

RESEARCH PAPER

APPLIED EDUCATION

The Effect of Helicopter Parenting on Emerging Adult Students' Burnout

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ABSTRACT

Emerging Adulthood is a transitional phase, where young adults face the complexities of independence and dependences. Parents often play a crucial role in adults' life by providing support and guidance. Students' poor wellbeing is a serious concern in universities. Mental health problems are associated with a range of study-related problems including lowered academic achievement and cognitive performance. Problems in student well-being such as prolonged stress may lead to burnout. Thus, the present study is entitled as "The Effect of Helicopter Parenting on Emerging Adult Students Burnout" is an attempt to seek the relationship between Helicopter Parenting and Burnout of Emerging Adult students studied at higher education institutions of Odisha and to find out the significance difference in the level of Helicopter Parenting and Burnout among higher students on the basis of locality and gender of Emerging Adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha. So, for this the Cor-relational method was adopted for the study. This research uses a quantitative approach with cor-relational analysis and T-Test. The study concluded that high level of perceived Helicopter Parenting in rural adults could be possibly due to the collectivistic nature of people, where decisions are taken based on the approval of parents and parents actively take interest in their child's life which may hinder the child's autonomy.

Keywords: Helicopter Parenting, Burnout, Emerging Adult Student

Emerging Adulthood is a time of many changes in various spheres of life. These changes are often associated with setting specific goals, the implementation of which gives a sense of satisfaction with family

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life, love, education or professional work (Arnett, 2005). These changes can also constitute a source of stress and put the mental health of young people at risk. Early adulthood is characterized by extraordinary vitality, creativity, and flexibility, but it is also a time of contradictions and burdensome, difficult life tasks. Arnett (2020) labeled the developmental period between the end of puberty and adulthood as ‘emerging adulthood’, arguing that it was a defined period of life for young people in industrialized societies. In his article “Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Twenties” he proposed a new theory of development from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on ages 18-25 and he argued that period as “emerging adulthood”, which is conceptually and empirically different from both adolescence and young adulthood. It is a time of identity exploration in various fields, professional, social, and ideological. It is a time of instability, an in-between period when individuals focus on themselves, but also a time when people have great expectations for themselves. (Arnett, 2005; Arnett, 2015; Arnett, & Mitra, 2018).

It is universally known that parents have significant impacts on their children across their life span. Emerging adulthood, a time between 18 to 25 years of age, is a period of change and exploration of life possibilities, including love, work, and worldviews, all of which are instrumental in the process of exploration of possible future life directions (Arnett, 2005). Parental behaviors play a significant role in the healthy development of emerging adult students in college.

The shift to college can be a challenging period during which young adults and their parents may find it difficult to adapt new source of independence. Although emerging adults may “take a certain satisfaction in moving toward self-sufficiency, they also find it burdensome and onerous to pay their own bills and do all the other things their parents had always done for them” (Arnett, 2015). Certain parenting practices, including helicopter parenting, might prevent this kind of autonomy development. The issue known as “Helicopter Parenting” (Cline & Fay, 1990) has drawn more attention from academics, practitioners and college administrators due to research showing that this style of parenting negatively impacts the mental health of emerging adult college students (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014). A research study involving a nationally representative sample of over 3,600 Americans indicated that parenting focused on children and requiring significant time investment has emerged as a cultural standard, prevalent across various social classes (Ishizuka, P. 2019). It has been suggested that intensive parenting is widespread worldwide (Anderson, 2019) and can lead to navigate consequences, including heightened levels of depression (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014) and anxiety (Spokas & Heimberg, 2009).

Researchers have consistently emphasized the significance of parenting in shaping child development and mental health throughout adulthood (Belsky, 1984; Gutman & Feinstein, 2010; Waller *et al.* 2013; Masud *et al.* 2015). Recent findings indicate that helicopter parenting may contribute to heightened levels of anxiety (Spokas & Heimberg, 2009; Segrin *et al.* 2012), depression (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014), increased reliance on prescribed medications and a rise in the recreational use of painkillers (LeMoyné & Buchanan, 2011). Furthermore, helicopter parenting has been associated with diminished well-being (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014), reduced self-regulation (Perry *et al.* 2018), lower self-efficacy (Reed *et al.* 2016) and adverse academic performance (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Luebke *et al.* 2018).

Helicopter Parenting

College officials are becoming more and more concerned about Helicopter Parenting (Hunt, 2008; Somers & Settle, 2010). While parental participation has usually been linked to favorable child outcomes in terms

of cognitive and psychosocial development (Fingerman *et al.* 2012; Wilder, S. 2014), there is growing evidence that helicopter parenting, which involves developmentally inappropriate levels of involvement, is linked to worse well-being (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014; Segrin *et al.* 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, T. 2011) and academic achievement (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Shoup *et al.* 2009) among adolescents and young adults. Helicopter parents hover over their children to shelter them from stress, resolve their problems and offer constant support and affirmation (Hirsch & Goldberg, 2010) and this kind of parenting increases behavioral control over the students while restricting their freedom (Kouros *et al.* 2017).

While helicopter parenting is intended to foster children's success, it may inadvertently heighten the risk to their psychological well-being (He & Ji, 2003; Srivastav & Mathur, 2020; Wieland & Kucirka, 2020). In light of the increasing focus on mental health, depression has become a significant concern that is intricately linked to the parenting styles commonly observed in society (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Hayes & Preacher, 2013; Milevsky *et al.* 2007). High degrees of helicopter Parenting and over controlling parents were associated with significantly higher depression and lower life satisfaction among students (Schiffrin *et al.* 2014). Various forms of anxiety disorders such as separation anxiety, social anxiety, panic disorder, were more prevalent among young adults who experienced overparenting (Rousseau & Scharf, 2015). Helicopter parents who are constantly working round the clock to improve their child's academic performance, intelligence and emphasizes instilling perfectionism in their children increase the probability of the child developing anxiety disorders during adolescents and young adulthood (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). College students with highly involved parents scored lower grades than students with lesser involvement (Shoup *et al.* 2009) and experienced lower self-esteem (Rutherford, 2011). Helicopter parenting is related to low self-efficacy, withdrawal from peers, and lack of trust among peers (Ingen *et al.* 2015). Increased level of narcissism, anxiety, alienation and lower self-worth was also related to helicopter parenting (Klick & Mitchell, 2016).

Burnout

Herbert Freudenberger was one of the pioneers in the field of burnout research. Indeed, he is credited with establishing the clinical construct of burnout. He noticed that a group of volunteers with whom he was working in a free clinic were experiencing emotional exhaustion and a loss of motivation over time. He called the condition "burnout" in an article published in the Journal of Social Issues in 1974 (Freudenberger, 1974), and defined it as "to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources" (Kahill, 1988).

The research studies have revealed the presence of burnout among college students (Chang *et al.* 2000; Yang *et al.* 2021). These studies indicate that students have experienced different levels of burnout during their college learning period. Burnout among college students "as refers to feeling exhausted because of study demands (exhaustion), having a cynical and detached attitude towards one's schoolwork (cynicism), and feeling incompetent as a student (reduced efficacy also known reduced academic efficacy)" (Schaufeli *et al.* 2002). In other words, student burnout composed three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy (Schaufeli *et al.* 2002). Another definition of burnout was made by Yang (2004), which is defined student burnout "as students in the learning process, because of course stress, course load or other psychological factors, display a state of emotional exhaustion, a tendency to depersonalization, and a feeling of low personal accomplishment".

Rationale of the Study

The influence of Helicopter Parenting on college students is unknown because there has been limited research available to measure it objectively. Certain studies indicate that college students who described their parents as highly involved were more engaged in their college experience, yet they tended to achieve lower academic grades compared to those with less involved of parents (Shoup *et al.* 2009). Moreover, college students whose parents are very involved showed higher levels of personal competence and greater advancements in personal and social development, along with improved life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Fingerman, 2012). Certain studies focused on Helicopter Parenting and discovered it was associated with various adverse effects in college students (Segrin *et al.* 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Those College students who indicated that their parents were excessively involves and controlling in their lives displayed decreased psychological well-being and had a higher likelihood of using medication for depression and anxiety (LeMoyne Buchanan, T. 2011). A different study discovered that parents of college students who stated they were excessively involved in their children's lives had offspring with reduced satisfaction regarding their family life (Segrin *et al.* 2012). Conversely, (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) another research indicated that when children perceived their parents as engaging in helicopter parenting, they characterized their parents as involved and emotionally supportive; however, they also felt that their parents did not provide them with enough autonomy support (Carone *et al.* 2022).

The parenting approach within the family setting is a crucial and directly related factor that significantly influences an individual's developmental journey, exerting a lasting and progressive effect on psychological well-being (Zhou *et al.* 2021). Research has shown that depression is not an inherent trait and the style of parenting is a key determinant in its development (Stavoulaki *et al.* 2021). In particular, parents who promote independence enable their children to pursue their interests while minimizing control and pressure, which can help prevent the emergence of depressive feelings (Tian *et al.* 2012). Conversely, when parents employ controlling strategies such as- interfering with decisions, imposing restrictions and excessive supervision, children may experience diminished autonomy, resulting in an increase in depressive emotions (Li *et al.* 2015). Therefore, the impact of parenting on the depression of college students should be recognized and taken seriously.

Students' poor wellbeing is a serious concern in universities (Auerbach *et al.* 2018; Hunt, 2008). Problems in student well-being such as prolonged stress may lead to burnout (May *et al.* 2015; Salmela-Aro & Read, 2017). While school burnout has been studied widely in the school context, research in the university context is more limited. The experiences of school burnout comprising exhaustion, inadequacy and cynicism have been shown to exist even in the early stages of studying at the university level (Salmela-Aro & Read, 2017; Asikainen *et al.* 2022).

As children work towards becoming self-sufficient young people, their need for autonomy grows with time. The degree of parental participation and control should be adapted to the developmental stage of the child. The psychological well-being of college students was worse when they felt that their parents were too active and controlling in their lives, and they were more likely to take depression and anxiety medications (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). According to a different study, children of college students whose parents said they were too active in their lives were less satisfied with their family life (Segrin *et al.* 2012). On the other hand, children who claimed that their parents were helicopter parents characterized them as emotionally supportive and involved, but they also thought that their parents did not provide them

with enough autonomous support, according to (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). So, investigator has a keen interest to study the relationship of Helicopter Parenting and Burnout of students from different areas and to determine the significant differences between Helicopter Parenting and Burnout of Emerging Adult students studying at higher education institutions belonging to Rural and urban areas of Odisha.

Research Method

This study used descriptive cor-relational design to determine the association between helicopter Parenting and Burnout of students studying at higher education institutions of Odisha.

Tools Used

The researcher decided to use two standardized tools-

- ☐ Helicopter Parenting Instrument developed and standardized by Odenweller and colleagues, 2014.
- ☐ Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS) developed and standardized by Schaufeli et al., 2009.

Statistical Techniques Used

Product Moment correlation was computed in order to find out the relationship between Helicopter Parenting and components of students' burnout of emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions in Odisha. T-test, Mean and SD statistical techniques also used to find out the significance difference in the level of helicopter parenting and burnout among higher education students belonging to rural and urban areas and female and male students.

Population and Sample for the Study

The Target population was all the emerging adult students studying at higher education institutions in Odisha. Students belonging to Rural and Urban areas of Odisha studying at higher education institutions was the accessible population of this study.

Investigator select 400 students studying at higher education institutions in Odisha by using Stratified random sampling method. Out of which, 200 are male students and 200 are female students and 200 students belongs to urban area and 200 are belongs to rural area.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are —

- (i) To find out the relationship between the Helicopter Parenting and components of Burnout of higher education Students.
- (ii) To find out the differences in the level of Helicopter parenting and Burnout among higher education Students belonging to Rural and Urban areas.

- (iii) To find out the gender differences in the level of Helicopter parenting and Burnout of higher education Students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the calculated co-efficient of correlation (.474, .405, -.148 and .378) between the Helicopter Parenting and components of Burnout of Emerging Adult Students of higher education students of Odisha. Helicopter Parenting positively related with the Emotional Exhaustion, cynicism and total Burnout. Whereas co-efficient of correlation (-0.148) between Helicopter Parenting and component of Academic Efficacy of Burnout is negatively related. Another way, Helicopter Parenting has significantly related with Emotional Exhaustion at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. Cynicism, another component of Burnout also has significant related with Helicopter Parenting at only 0.05 level of significance. Academic Efficacy adversely related with Helicopter Parenting. Helicopter Parenting has significantly related with total burnout at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. It indicates that Emotional Exhaustion, Cynicism components and total of Burnout have significantly positive factors which relate to Helicopter Parenting of Emerging Adult students of higher education students of Odisha and Academic Efficacy adversely relate with Helicopter Parenting of Emerging Adult students belonging to higher education students of Odisha.

Table 1: Co-efficient of correlation among Helicopter Parenting and components of Burnout of Emerging Adult Students of higher education students of Odisha

Variable	Emotional Exhaustion	Cynicism	Academic Efficacy	Total Burnout
Helicopter Parenting	.474**	.405*	-.148	.378**

Table 2 shows the area wise mean score of Helicopter Parenting. The mean score for rural area is 70.73 and urban area is 52.20. The t-test was applied to find out the difference in the level of Helicopter Parenting of emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha belonging to rural and urban areas. The calculated “*t*” value 19.03 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Since the calculated “*t*” value is higher than the table value, it is inferred that there exists significant difference in the level of helicopter parenting among emerging adult students studying in higher education institution of Odisha belonging to rural and urban areas at 0.01 level of significance. Rural adults have high level of perceived helicopter parenting as compared to the level of perceived helicopter parenting among Urban adults.

Table 2: Difference in the level of Helicopter Parenting among Emerging Adult Students studying in Higher Education Institution of Odisha belonging to Rural and Urban areas

Variables	Sample (400)	Mean	SD	“ <i>t</i> ” vale	P
Helicopter Parenting	Rural (200)	70.73	9.89	19.03	<0.0001
	Urban (200)	52.20	9.58		

Table 3 shows the area wise mean score of Burnout. The mean score for rural area is 54.83 and urban area is 49.98. The t-test was applied to find out the difference in the level of Burnout of emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha belonging to rural and urban areas. The calculated “*t*” value 6.17 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Since the calculated “*t*” value is higher than the table value, it is inferred that there exists significant difference in

the level of burnout among emerging adult students studying in higher education institution of Odisha belonging to rural and urban areas at 0.01 level of significance. Rural adults have high level of Burnout than compared to the level of Burnout among Urban adults.

Table 3: Difference in the level of Burnout among Emerging Adult Students studying in Higher Education Institution of Odisha belonging to Rural and Urban areas

Variables	Sample (160)	Mean	SD	"t" value	P
Burnout	Rural (200)	54.83	8.21	6.17	<0.0001
	Urban (200)	49.98	7.47		

Table 4 shows the gender wise mean score of Helicopter Parenting. The mean score for male is 71.419 and for female is 63.290. The t-test was applied to find out the difference in the level of Helicopter Parenting among male and female emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha. The calculated "t" value 4.73 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Since the calculated "t" value is higher than the table value, it is inferred that there exists significant difference in the level of helicopter parenting among female and male emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha belonging to rural and urban areas. Male adults have high level of perceived helicopter parenting as compared to the level of perceived helicopter parenting among Female adults.

Table 4: Difference in the level of Helicopter Parenting among female and male Emerging Adult Students studying in Higher Education Institution of Odisha

Variables	Sample (160)	Mean	SD	"t" value	P
Helicopter Parenting	Male (200)	71.419	17.83	4.73	<0.0001
	Female (200)	63.290	16.47		

Table 5 shows the gender wise mean score of Burnout. The mean score for male is 69.28 and for female is 61.54. The t-test was applied to find out the difference in the level of Burnout among male and female emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha. The calculated "t" value 5.82 which is higher than table value at 0.01 level of significance. Since the calculated "t" value is higher than the table value, it is inferred that there exists significant difference in the level of burnout among male and female emerging adult students studying in higher education institutions of Odisha. Male adults have high level of Burnout than compared to the level of Burnout among Female adults.

Table 5: Difference in the level of Burnout among female and male Emerging Adult Students studying in Higher Education Institution of Odisha

Variables	Sample (160)	Mean	SD	"t" value	P
Burnout	Male (200)	69.28	14.279	5.82	<0.0001
	Female (200)	61.54	12.258		

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND COCLUSION

The present study offers new perspectives on the dynamics of helicopter parenting and burnout by examining variations across demographic variables such as- locality and gender among emerging adults. One of the most noteworthy findings is that rural adults reported significantly higher levels of perceived

helicopter parenting compared to their urban counterparts. This result may suggest that in rural contexts, where traditional family structures and close-knit communities are more prevalent, parental involvement tends to be more intensive and controlling, potentially due to heightened sense of parental protectiveness.

The study also revealed that rural adults experience higher levels of burnout than urban adults. This could be attributed to the compounding effects of overparenting and reduced access to supportive educational or occupational environments that promotes independence and coping skills. The excessive parental control in rural settings may inadvertently hinder the development of self-regulation and resilience, thereby increasing vulnerability to burnout.

Gender based differences also emerged prominently in the findings. Male adults reported higher levels of perceived helicopter parenting as well as greater burnout compared to female adults. These findings diverge from traditional assumptions that parental overinvolvement is more common with daughters and suggest a shifting pattern where sons may now be receiving more intrusive attention. This may reflect evolving cultural expectations regarding male achievement and responsibility.

The current study contributes to the growing body of literature on helicopter parenting by offering novel insights into its psychological and academic implications among emerging adults. The study also deeply focusses on how contextual factors such as rural versus urban upbringing and gender – intersect with helicopter parenting to influence psychological well-being. This research not only supports previous studies that have established a link between helicopter parenting and negative mental health outcomes (Hayley *et al.*, 2019 & Pautler, 2017), but also extends the discourse by uncovering demographic nuances that warrant deeper investigation. These results underscore the importance of culturally and contextually grounded parenting interventions aimed at fostering autonomy and emotional resilience among emerging adults.

GENERATIVE AI DECLARATION

The author(s) confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript, and no images were manipulated using AI. The authors developed and verified all scientific content, data analysis, interpretation of results, and conclusions. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work presented, and no AI tool was listed as an author.

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