

Academic Entitlement. Academic Entitlement was measured using the final 8 items of the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire (AEQ) developed by Kopp et al. (2011). College-aged adults answered questions on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items included “If I don’t do well on a test, the professor should make tests easier or curve grades”, “Professors should only lecture on material covered in the textbook and assigned readings”, “If I am struggling in a class, the professor should approach me and offer to help”, “It is the professor’s responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed”, “If I cannot learn the material for a class from lecture alone, then it is the professor’s fault when I fail the test”, “I am a product of my environment. Therefore, if I do poorly in class, it is not my fault”, “I should be given the opportunity to make up a test, regardless of the reason for the absence”, and “Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades” (Kopp et al., 2011). Reliability for the current study was acceptable ($\alpha = .80$).

Drinking Behavior. Drinking behaviors were measured by questions used by Labrie and Sessoms (2012). The selected questions examined frequency and amount of drinking alcohol. Higher scores on the nine point Likert scale indicated riskier drinking habits. The following questions were included: “How many days do you drink per month?”, “How many drinks on average do you consume each time you drink?”, “How many drinks do you consume each week?”, “What is the maximum number of drinks you consumed at one time in the past month?”, “How many times have you consumed at least four (females) or five (males) drinks within a two-hour period over the past two weeks?” Reliability for the current study was good ($\alpha = .92$).

Disordered Eating. Disordered eating was measured using the Eating Attitudes Test-26 (EAT-26; Garner, Olmsted, Bohr, & Garfinkel, 1982), a widely used self-report measure comprised of 26 statements that describe behavioral and attitudinal characteristics of individuals

with eating disorders or at risk for developing eating disorders. Items assess dieting and compensatory behaviors, drive for thinness, food preoccupation and perceived pressure from others to gain weight and/or control eating. Responses for the EAT-26 were on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Never to Always. Scores of never, rarely, and sometimes are recoded to equal 0, often equals 1, usually equals 2 and always equals 3. Total scores can range from 0 to 78, with scores above 20 indicating a potential eating disorder. Although the EAT-26 does not directly measure all DSM V ED symptoms, it can differentiate individuals with and without eating disorders, as well as those with subclinical symptoms (Mintz & O'Halloran, 2000). Reliability for the current study was satisfactory ($\alpha = .88$).

Demographics. Participant information regarding age, gender, primary ethnicity, place of residence, cumulative GPA, and class/year was recorded through a participant survey. Participants were also asked of their paternal and maternal status (i.e. married, divorced/separated, single, widowed, remarried, or deceased).

Procedure

Participants signed up online for a specific study timeslot in order to complete paper questionnaires in a classroom setting. Upon arrival, participants signed their names in a binder and I provided them with a consent form to read over before beginning. Participants were given 45 minutes to fill out the packet of questionnaires. Once packets were completed, participants placed them in a box to ensure anonymity and a debriefing form was provided.

Results

Hypothesized associations were analyzed using correlations. Associations between measures of helicopter parenting were considered first, then compared with scores of overall attachment and attachment subscales. Finally, all helicopter and attachment variables were

compared with college life variables (i.e. school engagement, academic entitlement, academic motivation and achievement, drinking behavior, and disordered eating).

Scores from the 10-item Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) measure of helicopter parenting positively correlated with those from the overall overparenting measure (Segrin et al., 2012) ($r = .49, p < .01$), such that high scores of helicopter parenting indicated high scores of overall overparenting. However, analyses examining the three subscales from the overall overparenting yielded mixed results. Helicopter parenting was positively correlated with child self-direction ($r = .47, p < .001$) and tangible assistance ($r = .28, p < .01$). No significant correlation was found between helicopter parenting and advice/affect management ($r = -.01, p = .92$). Intergenerational support also positively correlated with overall overparenting ($r = .42, p < .001$) such that high parental support indicated high overall overparenting. Intergenerational support includes emotional, financial, practical and other parental support. Intergenerational support was positively correlated with two of the subscales: advice/affect management ($r = .42, p < .001$), and tangible assistance ($r = .38, p < .001$). No significant correlation was found between intergenerational support and child self-direction ($r = .12, p = .27$). The correlation between the 10-item helicopter scale and intergenerational support index was significant but weaker than the other correlations ($r = .27, p < .05$).

The next set of analyses explored associations between the helicopter parenting measures and the attachment measure. Overall parental attachment (Kenny, 1987) was negatively correlated with the 10-item scale of helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) ($r = -.49, p < .001$) such that students who reported high perceived helicopter parenting also reported low overall feelings of attachment to their parent. Analyses examining the three attachment subscales: Affective quality of relationship, parents as facilitators of independence, and parents

as source of support yielded opposite associations with helicopter parenting. Subscales affective quality of relationship and parents as facilitators of independence negatively correlated with helicopter parenting such that high helicopter parenting indicated lower affective quality of relationship and lower parents as facilitators of independence ($r = -.42, p < .001$; $r = -.66, p < .001$). No significant correlation was found between helicopter parenting and parents as source of support ($r = -.04, p = .68$). The overall attachment measure and overall overparenting measure (Segrin et al., 2012) were not significantly correlated, however significant associations were found when examining the subscales of both measures (see Table 1).

There were no significant correlations between overall attachment and intergenerational support. As expected, the attachment subscale measuring parents as source of support was positively correlated with intergenerational support ($r = .41, p < .001$) such that participants who saw their parents as high sources of support also scored high on intergenerational support. No significant correlations were found for intergenerational support and affective quality of relationship ($r = .18, p = .09$) or intergenerational support and parents as facilitators of independence ($r = -.09, p = .40$).

Helicopter parenting and attachment variables were then considered with outcome variables (i.e. school engagement, academic motivation and achievement, academic entitlement, drinking behavior, and disordered eating). School engagement was measured using the School Engagement Scale, with subscales of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. I predicted that higher scores of helicopter parenting would be negatively correlated with school engagement, such that someone who scores high in perceived helicopter parenting will score low in school engagement. The 10-item helicopter parenting scale was negatively correlated with behavioral school engagement ($r = -.31, p < .01$), such that students who reported high scores of

helicopter parenting reported lower scores of school engagement. Conversely, advice/affect management of the overparenting measure was positively correlated with overall school engagement ($r=.40, p < .01$), behavioral school engagement ($r=.22, p < .05$), emotional school engagement ($r=.34, p < .01$), and cognitive school engagement ($r=.29, p < .01$), such that students who reported high scores of advice and affect management also reported high scores of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive school engagement. Higher school engagement scores were positively correlated with attachment ($r=.37, p < .001$). Particularly, high overall attachment scores and subscale scores were correlated with high scores of behavioral and emotional school engagement ($r=.38, p < .001$; $r=.30, p < .01$) (see Table 2).

I further examined the relations of parent variables with perceived parents as academic motivation and academic achievement. A positive correlation was found for parents as academic motivation and the 10-item helicopter parenting scale ($r=.43, p < .001$), parents as academic motivation and overall overparenting ($r=.29, p < .01$), parents as academic motivation and child self-direction ($r=.22, p < .05$), and parents as academic motivation and tangible assistance ($r=.24, p < .05$). Parents as academic motivation negatively correlated with overall parental attachment ($r=-.31, p < .01$), parents as academic motivation and affective quality of relationship ($r=-.26, p < .05$), and parents as academic motivation and parents as facilitators of independence ($r=-.46, p < .001$).

Academic achievement was measured using GPA. There was a negative correlation between GPA and the 10-item helicopter parenting scale ($r=-.27, p < .05$) such that more perceived helicopter parenting was associated with a lower GPA. Conversely, GPA positively correlated with advice/affect management ($r=.35, p < .01$) such that higher reported scores of advice and affect management were associated with higher GPA. GPA did not significantly

correlate with overall overparenting ($r = -.01, p = .95$), child self-direction ($r = -.16, p = .13$), or tangible assistance ($r = -.03, p = .80$), suggesting that the positive correlation was driven by advice/affect management and was not indicative of the overparenting measure overall. GPA and overall attachment was positively correlated ($r = .22, p < .05$) and GPA and parents as facilitators of independence was positively correlated ($r = .28, p < .01$), such that higher scores of overall attachment and parents as facilitators of independence were associated with higher GPA.

Academic entitlement was measured using the AEQ (Kopp et al., 2011). The correlation between the 10-item helicopter parenting scale and academic entitlement was significant, such that those scoring high in helicopter parenting also scored high in academic entitlement ($r = .40, p < .001$). A further positive correlation was found between academic entitlement and tangible assistance ($r = .21, p < .05$) such that students reporting higher entitlement scores also reported higher tangible assistance from his or her parent. A negative correlation was found between academic entitlement and overall attachment ($r = -.24, p < .05$). Further negative correlations were found between academic entitlement and affective quality of relationship ($r = -.28, p < .01$) and academic entitlement and parents as facilitators of independence ($r = -.28, p < .01$). No significant correlations were found for academic entitlement and parents as source of support (see Table 3).

Drinking behavior was measured using a series of questions assessing the amount and frequency of alcohol consumption. I predicted positive correlations between attachment and drinking behavior in which students who reported higher attachment levels were less likely to engage in alcohol consumption. No significant negative correlations were found between any of the helicopter parenting variables. No significant correlations were found between drinking behavior and attachment (see Table 4).

Disordered eating was measured using the EAT-26. A negative correlation was found between disordered eating and both helicopter parenting and overall overparenting ($r = -.26, p = .01$; $r = -.22, p < .05$), such that high scores of helicopter parenting and overparenting indicated less disordered eating behaviors. Disordered eating was divided into three subscales: dieting, bulimia/food preoccupation, and oral control. Specifically, high scores of helicopter parenting correlated with lower scores of bulimia and food preoccupation ($r = -.27, p = .01$) and lower scores of oral control ($r = -.27, p = .01$). No significant correlations were found between disordered eating and overall attachment ($r = .15, p = .15$). However contrary to my prediction, disordered eating was found to be positively correlated with parents as facilitators of independence ($r = .24, p < .05$) such that students who reported high scores of parents as facilitators of independence also reported higher scores of disordered eating (see Table 5).

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that helicopter parenting and attachment are not the same, though they appear to relate in some way. An overall inverse relation was found between the 10-item helicopter parenting scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) and overall parental attachment (Kenny, 1987) such that students who scored high on perceived helicopter parenting scored lower on overall parental attachment. However, scores from the subscales of overparenting (Segrin et al., 2012) and Parental Attachment Questionnaire (Kenny, 1987) generated more complex associations with parent and college life variables than the overall scores. For example, overall overparenting (2012) did not significantly correlate with overall attachment (1987). However, the parents as source of support subscale of attachment had a significant positive correlation with overall overparenting, and the parents as facilitators of independence subscale of attachment had a significant negative correlation with overall overparenting. When considering

the subscales of these measures independently, associations with other variables were different than those revealed when considering the overall scores alone. This finding may have important implications on the use of these overall scales in the future.

Based on the results of this study, helicopter parenting and attachment variables do not appear to yield the same associations among college life variables. While the subscales of the overparenting measure (2012) and Parental Attachment Questionnaire (1987) give the impression of measuring similar characteristics (i.e. support, behavioral control and autonomy-granting), correlations with college life outcomes were incongruent. For example, the child self-direction subscale of the overparenting measure (2012) and the parents as facilitators of independence subscale of the Parental Attachment Questionnaire (1987) appear to measure the same feature of granting autonomy. However when associated with school engagement, child self-direction, though not significant, appeared to have a negative correlation while parents as facilitators of independence positively correlated with school engagement. The masking of subscale scores by overall scores further continues to be an issue in associations among college life variables. For example, GPA was found to be positively correlated with the advice/affect management subscale of the overparenting measure (2012) such that higher reported scores of advice and affect management were associated with higher GPA. However, GPA did not significantly correlate with overall overparenting or its two other subscales, suggesting that the positive correlation was driven by advice/affect management and was not indicative of the overparenting measure overall.

According to results of this study, helicopter parenting appears to remain a complicated yet fascinating phenomenon that warrants further investigation. This unique pattern of parenting has been described as a combination of certain features (high support, high behavioral control, and

low autonomy-granting) (Segrin et al., 2012). However, the current study did not examine the importance of order or thresholds of these characteristics. It is unclear if a certain amount of support, behavioral control, and autonomy is needed to classify a parent as a helicopter parent, or if it is simply the combination of all three. Future research should explore these elements further in order to determine what is necessary to consistently distinguish a helicopter parent from other parents. The current study also did not consider how helicopter parenting may affect college life variables differently as a result of the student's class or year. Specific attention was paid to college freshman and while perceived helicopter parenting may have certain effects on young adults entering college, the same behaviors may develop differently as the student ages. For example, although the current study found perceived helicopter parenting to be negatively associated with GPA, a longitudinal investigation of the same relation may yield a different result. Perhaps the same parenting effects that were associated with lower GPA encouraged the student to work even harder to achieve academic success, resulting in an overall increase in GPA. Finally, the current study did not consider how certain personality traits of students may encourage helicopter parenting behavior from their parents. Further research should consider how children of helicopter parents may be influencing their parents' over-supportive behaviors.

Results of the study inquired whether helicopter parenting may be another variable entirely; one that is not yet known. The ten-item scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) yielded associations consistent with my hypotheses and previous literature on helicopter parenting; however, it is not clear what the items really measure. This scale should be further examined in future research in order to determine what characteristics of helicopter parenting are being measured, as well as to replicate the findings of the current study. Finally, while student perception of helicopter parenting is important, the current study was unable to examine

behavioral evidence or parent self-reported scores of helicopter parenting. Future research should examine perceived helicopter parenting and attachment scores from both the parent and the child. Differences in perception of overparenting between student and parent may provide a new area of interest for researchers.

Despite its inadequacies, the current study provided thought-provoking results and continued investigation of the variables is essential. Measures of attachment and the advice/affect management of overparenting were positively associated with school engagement. Moreover, most of the same variables were associated with GPA. According to these results, encouragement of parent support is suggested—students perceiving a strong attachment to parents flourished in the college academic environment. Further, helicopter parenting variables were associated with parents as academic motivation and entitlement. If students are only motivated academically by their parents, their success will be dependent upon that relationship. Additionally, having entitled beliefs about their experiences in college may leave them ill-prepared for the responsibilities of adult life. The impact of college life behaviors related to health is less understood by the results of this study. No significant relations for drinking behavior were found and an unexpected association was found for disordered eating, in which high reported scores of perceived helicopter parenting corresponded with lower scores of disordered eating. Additional research is needed to better understand the relations among these variables, particularly with a larger sample size. Future studies should also consider additional college health behaviors such as drug use, sexual intercourse behaviors, and extracurricular involvement as they relate to helicopter parenting and parental attachment.

Future Directions

While the current study was unable to examine all possible components underlying helicopter parenting, further investigation of these elements is important for future research. First, additional studies should consider the developmental stage of the student. Individual differences in the student may play an important role in how the behavior of his or her parent affects him or her. With that said, an additional area of interest for future research involves the parent-child relationship (i.e. student satisfaction and well-being). Several limitations of this study are important to consider. Primarily, helicopter parenting is a novel concept with no universal definition. Future studies are needed to investigate the features characteristic of helicopter parenting in order to determine an accurate and consistent definition. Another major limitation of the study was the small sample size. Future studies would benefit from a larger sample size that encompasses an array of students of differing class years. In addition, the current study was limited by the late scheduling of data collection (e.g., data was collected during the second half of spring semester). Future studies should consider collecting data earlier in the semester when students are more academically mindful. An additional limitation was that only one measure of parental attachment was used. Parent-child attachment has traditionally been measured by dividing scores into strict categories of attachment styles. However the Parental Attachment Questionnaire, like more recent scales, measured it on a continuum (Kenny, 1987). Future studies should attempt to use a variety of attachment measure to compare results. Overall, this study served to introduce to literature the relations among helicopter parenting, attachment, and college life variables in a way that has not yet been explored.

Table 1

Summary of Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores on the Subscales of Parental Attachment and Overparenting

Measure	Overall Parental Attachment	Affective Quality of Relationship	Parents as Source of Support	Parents as Facilitators of Independence	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall Overparenting	-.09	-.04	.38**	-.47**	3.18	.38
Advice/Affect Management	.52**	.50**	.64**	.16	4.13	.49
Child Self-Direction	-.45**	-.36**	-.02	-.66**	2.17	.58
Tangible Assistance	.02	-.00	.24*	-.11	3.79	.72
<i>M</i>	3.97	4.23	3.72	3.87	-	-
<i>SD</i>	.40	.45	.49	.59	-	-

Notes: ** correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2

Summary of Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores on Subscales of School Engagement, Helicopter Parenting, Subscales of Overparenting, Intergenerational Support, and Subscales of Parental Attachment

Measure	School Engagement	Behavioral	Emotional	Cognitive	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Helicopter Parenting	-.20	-.31**	-.14	-.05	1.66	.58
Overall Overparenting	-.01	-.05	-.06	.07	3.18	.38
Advice/Affect Management	.40**	.22*	.34**	.29**	4.13	.49
Child Self-Direction	-.15	-.15	-.19	.00	2.17	.58
Tangible Assistance	-.13	-.03	-.15	-.08	3.79	.72
Intergenerational Support	.05	.01	-.03	.14	5.12	1.15
Overall Parental Attachment	.37**	.38**	.30**	.17	3.97	.40
Affective Quality of Relationship	.37**	.38**	.32**	.15	4.23	.91
Parents as Source of Support	.28**	.25*	.25*	.13	3.72	.75
Parents as Facilitators of Independence	.21*	.29**	.13	.09	3.87	.87
<i>M</i>	3.33	4.24	3.50	2.44	-	-
<i>SD</i>	.38	.39	.60	.53	-	-

Notes: ** correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3

Summary of Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores of Academic Entitlement, Helicopter Parenting, Subscales of Overparenting, Intergenerational Support, and Subscales of Parental Attachment

Measure	Academic Entitlement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Helicopter Parenting	.40**	1.66	.58
Overall Overparenting	.29**	3.18	.38
Advice/Affect Management	-.16	4.13	.49
Child Self-Direction	.12	2.17	.58
Tangible Assistance	.21*	3.79	.72
Intergenerational Support	.18	5.12	1.15
Overall Parental Attachment	-.31**	3.97	.40
Affective Quality of Relationship	-.28**	4.23	.91
Parents as Source of Support	.06	3.72	.75
Parents as Facilitators of Independence	-.28**	3.87	.87
<i>M</i>	1.66	-	-
<i>SD</i>	.58	-	-

Notes: ** correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4

Summary of Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores of Drinking Behavior, Helicopter Parenting, Subscales of Overparenting, Intergenerational Support, and Subscales of Parental Attachment

Measure	Drinking Behavior	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Helicopter Parenting	.15	1.66	.58
Overall Overparenting	-.14	3.18	.38
Advice/Affect Management	-.04	4.13	.49
Child Self-Direction	-.18	2.17	.58
Tangible Assistance	.08	3.79	.72
Intergenerational Support	.07	5.12	1.15
Overall Parental Attachment	-.03	3.97	.40
Affective Quality of Relationship	-.05	4.23	.91
Parent as Source of Support	-.04	3.72	.75
Parent as Facilitator of Independence	.03	3.87	.87
<i>M</i>	1.66	-	-
<i>SD</i>	.58	-	-

Table 5

Summary of Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for Scores on the Subscales of Disordered Eating, Helicopter Parenting, Subscales of Overparenting, Intergenerational Support, and Subscales of Parental Attachment

Measure	Disordered Eating	Diet	Bulimia/Food Preoccupation	Oral Control	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Helicopter Parenting	-.26*	-.17	-.27**	-.27**	1.66	.58
Overall Overparenting	-.22*	-.20	-.15	-.17	3.18	.38
Advice/Affect Management	-.16	-.13	-.11	-.13	4.13	.49
Child Self-Direction	-.06	-.00	.04	-.25	2.17	.58
Tangible Assistance	-.19	-	-.18	.08	3.79	.72
Intergenerational Support	-.17	.24*	-.20	-.07	5.12	1.15
Overall Parental Attachment	.15	.08	.18	.17	3.97	.40
Affective Quality of Relationship	.13	.05	.18	.16	4.23	.91
Parents as Source of Support	-.00	.03	.04	-.12	3.72	.75
Parents as Facilitators of Independence	.24*	.14	.19	.33**	3.87	.87
<i>M</i>	4.59	4.27	5.14	4.70	-	-
<i>SD</i>	.61	.89	.68	.65	-	-

Notes: ** correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)



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“This document was developed from the article: Fitzgerald, Kaitlin S., "Helicopter Parenting and Parent-Child Attachment" (2015). Senior Honors Projects, 2010-current. 46.
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