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Exploring Relationship of Helicopter Parenting with Social-Emotional Competence and Decision Making Styles among Adolescents

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Article Details

ABSTRACT

Helicopter Parenting, Social-Objectives: The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship among Keywords: Emotional Competence, Rational Decision helicopter parenting, social-emotional competence, and decision-making styles Style, Intuitive Decision Style, Adolescence, (intuitive style and rational style) in adolescents. Method: This study employed a cross-sectional correlational design. The sample consisted of 800 students Collectivism recruited through a convenient sampling technique. 400 males and 400 females from Secondary and Higher Secondary classes were used in this study, from both the government and private sectors of Gujrat, Pakistan. Helicopter Parenting Misbah Arshad (PhD)

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Department of Psychology, University of Behaviors Questionnaire (Schiffirin et al., 2013), Social-emotional Competency Questionnaire (Zhou & Ee, 2012), and Decision Styles Scale (Hamilton et al., 2016) are the self-report questionnaires used for this study. Findings: Mother Helicopter Parenting Behaviors have a significant positive relationship with social-emotional Department of Psychology, University of competence, intuitive decision style, and rational decision style. Father Helicopter Parenting Behaviors are significantly positively correlated with social-emotional competence, rational and intuitive decision styles. The findings showed that perceived helicopter parenting behaviors are higher in females than males. Females have higher social-emotional competence and rational decision styles than males. No significant differences in intuitive decision style are present. Conclusion: Culture plays a significant role in positive perception of helicopter parenting behaviors, development of social-emotional competence, and decision-making skills among adolescents. In a country with a collectivist culture like Pakistan, Helicopter Parenting is viewed as a positive parenting approach and has positive impacts on adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a phase when important decisions have to be made. It is the period of life when competencies develop. In Secondary and Higher Secondary classes, students are supposed to decide which field they want to choose for building their career, and thus, in Adolescence, the decision-making skills are of significant importance. Decision-making is highly influenced by parenting styles. In Pakistan, helicopter parenting is a very common practice due to the collectivist culture. Parents take almost all decisions on their children's behalf and remain overly involved in their social and academic life.

HELICOPTER PARENTING

Helicopter parenting was originally given by Dr. Haim Ginott in his book " Between Parent and Teenagers" in 1969. Helicopter parenting is characterized by the over-involvement and excessive monitoring of parents in children's lives. This might include resolving issues on children's behalf, communicating to their professors about improving their grades, managing and supervising their relationships, and attempting to learn more about the details of their child's life than required (Rote et al., 2020). Expectations by society may cause gender-based parenting causing the idea of overprotective parenting to be more inclined towards girls than boys. (Schiffirin et al., 2014).

The impact of helicopter parenting on children's development is complex, leading to both positive and negative outcomes. Empirical evidence suggests that children with the support of overly involved parents perform better in academics and in-depth learning experiences. Helicopter Parenting fosters dependency in adolescents, leads to higher levels of anxiety and despair and thus negatively impacts self-determination and mental well-being during emerging adulthood (Schiffrin et al., 2019; Vigdal & Brønnick, 2022). Findings of a study conducted in India showed that there were 48.8% of students whose parents exhibited helicopter parenting behaviors. (Jeepalyam et al., 2021).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Helicopter parenting significantly impacts the well-being of adolescents. Social-emotional competence is a crucial factor in healthy child development (Davis, 2024). Components of SEC include self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision-making. "Self-awareness is a metacognitive function defined as declarative

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knowledge of one's ability, thoughts, feelings, and mental states, and implies that one actively identifies, processes, and stores information about the self" (Bivona et al., 2014). "Social- awareness is the ability to sense, understand and react to others' emotions while comprehending on social networks" (Goleman, 2016). Self-management refers to controlling one's own emotions, impulses, and resources (Goleman, 2015). Relationship Management is the capacity for clear communication, effective relations with people, teamwork, and conflict management (Maricopa Community College District, 2016). According to Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, responsible decision-making is defined as "the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, ethical standards and social norms,

DECISION MAKING

"Decision-making is an intellectual process which assists in the selection of a course of action among several possible alternatives" (Nadaf, 2015). Rational decision-making style is characterized by deep analysis, critical evaluation and placing facts to make a choice. It involves objectively diving deep in an issue. Rationality has been defined as the "compatibility between choice and value." (Oliveria, 2007). For the most important and higher-level decisions, rational decisionmaking model is used. Intuitive decision-making style is a haphazard, automatic and fast process in which the choice is made based on gut instinct without any conscious reasoning and deep analysis. Dane and Pratt (2007) defined intuition as "affectively charged judgments that arise through rapid, non-conscious, and holistic associations". Hogarth (2001) recognizes that although intuitive decisions can result in the right outcome, their success must be founded on experience- based learning and formal education. Intuitive decision-making style is mostly used by adolescents. Adolescence is a crucial phase for decision-making.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate the relationship of Helicopter parenting with social-emotional competence and decision-making styles (rational and intuitive) among secondary and higher secondary students. It also aims to examine the differences in demographic correlates for perceived helicopter parenting, social-emotional competence, and decision-making styles in study participants.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

• Helicopter parenting is significantly related to the rational and intuitive decision-making styles

among adolescents

- Helicopter parenting has a significant impact on the social-emotional competence of Secondary and Higher-secondary students
- There are significant gender differences in perceived helicopter parenting, socialemotional competence, and decision-making.

METHOD

SAMPLE

A cross-sectional correlational research design was used for this study. The type of non-probability Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. A total of 800 students were recruited. 8 categories of sample were made (n = 100) based on educational level (secondary or higher secondary), gender (male or female), and sector of institute (government or private). The sample was selected from the institutes of Gujrat, Pakistan, due to the ease of access.

TABLE 1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Variable	F	(%)	
Gender			
Male	400	50%	
Female	400	50%	
Educational level			
Secondary	400	50%	
Higher Secondary	400	50%	
Sector of institute			
Government	400	50%	
Private	400	50%	
Residence area			
Urban	425	53.1	
Rural	375	46.9	
Socioeconomic status			
Lower class	17	2.1	

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Middle class	664	83.0	
Upper class	119	14.9	
Family structure			
Nuclear	312	39.0	
Joint	350	43.8	
Extended	138	17.3	
Mother's education			
Uneducated	190	23.8	
Matriculation	330	41.3	
Intermediate	181	22.6	
Graduation	72	9.0	
Above graduation	27	3.4	
Father's education			
Uneducated	80	10.0	
Matriculation	291	36.4	
Intermediate	176	22.0	
Graduation	181	22.6	
Above graduation	72	9.0	
Mother's Occupation			
Working	66	8.3	
Housewife	734	91.8	
Institutional level			
Government school boys	100	12.5	
Private school boys	100	12.5	
Government school girls	100	12.5	
Private school girls	100	12.5	
Government college boys	100	12.5	
Private college boys	100	12.5	

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about Volume 3, Issue 7 (2025)						
Government college girls	100	12.5				
Private college girls	100	12.5				

Note: (N= $\overline{800}$); f = frequency, % = percentage

The above table represents the demographics of the sample (N = 800). The sample consisted of an equal number of males (n=400) and females (n=400), 50% each. There is an even distribution of the participants for educational level (secondary and higher secondary) and sector of the institute (government and private). The residence area included urban area and rural area. 425 participants belonged to the urban area (53.1%) and 375 participants belonged to the rural area (46.9%). Socioeconomic status included 17 lower-class (2.1%), 664 middle-class (83.0%), and 119 upperclass (14.9%) participants. The results showed that 39.0% of participants belonged to nuclear, 43.8% belonged to joint and 17.3% belonged to extended family structure, indicating the highest frequency (350) of participants from the joint family system. Regarding the education of parents, 190 mothers were uneducated (23.8%), 330 mothers had done matriculation (41.3%), 181 mothers did intermediate (22.6%), 72 graduated (9.0%), and 27 studied above graduation (3.4%). For fathers, 80 were uneducated (10.0%), 291 were matriculated (36.4%), 176 were intermediate (22.0%), 181 graduated (22.6%) and 72 studied beyond graduation (9.0%). Most of the mothers were housewives (91.8%) and only 8.3% of mothers were working women. The participants were divided into eight equal institutional levels with 100 participants in each category, with a percentage of 12.5% each.

MEASURES

Gender, educational level, sector of institute, residence area, mother's occupation, father's occupation, socioeconomic status, and institutional level are the demographics that were taken for this study.

The Helicopter Parenting Behaviors Questionnaire (HPBQ) is a self-report measure consisting of 9 items. It was developed by Schiffrin et al. (2013). This questionnaire was used to measure the perception of helicopter parenting among students of secondary and higher-secondary classes. The two versions for mother and father were used. There were no reverse-coded items. Helicopter Parenting Behaviors were assessed using a 6-point Likert scale.

The social-emotional competence was measured using the Social-Emotional Competency Questionnaire (SECQ). This scale was developed by Zhou and Ee (2012). The Social- Emotional Competency Questionnaire consists of 25 items. There are five dimensions of social- emotional competence measured by five respective subscales. These five subscales include: Self- Awareness, Social-Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Management and Responsible Decision-Making. Each subscale consists of 5 items. a 6-point Likert scale was used to assess the responses.

The Decision Style Scale was used for measuring the decision-making styles among adolescents. This scale was developed by Hamilton et al. (2016). It is a self-report questionnaire that consists of 10 items. It has two subscales: rational and intuitive. The first five items measured rational decision style for making decisions, and the next five items measured intuitive style of decision making. The responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale

PROCEDURE

The permission for all three scales was taken from the corresponding authors. The researcher, being a student, lacked access to all the educational institutions of Gujrat, and thus a non-probability convenient sampling technique was used. A permission letter was sent to all the schools and colleges of Gujrat, and those who granted permission were visited personally by the researcher. A total of 8 categories were made for data collection. Each category consisted of 100 participants. An informed consent form was signed by students, and confidentiality was ensured as per ethical considerations. The incomplete questionnaires were discarded, and data from 800 students were collected. Later, the participants were thanked and appreciated for their cooperation.

RESULTS

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha (α)		
Helicopter parenting behaviors scale (mother)	9	0.75		
Helicopter parenting behaviors scale (father)	9	0.75		
Social-emotional Competency Questionnaire	25	0.85		
Decision style scale (rational)	5	0.56		
Decision style scale (intuitive)	5	0.66		

 TABLE 2:
 RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR SCALES

Table 2 shows that the reliability of scales used in this study was measured using Cronbach's alpha (α). The Helicopter Parenting Behaviors Scale, consisting of 9-items showed acceptable reliability for both the mother ($\alpha = 0.75$) and father ($\alpha = 0.75$). The 25-item scale of Social-Emotional Competence showed a reliability of $\alpha = 0.85$ which is considered good internal consistency. The 5-item Rational Decision Style Scale showed poor internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.56$ and the 5- item Intuitive Decision Style Scale showed questionable reliability with $\alpha = 0.66$.

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Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Helicopter parenting behavior (mother)	-	.649**	.245**	.399**	.484**
Helicopter parenting behavior (father)	-	-	.123**	.311**	.494**
Social-emotional Competence	-	-	-	.451**	.209**
Decision style (rational)	-	-	-	-	.537
Decision style (intuitive)	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 3: PEARSON CORRELATION FOR STUDY VARIABLES

Note: * p <.05. **p <.01

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed to analyze the relationship between Helicopter Parenting (HPB), Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) and Decision-Making Styles (rational and intuitive). Results revealed that maternal helicopter parenting behaviors were strongly and positively correlated with paternal helicopter parenting behaviors (r = .649, p < .01). Maternal helicopter parenting behaviors (r = .649, p < .01). Maternal helicopter parenting behavior has a small positive correlation with social-emotional competence (r = .245, p < .01), a moderate positive correlation with rational decision style (r = .311, p < .01), and a strong positive correlation with intuitive decision style (r = .399, p < .01).

Helicopter parenting behaviors for the father showed a significant positive correlation with social- emotional competence (r = .123, p < .01), a moderate positive correlation with rational decision-making style (r = .311, p <.01), and a strong positive correlation with intuitive decision-making style (r = .494, p < .01).

Social-emotional competence showed a significant moderate positive correlation with rational decision-making style (r = .451, p < .01) and a small positive correlation with intuitive decision-making style (r = .209, p < .01).

To conclude, the rational decision-making style has a moderate positive correlation with the intuitive decision-making style (r = .537, p < .01), no significance level was reported.

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TABLE 4

Table 4									
	Μ	SD	Μ	SD					
Variable	male	male	female	female	t	df	р	Mean Diff	95% CI of Diff
HPB					~ ~ ~				
(Mother)	36.89	9.49	40.39	8.27	-5.56	783	0.00	-3.50	[-4.73,-2.26]
HPB	00.01	0.00	00.00	0.10	0.00	-00	0.00	0.10	
(Father)	36.91	9.02	39.03	9.12	-3.30	798	0.00	-2.12	[-3.38,-0.86]
Total	04.07	18.88	97.61	19.12	-2.49	797	0.01	-3.35	
SEC	94.27	18.88	97.01	19.12	-2.49	191	0.01	-3.39	[-5.99,-0.71]
Rational	1675	3.95	17.82	3.65	4.00	700	0.00	1.02	
DMS	16.75	5.95	17.82	3.05	-4.00	793	0.00	-1.08	[−1.60,−0.55]
Intuitive	1007	0 70	10.00	0.67	1 70	700	0.09	0.47	
DMS	18.87	3.73	19.33	3.67	-1.78	798	0.08	-0.47	[-0.98,-0.05]

Note: HPB = Helicopter Parenting Behavior, SEC= Social-Emotional Competence, DMS= Decision-Making Style

An independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate the gender differences in helicopter parenting behaviors (mother), helicopter parenting behaviors (father), social-emotional competence, and decision-making styles (rational and intuitive).

Results revealed that maternal helicopter parenting behaviors were significantly more perceived by females (M= 40.39, SD=8.27) than males (M= 36.89, SD= 9.49), t (783.30) = -5.556, p < .001, 95% CI [-4.73, -2.26], suggesting a moderate gender difference.

Perception of paternal helicopter parenting behaviors was significantly higher in females (M=39.03, SD=9.12) than in males (M=36.91, SD=9.02), t (798) = -3.301, p = .001, 95% CI [-3.38, -0.86], indicating a small to moderate gender difference.

Social-emotional competence was significantly higher in females (M=97.61, SD=19.12) than in males (M=94.27, SD=18.88), t (797) = -2.489, p = .013, 95% CI [-5.99, -0.71], suggesting a small difference.

Females (M=17.82, SD=3.65) scored significantly higher on rational decision-making style than males (M=16.75, SD=3.95), t (793) = -3.996, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.60, -0.55], indicating a

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small to moderate gender difference.

The gender difference for intuitive decision-making style was not statistically significant t (798) = -1.778, p = .076, 95% CI [-0.98, -0.05]. However, females (M=19.33, SD=3.67) scored slightly higher than males (M=18.87, SD=3.73).

PATH ANALYSIS



A path analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between helicopter parenting (father and mother), students' social-emotional competence, and its influence on rational and intuitive decision-making styles.

Maternal helicopter parenting behaviors had a strong significant positive impact on students' social-emotional competence ($\beta = .60$). Helicopter parenting behaviors of the father had a moderate positive impact on social-emotional competence. ($\beta = .43$). There was a significant positive covariance between the helicopter parenting behaviors of mother and father (covariance = 53.66) which indicates that both parents have the same parenting style. Social-emotional competence had a positive impact on rational and intuitive decision-making styles ($\beta = .09$ for rational decision-making style and $\beta = .04$ for intuitive decision-making style).

Maternal helicopter parenting showed a slight but significant indirect impact on both rational $(\beta = .054)$ and intuitive $(\beta = .024)$ decision-making styles, through social-emotional competence. Likewise, there were slight indirect effects of paternal helicopter parenting on rational $(\beta = .039)$ and intuitive $(\beta = .017)$ decision-making styles. These results revealed that helicopter parenting behaviors may have an impact on the social-emotional competence of students, which in turn shapes their

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decision-making styles.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we aimed to examine the relationship between helicopter parenting, social-emotional competence, and decision-making styles (rational and intuitive). Previous research indicates that helicopter parenting is negatively related to social-emotional competence (Batool et al., 2024; Oad et al., 2023) and negatively impacts adolescents' decision-making skills (Sood, 2021). Unexpectedly, the data for the current study did not support our hypothesis. The findings of this study revealed that helicopter parenting positively impacts social-emotional competence and students' rational and intuitive decision-making styles. This unexpected and surprising result could be better understood by considering the collectivist culture of Pakistan.

COLLECTIVIST CULTURE

Culture has a strong influence on the perception of helicopter parenting. The culture of Pakistan has deep roots in collectivism. Pakistani culture has a high collectivism index score and lower scores in individualism, as suggested by Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory (Zemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowska, 2023). According to Rousseau & Scharf (2018), the prevalence and practice of helicopter parenting differ depending upon whether the culture is more collectivist or individualistic.

Considering the collectivist culture of Pakistan, we can say that parenting style is highly influenced by cultural values. Parental involvement is expected by children as their direction and advice are respected, valued, and obeyed. Therefore, children view Helicopter Parenting as a positive and normal practice of family life rather than a negative one. This is also supported by Baumrind's theory which emphasizes that if parenting practices are aligned with cultural norms, children will accept it rather than raise questions (Baumrind, 1972). Asian children interpret authoritative parenting differently than Europeans and Americans (Chao, 2001). According to Keshavarz and Baharudin (2013), in a collectivist culture, highly involved practices are not seen as bad, instead they are seen as manifestations of care and a part of parental responsibilities, which in turn leaves a positive impact on children. Adolescents reared in collectivist societies see parental involvement and supervision as an obligation to the family, which makes them compliant and social-emotional competent instead of rebellious and emotionally unstable.

Moreover, the findings of the current study are also supported by Yousafzai et al. (2015), who suggested that features of helicopter parenting if practiced and sensitized under an appropriate

cultural context might increase emotional competence. Therefore, in Pakistan's culture, Helicopter

Parenting might serve as a protective element that fosters emotional intelligence and social maturity, rather than being viewed as a dysfunctional manner.

The findings of the current study revealed gender variations in the perception of Helicopter parenting. Female students reported experiencing more Helicopter Parenting behaviors than males. This finding is consistent with the existing literature which indicates that girls in the collectivist culture are often more emotionally controlled and supervised by their parents due to the traditional gender roles and cultural norms (Ahmad & Mingay, 2023). Daughters are seen to need more emotional protection and guidance in a collectivist culture like Pakistan. Research conducted by Saleem et al. (2015) in the Pakistani context indicates that boys' parenting is generally more authoritative, while overprotection is experienced more by girls. According to Ahmed and Mingay (2023), this intensification strengthens parental engagement with girls, particularly in areas of academics, social interactions, and decision-making.

In Western countries, where the culture is individualistic, Helicopter parenting is perceived as a negative construct. According to Padila-Walker & Nelson (2012), the parenting practices that involve control or lack of autonomy result in adverse psychological outcomes for children. Contrary to the results of the current study, Ulutas and Aksoy (2014) reported over-parenting fosters dependency and hinders coping skills. These contrasting results may mirror the difference between parental perception and child interpretation within different cultures. Schiffrin et al. (2014) conducted a study on U.S students indicating higher levels of depression and anxiety and decreased satisfaction among students who are reared with helicopter parenting approach. These findings suggest that helicopter parenting negatively impacts decision-making and independence and these are the core values of an individualistic culture.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Self-report measures were used for data collection which might have affected the outcome due to social desirability bias and false self-perception. There was a limited geographical representation as participants were recruited from Schools and Colleges of Gujrat, Pakistan which makes it hard to generalize results to other regions and cultures. Since the study involved participants from a collectivist culture it is difficult to apply an individualistic culture. The research depended solely on the data reported by the children. There was no involvement of parents in reporting which

questions the authenticity of student's answers. The scales used in the study were standardized

but they might have overlooked the unique social-emotional behaviors in the Pakistani culture due to their western-centered development. More research should be done on Helicopter Parenting considering the collectivist culture of Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that helicopter parenting is positively related to social-emotional competence and decision-making styles in adolescents. Contrary to the western negative perception of helicopter parenting, characterized by dependency and reduced autonomy, in Pakistan, parental involvement is seen as a positive practice involving emotional support, care and attention and yields positive outcomes. This calls the need to study parenting approaches in various cultural contexts.

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