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ORIGINAL PAPER

Does Culture Matter? A Qualitative Inquiry of Helicopter Parenting in Korean American College Students

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to examine college students' culturally-mediated perceptions, prevalence, and experiences of helicopter parenting and its potential impact on their development. Using an online survey platform, we conducted an online survey of 40 Korean American college students in three large universities in the Southeastern region of the U.S. The majority of the participating Korean American college students acknowledged the negative aspects of helicopter parenting and its negative impact on various outcomes in students while recognizing the parents' benevolent intent and positive effects on academics and career preparation. The findings were mostly consistent with previous research but added rich description and cultural nuance and meaning of helicopter parenting and its perceived impacts on various developmental outcomes to the current literature.

Keywords Helicopter parenting · Overparenting · Parent involvement · Korean American · Immigrant · Developmental outcomes

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Introduction

The Asian American population is the highest-paid, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group in the U. S. (Min 2011; Takeuchi et al. 2007). Despite this national status, these groups are relatively understudied than other ethnic groups. In particular, Korean Americans reported tension and conflicts with and more academic pressure from their parents than other Asian American groups (Choi et al. 2008). This may lead to negative outcomes such as stress and depression. Accordingly, it is possible that helicopter parenting and its associations with college students' various developmental outcomes may be significant among Korean American families.

Helicopter parenting—a developmentally inappropriate form of parental over-involvement—has been spotlighted in public media because of its negative impact on children's outcomes (e.g., Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012). The popular image of helicopter parenting and its potential negative impact on children is pronounced in the U. S. media (mostly through anecdotal notes and blogs; Time Magazine 2009) and its prevalence has been discussed across countries from England to China (e.g., BBC News 2008; Han and Dong 2010). Under the pressure of modernity and raised expectations for individual achievements to compete in a global job market, this phenomenon is believed to be especially prevalent and sometimes even normalized among middle-class parents in Western culture (Ungar 2009).

In a response to the concern of its prevalence, there has recently been an increasing endeavor to conduct empirical research on this phenomenon. There are only a few studies on the prevalence of and experiences with helicopter parenting for college students and the findings of the studies on the prevalence of helicopter parenting are inconsistent. For example, Somers and Settle (2010) interviewed academic

and student officials and reported that the phenomenon of helicopter parenting is prevalent in college students from their campuses (i.e., the percentage of helicopter parents is as high as 40–60%) regardless of parent demographics. Other studies found moderate levels of perceived helicopter parenting among college student population and only a small percentage of students perceiving parental involvement as too excessive (Kwon et al. 2016; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011). However, there is limited knowledge about what helicopter parenting may comprise and how this style of parenting is perceived and experienced by the children (Locke et al. 2012).

The term "helicopter parenting" has been interchangeably used with overparenting (Segrin et al. 2015); parental over-involvement (Givertz and Segrin 2014); parental over-protection (Klein and Pierce 2010); intense parental support (Fingerman et al. 2012); parental control (Barber and Harmon 2002); and tiger parenting (Chua 2011). All of these terms reflect some aspects of helicopter parenting and may not fully capture the nature of this unique parenting style. The boundary between those concepts has been blurry and led to unclear implications for its impacts on various child outcomes. For example, helicopter parenting shares some characteristics with parental control in that both delineate types of directive parenting behaviors. However, it is overly responsive to the child's needs and may involve more benevolent intentions for the child's well-being, whereas psychological control by the parent is manipulative of the child's expressions and feelings. On the other hand, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) found that helicopter parenting was positively associated with parent involvement and other positive aspects of the parent-child relationship such as guidance and emotional support while negatively associated with parental autonomy granting. Regardless of its actual impact, its benevolent intention is another unique aspect of helicopter parenting (Kantrowitz and Tyre 2006). However, this has not been clearly acknowledged in the current conceptualization of helicopter parenting.

Some particular types of parenting style and parental control commonly used in the context of Asian or Asian American families are authoritarian parenting or tiger parenting (Baumrind 1971; Chua 2011; Lau and Fung 2013). Tiger parenting refers to a harsh and strict form of parental control with a high emphasis on academic achievement over social and emotional aspects of children's lives and is considered as an extreme case of authoritarian parenting (i.e., high control and low affect, Chua 2011). This concept is similar to helicopter parenting in terms of high levels of parental control without granting autonomy. However, its emotional aspect is different from that of helicopter parenting in that tiger parents do not convey warmth and affection while helicopter parents provide high levels of emotional support.

Research on the effects of helicopter parenting suggests predominantly negative outcomes in health and psychological adjustment such as lower levels of independence, emotional well-being, effective coping skills and higher levels of anxiety, depression, self-efficacy, and child behavioral problems (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan 2014; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011). For example, Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014) found some differences between parent involvement and over-parenting in their impact on college students' self-efficacy and hypothetical work place adjustment. In their study, overparenting but not parental involvement, was significantly correlated with lower levels of self-efficacy as well as maladaptive responses to hypothetical workplace scenarios.

There are, however, other studies showing that helicopter parenting would lead to neutral or even positive outcomes for young adults, such as higher satisfaction and engagement with the college experience, although it is negatively associated with students' grade point averages (GPA) (National Survey of Student Engagement 2007). For example, some researchers have not found a positive or negative association between helicopter parenting and adjustment to college (Lampert 2009) or have found mixed outcomes (Fingerman et al. 2012); that is, helicopter parenting was positively associated with psychological adjustment and life satisfaction of grown-up children while it was negatively associated with life satisfaction of parents. It may be because grown-up children of helicopter parents have positive relationships with their parents and view their parental support as appropriate and instrumental. Despite an increasing number of studies that investigate the effect of helicopter parenting on children, the existing studies tend to have a narrow focus on one aspect of college students' outcomes such as self-efficacy, emotional well-being, or psychological or college adjustment. Further research is needed to investigate a greater variety of developmental outcomes (e.g., health and academic outcomes).

Theoretical and empirical research has stressed the importance of investigating how parent involvement and parenting style are affected by larger sociocultural contexts such as acculturation and cultural value and beliefs systems (Harrison et al. 1990). However, the extant research has not expanded to advance our understanding of helicopter parenting in cultural contexts. Cultural differences in parenting style and their effects on children in the current literature have been controversial. Some researchers suggest universal similarities in family functioning and individual developmental processes across cultures (Barber et al. 2005; Chirkov and Ryan 2001). Consistent with this culturally similar view, Olsen et al. (2002) found that parents' psychological control increased children's negative functioning with regard to internalized and externalized problems, while parental behavioral control with autonomy support had a

positive impact on children's academic adjustment and emotional well-being across cultures (Wang et al. 2007). Other researchers have argued that parenting, parental involvement and socialization practices operate differently on children's outcomes in different ethnic groups in part due to different cultural values and social norms, and goals for parental involvement and autonomy granting (Darling and Steinberg 1993; McElhaney and Allen 2012).

High levels of parental control and involvement particularly in academics in Asian Confucian heritage cultures are often contrasted with parents' control and involvement in Western cultures (Grolnick and Farkas 2002). For example, East Asian parents have often been depicted as highly controlling and restrictive (e.g., Authoritarian parenting, Baumrind 1971) and highly involved in children's academic lives, compared to European American students (Chao 1994). Influenced by interdependent and collectivistic cultural views, Asian and Asian American parents often see their children as extensions of themselves and their children's success more as a family honor than an individual accomplishment (Kim and Hong 2007). Asian parents tend to prefer to use criticism, demand obedience to the authority (i.e., filial piety), remind their children of the sacrifices they made for their children, and pressure them by comparing their children's accomplishment with others (Chao 2000). In contrast, parental control in Western cultures (e.g., authoritative parenting style—clear limit setting and guidance with warmth, reason, and flexibility) prioritizes individuality and autonomy over relatedness and interdependence (Baumrind 1971). In addition, researchers have found different associations between high levels of parental control and children's outcomes across cultures. For example, high levels of parental control (e.g., authoritarian parenting) are consistently related to lower levels of academic achievement for European American students but not for other ethnic groups such as Asian American students (Darling and Steinberg 1993).

Another line of research shows that Asian Americans' parents as immigrants might change as efforts to adjust to the new contexts and might vary their involvement by levels of acculturation (i.e., the process of adapting to the values and attitudes of the host culture, Cheah et al. 2013). Immigrant parents, especially when they have successfully adapted to the host culture, can integrate positive aspects of discipline strategies from both cultures, which may in turn be associated with better psychological outcomes in children (Kim et al. 2006). Discrepancy in the levels of acculturation between parents and children has often been found to be a major source of intergenerational conflicts in Asian American families (Choi et al. 2008). These findings suggest that parenting style and its impact on children's outcomes may depend on other variables (e.g., level of acculturation, context).

Researchers often compare Asian-heritage parenting (mostly of Chinese origin) with other ethnic group's parenting, using mean scores on Western measures of parenting style (e.g., authoritarian parenting, Juang et al. 2013). However, this approach (i.e., using a Western lens to define and explain parenting in other cultures) neither captures the variations inherent in Asian-heritage parenting (e.g., Chinese-American vs. Korean American) nor pays close attention to culturally specific approaches to Asian-heritage parenting and its associations with children's outcomes. In addition, researchers recently suggest that Asian parenting is more dynamic and multifaceted than suggested by one type such as authoritarian parenting, and attempt to expand a typology of parenting practices among Asian/Asian American groups (Kim et al. 2013). More in-depth and open-ended qualitative investigation is necessary to capture the complex and subtle cultural meaning of the effects of helicopter parenting with unique parenting profiles on developmental outcomes.

In regards to the variation in Asian-heritage parenting, we paid particular attention to Korean Americans college students for several reasons because we expect that Korean American college students may experience higher levels of or more helicopter parenting than even other Asian groups. Korean American parents have higher expectations for children's academic success, are more actively involved in their children's school life and college application process, and provide resources than other Asian American parents (Wolf et al. 2009). This may be related to the fact that Korean American parents put higher emphasis on their parental role and responsibility and have a higher socioeconomic status than other Asian American groups (Pew Research Center 2012). Korean Americans were also likely to perceive that parents from their country of origin put more academic pressure on children than other Asian groups (Min 2011).

Taken together, helicopter parenting is a complex phenomenon (Gabriel 2010; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012; Segrin et al. 2012; Spokas and Heimberg 2009; Ungar 2009) that requires more nuanced and in-depth examination through various scholarly inquires. Previous research (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan 2014; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Schiffrin et al. 2014; Segrin et al. 2012) has focused on its consequences on a psychological domain but does not expand to other developmental domains. Thus, we aimed to expand literature by exploring holistic views on the topic that could lead to multifactorial consequences on various outcomes associated with helicopter parenting. Also, given the importance of considering social cultural context in studies of parenting and child outcomes Darling and Steinberg 1993; Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012; Chao 1994; Dundes et al. 2009; Harrison et al. 1990; Kim and Hong 2007; Pong

et al. 2005), we conducted a qualitative study of Korean American college students' perceptions, perceived prevalence of, and experiences with helicopter parenting and its impact on their social emotional, academics, and physical/health outcomes to gain a better understanding of helicopter parenting in the context of Korean American population.

Method

Participants

Forty Korean American college students from two large public universities and one private university in the Southeastern region of the U.S. participated in this study. Students were eligible to participate if they were either born in the U.S. or held U.S. citizenship. Students were not eligible to participate (a) when they were in the U.S. with a foreign student visa status, (b) if they moved to the U.S. after 6th grade, or (c) if they did not feel comfortable answering questions in English. These criteria were used because they needed to be fluent enough to participate in research that would be conducted in English, and they also needed to have had significant school and life experiences in the U.S. Participants were all single students (never married), and 53% of them currently live with their parent (s). The students' age range from 17 to 26 ($M = 20.13$ years). Among the 40 students, there were 12 fourth-year, 7 third-year, and 13 second-year students (Eight students did not identify the college year they are in). Twenty-three respondents were female students, and most of their parents were identified as first generation immigrants. All parents of participating Korean American students are of Korean heritage.

Procedure

We undertook an online survey with all open-ended questions with a convenience sample of 40 Korean American college students. Online surveys are flexible and useful to recruit remote or hard-to-reach respondents in that they are inexpensive and a sound means of data collection. This method has its drawbacks that we are not able to ask follow-up questions, clarify responses, and conduct member-checking due to its anonymity, but it would serve as a viable alternative to in-depth interviews or larger focus groups to explore perceptions and experiences with helicopter parenting and prompt responses, thereby adding qualitative information to the literature on helicopter parenting among Korean American college students. Thus, we have adopted this research method for the present exploratory study.

We first followed appropriate consent procedures and received approval from an Institutional Research Board at the host university to protect human subjects and confidentiality of data. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowballing methods. To begin, we sent an email to Korean Undergraduate Student Organizations from two public universities and one private university in the Southeastern region of the U.S. and posted a recruitment flyer on their website. We also invited some college students we know to participate via email and asked them to spread the word through their network. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to suggest the name and contact information of a friend who would be interested and eligible to participate in the research. Invitations were sent to those students who were referred.

When students expressed an interest in participating, they were asked to contact the first author via email. The first author then emailed a website link which directed students to the online survey. The first page of instructions for the survey showed a brief description of the study and provided information necessary for informed consent (e.g., the voluntary nature of participation and how participants' confidentiality would be maintained). Once students agreed to participate by clicking the "next" button, they were directed to the next page where they could start with the online survey. They could complete it anywhere and anytime they chose. After participants completed the survey, they were asked to send a copy of the last page to the first author to confirm their participation so she could send them a $20 electronic gift card. All the responses were organized on a spreadsheet by research question and by respondent for analysis.

Measures

Students were asked to provide demographic information and to answer 15 open-ended questions that required detailed responses (about 30–40 min). We provided explicit instruction on the first page, clearly indicating that students ought to respond to each question in detail, like in a real face-to-face interview (e.g., at least in a long paragraph). At the start of the survey, a dictionary definition of helicopter parenting was provided, that is "a style of child rearing in which an overprotective mother or father discourages a child's independence by being too involved in the child's life" (Dictionary.com) in case they were not familiar with the term.

The students were asked about their experience with their parents' parenting style and their perception of the impact they thought helicopter parenting had been on their physical, social-emotional, and intellectual well-being. Some example questions included, "How do you think your parents' parenting style and involvement has changed in

general since you entered the college? If you have experienced helicopter parenting, when was it? Are you still experiencing it? Please give us specific examples and situations; what advantages (if any) are in the helicopter parenting? Please consider health as a balance of physical social-emotional, and intellectual well-being." Participants were also asked to comment on the tendency of helicopter parenting between Korean American parents and parents from other ethnic groups as well as between Korean American parents and Korean parents living in Korea.

Data Analyses

The goal of qualitative analysis is to reduce large amounts of textual data into meaningful concepts to identify themes in the data (Miles and Huberman 1994). We used Lichtman's (2006) three Cs of analysis (i.e., Codes, Categories, Concepts) method to select, focus, and identify the key concepts from students' responses to their perception and perceived prevalence of, experience with, and outcomes of helicopter parenting. The survey responses served as the descriptive material or texts. Prior to the data reduction procedure and interpretation of the data, we read the responses repeatedly. Responses were clarified through member-checking, and interpreted data were reviewed and compared to each other until consensus on the concepts or themes was reached.

Results

Three overarching themes emerged from the analysis of the survey data: perception of, experience with, and outcomes of helicopter parenting. Of the 40 participants, twenty students reported that they had heard about helicopter parenting from various sources but are not necessarily claiming they have seen it. Other groups claimed that they have heard or seen helicopter parenting in their own parents or some parents of their friends. By examining their own definitions and ascribed purposes of helicopter parenting, we found that Korean American college students defined, three broad categories as important features of helicopter parenting: overinvolvement and/or overprotection, strict overcontrol without granting autonomy, and benevolent intention. Thirty-five students highlighted the negative aspects of helicopter parenting and mentioned that it should be avoided, as it does not allow freedom and opportunities for children to make a decision independently and disrupts independence and healthy development. Their narratives included the ubiquitous presence of parents in one's life and parents' strict controlling behaviors such as directing, overcontrolling, and interfering with a child's freedom and independence to make his or her own decisions (e.g., "Helicopter parenting equals creating a robot; no self-identity"). There are some elements of conceptualization of helicopter parenting that are slightly different from current conceptualizations of helicopter parenting. Eight students added strictness and power struggle along with overcontrol, which is reminiscent of authoritarian parenting as a typical form of Asian parenting (Baumrind 1971; Lau and Fung 2013). For example, the following excerpt directly demonstrates not only an aspect of helicopter parenting that is common but also an aspect that may be unique to Asian culture: filial piety and compliance to the authority of parents.

> I would define helicopter parenting as a style of parenting in which most decisions concerning the lives of their children are decided by the parents, children have little to no power in these decisions and often fear their parents' reactions when they disobey.

Although a negative connotation of helicopter parenting prevails in responses, it is important to note that twenty-five students acknowledged the benevolent intention of helicopter parents. They mentioned that the parents would hover over their child because the parents attempted to protect him/her from any foreseeable harm and believe that it is best for their child, or it is their parents' way of showing their love and affection. (e.g., "To keep their children away from any harm or bad influence. Parents do not want their children to experience despair or get negatively affected while they grow up").

Regarding the overall level of parent involvement, most participants noticed changes in their parents' involvement and parenting style from the moment they entered college. Thirty students mentioned that, although their parents continue to be involved in their life and have high expectation for their academic performance, they have become more lenient, or less involved, compared to when they were in middle or high school. They also felt that their parents tend to understand and trust them more and let them make their own decisions more freely than before. These changes in the levels of parent involvement, trust, and expectations in general were perceived positively by the participants. For example, one student stated:

> Since I entered college I believe my parents have eased off a good amount. They became less involved in what I do. Instead of being involved in my decisions their actions became more of a result of curiosity. They began to ask me about my thoughts and decisions instead of presenting their own onto me.

The students attributed these changes to various reasons. Seven students mentioned that the changes might have occurred mainly because the parents have begun to view their child as an adult who is responsible for himself/herself

as he/she has become a college student. Three students mentioned that it is partly because they live on campus and do not stay with their parents; parents do not have control over them and have to trust their child's decisions. Two students stated that because their parents immigrated later in life and did not attend a college in the U.S., they do not know much about the college work and life in the U.S. Another student mentioned that because his parents do not have access to the grades and receive information only from their child, they have seemed to realize that there is not much they can do to help and become more trusting and less controlling.

On the other hand, among ten students who reported that their parents had not changed their parenting style, five students mentioned that their parents are still very involved and allow their child to be independent while the other five expressed that their parents are still highly controlling. The students who commented about ongoing support and involvement often reported having a mutually trusting and positive relationship with their parents while being aware of the cultural stereotype of highly controlling Asian parents such as a tiger mom or a helicopter parent. It is well reflected in one student's comments as the followings:

> Throughout middle and high school, my parents, despite being associated with the stereotypical "Korean tiger parents" image, did NOT hover over me as some of my friends' parents did to their kids. My parents have generally trusted me to do things on my own, and in return I respect them for that … It has been similar in college, though I must admit that they worry even less now. I feel that they know that I will do my very best academically, not hang out with the wrong crowd, and just enjoy life with friends. I think that's an awesome thing.

Regardless of whether or what changes in parental involvement students experienced since entering college, slightly more than half of the participants mentioned that they had experienced helicopter parenting in that they felt that the parental involvement and control was somewhat too excessive. The students who experienced helicopter parenting perceived that their parents imposed high pressure and control not only on their school work and academics, or extra curricula activities (e.g., SAT prep classes) they did not want to attend, but also on social activities (e.g., strict curfew, being judgmental and selective about their date). While they experienced this type of parenting mostly in the past (i.e., in middle or high school), some of them were still experiencing this excessive form of parental involvement and control, sometimes with less intensity after entering college.

All respondents stated negative reactions to helicopter parenting or experiences with helicopter parenting such as disgust, disapproval, anger, embarrassment, rebellion, stress, frustration, and even some violence, which could be hypothetical for students who never experienced it. However, several students who actually experienced helicopter parenting have taken some passive reactive behaviors to helicopter parenting. Even though they do not like the helicopter parenting, they often do not express their negative emotion explicitly, but are likely to avoid, succumb, and do what they want secretly. This is well aligned with Korean's traditional value of filial piety that Korean American students try to repress their negative emotions toward parents and embrace the cultural value of obedience of parents as an authority figure. One student mentioned:

> I don't argue with my parents. There is no talking back in my family. You just don't do it. But sometimes, I make decisions secretly. It makes me feel really bad, but some things need to be done, especially ones that will decide the outcome of your future.

When asked about perceived prevalence of and reasons for helicopter parenting among Korean Americans, Koreans, and parents from other ethnic groups, thirty-six participants addressed perceived group differences in the helicopter parenting phenomenon by group. Although a few participants perceived that it may be somewhat stereotyping, thirty-seven participants agreed that Korean American parents are generally more likely to be overprotective and overcontrolling than other ethnic groups.

The possible reasons for the group differences vary but are related to cultural contexts, expectations, norms, and values. Respondents stated that Korean American parents (similar to other Asian parents) are more likely to be helicopter parents than other ethnic group for various reasons: (a) the parents have higher expectation and stricter standards for education; (b) are less flexible and lenient, (c) have limited experiences with diversity, (d) emphasize how they appear to others, and (e) feel they should be more involved in children's lives as an immigrant compared to non-immigrant groups. For example, one participant stated as the following:

> They (my parents) are more likely to be a helicopter parent especially because we're 2nd generation of immigrants. They have much higher expectation and hopes for our lives in America. They want us to drive the Mercedes and not work 80 h a week like they do. They want us to live a comfortable lifestyle that they don't have.

When students were asked to compare Koreans (living in Korea) and Korean Americans in helicopter parenting, the responses were mixed. Twenty-nine students perceived a difference in prevalence of helicopter parenting between Koreans and Korean Americans. Among them, sixteen

participants mentioned that Korean American parents would be less likely to be a helicopter parent than Korean parents who live in South Korea. It is because Korean American parents came to the U.S. to pursue a different lifestyle and set different expectations, rules, and focus influenced by the mainstream culture (e.g., more encouragement for a child's independence and social life). It is also mentioned that Korean Americans have more opportunities and the job market is less competitive in the U. S. than in Korea, which is well reflected in the following excerpt:

> In South Korea, I would imagine the helicopter parenting to be even worse. In America, there are at least a lot of opportunities to make it and succeed. In Korea, the job market doesn't supply enough for the amount of the population and the number of talented people in Korea. Therefore, I imagine the helicopter parenting in Korea to be even worse.

On the other hand, thirteen participants perceived that Korean American parents tend to be a helicopter parent more than Korean parents because they have pressures to overcome societal obstacles (e.g., minority status) and prove themselves in another country as an immigrant. A few participants mentioned that the difference might also be attributed to a different life style in two contexts. For example, students in Korea walk or ride public transportation to school and afterschool activities by themselves. Thus, they have more freedom and are more responsible for themselves, and their parents are more understanding and enforce less strict parenting than Korean American students who need parents' rides to go to places.

Regarding possible impacts of helicopter parenting, all participating students believed that helicopter parenting would have a negative impact on many areas of a child's development (i.e., physical, social, emotional, academic aspect) no matter whether they actually experienced this form of parenting or not. As not all students might have experienced helicopter parenting, we asked about their perception of possible outcomes of helicopter parenting, which might not directly come from their own experiences. However, there was no noticeable difference in their perception in helicopter parenting and its impact on different developmental domains in college students. It was frequently mentioned that the adverse effects of helicopter parenting result from an imbalanced focus of parental control and involvement on academics over other developmental areas. The overemphasis and pressure on academics, especially before college years, may obscure the importance of other areas of development, creates high stress on children, and has a negative impact on overall health and development of children. In particular, participants mentioned that helicopter parenting would have a most significant influence on the psychosocial aspect of a child's life. Helicopter parents would put excessive pressure on academics to be successful in school and career over or at the expense of social emotional aspects of children's lives, which would lead to psychological distress such as depression, anxiety and fear of making mistakes, anger, and suicidal thoughts. The high levels of control over a child's daily life and choices would also lower a child's self-esteem, self-efficacy, and confidence and undermine independent problem solving skills. One student put it as the following:

> One can feel too much pressure from his/her parents that may lead to depression or anxiety. Also, one may be less self-confident about his/herself when they are out of parents' umbrella.

Another student mentioned:

> I think that you test your self-efficacy the most when you're alone. This is because you're testing your own limits to see how far you can succeed, but with helicopter parenting, I think that it takes away from one's own ability to complete what they want to achieve.

It may cause some problems in a child's social life as the helicopter parents would limit opportunities for their children to interact with and make friends so that they can spend more time studying. Students of a helicopter parent would become introverted, socially isolated, lonely, socially awkward, and lose friends. Several students mentioned that they struggled and had difficulty opening up to other people or expressing their own emotions due to the cultural expectation to suppress and overcome any emotional hardships and negative feelings. Three students expressed anger and resentment toward helicopter parents who are overly strict and controlling and suggested that such parenting style might compel the child to become involved in risky activities such as drug use and violence. Four participants stated that helicopter parenting would lead to high levels of stress in parents and conflicts between parents and children. High levels of stress and intergenerational conflicts appeared to occur and exacerbate especially when the norm and value of the mainstream culture (e.g., independence and lower pressure on academics) the child held collided with the value of the traditional culture parents have (e.g., family obligation over personal interest, high pressure on academics). One of the students stated:

> The children will be overly stressed and see their parents as "evil." My friends tell me that they "hate" their parents for being so strict and that they don't need them in their lives. This is bit extreme, but helicopter parenting makes the children think that their parents don't want them to have a social life.

> The main focus of all Asian parents is school and studying. They don't care about anything else but where their children end up in college…The parents should not be so strict because then their children will become physically ill from all the stress and won't be able to think straight.

The perceived effect of helicopter parenting on physical aspects of development or health was less frequently mentioned, but participants in general perceived that students would suffer from having helicopter parents in the physical realm of development. Three participants noted that because of helicopter parents' high emphasis on academics, children would not have time to do anything else such as athletic activities, even if they wanted to (e.g., "When the parents focus their children too much on academics, the child has no room to do anything else. The child becomes physically unhealthy because of their lack of exercise"). Due to the lack of physical activities, sedentary nature of academic activities, and stress, they may have some health issues. Because of stress resulting from helicopter parenting, two students stated that they experienced health issues such as obesity and binge eating.

Although participating students' responses to the potential outcomes of helicopter parenting are mostly negative, it is important to note that thirty-three students perceived that they would benefit from helicopter parenting to some extent in their life. For example, while five students mentioned about its positive effect on feeling loved and supported, most of students said they would benefit primarily in academics and school-related accomplishments. They would be positively affected by receiving parental guidance, close monitoring, support needed especially during the teen years, and protection from making mistakes. Students also considered that they would be likely to develop good work ethics, make good and right choices (e.g., choosing a good group of friends), have a safer and healthier lifestyle, go to prestigious schools, and obtain a good professional career with support of helicopter parents. One student stated it:

> I think helicopter parenting to some degree is okay. I think it was due to my parents' heavy involvement that I was able to explore my own dreams and passions, to grow spiritually, to choose good groups of friends, to study hard. Helicopter parenting (in moderation) gives children the support they need.

The finding suggests that helicopter parenting may be beneficial especially on academic outcomes and some emotional outcomes (e.g., feeling of being loved and supported) unlike other types of parental control such as psychological control that are more consistently associated with negative child outcomes.

Discussion

Helicopter parenting is a relatively new and complex phenomenon that requires more nuanced and in-depth examination through various scholarly inquiries. There has been little evidence available on this particular type of parental control and involvement among diverse ethnic groups such as Korean American population. As one of the few open-ended qualitative investigations adopting a cultural perspective, we endeavored to capture the subtle cultural nuance and meaning of helicopter parenting and its effects on various outcomes in Korean American college students.

We identified the following three overarching themes from the participants' transcripts: perception of, experience with, and outcomes of helicopter parenting. First, we found that Korean American college students defined, three broad categories as important features of helicopter parenting: overinvolvement and/or overprotection, strict overcontrol without granting autonomy, and benevolent intention. This conceptualization is in general similar to the existing one but involves unique aspects such as added meaning of strictness and power struggle along with overcontrol is reminiscent of authoritarian parenting as a typical form of Asian parenting (Baumrind 1971; Lau and Fung 2013). It also may reflect rigid hierarchical relationships such as filial piety among Korean families, a value embraced in many Confucian cultures (Chao 2000; Chung and Choe 2001; Dundes et al. 2009). Benevolent intention is another unique aspect of helicopter parenting similar to general parent involvement or positive aspects of parenting (Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012). This characteristic may explain why helicopter parenting was positively associated with parental involvement and other positive aspects of parenting (Padilla-Walker and Nelson 2012). The benevolent intent, however, has often been neglected in the current conceptualization of helicopter parenting due to a high emphasis on its negative aspect.

Second, the findings of Korean American college students' experiences with helicopter parenting indicate the overall decline of parental control and involvement in college years, but they also reflect the prevalence of helicopter parenting among Korean American college students especially before entering college. The prevalence of helicopter parenting is not surprising given the tendency of Korean American parents who are more likely to be well-educated with more resources and to place a high emphasis on academic performance and economic success in their children than other ethnic group including other Asian groups (Min 2011; Pew Research Center 2012). The findings of the prevalence of helicopter parenting are different from those in the previous studies (Kwon et al. 2016; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Somers and Settle 2010). This might be due to the different methods used, measures that address

different aspects of experiences with helicopter parenting, and the different background of the informants. For example, we found that helicopter parenting was more prevalent (20–25%) among Korean American college students in this study than what we found using ratings on helicopter parenting scale with Korean college students (i.e., 4–5% of students thought their parent's involvement is excessive, Kwon et al. 2016) and American college students (LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011).

The discrepancy may also occur because the qualitative nature of this study may serve to better capture helicopter parenting students actually experienced. It is important to mention that the primary purpose of qualitative research is not to quantify participants' experiences or to assess the prevalence of key phenomenon. We still believe the findings of the current study that the majority of participants experienced helicopter parenting is meaningful. This study may provide a fuller range of description of their perception of and experiences with helicopter parenting along with participants' reaction to and perceived reasons for helicopter parenting than previous literature that are mostly quantitative and used ratings of limited items related to helicopter parenting on the scale (Kim et al. 2013; Lau and Fung 2013). Additionally, the retrospective investigation of the present study allowed us to address helicopter parenting practices that are changing and adaptive to children's age and emerging needs, which is another contribution to helicopter parenting literature. The prevalence and experiences of helicopter parenting would differ significantly by children's developmental period (e.g., early childhood, adolescence, vs. emerging adulthood). In particular, it is possible that Korean American students would experience helicopter parenting the most during adolescents when the academic pressures to go to college is the highest. Thus, it is important to investigate helicopter parenting across developmental phases with a focus on the adolescent period to view a complete picture of its experience in the cultural context.

The cultural meaning of perceived prevalence of and reasons for helicopter parenting is more explicit in participants' comparisons of helicopter parenting among Korean Americans, Koreans, and parents from other ethnic groups. Thirty-six participants addressed perceived group differences in the helicopter parenting phenomenon by ethnic group and the cultural context. Although a few participants perceived that it may be somewhat stereotyping, thirty-seven participants agreed that Korean American parents are generally more likely to be overprotective and over-controlling than other ethnic groups. The findings also showed that there is a variation between Korean and Korean Americans in helicopter parenting by the cultural context. Our findings suggest that students' perceptions of parenting involvement and styles are culturally or contextually bound at least to some extent although their reasoning for differences varies (Harrison et al. 1990). For example, participants perceived that Korean immigrants or Korean American parents would exhibit helicopter parenting differently in its degree and style than those who live in Korea. They still share cultural heritage and common experiences and values as parents. However, differences in parenting would occur largely due to the social context where they currently live (i.e., the U.S. vs. Korea) while their life style, values, and expectations are adjusted to and influenced by the context of the host culture. Immigrant parents, especially when they have successfully adapted to the host culture, can integrate positive aspects of discipline strategies from both cultures (Cheah et al. 2013; Kim et al. 2006).

Lastly, the majority of participating students' responses to the potential outcomes of helicopter parenting are mostly negative especially in psychological, social, and emotional areas of development (e.g., increasing levels of anxiety, risky behaviors, family conflicts; undermining self-efficacy, confidence, self-esteem). However, it is noteworthy that thirty-three students perceived that they would benefit from helicopter parenting to some extent in their life such as academics, work ethics, and a future career. The perceived effect of helicopter parenting on physical aspects of development or health was less frequently mentioned, but several students mentioned about negative impacts of helicopter parenting on health and physical development. Two students stated that they experienced obesity and binge eating due to stress resulting from helicopter parenting.

This finding is consistent with previous research that overall, high levels of parental control are perceived negatively by children and negatively associated with students' psychological outcomes (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan 2014; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Schiffrin et al. 2014; Segrin et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2007). The phenomenon of pressuring children to enter prestigious universities and achieve higher levels of success in careers is more likely to occur among Asian immigrant families than European American families (Goyette and Xie 1999). This occurrence may be due to Korean American parents' high expectations for academic success and imbalance between parental emphasis on academics and other areas of a child's life. The overemphasis on academics may be in part because Korean Americans perceive a minority status as a barrier to upward mobility and believe that education is the only means to make it possible (Sue and Okazaki 1990). In addition to the high levels of pressure on academics, a mismatch in levels of acculturation between parents and children may cause and even acerbate intergenerational conflict among Korean American families (Choi et al. 2008; Kim 2014).

Positive perceptions about outcomes of helicopter parenting is similar to the findings of some research that highlights possible cultural differences in associations

between parental control and academic outcomes. The researchers have found that high levels of parental control (e.g., authoritarian parenting) are consistently related to lower levels of academic achievement for European American students but not for other ethnic groups such as Asian American students (Darling and Steinberg 1993). However, this finding is different from other studies on helicopter parenting that did not find positive associations between helicopter parenting and academic outcomes. The discrepancy may be because of different populations (e.g., Korean American students in the present study vs. Mostly Caucasians in Lampert 2009). The findings of academic, physical, and health-related outcomes of helicopter parenting add to the literature and suggest a more balanced view of various outcomes of helicopter parenting that take its negative and positive aspects and cultural factors into consideration.

In conclusion, the majority of the participating Korean American college students acknowledged the negative aspects of helicopter parenting and its negative impact on various outcomes while recognizing the parents' benevolent intent and some positive outcomes. Many of them believed that the helicopter parenting might have most detrimental effects on social emotional aspects of development. The positive impact of helicopter parenting on academics and successful future careers and the negative impact on physical and health outcomes are new additions to the literature on helicopter parenting. This study also extends previous research by adding non-Western population (i.e., Korean American college students) and investigating more cultural nuance to the meaning of helicopter parenting and its perceived impacts on outcomes by using open-ended qualitative inquiries. Finally, we added richer description of helicopter parenting than previous studies by providing data on the perceived reasons for and reaction to helicopter parenting and the perceived prevalence among Korean Americans compared to Koreans and other ethnic groups.

There are important limitations to this study that deserve close attention. First, it includes forty participants and is limited to Korean American students who study in three large universities in the Southeastern Region of the U.S., which limits generalization to the population. As aforementioned, Asian American college students' ethnicity and socioeconomic status both matter in their perceptions towards parental expectations and involvement, parenting styles, and their educational experiences and outcomes (Kim 2014; Wolf et al. 2009). The perceptions of and experiences with helicopter parenting may vary within Asian American groups and even within Korean Americans. In this regard, the present study is not comparative research, so the inference on potential cultural differences or contextual influences is only speculative. Further research with other comparative groups (e.g., diverse ethnic groups) would be warranted to confirm our findings and advance our understanding of universal trends and culture-specific patterns of parenting styles and their impacts on child development.

Second, the online survey employed for this research is a convenient and effective method (e.g., provides greater anonymity for participants, eliminates the need for transcriptions, may allow participants to communicate with fewer social inhibitions) but is relatively brief and does not allow researchers to use prompts or follow-up questions for pursuing more detailed responses, clarifying responses, or member-checking. Although our open-ended questionnaire provided richer and more nuanced accounts of helicopter parenting than other types of surveys (e.g., 5-point Likert-scale), the field would benefit from more in-depth interview methods with follow-up questions. We also suggest that adding parents of Korean American college students to the study would provide a more nuanced and complete picture of the phenomenon by providing their own perspectives on helicopter parenting, the intent, and perceived impact on their child. Third, this study was a cross-sectional qualitative study. Parent involvement and parenting style change once students enter college, and helicopter parenting seems more prevalent prior to college. Given the possible changes and adjustment of parenting to the child's emerging developmental needs, it will be meaningful to conduct longitudinal research on the impact of helicopter parenting on children's outcomes across different developmental periods.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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