

Systematic Review

Wings or Handcuffs? The Dilemmas of Helicopter Parenting Based on a Systematic Literature Review

Zsófia Kocsis , Dorka Kas  and Gabriella Pusztai 

MTA-DE-Parent-Teachers Cooperation Research Group, Department of Educational Studies, University of Debrecen, H-4032 Debrecen, Hungary; kasdorka2003@gmail.com (D.K.); pusztai.gabriella@arts.unideb.hu (G.P.)

* Correspondence: kocsis.zsofia@arts.unideb.hu

Abstract

Modern parenting styles cover a wide spectrum, from strict tiger parenting to supportive lighthouse parenting. Among these, helicopter parenting remains particularly controversial: while some consider it a protective approach, others believe that excessive control can hinder the development of a child's autonomy and independence. Our research is significant because it approaches the topic from a rarely examined pedagogical perspective, thereby contributing to the psychology-dominated literature. We conducted our analysis using the EBSCO Discovery Service search engine and followed the steps of the PRISMA protocol. The aim of the study is to explore the relationship between helicopter parenting and academic achievement, as well as to review the factors—such as career-related decisions and adaptation—that may play a mediating role in this relationship. It reviews 33 studies published between 2012 and 2024, most of which use quantitative methods. Most of these studies were conducted in the United States and focus primarily on the college-age demographic. Our findings show that recognising and addressing helicopter parenting behaviours is essential to supporting student success. Furthermore, educational institutions should more actively make use of the potential resources and opportunities offered by such parenting behaviours. Overall, our findings confirm that helicopter parenting remains an under-researched topic at both the national and European levels, particularly in the context of education and public education systems, where further research is clearly needed.



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Keywords: systematic literature review; overparenting; helicopter parenting behaviour; helicopter parents; parental involvement

1. Introduction

Parenting style is the set of attitudes towards the child and the parenting strategies used (Darling and Steinberg 1993). Our research focuses on helicopter parenting, which can be described as overly controlling and protective parenting behaviour (Cline and Fay 2020). The phenomenon was first described in the literature in the 1980s and is often illustrated by the metaphor of a parent 'orbiting' their child (Lythcott-Haims 2015). The term helicopter parenting is often used interchangeably with the colloquial term overparenting. Although the effects of helicopter parenting have been studied from different perspectives, its impact on academic achievement remains an under-researched area from a pedagogical viewpoint, which our present research aims to explore. The literature presents contradictory findings on the effects of helicopter parenting on children. The literature highlights that moderate levels of parental monitoring and support can promote children's autonomy and development, whereas developmentally inappropriate, intrusive control—characteristic of

helicopter parenting—can hinder these processes. According to self-determination theory, helicopter parenting limits children’s opportunities for independent decision-making and problem-solving (Barber et al. 1994; Deci and Ryan 2000). At the same time, studies also show that helicopter parenting does not influence all demographic groups in the same way (LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011). The discrepancy in the research may be due to cultural differences. Parenting attitudes are deeply embedded in culture. These differences are often explained by cultural variation in how parental involvement is understood and practiced, that is, interpreted and contextualised in different ways: behaviours labelled as intrusive in Western settings may be perceived as normative expressions of care in some Asian cultural contexts (Kwon et al. 2017). Helicopter parenting is a widely researched phenomenon, primarily examined from a psychological perspective. However, there are few studies from an educational science approach, and our study aims to fill this gap. Given the contradictory findings in the literature, our study aims to examine how helicopter parenting influences students’ academic careers, especially from an educational science perspective. We formulate the following research question: What associations can be identified between helicopter parenting and academic performance based on peer-reviewed studies, with a particular focus on educational contexts and implications? By addressing this question, our systematic review seeks to contribute to the pedagogical understanding of helicopter parenting and to identify research gaps that may inform future empirical studies.

2. Theoretical Background

Research on parental involvement has received significant attention both internationally and domestically. Some studies examine the emotional and adaptation effects of parental participation (Hwang et al. 2024; Zhang and Bao 2024), parental involvement is crucial, and its excessive form has attracted increasing research interest (Baumrind 1993; Kwon et al. 2017). While parental support can foster a child’s development, over-involvement may have negative consequences. The terms “overparenting” and “helicopter parenting” frequently appear in the literature (Kwon et al. 2017; Jiao and Segrin 2023). Our study aims to explore helicopter parenting in greater depth. Helicopter parenting involves excessive control and protection, extending to all aspects of a child’s life (LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012). While parents aim to ensure a carefree life for their child, this approach can be counterproductive, as it hinders autonomy and fosters dependency (Moorman and Pomerantz 2010; Van Ingen et al. 2015). Although parents act with good intentions, children may perceive this behaviour as a lack of trust, which can reduce their independence and problem-solving skills (Lukianoff and Haidt 2018; Cline and Fay 2020).

Research on helicopter parenting primarily focuses on the field of psychology; however, there is no clear consensus on whether the phenomenon has positive or negative effects. Several studies have shown that helicopter parenting is significantly associated with higher levels of stress (Su et al. 2023), depression (Li et al. 2024), and anxiety (Jiao et al. 2024). Additionally, it has been linked to lower self-efficacy, while no clear correlation has been found with social self-efficacy (Van Ingen et al. 2015). Some studies also examine its impact on behavioural factors, such as alcohol consumption, where a negative correlation has been identified (McGinley and Davis 2021), as well as on relationship decisions, particularly in shaping attitudes toward marriage (Willoughby et al. 2015). According to educational research, helicopter parenting affects university students’ career-related decisions and adaptability. Excessive parental control increases stress related to career expectations while reducing career decision-making self-efficacy (Wang 2023). Studies on workplace attitudes have shown a strong connection between helicopter parenting and the family’s influence on career choices (Gomes and Deuling 2019). The results indicate that helicopter parenting

exerts an indirect influence on college adjustment, underscoring the significance of the link between supportive parenting, students' mental health, and ultimately their academic achievement. The research also explored students' attitudes toward parental involvement, revealing that those experiencing higher levels of overparenting were less inclined to seek parental intervention. (Darlow et al. 2017).

Helicopter parenting falls between a strictly controlling and an autonomy-supportive parenting style (Chua 2011; Ginsburg 2015). Its impact largely depends on how the child perceives it—either as supportive or restrictive (Fingerman et al. 2012). While international research extensively explores this topic, studies in Hungary remain limited, especially regarding measurement tools, highlighting the need for further investigation. In the Hungarian context, broader studies on the topic of parental involvement have only emerged in recent years. These studies examine parental participation from various perspectives, such as the role of fathers (Csák 2023), parental volunteering (Kocsis et al. 2024), the importance of school professionals (Csók and Pusztai 2022), denominational comparisons (Pusztai et al. 2024), or the cooperation between teachers and parents of students with special educational needs (Bacsikai et al. 2024; Dan et al. 2024). This study examines helicopter parenting and its impact on academic trajectories using a systematic literature review method (Chang 2018). This approach helps identify key findings and research gaps. Previous analyses have primarily focused on psychological effects (Vigdal and Brønnick 2022; Cui et al. 2022), while in Hungary, no comprehensive study has been conducted from an educational science perspective.

3. Materials and Methods

We conducted a systematic literature review following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Page et al. 2021), using the method described by Chang (2018). We worked exclusively with peer-reviewed journal articles and examined the specificities of this literature.

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

For this systematic review, we selected studies that met the following inclusion criteria: (1) The study was published in a peer-reviewed journal; (2) the study investigated helicopter parenting behaviour; (3) the study explicitly examined helicopter parenting in the context of formal education (primary, secondary, or higher education). Articles addressing psychological or family dynamics without educational relevance were excluded; (4) only studies published in English were eligible; studies in other languages were excluded; (5) the study covered any of the following disciplines or groups of disciplines: education, psychology, sociology, social sciences, and humanities. We included only peer-reviewed journal articles. Books, book chapters, dissertations, conference papers, and non-peer-reviewed publications were excluded. We did not specify the year of publication (Pusztai et al. 2024).

3.2. Search Strategy

To define the search strategy, we consulted the research librarian of the University of Debrecen. The search itself was conducted in July 2024 in the database of the University Library of Debrecen (Pusztai et al. 2024), using the EBSCO Discovery Service Search Engine, which includes several databases (see Appendix A). This is not a single database but an integrated, multidisciplinary search system that aggregates around 80 international scholarly databases (for example, ERIC, PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, and SocINDEX), enabling simultaneous retrieval of literature across multiple disciplines. To map the relevant literature, we used the following keywords: helicopter

parenting OR overparenting OR helicopter parents AND parental involvement OR parent engagement OR parent participation.

3.3. Selection

One hundred and forty-two studies were found based on the search criteria (Figure 1). After removing duplicates, the publications were filtered by title. After excluding studies whose title was not closely related to our research, one hundred and twenty-seven studies remained.

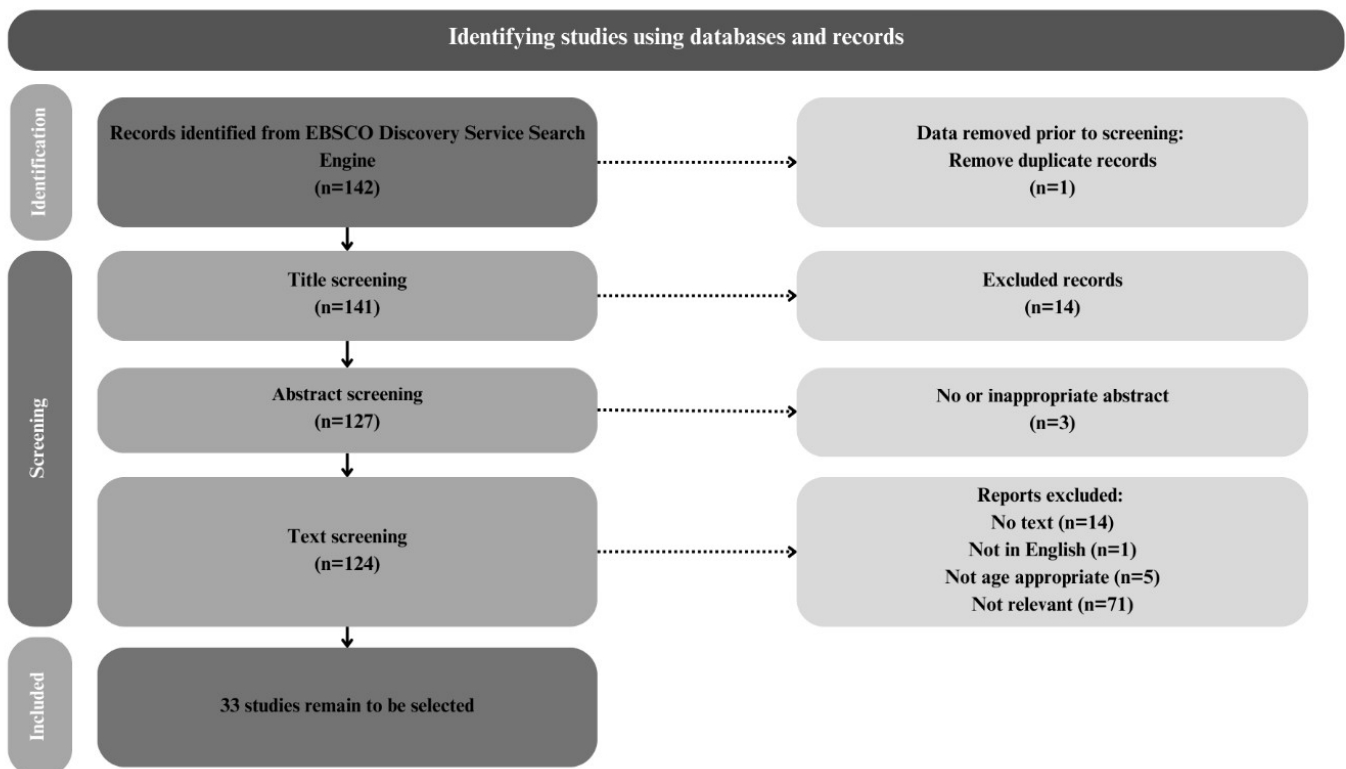


Figure 1. PRISMA protocol.

The analysis of the titles revealed that some publications dealt with political views, psychological problems or financial socialisation, so fourteen articles were excluded as they did not fit the focus of our study. The next step was to review the abstracts, where three additional studies were excluded due to lack of abstracts or deviation from the topic. In the final stage, the full texts of the remaining one hundred and twenty-four studies were analysed. Ninety-one studies were then excluded for the following reasons: they did not meet the language criteria (1), the full text was not available (14), the subjects of the study were not active students (5), and seventy-one publications did not examine the topic from an educational science perspective, so they were not relevant to us, e.g., political views, financial socialisation. For the excluded articles whose full text was unavailable, we attempted to obtain them through library databases, interlibrary loan services, and by directly contacting the authors, but these efforts were unsuccessful. Thirty-three studies remained at the end of the screening process.

None of the studies that met our eligibility criteria were conducted in Europe or South America. At the same time, in the theoretical background section we also refer to European contributions, which were not part of the systematically reviewed sample but were included to broaden the conceptual framework.

4. Results

The results of our analysis are presented below. First, we summarise the most relevant information on the publication of the studies (Table 1). In terms of the year of publication of the articles, the thirty-three studies we have analysed were published between 2012 and 2024.

Table 1. Distribution of selected articles by year of publication.

2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
2	1	1	1	3	2	2	5	3	3	7	3

Prior to 2020, up to three studies per year (12 in total) focused on helicopter parenting. The number of publications increased significantly between 2020 and 2023, with the highest number of publications in 2023. This may be due to generational effects. [Cline and Fay \(2020\)](#) were the first to explore the issue more widely, linking the phenomenon of helicopter parenting to the Baby Boomer generation. Their children emerged as adolescents in 1990 and as parents between 2020 and 2023 in the target population of their research, suggesting the likelihood of parenting patterns being passed on ([Türker and Bahçeci 2024](#)). The map represents the countries where research on helicopter parenting has been conducted (Figure 2).

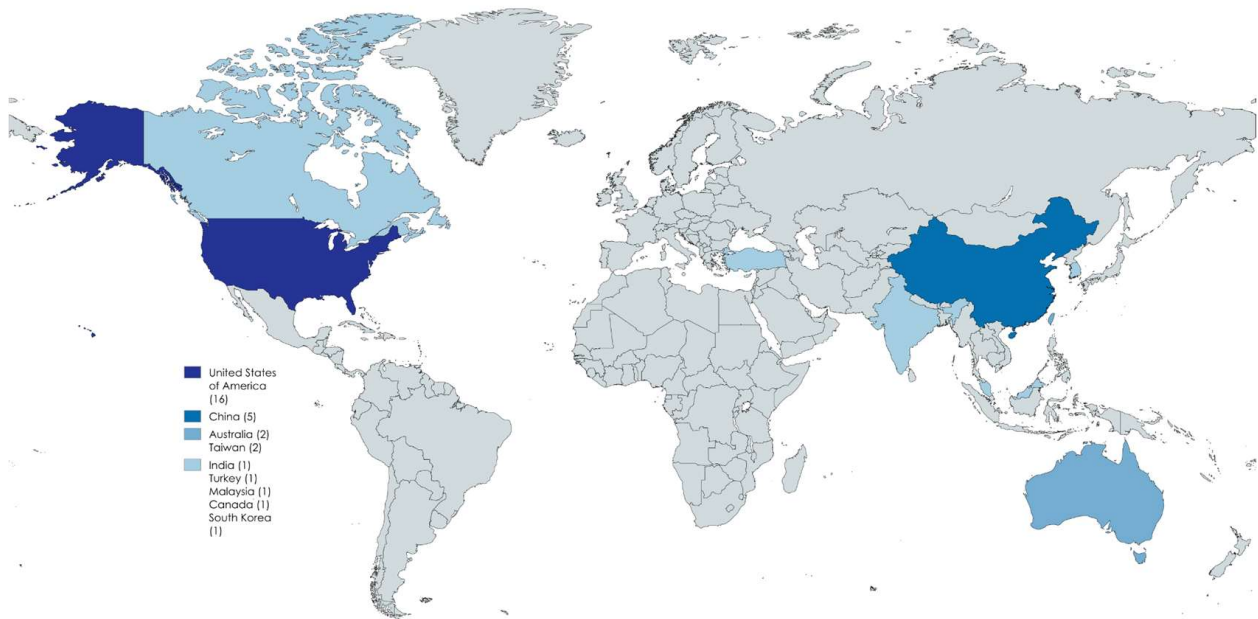


Figure 2. Countries where the research was carried out.

Of the thirty-three studies we looked at, fifteen were conducted in the United States, five in China, two in Taiwan and two in Australia. One study each was carried out in India, Turkey, Malaysia and Canada, while a comparative study looked at the United States and South Korea. Four publications did not provide information on where the data were collected. Overall, the majority of the 33 empirical studies selected through our systematic search were conducted in Eastern and Western countries (mainly the US and Asian contexts). However, no European or South American studies met our inclusion criteria.

Table 2 gives details of the publications. The majority of the articles analysed were published in US and UK journals, and the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) index, based on data from the Scopus database, was used to evaluate the metrics of scientific journals. One study was published in an Australian journal not listed in Scopus, the Australian Journal

of Guidance and Counselling. According to the scientific classification, fourteen studies were published in Q1 journals and eighteen in Q2 journals, reflecting the growing scientific interest in the topic.

Table 2. Distribution of selected articles by place of publication.

Journal	Classification by Field of Science	Classification	Number of Articles	Authors
Assessment	Psychology-Applied Psychology, Clinical Psychology	Q1	1	- Luebbe et al. (2018)
Current Psychology	Psychology, Psychology (miscellaneous)	Q1	3	- Hwang et al. (2024) - Ching et al. (2023) - Kömürcü-Akik and Alsancak-Akbulut (2023)
Education and Training	Business, Management and Accounting-Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous). Social Sciences-Education, Life-span and Life-course Studies	Q1	1	- Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014)
Learning and Individual Differences	Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Social Psychology. Social Sciences-Education	Q1	1	- Hong et al. (2015)
Leisure Sciences	Business, Management and Accounting-Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management. Environmental Science-Environmental Science (miscellaneous). Social Sciences-Sociology and Political Science	Q1	1	- Garst et al. (2020)
Journal of Adolescence	Medicine-Paediatrics, Perinatology and Child Health, Psychiatry and Mental Health. Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Social Psychology	Q1	1	- Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012)
Journal of College Student Development	Social sciences-Education	Q1	1	- Howard et al. (2019)
Journal of Family Communication	Psychology-Social Psychology. Social Sciences-Communication	Q1	2	- Dorrance Hall et al. (2021) - Burke et al. (2018)

Table 2. Cont.

Journal	Classification by Field of Science	Classification	Number of Articles	Authors
Journal of Family Issues	Social Sciences-Social Sciences (miscellaneous)	Q1	1	- Jung et al. (2019)
Journal of Research on Adolescence	Neuroscience-Behavioural Neuroscience. Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology. Social Sciences-Cultural Studies, Social Sciences (miscellaneous)	Q1	1	- Wang et al. (2023)
Journal of Social and Personal Relationships	Psychology: - Developmental and Educational Psychology - Social Psychology Social Sciences: - Communication - Sociology and Political Science	Q1	1	- Hong and Cui (2023)
Family Journal	Psychology: - Social Psychology Social Sciences: - Social Sciences (miscellaneous)	Q2	2	- Sood and Buchanan (2024) - Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020)
Frontiers in Psychology	Psychology, Psychology (miscellaneous)	Q2	2	- LeBlanc and Lyons (2022) - Ho et al. (2022)
Journal of Adult Development	Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology. Experimental and Cognitive Psychology. Social Sciences-Life-span and Life-course Studies	Q2	3	- Gao et al. (2024) - Hwang and Jung (2021) - Low and Chong (2023)
Journal of Child and Family Studies	Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology. Social Sciences-Life-span and Life-course Studies	Q2	9	- Rote et al. (2020) - Kwon et al. (2017) - Jiao and Segrin (2023) - Zong and Hawk (2022) - Carr et al. (2021) - Schiffrin and Liss (2017) - Love et al. (2020) - Darlow et al. (2017) - Fletcher et al. (2020)

Table 2. Cont.

Journal	Classification by Field of Science	Classification	Number of Articles	Authors
Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools	Psychology-Developmental and Educational Psychology, Social Psychology. Social Sciences-Education	Q2	1	- Locke et al. (2016)
Psychology Research and Behaviour Management	Medicine-Psychiatry and Mental Health. Psychology, Psychology (miscellaneous)	Q2	1	- Wang (2023)
Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling	-	-	1	- Locke et al. (2012)

Source: Journal metrics based on Scimago Journal & Country Rank data as of 5 September 2024.

Among the articles processed, articles classified as Q2 are over-represented. Most of the publications, nine in number, were published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies, and the dominant discipline classification is psychology.

4.1. Conceptual and Methodological Framework

Most of the studies focus on university students, but some research also looks at parents and younger age groups. Most studies used quantitative methods, except for two studies. The study with the largest number of items was conducted by Dorrance Hall et al. (2021). Details on the target groups and methodology can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Target groups of studies and methods of data collection.

Article	Methodological Background				Target Group		
	Interview	Questionnaire	Parent	Teacher	Student (Primary or Secondary School)	University Students	Others
Ching et al. (2023)		N = 416			X		
Ho et al. (2022)		N = 293			X		
Hong et al. (2015)		N = 597			X		
Sood and Buchanan (2024)		N = 425			X		
Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014)		N = 482				X	
Buchanan and LeMoyné (2020)		N = 247				X	
Carr et al. (2021)		N = 86				X	
Darlow et al. (2017)		N = 294				X	
Dorrance Hall et al. (2021)		N = 2253				X	
Fletcher et al. (2020)		N = 343				X	

Table 3. Cont.

Article	Methodological Background		Target Group				
	Interview	Questionnaire	Parent	Teacher	Student (Primary or Secondary School)	University Students	Others
Gao et al. (2024)		N = 392				X	
Howard et al. (2019)		N = 226				X	
Hwang and Jung (2021)		N = 462				X	
Hwang et al. (2024)		N = 859				X	
Jiao and Segrin (2023)		N = 442				X	
Jung et al. (2019)		N _{USA} = 200 N _{Korea} = 143				X	
Kömürcü-Akik and Alsancak-Akbulut (2023)		N = 324				X	
Kwon et al. (2017)	N = 40					X	
LeBlanc and Lyons (2022)		N = 491				X	
Love et al. (2020)		N = 427				X	
Low and Chong (2023)		N = 204				X	
Luebbe et al. (2018)		N = 377				X	
Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012)		N = 438				X	
Rote et al. (2020)		N = 282				X	
Wang (2023)		N = 743				X	
Burke et al. (2018)		N = 302	X			X	
Garst et al. (2020)	N = 160		X				
Hong and Cui (2023)		N _{pair} = 122	X		X		
Locke et al. (2012)		N = 128	X	X			X
Locke et al. (2016)		N = 866	X				
Schiffrin and Liss (2017)		N _{mother} = 121 N _{student} = 192	X			X	
Zong and Hawk (2022)		NT1 = 433 NT2 = 461 NT3 _{mother} = 248 NT3 _{student} = 408	X			X	
Wang et al. (2023)		N = 349	X			X	

In the following subsections, the main research findings and measurement tools used in the research are presented along with the above-mentioned target groups, as we believe that it would be more useful for future research to detail these dimensions.

4.2. Research on Higher Education Students

University students are the main target group for research on helicopter parenting, with twenty-one studies focusing on them. Table 4 shows that the topics range widely, from career choice to communication.

Table 4. Main topics of research on higher education students.

Article	Topic
LeBlanc and Lyons (2022) Wang (2023)	Career choice
Hwang and Jung (2021) Rote et al. (2020)	Parent–child relationship
Dorrance Hall et al. (2021) Jiao and Segrin (2023)	Communication
Carr et al. (2021) Low and Chong (2023)	FNE-fear of negative evaluation
Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020) Darlow et al. (2017)	Self-efficacy
Jung et al. (2019) Luebbe et al. (2018) Love et al. (2020)	Academic performance
Hwang et al. (2024)	Academic achievement, self-efficacy
Fletcher et al. (2020) Gao et al. (2024)	Eligibility
Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014) Kwon et al. (2017)	Demographic data
Howard et al. (2019)	Courage, academic success
Kömürcü-Akik and Alsancak-Akbulut (2023)	Validation
Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012)	Parental control

LeBlanc and Lyons (2022) and Wang (2023) investigate career identity and career choice difficulties. Wang (2023) finds that helicopter parenting is positively related to career indecision. And LeBlanc and Lyons (2022) found that students who experience higher levels of helicopter parenting have lower career adaptability and higher levels of self-doubt.

Rote et al. (2020) and Hwang and Jung (2021) focus on the parent–child relationship. Hwang and Jung (2021) find that academic control plays a key role in academic success: those who feel more control perform better. Maternal autonomy support strengthens academic control, while paternal helicopter parenting weakens it. Excessive parental involvement first worsens the parent–child relationship, then reduces the student’s autonomy and increases their sense of control. The associations between helicopter parenting

and parental context were investigated by [Rote et al. \(2020\)](#) using four family profiles (autonomous, maternal overcontrol, paternal overcontrol, Hp accepting). Perceptions of maternal and paternal overcontrol have negative effects on children, while children in Hp accepting families are more motivated.

According to [Dorrance Hall et al. \(2021\)](#), the communication environment affects how children perceive parental control. Research by [Jiao and Segrin \(2023\)](#) showed that open family communication does not reduce the association between Hp parenting and depression or anxiety.

[Carr et al. \(2021\)](#) found that helicopter parenting reduces autonomy and increases fear of failure, especially in women. [Low and Chong \(2023\)](#) showed that FNE acts as a mediating factor: helicopter parenting increases fear of failure, which ultimately reduces resilience.

Three studies have focused on self-efficacy. [Buchanan and LeMoyne \(2020\)](#) found that helicopter parenting reduces self-efficacy, but that this association was not found for women. [Darlow et al. \(2017\)](#) confirmed that overcontrol is associated with lower self-efficacy. According to [Hwang et al. \(2024\)](#), the low helicopter–high attachment group showed better self-efficacy and academic performance than the high helicopter–high attachment group.

[Padilla-Walker and Nelson \(2012\)](#) showed that helicopter attachment is associated with psychological and behavioural control. [Jung et al. \(2019\)](#) found a negative association between helicopter parenting of South Korean fathers and academic outcomes, while this was not confirmed in other groups. [Luebbe et al. \(2018\)](#) investigated the negative effects of helicopter parenting on academic functioning. [Love et al. \(2020\)](#) found that paternal helicopter parenting was more strongly associated with school dropout than maternal helicopter parenting.

The research of [Fletcher et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Gao et al. \(2024\)](#) investigates the sense of entitlement. [Fletcher et al. \(2020\)](#) showed that overparenting reinforces a sense of academic entitlement, which can lead to unrealistic expectations of the educational environment. According to [Gao et al. \(2024\)](#), a sense of entitlement positively moderates the negative impact of helicopter parenting on autonomy.

[Howard et al. \(2019\)](#) discuss the relationship between helicopter parenting and courage, showing that appropriate parental involvement positively, while helicopter parenting negatively, affects Grit levels, i.e., persistence, commitment to long-term goals, and is associated with courage.

[Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan \(2014\)](#), also accounting for demographic data, found that over-parenting is more common among students living at home. Focusing on cultural differences, [Kwon et al. \(2017\)](#) highlighted that although the negative aspects of helicopter parenting are acknowledged, they also highlight the goodwill of parents and the positive impact on academic achievement.

[Kömürçü-Akik and Alsancak-Akbulut \(2023\)](#) validated the Turkish adaptation of the Helicopter Parenting Behaviour Questionnaire (HPBQ). The results support the convergent and divergent validity of the Turkish version of the HPBQ.

4.3. Research on Students in Public Education

Four studies looked at helicopter parenting among students in public schools. This target group has been less researched in studies on this topic. The research by [Ching et al. \(2023\)](#) aimed to replicate the findings of [Love et al. \(2020\)](#). Their results showed that self-control is a mediating factor between school burnout and helicopter parenting: low self-control due to helicopter parenting makes it harder for students to cope with challenges, which can lead to burnout.

Ho et al. (2022) concluded that helicopter parenting reduces self-regulated learning and increases procrastination, and therefore mitigating it would promote student engagement.

Sood and Buchanan (2024) developed a helicopter parenting scale for adolescents in India that measures the effects of pressure and intrusion. Their results show that pressure exercise decreases academic performance, while intrusion tends to affect well-being.

4.4. Research Focusing on Parents

Eight studies also looked at the parental perspective. According to Burke et al. (2018), overparenting is associated with parental facilitation, which is positive parental involvement for the child, but not interference, which is an overbearing parental attitude for the child. Garst et al. (2020) investigated parental involvement in sport, highlighting the dichotomy of support and excessive control. Their research involved focus group interviews. Their results support the overinvolvement and directive nature of parental involvement. Hong and Cui (2023) studied parent-child pairs. Their research found no clear association between overparenting and educational or career goal expectations. Locke et al. (2012) used professionals as subjects and their research explored the definition of overparenting, while Locke et al. (2016) examined the impact of overparenting behaviour in the context of homework. Schiffrin and Liss (2017) demonstrated the association between helicopter parenting and poor academic motivation and its negative impact on academic achievement. Zong and Hawk (2022) developed a new multidimensional scale to measure the mother-child relationship. Wang et al. (2023) showed that mothers who perceive threat are more prone to helicopter parenting.

4.5. Measuring Instruments

After summarising the results, we thought it important to describe the measurement tools used in each study, which are presented in Table 5. The examination of the applied measurement tools indicates that some studies relied on the same scales, while others used self-developed instruments. Padilla-Walker and Nelson's (2012) Helicopter Parenting Scale appeared in multiple studies, as its five-point scale effectively assesses parental decision-making and problem-solving involvement. Odenweller et al.'s (2014) Helicopter Parenting Instrument was also widely used, along with Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan's (2014) Overparenting Scale. Some studies utilised LeMoyné and Buchanan's (2011) Helicopter Parenting Scale, while others applied Schiffrin et al.'s (2014) HPBQ scale. Additional research either developed unique measurement tools or employed scales such as the Hovering Parents Scale and the Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale. One study followed a qualitative methodology. Among the five commonly used items of the Helicopter Parenting Scale, examples include the extent to which a parent interferes with their child's decisions or manages their problems, illustrating the effects of excessive parental involvement.

Odenweller et al.'s (2014) Helicopter Parenting Instrument contains fifteen items, but some studies used shorter versions. The scale measures parental decision-making and overprotective behaviour, using a five-point or seven-point Likert scale. A similar focus is found in Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan's (2014) Overparenting Scale, which examines the level of parental control, as well as LeMoyné and Buchanan's (2011) Helicopter Parenting Scale, which measures the impact of parental intervention on problem-solving.

Schiffrin et al.'s (2014) Helicopter Parenting Behaviour Questionnaire appears in different versions in the literature. Some studies used the original version, which measures maternal helicopter parenting and autonomy support through separate subscales, while others used a modified, fifteen-item version. The Hovering Parents Scale examines various aspects of parental over-involvement and was used with only seven items in some studies.

Table 5. Measurement Tools Used in Studies Focusing on Higher Education Students.

Instrument	Article
Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012)—Helicopter Parenting Scale	Gao et al. (2024)
	Hwang and Jung (2021)
	Hwang et al. (2024)
	Jung et al. (2019)
	Low and Chong (2023)
	Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012)
	Rote et al. (2020)
Odenweller et al. (2014)—Helicopter Parenting Instrument	Dorrance Hall et al. (2021)
	Howard et al. (2019)
	LeBlanc and Lyons (2022)
Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014)—5-item overparenting scale	Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014)
	Love et al. (2020)
	Wang (2023)
LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011)—HPS-Helicopter Parenting Scale	Buchanan and LeMoyne (2020)
	Darlow et al. (2017)
Schiffrin et al. (2014)—(HPBQ) Helicopter parenting behaviour questionnaire	Carr et al. (2021)
	Kömürçü-Akik and Alsancak-Akbulut (2023)
10-item Hovering Parents Scale	Fletcher et al. (2020)
Schiffrin et al. (2019)—10-item Consolidated Helicopter Parenting Scale	Jiao and Segrin (2023)
Interview	Kwon et al. (2017)
Self-developed	Luebbe et al. (2018)

Of the eight studies examining parents, two used the same measurement tool, while the others measured helicopter parenting with different tools (see Table 6). Garst et al. (2020) conducted qualitative research. Burke et al. (2018) used the four subscales of the Overparenting Scale by Segrin et al. (2012, 2015), which measure problem-solving, counselling, assistance, and risk aversion. Hong and Cui (2023) applied the 5-item Overparenting Scale by Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014). Locke et al. (2012) used open-ended questions to explore the concept of helicopter parenting, while Locke et al. (2016) used their own developed Locke Parenting Scale (LPS). Zong and Hawk (2022) and Schiffrin and Liss (2017) applied the 9-item Helicopter Parent Scale by Schiffrin et al. (2014), while Wang et al. (2023) used the Helicopter Parenting Instrument by Odenweller et al. (2014).

Table 6. Measurement Tools Used in Studies Examining Parents.

Instrument	Article
Segrin et al. (2012, 2015)—Overparenting Scale	Burke et al. (2018)
Interview	Garst et al. (2020)
Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014)—5-item Overparenting Scale	Hong and Cui (2023)
No specific measurement tool is mentioned.	Locke et al. (2012)
Locke et al. (2016)—Locke Parenting Scale	Locke et al. (2016)
Schiffirin et al. (2014)—Helicopter Parent Scale (9 item)	Schiffirin and Liss (2017) Zong and Hawk (2022)
Odenweller et al. (2014)—Helicopter Parenting Instrument	Wang et al. (2023)

The four studies used different measurement tools (see Table 7). Ching et al. (2023) used the full 15 items of the Helicopter Parenting Instrument by Odenweller et al. (2014). Ho et al. (2022) measured helicopter parenting attitudes based on the questionnaire used by Hong et al. (2015). Hong et al. (2015) used their own questionnaire to examine parental supervision. Sood and Buchanan (2024) developed their own questionnaire for the 13–17 age group, which was compared to the HPS scale by LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011).

Table 7. Measurement Tools Used in Studies Examining Students in Public Education.

Instrument	Article
Odenweller et al. (2014)—Helicopter Parenting Instrument	Ching et al. (2023)
Hong et al. (2015)—Helicopter parenting attitudes	Ho et al. (2022)
Adapted questionnaire ¹	Hong et al. (2015)
Own development, compared to LeMoyne and Buchanan’s (2011) HPS scale.	Sood and Buchanan (2024)

5. Discussion

Our systematic review of 33 peer-reviewed studies revealed that helicopter parenting is linked to academic performance through a range of mediating psychological and behavioural factors. The most consistent associations point to negative outcomes such as school burnout, reduced self-regulation, procrastination, and fear of failure. These indirect pathways suggest that helicopter parenting rarely affects academic achievement directly, but it influences students’ capacity to cope with school-related demands and to learn independently. It is important to note that the reviewed studies primarily operate with psychological variables. The novelty of our findings lies in the observation that the studies examined often neglect to explore the educational consequences of overparenting—such as its impact on autonomous and self-regulated learning, or on the relationship between schools and parents.

The studies presented mixed results regarding the academic outcomes of helicopter parenting. While several found detrimental effects on students’ motivation and mental well-being, a smaller number of studies indicated that parental support and involvement may contribute to improved academic performance—particularly in cultural contexts where interdependence and parental authority are valued. However, the lack of longitudinal

studies, overreliance on self-reported data, and inconsistent operationalization of helicopter parenting limit the generalisability of these findings.

From an educational perspective, these findings point to a deeper issue: the misalignment between overinvolved parenting and educational goals such as autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and independent learning. Overparenting may unintentionally undermine students' development of self-regulated learning strategies—key competencies in both school and higher education. These challenges are particularly acute in compulsory education, where the studies remain scarce. The pedagogical relevance of helicopter parenting thus lies in understanding how external control from parents interacts with the goals of schooling and the teacher's role in supporting student agency. The helicopter parenting raises fundamental concerns about how educational institutions can support or counterbalance certain parental behaviours, and how teachers can maintain productive partnerships with highly involved, or sometimes overly controlling parents. Schools and teachers are not equipped to recognise the signs of overparenting and to engage in constructive dialogue with parents.

6. Conclusions and Limitations

One limitation of our study is that the systematic literature review does not include all relevant research, as the chosen methods and criteria influenced the selection of studies. Based on the keywords and databases, it is possible that we may have overlooked important studies that would be relevant for future research. In our analysis, we only included peer-reviewed journal articles, so books, book chapters, dissertations, and newspaper articles were not part of the review. Additionally, the majority of the studies are in English, which could present cultural limitations. Furthermore, many of the studies we processed refer to Asian countries, and it is likely that other non-English studies did not meet our search criteria. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised, as they are context-dependent and geographically biased. However, the cultural context must be taken into account in the interpretation, as a significant number of our studies come from Asian countries where this form of parental involvement is relatively accepted. Thus, there may be differences in interpretation across cultures. It is also possible that the predominance of studies examining university students means that our conclusions may not apply to all educational age groups.

For future research, it would be important to conduct domestic studies to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. Since most research on helicopter parenting uses quantitative methods, future studies might consider applying qualitative approaches to better explore the children's experiences. Given that the topic has mainly been studied in university populations, it would be useful to shift the focus to younger age groups. It is also necessary to investigate the long-term effects of helicopter parenting. Future research should also consider interdisciplinary approaches.

On the practical side, educational institutions could benefit from developing parental involvement strategies that encourage positive parental participation without hindering children's autonomy. It is essential that educators receive adequate training on how to communicate effectively with overly involved parents. The parent-school partnership remains crucial for the social and academic development of children.

The theoretical relevance of our research lies in its contribution to filling a gap in the literature and providing a foundation for domestic studies examining the negative aspects of parental involvement. Practically, the study could be useful in teacher training, helping future educators understand the characteristics of helicopter parenting. Furthermore, the review of measurement tools could provide a basis for future research to select the appropriate instruments for studying specific topics or age groups.

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Appendix A. Databases Involved in Data Collection by EBSCO Discovery Service

Accucoms - COVID-19 resources,
ACM Digital Library
Arts & Humanities (ProQuest)
Bibliotheca Corviniana Digitalis
Biological Abstracts 2000–2004
Biomedical & Life Sciences Collection
BMJ Journals
Business Source Premier
CAB Abstracts
Cambridge Journals
ChemSpider
CNKI
Cochrane
COMPASS
Congress.gov
De Gruyter Journals
Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
Ebook (Springer)
Ebook Collection (Ebsco)
EbookCentral (ProQuest)
EBSCOHost
Elsevier
Elsevier - SciVal
ELTE Reader
Emerald
EMIS University – Central and South - East Europe
EndNote
ERIC
European Parliament Legislative Observatory
EUR-Lex
Europeana Collections
EUROSTAT
FSTA (Food Science and Technology Abstracts)
GALE Literary Sources (GLS)

Gale Reference Complete
 Global Health and Human Rights Database
 Grove Music Online
 HUMANUS
 HUNGARICANA
 IJOTEN,
 Impact Factor (Journal Citation Reports)
 InCites
 International Human Rights Network
 Internet Archive
 JSTOR
 MATARKA
 MathSciNet
 MathSciNet (EBSCOhost)
 MEDLINE (EBSCOhost)
 MEDLINE (PubMed)
 Medscape
 Nature Journals
 NEJM Group - COVID-19 resources
 Nutrition and Food Sciences
 Oxford Handbooks Online (OHO) – Criminology and Criminal Justice
 Oxford Handbooks Online (OHO) – Law
 Oxford Scholarship Online (Law Collection)
 Oxford University Press (OUP) Journals
 Project Gutenberg
 BRITISH JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Appendix A. Databases involved in data collection by EBSCO Discovery Service19

Notes

- ¹ See [Hong et al. \(2015\)](#): The items in the questionnaire were compiled based on previous research and definitions, and the statements were then verified following a panel discussion. (p. 141)

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