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Parental Overreach, Student Entitlement and their Motivation; Investigating the Relationship Between Helicopter Parenting, Psychological Entitlement and Academic Motivation Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

Helicopter parenting, defined by an excessive parental involvement and control over children's lives, has been under the spotlight of researchers in recent years for its potential impact on children's personal, psychological, social and academic domains. Excessive involvement, authority and control by parent in child's life can lead to sense of entitlement in students and can also hinder their motivation to learn and progress in academics. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the relationship between helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement and academic motivation among the university students. The study was quantitative utilizing the cross-sectional correlational design. The study sample comprised of 200 university students from Gujrat. The scales used were Helicopter Parenting Scale (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011), Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell et al., 2004) and Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992). We hypothesized that there will likely be a relationship between these variables. Pearson correlation highlighted a significant positive relationship between helicopter parenting and psychological entitlement ($r = .46, p < .001$), helicopter parenting and extrinsic motivation ($r = .32, p < .001$) and helicopter parenting and amotivation ($r = .36, p$

< .001). Moreover, there was a significant negative relationship highlighted between helicopter parenting and intrinsic motivation ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, there was a significant positive relationship between psychological entitlement and extrinsic motivation ($r = .16$, $p < .05$). The helicopter parenting practices supported the negative psychological entitlement and maladaptive academic motivations. These findings could be incorporated in different parenting interventions focusing on academic progress and psychosocial factors of positive entitlement.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, Helicopter Parenting, Psychological Entitlement

INTRODUCTION

Parenting holds the significant most place in child growth as it influences the cognitive and personality development of the child. This influence is not only confined to childhood but leads to the adulthood as well (Ge et al., 2022). There is abundance of literature highlighting the influence of parenting especially the impact of different parenting styles such as Baumrind's parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991) upon the social and personality development of child across different age phases (Rixia et al., 2011; as cited in Yuan, 2023). Not only the personal and social but academic domain of students' is also influenced by parenting (Shaki et al., 2022). Even though, the university going phase in the life of students bring about independence, but the influence of parents remains significant especially when it comes to academic excellence and standards (Shadach et al., 2017).

Parenting styles have received a notable attention in research over the decades. In the recent times however, helicopter parenting received a considerable attention (Nie et al., 2023). It is characterized by over-protective, and over-involving attitude of parents towards their children. These parents tend to control the lives of their children and direct them to do whatever they desire. Helicopter parents try to completely supervise and regulate their child's life and may adopt control and involvement levels which are not developmentally appropriate (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Such involvement and control can affect the autonomy, decision making ability and emotional maturity of child (Segrin et al., 2013).

In terms of university going student, helicopter parents extensively monitor the progress of child, will make decisions related to their academics and will solve the child's problems themselves (Leung & Busiol, 2016). However, the helicopter parenting has been found to be positively linked with the emotional support and parental involvement which leads to positive outcomes (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Padilla-Walker et al. (2019) conclude that the helicopter parenting at modest level combined with parental warmth leads to higher academic engagement in students. Nevertheless, extensive care and over-protective attitude which is displayed during helicopter parenting may leads to the distorted self-perception in the child. Shadach et al. (2017) suggests that these children have the tendency to develop and acquire a sense of entitlement, along with an elevated belief that they are eligible for the favorable outcomes and rewards in comparison to their peers

(Candel & Turliuc, 2017). These students develop a sense of psychological entitlement leading them to believe that they deserve a higher recognition and number of rewards (Dreiling, 2015).

Psychological entitlement refers to a lasting and persistent sense that a person is worthy and that he/she deserves more and is obligated/entitled to better or more things than their counterparts (Campbell et al., 2004). Psychological entitlement develops through life experience that is an individual receives a special status and authority mainly within a family especially by parents. Yongmei and Yulin (2024) focused on influence of parenting style upon psychological entitlement with their study highlighting that overparenting attitude by parents was positively associated with psychological entitlement. Helicopter parents give their children support, care and protection in a way that may spoil them leading them to believe that they deserve preferential or special treatment from others including peers, teachers and colleagues. This results in development of psychological entitlement in such children (Rothman & Steil, 2012).

The intrusive, restricting, dominating and possessive behaviors by parents such as in helicopter parenting have an adverse impact upon the self system of child. Apart from this, these are likely to affect the perception of child's own self in relation with others. This can lead to impaired self-competence but on the contrary, has the tendency to develop a sense of entitlement in children. Parenting with full authority and added pressure on academics is associated with entitlement in young adults in their academic as well as employment domains (Greenberger et al., 2008). A study conducted by Givertz and Segrin (2004) highlighted a positive link between overinvolved parenting and higher psychological entitlement in young adults.

According to Fletcher et al. (2020) there is a link between helicopter parenting and entitlement among students and this entitlement can be a factor which increases the risk of helicopter parenting in terms of academic outcomes of the students (Knepp, 2016). A research study upon university students from Iran revealed a significant positive link amongst helicopter parenting and academic entitlement (Rafiei et al., 2024). Literature evidence suggests that helicopter parenting was found to have an impact upon academic wellbeing including attitude of student towards academics along with academic performance (Howard et al., 2022). Moreover, it was revealed that helicopter parenting had a negative impact upon academic functioning (Luebbe et al., 2018), academic control (Hwang & Jung, 2021) and academic confidence (Eberly Lewis et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Hong et al. (2015) highlighted that the helicopter parenting positively predicted procrastination which negatively predicted self-regulated learning in students. Moreover, a study highlighted that the helicopter parenting was positively linked with dysfunctional academic motivation among students (Schriffin & Liss, 2017). This is because helicopter parenting may result in reduction of intrinsic motivation which hinders learning and achievement because the external factors such as parental approval are more valued (Schriffin & Liss, 2017). Moreover, Howard et al. (2020) highlighted that students reported lower levels of

intrinsic motivation if they experienced helicopter parenting.

Hence, this study was conducted with an aim to investigate the interplay between the helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement and academic motivation among university students. These variables influence the psychological and academic aspect of a student's life especially in Pakistan as family dynamics in the country often emphasize strong parental involvement and support, especially regarding education. Although, these variables hold influence but there is limited evidence of these variables being studied together which also signify our study.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical perspective followed the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), social cognitive model (Pintrich, 1989) and parenting style model by Baumrind (1971). This theory encompassed the factors related to the individual's sense of motivation and personality formation with an innate tendency to perform in certain situations (Awiszus et al., 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Academic motivation and psychological entitlement gathered by a person's own will to perform in certain situations which are directly linked with parenting styles (Oh et al., 2021). The parenting style model (Baumrind, 1971) determined helicopter parenting in light of similar to permissive and authoritarian parenting, which thus inversely linked to academic motivation and psychological entitlement (Carrasquillo, 2024).

Motivation includes three main constructs as outlined by the social-cognitive model of motivation (Bandura, 2001). These are expectancy motivation; value; and affect (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Finally, affect involves the emotional response to (anticipated) learning, particularly the idea that anxiety can actively work against a student feeling motivated (Pintrich et al., 1993; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Motivation appears central to academic success and multiple studies have found that motivation is positively correlated with academic achievement (Ningrum et al., 2018). This has implications for children with helicopter parents as helicopter parenting has shown negative relations with child learning motivation (Hwang & Jung, 2021). As such, motivation may serve as a pathway linking helicopter parenting and student academic achievement.

Study Objective

- To investigate the relationship between helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement and academic motivation.

Study Hypothesis

- There is a likelihood that a relationship will be found between helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement and academic motivation.

Method

Objectives

To investigate the relationship between helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement and academic motivation among university students.

Research Design

This research study employed a cross-sectional correlational design. The

study was quantitative.

Sample

The study sample comprised of 200 university students from Gujrat city in Pakistan. The sampling strategy was convenient sampling strategy.

Operational Definitions

Helicopter Parenting

Helicopter parenting is the type of parenting which involves over interference or an overly protective attitude of parents towards children's new learning behaviors. Thus, constant involvement and controlling behaviors arise negative impact thus blocks the opportunities for children to learn new skills from difficult situations (Awiszus et al., 2022). This resulted in an overall negative effect on child's normal and expected development.

Psychological Entitlement

This gathered the attaining of the higher status in respect to any stage, or position when compared to others. The behavioral pattern involved status-seeking to get to the highest status in social hierarchies. This encompassed both the social validation and the affective behavioral patterns in attainment of highest reward, appreciation or position (Redford & Ratliff, 2017).

Academic Motivation

This carries the concept of student's motivation in learning new creative skills, abilities to seek knowledge in a more efficient manner, and gaining overall academic satisfaction. The motivation of students in field of academia with respect to cognitive, affective training components, and behavioral aspects (Vasile et al., 2011).

Instruments

Helicopter Parenting Scale

The scale was used to assess the helicopter parenting experience (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). The scale has a total of 10 items which are rated on a 5-point scale with options ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). The higher scores reported on this scale are an indicator of elevated experience of helicopter parenting. The reliability value of the scale in this study was found to be .77.

Psychological Entitlement Scale

This instrument will be used for measuring the levels of psychological entitlement (Campbell et al., 2004). Respective scale or interest has 9 items with options ranging from "1" (strong disagreement) to "7" (strong agreement). The higher scores reported on this scale are an indicator of higher sense of psychological entitlement in a person. The reliability value of the scale in this study was found to be .80.

Academic Motivation Scale

This scale was developed by Vallerand et al. (1992). Although quite old this scale is, it is being used in modern day literature (Adrenska et al., 2016) and is a globally acknowledged tool undergoing validation across globe (Algharaibeh, 2021). The scale has 28 items with 12 items for intrinsic motivation as well as extrinsic motivation. There are 4 items to determine amotivation. The scale is rated on a 7-

point scale with options ranging from "1" (does not correspond at all) to "7" (corresponds exactly). The reliability value of the complete scale in this study was found to be .81. The reliability values of the three subscales “intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation” in this study were found to be .72, .70 and .74 respectively.

Procedure

Following institutional approval, data collection was carried out within university settings. Participants were recruited using survey questionnaires. Informed consent was a must and was obtained before proceeding with participation in study. The participants were given a clear explanation of the study's goal and nature. They were also told that their responses would be kept private and that they might leave the study at any time. After collecting the completed questionnaires, responses containing substantial errors or missing data were excluded. The final sample comprised 200 valid cases, which were subsequently analyzed to derive the study findings using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

RESULTS

Table 1

Psychometric Properties of the Instruments (N = 200)

Scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Range
HPS	39.41	5.69	.77	16-50
PES	25.04	11.53	.80	10-44
AMS				
INT-MOT	37.15	10.57	.72	15-79
EXT-MOT	59.41	10.47	.70	17-72
A-motivation	22.15	4.91	.74	4-24

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; HPS = Helicopter Parenting Scale; PES = Psychological Entitlement Scale; AMS = Academic Motivation Scale; INT-MOT = Intrinsic Motivation; EXT-MOT = Extrinsic Motivation.

The table provides the reliability values of the scales along with their descriptive statistics. All of the scale show that the good and acceptable reliability values that is the values are at or above .70 which indicates that all the data collected is valid for statistical analyses.

Table 2

Correlation Analysis for the Study Variables (N = 200)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. HP	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. PE	.46***	-	-	-	-	-
AM						
3. INT-MOT	-.25**	-.09	-	-	-	-
4. EXT-MOT	.32***	.16*	-.47***	-	-	-
5. A-motivation	.36***	.04	-.51***	-.54***	-	-

Note. HPS = Helicopter Parenting; PE = Psychological Entitlement; AM = Academic Motivation; INT-MOT = Intrinsic Motivation; EXT-MOT = Extrinsic Motivation, * *p*

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

The findings of correlation between study variables are highlighted in this table. Helicopter parenting was significantly positively correlated with psychological entitlement, extrinsic motivation and amotivation in students and these relationships were significant. There was a significant negative relationship between helicopter parenting and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, psychological entitlement was having a significant positive relationship with extrinsic motivation. Furthermore, there was a significant negative relationship between intrinsic motivation and amotivation and between extrinsic motivation and amotivation among the students.

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to investigate the relationship between helicopter parenting, psychological entitlement, and academic motivation among university students. The results included the demographic information along with psychometric properties of the scale. The results of the study highlighted the significant positive connection of helicopter parenting with a-motivation, extrinsic motivation, and psychological entitlement, also negative relationship with intrinsic motivation among university students. In coherence with the past studies suggested Yongmei and Yulin (2024) showed that helicopter parenting positively correlated with psychological entitlement.

The study by Dreiling (2015) showed that entitlement carries the reflection of narcissism tendencies which thus positively linked to helicopter parenting (Eberly et al., 2023). The study highlighted that parenting styles were significantly linked to the behavioral and cognitive changes among children specifically in young adults (Hong & Cui, 2019). In Pakistani culture helicopter parenting linked to poor emotional as well as mental health consequences among university students (Asif et al., 2024). Thus, the findings of present study highlighted that the increased experience of helicopter parenting by university students lead to elevated levels of psychological entitlement (Nie et al., 2023).

The results showed that helicopter parenting enhanced extrinsic motivation and weakened intrinsic motivation in university students. The literature suggested that helicopter parenting disrupts the individuals' abilities to solve problems, thus on the other hand children of overpowering parents showed obedience in the form of extrinsic motivation (Hivick, 2019; Macias, 2019). The study conducted on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation determined that both factors could be overlapped and can give different meaning and directions in the life of an individual (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Another study concluded that helicopter parenting was positively linked to extrinsic motivation and mal-adaptive academic motivation strategies to increase parental trust (Schiffirin & Liss, 2017). The results highlighted a-motivation enhanced by helicopter parenting. Study highlighted that a-motivation caused by increased level of anxiety and frustration (Zhang et al., 2024), which is caused by helicopter parenting (Sadoughi, 2024).

The study conducted by De Muyenck et al. (2020) showed that negative

parenting practices led to a-motivation and disengagement among university students. In Pakistani culture the study highlighted helicopter parenting negatively associated with social competence and self-efficacy (Batool et al., 2024), which are the direct factors for motivation among university students. The increased psychological entitlement resulted in increased level of distress which then caused demotivation among individuals (Grubbs & Exline, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The study highlighted that helicopter parenting was positively linked to a-motivation, extrinsic motivation, and psychological entitlement, also decreases the ability to enhance intrinsic motivation among university students. Helicopter parenting led to lower levels of intrinsic motivation making an individual unable to learn new things but apparently show energy in disguise of demotivation. Thus, helicopter parenting causes an individual to become enthusiastic in appearance which resulted in increased level of psychological entitlement and demotivation at the same time.

Limitations and Implications

The study lacks the psychosocial factors (role of peers, teachers, depression, stress etc.) involved in university settings in light of the sample. The study was conducted from limited region of Pakistan, thus questions the generalizability of results among regional diversity. The study could be utilized in connecting parental practices related interventions in light of university settings. The study values parental practices as predictor of adults' behavioral and cognitive structuring for better academic performance in future. The study will open path for future studies in this area with model investigations taking into consideration these variables.

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