What Propels Helicopter Parents?

Parents' Motivation for Over Involvement in their Children's Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. The literature reviewed in this study includes factors that contribute to helicopter parenting in the higher education environment: Millennial characteristics, parental demographics, and technology. In addition, the privacy act, higher education rankings, and financial aid (i.e., tuition and enrolment management strategy), which contribute to the higher education environment, are discussed. Literature on why parents engage in helicopter parenting is limited. As such, this study helped to address this gap in research.

Using a social constructivist approach, data were obtained using a qualitative, multi-instrument case study method. Five parents of female, undergraduate students at a Canadian university participated in the telephone interviews. This study found financial and emotional support were the foremost ways parents supported their children. Parents were motivated by their desire to offer guidance; need for connection and communication; and need to show and receive love. Parents who participated in parent programming offered by the university, regardless of the type of programming, found it to be beneficial. Future research is needed to study father-son dyads as well as explore the reciprocation of support, specifically emotional support, from students to parents.

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Better than a thousand days of diligent study

is one day with a great teacher.

-Japanese Proverb

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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to and a brief context for the problem examined in this study. In addition, the research questions, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and definitions pertaining to the study are outlined.

Meet the Parents: An Introduction to the Problem

A parent can be defined as a mother or father; someone who has given birth to or sired a child. From a legal perspective, a parent can also be defined as "[the] person having lawful care or custody of a child" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, 2012, p. 4). For many, the definition of *parent* does not express what it actually means to *be* a parent. Some parents see their role as protector or provider, while others focus on giving affection and offering care. The time, energy, money, love, hopes, dreams, and other resources parents provide for their children may be seemingly immeasurable. And although children start out as infants with much need for protection, provision, affection, and care, it is the responsibility of parents to help their kids grow and mature into independent, contributing members of society (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010). When children reach adulthood, not all parents are ready for their kids to leave home. In addition, some parents do not foster the independence their college-aged children seek and may be expected to have by college administrators, staff, and faculty when entering college or university.

Some of today's parents, who are overinvolved, overprotective, and overindulgent are referred to as *hyper parents* or *helicopter parents*. They hover and swoop down to solve their children's problems (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010). Helicopter parenting is a growing trend that is seen worldwide; not just in Canada and the United States but also in Latin America, Asia, and Europe (Somers & Settle, 2010b). In Sweden, helicopter parents are called *curling parents*: they franticly sweep the ice to clear away obstacles for their kids (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010).

Vadeboncoeur (2013) observed the term *helicopter parent* was added to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary in 2011 and is defined as "a parent who is overly involved in the life of his or her child" (Helicopter parent, 2013). Researchers LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) asserted it is normal for parents to have concerns; however, helicopter parents take their concerns to a dysfunctional or inappropriate level.

Helicopter parenting begins at an early age and continues through the college years. LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) contended, "while helicopter parenting is a phenomenon popularly associated with college students, it is not a practice that begins in college" (p. 405). Many new parents are concerned with their child's education and learning from the time of conception. Parents believe that new technology, devices, and instruments used while the baby is still in utero help make their children more intelligent and advantaged from birth (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010). In some Canadian cities, parents register their unborn children for elite, junior kindergarten with a three-year waiting list and tuition of $1,200 per month (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010). These concerned parents hope that one day their children will have the right education, skills, and training to get into the best universities possible. They believe that the right preschool leads to the right high school and, ultimately, the right university (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010). Some parents have expressed their concern for their toddler's college education by appearing on national television for a chance to win a $50,000 college education fund (Armstrong, Ringbakk, Wachter, Silverman & Fox, 2013). From new gadgets to elite kindergarten to reality TV, parents are willing to go to great lengths to give their children an edge on life.

The phenomenon of helicopter parenting has been of great interest to popular media for years; however, academic researchers have started studying the topic only recently. The topic of helicopter parenting has been featured in popular main-stream media: *TIME* magazine articles

(Gibbs, 2009), *CBC* documentaries (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010), *ABC* news clips (Davis, 2012; Deutsch, 2009), and *YouTube* videos (BU Today, 2010), to name a few. Talk show host and media mogul Oprah Winfrey has also joined the craze urging her audience to stop managing their children's lives and, instead, become a consultant (Winfrey, 2013).

Many university officials, administrators, and professors have stories and anecdotes of their humorous or horrific interactions with helicopter parents acting on behalf of their children, but research on helicopter parenting is limited. Although, there is much interest in the subject by college administrators and popular media, researchers agreed academic studies measuring the effects of helicopter parents on college-aged students are lacking (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Schiffrin et al., 2013; Somers & Settle, 2010). Hunt (2008) asserted "[t]here are many newspaper articles but few scholarly studies on the topic of helicopter parents" (p. 11) and additional studies could be done on helicopter parents and their children for those interested in "college student development and university administration" (p. 11). From past research, it is evident that "parenting involving hovering parents who are potentially over-involved in the lives of their child" (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012, p. 1177) is of interest to the post-secondary community. However, very few researchers have studied the reasons *why* parents are overinvolved. Padilla-Walker and Nelson noted, "[F]uture work is needed to better understand the reasons parents give for why they tend to hover over their children at this age [emerging adulthood]" (p. 1188).

The majority of university students today are part of the Millennial Generation who "grew up in an era that placed high value on children" and exhibit seven common, core traits (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 1). Howe and Strauss (2003) argued that the trend of placing high value on children includes the emergence of helicopter parents. As such, parents are taking

greater roles in the lives of their college-aged children and are important stakeholders in the post-secondary experience. The role of parents in the lives of their college-aged children may still be one of support; however, parents experience the temptation to overstep boundaries and misuse advances in technology. Post-secondary institutions must find a way to serve the needs of students while providing information that appeases parents without breaking university policy and privacy legislation. To this end, helicopter parenting within the higher education environment is a contentious issue. With increasing tuition, advances in technology, and student characteristics, the question of *why* parents engage in helicopter or overinvolved parenting of their college-aged children remains.

The Researcher: Perspective of a Student Services Administrator

As a millennial, non-parent, university administrator and researcher of this study, I feel my perspective is a unique one. First, technology has significantly changed in the last ten to fifteen years. As such, I was an undergraduate student before Facebook, smartphones, and text messaging were all a part of daily life. Second, living over four hours away from campus, my parents left me to pursue undergraduate studies on my own. Third, my parents never attended university and had minimal input into my post-secondary education, although my mother earned a nursing diploma and my father sat on the local school board. My parents agreed to my choice in university, provided me with financial support, and passed on messages if university staff called. They provided support for living arrangements, but they left the halls of academia for me to pursue on my own. They never selected my classes, called my professors, or edited my university assignments. I survived life as an undergraduate student and learned a lot throughout the process.

4

My interest in parents' motivation for being involved in their college-aged children's lives developed over the last ten years while working as a student services professional at a U-15 Canadian university. Through my work experience, I have observed different parents intervening on behalf of their college-aged children and infer, from both my experience and the literature, that the motivation behind parents' over involvement needs further exploration. Admittedly, the scope of my interaction with parents is limited and is defined by my role on campus. In addition, I am not a parent so I cannot speak or relate based on my personal parenting experiences. Over the years, however, I have received a large number of phone calls and emails from parents and the number of inquiries seems to be growing each year. Through these correspondences, parents have admitted to acting on behalf of the student and applying for admission and scholarships for their child. In some cases, parents have pretended to be the student or they request specific information concerning their son or daughter. Thus, my current role as a student services professional on a university campus has been the catalyst in developing my interest in parents' motivation for involvement in their college-aged children lives.

Rationale for Research

In this study, the researcher examined helicopter parenting—a phenomenon that currently remains understudied—and looked at parents' motivation for being involved in their college-aged children's lives. Previous studies have researched helicopter parenting (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Schiffrin et al., 2013); however, research into why parents engage in helicopter parenting is limited. In this qualitative study, the researcher examined the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. This study was conducted using a qualitative, two phase, multi-instrument case study research method. The researcher transcribed and coded the data from the telephone interviews conducted with parents of college-aged children. Through analysis of the interviews, the researcher identified themes relating to parental involvement, parental motivation, and parent programming.

Research Questions

This research aimed to investigate the motivation for and the reasons why parents engage in helicopter or overinvolved parenting of their college-aged children. To this end, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of parental involvement?
2. What is the motivation behind parental involvement?
3. Do parents find parent programming offered by the university beneficial?

Context

There has been much interest in the subject of helicopter parenting but, as a relatively new phenomenon, it is an understudied area of research. The environment that surrounds helicopter parenting research has been largely negative. In particular, media and higher education professionals have focused on the negative aspects of helicopter parenting techniques and have given overinvolved parents a bad reputation. Academic interest and research on the subject have been emerging with new articles on helicopter parenting being published each month.

Significance

Helicopter parenting has been an under researched phenomenon. As such, this study added to the ever-growing body of research on the phenomenon. Furthermore, it addressed a gap in the literature and provided findings on what motivated these parents to be overinvolved in their college-aged children's lives. This study also provided insight on overinvolved parents, which may assist Canadian and American higher education administration, faculty, and staff in their interactions with overinvolved parents. The findings may help to cultivate empathy and understanding among those who work in the post-secondary environment and encounter helicopter parents on a regular basis. Furthermore, it explored parent programming currently offered by a Canadian university and how it benefits parents in adapting to the transitions of having college-aged children.

Assumptions

There were four assumptions underlying this study.

1. The phenomenon of helicopter parenting exists (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

2. Parental involvement would be beneficial to a certain level. Research on helicopter parenting has not included a standardized unit of measurement for helicopter parenting. However, researchers have agreed there is a level of parental involvement that, when reached, impacts students. It is at this point that negative consequences of parental involvement may ensue. According to Schiffrin et al. (2013), when college-aged children experience reduced autonomy, competence, and relatedness parenting is deemed inappropriate or overinvolved.

3. When parent participants responded to the interview questions and shared the benefits and drawbacks of their behaviors, they would be selective with the information they shared. Parents' interactions with other parents and college administrators; knowledge and practice of acceptable social and cultural norms; and information from mass media would contribute to their behavior, interpretation of their behavior, and discussion of their behavior. As such, participants' answers would be shaped by their awareness of what society deems as acceptable or appropriate.

4. The student-parent dyadic survey responses from phase one of the study would be similar. With similar or matching survey responses within the student-parent dyads, the researcher would be able to proceed with interviewing parents in phase two of the study.

Delimitations

This study had the following delimitations:

1. Sample: This study consisted of two phases and used multiple instruments.

   a. Phase one: Undergraduate students at a Canadian post-secondary institution were invited to participate in the online student survey. The researcher anticipated undergraduate students were more likely to have overinvolved parents than graduate students. As such, graduate students were not included in the sample. (Initially, only undergraduate students enrolled in one college at the post-secondary institution were invited to participate. Given the low response rate, all undergraduate students at the institution were invited to participate in the online survey.) Upon completion of the survey, students were asked to email an invitation to one of their parents inviting them to participate in the corresponding online parent/guardian survey.

b. Phase two: The second phase of the study contained five parent cases. To participate, parents had survey responses that could be matched with the student version of the survey. They also provided their email address and were part of a student-parent dyad with the most affirmative responses to the helicopter parenting questions.

2. Location: The research questions were investigated at a Canadian post-secondary institution;

3. Time: The multi-instrument data collection took approximately fourteen weeks, spanning from March to June 2015; and,

4. Focus: Since not all parents exhibited helicopter parenting tendencies or overinvolved behaviors, this study included only those parents who were reported by both their college-aged child and themselves as demonstrating the most helicopter parenting behaviors among the respondents.

Limitations

The following were limitations to this study:

1. Given the qualitative, case study method, as well as the small sample size and unique population, the findings of this study were limited and may not be generalizable to the larger issue and greater population. Nevertheless, Yin (2009) noted, "case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (p. 15).

2. As a graduate student, the investigator was a novice researcher with limited research experience. The researcher's ability to apply relevant theories and analyze data

developed over the course of this study through continued research and consultation with her thesis supervisor.

3. The participants may have provided more positive responses to the survey questions than what actually occurred in reality. Although participants were assured their identity would remain anonymous for the purposes of this study, there may be discrepancies between their remembered experiences and what actually took place. Given the types of questions being asked, participant memory bias was anticipated. Intentional or unintentional memory bias may have occurred during the process of participants self-reporting.

Definitions Applicable to this Study

Affective Methods: emotion coding, values coding, versus coding, and evaluation coding are all affective methods. These "methods investigate subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgments) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences…[a]ffective qualities are core motives for human action, reaction, and interaction" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105).

Baby Boom Generation: individuals born between 1946 and 1964, also referred to as Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers may have offspring that are members of the Millennial Generation. They are characterized by having fewer children and more resources (e.g., wealth) than their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Hunt, 2008; "Liftoff for 'helicopter' parents," 2007).

Emerging Adulthood: a time in life, typically ages 18–25, when individuals have left dependency common in childhood and adolescence but have not yet entered responsibilities characteristic of adulthood (Arnett, 2000). "Emerging adulthood is a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain,

when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course" (Arnett, 2000, p. 469).

Emotion Coding: an affective coding method that labels "emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participant, or inferred by the researcher about the participant" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105). Emotion coding is appropriate to "explore intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions" (p. 105).

Helicopter Parents: a phenomenon commonly associated with parents of college-aged children who have "concerns of normative parents taken to a dysfunctional level" (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011, p. 406). Simply put, "A helicopter parent is a mother, father, or even a grandparent who 'hovers' over a student of any age by being involved—sometimes overly so—in student/school, student/employer, or student/societal relationships" (Somers & Settle, 2010a, p. 19).

Millennial Generation/Generation Y: individuals born between 1982 and 2002 and, because of their shared experiences, demonstrate a unique set of characteristics and core traits; also known as Millennials (Elam, Stratton & Gibson, 2007; "The rise of the millennials," 2001). Howe and Strauss (2003) proposed members of the Millennial Generation exhibit seven core traits: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving.

Parent: refers to the "person having lawful care or custody of a child" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, 2012, p. 4). The researcher used *parent/guardian* in the questionnaire; however, for brevity sake *parent* was used to refer to both parent and/or guardian in this study.

Structural Coding: a type of coding that is suitable for interview transcripts; also known as utilitarian coding. It is a question-based code that allows researchers to examine "commonalities, difference, and relationships" among the data (Saldaña, 2013, p. 84).

Values Coding: an affective coding method used on "qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 110). Values coding is particularly appropriate for qualitative studies "that explore cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies…" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 111).

Organization of the Thesis

The present study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces and provides background information on the problem, as well as outlines the research questions. The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. The researcher desires to learn more about why parents are overinvolved and, she compiled the research questions accordingly. The importance of the study, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and definitions of the study are also outlined.

The second chapter is a review of the literature and existing research relevant to the present study. Chapter three outlines the research design including methodology and method. In chapter four, the findings from the online surveys and telephone interviews are presented. In addition, each of the five parents' stories is outlined as a case study. Finally, chapter five includes a discussion of findings and implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the literature, provide a review of existing studies, and outline the context of the problem. Of particular importance is background information on helicopter parenting and research done in this area. The key factors within the higher education environment that play a part in the phenomenon of helicopter parenting, including Millennial characteristics, the demographic of parents, and technology, are also reviewed in this chapter.

Review of the Related Literature

Post-secondary institutions are facing new challenges with increasing involvement from parents in the lives of their college-aged children. Some levels of parental involvement affect students and impose expectations on professors, administrators, and institutions as a whole. By uncovering what motivates helicopter parents, post-secondary institutions may be better prepared to effectively deal with parental concerns. In this review, characteristics of the Millennial Generation and information on students as emerging adults; benefits, drawbacks, types, and measures of helicopter parents; factors contributing to parental support; and some of the varied aspects of the post-secondary environment, including the financial aid landscape, are explored.

Stakeholders

In addition to understanding college-aged students and their parents, the higher education environment in which these stakeholders operate must also be understood. Students, administrators, faculty, and staff are a few of the more commonly named *stakeholders* of a post-secondary institution. Stakeholders are defined as "individuals or entities who stand to gain or lose from the success or failure of a system or an organization" (Gross & Godwin, 2005, para. 9). In recent years, parents, alumni, donors, future employers, and the surrounding community have

also been identified as stakeholders of post-secondary institutions. This literature review will focus on two of the many stakeholders of post-secondary institutions: the student and the parent.

The Student

Students are one of the university's quintessential stakeholders; without them, a university ceases to have purpose. The traditional college-aged student who entered university for the first time in 2014–2015 was born in 1997. According to Statistics Canada (2013a), the largest segment of the student population in Canadian post-secondary institutions is in their late teens and early 20s (para. 4). These students are referred to as *emerging adults* and are typically 18 to 25 years old (Arnett, 2000). Data on Canadian students collected by Statistics Canada (2013b) show that most post-secondary students indeed fall into the emerging adult demographic. In 2009–2010, 41.7% of 18 year olds, 49.4% of 19 year olds, 50.1% of 20 year olds, 45.9% of 21 year olds, 36.8% of 22 year olds, 30.1% of 23 year olds, 22.8% of 24 year olds, and 17.1% of 25 year olds participated in college or university education (Statistics Canada, 2013b, para. 2). Primary stakeholders are students, and first-time, Canadian post-secondary students are indeed emerging adults.

The majority of students entering their first year of university are neither adolescents nor adults. Arnett (2000) asserted, "Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews" (p. 469). The researcher argued that young people in their late teens and early twenties in industrialized countries experience "profound change and importance" during these years (p. 469). In addition to enrolling in higher education, emerging adults experience semi-autonomous living, continued identity development, and introduction to legal privileges (e.g., voting). Furthermore,

demographic shifts, such as early onset of puberty; delayed age of marriage and starting a family; and exploration in areas of worldviews, occupations, and romantic interests make this period of time unique. University students are primarily emerging adults, a period of life that is unlike both adolescence and adulthood.

  Millennials: A new kind of student. Emerging adults are part of the *Millennial Generation* with their own characteristics and core traits. Students born between 1982 and 2002 are classified as the Millennial Generation or *Millennials*, for short. They are also referred to as Generation Y, Gen X[2], Echo Boomers, and the Net generation. They have grown up in very different times than their parents and grandparents and "are experiencing a different kind of childhood than did their boomer and X'er predecessors" ("The rise of the millennials," 2001, p. 7). Baby boomers have birthdates from 1946–1964, years when "families were stable but beginning to crumble" (p. 7). Generation X adults have birthdates from 1965–1985 when "family stability was falling. Millennial children are now experiencing increasing family stability as the surrounding culture renews its appreciation of and support for the family unit" (p. 7). Howe and Strauss (2000) argued there are more Millennials than other generations with some positive qualities: "They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse" (p. 4). Millennials are also described as "optimistic, team-oriented, high-achieving rule-followers" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 1). Millennials are the most prized, precious, and managed children of all time (Bartlett & LeRose, 2010).

  Howe and Strauss (2000) argued Millennials exhibit seven core or distinguishing traits. College-aged students are part of the Millennial Generation and are special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional (pp. 43–44). First, Millennials have a sense that they are "vital to the nation and to their parents' sense of purpose" (p. 43). They feel

they are special. Second, the researchers argued there is a focus on youth safety and, as such, Millennials are also sheltered. With increased safety-focused rules, devices, and practices—in part due to school shootings—Millennials' safety is a concern. They are sheltered and protected. Third, Millennials are confident. Howe and Strauss (2000) noted Millennials have "high levels of trust and optimism" and "a newly felt connection to parents and future" (p. 44), which lead to feelings of confidence. Fourth, Millennials have participated in team sports and group learning. As a result, they have strong peer bonds and are team-oriented. Fifth, they are high achieving. Howe and Strauss credited accountability and higher school standards as reasons why Millennials are the "best-educated and best-behaved adults in the nation's history" (p. 44). Sixth, Millennials are pressured to achieve. They are pushed to maximize opportunities and reduce risks. Finally, Millennials are conventional: "Taking pride in their improving behavior and more comfortable with their parents' values than any other generation in living memory, Millennials support convention—the idea that social rules can help" (p. 44).   These seven traits are unique to the Millennial Generation, a generation that consequently comprises the bulk of the student body currently attending university.

Parents and the Rise of the Helopat

Parents of Millennials are becoming increasingly involved stakeholders of post-secondary institutions. Since the 1990s, higher education administrators and researchers have termed overbearing, micromanaging, and controlling parents as *helicopter parents* or *helopats* (Watson, 2007). Researchers have suggested that approximately 40 to 60% of parents on campuses are helicopter parents (Somers & Settle, 2010a, p. 23). They found helicopter parenting to be most prevalent during students' first, second, and last years of university. According to Somers and Settle (2010a), helicopter parenting increases during the students' final

year of university when they are graduating and entering the workforce or applying to graduate school.

There are numerous definitions of and explanations for helicopter parents. Hunt (2008) claimed, "helicopter parents hover over and around their children interceding as soon as the child faces an unpleasant situation or uncertainty" (p. 9). Whereas Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, and Montgomery (2013) argued, overinvolved parenting involves specific behaviors including "the application of developmentally inappropriate levels of parental directiveness, tangible assistance, problem-solving, monitoring, and involvement into the lives of children" (p. 569). Despite the negative undertones of these definitions, researchers have found both benefits and drawbacks to helicopter parenting.

Increased parental involvement on university and college campuses is being noticed. University faculty and staff "have reported a trend of parents becoming more and more involved in the college-related decisions of their children" (HERI, 2008, as cited in Somers & Settle, 2010a). According to Somers and Settle (2010b), "Financial aid offices, in particular, will receive many more inquiries for additional funds as families struggle to afford college in the midst of the current economic downturn; administrators should respond appropriately and compassionately" (p. 7). This trend of parent inquiries can lead to strained relationships between university staff and parents. Building healthy relationships can often include drawing boundaries. Somers and Settle (2010b) recommended that university staff should help set boundaries by using the term *student* rather than child, and *professors* rather than teachers, when referring to faculty members.

Benefits of helicopter parenting. Studies have found numerous and varied benefits to parents' over involvement in the lives of their college-aged children. Research on child

17

development has found parental involvement to be a strong predictor of positive outcomes like better academic achievement, improved social skills, fewer behavioral problems, and low levels of alcohol use (El Nikali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001; Miller-Day & Kam, 2010). Duchesne, Ratelle, Larose and Guay (2007) studied 498 students during a two-year longitudinal study. They found students whose parents were highly involved and provided autonomous support to their children at the end of high school were more likely to be well adjusted academically in college. Furthermore, studies have shown that college-aged children who are close to their parents reported being happier, having greater life satisfaction, and less psychological distress (Amato, 1994). Researchers have also concluded that attachment levels to parents contribute to college students' psychological well-being, self-esteem, intellectual ability, and social competence (Fass & Tubman, 2002; Love & Murdock, 2004). Additionally, in the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, "college students of helicopter parents reported higher satisfaction and engagement with the college experience" (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014, p. 315).

Drawbacks of helicopter parenting. Despite the positive outcomes in studies on parental attachment, popular media and emerging research largely report negative outcomes when it comes to overinvolved parents. In a survey of 330 university students in the southern United States, LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) found children of perceived helicopter parents had lower levels of overall well-being, were more likely to be treated for anxiety and/or depression, and took pain pills for a reason other than pain. Similarly, Schiffrin et al. (2013) found students with parents that demonstrated helicopter parenting behaviors had higher levels of depression and lower levels of satisfaction with life. Contrary to LeMoyne and Buchanan's findings, Schiffrin et al. did not find increased anxiety in students with helicopter parents.

18

Researchers have argued that helicopter parenting prevents college-aged children from developing the skills they need in order to be independent and face challenges in the college environment (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Marano, 2004). To this end, Segrin et al. (2013) investigated 653 parent-adult child dyads across 32 of the 50 United States and found, "overparenting is associated with higher levels of narcissism and more ineffective coping skills such as internalizing and distancing. These ineffective coping skills are, in turn, associated with greater anxiety and stress in adult children" (p. 587). Likewise, Montgomery (2010) found "a correlation between helicopter parenting and neuroticism, lower openness to new experience, and dependency" (as cited in Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014, p. 315). In addition, over parenting is also associated with lower quality parent-child communication and a higher sense of entitlement in young adult children (Segrin et al., 2012).   Emergent research found that negative outcomes of helicopter parenting do not stop at the college-level. Negative outcomes can extend past college and relate to dysfunctional job search and work place behavior (Bradley-Geist et al., 2014).

Types of helicopter parents. A recent study by Somers and Settle (2010a) identified the five most common types of helicopter parents: consumer advocate, fairness advocate, vicarious college student, toxic parent, and safety patrol parent. In their qualitative study, the researchers conducted interviews and focus groups with 190 academic and student services professionals at four-year universities in the United States. Participants of their study reported helicopter parents as both male and female, and from various ethnic and socioeconomic groups, not just the middle- and upper-class.

Somers and Settle (2010a) contended the first type of parent—the *consumer advocate*—views the college experience as a consumer transaction. They look for price, demand a warranty,

and consider everything open to negotiation. Some parents believe they are co-purchasers of the degree or co-consumers of the services. *Fairness or equity advocate* is the second type of helicopter parent. These parents say they want fairness and equity when really what they seek is the best for their child and display a sense of entitlement. The third type of parent, the *vicarious college student*, missed out on their own college experience and wants to live it through their child's college days. They attend activities on campus, sporting events, and parents' days. Fourth, *toxic parents* "have numerous psychological issues and are controlling, negative, and try at once to live their children's lives even as they 'one-up' their children in the process" (Somers & Settle, 2010a, p. 26). The final helicopter parent type, the *safety patrol parent*, is focused on the safety of their child. Given recent attacks on college campuses, these parents have real fears but they may be acted out through inappropriate behavior. Parents described as one of these five helicopter parent types display the same types of overbearing, overinvolved, and over protectant tendencies regardless of what appear to be the underlying reasons.

Measures of helicopter parents. In addition to providing types and definitions of helicopter parents, researchers have also developed various measures and scales to assess if parents can be categorized as helicopter parents. Randall (2007) asserted there are many "quick, thoroughly un-scientific" (para. 1) quizzes for parents of college-aged students to determine if they are a helicopter parent. According to Somers and Settle (2010b), "With the many issues inherent in the study of parent involvement, measurement of the phenomenon is difficult and complex" (p. 6). However, there are four measures that have been recently developed for research on helicopter parents and college-aged students: the *Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS)*, the *Helicopter Parenting Measure*, the *Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviors Measur*e, and the *Helicopter Parenting Instrument (HPI)*.

The first measure, the *Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS)*, was developed by LeMoyne

and Buchanan (2011). According to the creators of the HPS,

[H]elicopter parenting represents a collection of tendencies that constitute appropriate

parenting characteristics taken to an inappropriate degree. This inappropriateness

manifests itself in the parents' inability or unwillingness to (as perceived by the

respondent) allow their children to experience life's challenges independently. (p. 405)

Sample questions for the college students' surveyed included, "My parents supervised my every

move growing up," "It was very important to my parents that I never fail in life," and "I trust my

parents' judgment over my own" (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011, p. 406). Responses ranged from

1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The higher the score, the greater level of perceived

helicopter parenting by the respondent. The study found that students with helicopter parents

have more negative feelings about themselves, "in that they have lower levels of overall well-

being" (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011, p. 412).

Second, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) developed the *Helicopter Parenting Measure*

that examined the interrelation between helicopter parenting, behavioral control, and

psychological control in emerging adulthood. The measure looked at the correlation between

helicopter parenting to general dimensions of parenting, specifically parental warmth,

involvement, and autonomy granting. The researchers also studied other aspects of the parent-

child relationship including guidance, affection, and emotional support the child felt from the

relationship; as well as child adjustment outcomes such as self-worth, identity achievement,

school engagement, and perceived adult status (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). To measure for

helicopter parenting, emerging adults and their parents answered questions based on a 5-point

scale. Responses ranged from 1 *(not at all like me/him/her)* to 5 *(a lot like me/him/her)*.

Questions included "My parent makes important decisions for me," "My parent intervenes in settling disputes with my roommates or friends," and "My parent solves any crisis or problem I might have" (p. 1183). Using the same 5-point scale, both groups were asked some of the following sample questions to assess behavioral control: "My parent tries to limit or control who my friends are," "My parent tries to tell me what I can and can't do on nights and weekends," and "My parent tries to control which classes I take or what my major is" (p. 1183). The researchers also asked questions to assess psychological control using a 3-point scale with responses ranging from 1 *(not at all like him/her)* to 3 *(a lot like him/her)*. Questions included "My parent is less friendly with me if I do not see things his/her way," "My parent will avoid looking at me when I have disappointed him/her," and "My parent, if I have hurt his/her feelings, stops talking to me until I please him/her" (p. 1183). Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) found their study included benefits and drawbacks of overinvolved parenting behaviors. Furthermore, they suggested "helicopter parenting appears to be inappropriately intrusive and managing, but done out of strong parental concern for the well-being and success of the child" (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012, p. 1186).

The third measure, the *Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviors Measure*, created by Schiffrin et al. (2013) originally included 27 items, but only15 items were retained as part of the final measure. This measure allowed students to report on their mothers' behaviors. It contained questions about control of the students' actions and when mothers' act on behalf of the students. Some of the questions include, "My mother monitors who I spend time with," "My mother has instructed me on how to properly care for a car," "My mother does my laundry when I come home," and "My mother manages my bank account" (p. 5). The measure was created using inappropriate parenting behaviors of college-aged students identified

22

by college administrators. College students rated their agreement with the statements about their mothers' current parenting behaviors on a scale from 1 *(strong disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree)*. The data showed that students with parents that demonstrated helicopter parenting behaviors had higher levels of depression and lower levels of satisfaction with life. However, contrary to previous findings, this study did not find increased anxiety in those students with helicopter parents (Schiffrin et al., 2013). Since this measure was created for mothers and primarily female college students completed the survey, the researchers suggested the measure could examine father-son dyads by rewording the survey questions to include fathers and recruiting male college students to participate.

Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, and Weber (2014) created the fourth measure, the *Helicopter Parenting Instrument (HPI)*, to be paired with LeMoyne and Buchanan's *Helicopter Parenting Scale*. Together these instruments measured Millennial's perceptions of helicopter parenting behaviors displayed by their parents. The 15-item HPI included questions like, "My parent tries to make all of my major decisions" and "My parent feels like a bad parent when I make poor choices" (Odenweller et al., 2014, p. 425). The researchers found helicopter parenting was positively associated with the constructs of authoritarian parenting style and conformity orientation, which "include strict and overpowering parental control and monitoring, unconditional child obedience and dependence, and have been associated with negative outcomes for children" (Odenweller et al., 2014, p. 418).

All four of these helicopter parenting measures surveyed students. However, of the four measures outlined above, only one of the measures—the *Helicopter Parenting Measure*—was originally created for both student and parent participants. As such, it is evident that researchers preferred to survey students about their helicopter parents, rather than surveying parents directly.

Although exceptional, one set of researchers (Somers & Settle, 2010a) has chosen not to survey students at all. Instead, they surveyed the experts on campus, bypassing students and parents completely.

Parental support factors. The many factors that contribute to the level of support provided by parents include socioeconomic status, family size, gender, and marital status. Kantrowitz and Tyre (2006) asserted that many Baby Boomer parents, when compared to past generations, are part of dual-income families and have an abundance of resources to aid their children. They are wealthy and well educated, as well. As such, helicopter parenting is often exhibited by professional middle- and upper-class parents with more financial resources who are able to provide more tangible assistance to grown children than less well-off parents (Fingerman, Miller, Birditt & Zarit, 2009; Nelson, 2010, as cited in Givertz & Segrin, 2012). To this end, Rossi and Rossi (1990) found that income was significantly related to the amount of help mothers and fathers gave to their children. Parents with higher incomes were able to provide more extensive help to their adult children. In addition, children reported receiving more help from mothers than from fathers. Fathers provided advice, financial support, and job prospects, whereas mothers were more apt to provide emotional support, gifts, and caregiving (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Given that financial resources are finite, parents may feel the need to intervene on behalf of their children when it comes to issues of financial aid more than in other areas of a college education. Parents may have planned and saved for many years to pay for their children's college education.

Students who come from larger families may have less parental support than students from smaller families. Larger families typically have lower socioeconomic status and fewer financial assets (Fingerman et al., 2009). Larger families may suffer from scarcity of parental

academic support for any given child. Likewise, some parents as they approach middle-age demonstrate *resource expansion* and are required to juggle competing demands such as work, caregiving for elderly parents, and support for their grown children and grandchildren.

Marital status may also play a role in the support of parents. Furstenberg, Hoffman, and Shrestha (1995) found married parents rather than single, divorced, or remarried parents, provided more support to adult children. In addition, fathers who lived with their children were able to provide tangible and emotional support, and establish strong, lasting relationships, when compared with fathers who lived apart from their children earlier in life.

Motivation for helicopter parenting. Researchers cited increased technology; higher education levels; fewer children; and, more economic uncertainty among the reasons parents are more involved in their children's lives and university education than ever (Hunt, 2008). Children's achievements also impact the support parents provide to their children. Children who are high achievers receive more parental support because it makes parents look or feel good (Carstensen & Lockenhoff, 2003, as cited in Fingerman, Miller, Birditt, & Zarit, 2009). Parents with high-achieving children viewed their offspring as extensions of themselves (Shellenbarger, 2005). In a study on parents and their relationships with their adult children, those children who shared their parents' values and had few problems were more likely to reciprocate support in the future when parents were elderly and needed care (Fingerman, et al., 2009). These researchers found some parents who felt their children were high achievers reflected their success as parents. In addition, parents supported their children in hopes of one day having the support reciprocated to them (Fingerman et al., 2009). Thus, some motives for parental actions may be self-serving in future reciprocity of caregiving activities and receipt of glory based on the academic achievement of the child. Furthermore, the parental support may be given in a conflicted

manner. Fingerman, Cheng, Cichy, Birditt, and Zarit (2013) found that 40% of grown children felt support from parents was coercive, intrusive, or pushy and that parents expected repayment or reminded children that support was given (p. 908).

Being overly involved in children's lives can impact both the parent and the college-aged child. Research has found some parents benefit by having fewer depressive symptoms from providing emotional, financial, and other instrumental support to grown children (Byers, Levy, Allore, Bruce, & Kasl, 2008). While other parents who support their grown children feel dissatisfied over the emotional, time, and material costs they incur as a result of their support (Fingerman et al., 2012). "[T]he bulk of evidence suggests parents who provide intense support to grown children will report diminished well-being, particularly if they view that support as excessive" (Fingerman et al., 2012, p. 883).

Many students, especially in their first year or two of college or university, are unmarried. Since married children have a spouse to lean on for support, unmarried children rely more on their parents. Students living at home save money on food and rent and may also receive more support than students living independently because of parents' ability to share resources and time (Schoeni & Ross, 2005). As such, students living at home with their parents are reliant on their parents for many resources, perhaps more so than children living away from home. Surprisingly, in the study by Fingerman et al. (2009), when other factors were controlled, the child's age, rather than status as a student, was associated with financial and other support from parents.

Academic achievement and helicopter parents. Researchers have investigated whether helicopter parents help or hinder their children's academic performance. According to data collected from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, students in frequent contact

with their parents reported higher levels of engagement and use of deep learning activities while in college (Mathews, 2007). Mathews (2007) suggested, "The study found no evidence that helicopter parenting produces better grades. In fact, students with very involved parents had lower grades than those whose parents were not so involved" (para. 5). Similarly, Hofer (2008) found no evidence that parental regulation of academics was beneficial to students. On the other hand, Duchesne, Ratelle, Larose, and Guay (2007) believed that students with parents who were highly involved and provided autonomous support at the end of high school were more likely to be well adjusted academically in college. Thus, research has led to contradictory findings regarding helicopter parenting and the impact on students' academic achievement.

Parent-student relationship and autonomous student development. A student may enter university as a dependent adolescent but the goal for them may be to graduate as a self-sufficient adult. To this end, Hofer (2008) argued, "One of the primary psychosocial tasks of the period of emerging adulthood is to become an autonomous, self-governing, self-regulating individual" (p. 9). Whether developing as a student or simply as an emerging adult, separation from parents is considered a "key component of the autonomy development process for college students" (Cullaty, 2011, p. 427). Separation, however, does not mean ending the parent-student relationship. In a study at Southern State University, Cullaty (2001) surveyed 169 third-year students and, from the survey results, selected 18 students with varying levels of parental involvement to be interviewed. Cullaty (2011) found that students "gained confidence when they acted autonomously and received support for their actions from their parents" (p. 431). Parents who provided the support and encouragement students need to grow academically saw students excel when faced with new challenges. Cullaty suggested, "support involves listening to the student, asking questions, respecting independent decisions, and offering emotional

encouragement" (p. 436). In addition, there are three parental behaviors that Cullaty (2011) argued promote autonomous child development: "redefining the parent-student relationship, relinquishing unnecessary control, and encouraging responsibility" (p. 431). Cullaty found parents promoted autonomy in their relationship with their student by being their friend and treating them like equals; allowing them to form their own opinions and make their own decisions; resigning control and allowing students to make mistakes; and providing guidance, not control, when they are taking on additional responsibility. In the same way that parental support helps develop autonomy in students, this study found parental control inhibited autonomy. Parents who exerted too much influence or became overinvolved in their students' lives caused students to feel conflicted about their choices and caused frustration and resentment in the student (Cullaty, 2011).

Parent centered activities at university. Given the desire of parents to be involved in their college-aged child's life, some post-secondary institutions are responding in a proactive way by creating programs specifically for parents. According to LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011), "The issue of helicopter parenting is important, as universities are spending both time and money on the assumption that it leads to overall negative outcomes for college students" (p. 413). Indeed, post-secondary institutions within Canada and the United States are offering support programs for parents to reduce parent stress and promote healthy parent-child relations.

Each institution differs in their level of support to and interaction with parents. According to Cutright (2008), a change in the ways parents and universities interact is evident, but helicopter parents are not the norm:

> [T]here seems to be broad consensus that the institution-parent relationship is changing, and at its most extreme manifestations presents the helicopter parent phenomenon. But it

28

is important that we not lose sight of the fact that this behavior describes a minority of

parents and that it may be the result of institutional failure to provide them adequate

information and avenues of appropriate relationship with the campus. (p. 47)

To provide parents with adequate and appropriate information as well as facilitate parents' quest

for a relationship with the post-secondary institution, the number of institutions that offer parent

programs like Parent Orientation, Family Day or Weekend, Parents Council, and Parents

Association is increasing (Savage, 2007). According to the results of the 2011 National Survey

of College and University Parent Programs conducted by Savage and Petree (2011), 52.2% of the

211 colleges and universities surveyed developed a parent or family program since the year 2000

(p. 9). The number and scope of parent and family programming has been increasing in higher

education (Savage & Petree, 2011) and institutions are promoting their parent services more

publicly (Savage, 2007).

Some institutions employ *parent coordinators* that plan events specifically for parents,

provide newsletters, and answer telephone hotlines. According to Lum (2006), almost 70% of

American four-year colleges and universities have parent coordinators on staff. Although this

trend may not be catching on as quickly in Canada, Canadian universities and colleges across the

country from the University of Victoria to the Memorial University of Newfoundland and

institutions in between are catering to parents.

Canadian universities are offering parent-friendly websites, parent orientation, and other

activities specifically focused on providing information for parents (University of Victoria, 2013;

Memorial University, 2013). At the University of Waterloo, parents were welcomed for two

events during past orientation weeks. Their website specifically advertises parent orientation as

a way to, "[d]evelop strategies to help you support your student…. Learn about campus life,

services offered, what changes you might see in your student during the first few weeks and how to support them through their first year" (University of Waterloo, 2012, "Parent Orientation", para. 1).   Gross and Godwin (2005) argued that parental influence may stop at the student's choice of post-secondary institution and not extend to the institution itself:

> Parents increasingly have a great interest in the educational institution their child is attending but little influence over the enterprise. Similarly, the local community has considerable interest in but little influence on the enterprise. These placements signal the importance of educational institutions increasing their communication with these constituencies and perhaps considering ways to involve them more fully within the on-campus life of the institution. (para. 14)

Through programs, staff resources, and websites, post-secondary institutions are trying to facilitate parent involvement while allowing the student the freedom to be an adult and take responsibility for their university education. Across North America post-secondary institutions are facilitating helicopter parenting; meanwhile, researchers are studying helicopter parents in order to gain a better understanding of these overinvolved stakeholders.

The recent emergence of helicopter parents has led to researchers creating new terminology, definitions, scales, subtypes, and studies to define, measure, and explain the phenomenon of helicopter parenting. With both benefits and drawbacks to helicopter parenting, more post-secondary educational institutions are responding to parents' needs and offering more parent programing than ever.

Technology

In their analysis of overinvolved parents, researchers (Somers & Settle, 2010b) have credited advances in technology with enabling helicopter parenting. Advances in technology

make it possible for parents to stay connected with the post-secondary institution and, more importantly, with their children 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The widespread use of the Internet, email, text messaging, cell phones, and social media allow parents to continually check in with their children, regardless of the physical distance between them (Hofer, 2008; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Randall, 2007). To this end, Richard Mullendore, University of Georgia professor, has nicknamed the cell phone the "world's longest umbilical cord" (Vadeboncoeur, 2013, para. 8) allowing students to remain electronically tethered and experience *extreme connectivity* with their parents and the world around them. While this extreme connectivity may have its advantages, according to Somers and Settle (2010b), helicopter parents can also use technology to invade their children's privacy:

> In this "wired world" parents can and do masquerade online as their children. Parents may complete their students' online profiles for roommate matching: some research their children's roommates via Facebook or other electronic media and then masquerade as their children when requesting a roommate reassignment. Parents also can register online for their students, monitor their academic progress, and compose and answer e-mail. If the parent is savvy enough, she can even log into the course software and registrar's system and learn individual course grades as they are posted. (p. 4)

Through the use of current technology, parents are able to stay connected with their children and check up on them as well.

Social media is "a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation and sharing" (Junco, Heibergert & Loken, 2011, p. 1). Social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Instagram are part of college students' daily lives (Junco et al., 2011). In 2007, the Higher

Education Research Institute reported that 94% of first year college students used social networking websites (HERI, as cited in Junco et al., 2011, p. 2) with Facebook reported as the most popular social networking website. When Mastrodicasa and Kepic (2005) surveyed a large research university, they found 85% of students had Facebook accounts (Mastrodicasa & Kepic, 2005, as cited in Junco et al., 2011, p. 2).

Hofer (2008) studied 407 first-year and sophomore students at an American liberal arts college. Participants completed an online survey and were also asked to forward a web link to their parents to participate. The researcher found students reported communicating with their parents 13 times a week, on average twice daily (p. 14). The most common modes of communication were cell phones then email. Female students communicated with their parents more frequently than male students and, similarly, parents initiated contact with daughters more often than with sons. Most students were satisfied with the level of communication with their parents; however, many wanted more contact with their fathers. Parents were also satisfied with the level of communication with their students (Hofer, 2008).

Technology allows parents to be overinvolved in their college-aged child's life, which does not always benefit the student. Researchers have found that Millennials are over reliant on technology and, as a result, have "stunted interpersonal (face-to-face) skills" (Elam, Stratton & Gibson, 2007, p. 22) and multi-tasking tendencies, which have led to shortened attention spans (Elam et al., 2007). Similarly, Hofer (2008) contented that parental intervention is facilitated by technology and that this intervention may be detrimental to the student's development:

> There is no evidence that continued parental regulation of either academics or behavior is
> beneficial. Continued parental intervention in the college years appears to be abetted by
> the frequent communication made possible by current technology, and such intervention

may in some cases be preventing students from enjoying their overall college experience

as well as from developing satisfying adult relationships with their parents. (p. 21)

Underdeveloped interpersonal skills coupled with easy access to telephones and other

communication devices allow students to unnecessarily burden their parents with intense

emotion. Students vent their frustrations to their parents and then parents get concerned. Somers

and Settle (2010b) noted, "In reality, these calls may be more of a visceral reaction to everyday

stress than a serious sign of distress on the part of the student" (p.4). With the ability to easily

access technology, students are given the opportunity to overreact to situations resulting in a

chain reaction where parents act upon exaggerated levels of frustration and unnecessarily elevate

the student's concern to university officials.

Technology has changed how students interact with their parents, peers, employers, and

the like. It has also changed how students (or their parents) apply for university admission,

register for courses, submit scholarship applications, and select roommates, all of which can be

done online with a few quick clicks of a mouse. In addition to the technical changes to

administrative aspects of university, technology has also changed the way students learn and

engage in their university education and day-to-day learning. From electronic voting systems,

which aid in learning math content to educational video games to help teach genetic concepts,

researchers have found correlations between the use of technology and student learning and

engagement (Junco et al., 2011).

Junco et al., (2011) studied the effects of Twitter use on 125 pre-health professional

majors taking a first year seminar course. Twitter allows users to post short blogs or *tweets* of

140 characters or less. According to Twitter.com (2013), "Twitter is a real-time information

network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find

interesting" (para. 1). Junco et al., (2011) contended that Twitter use can aid in learning, specifically in motivating students, facilitating engagement with each other and leading to academic and psychosocial development. Specifically, the researchers found improved contact between students and faculty members, increased cooperation among students, the promotion of active learning, prompt feedback from faculty, maximization of the time on task, communication of high expectations, and respect for diversity, all of which are in line with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles for good practice and student engagement in undergraduate education (Junco et al., 2011). Technology has many benefits, some of which have extended to classroom learning.

Technology can allow for better communication with helicopter parents. Somers and Settle (2010b) claimed that technology aids in institutional communication strategies with parents. The use of campus hotlines that contain pre-recorded information about safety and campus emergencies, websites with up-to-date information, and group texts or email messages that provide urgent information "help parents and students ground their thoughts and behavior on fact rather than rumor" (Somers & Settle, 2010b, p. 8). Indeed, colleges and universities are using electronic formats to notify parents of emergency situations on campus. From the 2011 National Survey of College and University Parent Programs, researchers found most of the 211 participant institutions provided emergency information to parents and family members by email (64%), website updates (34%), social media (9%), text messaging (23%) or recorded messaging and calls (15%). Nine percent of participants indicated their institutions had emergency notification systems in place for parents/families, but did not specify how their systems worked (Savage & Petree, 2011, p. 17). Based on these survey results, institutions are likely to use more than one format to distribute emergency information to parents and families. Parents can be

overinvolved in their children's lives by using advances in technology inappropriately; however, some forms of technology can assist practitioners in responding to parents.

Technology has changed since parents were students, notably through the creation of the Internet, email, social media, and smartphones. Current technology certainly allows parents to interact frequently with children, even multiple times each day. Furthermore, easily accessible technology may allow for students to connect with their parents to vent frustrations and air their feelings. Also, educators at post-secondary institutions can use technology as a learning tool. In fact, technology may prove to be an efficient and effective way for administrators at post-secondary institutions to communicate important information to stakeholders, specifically students and parents, as well.

The Higher Education Environment

Students and parents are stakeholders within the higher education environment: a complex and ever changing setting. This environment impacts students and how parents are involved in their college-aged children's lives. In addition to advances in technology, including online course registration, grade retrieval, and learning tools, there are other changes in the higher education environment that impact student and parental involvement. The needs of students and the diversity of the campus result in growing campus communities and expanded student services and other amenities. Higher education has become more of an investment each year with annual increases in tuition, books, supplies, and living costs.

Entrance requirements and admission processes are more rigorous and competitive than in the past. To this end, Springer, Reider, and Morgan (2013) argued more high school graduates are competing for admission spots than ever before due to a few key reasons. First, a larger number of high school graduates are applying to colleges and universities. Second, students

believe obtaining a college degree is important to succeed in life. Third, colleges are

aggressively recruiting larger, more diverse pools of applicants. Fourth, the Internet makes

college information more accessible to students through websites, virtual tours, and social media.

The Internet also allows universities and colleges to post online admission applications, making

it easy to apply.

Privacy Act

Post-secondary institutions have boundaries imposed on them by legislation. Parents

sometimes find it difficult to adhere to these boundaries. University faculty and staff must also

adhere to these university policies, rules, and regulations. Some student-related information

requested by parents such as course withdrawal, final grades, and class location, is protected and

cannot be released to parents and other third parties.

Students of post-secondary institutions are considered adults by the institution regardless

of the age at which they start attending, even as early as 17 years old. Some parents, who are

accustomed to receiving and accessing all information as their children progress from

Kindergarten to Grade 12, object when they are unable to receive or prohibited from accessing

student information when their child arrives at university. The inability to obtain information

may be seen as a barrier for some parents who frequently intervene on their child's behalf.

College-aged students are considered adults by university standards and, in Saskatchewan, the

provincial *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIPP).*

The LAFOIPP Act prohibits communicating with anyone other than the student directly unless

the student provides written consent. In America, post-secondary institutions are bound by the

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is defined as:

Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records…. FERPA gives

parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights

transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond

the high school level. (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, "Family Educational Rights

and Privacy Act (FERPA)", para. 1)

According to Cutright (2008), "FERPA, in theory, is a sound articulation of student

independence and adulthood. In practice, it has sometimes inhibited institutional-parental

consultation when that consultation is appropriate to the student's best interests" (p. 45).

Indeed, there are laws and privacy acts that administrators can cite for not providing

certain information and details. Nevertheless, conflict can arise between parents and university

administrators as a result of demanding, overinvolved parents. As Cullaty (2011) argued,

increased parental involvement may contradict privacy acts, as well as the objectives of post-

secondary institutions:

Student affairs administrators worry that a high level of parental involvement prevents

students from achieving important learning outcomes. That is, the phenomenon of

increased parental involvement may place parents at odds with the mission of colleges

and universities to transform teenagers into adults with the ability to take responsibility

for their own lives and contribute to society. (p. 425)

Even if access to information were not prohibited, practical considerations like parent-student

estrangement and the students' safety, as well as other risks and benefits to students' autonomy,

growth, learning, and maturation must also be considered.

Higher Education Rankings

Parents may not be able to access restricted student information easily or frequently but they do access institutional information by way of university rankings, which is widely available in print and online. Annual university rankings by *Maclean's* Magazine (Dehaas, 2012) have led to an increased competitiveness among universities and consumer-driven mentality among college savvy students and parents. For decades *Maclean's* has been creating a *University Rankings* edition. In recent years, the edition is a guide to Canada's best schools comprised of hundreds of pages of information. These rankings have been called the "holy book for anyone planning their education in Canada" (Dehaas, 2012, para.1). The issue contains advice, charts, stories, and statistics to help students choose "the right school" (para. 2).

The 2015 ranking results were divided into three categories which recognized differences in program offerings and levels of researching funding: the Medical Doctoral University Ranking, of which McGill University is listed as the leader for the tenth year in a row; Comprehensive University Rankings, which lists Simon Fraser University as regaining the first-place position; and, the Primarily Undergraduate Ranking, ranking Mount Allison University as first since 2007 (Maclean's, 2015, para. 3–5). In 2012, *Maclean's* ranked 49 Canadian universities in six broad areas including students and classes, faculty, resources, student support, library, and reputation. Also under the six broad areas of review, *Maclean'*s magazine addresses financial aid questions, a topic of great interest to parents. Data are obtained from various sources including Statistics Canada, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, the three major Canadian granting agencies—SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR—as well as surveys sent to university officials at each of the institutions (Dwyer, 2012). Year after year post-secondary institutions, especially those with low rankings, strive to improve their rankings.

Officials at post-secondary institutions understand the 2.4 million *Maclean's* readers use

the rankings in order to decide where they or others ought to attend university (Maclean's, 2013).

Overinvolved parents are suspected to make up a portion of the large readership and,

presumably, use the rankings in guiding and directing their children in their choice of higher

education.

Financial Aid

One area of focus in the *Maclean's* university ranking is financial aid. Financial aid is a

topic of great interest to parents. Stelmach and von Wolff (2010) investigated how the parental

role was conceptualized on websites and print materials of eight universities in Western Canada.

The researches noted two themes emerged from their study, one of which was parents' role as

"financial investors and advisors" (Stelmach & von Wolff, 2010, p. 69). They asserted that

because of rising higher education costs, financial information is in the top three categories of

information available to parents. Due to the sizable investment, financing post-secondary

education is important to parents. Consistent with these findings, Rapp (2005) recommended,

"parents understand the scholarship awarding practices of universities and colleges" (p. 19)

because parental encouragement influences the student's college decision.

Financial aid at colleges and universities is comprised of student loans, scholarships,

bursaries, and prizes. Student loans are typically offered by the government; however, loans and

lines of credit from financial institutions are also available. Scholarships, also referred to as

merit-based awards, have an academic achievement component and are awarded primarily on the

basis of grades. Bursaries, or need-based awards, have a financial need component and are

primarily awarded based on a financial need calculation. Finally prizes are awarded based on a

specific accomplishment or achievement (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Awards are free

money that students do not pay back; loans must be paid back, usually with interest, after graduation. Despite the source, financial aid can help students make ends meet while in university, which is especially important in a time when tuition rates are at all-time highs.

Tuition rates. Education level influences level of income. The more educated people are, the more income they will earn over a lifetime, making post-secondary education an important life decision (Rapp, 2005). When looking at lifetime earnings, those with a Bachelor's degree will earn 84% more than those individuals with only a high school diploma, according to statistics reported by American researchers Carnevale, Rose, and Cheah (2011, p. 1). Earning more money over a lifetime may not be the only reason individuals attend university, but it is an important one.

University comes with a hefty price tag, one that is getting larger each and every year. As Cutright (2008) indicated, "Tuition rates that have risen more steadily than general inflation for decade after decade, no matter the justifications, have resulted in price tag that can make a college education the most costly expenditure of a lifetime" (p. 42). Undergraduate students in Canada paid five percent more in tuition in 2012–2013 than in the previous year and in 2011–2012 tuition had increased over four percent as well. Tuition is indeed rising faster than the rate of inflation, which increased only 1.3 percent from 2011 to 2012 (The Canadian Press, 2012, para. 2). With increasing tuition rates financial aid may be seen as being increasingly important, "As the college degree is becoming essential, college tuition is skyrocketing—creating a paradox in which students need to have money in order to make money" (Scurry, 2003, as cited in Rapp, 2005, p. 16). As a result of increased costs, many students rely on their parents to pay for tuition or seek financial aid to help ease the costly burden of education.

Lipman Hearne Inc. surveyed 600 students graduating from an American high school asking for the most influential factors regarding their decision to apply to a specific post-secondary institution. The researchers found that the majority of students did not name financial aid as one of the most influential factors. In fact, 25% of students named academic program as the most important factor in their decision to apply to a specific post-secondary institution, whereas 21% listed proximity to their homes, 10% identified cost, and only 7% indicated scholarship or financial aid as one of the most influential factors in their decision (Fischer, 2006, p. A49). With the cost of tuition rising yet students failing to report the impact of financial aid on their decision to attend college or university, the cost of education may be the burden of a stakeholder other than the student, namely the parent. Somers and Settle (2010b) contended that higher education has become a commodity:

> Parents/customers want individualized attention and instruction. In return for their considerable financial investment in higher education, consumers want results: good grades, highly paid internships, jobs with the best firms, admission to the best graduate and professional schools, and career and personal success. The encroachment of the consumer culture into higher education is a major cause of both helicopter behavior on the part of the parents and frustration on the part of the educators who regret the suggestion that higher education can be bought and sold like a commodity. (pp. 4-5)

Tuition rates and financial aid are important matters to parents because of the ever-increasing academic costs of attendance.

Enrolment management strategy. Post-secondary institutions use financial aid as part of their *Enrolment Management Strategy (EMS)*, a term which emerged in the late 1970s and has become popular among higher education administrators in recent years. Tuition costs and

financial aid both influence student enrolment decisions and closely tie together financial and enrolment objectives. The purpose of EMS is to attract and retain students (Hossler, 2000). Thus, colleges and universities ultimately offer awards to recruit and keep students. Institutions and their donors also use awards to recognize excellence in certain academic areas and provide financial support to students who need it the most.

Some post-secondary institutions use "high-tuition, high-aid strategy" while others "use low tuition costs rather than financial aid to help manage their enrollments" (Hossler, 2000, p. 81). Financial aid is complex and many factors contribute to its complexity: student's academic ability, financial aid, and admission offers from other colleges or universities (Hossler, 2000). Hossler noted the actual amount of the award is of low importance to a student's decision to enrol:

> [R]eceiving a financial aid award has a significant positive effect on the likelihood that a student will enter the institution that has made the financial aid offer. Indeed, these reviews conclude that the effects of just receiving an award, regardless of the amount, equals or exceeds the effects of the amount of the award. (p. 81)

The complexity of financial aid and the enrolment management strategies of post-secondary institutions, as the *Maclean's* university rankings suggest, are some of the many factors that have an impact on a student's decision to attend a post-secondary institution. Financial aid is an important consideration for students and their parents and certainly part of the larger higher education environment.

As shown in Figure 1, based on the literature reviewed, there are three factors that contribute to helicopter parenting of college-aged children: characteristics of Millennials, demographics of parents, and advances in technology. These three factors, when taken within

the context of the higher education environment, contribute to helicopter parenting. Rules,

regulations, and policies relating to privacy legislation; *Maclean's* university rankings; and

financial aid all contribute to the higher education environment in which helicopter parenting

occurs. With these factors and contributions to the environment, the phenomenon of helicopter

parents is present at post-secondary institutions today.
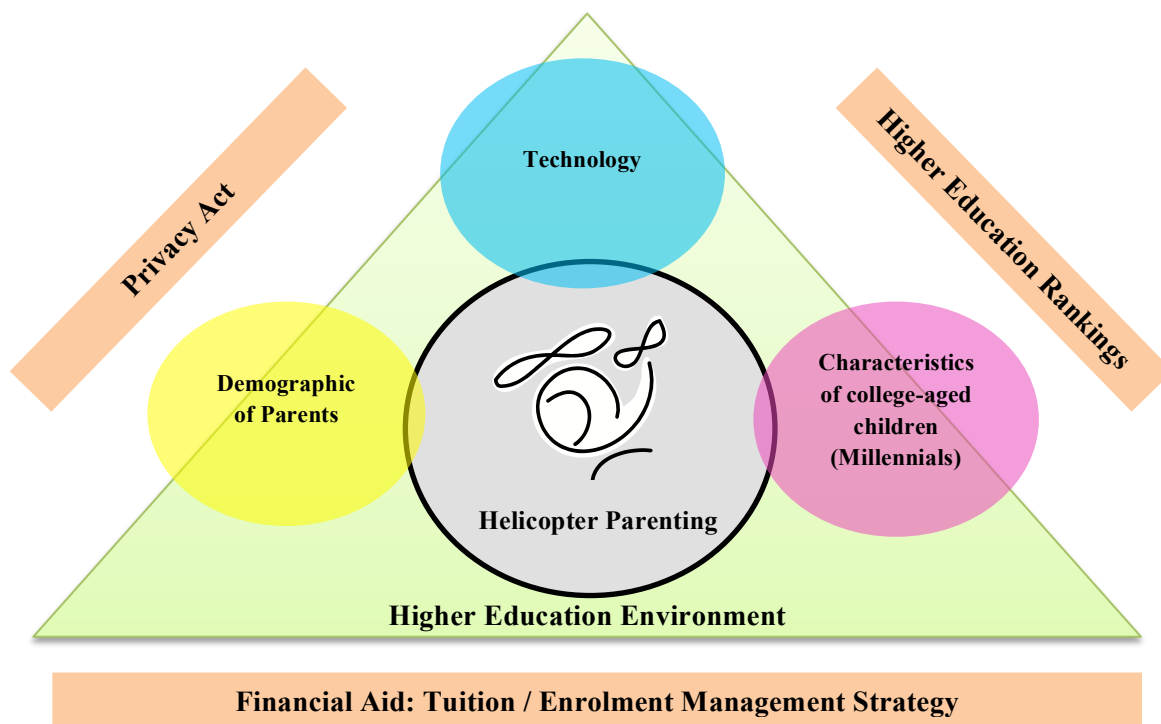
Figure 1. Helicopter parenting outline of the literature reviewed for this study. This figure
illustrates the factors contributing to helicopter parenting within the higher education environment,
which were reviewed as part of this study.

Summary

This chapter is a review of current literature including a description of the Millennial

Generation, the shifting demographic of parents, and current technology that all play a part in the

phenomenon of helicopter parenting within the higher education environment. Helicopter

parenting is a complex, modern day phenomenon with benefits and drawbacks for both the

student and the parent. Types of helicopter parents have been proposed and measures/scales created; however, researchers in the area of helicopter parenting agree that "future work is needed in examining *why* parents engage in helicopter parenting" (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The purpose of the current research study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

This chapter outlines the purpose and methodology. The method of this study is also included and details the sample population; participation recruitment; anonymity and confidentiality; credibility, validity, and trustworthiness; pilot testing; and, data collection. In addition, ethical guidelines are included.

Purpose of the Study

Past research has examined the phenomenon of helicopter parenting (Fingerman et al., 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2012; Schiffrin et al., 2013) however, research into why parents engage in excessive, inappropriate, and overinvolved parenting is limited. The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. This study was a qualitative, two phase, multi-instrument case study using a social constructivist approach.

Methodology

This research study was a qualitative, multi-instrument case study with a social constructivist worldview. Creswell (2007) argued that when the constructivist approach is used, the researcher generates a pattern of meaning through the use of interpretive research methods. By using a constructivist approach, the open-ended questions allowed participants to describe their experiences, views, and perspectives. Meaning for the study was found by what participants say or do and in their interaction with others, historical experiences, and cultural norms (Creswell, 2007).

Method of the Study

The researcher conducted this qualitative study using a multi-instrument, multiple case study method. To this end, five individual telephone interviews were conducted resulting in five

cases. According to Yin (2009), "Case studies can cover multiple cases and then draw a single set of 'cross-case' conclusions" (p.20). Cresswell (2007) noted interviews as an acceptable form of data collection for the case study method. By using the case study method, an in-depth description, analysis, and understanding of the multiple cases were developed (Cresswell, 2007).

Yin (2009) proposed case study methods meet three conditions: the proposed research question is exploratory; the investigator does not have control over behavioural events; and, the focus of the study is on contemporary events. This study met the three conditions Yin (2009) outlined. First, the research questions explored the benefits and drawbacks to parental involvement, as well as the motivation behind parental involvement. Second, using open-ended interview questions, the researcher did not have control over the participants' behavior. Finally, this study focused on contemporary events. Helicopter parenting is a contemporary, modern, and relevant topic that is currently popular in mainstream media.

Sample Population

Research on helicopter parenting is limited; however, research has often been further limited to the perspective of the student and does not include the perspective of the parent. Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014) argued there is a measurement issue if the data include only student participants. "Students might have a biased perspective of their parents' action" or "students might not be entirely aware of their parents' behaviors" (p. 325). To avoid possible perspective bias, the researcher surveyed both students and parents in this study.

Participants for phase one of the study were initially selected by convenience or availability sampling (Cresswell, 2007). Approximately 1,200 undergraduate students enrolled in a single college at a Canadian post-secondary institution were invited to participate in the survey. Although surveying participants from only one college was not a representative sample

of the entire post-secondary institution's undergraduate population, convenience sampling was used for ease of recruiting student participants. A large percentage of the student population in the college was female; approximately 75% of the students invited to participate were female. Given the low response rate to the first round of student surveys, the researcher invited all undergraduate students at the post-secondary institution—nearly 17,000 students—to participate in a second round of surveys. Almost 60% of the total undergraduate population was female and just over 40% of the population was male. In both rounds of the survey, participants were required to have access to the Internet and a valid email address to participate in the survey. All undergraduate students met both of these requirements since all students had access to computer labs with Internet on the institution's campus and all students were given an institution email address upon initial course registration. Student participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

As stated earlier, this study aimed to have a more unbiased approach and included both student and parent perspectives. To this end and since this study focused on parent motivations, parental involvement was also sought. Student participants were asked to invite one of their parents to complete the parent/guardian online survey. To participate, parents were also required to have access to the Internet and an email address. Parent participation was also completely voluntary.

Participants for phase two of the study were selected by stratified purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). The online questionnaires from phase one of the study were matched by corresponding student-parent dyads. For the pairings where both the student and parent reported the parent exhibiting helicopter parenting behaviors and the parent provided their email address, the parent was selected as a case study participant for phase two. Five parent participants were

interviewed for phase two of the study. According to Creswell (2007), no more than four or five case studies should be included in a single study: "This number should provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis" (p. 128). Since the number of interview participants was within the recommended limit, the pool of purposeful participants did not need to be limited by a random sample.

Participant Recruitment

Undergraduate students enrolled in one college at a Canadian post-secondary institution were sent an internal announcement to their student web portal inviting them to voluntarily participate in a research study (see Appendix A). A reminder announcement was sent to the students the day before the survey deadline (see Appendix B). The announcements invited students to participate in an online survey taking approximately ten minutes to complete.

Due to the low response rate to the first round of student surveys, a second round of surveys was needed. As such, invitations were sent to all undergraduate students at the institution. A bulletin was posted in students' web portal with the invitation attached (see Appendix C). A reminder bulletin was posted to the students the day before the survey deadline (see Appendix D). Again, the bulletins invited students to participate in an online survey taking approximately ten minutes to complete.

Upon completion of the online survey, students were asked to forward an invitation to one of their parents, specifically the parent they were thinking of when completing the survey. The parent invitation was available for the student to copy and paste into the body of an email to send to one of their parents. The invitation included the web address for the parent questionnaire and invited parents to participate in an online survey taking approximately ten minutes to complete (see Appendices E and F for parent invitations). At the end of the survey, parents were

asked to enter their email address if they agreed to be contacted as a case study participant for phase two of the study. If selected to participate in the telephone interview, the parents were sent an email invitation with a consent form attached (see Appendices G and H). A reminder email was sent to those parents who did not respond within one week after the first email was sent. As an incentive to participate in phase two of the study, if the parent completed the telephone interview, they received an iPod shuffle.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Participants were not required to provide their name in the study; however, as two of the survey questions, student participants were asked to include the last two letters of their first name and the first three letters of their last name. Similarly, parent participants were asked to enter the last two letters of their child's first name and the first three letters of their child's last name. This information, when correctly entered by both the student and parent, allowed the researcher to match the student survey to the corresponding parent survey. Parents who agreed to be contacted as a case study participant were asked to provide their email address.

Approval for this study was sought from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, which requires that the confidentiality and anonymity of participants be protected. Precautions were outlined in a confidentiality statement and provided to the case study participants (see Appendix H). When transcribing the interviews, the researcher used a pseudonym for each of the case study participants. Per the guidelines of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board (University of Saskatchewan, 2014), a pseudonym was also used when reporting direct quotations from the interview and all of the participant's identifying information has been removed.

Credibility, Validity, and Trustworthiness

As a qualitative study, it may be impossible to have findings that are objective truth. Nevertheless, the purpose of credible qualitative research is to "increase 'the correspondence between research and the real world'" (Wolcott, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 215). Merriam (2009) stated, "One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research" (p. 213). Keeping this mind, there were strategies and practices that were undertaken while doing qualitative research to assist with credible, valid, and trustworthy results.

First, avoiding bias is important for any researcher, especially those undertaking case study. According to Yin (2009), "Case study investigators are especially prone to this problem because they must understand the issues beforehand" (p.72). As such, Yin recommended being open to contrary findings and reporting preliminary findings to a few critical colleagues to see if they can offer "alternative explanations and suggestions" which can lead to "documentable rebuttals" (p. 72).

Merriam argued that, "The more important question for qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (2009, p. 221). To this end, Merriam recommended eight strategies to increase the validity and reliability of qualitative research, three of which will be used by the researcher in this study: member checks, peer review/examination, and audit trail. *Member checks* or *respondent validation* includes receiving feedback from the people who were interviewed. By providing interview data or transcripts to the participants, they reviewed the information and interpretations to ensure accuracy. Participants had the opportunity to suggest revisions to better capture their "constructions of reality–how they

understand the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 214). *Peer review/examination* consisted of discussions with the researcher's thesis supervisor to ensure the process of the study and the "congruency of emerging findings with the raw data" and "tentative interpretations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 229) appeared accurate. In addition, this study is part of a graduate program. As such, the thesis committee provides a peer review: committee members have been presented with the findings and had the opportunity to provide feedback to the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Finally, to keep an *audit trail*, the researcher plans to keep a research journal to take notes as the interviews are being conducted. Richards (2009) emphasized the importance of an audit trail for validity purposes:

> [G]ood qualitative research gets much of its claim to validity from the researcher's ability to show convincingly how they got there, and how they built confidence that this was the best account possible. This is why qualitative research has a special need for project history, in the form of a diary or log of processes. (p. 143)

An audit trail provides a detailed description of data collection, category creation, and decision-making throughout the qualitative study (Merriam, 2009). In addition to bias avoidance, the researcher endeavored to exercise these three strategies—respondent validation, peer review, and audit trail—to assist with the validity and reliability of the proposed study.

Pilot Testing

Before sending the invitation to students to participate in the study, the questionnaire was given to two student-parent dyads purposefully selected by the researcher. The student participants were current undergraduate students at the post-secondary institution, not enrolled in the specific college to be surveyed. The parent participants were employees of the institution.

Pilot testing ensured the online questionnaire was accessible, understandable, and easy to navigate by both students and parents.

One parent participated in a follow-up telephone interview. The telephone interview allowed the researcher to practice her interviewing technique, create probing questions, and determine if the questions led to responses that satisfy the research question. Although the researcher did not originally intend to use the pilot testing data as part of the study, the Behavioural Research Ethics Board approved use of the pilot testing data. As such, responses from one parent-student dyad were included in the data for this study.

Data Collection

The study consisted of two phases. The first phase employed two versions of the questionnaire—one for students and one for parents—that were available online via a web link. The researcher used an online survey tool to compile the questionnaires. The results of the online surveys were used to screen participants for phase two. The second phase of the study consisted of telephone interviews with four parent participants identified from phase one and one parent from the pilot testing. Phase two explored the motivation behind helicopter parenting, making the study a collective or multiple case study method. The study examined one issue but used multiple cases to illustrate and offer different perspectives on the issue (Creswell, 2007).

Phase one: Online questionnaires. The researcher had access to a survey tool, which the university subscribes to online. The online survey tool allowed the researcher to post the questionnaires online. The online questionnaire was an inexpensive survey method that was easily accessible to participants and simplified data collection. The online questionnaires were created using the survey tool accessible to the researcher through the university's website. Web links to the different surveys were included in the invitations sent to the students and,

subsequently, parents. The *Helicopter Parenting Behaviors* questionnaire (Schiffrin et al., 2013) containing 15 questions—six questions measuring autonomy support and nine questions measuring helicopter parenting—was modified and used in phase one as the online survey portion of the study. Students were asked questions about their relationship with one of their parents. The questionnaire was modified to read "my parent" rather than "my mother," which was the terminology used in the original questionnaire. Students were asked to respond to the questionnaire with only one of their parents in mind. The survey used a six point balanced scale; since no neutral choice exists it is considered a forced choice Likert scale. The Likert items are: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 4 (*somewhat agree*), 5 (*agree*), and 6 (*strongly agree*). In addition to a couple of demographics questions, students were also asked to indicate the last two letters of their first name and the first three letters of their last name to allow for their responses to be matched to the correct parent version of the survey (see Appendices I and J).

Similarly, parents were asked 15 questions about their relationship with their child who answered the student version of the survey. To be suitable for parents, the *Helicopter Parenting Behaviors* questionnaire was modified slightly. For example, the question "My mother monitors my diet" has been changed to "I monitor my child's diet" (see Appendices K and L). Parents were asked to provide the last two letters of their child's first name and the first three letters of their child's last name for their responses to be matched to the correct child's survey. Parents were also asked to leave their contact information (i.e., email address) if they were willing to be contacted to participate in a subsequent telephone interview of one hour or less. Student-parent dyads who responded to the most helicopter parenting questions with a response of 4 *(somewhat*

agree), 5 (*agree*), or 6 (*strongly agree*) were considered as being overinvolved in their college aged child's life and were considered to participate in phase two of the study.

Phase two: Telephone interviews. Based on the questionnaires completed by the student-parent dyads, five parents were selected to participate in individual interviews. Parents selected for phase two were asked to participate in a telephone interview taking up to one hour to complete. If the parent completed the telephone interview, they received an iPod shuffle valued at $59 as a token of appreciation for their time.

Prior to the current study, the researcher had not performed case study research before. As such, she practiced the telephone questions in advance to ensure the questions were asked in the same manner for all participants. Interview protocol and consistent recording procedures were also incorporated as Creswell (2007) recommended. To this end and to serve as an additional source of evidence, the telephone interviews were recorded using an earpiece, of which the participant was made aware. The length of each interview was kept well within the one-hour time limit; each interview was approximately thirty minutes.

The results of the online surveys from phase one were analyzed using the university's secure survey tool. Results were available as comma-separated values (CSV) spreadsheets formatted as text or numeric values for analysis. Descriptive statistics summarizing the sample were collected, including the number of participants (student and parent), type of dyadic pairings (i.e., mother-daughter, father-son, mother-son, or father-daughter), and student living arrangements. Student responses were matched with parent responses and compared question by question. Results of each question were compared in numeric form. Student-parent dyads that had the most affirmative responses to the helicopter parenting questions—with a response of 4 (*somewhat agree*), 5 (*agree*), or 6 (*strongly agree*)—were considered as receiving or exhibiting

54

helicopter parenting tendencies. Parents from these dyads who provided a valid email address were contacted to participate in phase two of the study.

The telephone interviews from phase two were recorded. During the interview, the researcher typed jot notes of words and phrases for future reference (Saldaña, 2013). When the interview was finished, the researcher transcribed each interview. A transcript of the interview was sent along with a transcript release form to each participant (see Appendix M). The researcher coded and re-coded the interview data, as necessary. The various codes and subcodes were constructed during the data coding process (see Appendix N). The interviews were analysed by coding the participants' responses into categories to determine common themes or concepts from the data (Saldaña, 2013). The researcher was the primary coder and performed the coding manually. The thesis supervisor was consulted to do a peer audit of the coding. Of the various coding types, two types of coding were primarily used: elemental coding and affective coding. Elemental coding was based on the questions posed and established from the topics of the interview. Affective coding helped to examine the participants' emotions and experiences along with the values that reflect the participants' attitudes and beliefs. From the coding process, the researcher found common themes from the participants' motivation and experiences around the research questions. The research questions and the purpose of the study were also used to assist with the coding process. Findings of this study are based on the coding of the transcribed interviews. The study was expected to take approximately six to eight weeks to complete, however, the study took approximately 14 weeks to complete from time of advertising to students until the last telephone interview was completed.

Ethical Guidelines

The term *helicopter parents* was used throughout this study. Due to the negative connotations mainstream media has associated with this term, the information provided to participants indicated the study explored student-parent interactions. The survey questions and open-ended questions naturally did not include terms such as overinvolved, helicopter, highly engaged, or overbearing when referring to parents. An application form for Ethics Board Approval, which included the project title, a brief overview of the research project, project details, estimation of risks and benefits, participant recruitment, consent process, and data security and storage, was submitted to the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board – Human Behavioural for review. The Behavioural Research Ethics Review Application was approved on February 27, 2015. The study commenced after the Certificate of Approval was received.

Hard copies of the notes and other research data are being stored in Dr. Michelle Prytula's locked cabinet in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan for five years. After five years the hard copies of information will be destroyed. Electronic versions of the information, including audio recordings of the telephone interviews, will be stored on a USB key and backed up on an external hard drive connected to the researcher's personal laptop. Electronic information will be kept for five years and then destroyed.

Summary

In conclusion, the researcher used a social constructivist approach to implement a qualitative, two phase, multi-instrument case study. The following research questions were explored: What are the benefits and drawbacks of parental involvement? What is the motivation behind parental involvement? Do parents find parent programming offered by the university

beneficial? The first phase included online surveys for students and parents. Phase two

consisted of telephone interviews asking parent participants, pre-screened from phase one, open-

ended questions. Coding of the parents' responses was used to identify unified themes. While

undertaking this study, ethical guidelines were followed and approval from the institution's

Ethics Board was sought. As required by Ethics standards, research data are being stored for five

years before being destroyed.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Collected Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. Data from the online surveys and telephone interviews are presented in this chapter. To this end, participant recruitment, student participants, parent participants, and student-parent dyads are summarized in this chapter. The parents' stories, as captured by the researcher in the telephone interviews, are also outlined as part of this presentation.

Presentation of the Data

The data for this study were collected in the spring of 2015. The researcher collected data in two phases. Data from phase one were used to pre-screen participants for phase two. The details of the data collection are outlined below.

Pilot Testing

After the researcher received the Certificate of Approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, pilot testing of the online surveys was conducted with two student-parent dyads. One dyad was a mother-daughter pairing and the other was a father-son pairing. The researcher used criterion-based selection and convenience sampling as described by Merriam (2009) to select the pilot testing participants. The student participants were current undergraduate students at a Canadian post-secondary institution, which was the first criterion for student participation. The researcher aimed to include students in the pilot testing who would not be invited to participate in the larger study. To this end, the students who participated in the pilot testing were not enrolled in the same college as the students to whom the survey was initially sent. The parent participants had college-aged children, which was the first criterion for parent participation. The parents also had access to Internet and email, which was the second criterion

for parent participation. Pilot testing allowed the researcher to ensure the online surveys were accessible via the emailed hyperlink, as well as easy to understand and navigate.

One of the parents was asked to participate in the pilot testing of the telephone interview. As such, the parent was interviewed and answered questions about her involvement in her college-aged child's life. After the telephone interview, a transcribed copy of the interview was given to the parent participant. Pilot testing allowed the researcher to practice asking the interview questions and gain experience creating probing questions, transcribing the interview, and coding the results.

Round 1: Surveys to Undergraduate Students

Once pilot testing of the online surveys was completed, an electronic announcement was sent to all undergraduate students in one college at a Canadian post-secondary institution. The announcement invited students to complete the online student survey (see Appendix A). At the end of the survey, students were asked to invite their parents to complete the online parent survey. Of the 27 students who started the survey, 15 students completed the survey. Twelve of the students who completed the survey responded "yes" to the question, "Are you willing to email the information below (including the link to the online survey) to the parent/guardian you had in mind when completing your portion of the survey?" As a result of their children's invitations, eight parents started the online parent survey and six parents completed the survey. The researcher identified five student-parent dyads from the first round of surveys. The researcher was unable to match the sixth parent with the corresponding student because the parent and student provided inconsistent information when listing the last two letters of the child's first name and/or the first three letters of the child's last name.

Request to Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Given the low response rate of student and parent participants in round one, the researcher contacted the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and requested that undergraduate students from other colleges at the institution be allowed to complete the online survey. By making the survey available to more students, the researcher hoped there would be an increase in participant response rate. For students from other colleges to be included in the study, references to the specific college in the invitations to participate and the online surveys were replaced with the name of the institution. One additional question was included in each of the surveys. "What college are you currently enrolled in?" was added to the student survey (see Appendix J) and "What college is your child currently enrolled in?" was added to the parent survey (see Appendix L). The Behavioural Research Ethics Board approved the requested changes and added a note to the researcher's file regarding the minor revisions and added questions. An amendment certificate was not required for these minor changes.

Round 2: Surveys to Undergraduate Students in all Colleges

All undergraduate students at the post-secondary institution were sent an electronic bulletin via the student web portal inviting them to participate in the online study. Given the limitations of the web portal and after consultation with the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, the invitation and reminder were condensed and the consent form was attached to the bulletin (see Appendices C and D). Of the 41 students who started the survey, 25 students completed it. Only eight of the students were willing to email their parents/guardians to invite them to participate in the parent survey. Seven parents started the survey and five parents completed it. The researcher identified three additional student-parent dyads from the second round of surveys. The other two parent surveys could not be matched with corresponding student surveys.

The Dyads

The online surveys were used as a selection tool to identify which parents to contact for a telephone interview. After both rounds of surveys were closed, the researcher reviewed the surveys completed by the eight student-parent dyads. One of the parent respondents did not leave their email address and, therefore, could not be contacted for a follow-up telephone interview. As such, seven dyads remained for review and consideration for phase two of the study: a telephone interview.

The online surveys consisted of the *Helicopter Parenting Behaviors* measure created by Schiffrin et al. (2013). This measure contained six questions coded for autonomy support and nine questions coded for helicopter parenting. At the proposal stage, the researcher planned to interview the parents who answered the majority of the helicopter parenting questions with positive responses. However, based on the survey results, the researcher identified the student-parent dyads with the most positive responses (i.e., somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree) to the helicopter parenting questions to participate in the telephone interviews. To this end, five parents were emailed an invitation to participate in a telephone interview (see Appendix G). At that time, parents were also provided with a copy of the consent form (see Appendix H). Four of the five parents invited to participate obliged and completed the telephone interview. After the telephone interview, the researcher emailed each parent a copy of their transcribed interview and the transcript release form (see Appendix M).

Inclusion of Data from Pilot Testing

In the end, student surveys were open to all undergraduate students at the post-secondary institution, not just students from one college. As such, the researcher petitioned the Behavioural Research Ethics Board to include the data collected as part of the pilot testing in the study. The

Behavioural Research Ethics Board agreed and issued a study amendment certificate. Since only one parent completed the telephone interview during the pilot testing phase, only data for that corresponding parent-student dyad were used. Follow-up emails with consent forms were sent to both the student and the parent who participated in the pilot testing to obtain their expressed consent for their data to be used (see Appendices O and P). By including the data from the pilot-testing phase, five telephone interviews were completed and used to compile the findings of this study. As incentives, iPod Shuffles were offered to participants if they completed a telephone interview. All five parents who completed the telephone interviews, including the parent who participated in the pilot testing, were given iPod shuffles.

Participant Recruitment

On behalf of the researcher, a college staff member distributed the announcement inviting undergraduate students to participate in the survey on Monday, March 9, 2015 (see Appendix A). Students and parents were asked to complete the surveys by Friday, March 20, 2015. A reminder announcement was also distributed prior to the deadline (see Appendix B). After receiving approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board to do so, the researcher posted a web portal bulletin to all undergraduate students at the institution on Tuesday, March 31, 2015 (see Appendix C). Students and parents were asked to complete surveys by Friday, April 10, 2015. A reminder bulletin was posted for students on April 9, 2015 (see Appendix D). Both sets of invitations included the researcher's request for the students to invite their parents to complete the online parent survey.

<div align="center">

Survey Results

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The researcher reviewed the survey data from both rounds of student and parent surveys, as well as the data from the pilot testing from one student-parent dyad.

Student Survey Participants

Forty-one undergraduate students completed the surveys: thirty-three female students and eight male students. None of the students reported a gender of "other." The forty-one students who completed the survey were enrolled in eight different colleges/programs; however, one student's program was unknown and one student was visiting from another institution. The age of participants ranged from 18–45 years old with a mean age of 23, mode age of 22, and median age of 22.

Parent Survey Participants

Twelve parents of undergraduate students completed the survey: ten female parents (mothers) and two male parents (fathers). None of the parents reported a gender of "other." Ten of the parents provided their email addresses to be contacted for a follow-up telephone interview.

Dyad Survey Responses

Nine student-parent dyads were matched from the student and parent survey responses. Seven of the dyads were mother-daughter pairings and two were father-daughter pairings. Based on the participants' responses, three of the students lived at home, four lived away from home but in the same province, one lived in a different province, and one living arrangement was unknown due to inconsistent responses from the student and parent.

As previously outlined in the *Methods of the Study*, each survey contained fifteen questions. Participants were asked to respond to the questions on a scale of one *(strongly disagree)* to six *(strongly agree)*. The researcher noted point differences in responses between the student and parent of each dyad. For example, if the student responded with a four (*somewhat agree*) and the parent responded with a five (*agree*), the researcher counted a one-point difference.

The student-parent dyads responded to the majority of questions similarly. The majority of the students' and parent's responses—almost 81 percent—were the same or within one point of each other. Responses that differed by two points or less totaled 94.8 percent. Only five percent of student and parent responses differed by three or four points. Typically, if the student and parent disagreed by three or four points, it was only in response to one of the fifteen questions. Only one dyad disagreed by three points on three separate questions. The survey results are elaborated below.

When reviewing each of the questions, the researcher found six out of the nine dyads had consistent responses between the corresponding parent and student to question 1 regarding the parent/guardian having a say in the major the student chose or will choose. Conversely, eight of the dyads had responses that differed between the corresponding parent and student by one to four points when answering question 13 about the parent/guardian tracking the student's schoolwork.

Six of the fifteen survey questions measured autonomy support. Four of the dyads responded affirmatively (i.e., somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree) to five of the six autonomy support questions and the other five dyads responded affirmatively to all six of the autonomy support questions. The one autonomy support question not answered positively by one or both of the respondents was different for each of the four dyads. The table below includes

the various questions on which student-parent dyads disagreed.

	Q5. Tips on how to shop for groceries economically.	Q8. Encouragement to deal with interpersonal problems on own.	Q12. Encouragement to keep a budget/ manage finances.	Q15. Encouragement to choose own classes.
◼ Student	3	2	3	4
◼ Parent	5	3	5	3
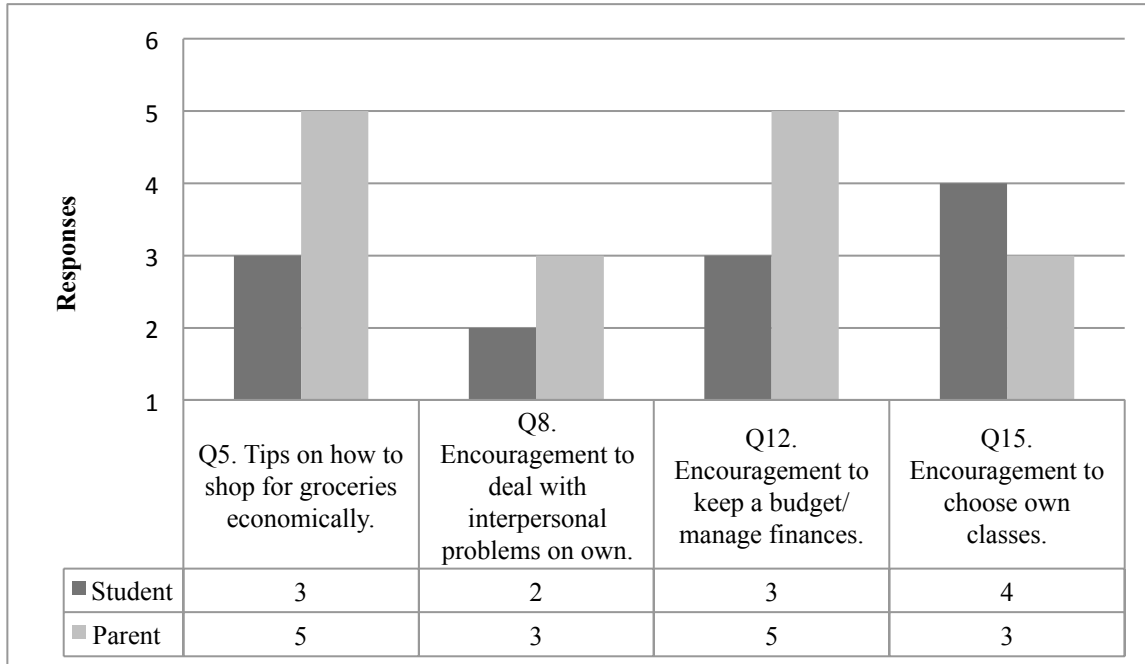
Table 1: Differing responses to autonomy support questions of four student-parent dyads. The respondents answered the questions on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). One member of the dyad answered the question positively (4, 5, or 6) and the other member of the dyad answered the question negatively (1, 2, or 3). The four dyads disagreed on different questions as summarized in this table.

Nine of the fifteen survey questions were coded for helicopter parenting. Within each dyad, the student and parent had varied responses. In all nine of the dyads, the researcher found one of the respondents answered at least one question affirmatively (i.e., somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree) while the other respondent answered the same question negatively (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, or somewhat disagree). In one dyad, both the student and the parent answered none of the helicopter parenting questions in the affirmative. Since none of the helicopter parenting questions was answered in the affirmative, the parent in this dyad was not selected to participate in a follow-up telephone interview.

The Parent Participants

Over a two-week period, the researcher interviewed five parents. Each telephone interview took approximately thirty minutes to complete. The parents invited to participate in the telephone interviews had the most dyadic affirmative responses (i.e., somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree) to the helicopter parenting questions in the survey. Four of the parents were female participants (mothers) and one parent was a male participant (father). The parent participants were Savannah, Fred, Willa, Nancy, and Camilla. The participants' names were changed for this study to protect their anonymity. In addition, details that could be used to identify student or parent participants have been excluded. Three of the five parents lived in the same community as their child who attended university and the other two parents lived several hours away from their children. All five participants were asked the same set of questions, with probing and follow-up questions, as the interviewer deemed necessary (See Appendix Q).

Response Bias of Participants

The interview responses provided by the parent participants were prone to response bias. As part of the interview process, participants were asked to self-report on their behavior and involvement in their college-aged children's lives by answering a series of open-ended questions. Self-reported data can result in more socially acceptable or socially desirable responses from the participants than what is considered a "correct, honest, accurate response" (Furnham, 1986, p. 385). Since helicopter parenting is a topic of interest in mainstream media and some parents showed an awareness of the negative stigma associated with overbearing tendencies, it is possible that some parents may have altered their responses to be more socially acceptable or desirable.

Analysis of Interviews

The researcher manually coded and re-coded the telephone interviews using various codes and subcodes she constructed during the analysis process (see Appendix N). She used the research questions and the purpose of the study to assist with the coding process. Common themes or concepts emerged from the participants' responses and were based on respondents' motivation and experiences. Finally, the codes and subcodes were grouped into categories/themes. The findings of this study were drawn from the categories and the codes and subcodes therein.

Savannah

Savannah was asked questions about her involvement in the life of her college-aged daughter, one of Savannah's two children currently enrolled in university. Savannah's daughter lived at home while attending university. Savannah reported her involvement in her child's life as "a support, I would hope, and maybe providing guidance when necessary. Being interested and encouraging." She indicated that her favorite way of being involved in her daughter's life was "talking about things." Savannah enjoyed learning about her daughter's wishes, hopes, and goals and she wanted to help her daughter "figure out how to get there; how to achieve them."

Savannah explained that it was challenging to respect her daughter's decisions, especially if her daughter made a decision she viewed as not the best or most optimal one. She, however, acknowledged that if she—the parent—took over the decision-making role, it would be a disservice to her daughter:

> You're providing encouragement and support but you don't really want to be highly
>
> involved in the sense of making decisions for them and forcing them—that would be—I
>
> would see that as a detriment that, if you're taking over the decision making role. It's

very much trying just to be in a support role and allowing my daughter to actually make the decisions.

Despite Savannah's willingness and ability to share her life experiences and guidance, she recognized her child's need to have her own experiences and learn on her own. Savannah reported, "Sometimes you hope that you can pass on the things you have learned through experience and maybe save them some grief. Not entirely, you kind of have to live through some of those things yourself." Despite the challenge to respect her daughter's choices, Savannah saw a role in helping her daughter make good choices.

Savannah claimed that it was a financial benefit to have her daughter living at home for her daughter and the family. She felt support—financial and otherwise—would contribute to her daughter's success:

Well, I guess, financially because she is able to live at home, you know, that's a big financial benefit, I guess, for the whole family. You know, she doesn't really need to work or not work too much during the school year and so that allows her more time for her school work. And, I guess, if you're able to be supportive and help her achieve her goals, the financial benefit is eventually there for her because she will be successful in completing her education.

Because she lived at home, her daughter did not have to work during the school year and it also allowed Savannah to offer support to her daughter on a daily basis. Savannah saw her financial contribution to her child as a benefit, "I suppose financially, again, if she can be successful, because we are helping her pay for her education, that's a financial benefit to us. Because we're not losing the money, so to speak, that's she's accomplishing something with it." Savannah was also able to envision her daughter's eventual degree completion and success in the world. By

68

seeing her daughter succeed, Savannah reported that it made her happy. She also felt glad that her daughter had support from her family, "I guess, it makes me feel glad that she can have a support system in her family if she wants to take, you know, that is there to take advantage." Savannah acknowledged that support, which included monetary contributions, was a factor in her daughter's success.

Savannah believed that as her daughter moves into adulthood, she would like to be less involved in her daughter's life. She acknowledged that, as a parent, it might be difficult to take a step back:

> I would say just recognizing maturity and—realizing that—you know, as you become more of an adult, that you should be making those decisions on your own. And just, sometimes it's really hard as a parent to sort-of stay back but to try and do that so that she's developing all the skills that she needs.

She noted that as her child transitioned from high school to university, there was less of an opportunity to be involved in her daughter's education through formal, traditional channels like parent-teacher interviews, which led to her "stepping back" as a parent.

Savannah participated in the university's parent programming. She was a member of the parent-panel rather than an attendee. As one of the speakers at the event, she found the experience to be both helpful and thought provoking:

> I guess, because I was speaking it made me kind of think about those sorts of things and make me look at what I thought my role had been and maybe what it should be and that sort of thing. So, yeah, it was helpful that way.

Savannah's parent programming experience allowed her to reflect on her changing role as a parent.

Fred

Fred had two college-aged children. He answered questions about his involvement in the life of his daughter, who lived away from home and in a different community to attend university.

Fred supported his daughter in various ways, including financially, academically, and physically. Providing ongoing financial support was one of the main ways he was involved in his daughter's life. Fred explained the financial arrangement he had with his daughter, "My deal was I paid for half of their education and they had to come up with the other half." He also provided academic support by way of proofreading essays and "lots of automotive-type help with her transportation problems." Fred noted that he would help with the transportation and automotive needs regardless of whether his daughter was attending university or working at her first job.

Fred explained there were various benefits to having a relationship with his college-aged daughter. He enjoyed "sitting down and talking" with her. He also noted that her education has enriched his life and helped him learn too:

> I think I learned a portion of what she learns, I guess, from talking about her courses and, just what she was doing and so on. Yeah, no, it's definitely made me a very smart; a more learned person.

In addition to learning alongside his daughter, Fred also felt proud to see her succeed. Fred explained that his feelings are often a reflection of her feelings, "If they feel good about doing it, I feel good about them doing it." Similarly, as a father, Fred also empathized with his daughter during the difficult times, such as final exam periods. He tried to support her as much as necessary when she was going through challenging times at university.

Fred noted the travel time between him and his daughter as being a drawback. However, because of the distance between the two of them, his day-to-day life had not changed:

I guess, when they are gone to the university, it's far enough away that what they are doing doesn't affect what I'm doing at home, I guess. Either way, I would still be doing the same activities: same friends, same circle of friends. So, no, it would have no affect on me either way.

Although Fred's circle of friends remained unchanged, Fred believed his daughter's circle of friends had "expanded exponentially" by moving from a smaller community to a larger one.

Fred believed that his involvement in his daughter's life was "about right." He explained that he does not believe he should be more involved than he already is. He suggested that his daughter must develop independence, "she needs to do things on her own and I'm a firm believer that you learn to do by doing. And she needs the responsibility to succeed." Fred also indicated his level of support may vary depending on his daughter's course load. With more assignments due, she required more support from him.

Fred attended parent programming the first year his daughter enrolled in university. He described it as an "Arts and Science tour of the university and kind of a quick half-hour spiel about living in residence." The tour and information session introduced him to the university and residence, reminded him that university students are adults, and informed him that parents are prohibited from accessing their child's university online account. Fred claimed the programming was "a good reminder" and helpful to attend.

Willa

Willa had two children attending university with a third child enrolling the following year. Willa answered questions about her involvement in the life of her daughter, who was

enrolled in a professional college. Willa lived in a community that was approximately five hours from where her daughter attended university. Willa explained that her daughter was a full-time university student but Willa was still very involved in her life and kept "up-to-date on what's happening with her classes." She noted frequent communication with her daughter by way of text messages and telephone calls, although Willa preferred communicating with face-to-face visits.

Willa noted that she was in contact with her daughter at least once a week and said "I try to show support to her every time I'm in contact with her." She supported her daughter by providing words of encouragement, validating her choices and decisions, and helping her in all aspects of life. Willa supported her daughter financially. Most of Willa's wage was used to pay for both of her daughters' tuition and rent. By providing financial support, Willa believed that she is offering her daughter "piece of mind; that she's not worried about trying to make ends meet." To this end, her daughter did not have to work during the school year. Conversely, Willa described one of the sacrifices she made as a parent, "We don't vacation like other people do, I guess, socially because we're concerned—more concerned—with the family and getting them through school and getting them settled, etc." Willa contended that although other people might see not going on vacations as a drawback, she does not actually perceive it as a drawback.

Willa described the challenge of being involved in her college-aged child's life: "I guess, as a young adult, which she is now, trying to give advice to her as a parent while still letting her maintain her own decision making as an adult." Willa stated her daughter asked for her advice when make decisions regarding summer employment, career specialization, and interpersonal relationships. Willa provided her daughter with advice and the "opportunity to vent about something that has happened with somebody else." She also acted as a "sounding board" for her

daughter. Willa believed she helps her daughter make good decisions. She thought that if her daughter ever needed additional help, her daughter would ask for it.

Willa explained that she has felt many emotions as a parent of a college-aged child, "You run the whole gamut of emotions, you want the best for your child." Willa described feeling happy and proud to experiencing some separation anxiety and not seeing her daughter as frequently as she would like. As a mother, Willa wanted to know information about her child, such as what she was doing, where she was going, what was happening in her life, and how she was feeling. Willa explained a couple of different reasons for wanting to know these specific details:

> Probably just because I'm nosey *[laughs]* but, I like to be able to, again, be sort of a sounding board, give her advice on situations. So that I know more about the situation or how something works, I feel that I'm better able to give advice.

In the pursuit of information and providing advice, Willa acknowledged that she did not want to be "the overbearing parent." She realized there were limitations and boundaries she, as a parent, needed to respect.

Willa recognized that her social circle has expanded as a result of her daughter attending university. Willa has met new people through her daughter: "she's broadened our horizons as far as social groups by being involved with various individuals and groups through her schooling that we've been introduced to." Socially, Willa's circle of friends had grown because of her daughter, her daughter's friends, and her daughter's classmates.

Willa said she was where she wanted to be with the level of involvement in her daughter's life. She did not want to be less involved or more involved. Willa recognized there

might be a time when her daughter would not want her advice but, if possible, she would still try to offer her opinion:

> I would probably–I would probably still try to get my two cents in. I would probably *[laughs]* kind of raise the topic in other ways and try to insert my own ideas as far as that's concerned. But if she really feels that I should have no input in it, I guess I would just have to accept it.

Willa described that she would be "hurt" if her daughter did not want her advice but that she would have to come to terms with it.

> Willa did not attend the university's parent programming. She felt that it was unnecessary:

> Yeah, I guess I made a decision not to attend. I attended that university myself so I kind of knew what was happening there. I am an educator so I'm kind of in tune with what happens when kids graduate from high school and move on to university. And, I don't know, I guess I felt that I was prepared.

As an alumni and an educator, she felt she was adequately prepared to send her daughter to university.

Nancy

Nancy, a single mom, was asked questions about her involvement in her daughter's life. Nancy's daughter lived at home while attending university. She described their living arrangement as "hairy" and said that "two women in the house can be crazy." However, they liked to bounce ideas off of each other and Nancy anticipated it would be "lonely" without her daughter living at home.

Because her daughter lived at home, Nancy was involved in her daughter's life on a daily basis and supported her daughter in various ways. She provided physical space for her daughter to study and other resources, including a laptop computer and the Internet. Nancy also drove her daughter to where she needed to go because her daughter did not have a driver's license.

Nancy explained that she has a high school education and she wanted her daughter to attend university to have more opportunities than she had:

> Because I think it's very important that she gets a college education. I don't want to see her doing the shifts and I want to see her do better than what I've done. And to do what she wants to do and, you know, have the opportunity that I didn't take.

Nancy acknowledged that having different levels of education impacted the communication between her and her daughter, "I have a high school education and she's got the college education, so sometimes it can be a little hard for us to communicate with each other." She observed, "sometimes I can't converse on the same level as her anymore" and "it can get emotional in knowing that she is becoming more educated than I am." Nancy felt her daughter was "outgrowing" her.

Nancy described her financial contribution as the most challenging way of being involved in her daughter's life. Although Nancy saw the long-term benefits of her daughter attending university, she felt the burden of providing financial support:

> But, it is hard to keep up, you know, with paying for things and stuff, but, I mean, eventually, in the long run it will be good for her. You know the drawback is that we have to scrimp and save on aspects of our living and it can be tough to try to make sure that she actually gets her education that she needs. Thank goodness there's also the

student loans that she can take too. But, you know, I was able to save up some RESPs for

her. But it is tough for, just the financial aspect of her going to university.

Nancy pointed out the other financial support systems that her daughter was taking advantage of,

like government student loans and Registered Education Saving Plans (RESPs). Although

Nancy emphasized the importance of supporting her daughter financially, had she not supported

her daughter financially, Nancy believed she would have more money saved for retirement,

traveling, and doing the things that she wanted to do.

Nancy described herself as "happy with where we are" when it comes to her level of

involvement in her daughter's life. She did not want to be more involved or less involved in her

daughter's life than she already was. She felt she supported her daughter to the best of her

ability, although she claimed, "sometimes I feel like it's not enough." Nancy was proud of her

daughter and the "amazing things" she had accomplished.

Nancy did not attend any university parent programming; she was unaware of such

offerings. She indicated that she would have been interested in attending parent programming if

she had known about it.

Camilla

Camilla was asked questions about her involvement in the life of her daughter. Camilla

reported that they live in the same community but her daughter did not live at home. Despite not

living together, Camilla and her daughter have remained in contact several times a week through

text messaging and telephone calls. Her favorite way of being involved in her daughter's life is

talking about "what's going on in her life."

Camilla supported her daughter in the daily things of life. She often validated her

daughter's experiences, gave her perspective on certain situations, and provided encouragement:

76

Well, I think support can be in support in times of need and just support in day-to-day things that when things are going well for her or she's had a good experience; she's had fun or she's just talking about what's going on in her life, that kind of thing. So it can be, you know, I'm saying things like, "I'm glad that you had fun" or "That sounded like fun" or "I'm glad that worked out" or some sort of thing like that or… Sometimes it's just being supportive as she's going through a tough time, sort of thing. Or telling her that— to sort of "Hold the course," but not in those terms.

Camilla supported her daughter in many ways. However, she pointed out that she did not provide frequent financial support to her daughter, "Once, very rarely, it's been financial support, a bit of money to tide her over until the end of the month, that kind of thing but that doesn't happen very often." Instead, they connected over meals, whether dining out or at home for lunch and supper. Although their paths did not cross socially, sometimes Camilla had her daughter and her friends over for a meal or her daughter invited her over for a meal. At other times, Camilla contributed physical items to her daughter, if there was something she needed to borrow for her apartment or give to a friend.

Camilla revealed that she loved her daughter and there were many benefits to being involved in her life. She empathized with her daughter when she was going through difficult times. She also explained that her daughter reciprocated the support, "And, sometimes if she feels I'm feeling down, she's there for me. She'll do something to cheer me up." Camilla contended that emotional support was both given and received.

Camilla believed her ability to support her daughter was "pretty good" and she did not feel overinvolved or under involved in her daughter's life. If Camilla were overinvolved or

intrusive, she felt her daughter would provide feedback in the form of body language, shortened conversations, avoidance tactics, and verbal communication.

Camilla attended the university's parent programming. It was the "joint student-parent registration thing, at her [daughter's] request." Although Camilla was familiar with the university, she found the presentation helpful when her daughter registered for courses. Camilla provided information and reminded her daughter about helpful registration-related items that she had forgotten about.

Conclusion

The researcher used the online student and parent surveys as a pre-screening tool to determine parent participants for the telephone interviews. In the end, five parents completed thirty-minute telephone interviews responding to questions about their involvement in their college-aged child's life. Based on their responses to these questions, the interviewer compiled the parents' stories. Although each story is unique, the researcher coded commonalities and differences in these summarizes. The researcher noted themes and compiled findings, which are outlined in chapter five.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Data and Contribution

Helicopter parenting has been the topic of negative media coverage in recent years. Due to its subjective nature, researchers of the phenomenon have provided various definitions and measures of helicopter parenting, resulting in a lack of clarity and objective parameters around the subject. Somers and Settle (2010b) stated, the "measurement of the phenomenon is difficult and complex" (p. 6). The role and benefit of parents' involvement in their children's lives have been difficult to measure because of their emotional and intangible natures. Furthermore, post-secondary administrators have suggested helicopter parents are becoming more prevalent because of anecdotal evidence at their institutions. Administrators have been faced with the challenge of how best to respond to the wishes, needs, and demands of overinvolved parents. This chapter contains an analysis of the data; the responses to the research questions; and a discussion of the findings, implications, and significance of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. The researcher interviewed five parents of undergraduate students attending a Canadian post-secondary institution to understand their involvement and their motivation for involvement in their children's lives. Through analysis of their responses, the researcher identified themes and categories; suggested what motivates parents' behavior; and, proposed implications for theory, future research, and practice within the post-secondary environment.

Methodological Orientation

This study was a qualitative, multi-instrument case study with a social constructivist worldview. As outlined by Creswell (2007), using the social constructivist worldview, the

researcher relied on the participants' subjective views of the situation. Participants' formed meaning of their situation by interacting with others, as well as the "historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (p. 21). The researcher then interpreted the data through her knowledge of cultural and historical norms (i.e., experiences and background) (Creswell, 2007).

Study Design

Data for this study were initially collected through a survey for participant selection, and ultimately collected through telephone interviews. The researcher used an online survey as a pre-screening tool for participants. Students and parents completed online surveys answering questions about autonomy support and helicopter parenting. From the online survey data, the researcher identified nine student-parent dyads. The student-parent dyads that had the most affirmative responses (i.e., somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree) to the helicopter parenting questions were contacted to participate in a telephone interview. Since the student-parent dyads did not answer *all* of the helicopter parenting questions as *agree* or *strongly agree*, on the spectrum of overinvolved parents, the parents in this study could be considered as providing autonomous support rather than helicopter parenting tendencies. As a result, parents who demonstrated more helicopter parenting tendencies may have provided different findings.

In the end, five parents completed telephone interviews. The researcher used open-ended interview questions that were adapted from the questions Kolkhorst, Yazedjian, and Toews (2010) originally compiled to explore the parent-adult child relationship. Each telephone interview was recorded and transcribed. The transcribed interviews were used to generate the data presented as case studies. The researcher then analyzed the case studies.

Analysis of the Data

The researcher coded the data from the interview transcripts to assist with the analysis of the data. Saldaña (2013) defined a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). Furthermore, the researcher used descriptive coding, which "summarizes the primary topic of the excerpt" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4). Saldaña (2013) argued that codes, when clustered together, facilitate the development of categories. To this end, the researcher used codes and subcodes when analyzing the interview data and determined categories, patterns, and recurring themes (see Appendix N). Only participant responses and comments were coded; the researcher's questions, probes, and comments were not coded. Saldaña (2013) directed that researchers' utterances are more "functional than substantive" and do not need to be coded (p. 16).

The researcher also employed coding techniques Saldaña (2013) referred to as affective methods, specifically emotion coding; and, elemental methods, specifically structural coding and In Vivo coding. By using affective methods, the researcher sought to investigate participants' "emotions, values, conflicts, and other subjective qualities of human experience" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 261). Emotion coding allowed the researcher to attach a label to the participants' emotions. Saldaña (2013) recommended emotion coding for qualitative studies that examine intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships because it "[p]rovides insight into the participants' perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions" (p. 263). Similarly, the elemental methods of structural coding and In Vivo coding allowed the researcher to examine the content of the interviews in relation to the research questions and note commonalities and differences between the multiple case studies while maintaining the participants' voices by using their words or phrases.

Presentation of the Findings

The current study was guided by three research questions. As such, the findings of the study are summarized in response to each of the following questions:

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of parental involvement?

2. What is the motivation behind parental involvement?

3. Do parents find parent programming offered by the university beneficial?

Benefits and Drawbacks of Parental Involvement

In response to the first research question, parents identified numerous benefits and drawbacks to being involved in their college-aged child's life. Parents claimed there were benefits and drawbacks to the student, as well as to themselves as the parent. The benefits and drawbacks reported by parents were organized into five different types of support: financial, physical, social, academic, and emotional. First, parents supported their child financially by paying for living accommodations and tuition. Second, parents provided physical support to their children in areas such as transportation, meals, and electronics. The next support was social support. The social circles for most parents and children did not overlap; however, one parent noted meeting new people through their daughter and her classmates. Fourth, parents reported providing academic support, albeit somewhat limited. Finally, the largest and most important area of support was emotional support. Of the various types of support, parents provided the most emotional support to their children and received the most emotional support reciprocated from their children.

Some of the areas of support appeared to overlap because they were interrelated. For example, living at home was a financial benefit, but could be classified as a physical support, as well. To keep the themes organized, the researcher attempted to categorize the interviews

keeping in mind the question to which participants were responding and how the parent participants viewed or classified the support.

Financial Support. Parents highlighted living and school related expenses as the two largest areas in which they supported their children financially. All but one of the parents described providing substantial financial support to their children attending university. If their child lived at home, the parent provided room and board; if their child lived away from home, the parent provided rent money. One parent noted the financial benefit of having the student live at home, "Well, I guess, financially because she is able to live at home, you know, that's a big financial benefit, I guess, for the whole family." By living at home, the student—and by extension her parents and family—did not have to provide rent money for residence or off-campus accommodations. In addition to providing living accommodations, parents also reported paying for their children's tuition, whether it was the entire amount or a portion thereof.   Parents in the current study were not asked to report totals; however, Schoeni and Ross (2005) reported American parents provided approximately $38,000 in assistance, including housing, food, educational expenses, and cash during the transition to adulthood. The assistance parents in the current study reported—living accommodations and educational expenses—required substantial sums of money, as well.

Parents considered their financial support to be beneficial to their children. During the school year, students worried less about their finances and were not required to work part-time or casually; they could focus on their studies and get good grades. In addition, by having financial support from parents, students relied less on student loan funding. Parents believed their financial support alleviated some worry and stress their children felt and allowed them to have more time for studying.

Parents reasoned their financial support was an investment, rather than a loss. They felt they contributed to the success of their child and their child's potential to be gainfully employed upon completion of university. To this end, one parent commented, "I suppose financially, again, if she can be successful, because we are helping her pay for her education, that's a financial benefit to us because we're not losing the money, so to speak, that she's accomplishing something with it." Another parent also suggested their financial contribution was more of a benefit than a drawback because the student received an education and did not have to rely as heavily on loan funding:

> I don't look at it as a drawback, I guess, because I know she's going to be successful and this is very important to try to have her educated in her field of study without overwhelming her with student loans.

One parent also noted receiving a tax incentive for contributing financially to their child's education; however, the tax incentive "doesn't amount to a whole lot." Based on the student perspective, Fingerman et al. (2012) suggested, "Indeed, grown children may interpret intense parental support favorably and view it as an investment in themselves" (p. 882). Consistent with this theory, in the current study, parents believed their financial contribution helped their children pursue their educational and occupational aspirations and, as such, saw it as an investment in their children's future success.

The researcher concluded parental financial support for college-aged children is sacrificial but parents do not identify it as a drawback. Although parents were eager and willing to support their children financially, by contributing to their children's education, parents had less disposable income, saved less for retirement, and were unable to travel or go on vacations. Parents faced financial constraint in other areas of life to provide financial assistance to their

children for post-secondary education. Contrary to the finding by Fingerman et al. (2013), where students perceived parental support as conflicted and repayment was expected, if the parents interviewed in the current study had repayment plans with their children to repay contributions used for education, none of the parents mentioned their arrangements to the researcher.

Physical Support. Parents had difficulty identifying specific physical or practical support they provided to their children. Ultimately, the researcher noted parents provided physical and practical support in numerous ways that benefited the student: study space; electronics (i.e., computers, the Internet); transportation (i.e., rides, automotive help); travel time; meals; and, items from around the house.

One parent reported receiving a meal cooked by their child, but other physical supports did not seem to be reciprocated. In fact, one parent noted if her daughter was not enrolled in school, she would have more time to help with household duties: "I guess, physically, there would be more, if she wasn't studying, she would be able to help me out more around the house." Although parents provided support to their children physically and practically, parents mentioned very few ways of supporting their child physically or practically relative to other types of support they provided.

Social Support. Of all the support parents provided, social support was the support exhibited the least by parents. Parents noted providing very little social support to their college-aged children. Whether children lived at home or away from home, their social circles did not intersect with their parents' social lives with the exception of one case. Parents who did not live in the same community as their children pointed out that their children's social circles or circles of friends grew when they moved away from home to attend university. One parent, however, gained a larger social circle by meeting their child's friends and classmates. Other parents said

they lived far enough away from their child that their social life was not impacted by their child's social life. Finally, parents who lived in the same community as their child indicated their social circles did not tend to overlap with their child's social circle, and as such, had no impact on their social lives as a parent.

One parent contended that with parental support, students benefited from a more robust social life. The parent believed that parental support is a social benefit for the child, "if you can provide a reasonable amount of support then that should contribute to her being in an emotionally good place." The parent elaborated by saying that by being in an emotionally good place, the child could spend time with friends and have fun. Based on the parent's response, the researcher asserts that college-aged children benefited socially by having parental support, which allows the student to have meaningful friendships.

Academic Support. Parents reported providing limited academic support to their children. Parental academic support consisted of proofreading essays, assisting with registration, suggesting study skills workshops, and providing items for projects. One parent noted that the more courses the student was taking, the more support she needed.

In addition, support in this area was limited by the university's privacy regulations. One parent noted the limitations imposed by the university regarding parental access to student information:

> I can't phone up and ask marks, say. Like, they are adults; they are on their own. I don't
> have access to their [student] account, etc. So it's a good way to have it. But yeah, no, I
> can't oversee them, I guess.

Parents, although willing to provide academic support when needed, did not note academic help as their favorite or most challenging way to support their college-aged child; they did not emphasize their support in this area.

Parents did not report receiving any academic support from their children. Since most parents have completed their formal education, whether at the secondary or post-secondary level, students would likely have no reason to reciprocate academic support to their parents.

Duchesne, Ratelle, Larose, and Guay (2007) found that students whose parents were highly involved and provided autonomous support were more likely to be well adjusted academically. Furthermore, their results suggested that women, specifically in the science stream, were better adjusted academically than men. In the current study, the parents were responding to the interview questions with their college-aged daughters in mind. It is unknown if the students in the student-parent dyads were well adjusted or succeeded academically because questions relating to academic achievement were not included as part of the online surveys or telephone interviews. Nevertheless, based on the students' ages, the researcher assumed many of them had completed more than one year of university. To be an upper year student, students must have obtained the minimum average required to meet the academic standards for promotion within their college. Parents in this study reported supporting their daughters in many areas, but did not focus on providing academic support. The results, however, seem to be consistent with the study by Duchesne et al. (2007) that suggested parents who support their college-aged children in other areas assist students in adjusting and succeeding academically, as well.

Emotional Support. All parents who were interviewed reported providing emotional support to their college-aged children. When discussing their involvement in their children's lives, parents described a whole range of emotions from being happy, glad, joyful, and proud to

being worried, stressed, concerned, and lonely. Parents highlighted emotional support as the most important type of support for both students and parents.

Technology allowed parents to provide emotional support. Although a few of the parents mentioned talking on the phone or communicating by text messaging, one parent reported her *favorite* way of being involved was "through text messages or telephone calls." This finding is consistent with research by Fingerman et al. (2012) that found, "Listening, emotional support, and advice, which can occur via cell phone, text messaging, or e-mail occurred most often" (p. 891). Certainly most parents in the current study reported calling or text messaging their children, especially if they lived in a different community. As such, technology helped to facilitate the emotional support parents provided.

Parents emphasized the emotional support they provided to their children was especially important during this transitional period of their children's lives, which Arnett (2000) described as emerging adulthood. Parents reported validating the student's experiences and encouraging them. One parent explained the emotional bond that comes from raising a child, as well as the emotions that ensue when the child transitions to adulthood:

Well, there's definitely, the emotional is probably the biggest part of it. There's all kinds of emotional benefits to being involved with her because we've, you know, brought her up since she was a baby, obviously. I like to be emotionally in touch with what my children are doing or thinking or feeling. As far as emotional drawbacks, there's that separation. There's that knowledge that she's going out on her own and so you're not going to be as close as you were when she was living in your household and you were, you know, making her school lunches and driving her to school, and seeing her, you know, so many hours a day.

The emotional bond between a parent and child can lead to feelings of separation, when the child moves away from home or starts demonstrating increased independence.

Parents contended that during stressful times, like end of term final exams, they empathized with their children and understood what they were going through as university students. As such, they offered more moral support to their children during final examinations and other difficult times throughout the year, as the student needed.

Most parents were quick to praise their college-aged children and list their children's positive qualities. Parents commented on positive characteristics from who they are to what they do: "She's become a great individual," "She does amazing things," and "She's got a wicked sense of humor. She likes to help others. She's very considerate." If parents see their children as a continuation of themselves, the positive comments parents recounted in relation to their children may in turn contribute to parents feeling successful. To this end, Fingerman et al. (2009) claimed, "Parents also may derive satisfaction from grown children's success because they view those children as an extension of themselves" (p. 1229). Parents reported on their children's positive qualities and by highlighting their children's success parents felt successful too. Also, if children are seen as successful, it provides parents with a way to measure their return on investment in their children. Parents support their children to help them succeed. If children succeed, parents also experience feelings of success and have, thereby, realized gain from their support and investment.

Parents believed that if they were less involved in their children's lives, they would have less stress, and would be less worried and concerned about their child. Most parents, however, did not want to be less involved in their children's lives so they considered worry, stress, and

concern as part of their role as an involved parent. They were willing to feel these negative emotions so they could receive the benefit of the positive emotions, as well.

Emotional support was the one support that was clearly reciprocated to parents. College-aged children were able to provide their parents with emotional support. One parent noted her daughter's thoughtfulness, "She remembers birthdays and Mother's Days and those kinds of things." The student would help to cheer up the parent, when the parent was feeling down. Emotional support was the one support that was reciprocated the most.

There are large costs for parents to be involved in their children's lives, especially financially and emotionally. One parent contended the cost of support was a small price to pay for being involved in their child's life and, as such, they did not want to be less involved:

> But I can see benefits, I guess, to being less involved if I didn't support her financially, or if I didn't feel that, you know, I needed to visit her or, needed to do these things for her, I guess financially I would be further ahead, in my own life. But, I can't imagine that the financial benefits would outweigh the emotional sort of drawbacks to the whole situation.

Parents who are involved in their children's lives know they are making sacrifices but view the sacrifices as investments in their children, rather than drawbacks.

Parents supported their college-aged children financially, physically, socially, academically, and emotionally. The largest financial supports were in the areas of living accommodations and tuition costs. Emotional support was the most important support parents provided to their children. It was also the support that was reciprocated to parents. Supporting college-aged children comes with a cost. A cost, however, that parents feel is a price worth paying to see their children succeed and attain their education goals. In their study, Fingerman et al. (2009) found "parents offered nontangible forms of help (e.g., listening, advice) more often

90

than they provided finite resources (e.g., practical, financial)," which is somewhat consistent with the findings of the current study. In this study, although parents offered nontangible forms of help to their children, they also provided significant financial support.

Studies on helicopter parenting (Duchesne et al., 2007; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2013; Schoeni & Ross, 2005) have focused on the student experience, benefits and drawbacks to the college-aged child, and success of the emerging adult. Indeed, researchers have emphasized the reliance of students on their parents. However, in a study by Fingerman et al. (2009), "parents reported receiving support from the average grown child only a few times a year. Much of that support involved talking about daily life with their child or socializing" (p. 1225). Parents noted that financial assistance was reciprocated very rarely, if at all. Consistent with the findings of Fingerman et al. (2009), in the current study some parents noted their reliance on their college-aged child for emotional support. The reciprocation of support, primarily emotional support, could be an important factor as to why parents are overinvolved. The reciprocation of support, especially emotional support, is an area of study that could be explored in the future.

Motivation behind Parental Support

In response to the second research question, the researcher found three motivating factors behind parental support: the desire to offer guidance; the need for connection and communication; and, most importantly, the need to show and receive love.

Desire to offer guidance. Parents reported a desire to offer guidance to their college-aged child. They also emphasized their desire to help their children make the "best," "right," or "optimal" decisions. They claimed sharing their life experiences could help guide their children in the direction that would lead to success. Parents reported providing guidance on education,

employment, relationships and the various other things that were going on in their children's lives.

In addition to wanting to offer guidance, parents reported that children sought guidance from them. College-aged children asked for their parents' advice and guidance, and consulted with their parents to help discern what they should do and what decisions they should make. Parents also validated experiences and actions, as a way of providing positive reinforcement and guiding future decisions and actions.

Parents reported the notion of facilitating independence and allowing children to learn for themselves during such a transitional phase of life. Many parents demonstrated self-awareness. They admitted to struggling with knowing when to "step back" and when to allow their children to make their own decisions. They recognized there was a fine line between being involved and being overinvolved. Only one parent reported wanting to be less involved as their college-aged child matured. The other parents thought they were in a good place and not overinvolved or "overbearing".

There was an understanding among parents that the university has privacy regulations, which restricts parental access to information and services, like students' web accounts. One parent noted the boundaries imposed by the university, claiming the policies, rules, and regulations prohibit overinvolved parenting: "you cannot helicopter parent 'cause the university really won't let you." Parents realized there are limits to what they can do for their child, especially within the constraints of privacy legislation and the university's regulations and policies.

Literature on helicopter parenting has not given parents enough credit for their self-awareness and ability to navigate the fine lines it takes to parent a college-aged child. It was

evident that parents struggled with finding the appropriate balance of providing guidance yet facilitating independence and autonomy. In addition, parents recognized that students must do things on their own for growth and development. Unlike the enmeshment and neurotic dependency Munich and Munich (2009) emphasized, which stem from Freudian theory where parents project their own ideals on their children, and have difficulty separating from their child due to their own narcissism or unresolved narcissistic conflicts (Givertz & Segrin, 2012), the parents interviewed for the current study had an awareness of being overbearing and overinvolved. They struggled with the fine line of supporting their children yet allowing them to make their own decisions. They recognized the need for their children to act independently yet still desired to provide support and guidance. Although the parents in this study may not have found the perfect way to step back or promote autonomy in their relationship as Cullaty (2011) proposed, the parents in this study showed a desire to promote independence and were aware of the tensions they experienced as they sought to achieve the desired balance. Similarly, Kolkhorst et al. (2011) found that students who reported secure relationships with their parents described their parents as balancing involvement and separation.

Need for connection and communication. All of the parents interviewed for the current study responded that their favorite way of being involved with their children was communication. Parents listed in-person visits, text messages, and telephone calls as their favorite ways of staying connected with their children. Whether it was "sitting down and talking," "going to visit her or her coming down to visit here," or "knowing what she's doing," all five parents agreed communication was especially important to them. Parents enjoyed learning about their children's wishes, hopes, goals, and ambitions. They wanted to see their children succeed: become educated and have good occupational prospects.

Parents also listened to their children. In doing so, they acted as a "sounding board" and allowed their children to vent. By listening to their children, parents received information and, in return, were also able to provide information to their children. When providing information, parents sought to remind, interpret, and advise their children on matters relating to life, school, and relationships. They pointed out opportunities, shared knowledge, and contributed perspective/life experience.

Two parents noted they did not attend university. The disparity in education levels had communication implications for these two student-parent dyads. One parent used the opportunity to learn from their child. The other, however, said the difference in education levels made it difficult to communicate with her child. Despite the disparity in education levels, the parents still supported and were involved in their children's lives. Consistent with findings of Fingerman et al. (2009), parents were involved and supported their college-aged children regardless of parental education and income levels. Parents, in no uncertain terms, stated that they liked being in contact with their children and knowing what was going on in their lives.

Need to show and receive love. More important than guiding their children and staying in touch, was a motivating factor that stems from a deep, personal attachment that parents had inherently: unconditional love.

Parents naturally love their children. In this study, parents reported that love motivates them to be involved in the life of their child, whether they are young or old. It gives them an innate desire to support and guide their children. When asked why do you support your college-aged child, one parent said matter-of-factly, "She's my daughter and I love her." Another parent echoed that sentiment and stated:

Ah, *[laughs]* she's my first-born child. I can't imagine not supporting her. She is—I

don't know—*[laughs]*. She's a fantastic human being who deserves our support,

definitely, and has never done anything to make me think otherwise—that I shouldn't

support her whole-heartedly. I want her to have the very best that she could possibly

have in life.

Parents love their children and, in this study, love motivated the parents to provide support to

their college-aged children.

Due to underlying family values, parents wanted to be involved because it was a way they

expressed their love for their children. They thought it was absurd to not be involved and to not

support their child. They would never think not to support their child. One parent specifically

noted their family values, "I would worry less, I guess, if I wasn't involved but it, it for our

family would not happen so it was never a consideration." The family and the values that unite it

were innately engrained in these parents.

Even if parents exhibited helicopter parenting tendencies or overinvolved behaviors,

parents had benevolent intentions, which is consistent with the findings of Segrin et al. (2012).

Parents did not think twice about supporting their children because they love their children and

demonstrate deep-rooted family values. Family values are exhibited by parents, as helping

children is second nature and done without a second thought. These parents loved and, in return,

expected nothing from their children. Current literature on the phenomenon of helicopter

parenting has focused on other factors such as generational characteristics, family composition,

advances in technology, societal changes, psychological shifts, consumerism, and child safety

(Somers & Settle, 2010b), rather than emotional bonds and innate feelings of love.

Parent Programming

In response to the third research question, the researcher found parents who participated in parent programming offered by the university—whether their participation was as a presenter or attendee—reported the programming to be both useful and helpful.

Three of the five parents participated in parent programming. The three parents participated in different types of parent-specific programming offered by the university. One parent attended a campus tour, one parent attended an informational session on course registration, and one parent was a member of a question and answer parent panel. Parent programming served to remind parents of boundaries, provide them with information, and catalyze thought about their role as a parent of a college-aged child. The parents who did not participate in parent programming indicated it was because they were unaware of the available programming or thought they were already adequately prepared.

Regardless of the type of parent programming, according to the parents who attended, they found it beneficial to participate in the programming offered by the institution. Even those parents who were familiar with the campus developed a greater understanding of student life and offered support to the student that reflected their participation in the programming. As such, it is no surprise that more colleges and universities are providing parent programs and that the range of services and events that institutions offer is also increasing (Savage & Petree, 2011).

Findings

The parental case studies the researcher coded and analyzed led to findings in response to the three research questions. The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. The research questions and findings are as follows:

1. **What are the benefits and drawbacks of parental involvement?**

   Parents supported their college-aged children in various aspects of student life, especially financially and emotionally. Also, some parents received emotional support reciprocated to them.

2. **What is the motivation behind parental involvement?**

   - Three factors motivated parents to support their college-aged children: desire to offer guidance; need for connection and communication; and need to show and receive love. In all cases, parents noted talking with and knowing about their children as their favorite way to be involved in their children's lives. Technology enabled communication through telephone calls and text messaging. Having children whom they loved was reason enough for parents to be involved. Love rooted in family values motivated the parents.

   - Parents expressed self-awareness. They had knowledge of overbearing and helicopter parents and demonstrated an awareness of not wanting to be overinvolved. They wanted to find a balance in being involved and facilitating independence, but not being overinvolved.

3. **Do parents find parent programming offered by the university beneficial?**

   Parents who participated benefited from parent programming offered by the university. Regardless of the type of parent programming (e.g., tour, information session, or parent panel), parents who participated had a greater understanding of student life and offered support to the student that resulted from their participation in the programming.

   In conducting the interviewers, the researcher noted the following tendencies of parents. If a parent had more than one college-aged child, they often had difficulty speaking with only

one of their children in mind. For example, parents referred to "children" instead of "child." In addition, the parents who appeared to be married or in a relationship with the child's other parent often spoke using "we" and "our," which suggested both parents were involved in the child's life.

Typically, parents do not self-identify as being a helicopter parent nor do parents want to be classified as a helicopter parent. Instead, helicopter parenting is an external assessment or label given to parents by researchers, post-secondary administrators, and the media. As such, the parent participants may have demonstrated response bias and provided responses that were not completely accurate given their desire to provide socially acceptable responses (Furnham, 1986). Furthermore, on the spectrum of overinvolved parents, some researchers may classify the parents in this study as autonomous support providers rather than helicopter parents since the student-parent dyads did not answer all helicopter parenting questions with responses of agree or strongly agree. Although the parents in this study may not exhibit extreme helicopter parenting tendencies, the researcher can still learn about parental motivation from the responses the parent participants provided. What motivates typical parents can help researchers understand what motivates extreme (i.e., helicopter or overinvolved) parents, as well.

It is possible, however, that parents who demonstrated more extreme helicopter parenting tendencies may have provided different findings. Researchers may wish to explore if a helicopter parenting spectrum or continuum exists, since some parents may display more intense helicopter parenting tendencies in all aspects of life, while other parents may display over involvement in only certain areas of life. Given the intangible nature, emotional aspects, and self-reporting mechanisms—factors that should be considered when studying this

phenomenon—helicopter parenting appears to be difficult and complex to measure. More

exploration on this topic is needed.

Discussion

The parents in this study wanted to see their children succeed. To this end, parents

supported college-aged children in many ways, especially financially and emotionally.

Professionals at post-secondary institutions can be valuable communicators to parents. They can

help inform parents of the institution's policies and guidelines. They can also respond to parents

in a way that underscores the fact that student success is of utmost importance but it involves the

student following through by learning and acting on their own. Allowing parents to be engaged

in the experience but implementing a boundary between parents and college-aged students may

elicit students' independence and facilitate learning outcomes.

Parents of these college-aged children are aware of overinvolved parents and the negative

attention that surrounds helicopter parenting. As such, parents could benefit from some positive

media coverage to help remove the stigma associated with being involved in college-aged

children's lives. As Fingerman et al. (20102) noted, "The popular media may play a role in

shaping beliefs about support of grown children" (p. 891). The positive coverage could provide

practical information on how to help children successfully transition to university and how

parents can support their children in this transitional phase of life. Media and literature can give

parents more credit for their self-awareness. Also, media coverage along with parent

programming can help to educate parents on how to provide autonomous support while still

helping their children succeed and attain educational and occupational goals.

Parent programming is a worthy investment by the post-secondary institutions.

Programming that is specifically for parents or includes parents is helpful for parents and

students alike. Any opportunity to connect with parents, whether it is a campus tour, information session, or question and answer panel, should be seized. Programming with content focused on helping parents to support their student in the transition from high school to university could prove especially helpful. Given parents' awareness of helicopter parenting, guidelines on how not to be overbearing or involved could also be shared.

<div align="center">**Implications**</div>

Implications for Theory

As outlined in chapter one, research into why parents engage in helicopter parenting is limited. Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) suggested future research was needed to examine "*why* parents engage in helicopter parenting" (p.1188). Qualitative evidence collected in this study via telephone interviews helped to address this gap in research. Although the findings in the case study research may not be generalizable to the larger issue of helicopter parenting or the greater population, the findings of this study may contribute to the theoretical propositions as Yin (2009) proposed. As such, this study added to the growing body of research on the phenomenon of helicopter parenting. In addition, the parent participants in this study may not have demonstrated extreme helicopter parenting tendencies, however, the findings may help to inform student-parent interactions, nonetheless.

This study extends prior research by Fingerman et al. (2009) that found parents received emotional support from grown children. Indeed, some parents in the current study noted the emotional support their college-aged children reciprocated to them. To this end, reciprocation of emotional support could be an important factor in parents' motivation to be overinvolved. Research into areas of reciprocal support, including emotional support, could be explored in the future.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice include post-secondary student services professionals using parents as a messenger for information. Parents sought to guide their children and transfer knowledge and information. As such, parents can play an integral role in delivering information to students (e.g., admission requirements, availability of scholarship applications, etc.) and reminding their children of important deadlines during the transition from high school to university. Publications, such as parent guides and institutional webpages specifically for parents, may help to inform parents. The information can encourage parents to be involved in their children's education in a way that supports autonomy and facilitates independence. It can also help to inform parents on which tasks students are required to do on their own.

Furthermore, this study may provide insight for higher education administration. It may help administrators cultivate empathy by understanding what motivates parents to be involved, with the underlying benevolent intention being love. This information may assist these professionals in dealing with the concerns and meeting the needs of students and parents alike.

In the current study, students reciprocated emotional support to parents. Although intangible and difficult to measure, emotional support can be provided over text message, telephone calls, and in-person. It is also free to give; it does not require financial investment or involve physical items. As such, college-aged children should be encouraged to remain in contact with their parents both to receive support and give support. Encouraging students to be caring individuals and to value the relationships in their life, including their relationships with their parents, may help them be more successful in their education, as well as future career.

Implications for Future Research

Implications for future research revealed in this study include the need to study parents' self-awareness. Unlike other studies, parents in the current study expressed a desire to not be overinvolved or overbearing. Future work is needed to examine the accuracy of parents' self-awareness and how to develop and improve the underlying self-awareness of overinvolved parents.

Reciprocation of support is not included in much of the research on helicopter parenting. Research specifically examining support exchanges, especially emotional support, among students and parents could be explored.

This study focused on parents of Millennials who were attending university. Future research could compare parental support of Millennials enrolled in higher education with parental support of Millennials not enrolled in higher education. Research to determine if overinvolved parenting of Millennials only occurs for children attending higher education or if parents are overinvolved in the lives of their Millennial children, regardless of student status.

The parents that were interviewed for the current study were parents of college-aged children in a prairie, Canadian province. Parents from other regions of Canada, North America, and the world may support their children and helicopter parent differently. Chua (2011) authored a book titled, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother,* and discussed tiger parents in the Asian culture. Future research could be done with a culturally sensitive instrument to compare the similarities and differences of overinvolved parenting in different cultures. Cultural implications of overinvolved parents and the relative success of their children could be explored.

The current study examined four mother-daughter pairings and one father-daughter pairing, which was similar to the participant pool in the study by Schiffrin et al. (2013), which

surveyed the mothers of mainly female college students. Since a previous study and the current study focused on mother-daughter pairings, future research could be done with male participants. Father-son dyads may offer insight on the parenting differences between fathers and mothers and the involvement parents have with their college-aged sons.

The measures currently available aim to determine if a parent demonstrates helicopter-parenting tendencies. A new measure that allows researchers to determine the type of helicopter parent, per the five typologies outlined by Somers and Settle (2010a), could be created. Also, a measure that explores the spectrum of helicopter parenting may be needed. Typecasting parents may provide valuable insight for researchers and student services professionals, and might serve as a learning tool for parents to help build self-awareness.

Post-Research (Methodological) Reflections

Post-research reflections include things I would do differently as a researcher, my preconceived notions and assumptions, my change in perspective or lack thereof, and my growth as a professional. I also include details on the conferences where I plan to present the findings of this study.

Participant Recruitment

There are four things I would change with the recruitment of participants. First, I would coordinate participant recruitment and the timing thereof differently. I would limit the survey to one round and use the initial invitation to invite undergraduate students from all colleges to participate in the survey. Second, I would have the survey available to students for a longer period of time, perhaps up to a month. Having the survey available for a longer period of time would allow for more students to complete the survey and invite their parents to complete the survey. Parents would also have more time to complete the parent survey. Third, if possible, I

103

would avoid having the survey open to students during major holidays (i.e., the Easter long weekend) and well before final exams. Finally, I would provide an incentive of nominal value for those student participants who invited their parents to complete the online survey. Having more student-parent dyads to select interview participants may have resulted in different findings. I believe by making adjustments to these four areas, I would have had a better response rate, resulting in a better-suited participant pool.

Matching Questions in the Surveys

It was impossible to match some of the student surveys with the parent surveys because the responses from the students and parents were inconsistent. Two questions in particular were problematic:

1. What are the last two letters of your/your child's first name?

2. What are the first three letters of your/your child's last name?

These questions seemed to cause confusion among the students and parents. In future surveys, the questions used for matching purposes could be more straightforward and easier to understand. These questions were important since I relied so heavily on the participants' responses from phase one to proceed with data collection in phase two of the study.

Preconceived Notions and Assumptions

Based on cultural norms and mass media coverage, I assumed parents would be somewhat aware of the helicopter parenting phenomenon and, as a result, would self-select when providing their responses. However, I did not anticipate parents' high levels of awareness of overbearing, helicopter parenting tendencies nor did I anticipate they would acknowledge them in their responses. Based on their responses, I found parents to be aware of the overinvolved parenting concept and its negative undertones because two of the parents mentioned it in their

interviews. Parents articulated the struggle they had in allowing their children to make independent decisions and learn from their own experiences. In addition, it was apparent that parents wanted what was best for their children and felt their guidance and life experience would help their children make better decisions and, ultimately, succeed in life.

An education in parenting. I learned involved parents—overinvolved or otherwise—are truly selfless, caring, human beings. Their involvement stems from love and aspirations of seeing their children succeed. They truly want what is best for their children. They may not always know what is best for their children or how to help them succeed, but their intentions are well meaning.

Parents have a strong emotional bond with their children. It is a bond that grows from raising kids through infancy, childhood, and adolescence. The bond can be tried and tested during the transition to adulthood, as emerging adulthood is truly a time of change and the unknown. Parents struggle with knowing how to support and protect their children so they can be happy, healthy, and successful adults.

Unchanged perspective. I will continue to believe that despite parents' benevolent intentions, some may cross the figurative line and become too involved in their children's post-secondary lives and, at times, act inappropriately. I believe that college-aged students, whether they are 18 or 25, when possible, should act for themselves, on their own, and as adults. Parents, when being involved with matters of post-secondary education, should ask themselves, "Is this something my child can do on their own or must I be involved?" If it is something the college-aged child can do on their own and it is an experience from which the student can learn—be it a learning opportunity large or small; practical, administrative, or academic in nature—I believe the student should act on their own.

Autonomous action by college-aged students in the post-secondary environment will foster independence, maturity, and responsibility: three qualities university students should graduate with and members of our workforce ought to posses. In addition, the privacy laws already in place by the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (LAFOIPP) promote and warrant college-aged students to act independently. Administrators at post-secondary institutions should be authorized to speak to third parties about students on very rare occasions. It should not be the norm. Instead, students should take control and responsibility for their higher education, from the point of applying for admission to receiving their degree, and everything in between.

Parents, no doubt, can play a role in providing support whether it is physically, financially, socially, and/or emotionally; however, parents should draw the line when it comes to the learning opportunities of their child's higher education. The student is receiving the education and earning the degree. Indeed, students need support to succeed but the various learning opportunities that come with navigating higher education should be left to the student.

Result: Professional growth. This research has resulted in my growth professionally and personally. As a student services professional in a university setting, this research has shaped how I interact with parents and students. I have tried and will strive to be more supportive when students are courageous and seek help on their own. Knowing that there are many different facets to life as a student, I aim to support students who exhibit independence and autonomy. My interactions with parents have been and will continue to be aimed at involving students with the processes at hand and encouraging parents to have their children take responsibility and learn for themselves.

As a daughter with supportive parents, I will strive to be more communicative, loving, and kind. Despite having transitioned beyond the emerging adult phase of life, my parents continue to support me in my endeavors. I will strive to value and cherish them and reciprocate support whenever I can.

Finally, one day, if I am fortunate enough to be a mother, I hope to relate to the strong emotional bond that motivates parents to be involved in their children's lives. I hope to guide, communicate, and love, as I have known involved parents to do.

Conference Presentations

As a student services professional at a Canadian university, I will share my study and findings at professional conferences for the two associations to which I belong: the Canadian Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) and the Western Association of Registrars of the Universities and College of Canada (WARUCC). CASFAA has an annual conference and I plan to present at the 2016 CASFAA Conference in Vancouver, BC. I also plan to present at the next WARUCC Conference, which will be held in 2017.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of helicopter parenting and the motivation behind overinvolved parenting of college-aged children. The current study found parents support their college-aged children during this transitional phase of life in five different ways: financially, physically, socially, academically, and emotionally. Financial and emotional support, however, were noted as the foremost ways parents supported their children. In addition, parents reported that students reciprocated emotional support.

At their core, parents are driven by love and their deep-rooted family values, which motivate them to guide and communicate with their children. Parents want to share their life

experience and desire to offer guidance. They act as "sounding boards" for students who "vent" their concerns. Parents are also motivated by their need for connection and communication. Advances in technology have allowed parents and children to easily stay connected. Finally, parents also have a need to show and receive love, a motivation that extends from family values. Showing support and love to children came naturally for the parents in this study.

Parents of college-aged children are aware of overbearing and helicopter parents that mar news stories, talk shows, and documentaries. In this study, parents struggled with knowing how to provide guidance to their emerging adult children while allowing them to make their own decisions. In the end, parents reported loving their children and wanting to see them succeed. Perhaps the support that college-age children need the most is the hardest thing for parents to do: the letting go.

Emotions and intangible support are difficult to measure. Thus, researchers studying the phenomenon of helicopter parenting—in the center of which are loving, familial relationships—will continue to grapple with its subjective nature, and the complexity with which it can be quantified.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Announcement to Undergraduate Students

Subject: Participate in a Student Survey

As an undergraduate student in the College of _____, you are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may **select only <u>one</u>** of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you and a parent/guardian both answer the survey questions, your parent/guardian may be selected to participate in the second phase of this study. Phase two of this study will consist of a telephone interview with only your parent/guardian and will take less than one hour to complete. Please note: that only three to five parents will be interviewed in phase two of this study. If your parent/guardian completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will be asked to provide the last two letters of your first name and the first three letters of your last name so your survey results can be matched to the survey results of your participating parent.

This survey is hosted by Fluid Survey, a USA owned company and subject to US laws. As such the privacy of the information you provide may be subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. By participating in this survey you acknowledge and agree that although your [answers/information] will be stored in Canada they may or may not receive the same level of privacy protection afforded by Canadian law.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

(The link to provide your parent/guardian to complete their portion of the survey is:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.)

Surveys must be completed by **Friday, March 20, 2015**.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Appendix B: Reminder Announcement to Undergraduate Students

Subject: Reminder: Participate in a Student Survey

As an undergraduate student in the College of _____, you are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may **select only <u>one</u>** of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you and a parent/guardian both answer the survey questions, your parent/guardian may be selected to participate in the second phase of this study. Phase two of this study will consist of a telephone interview with only your parent/guardian and will take less than one hour to complete. Please note: that only three to five parents will be interviewed in phase two of this study. If your parent/guardian completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will be asked to provide the last two letters of your first name and the first three letters of your last name so your survey results can be matched to the survey results of your participating parent.

This survey is hosted by Fluid Survey, a USA owned company and subject to US laws. As such the privacy of the information you provide may be subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. By participating in this survey you acknowledge and agree that although your [answers/information] will be stored in Canada they may or may not receive the same level of privacy protection afforded by Canadian law.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

(The link to provide your parent/guardian to complete their portion of the survey is: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.)

Surveys must be completed by **Friday, March 20, 2015**.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Participate In A Student Survey

Undergraduate students at the [institution] are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may **select only <u>one</u>** of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

Surveys must be completed by **Friday, April 10, 2015**.

Please see the attached document for complete details.

Attachments:

SurveyInvitation.pdf

For more information, contact:

Arvelle Van Dyck (**arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca**)

Attachment: SurveyInvitation.pdf

Participate in a Student Survey

Undergraduate students at the [institution] are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may **select only <u>one</u>** of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you and a parent/guardian both answer the survey questions, your parent/guardian may be selected to participate in the second phase of this study. Phase two of this study will consist of a

telephone interview with only your parent/guardian and will take less than one hour to complete. Please note: that only three to five parents will be interviewed in phase two of this study. If your parent/guardian completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will be asked to provide the last two letters of your first name and the first three letters of your last name so your survey results can be matched to the survey results of your participating parent.

This survey is hosted by Fluid Survey, a USA owned company and subject to US laws. As such the privacy of the information you provide may be subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. By participating in this survey you acknowledge and agree that although your [answers/information] will be stored in Canada they may or may not receive the same level of privacy protection afforded by Canadian law.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:

https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

(The link to provide your parent/guardian to complete their portion of the survey is: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.)

Surveys must be completed by **Friday, April 10, 2015**.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306- 966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Appendix D: Reminder Bulletin for all Undergraduate Students

Reminder: Participate In A Student Survey

Bulletin Research Studies Posted Apr 09, 2015 10:56am

Undergraduate students at the [institution] are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may select only one of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

Please complete the survey by **Friday, April 10, 2015**. For complete details, see attached document.

📎 **Attachments:**

SurveyInvitation.pdf

For more information, contact:

Arvelle Van Dyck (**arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca**)

Attachment: SurveyInvitation.pdf

Participate in a Student Survey

Undergraduate students at the [institution] are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your parent/guardian to complete. The survey will take each of you approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. If you have more than one parent/guardian, you may **select only one** of your parents/guardians to complete the survey. Your parent/guardian will require Internet access and an email address. You and your parent/guardian do not need to complete the surveys at the same time.

If you and a parent/guardian both answer the survey questions, your parent/guardian may be selected to participate in the second phase of this study. Phase two of this study will consist of a

telephone interview with only your parent/guardian and will take less than one hour to complete. Please note: that only three to five parents will be interviewed in phase two of this study. If your parent/guardian completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will be asked to provide the last two letters of your first name and the first three letters of your last name so your survey results can be matched to the survey results of your participating parent.

This survey is hosted by Fluid Survey, a USA owned company and subject to US laws. As such the privacy of the information you provide may be subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. By participating in this survey you acknowledge and agree that although your [answers/information] will be stored in Canada they may or may not receive the same level of privacy protection afforded by Canadian law.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/student-survey/

(The link to provide your parent/guardian to complete their portion of the survey is: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.)

Surveys must be completed by **Friday, April 10, 2015.**

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306- 966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Appendix E: Email Invitation for Undergraduate Students to Send to Parents

Subject: Opportunity to participate in a research study

As an undergraduate student in the College of _____, I was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions. This study involves an online survey for both me (the student) and my parent/guardian to complete. The survey takes approximately10 minutes or less to complete.

If we both answer the survey questions, you will have option of entering your email address should you wish to be contacted at a later date for a telephone interview. Three to five parent participants will be invited to participate in a telephone interview that will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will only be contacted by the researcher to participate in phase two of the study, if you choose to leave your email address.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.
Please complete the survey by Friday, March 20, 2015.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of at or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Appendix F: Email Invitation for Undergraduate Students in any College to Send to Parents

Subject: Opportunity to participate in a research study

As an undergraduate student at the [institution], I was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions. This study involves an online survey for both me (the student) and my parent/guardian to complete. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes or less to complete.

If we both answer the survey questions, you will have option of entering your email address should you wish to be contacted at a later date to participate in a telephone interview. The telephone interview will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle. Please note: only three to five parents/guardians will be invited to participate in the telephone interview.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will only be contacted by the researcher to participate in phase two of the study, if you choose to leave your email address.

This survey is hosted by Fluid Survey, a USA owned company and subject to US laws. As such the privacy of the information you provide may be subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. By participating in this survey you acknowledge and agree that although your [answers/information] will be stored in Canada they may or may not receive the same level of privacy protection afforded by Canadian law.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/. **Please complete the survey by Friday, April 10, 2015.**

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Appendix G: Email Invitation for Parent Case Study Participation

Subject: Parent Request for Telephone Interview

Hello,

Thank you for participating in the online survey for our study about student-parent interactions. You are now invited to participate in the second phase of this study: a telephone interview.

Should you decide to participate in the telephone interview portion of this study, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your interactions with your college-aged child. The interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour to complete.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, only the completed portion of your telephone interview will be used in the study. If you wish to withdraw completely, none of your telephone interview will be used in the study. If at any time you do not wish to continue with the interview, please let me know and I will end the interview.

The interview will be recorded. You have the option to have the recording stopped at any time throughout the interview. If you wish to have the recording stopped, please let me know.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous in the findings of the study. All recordings, transcripts, and notes will be kept in locked storage for five years. Only the researchers will have access to the research information.

If you wish to participate, please reply to this email to set-up a time for the telephone interview. After you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod shuffle.

Please read the informed consent information below carefully.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck, Student Investigator

Appendix H: Consent Form for Telephone Interview

Student-Parent Interactions Study
Informed Consent – Please read the following carefully

Researchers: This study is being conducted by Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

Purpose: We are looking at interactions between parents and their college-aged children.

Procedure: Should you decide to participate in the telephone interview portion of this study, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your interactions with your college-aged child.

Potential Risks and Benefits: There are no known or anticipated risks for participating in this study. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate. By participating in this telephone interview, you will have a chance to share your experiences about interactions with your child. If you complete the telephone interview, you will be provided with an iPod shuffle.

Confidentiality: The information you share will be kept anonymous. You will not be asked for any identifying information. The results of this research will form the basis of a Master's thesis and may be presented at a conference, submitted for journal publication, and/or summarized in a professional association newsletter.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you may do so at any time, for any reason, and without explanation or penalty. For more information about this study, you may contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458) or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647).

Questions: If you have any questions concerning this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458) or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647).

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Results: If you wish to review the results of this study, please contact the researchers by email for a summary of the results.

Consent to Participate: By agreeing to participate in the telephone interview, you agree that you have read and understood the above information, that you have been provided with the

information necessary to choose to participate in the study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered, and you understand that you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

By participating in the telephone interview, your free and informed consent is implied and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

Student Survey
Student-Parent Interactions

Page 1
Student Information
1. Are you a current undergraduate student in the College of ____ at the [institution]?
Yes   No

2. What is your gender?
Female   Male   Other   _____

3. What is your age?

4 a. What are the **last two letters** of your **first name**?
(e.g., If your first name is Jane, enter N and E)

4 b. What are the **first three letters** of your **last name**?
(e.g., If your last name is Smith, enter S, M, and I)

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Page 2
Parent/Guardian Information
5. When answering the questionnaire, you will be asked to think of one parent/guardian. Please select the parent/guardian you will have in mind.

6. Does your parent/guardian have Internet access and an email address?
Yes   No

7 (a). Do you live in the same community or city as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say

7 (b). If you answered "Yes" to Question 7 (a), do you live in the same home as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

7 (c). If you answered "No" to Question 7 (a), do you live in the same province as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

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Pages 3–17
Please answer the following questions thinking about your parent/guardian on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

If you have more than one parent/guardian, please answer the questions thinking about **only the parent/guardian** you previously identified.

Each question is on a separate page. Choices for response are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. My parent/guardian had/will have a say in what major I chose/will choose.

2. My parent/guardian encourages me to discuss any academic problems I am having with my professor.

3. My parent/guardian monitors my exercise schedule.

4. When I am home with my parent/guardian, I have a curfew (a certain time that I must be home by every night).

5. My parent/guardian has given me tips on how to shop for groceries economically.

6. My parent/guardian encourages me to make my own decisions and take the responsibility for the choices I have made.

7. My parent/guardian regularly wants me to call or text him/her to let him/her know where I am.

8. My parent/guardian encourages me to deal with any interpersonal problems between myself and my roommate or my friends on my own.

9. If I were to receive a low grade that I felt was unfair, my parent/guardian would call the professor.

10. My parent/guardian monitors my diet.

11. My parent/guardian monitors who I spend time with.

12. My parent/guardian encourages me to keep a budget and manage my own finances.

13. My parent/guardian calls me to track my schoolwork (i.e., how I'm doing in school, what my grades are like, etc.).

14. If I am having an issue with my roommate, my parent/guardian would try to intervene.

15. My parent/guardian encourages me to choose my own classes.

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Page 18
Parental/Guardian Involvement

Part of this study includes surveying parents/guardians. We hope that you will assist us by emailing the information below to your parent/guardian and encouraging them to participate in the study. Once you send the email, if your parent/guardian agrees to participate in the study, they will click on the link to do so. **You will not be involved in the study beyond this point.**

The online survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If your parent/guardian completes the online survey they will have the option of entering their email address should they agree to be contacted at a later date to participate in a telephone interview taking less than one hour to complete. The email addresses for the case study participation will be used by the researcher for future contact. The email addresses will not be used as part of the survey data.

Three to five parents/guardians will be contacted to participate in the telephone interview. If your parent/guardian is completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod shuffle.

Are you willing to email the information below (including the link to the online survey) to the parent/guardian you had in mind when completing your portion of the survey?

Yes   No

Email to share with your parent/guardian - **Please copy and paste the information below into the body of an email and send it to the parent/guardian you had in mind when completing the survey.**

Subject: Opportunity to participate in a research study

As an undergraduate student in the College of _____, I was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions. This study involves an online survey for both me (the student) and my parent/guardian to complete. The survey takes approximately10 minutes or less to complete.

If we both answer the survey questions, you will have option of entering your email address should you wish to be contacted at a later date for a telephone interview. Three to five parent participants will be invited to participate in a telephone interview that will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will only be contacted by the researcher to participate in phase two of the study, if you choose to leave your email address.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link:
https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/.
Please complete the survey by Friday, March 20, 2015.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of at or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

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Page 19
Thank you for participating in this study!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck, student investigator

Student Survey
Student-Parent Interactions

Page 1
Student Information
1 a. Are you a current undergraduate student at the institution?
Yes   No

1 b. What college are you currently enrolled in?

2. What is your gender?
Female   Male   Other   _____

3. What is your age?

4 a. What are the **last two letters** of your **first name**?
(e.g., If your first name is Jane, enter N and E)

4 b. What are the **first three letters** of your **last name**?
(e.g., If your last name is Smith, enter S, M, and I)

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Page 2
Parent/Guardian Information
5. When answering the questionnaire, you will be asked to think of one parent/guardian. Please select the parent/guardian you will have in mind.

6. Does your parent/guardian have Internet access and an email address?
Yes   No

7 (a). Do you live in the same community or city as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say

7 (b). If you answered "Yes" to Question 7 (a), do you live in the same home as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

7 (c). If you answered "No" to Question 7 (a), do you live in the same province as your parent/guardian?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

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Pages 3–17

Please answer the following questions thinking about your parent/guardian on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

If you have more than one parent/guardian, please answer the questions thinking about **only the parent/guardian** you previously identified.

Each question is on a separate page. Choices for response are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. My parent/guardian had/will have a say in what major I chose/will choose.

2. My parent/guardian encourages me to discuss any academic problems I am having with my professor.

3. My parent/guardian monitors my exercise schedule.

4. When I am home with my parent/guardian, I have a curfew (a certain time that I must be home by every night).

5. My parent/guardian has given me tips on how to shop for groceries economically.

6. My parent/guardian encourages me to make my own decisions and take the responsibility for the choices I have made.

7. My parent/guardian regularly wants me to call or text him/her to let him/her know where I am.

8. My parent/guardian encourages me to deal with any interpersonal problems between myself and my roommate or my friends on my own.

9. If I were to receive a low grade that I felt was unfair, my parent/guardian would call the professor.

10. My parent/guardian monitors my diet.

11. My parent/guardian monitors who I spend time with.

12. My parent/guardian encourages me to keep a budget and manage my own finances.

13. My parent/guardian calls me to track my schoolwork (i.e., how I'm doing in school, what my grades are like, etc.).

14. If I am having an issue with my roommate, my parent/guardian would try to intervene.

15. My parent/guardian encourages me to choose my own classes.

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Page 18
Parental/Guardian Involvement

Part of this study includes surveying parents/guardians. We hope that you will assist us by emailing the information below to your parent/guardian and encouraging them to participate in the study. Once you send the email, if your parent/guardian agrees to participate in the study, they will click on the link to do so. **You will not be involved in the study beyond this point.**

The online survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If your parent/guardian completes the online survey they will have the option of entering their email address should they agree to be contacted at a later date to participate in a telephone interview taking less than one hour to complete. The email addresses for the case study participation will be used by the researcher for future contact. The email addresses will not be used as part of the survey data.

Three to five parents/guardians will be contacted to participate in the telephone interview. If your parent/guardian is completes the telephone interview, they will receive an iPod shuffle.

Are you willing to email the information below (including the link to the online survey) to the parent/guardian you had in mind when completing your portion of the survey?

Yes   No

Email to share with your parent/guardian - **Please copy and paste the information below into the body of an email and send it to the parent/guardian you had in mind when completing the survey.**

Subject: Opportunity to participate in a research study

As an undergraduate student at the [institution], I was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions. This study involves an online survey for both me (the student) and my parent/guardian to complete. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes or less to complete.

If we both answer the survey questions, you will have option of entering your email address should you wish to be contacted at a later date for a telephone interview. Three to five parent participants will be invited to participate in a telephone interview that will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, your survey results will not be used in the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous. You will only be contacted by the researcher to participate in phase two of the study, if you choose to leave your email address.

If you wish to participate, please click the following link: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/surveys/mxT8BNcNq8dNr3csNkp9HMbk68qcx2/parent-survey/. **Please complete the survey by Friday, March 20, 2015.**

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of at or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

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Page 19
Thank you for participating in this study!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck, student investigator

Parent/Guardian Survey
Student-Parent Interactions

Page 1
Information on the Study

As an undergraduate student in the College of _____, your college-aged child was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your child to complete separately. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. At the end of the survey, you will have option of entering your email address should you agree to be contacted at a later date to participate in a telephone interview. Three to five parents/guardians will be invited to participate in a telephone interview. Your email address will be used by the researcher for future contact and it will not be used as part of the survey data.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you provide your email address at the end of the survey, you may be contacted to participate in a telephone interview that will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Should you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous in the findings of the study. All survey data will be kept in locked storage for five years. Only the researchers will have access to the research information.

If you wish to participate, please complete this online survey by Friday, March 20, 2015.

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of at or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

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Page 2
Parent/Guardian Information

Please answer the following questions. If the question refers to your child, please answer the question keeping in mind your college-aged child who is an undergraduate student in the College of _____ at the [institution].

1. What is your gender?

Female   Male   Other _____

2. Is your child a current undergraduate student in the College of _____ at the [institution]?
(If your child is not an undergraduate student in the College of _____, please do not complete this survey.)

Yes   No

3. What are the **last two letters** of your child's **first name**?
(e.g., If your child's first name is Jane, enter N and E)

4. What are the **first three letters of your child's last name**?
(e.g., If your child's last name is Smith, enter S, M, and I)

5 (a). Do you live in the same community or city as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say

5 (b). If you answered "Yes" to Question 5 (a), do you live in the same home as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

5 (c). If you answered "No" to Question 5 (a), do you live in the same province as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

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Pages 3–17
Please answer the following questions thinking about your college-aged child in the College of _____ at the [intuition] on a scale from 1 *(strongly disagree)* **to 6** *(strongly agree).*

If you have more than one child in the College of _____ at the [institution], please answer the questions thinking about your child who asked you to participate in this study.

Each page contained one question. Choices for response are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I had/will have a say in what major my child chose/will choose.

2. I encourage my child to discuss any academic problems he/she is having with his/her professor.

3. I monitor my child's exercise schedule.

4. When my child is home with me, he/she has a curfew (a certain time that he/she must be home by every night).

5. I have given my child tips on how to shop for groceries economically.

6. I encourage my child to make his/her own decisions and take the responsibility for the choices he/she has made.

7. I regularly want my child to call or text me to let me know where he/she is.

8. I encourage my child to deal with any interpersonal problems between him/herself and their roommate or his/her friends on their own.

9. If my child were to receive a low grade that he/she felt was unfair, I would call the professor.

10. I monitor my child's diet.

11. I monitor who my child spends time with.

12. I encourage my child to keep a budget and manage his/her own finances.

13. I call my child to track his/her schoolwork (i.e., how they are doing in school, what their grades are like, etc.).

14. If my child is having an issue with his/her roommate, I would try to intervene.

15. I encourage my child to choose his/her own classes.

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Page 18

Contact Information
If you wish to be contacted at a later date for a telephone interview, please enter your email address below.

If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle. The telephone interview will take less than one hour to complete. The email addresses for the case study participation will be used by the researcher for future contact. The email addresses will not be used as part of the survey data. **Participation in this study is completely voluntary.**

Please enter your email address: _____

Please confirm your email address: _____

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Page 19

Thank you for participating in this study!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck, student investigator

Parent/Guardian Survey
Student-Parent Interactions

Page 1
Information on the Study

As an undergraduate student at the [institution], your college-aged child was invited to participate in a research study exploring student-parent interactions.

This study involves an online survey for both you and your child to complete separately. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. At the end of the survey, you will have option of entering your email address should you agree to be contacted at a later date to participate in a telephone interview. Three to five parents/guardians will be invited to participate in a telephone interview. Your email address will be used by the researcher for future contact and it will not be used as part of the survey data.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you provide your email address at the end of the survey, you may be contacted to participate in a telephone interview that will take less than one hour to complete. If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle.

Should you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous in the findings of the study. All survey data will be kept in locked storage for five years. Only the researchers will have access to the research information.

If you wish to participate, please complete this online survey by <u>Friday, April 10, 2015.</u>

For more information about this study, please contact Arvelle Van Dyck (email: arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca; telephone: 306-229-8458), graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of at or Dr. Michelle Prytula (email: michelle.prytula@usask.ca; telephone: 306-966-7647), College of Education.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

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Page 2
Parent/Guardian Information

Please answer the following questions. If the question refers to your child, please answer the question keeping in mind your college-aged child who is an undergraduate student at the [institution].

1. What is your gender?

Female   Male   Other _____

2 a. Is your child a current undergraduate student at the [institution]?

(If your child is <u>not</u> an undergraduate student at the [institution], please do <u>not</u> complete this survey.)
Yes   No

2 b. What college is your child enrolled in?

3. What are the **<u>last two letters</u>** of your child's **<u>first name</u>**?
(e.g., If your child's first name is Jane, enter N and E)

4. What are the **<u>first three letters</u> of your child's <u>last name</u>**?
(e.g., If your child's last name is Smith, enter S, M, and I)

5 (a). Do you live in the same community or city as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say

5 (b). If you answered "Yes" to Question 5 (a), do you live in the same home as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

5 (c). If you answered "No" to Question 5 (a), do you live in the same province as your child?
Yes   No   Prefer not to say   Not applicable

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Pages 3-17
Please answer the following questions thinking about your college-aged child enrolled at the [institution] on a scale from 1 *(strongly disagree)* **to 6** *(strongly agree)***.**

If you have more than one child enrolled at the [institution], please answer the questions thinking about your child who asked you to participate in this study.

Each page contained one question. Choices for response are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I had/will have a say in what major my child chose/will choose.

2. I encourage my child to discuss any academic problems he/she is having with his/her professor.

3. I monitor my child's exercise schedule.

4. When my child is home with me, he/she has a curfew (a certain time that he/she must be home by every night).

5. I have given my child tips on how to shop for groceries economically.

6. I encourage my child to make his/her own decisions and take the responsibility for the choices he/she has made.

7. I regularly want my child to call or text me to let me know where he/she is.

8. I encourage my child to deal with any interpersonal problems between him/herself and their roommate or his/her friends on their own.

9. If my child were to receive a low grade that he/she felt was unfair, I would call the professor.

10. I monitor my child's diet.

11. I monitor who my child spends time with.

12. I encourage my child to keep a budget and manage his/her own finances.

13. I call my child to track his/her schoolwork (i.e., how they are doing in school, what their grades are like, etc.).

14. If my child is having an issue with his/her roommate, I would try to intervene.

15. I encourage my child to choose his/her own classes.

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Page 18

Contact Information
If you wish to be contacted at a later date for a telephone interview, please enter your email address below.

If you complete the telephone interview, you will receive an iPod Shuffle. The telephone interview will take less than one hour to complete. The email addresses for the case study

146

participation will be used by the researcher for future contact. The email addresses will not be used as part of the survey data. **Participation in this study is completely voluntary.**

Please enter your email address: _____

Please confirm your email address: _____

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Page 19

Thank you for participating in this study!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck, student investigator

Appendix M: Transcript Release Form

Data/Transcript Release Form

Please find attached the transcribed interview from <insert date here> for your review. If you have any changes or revisions to report, please send them to Arvelle Van Dyck at arvelle.vandyck@usask.ca with the signed release form no later than **<insert date here>**. If no changes are received by this date, your approval of the transcribed interview will be implied.

Student-Parent Interactions

I,_____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Arvelle Van Dyck. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Arvelle Van Dyck to be used in the manner disclosed. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature of Participant

Arvelle Van Dyck_____   _____
Name of Student Investigator   Signature of Student Investigator

Appendix N: Codes and Themes

Category/Theme: Support
    Code: FINANCIAL
        Subcode: Rent Money/Room and Board
        Subcode: Tuition
        Subcode: Unemployment
        Subcode: Investment
        Subcode: Tax incentive
        Subcode: Disposable income
        Subcode: Retirement Savings
        Subcode: Travel
    Code: PHYSICAL
        Subcode: Room
        Subcode: Electronic Resources (Computers, Internet)
        Subcode: Transportation (Automotive, Driving)
        Subcode: Travel time
        Subcode: Meals
        Subcode: "Things around the house"
    Code: EMOTIONAL
        Subcode: Happy/Glad/Joy
        Subcode: Love
        Subcode: Health
        Subcode: Pride
        Subcode: Empathy / Understanding
        Subcode: "Being there"
        Subcode: Worry / Concern
        Subcode: Stress
        Subcode: Separation anxiety
        Subcode: Lonely
        Subcode: Outgrowing
        Subcode: Validate Experiences
        Subcode: Encourage
    Code: SOCIAL
        Subcode: Fun
        Subcode: Time
        Subcode: Friends (Circle of Friends)
    Code: ACADEMIC
        Subcode: Proofread
        Subcode: Registration
Category/Theme: Guidance
    Code: DECISIONS
        Subcode: Best/Right/Optimal
        Subcode: Life Experiences
        Subcode: Independence
        Subcode: Learning

Code: SKILLS
Code: RELATIONSHIPS
Category/Theme: Communication and Connection
    Code: MEDIUM
        Subcode: Telephone
        Subcode: Text messages
        Subcode: In-person
        Subcode: Email (Assignments)
    Code: INFORMATION
        Subcode: Remind
        Subcode: Interpret
        Subcode: Advise
        Subcode: Strategize
        Subcode: Opportunities
        Subcode: Knowledge
        Subcode: Perspective
        Subcode: "Point out what the negatives are"
    Code: ASPIRATIONS
        Subcode: Wishes
        Subcode: Hopes
        Subcode: Goals
        Subcode: Achieve
        Subcode: Success
        Subcode: Employment/Better job prospects
        Subcode: Education
    Code: LISTEN
        Subcode: "Sounding board"
        Subcode: Venting
    Code: PRAISE
    Code: FEEDBACK
        Subcode: Body language
        Subcode: Length of Conversation
        Subcode: Avoidance
Category/Theme: Limits
    Code: INVOLVEMENT
        Subcode: "State of stress"
    Code: ROLE
    Code: SELF-AWARE
    Code: UNIVERSITY
        Subcode: Privacy
        Subcode: Electronic account (institution web portal)
Category/Theme: Family Values and Love
    CODE: RECIPROCAL BENEFITS
        Subcode: Emotional Support
        Subcode: Learning
        Subcode: Social Circle

Subcode: Friction
Subcode: Lack of expertise/Learning differential
CODE: Innate
Subcode: "Never think not to"
CODE: PROTECT
Subcode: "Don't want her to feel bad or guilty"

Appendix O: Email to Student to include Pilot Testing Data

Thank you for participating in the testing of our survey regarding student-parent interactions. Given the low number of participants from the College of _____, we invited all undergraduate students at the [institution] to participate in the student survey. As such, we are wondering if you would agree to have the data you provided included as part of this study? If you agree to the use of your data, please reply to this email with the college you are registered in and your age. In addition, please provide your consent no later than June 9, 2015. You may provide your consent in the way that is most convenient for you: by oral consent or by signing the form and returning it by email or in-person (you may have your parent provide it to me on your behalf, if that's most convenient).

Thank you for your consideration and your assistance in helping test the student survey questions.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck
Student Investigator

Note: A copy of the student consent form was attached to the email.

Appendix P: Email to Parent to include Pilot Testing Data

Thank you for participating in the testing of our survey regarding student-parent interactions. Given the low number of participants from the College of _____, we invited all undergraduate students at the [institution] to participate and invite their parents to participate, as well. As such, we are wondering if you would agree to have the survey and telephone data you provided included as part of the study? If so, would you please provide your consent no later Tuesday, June 9, 2015? You may provide your consent in the way that is most convenient for you: by oral consent or by signing the form and returning it by email or in-person.

Furthermore, if you agree to have your telephone interview included as part of the study, we ask that you sign and return the Data/Transcript Release Form, which is also attached. You will receive an iPod shuffle for participating in the telephone interview, as did the other parents who participated in the telephone interview.

Thank you for your consideration. Your assistance in helping test the survey and telephone questions was greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Arvelle Van Dyck
Student Investigator

Note: Copies of the parent consent form, data/transcript release form, and transcribed interview were attached to the email.

Appendix Q: Telephone Interview Questions for Parent Participants

Open-ended Questions for Parent/Guardian Telephone Interview

Good (morning/afternoon/evening),

My name is Arvelle and I am a graduate student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Saskatchewan. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this telephone interview to explore student-parent interactions.

These questions could take between thirty to sixty minutes to complete.

Your participation is **completely voluntary**. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, only the completed portion of your telephone interview will be used in the study. If you wish to withdraw completely, none of your telephone interview will be used in the study. If at any time you do not wish to continue with the interview, please let me know and I will end the interview.

The interview will be recorded via an ear piece on my telephone. The recording can be turned off at your request. If you wish to have the recording stopped at any time, please let me know.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept anonymous in the findings of the study. All survey data, recordings, transcripts, and research notes will be kept in locked storage for five years. Only the researchers will have access to the research information.

Within several days of this interview, you will be emailed a transcribed version of this interview. If, at that time, you wish to see any changes made, you can let me know.

Upon completion of the telephone interview, I will ask you for your mailing address so I can send you an iPod shuffle.

Do you have any questions? If not, we will begin.

Please take as much time as you need to formulate your responses and answer the questions.

1.   How many children do you have in post-secondary education?

If the parent has more than one child in post-secondary education, ask the parent to answer the following questions referring only to their son/daughter who is an undergraduate student at the [institution] who completed the student survey.

2.   How are you involved in your child's life? Please describe your favorite ways of being involved in your child's life. What are the most challenging ways in which you are involved in your child's life?

3.   When and why (or in what situations) has your college-aged child asked for help? Were you able to help in those times?

4.   How often do you show support to your college-aged child? How do you support your college-aged child? Why do you support him/her?

5.   a) As a parent, do you perceive any benefits and/or drawbacks of being (highly) involved in your college-aged child's life? If so, what do you perceive are the benefits and drawbacks of being involved in your college-aged child's life? (e.g., Financial? Physical/Practical? Emotional? Social? Other?) Why?

      b) As a parent, do you perceive any benefits and/or drawbacks of being less involved in your college-aged child's life? If so, what do you perceive as the benefits and drawbacks of being less involved in your college-aged child's life? (e.g., Financial? Physical/Practical? Emotional? Social? Other?) Why?

6.   How do you feel about your ability to support your college-aged child? Can you please explain why you think you feel that way?

7.   Personally, do you want to be more or less involved in your college-aged child's life? Why?

8.   Did you attend programming specifically for parents during the university's Open House or Orientation events? If so, what was the programming? Was it helpful? In what ways was it helpful?

Some of the above questions were adapted from or similar to the open-ended questions Kolkhorst, Yazedjian, and Toews (2010) used to explore the parent-adult child relationship.

Thank you for completing the telephone interview and participating in this study. I would like to send you an iPod shuffle. I can mail it to you if you would like to provide me with your mailing address. Otherwise, we can arrange for a time for you to pick it up at the [institution]. What would work best for you?

I will email you a transcribed version of this interview for your review.

Once again, thank you for being a part of this study. Have a nice (day/evening).