents should be encouraged to set and maintain boundaries and have appropriate expectations for their children's behavior. Finally, clinicians need to work with parents to address the anxiety parents may feel when seeing their children fail or make mistakes.

In a similar manner, permissive parents often act with good intentions. Perhaps the most important aspect in working with permissive parents and children is to identify and solidify the parental role. Permissive parenting is often marked by parents who give their children equal power in the home and prefer to be friends with their children rather than parents (Santrock, 2007). However, children do not have the skill set to parent themselves with proper boundaries or teach themselves personal responsibility; this is the role of the parents. Clinicians can assist in coaching parents to take a more proactive and limit-setting role in the parent-child relationship and can help foster a more appropriate dynamic (Olivari, Tagliabue, & Confalonieri, 2013).

It is also important that the clinician discuss the intentions and values that are maintaining permissive parenting strategies and to discuss with parents the hopes that they have for their children (e.g., personally responsible, kind, generous, patient) and the ways that the permissive parenting style may hinder the development of those characteristics (Goodboy, Myers, & Bolkan, 2010). Giving parents alternative ways to influence and guide their children that are appropriate and culturally sensitive may help deter the child from developing PE or other problematic behaviors.

**Counseling Millennials.** This study spoke to several of the unique attributes of the Millennial population. Clinicians must comprehend the world in which Millennials live and its influence on their attitudes. When evaluating how PE may be impacting a client's functioning, clinicians should be cognizant of the expectations

that all clients may have of the world and how those expectations were learned. For Millennials, entitlement has been described as a learned and nurtured attitude, often reinforced by parents who have the best intentions for their children (Kerr et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013).

Those helicopter parents who tend to be overly involved in their child's life and attempt to protect their children from any disappointment may foster an expectation that things will always go the child's way, thus making it difficult for the child to cope with disappointment. This type of parenting may also create a dependency on the parent and impair the child's ability to learn to take care of her or himself. Permissive parents who do not set boundaries or impose demands or expectations on their children may not adequately prepare their children for a world that does make demands and requires things of their children. These children may be ill-equipped to adhere to rules, tolerate frustration, control their behavior, and persist in difficult tasks (Lamborn et al., 2008; Marsiglia et al., 2007; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2009).

Given the natural circumstances of the emerging adult population, it may not be feasible for a client to do family therapy. However, it is important for clinicians to understand that family therapy can be done with an individual client (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Fingerman et al., 2012; Jenkins & Asen, 1992). Exploring the childhood history of the client, relationships with parents and siblings, and the parenting dynamics from the client's perspective could add important elements for the clinician in understanding the client's narrative and the system that helped to shape the client's worldview.

One of the goals of therapy for young adult clients for whom entitlement is creating problems is to encourage self-sufficiency and independence. To do this, clinicians must identify when clients are eschewing personal responsibility and blaming external sources for negative consequences and then help clients to take responsibility for their actions. Assisting them to learn problem solving for themselves and practice good decision-making skills will facilitate their establishing independence. Further, it is important that clinicians help Millennials to evaluate their expectations of others and of society as a whole to ensure that those expectations are realistic.

For those clients who are unaccustomed to following rules or respecting boundaries, it is important to build their ability to take the perspective of others and to build empathy for others. Clients who have lived in an environment that held few if any expectations of them may find it difficult to take orders or demands from others. Helping clients to identify their goals and the necessary steps to reach those goals may be important areas of exploration in order to understand and build on the client's motivation.

There are multiple therapeutic strategies that could be useful in working with Millennials who are struggling with some of the consequences of PE such as disappointment, identity confusion, frustration, and interpersonal difficulties. Therapeutic approaches such as reality testing, interpersonal skill building, such as those found in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (Linehan et al., 2015) or Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes, Masuda, Bissett, Luoma, & Guerrero, 2005) may be beneficial in assisting the client in developing more realistic expectations of others as well as in improving frustration tolerance. These therapies include ways to improve

interpersonal effectiveness, which can be problematic for people with unrealistic expectations of others. Further, these therapies include skill building techniques focused on accepting and thriving in the reality that you have, not the reality that you want (Bohus et al., 2004; Hayes et al., 2005; Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006; Linehan, 1999).

### **Limitations**

This study acknowledges several limitations. The sample population utilized presented a limitation in diversity. It is also important to note that the majority of this sample came from a single private, religiously-affiliated university in California. This limits the generalizability of the findings. Few participants were from the larger, more diverse, public university. It is unclear why survey results were not more evenly distributed; clearly, future research in this field should be conducted with more diverse samples. The data were collected from a nonrandom sample, and those Millennials who volunteered could have elected to terminate participation at any time. As such, unmeasured variables (e.g., personality traits) may have influenced results. Another limitation could have regarded the subset of the millennial generation that was selected for this study. Millennials' ages span from age 11 to 33 however, this study only included participants aged 18 to 24. This left out a large section of this generation and, though the sample population came from the middle section of this span, it does not include a full spectrum of Millennials.

While this study did collect data related to race/ethnicity and subjective well-being, because of the limited number of ethnicities participating, these data are limited and should be interpreted with caution. In addition, there was limited diversity in reported family incomes, which did not include any participant who identified as

living at the poverty level. This lack of variability in income range may impact the correlations found between reported family income and the predictor variables.

Further research is necessary and should be conducted to explore the potential links between race/ethnicity, income, helicopter parenting, and PE.

Another limitation involves the instrument used to assess helicopter parenting, the HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The HPS is a new instrument consisting of only five questions and implemented to ascertain whether or not helicopter parenting was a consequential variable in subjects' perceptions of their parents. Given the continuing evolution of the definition of "helicopter parenting" and limited amount of prior research using this new measure, this study's findings recognize the need for further research on helicopter parenting.

For both the HPS and PAQ, the participants were asked to reflect on their caretakers as they were during the participants' childhood. This type of retrospective assessment may provide an inaccurate assessment of the participants' caretakers through recall bias. Recall bias is a form of information bias. It represents a major threat to the internal validity and credibility of studies using self-reported data. Recall of information depends entirely on memory, which can often be imperfect and unreliable (Gall, et al., 2007). By utilizing the memory of their caretakers to complete the HPS and PAQ assessments, the participants may have provided imprecise information.

It is important to note that the findings of this study as they relate to parenting styles are formulated in the perceptions of the participants and may not reflect an accurate assessment of their respective caretakers' parenting styles. While this study focused on the predictive nature of parenting styles and PE, it is also possible that a

parent's response to PE may influence the participant's perception of said caretaker's control and warmth. For example, a child with a high degree of PE may feel that their caretaker is controlling and invalidating if the caretaker were to set limits and enforce consequences for the child. It is important to note that the relationships between parents and children are incredibly complex and reciprocal in nature and that these complexities are difficult to capture through quantitative research.

The use of the PES as the measure of PE may also have posed a limitation due to its brevity and the restrictive nature of self-report measures. As opposed to prior research, this study did not find evidence that Millennials reported significantly high levels of PE but fell within the average range (Campbell et al., 2004). The results of earlier research regarding PE and the current discourse which considers Millennials to be highly entitled (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998) are discrepant from these findings. It is possible that given the use of a self-report measure for PE, social desirability may have been a factor in how some participants answered the questions. Social desirability can inform a participant's responses if the participant interprets the items as having socially appropriate or inappropriate response options. If a participant elects to respond to an item in a way that he or she feels is more socially acceptable rather than what is actually true for the participant, the results can be impacted. Given the brevity and high face validity of the PES, social desirability may have produced under-reporting of PE, which would interfere with the understanding of average tendencies as well as individual differences (Huck, 2012). Resolving these potential limitations may be accomplished through the use of alternative measures and/or collecting data from various sources.

## Conclusions

Though not without its limitations, this study makes an important contribution to the small but growing research on the influences that parenting styles, helicopter parenting, and PE have in the lives of Millennials. Perhaps the most conspicuous finding of this study as it relates to theory is the lack of evidence to support the contention that Millennials harbor high levels of entitlement (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). Data from this study contribute to both pedagogical dialogue concerning what entitlement means for this generation and expose a discrepancy between others' observations of Millennials (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) and their endorsement of entitled attitudes. This study illustrates the need for further research in the evolution of both the word "entitlement" and continued modification of its constructs.

This study affirmed prior research on the impact of Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles as they relate to child and adolescent outcomes (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). Authoritative parenting predicted greater subjective well-being. This study also found that increased helicopter parenting and permissive parenting predicted increased PE. Though it is too early in the research to draw conclusions regarding the impact of helicopter and permissive parenting as they pertain to PE and subjective well-being, continued research is warranted. As the discourse on PE and Millennials continues, it will be necessary for the field of counseling psychology to further research into the relevance and consequence of PE for this generation.



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**APPENDIX A**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**



*Institutional Review Board*

DATE: February 4, 2014

TO: Emily Dreiling, MA  
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [503963-3] The Interrelationships Among Perceived Parenting Styles,  
Psychological Entitlement and Subjective Well-Being

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: January 29, 2014

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or [Sherry.May@unco.edu](mailto:Sherry.May@unco.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

**APPENDIX B**

**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Seaver College

### SEAVER COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Emily Dreiling, MA  
Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Hwy  
Pepperdine University  
Malibu, CA 90263

February 20, 2014

**Protocol #: SIRB\_021405 (approved by University of Northern Colorado, IRB #503963-3)**

**Project Title: The Interrelationships Among Perceived Parenting Styles, Psychological Entitlement and Subjective Well-Being**

Dear Emily Dreiling:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to the Seaver College Institutional Review Board (Seaver IRB). The IRB appreciates your work in completing the proposal.

**Based upon review, your expedited IRB application has been approved from February 20, 2014 until February 19, 2015.**

Please note that the research must be conducted according to the proposal submitted to the Seaver IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For *any* proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a Request for Modification form to the Seaver IRB. Please be aware that changes to the research protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the Seaver IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the Seaver IRB as soon as possible. If notified, we will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event.

Upon completion of your study, please submit a Continuing Review Form to the IRB. Please contact the IRB if you have any questions about the continuing review process.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan Edgar Helm

Susan E. Helm, Ph.D., R.D.  
Chairperson, Seaver College Institutional Review Board  
susan.helm@pepperdine.edu

cc: **Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives**  
**Associate Dean for Research**  
**Mrs. Alexandra Marmion Roosa, Director, Research and Sponsored**  
**Programs**  
**Katy Carr, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives**  
**Associate Dean for Research**

**APPENDIX C**

**LUTHER COLLEGE  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**



destroyed or securely stored at the end of the study.

Data will be destroyed or securely stored upon completion of project

9. Check below to indicate that data will be examined using appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods.

Data will be examined using appropriate methods

10. Attachments may include any of the following (please use Microsoft Word format)

Permission to use measures.docx

Measures for IRB.docx

IRB Exempt Approval Letter.pdf

Invitation to participate in study - Luther college.docx

Entitlement Application Narrative with modifications.docx

Recruitment letter, poster, flier

Subject instructions, detailed procedures

Written consent form (or script)

Tests or questionnaires

Information sheets or debriefing materials

Other institutional approval

▼ Comments (1)

Stephanie V. Travers - 6:11 PM, Mar 11  
Hi Grace,  
Your project is approved; good luck with your data collection.  
-Dr. Travers  
Chair, Luther College HSRB

Add a comment...

Save comment



**APPENDIX D**

**E-MAIL OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE  
IN STUDY**

Dear Student,

Please take a few moments to fill out a brief survey about your thoughts about your parents, some of your ideas about relationships and answer a few questions about your outlook on life. The survey should not take longer than 20 minutes to complete and your participation will help others and me understand more about how parenting styles and attitudes are related.

All participants who complete the surveys can enter into a raffle drawing for **one of six \$25 Visa Gift Cards!**

Please click on the link below for further information on this study and how to participate...

[https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_025DRz0IkGRQRIV](https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_025DRz0IkGRQRIV)

You can copy this link, then paste it into an email or website.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me at:  
Emily.Dreiling@unco.edu

Thank you,  
Emily Dreiling, MA, LPC

**APPENDIX E**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

## CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

University of Northern Colorado

Project Title: The Interrelationships Among Perceived Parenting Styles, PE and Subjective Well-Being

Researchers: Emily Dreiling, MA, and Brian Johnson, Ph.D., Jeffrey Rings, Ph.D.

Department of Counseling Psychology

Email: emily.dreiling@unco.edu

Email: brian.johnson@unco.edu

Email: Jeffrey.rings@unco.edu

Your participation in this study involves answering a series of questions via an online survey regarding your experience of how your primary caretaker(s) parented you, your attitudes about various elements of relationships and your outlook on life. The goal of this study is to determine if these different variables are related to each other and in what ways.

All of your responses will be collected through Qualtrics, an online survey response database. The lead researcher will be the only person to have access to information. Your responses will be anonymous and there will be no identifying information attached to survey responses. Data will be stored on the website's secure servers. The surveys will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. We foresee no risks to you beyond that which typically occurs in filling out a survey or those normally encountered during regular classroom participation.

We will not ask for any identifying information that could connect you to your responses. We will take reasonable precautions to ensure the security of your responses to the survey. All survey responses will be kept in a password protected electronic file. We will not look at your results individually, but we will look at responses grouped by age, gender, and ethnicity and will review responses for errors or omissions.

As an incentive for your participation, you can choose to enter your email address into a raffle drawing for a \$25 Visa gift card upon survey completion. Your email address will not be tied to your responses. Participants at Luther College will be eligible for extra credit upon completion of this survey and may print the debriefing statement to account for their participation.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please click the continue button below to complete the online survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the online survey, you will give permission for your participation. You may print and keep this form for future reference.

If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161. You may also contact your university's Internal Review Board:

**Pepperdine University**

Graduate School of Education & Psychology  
6100 Center Drive 5th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(310) 568-5753  
gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

**Luther College**

Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB).  
Stephanie Travers, Associate Professor of  
Psychology, x1254  
travst01@luther.edu

Sincerely,  
Em Dreiling, MA

**APPENDIX F**

**DEBRIEFING STATEMENT**

## DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

*Please read the following information designed to debrief you as a study participant about the nature of this research:*

The study you just participated in is part of a research project that explores the relationship between your perceptions of your caretakers' parenting style, your attitudes related to entitlement and overall well-being. The goal of this study is to determine if these different variables are related to each other and in what ways.

If you have experienced any discomfort while completing this survey please contact your local university counseling center:

**University of Northern Colorado Counseling Center:**

970.351.2496

<http://www.unco.edu/counseling/>

**Pepperdine University Student Counseling Center:**

506-4210

<http://services.pepperdine.edu/counselingcenter>

**Luther College Counseling Center:**

563-387-1375

<http://www.luther.edu/counseling/>

**APPENDIX G**

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please answer the following questions. Remember: You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer or discontinue taking this survey at any time without consequence.

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Transgender

2. Which of the following categories below do you feel best describes your race/ethnicity (select all that apply)?

- a) Caucasian
- b) Hispanic/Latino
- c) African American
- d) Asian American
- e) Native American
- f) Pacific Islander
- g) Multiple races/ethnicities
- h) Other

3. What is your family's household income?

- a) Less than \$25,000
- b) \$25,000 to \$49,999
- c) \$50,000 to \$74, 999
- d) \$75,000 to \$99,999
- e) \$100,000 to \$124,999
- f) \$125,000 to \$149,999
- g) \$150,000 to \$174,999
- h) \$175,000 to \$199,999
- i) \$200,000 or more
- j) Don't know



**APPENDIX H**

**PERMISSION TO USE MEASURES**



**Laura Walker**

to me ▾

Hi there Em. Yes, you are welcome to use the measure, and the scale points are below!

Best,

Laura M. Padilla-Walker, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Family Life  
MFHD Graduate Coordinator  
Brigham Young University  
2097 JFSB  
Provo, UT 84602  
[\(801\) 422-9053](tel:(801)422-9053)  
[laura\\_walker@byu.edu](mailto:laura_walker@byu.edu)

1=Not at all like him/her  
2=Not like him/her  
3=A little like him/her  
4=Like him/her  
5=A lot like him/her



**W. Keith Campbell**

to me ▾

Aug 18 (1 day ago) ☆



Sure- you can use the PES. Good luck with your research!

Best,  
Keith

W. Keith Campbell, Ph.D.  
Professor and Head  
Department of Psychology  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30602  
phone: [\(706\) 542-2174](tel:(706)542-2174)  
fax: [\(706\) 542-3275](tel:(706)542-3275)  
[http://psychology.uga.edu/people/bios/faculty/W\\_Keith\\_Campbell.php](http://psychology.uga.edu/people/bios/faculty/W_Keith_Campbell.php)

...

**APPENDIX I**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITLEMENT SCALE**

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITLEMENT SCALE

Please respond to the following items using the number that best reflects your own beliefs. Please use the following 7-point scale:

1 Strong disagreement ○	2 Moderate disagreement ○	3 Slight disagreement ○	4 Neither agree nor disagree ○	5 Slight agreement ○	6 Moderate agreement ○	7 Strong agreement ○
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1. I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.
2. Great things should come to me.
3. If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat!
4. I demand the best because I'm worth it.
5. I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.
6. I deserve more things in my life.
7. People like me deserve an extra break now and then.
8. Things should go my way.
9. I feel entitled to more of everything.

**APPENDIX J**

**PARENTAL AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

## PARENTAL AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number on the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to your caretakers. Please answer the following questions as they relate to the caretaker you feel was most influential to you during your childhood. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your caretaker during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/>	Agree <input type="radio"/>	Neutral <input type="radio"/>	Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="radio"/>
-----------------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

1. While I was growing up my caretaker felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.
2. Even if his/her children didn't agree with her, my caretaker felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she/he thought was right.
3. Whenever my caretaker told me to do something as I was growing up, she/he expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established my caretaker discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.
5. My caretaker has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
6. My caretaker has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
7. As I was growing up my caretaker did not allow me to question any decisions she/he had made.
8. As I was growing up my caretaker directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.
9. My caretaker has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behavior the way they are supposed to.

10. As I was growing up my caretaker did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.
11. As I was growing up I knew what my caretaker expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my caretaker when I felt that they were unreasonable.
12. My caretaker felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.
13. As I was growing up, my caretaker seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.
14. Most of the time as I was growing up my caretaker did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.
15. As the children in my family were growing up, my caretaker consistently gave us directions and guidance in rational and objective ways.
16. As I was growing up my caretaker would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her/him.
17. My caretaker feels that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities decisions, and desires as they are growing up.
18. As I was growing up my caretaker let me know what behavior she/he expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she/he punished me.
19. As I was growing up my caretaker allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her/him.
20. As I was growing up my caretaker took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she/he would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.
21. My caretaker did not view herself/himself as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.
22. My caretaker had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but she/he was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
23. My caretaker gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she/he expected me to follow her/his direction, but she/he was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.

24. My caretaker respected my point of view on family matters and she/he generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.
  25. My caretaker has always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.
  26. As I was growing up my caretaker often told me exactly what she/he wanted me to do and how she/he expected me to do it.
  27. As I was growing up my caretaker gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she/he was also understanding when I disagreed with her/him.
  28. As I was growing up my caretaker did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desire of the children in the family.
  29. As I was growing up I knew what my caretaker expected of me in the family and she/he insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her/his authority.
  30. As I was growing up my caretaker made a decision in the family that hurt me, she/he was willing to discuss that decision with and to admit it if she/he had made a mistake.
-



**APPENDIX K**

**HELICOPTER PARENTING SCALE**

### HELICOPTER PARENTING SCALE

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number on the 5-point scale that best describes how that statement applies to your caretakers. Please answer the following questions as they relate to the caretaker you feel is most influential to you. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like him/her	Not like him/her	A little like him/her	Like him/her	A lot like him/her
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

**APPENDIX L**

**SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE**

**SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE**

Please respond to the following items using the number that best reflects your own beliefs. Please use the following 7-point scale:

1 Strong disagreement ○	2 Moderate disagreement ○	3 Slight disagreement ○	4 Neither agree nor disagree ○	5 Slight agreement ○	6 Moderate agreement ○	7 Strong agreement ○
----------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------------------

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

**APPENDIX M****DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ALL MEASURES**

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ALL MEASURES**

Scale	<i>N</i>	Range	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Variance
HPS	140	18	5	23	9.99	3.88	15.04
PES	140	42	9	25	27.99	8.85	78.23
SWLS	140	29	6	35	25.89	6.37	40.53
PAQ-P	140	28	10	38	22.98	6.04	36.42
PAQ-T	140	31	18	49	36.14	6.61	43.62
PAQ-R	140	36	13	49	30.94	7.92	62.67

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale; SWLS = Subjective Well-Being Scale PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative.

**APPENDIX N**

**MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION**

**THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG PERCEIVED PARENTING STYLES,  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITLEMENT, AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING**

**Abstract**

Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations. The focus has been on negative consequences mediated by psychological entitlement (PE) and its behavioral manifestations; however, the possible causes or contexts that might facilitate the development of PE are absent from the literature relating to this generation. One purpose of this study was to examine to what extent Millennials endorse entitled attitudes. Further, this study investigated Millennials' perceptions of parenting styles, utilizing Baumrind's parenting styles as well as experiences of helicopter parenting, personal feelings of PE, and the ways that these variables affect subjective well-being. By utilizing a series of multiple regressions, this study found that more salient experiences of authoritative parenting predicted higher subjective well-being while increases in PE predicted decreases in subjective well-being. Further, the study also found that an increase in permissive parenting and helicopter parenting styles predicted increased PE. Theoretical, research, and clinical implications are also discussed.



## Introduction

In May 2012, David McCullough, Jr., English teacher and son of Pulitzer Prize winning author and historian David McCullough, Sr., delivered a commencement speech to the graduating class of Wellesley High School in Wellesley, Massachusetts. His theme: “None of you is special. You are not special. You are not exceptional.” McCullough addressed the discrepancy between reality in America and the message that the members of today’s graduating classes have been told their entire lives that each graduate is unique, remarkable, and deserving of every opportunity available simply because of who they are. Rather, McCullough noted that each of them was only as remarkable as the other 3.2 million members of the nation’s class of 2012. The praise they have been given and the glory they have been promised by parents, teachers, and a society that has protected them from failure at every turn were, in fact, not a guarantee of success or happiness. McCullough did not leave those departing students mired in hopeless bewilderment at their state of un-specialness but encouraged them not to depend on simply being special to get what they want. He explained to them that they were not entitled to fulfillment; instead, they must seek it (McCullough, 2012). This message echoed a growing sentiment that today’s young adults are ill-equipped to thrive in a society that does not cater to their demands. It is this incongruity between reality and the promises of unearned rewards that has confused and frustrated today’s youthful generation, a generation that has been raised in an environment of passive expectancy and entitlement (Twenge, 2006).

McCullough’s (2012) comments attest to an awareness of seemingly growing levels of psychological entitlement (PE) among many of today’s young adults (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, &

Farruggia, 2011; Markstrom, Berman, Sabino, & Turner, 1998). The definition of PE is an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, modes of treatment, and/or designations when, in fact, one does not (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Kerr, 1985). This trend has led researchers to originate studies on young adults and how their increasingly ubiquitous attitudes about entitlement impact society (Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer & Murphy, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Windschitl, Rose, Stalkfleet, & Smith, 2008). The focus has been on negative consequences mediated by PE and its behavioral manifestations (Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Kerr, 1985); however, the possible causes or contexts that might facilitate the development of PE are absent from the literature relating to this generation. It is this omission in the literature that this study sought to correct, for in order to address the negative consequences of PE, it is important to examine the perspective of young adults the conditions in which it is fostered. This insight may contribute to possibly reducing the presence of PE in our culture (Kerr, 1985; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). A deeper understanding of PE and its consequences for Millennials was one of the goals of this study.

### **Millennials**

For clarification, the term Millennial reflects that this is the first generation to come of age in the new millennium (Taylor & Keeter, 2010), and this term is used throughout to reference today's young adult population, the population of interest for this study. Though the age range that encompasses Millennials includes all those born after 1982 through 2004 (Howe & Strauss, 2000), research has focused on the

behavioral manifestations and societal consequences of entitlement apparent in young adults; hence, the age range for this study was limited to those Millennials, ages 18 to 24. This delineation both narrows the focus of the population and allows for a more accurate description of the developmental stage they share; additionally, it also represents the population upon which the measures used in this study were normed and most frequently used (Buri, 1991; Campbell et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Diener et al., 1985; Exline & Zell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Within American society, the Millennials have been recognized as exhibiting significantly greater entitled attitudes than prior generations. However, the negative connotation of these labels, especially given that little attention has been given to the psychosocial factors that facilitated this evolution in entitled attitudes, may not accurately describe this population. The attribution of psychological entitlement (PE) traits to this generation has not included the assessment of PE from the perspective of Millennials themselves. As the research surrounding Millennials and entitlement continues it is pertinent that the perceptions about entitlement from the Millennials are included.

### **Entitlement**

PE is defined as an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, modes of treatment, and/or designations when, in fact, one does not (Campbell et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985). The focus has been on negative consequences mediated by PE and its behavioral manifestations (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Campbell et al., 2004; Exline et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985); however, the possible causes or contexts that might facilitate the development of PE are absent from

the literature relating to this generation. To address this gap in the literature, this study sought to the extent to which Millennials endorse psychologically entitled attitudes. Further this study explored what factors may contribute to PE and the impact that PE has on the lives of Millennials. The cultural and familial contributions to the entitled attitude of the Millennial Generation, as well as the impact of psychological entitled attitudes on Millennials' interpersonal and general well-being, have yet to be investigated from the viewpoint of Millennials themselves. It is, therefore, essential that in our understanding of PE we explore how these attitudes were learned to address the development of PE appropriately and its modification, if possible.

### **Parenting Styles**

To fully understand both the development of PE and its impact on Millennials, it is important to understand the contextual factors at work. The developmental lens used in this study to conceptualize the Millennial Generation is based upon the work of Arnett (2000) and his theory of emerging adulthood. In his theory Arnett (2000) defined the stage of development between the late teens and mid 20s as a distinct period that is neither adolescence nor adulthood but theoretically and empirically different. He called this stage "emerging adulthood." It is an era of newly gained independence from adolescence without the substantial responsibilities of adulthood. Arnett (2000) theorized that the bulk of identity development occurs during this emerging adulthood phase. Because of the critical nature of the developmental processes and the transitional nature inherent in the emerging adulthood phase (Arnett, 2000), the effects of parenting may be profound.

One of the salient traits of Millennials is their relationship with their parents. Unlike prior generations who differentiate from their parents at the emerging

adulthood stage, Millennials remain highly reliant upon their parents into adulthood (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Given the influence that parents exert throughout a child's life and their continued presence in the lives of Millennials, it is necessary to explore the potential role of parenting in the development of PE. The parenting styles utilized in this study are based on Baumrind's (1978) identification of three distinct parenting styles: (a) permissive, (b) authoritarian, and (c) authoritative. Baumrind (1978) described the permissive parent as affirming, accepting, and non-punishing. By contrast, the authoritarian parent uses power, punishment, and direction to shape a child. The authoritarian parent employs a strict set of standards that the child is expected to obtain, maintain, and sustain (Baumrind, 1971). Finally, the authoritative parent works to balance the self-direction of the child with discipline and conformity. The authoritative parent sets reasonable standards for the child and directs the child in a rational manner (Baumrind, 1971).

Recently increased attention by the media related to helicopter parenting, have prompted researchers to begin investigations into the relationship between over-parenting, child behavior, and adjustment (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2012; LeTrent, 2013; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker, Nelson, & Knapp, 2013). In one of the first studies on over-parenting, Segrin et al. (2012) noted a different form of parental control that was motivated by fervent desires to ensure that their child is successful, does not experience disappointment or failure, and is consistently happy and contented. The manner in which these desires are met and defined is structured in the parent's terms and generally results in the parents attempting to remove any obstacle to the desired goals. This study's exploration of the influence parenting styles may have on the development of PE will allow for greater

understanding of the etiology of PE. Further, this understanding can provide a guide toward addressing and altering potential parenting styles that facilitate the development of PE before it has lasting negative consequences.

### **Subjective Well-Being**

The Diener et al. (1985) construction of subjective well-being consists of three factors: (a) positive affect, (b) negative affect, and (c) life satisfaction. Positive and negative affect represent the emotional component of subjective well-being, while life satisfaction represents the cognitive element. Positive affect consists of pleasurable emotions such as joy, happiness, and contentment, while negative affect includes unpleasant feelings such as fear, sadness, and discontentment. Life satisfaction reflects a cognitive assessment of one's life as a whole. Given what prior research has indicated about the negative effects of PE in the domains of relationships with friends and family (Bishop & Lane, 2002; Campbell, 1999; Kerr, 1985; Levin, 1970) and on romantic relationships (Campbell et al., 2004; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), PE's presence may adversely impact one's overall well-being. As the understanding and consequences of PE for Millennials evolves, determining how PE impacts the subjective well-being of Millennials will be an important factor to consider.

### **The Present Study**

This study aspired to realize three aims defined through one research question apiece. The first aim was to investigate the extent to which Millennials endorse PE attitudes. The second aim was to investigate the extent to which Millennials' endorsements of parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian permissive, helicopter) and PE attitudes affect subjective well-being. The third aim was to explore how Baumrind's (1971, 1978) parenting styles as well as helicopter parenting (Padilla-

Walker & Nelson, 2012) may contribute to PE. The following research questions were utilized to address each of these goals:

- Q1 Do Millennials report higher PE than average, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?
- Q2 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, and psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, account for in the level of subjective well-being as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale?
- Q3 How much variance does perceived parenting style, as measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and evaluation of over-parenting, as measured by the Helicopter Parenting Scale, account for in the expression of psychological entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale?

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Participants of this study were undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 from one of three participating universities. 140 undergraduates participated in this study. Of the 140 completed surveys, 36 (26%) were from the university in Iowa, 90 (64%) were from the university in California, and 14 (10%) were from the university in Colorado. Due to the small number of Latino ( $n = 16$ ), African American ( $n = 4$ ), Asian American ( $n = 13$ ), Native American ( $n = 0$ ), Pacific Islander ( $n = 0$ ) and Multiple races/ethnicities/other ( $n = 15$ ) participants, the race/ethnicity demographic was condensed into two categories: Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ) and Non-Caucasian ( $n=48$ ). The following table provides information on the demographic characteristics of this sample.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample (n=140)*

Category	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	94	67
Male	46	32
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian	92	63
Non-Caucasian	48	34
<b>Family household income</b>		
Don't know	0	0
\$200,000 or more	24	17
\$175,000 to \$199,999	6	4
\$150,000 to \$174,999	6	4
\$125,000 to \$149,999	8	6
\$100,000 to \$124,999	20	15
\$75,000 to \$99,999	22	16
\$50,000 to \$74, 999	22	16
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19	14
Less than \$25,000	13	9

**Procedure**

Undergraduate students from three universities including a private university in the northern Midwest, a public university in the Rocky Mountain Region and a private university on the West Coast were contacted to participate in this study via email. The students were provided with a link to a survey through the Qualtrics website ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) and invited to participate if they were between the ages of 18 to 24. Informed consent was obtained online prior to the initiation of the survey items



and students were informed they could cease participation at any time. Data were stored in a password protected database provided through Qualtrics with a link to identifying information to preserve participant anonymity. Upon completion of the survey a debriefing statement was provided for participants along with an invitation to enter into a drawing for one of six \$50 Visa gift cards. The names and e-mail addresses of the participants participating in the raffle were stored in a separate database from the data survey information.

### **Instruments**

Participants were first asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. Additionally, they were administered the (a) Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES) (Campbell et al., 2004), (b) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) (Buri, 1991), (c) Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS) (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), and (d) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1985).

#### **Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES)**

The PES (Campbell et al., 2004) consists of nine items that are responded to on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The reported range for this sample was 9 to 51. For this sample, the average total PES score was 27.99 ( $SD = 8.85$ ). A  $t$ -test was conducted between the sample and the sample on which the study was normed ( $M = 30.7$ ,  $SD = 8.1$ ) (Campbell et al., 2004). The results indicated the sample for this study's average score was significantly lower than the sample on which the scale was normed,  $t(176) = -3.41$ ,  $p < .001$ . A  $t$ -test was conducted between males ( $n = 46$ ) and females ( $n = 94$ ) on the PES variable. That test indicated no significant differences between genders,  $t(138) = -.33$ ,  $p = .741$ . No significant differences were found between reported

family incomes, race/ethnicity or participant location. For this study the PES was found to have an internal consistency of Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77$ .

### **Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)**

The PAQ is a 30-item self-report instrument designed to measure parental authority or disciplinary practices from the child's point of view (Buri, 1991). Participants were asked to answer the questions as they relate to the caretaker they feel was most influential to them during their childhood. Buri's instrument measures Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. Three separate scores were generated for each participant for each parenting style subscale on the PAQ: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. The participant was assigned to the parenting style category based upon her or his highest score. For this sample 6 participants fell into the permissive parenting style; 42 into authoritarian, and 88 into authoritative. Four participants had two or more parenting styles with equal high scores and were excluded from category assignment.

Beyond the categorical value of the PAQ scores which determined what type(s) of parenting style was experienced by each participant, the PAQ scores also produced an interval variable that indicated the extent to which each parenting style was experienced by each participant. For the permissive parenting style, the mean score was 22.88 ( $SD = 6.04$ ) with a reported range of 10 to 38. For the authoritarian parenting style, the mean score was 30.94 ( $SD = 7.92$ ) with a reported range of 13 to 49. For the authoritative parenting style, the mean score was 36.14 ( $SD = 6.61$ ) with a reported range of 18 to 49. Each of the three singular subscales, permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian, were found to have internal consistency reliabilities of .87 (Authoritarian), .82 (Authoritative), and .78 (Permissive) within this sample. To

determine if any of the demographic variables (gender, race/ethnicity, reported family income, university location) influenced which parenting style category a participant was more likely to belong to, a chi-square analyses was conducted for each demographic variable. A chi-square analysis was conducted between parenting styles and the demographic variable reported family income. These analyses indicated that neither, gender, race/ethnicity, nor reported family income were related to parenting style.

However, according to the chi-square analysis, there were significant differences among parenting styles based upon university location,  $\chi^2(2) = 8.0, p = .02$ . A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted between university locations and each of the parenting styles. Analysis indicated that the Iowa and Colorado universities were significantly different from each other on the authoritative parenting style. The participants from the Iowa university had the highest scores on authoritative parenting style ( $M = 37.69, SD = 6.09$ ) while the Colorado university had the lowest authoritative parenting style scores ( $M = 32.57, SD = 6.95$ ). For the authoritarian parenting style variable, the Iowa university and the California university differed significantly from one another. The California university had the highest authoritarian parenting style scores ( $M = 32.37, SD = 7.1$ ), and the Iowa university had the lowest authoritarian parenting style scores ( $M = 27.75, SD = 7.68$ ).

### **Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS)**

The HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) is based on the sum of the responses to five items on a 5-point Likert-type scale. For this sample, the mean score on the HPS was 9.99 ( $SD = 3.88$ ) with a reported range of 5 to 23. In this study the HPS was found to have an internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of .81. ANOVAs

were run between race/ethnicity, reported family income, location, gender, and HPS scores. No significant differences were found between gender, location, reported family income or race/ethnicity variables.

### **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**

The score for the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) is based on the sum of the responses to seven items on a 5-point Likert-type scale. For this sample, the average score for participants was 25.89 ( $SD = 6.37$ ) with a sample range of 6 to 35. A  $t$ -test indicated that the current sample scored significantly higher than the findings reported by Diener et al. (1985) in their scale development study ( $M = 23.5$ ,  $SD = 6.43$ );  $t(299) = 3.30$ ,  $p < .01$ . A  $t$ -test was conducted between males ( $n = 46$ ) and females ( $n = 94$ ) for the SWLS variable and that test indicated that females had significantly higher average scores,  $t(138) = -3.4$ ,  $p = .001$ , than males. A  $t$ -test was also conducted between Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ) and non-Caucasian ( $n = 48$ ) participants for the SWLS variable and that test indicated that Caucasians had significantly higher average scores than non-Caucasians,  $t(138) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .031$ . No significant differences were found among reported family income and SWLS scores. For this study the SWLS was found to have an internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ .

## **Results**

### **Data Cleaning and Preliminary Analyses**

The assumptions of multiple regression, linearity, absence of multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, all were tested prior to running data analyses. Linearity and absence of multicollinearity assumptions were both met. Normality of the continuous variables (PES, SWLS, and HPS) scores was examined through visual inspection of histograms and tests for skewness and kurtosis. Kurtosis levels of the variables were

within acceptable limits (Huck, 2012). The HPS had a positive skew (greater than .5) and the SWLS has a negative skew (less than -.5). The skew in the distribution of the HPS scores was adjusted by conducting a log10 transformation on the data. This transformation had the effect of normalizing the dataset. To normalize the SWLS data set four outliers (cases 13, 23, 43, and 114) were removed. The transformed HPS (log10) and SWLS (outliers removed) scores were used in all subsequent analyses to test the research hypotheses.

### **Analyses**

To assess if the sample population reported being psychologically entitled, the sample population's mean score on the PES was analyzed with the parameters set by the PES scoring instructions. To address Research Questions 2 and 3, a stepwise regression was utilized. In the first block of each analysis, the demographic variables that were found to have significant relationships to the dependent variable of interest were entered. All predictor variables of interest were entered simultaneously in the second block. This regression model was selected as the analysis to address these questions because it allowed for an understanding of not only which variables are significant predictors and the magnitude of their effects, but also about the structure by which multiple predictors simultaneously relate to the dependent variable. Further, this analysis allowed for the exploration of the role of the predictor variables in the equation without dictation of any specific strength of one variable over the other. Interpretations of the model were conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. Prior to conducting the analyses for each research question, a correlational analysis was

conducted among the 140 participants on PAQ subscale scores, HPS scores, PES scores, and SWLS scores (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Correlational Analysis for Research Variables (n = 140)*

	PES	SWLS	PAQ-P	PAQ-T	PAQ-R	HPS
PES	-					
SWLS	-.20*	-				
PAQ-P	.11	-.17*	-			
PAQ-T	-.12	.36***	.11	-		
PAQ-R	.10	-.07	-.59***	-.21*	-	
HPS	.32***	-.16	-.03	-.05	.21*	-

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Research Question 1

To address this research question, the sample population's mean score on the PES was calculated. For this sample ( $n = 140$ ), the average total PES score was 27.99 ( $SD = 8.85$ ). According to the developers' instructions (Campbell et al., 2004), this sample's mean PES score was within the average range.

### Research Question 2

First, a correlational analysis was conducted among the 140 participants on PAQ subscale scores, HPS scores, PES scores, and SWLS scores (see Table 2). Significant correlations were found between PES and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.20$ ,  $p = .022$ , PAQ-permissive and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.17$ ,  $p = .045$ , and

PAQ-authoritative and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = .36, p < .001$ . Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variables were the three parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative and helicopter parenting (HPS) and PE (PES). The dependent variable was subjective well-being (SWLS). Control variables were entered in the first step, with the main study variables entered on the second step.

Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variables were PAQ parenting style subscale scores (permissive, authoritative, authoritarian), HPS scores, and PES scores. The dependent variable was subjective well-being (SWLS scores). Control variables (gender, race/ethnicity, university location) were entered in the first step, with the independent variables entered in the second step. Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis as well as indices to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors (PES scores, PAQ parenting style subscale scores, HPS scores).

Table 3

*Regression Analysis for Research Question 2 (n = 140)*

	Variable	$r^2$	Adj. $r^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Block 1	Model	.13	.11					
	(Constant)			22.51	1.93		11.67	.000
	Gender			4.08	1.08	.30	3.72	.000***
	Race/Eth.			2.86	1.09	.21	2.63	.009**
	Location			-.51	.59	-.07	-.85	.396
Block 2	Model	.278	.234					
	(Constant)			28.99	5.66		5.12	.000
	Gender			3.11	1.06	.23	2.94	.004**
	Race/Eth.			2.13	1.05	.16	2.02	.045*
	Location			-.24	.57	-.03	-.42	.678
	PES			-.08	.06	-.11	-1.34	.182
	HPS			-5.71	3.08	-.15	-1.85	.066
	PAQ-P			-.14	.10	-.13	-1.36	.177
	PAQ-T			.24	.08	.25	3.08	.003**
PAQ-R			-.12	.08	-.15	-1.49	.138	

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

With regard to the control variables of gender, ethnicity, and location (Block 1), the model fit was significant,  $F(3, 136) = 6.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , and accounted for 13% of the variance in SWLS scores when these variables alone were entered in to the equation. Both gender,  $t(133) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , and ethnicity,  $t(133) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .009$ ,



were significant contributors to this block. The predictor variables of PES scores, HPS scores, PAQ-P scores, PAQ-T scores and PAQ-R scores were entered into the second block, and the addition of the predictors created a significant increase in  $R$  squared,  $R^2 = .28$ ,  $F(8, 131) = 6.31$ ,  $p < .001$ . Regarding the independent variables (Block 2), the model fit was significant, indicating that approximately 28% of the variance of the SWLS scores was accounted for by the linear combination of parenting and PE measures. Interpretations of the model were conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. Authoritative parenting style was a significant predictor having a medium positive effect on subjective well-being,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t(135) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .003$ . This indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in authoritative parenting scores, SWLS scores increased by  $.25$ .

### **Research Question 3**

First, a correlational analysis was conducted among the 140 participants on PAQ subscale scores, HPS scores, PES scores, and SWLS scores (see Table 2). With regards to the variables that were utilized to answer this research question, significant correlations were found between PES and HPS scores,  $r(136) = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and PES and SWLS scores,  $r(136) = -.20$ ,  $p = .022$  (see Table 2). Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aforementioned variables. The independent variables were PAQ parenting style subscale scores (permissive, authoritarian, authoritative) and HPS scores. The dependent variable was PES scores. Control variables (gender, race/ethnicity, university location) were entered in the first block, with the main study variables were entered in the second block. In Table 4, the results

of the multiple regression analysis are presented as well as indices to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors.

Table 4

*Regression Analysis for Research Question 3 (n = 140)*

	Variable	$r^2$	Adj. $r^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Block 1	Model	.02	.000					
	(Constant)			30.79	2.85		10.82	.000
	Gender			.30	1.60	.02	.19	.850
	Race/Eth.			-2.66	1.60	-.14	-1.66	.099
	Location			-.53	.87	-.05	-.61	.546
Block 2	Model	.18	.14					
	(Constant)			4.88	8.33		.59	.559
	Gender			1.87	1.55	.10	1.19	.236
	Race/Eth.			-2.52	1.53	-.14	-1.64	.103
	Location			-.85	.84	-.08	-1.00	.317
	PAQ-P			.35	.15	.24	2.38	.019*
	PAQ-T			-.12	.11	-.09	-1.09	.278
	PAQ-R			.20	.12	.17	1.68	.095
	HPS			16.54	4.30	.32	3.84	.000***

*Note.* HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PAQ = Parental Authority Questionnaire: P = permissive, R = authoritarian, T = authoritative.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

With regard to the control variables of gender, ethnicity, and location (Block 1), the model fit was not significant,  $F(3, 136) = .99$ ,  $p = .399$ , and accounted for 2% of the variance in PES scores when these variables alone were entered into the equation. None of these variables were significant contributors in this block of the

analysis. The addition of the predictor variables created a significant increase in  $R$  squared,  $R^2 = .18$ ,  $F(7, 132) = 4.18$ ,  $p < .001$ . Regarding the independent variables, (Block 2), the model fit was significant, indicating that approximately 18% of the variance of PES scores in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of PAQ subscales and HPS scores. An interpretation of the model was conducted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines on effect size with absolute values of  $< .10$  suggesting a small effect size, approximately  $.30$  suggesting a medium effect size, and  $> .50$  suggesting a large effect size. PAQ-Permissive scores and HPS scores each were significant predictors of PES scores. This indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in PAQ-Permissive scores, PES scores increased by  $.35$  points. PAQ-Permissive scores had a small, positive effect on PES scores,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $t(139) = 2.38$ ,  $p = .019$ . HPS scores had a medium, positive effect on PES scores;  $\beta = .32$ ,  $t(139) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ . For every one standard deviation increase in HPS scores, PES scores increased by  $.32$ .

### **Discussion**

For Research Question 1, the mean of the sample population's responses on the PES was calculated. The overall scores on the PES indicated that, according to the scale identified by the PES (Campbell et al., 2004), the sample scored within the normal range. This is an interesting finding as it contradicts prior research and discussion which assessed Millennials as exhibiting excessive degrees of PE (Keller, 2012; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). A possible reason for this difference is that prior studies did not survey Millennials but rather utilized observational data about Millennials from professors and teachers (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009), employers of Millennials

(Lessard et al., 2001) and partners in relationships commenting on each other (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). This discrepancy between how others view Millennials in terms of PE and the extent to which Millennials themselves endorse entitled attitudes suggests that the discussion surrounding Millennials and PE (Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009) may be more complex than previously assumed.

For Research Question 2, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well parenting style, helicopter parenting, and PE predicted subjective well-being. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting predicted the most variance related to subjective well-being,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t(135) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .003$ . This finding is consistent with previous research (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005; Ishak et al., 2012; Segrin et al., 2012) which found that young adults raised with authoritative parents tend to do better in school (Ishak et al., 2012; Howe & Strauss, 2003), have better interpersonal relationships (Lamborn et al., 2008), and better self-esteem (Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Hickman et al., 2000; Marsiglia et al., 2007). All of these elements are related to overall well-being (Diener & Diener, 1995; McDowell, 2010) and, as such, the findings of this study align with prior research regarding a relationship between authoritative parenting and aspects of subjective well-being. The results did not indicate that the other parenting styles (authoritarian and permissive) or helicopter parenting were statistically significant predictors of subjective well-being. This is an interesting finding given that prior research has suggested that helicopter parenting may produce more negative outcomes, such as difficulty in being empathetic toward others (Segrin et al., 2012), and problems in navigating relationships (Sedikides et al., 2002). However, these concepts, which highlight difficulties in

interpersonal relationships, were not directly measured by the SWLS and thus, may not have been reflected in the results. Further, the influence of permissive, authoritarian and helicopter parenting styles may not have been salient enough in this sample to significantly impact subjective well-being.

In addressing Research Question 3, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well parenting styles and helicopter parenting predicted PE. Responses showed that a permissive parenting style was a significant positive predictor of PE, indicating that having a more salient perception of permissive parenting predicted greater PE. The results also suggested that the perception of helicopter parenting predicted greater PE. The findings of this study indicate that there may be elements of parenting common to both permissive parenting and helicopter parenting which could contribute to an increase in PE. In contrast, the findings may indicate that elements unique to permissive parenting and helicopter parenting may contribute to PE in different ways. Further research into the specific elements of these parenting styles will be necessary to determine more accurately what parenting behaviors contribute to PE. Research devoted to linking elements of PE to specific parenting behaviors may also be beneficial in developing treatment plans and interventions designed to interrupt the development of PE.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Perhaps the most conspicuous finding of this study as it relates to theory is the lack of evidence to support the contention that Millennials harbor high levels of entitlement (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). The findings of this study indicated that the participants fell within the normal range of the PES, suggesting that the Millennials

included in this study are not excessively entitled (Campbell et al., 2004). Existing theory and research related to entitlement among Millennials has been observational in nature and most have not utilized self-report measures (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline et al., 2004). The finding that Millennials did not report high PE suggests that while patterns of entitled behaviors have been observed by others to be more common among this generation, the evidence of this study does not support that assertion.

Within the definition of PE, it is specified that the entitled beliefs regarding one's assumed rights are 'irrational' (Campbell et al., 2004). It is perhaps this defining characteristic of PE that is at the heart of the discrepancy between how others view the Millennials and how Millennials view the world. Determining what is or is not an irrational belief can be a very contextually and culturally laden decision. For Millennials, the line between insistence and assertiveness may be less clear than it was for older generations. While insisting that one receive individualized treatment may appear to some like asking for special favors, to Millennials, it could be an expectation grounded in life experiences (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Exline et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985; Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The question is how we determine if what a person wants is rational (unentitled) or irrational and unrealistic (entitled). Based upon the culture in which the Millennials were raised in contrast to the cultures of older generations, what qualifies as reasonable or unreasonable expectations may be very different. Therefore, it is important that we strive toward obtaining a more concrete and agreed-upon definition of the construct of PE.

As part of the quest to better understand Millennials, it is important not only to understand the current attitudes of this population, but also how those attitudes developed. To begin to better understand how PE evolves in Millennials, this study

focused on the role that parenting styles may play in the development of PE.

Permissive and helicopter parenting were determined to be predictive of increased PE. However, again it is important to note that the percentage of variance accounted for by both of these predictor variables is small, especially the relationship between permissive parenting and PE. While both permissive parenting and helicopter parenting may be factors in the development of PE, their causal influence should not be over-emphasized.

Though often with the best intentions, helicopter parents may inadvertently be creating a need for their children's continued over-reliance on their support and protection from disappointment. This may render children to feel uncertain of their own ability to take care of themselves and may stunt their developing into independent and capable adults (Arnett, 2000; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2013). The systemic investigation into implications of helicopter parenting in young adults is, as this study shows, an important and needed area for further research. The evidence of the predictive quality of helicopter parenting for PE found in this study should act as a catalyst for further exploration of helicopter parenting and its consequences on young adults.

While helicopter parents may foster PE through over-involvement, intrusiveness, and shielding their children from disappointment, permissive parents may cultivate PE through their tendency to not set firm boundaries. Both parenting styles can create an environment where children are accustomed to getting their way. Permissive parenting is a style of parenting in which parents are very involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them (Santrock, 2007). Given the lack of regulation and indulgence of some permissive parents, it is easy to see how a

sense of entitlement could be fostered. Studies have found that children of permissive parents tend to engage in more selfishly-motivated activities than do children of those with differing parenting styles (Milevsky, 2007); this style of parenting is believed to directly contribute to low cognitive and emotional empathy development (Aunola et al., 2000). Because this parenting style is completely child-focused, concern for others' feelings and experiences are not of high importance to children of permissive parenting. Parents who indulge a child's desires without fostering personal responsibility may be catalysts for PE and, consequently, the negative consequences that can accompany PE when the child is no longer in the protection of a non-demanding environment (Nelson et al., 2011).

### **Research Implications**

The results from this study suggest that the research and conversation related to PE among Millennials needs to continue and expand. As this study found that, on average, the Millennials included in the sample did not score outside of the normative range on the PES, there may be a discrepancy between what others see in this population and the attitudes of Millennials. Further research is needed to explore this difference and what it means about how PE is defined, interpreted, understood, and assessed both through observation and self-awareness.

The results from this study illustrate the need for further research and dialogue related to both PE and its relationship to both helicopter and permissive parenting. Prior research has indicated that helicopter parenting and permissive parenting are similar in their being very child-focused and preoccupied with the happiness of the child (Lamborn et al., 2008; Santrock, 2007; Segrin et al., 2012). Given this study's finding that permissive and helicopter parenting each are predictive of PE, it may be



that this common element is an important factor in parenting practices that increase PE. Specific focus on the parental behaviors that are consistent with both helicopter and permissive parenting styles that may contribute to PE will be necessary in order to develop appropriate therapeutic interventions. Research suggests that the style of control of parents who are over-involved in their young adult children is similar to the style of overprotective or over-solicitous parenting found in parents of young children (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Research devoted to understanding critical ages and developmental stages where a child or adolescent is the most vulnerable for learning attitudes that may contribute to PE could be a very important contribution to research and clinical interventions. These interventions may then have a positive impact on the relationships between emerging adults and their parents and potentially decrease PE.

Similarly, this study supports the importance of further research on PE. The psychological and behavioral manifestations of entitlement have evolved, and with that, the instruments and constructs used in research on entitlement must evolve as well. A construct that is as complicated as PE calls for multiple and varied measurement approaches including self-report and observational measures. Research which utilizes only self-reports, such as this study, may inadequately capture the relational elements of entitlement (Huck, 2012; Johnson, 2005); further, elements such as impression management, social desirability, and lack of awareness may also hamper more precise measurement of PE. Because of its intricacy and the relational nature of PE, instruments that address various areas where entitlement may present as problematic, areas such as relationships, work, and academics, may give a more comprehensive portrait of PE in an individual.

Subsequent research must also target the definition of PE. In this study and in prior research, PE is defined as “an irrational belief that one possesses a legitimate right to receive special privileges, treatment, and/or designation when in fact one does not” (Campbell et al., 2004; Kerr, 1985). The word “irrational” must be defined as it relates to the culture of the Millennial population. Instruments that measure traits such as PE should be attuned to the evolving cultural norms of the population of interest. It may be beneficial to build upon the research that has been and is being conducted on constructs that may encompass elements of PE to build a more holistic definition. Exploring the variables related to such constructs as privilege, demandingness, and deservingness may provide additional information and research directions related to PE. It is apparent that in order to have an accurate and open dialogue about PE among Millennials, a definition based upon context must be devised.

### **Limitations**

This study acknowledges several limitations. The sample population utilized presented a limitation in diversity. It is also important to note that the majority of this sample came from a single university in California. This limits the generalizability of the findings. Few participants were from the larger, more diverse, public university. The data were collected from a nonrandom sample, and those Millennials who volunteered could have elected to terminate participation at any time. As such, unmeasured variables (e.g., personality traits) may have influenced results. Another limitation could have regarded the subset of the millennial generation that was selected for this study. Millennials’ ages span from age 11 to 33 however, this study only included participants aged 18 to 24. This left out a large section of this

generation and, though the sample population came from the middle section of this span, it does not include a full spectrum of Millennials.

While this study did collect data related to race/ethnicity and subjective well-being, because of the limited number of ethnicities participating, these data are limited and should be interpreted with caution. In addition, there was limited diversity in reported family incomes, which did not include any participant who identified as living at the poverty level. This lack of variability in income range may impact the correlations found between reported family income and the predictor variables. Further research is necessary and should be conducted to explore the potential links between race/ethnicity, income, helicopter parenting, and PE.

Another limitation involves the instrument used to assess helicopter parenting, the HPS (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The HPS is a new instrument consisting of only five questions and implemented to ascertain whether or not helicopter parenting was a consequential variable in subjects' perceptions of their parents. Given the continuing evolution of the definition of "helicopter parenting" and limited amount of prior research using this new measure, this study's findings recognize the need for further research on helicopter parenting.

For both the HPS and PAQ, the participants were asked to reflect on their caretakers as they were during the participants' childhood. This type of retrospective assessment may provide an inaccurate assessment of the participants' caretakers through recall bias. By utilizing the memory of their caretakers to complete the HPS and PAQ assessments, the participants may have provided imprecise information.

The use of the PES as the measure of PE may also have posed a limitation due to its brevity and the restrictive nature of self-report measures. As opposed to prior

research, this study did not find evidence that Millennials reported significantly high levels of PE but fell within the average range (Campbell et al., 2004). The results of earlier research regarding PE and the current discourse which considers Millennials to be highly entitled (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998) are discrepant from these findings. It is possible that given the use of a self-report measure for PE, social desirability may have been a factor in how some participants answered the questions. Social desirability can inform a participant's responses if the participant interprets the items as having socially appropriate or inappropriate response options. If a participant elects to respond to an item in a way that he or she feels is more socially acceptable rather than what is actually true for the participant, the results can be impacted. Given the brevity and high face validity of the PES, social desirability may have produced under-reporting of PE, which would interfere with the understanding of average tendencies as well as individual differences (Huck, 2012). Resolving these potential limitations may be accomplished through the use of alternative measures and/or collecting data from various sources.

### **Conclusions**

Though not without its limitations, this study makes an important contribution to the small but growing research on the influences that parenting styles, helicopter parenting, and PE have in the lives of Millennials. Perhaps the most conspicuous finding of this study as it relates to theory is the lack of evidence to support the contention that Millennials harbor high levels of entitlement (Baer & Cheryomuichin, 2010; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998).

This study illustrates the need for further research in the evolution of both the word “entitlement” and continued modification of its constructs.

This study affirmed prior research on the impact of Baumrind’s (1971, 1978) parenting styles as they relate to child and adolescent outcomes (Broderick & Blewitt, 2005). Authoritative parenting predicted greater subjective well-being. This study also found that increased helicopter parenting and permissive parenting predicted increased PE. Though it is too early in the research to draw conclusions regarding the impact of helicopter and permissive parenting as they pertain to PE and subjective well-being, continued research is warranted. As the discourse on PE and Millennials continues, it will be necessary for the field of counseling psychology to further research into the relevance and consequence of PE for this generation.

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