



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The impact of helicopter parenting on students independent learning in Indonesia

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Abstract. Helicopter parenting has a significant effect on the development of students independent learning, particularly among students in countries with a collectivist family culture, such as Indonesia. In an Indonesian context, the role of parents in their children's academic lives is fundamental, and many parents are involved in every stage of their children's education. Nevertheless, some studies indicate that students raised in an environment where parents exert significant control tend to rely more heavily on their parents when making academic decisions, such as choosing a major, setting career goals, or even seeking employment after graduation. This study aims to examine the influence of Helicopter Parenting on the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) ability of students in Indonesia. Data were collected from 112 college students using a questionnaire that had been tested for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha SDL = 0.959; HP = 0.946). The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant negative relationship between Helicopter Parenting and SDL ($r = -0.695$, $p < 0.01$). A simple linear regression showed that Helicopter Parenting explained 48.3% of SDL variability. These findings show that excessive parental involvement impacts low student learning independence. Moreover, this research provides theoretical implications for autonomy theory in collectivist cultures, as well as practical recommendations for parents and educational institutions to support the development of SDL. Theoretically, this study implements the theory of autonomy in a collectivist culture; practically, this study offers strategies that can be applied by parents and educational institutions to support the development of independent learning in students.

Keywords: Collectivistic Culture, Helicopter Parenting, Learning Independence, Parenting, Self-Directed Learning, Students

Abstrak. Pola asuh helicopter cenderung memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap perkembangan kemampuan belajar mandiri siswa, terutama di negara-negara dengan budaya keluarga kolektif sebagaimana Indonesia. Dalam konteks Indonesia, peran orang tua dalam kehidupan akademik anak-anak mereka sangat fundamental, dan banyak orang tua terlibat dalam setiap tahap pendidikan anak-anak mereka. Namun, beberapa penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang dibesarkan dalam lingkungan di mana orang tua mengendalikan secara signifikan cenderung lebih bergantung pada orang tua mereka saat mengambil keputusan akademik, seperti memilih jurusan, menetapkan tujuan karier, atau bahkan mencari pekerjaan setelah lulus. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh Helicopter Parenting terhadap kemampuan Self-Directed Learning (SDL) mahasiswa di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan dari 112 mahasiswa dengan menggunakan kuesioner yang telah diuji reliabilitasnya (Cronbach's Alpha SDL = 0,959; HP = 0,946). Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan negatif yang signifikan antara Helicopter Parenting dan SDL ($r = -0.695$, $p < 0.01$). Regresi linier sederhana menunjukkan bahwa Helicopter Parenting menjelaskan 48,3% variabilitas SDL. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan orang tua yang berlebihan berdampak pada rendahnya kemandirian belajar siswa. Selain itu, penelitian ini memberikan implikasi teoritis terhadap teori otonomi dalam budaya kolektivistis, serta rekomendasi praktis bagi orang tua dan institusi pendidikan untuk mendukung pengembangan SDL.

Kata kunci: Helikopter Parenting, Pengasuhan Orang Tua, Pembelajaran mandiri, Siswa, Budaya Kolektivistik, Kemandirian Belajar

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INTRODUCTION

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) refers to a child's ability to manage and direct their learning process, including setting goals, finding resources, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975). SDL is critical, especially in an era of globalization and evolving technology, where lifelong Learning is a key need. Individuals who can develop SDL are more academically successful and have better life skills,

such as more effective problem-solving and decision-making (Mohtar et al., 2023). However, SDL development cannot be separated from various factors, including the influence of parenting styles. Active parental participation, especially in children's education, can improve morale, positive thinking, and academic achievement, improving school behavior and social adjustment (Hindin et al., 2017; Shah et al., 2020).

Several studies have discussed three common parenting patterns toward SDL: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. However, there is little discussion of helicopter parenting styles. This style is one of the parenting styles that is getting more and more attention in educational research, which refers to parents being excessively involved in children's lives, including in terms of daily decisions, academic activities, and even social and emotional problems (Schiffirin et al., 2019). This parenting style involves excessive involvement of parents in the child's decision-making process and problem-solving. This results in failure to develop self-learning skills such as autonomous functioning, critical thinking, and proactivity.

A family, and especially parents, have an important role in a child's development, especially related to the child's behavior, personality, habits, and even educational achievement, resulting from the profound impact and influence that parenting styles have on the child (Putri et al., 2023). Parental involvement in education is a broad term encompassing communication, parenting, sincerity, involvement from home and school, and decision-making and involvement in society (Samad & Mangindara, 2020). To study helicopter parenting styles, it is necessary to consider the culture and demographics of the individual, as it can have profound consequences on children's mental health, life satisfaction, and academic achievement (Zhou, 2022).

The influence of Helicopter Parenting on the development of SDL, in many cases among students, is especially true in countries with an influential family culture or a culture of collectivism, such as Indonesia. In Indonesia, the role of parents in children's academic life is very significant, and many parents are involved in every step of the child's education. However, some studies show that college students who grow up in a parent-controlled environment are more likely to rely on parents in making academic decisions, such as choosing a primary, setting career goals, or even finding a job after graduation. This leads to over-dependence on parents, which can hinder the development of children's SDL. Some college students even report difficulty making decisions independently due to being accustomed to excessive parental involvement in academic life. Indonesia's multicultural tradition and collectivism offer a unique opportunity to study the impact of Helicopter Parenting on students' Independent Learning. In collectivist societies, the family unit is highly cohesive, and children learn to have a deep sense of duty and respect for their parents. This cultural context underscores the importance of considering cultural factors in parenting styles and their impact on children's development.

While Helicopter parenting is often well-intentioned, aiming to protect and help children succeed, it can hinder the development of children's independence and ability to manage their Learning. Recent studies have shown that college students raised by helicopter-parenting parents tend to have higher levels of anxiety, a lack of confidence, and difficulty in organizing their lives (Li et al., 2023; Reeve, 2022). In contrast, more supportive parenting styles that give children the freedom to make their own choices are more likely to help children develop stronger SDL and better self-management skills (Padilla-Walker et al., 2012).

Students in Indonesia may face unique difficulties in developing self-learning skills due to overprotective parents who manage everything, including decision-making and problem-solving, and provide excessive protection to avoid failure. Some children report taking more responsibility for their education when free from parental supervision and pressure (Shah et al., 2020). Moreover, Indonesian educators and students often have a limited understanding of autonomy and independent learning concepts, which are not routinely developed in daily teaching practices (Karimah, 2020). Therefore, there is a clear need for research on the impact of overly involved parents on a child's ability to master and control their own learning experiences to develop lifelong learning skills.

This study aims to inform educators, parents, and policymakers about effective independent learning development practices in Indonesian education by analyzing the effects of Helicopter Parenting on the independent learning ability of Indonesian students. The uniqueness of this study lies in the lack of understanding and development of the concept of independent learning in the Indonesian cultural context, which is exacerbated by the practice of helicopter parenting, where parents are overly protective and controlling of their children, including in decision-making and problem-solving. This limitation is further highlighted because the concept of independent learning has not yet become a common practice in education in Indonesia, both from the perspective of teachers and students. On the other hand, there have been few studies that explicitly investigate the impact of Helicopter Parenting on independent learning abilities within a collectivist cultural context such as Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-directed Learning (SDL) includes the ability of individuals to initiate, organize, and evaluate their learning process (Knowles, 1975). It also includes monitoring learning progress and comprehension, applying various learning techniques, and staying motivated during the learning process (Saputra & Daliman, 2021). Independent Learning is a person's ability to master skills and knowledge by applying several strategies (Mikroyannidis et al., 2014).

Organized Learning emphasizes students' participatory and constructive role in organizing and managing the learning process (Saks, 2024). Self-regulation in Learning allows students to actively manage cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral processes concerning the educational goals pursued (Panadero, 2017). An independent learner can select, sort, organize, and design an optimal environment conducive to effective Learning (Habiba et al., 2019). Such learners set goals and formulate the necessary strategies to achieve them, evaluate their progress, control time, and, if necessary, take instructions (Chatti et al., 2021).

Helicopter Parenting is characterized by excessive protection, continuous intervention, and strict supervision of the child's activities (Schiffirin et al., 2019). The term Helicopter Parenting describes parental involvement and excessive control over a child's life as a parenting style identified by Rasheed and Akhtar (2021). Helicopter Parenting-style parents supervise academic and social functions, intervening to prevent children from making choices that allow for autonomy and independence. This parenting style is often referred to as excessive parenting, as parents are fully involved in the children's lives, limiting their independence. In general, parental involvement is a positive thing. However, in the case of Helicopter parenting,

it can be detrimental to the sick child's well-being, mental health, and even academic achievement. Helicopter Parenting refers to the excessive involvement of parents in the child's life (Khairunnisa & Trihandayani, 2018; Lemoyne & Buchanan, 2011). Helicopter Parenting is positively associated with parental and child involvement but is negatively related to the granting of autonomy from parents (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Excessive involvement will damage the child's development and is likely to affect children's independence and self-progress (Kantrowitz & Peg, 2006; Maccoby, 2007) low self-efficacy, alienation from peers, and lack of trust among peers (Ingen et al., 2015).

The logical correlation between the main theory and the research variables is established through the theoretical framework of learning independence and autonomy theory in the context of individual development, particularly in the field of education. This research explains how the Helicopter Parenting style of parenting plays a role in shaping or even hindering the process of self-directed learning (SDL) in children. In SDL theory, it is emphasised that individuals who can direct their own learning processes possess skills in planning, organising, and evaluating learning. SDL is closely related to independence, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation (Baumgartner et al., 2003). This theory was further expanded by (Panadero, 2017) who noted that the theory of self-regulated learning encompasses cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational aspects.

In the context of Helicopter Parenting, this theory is characterised by excessive control, constant intervention, and strict supervision by parents, which contradicts the fundamental principles of SDL, namely independence and autonomy. Previous research indicates that helicopter parenting has negative effects on children's self-efficacy, autonomy, and decision-making abilities (Nelson et al., 2021; Padilla-Walker et al., 2021; Van Ingen et al., 2015)

Based on the integration of SDL theory and Helicopter Parenting, the hypothesis is derived from the assumption that SDL requires space for individuals to take initiative, formulate strategies, and evaluate their own learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Helicopter Parenting limits exploratory experiences, risk-taking, and learning from mistakes key elements in SDL.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach and has 112 students to collect data through a standardized questionnaire that measures two primary constructs: Helicopter parenting and self-directed learning skills (SDLS). Data analysis using JASP software was done for descriptive statistics, reliability, regression, correlation, CFA, and t-tests. (Wagenmakers et al., 2023).

Population and Sampling

The inclusion criteria used to select participants in this study were active students currently studying in the Bekasi and Jakarta areas, drawn from various departments and universities, students who had experienced helicopter parenting, and finally, students who had experienced the impact of this parenting style on their independent learning style, whether negative or positive.

Therefore, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where participants representing various departments and universities are selected until the sample size reaches 112 students. In addition, the sample size was

determined using power analysis, which shows the statistical ability to find meaningful relationships between the variables studied. Sample selection was also based on the characteristics of the respondents, namely students who experienced helicopter parenting that had an impact on independent learning styles (Memon et al., 2025).

Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire includes a validated scale of Helicopter Parenting and student self-learning. The data were analyzed using the correlation calculation method and the regression method. Sample description statistics are applied to describe the sample attributes and score distribution on the study variables used. Correlation analysis looked at the strength and direction of the relationship between parental adoption of Helicopter Parenting and students' self-paced learning activities (Masnun et al., 2020). While controlling for other relevant factors, the predictive power of regression analysis is used to determine the extent to which Helicopter Parenting predicts student self-learning.

Table 1. Research instruments

Variable	Theory	Item	Scale
Helicopter Parenting Scale	(Odenweller et al., 2014)	15 Items	Likert 1 to 5 1 Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly agree
Self-Directed Learning Scale	(Fisher et al., 2001)	40 Items	Likert 1 to 5 1 Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly agree

Source: Data Research 2025

RESULTS

Data analysis in this study utilised statistical tests using JASP software, which supports more transparent and reproducible statistical reporting, in line with modern scientific practices. Descriptive statistics are performed to summarize the study's demographic characteristics and the distribution of the variables.

Mean and Variance Interpretation

The average score for the Helicopter Parenting construct was 60.357 with a standard deviation of 9.619, indicating a moderate level of performance perception among respondents. The scores ranged from a minimum of 15 to a maximum of 75, demonstrating a significant variability in responses. SDLS average score was 150.375, with a standard deviation of 23.132, suggesting a generally favorable assessment across this construct. Scores varied widely between 45 and 197.

Unidimensional Reliability

The reliability of both constructs asses using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha for Helicopter Parenting is 0.835, while for SDLS, it is 0.926. These values indicate that both constructs have acceptable internal consistency, as Nunnally (1978) recommended, where a coefficient above 0.70 is considered satisfactory and above 0.90 excellent.

The item-level analysis suggests that omitting any individual item would not significantly improve the reliability of the scales, as shown by the individual item

reliabilities being close to the overall Cronbach's alpha. It suggests that all items contribute meaningfully to the constructs.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum
Helicopter Parenting	112	0	60.357	9.619	15.000
SDLS	112	0	150.375	23.132	45.000

Source: JASP Data Processing 2025

Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was performed to assess the impact of the SDLS variable on Helicopter Parenting scores. The regression model showed that SDLS significantly predicted Helicopter Parenting ($B = 0.289, p < 0.001$). The model explained approximately 48.3% of the variance in Helicopter Parenting scores ($R^2 = 0.483$). The Durbin-Watson statistic indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals ($d = 0.268$).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The chi-square test for the model fits yielded significant results ($\chi^2 = 4265.274, df = 1429, p < 0.001$), indicating that the proposed factor structure diverges from the data. Several fit indices, however, reflected poor fit ($CFI = 0.522, RMSEA = 0.133$). While this might suggest multivariate non-normality, these indicators are consistent with findings from prior research indicating challenges in achieving good model fit in complex constructs, for example in research Miller (2024) about helicopter parenting with parental and peer bonding, helicopter parenting with self-efficacy and regulatory skills (McCoy et al., 2024), and academic motivation and performance (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2025).

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation between the two constructs revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.695, p < 0.001$), indicating that higher scores on the Helicopter Parenting construct are associated with higher scores on the SDLS construct, substantiating a statistically significant relationship. The Spearman correlation also affirmed this relationship ($p = 0.593, p < 0.001$), suggesting that even non-normally distributed data reflects a similar tendency.

Independent Samples T-Test

An independent samples t-test was conducted to explore gender differences within the Helicopter Parenting scores. The results indicated no significant difference between male and female respondents ($t = -1.600, p = 0.112$). This suggests that both genders perceive the Helicopter Parenting construct similarly, which aligns with findings from similar studies, such as parenting and outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have important implications for parents, educators, and policymakers in Indonesia. Parents must balance supporting and guiding their children while fostering autonomy and independence (Putri & Ahmad, 2019). Educators must also be aware of the potential negative consequences of Helicopter Parenting parenting on student self-paced Learning and create a

learning environment that promotes student autonomy, critical thinking, and self-regulation (Shayo, 2019).

The findings of this study have important implications for understanding the dynamics between parenting styles and student learning autonomy in the context of indigenous psychology. Theoretically, this study enriches autonomy theory by demonstrating that Helicopter Parenting Style characterised by excessive control and involvement can hinder the development of self-directed learning (SDL) skills in students, even in the Indonesian context where family dependence is emphasised. This supports and expands previous research from (Masnun et al., 2020; Pong et al., 2010) by providing empirical evidence from Indonesia, showing that autonomy and intrinsic motivation can still emerge despite the culturally dominant authoritarian parenting style (Shayo, 2019). Excessive parental involvement can also prevent children from developing emotional regulation skills, such as learning to manage their emotions, depending on their parents' consent (Li et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the results show that the impact of parental involvement on academic outcomes is complex and diverse, with positive and negative effects depending on the nature and level of parental involvement (Porumbu & Necsoi, 2013). Considering the cultural context when examining the relationship between parenting styles and child development is important. In a collectivist society like Indonesia, where family bonds and interdependence are highly valued, the effects of parenting Helicopter parenting on students' self-paced Learning may be particularly prominent (Rahman et al., 2018).

While experiential Learning fosters students' knowledge, motivation, and self-determination (Karpudewan & Khan, 2017), parental involvement can influence children's attitudes and academic performance (Hindin et al., 2017). Parental efforts are consistently associated with higher levels of achievement (Hindin et al., 2017; Karpudewan & Khan, 2017). However, responses regarding academic socialization, communicating with teachers, and volunteering in schools reflect cultural beliefs and practices in the Philippines related to traditional parenting and extreme poverty (Garcia & Guzman, 2020).

This study contributes to the existing literature on parenting styles and child development by providing empirical evidence on the negative impact of Helicopter Parenting parenting on students' Independent Learning in the Indonesian context (Garcia, 2018; Hindin et al., 2017; West Java, 2021).

Practically, this study recommends that parents adopt a balanced parenting approach that provides emotional and academic support without sacrificing their children's independence. Educators should create classroom environments that encourage student independence, critical thinking, and self-regulation as a counterbalance to external parental control. For policymakers, these findings emphasise the importance of incorporating parenting

education into national education strategies, particularly with a focus on parenting methods that support independence in collectivist societies.

Future Research should explore the long-term effects of helicopter parenting on student learning outcomes across different developmental stages and educational levels. Additionally, further studies should investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and teacher support in mitigating the negative impacts of excessive parental involvement. Cross-cultural comparisons between collectivist and individualist societies could also provide deeper insights into how cultural values interact with parenting styles in shaping learning autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this study provides important insights into the complex relationship between helicopter parenting and student self-directed learning in the Indonesian context. The findings indicate that higher levels of parental control are associated with lower levels of student learning independence. In this regard, it is important to adopt a balanced parenting style that fosters independence while still providing appropriate guidance.

This study also reinforces and expands autonomy theory by showing how excessive parental involvement in a collectivist cultural context such as Indonesia can hinder the development of students' independence and self-regulation in learning. This implies a profound contribution regarding the cultural nuances that influence the application of psychological theories developed in the West, with theories from an Indonesian perspective.

Based on these conclusions, educational institutions should develop awareness programmes such as workshops for parents, helping them understand the negative impacts of overparenting and the importance of fostering autonomy. Teachers can also apply student-centred learning strategies and goal-setting techniques. Collaboration between parents and schools must be strengthened to build trust, confidence, and positive perceptions of education. Additionally, encouraging constructive and supportive parental involvement can increase student motivation, reduce absenteeism, and improve academic performance.

Future researchers should investigate intervention strategies aimed at reducing the negative impact of Helicopter Parenting on students. Longitudinal studies can help determine the long-term effects of parenting styles on educational outcomes. Furthermore, they should explore the mediating role of psychological constructs such as motivation, self-confidence, or resilience in the relationship between parenting and learning behavior, as well as analyse differences across educational levels and regions in Indonesia.

DECLARATION

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Ethical review and consent are not required for research involving human participants In accordance with local norms and institutional guidelines. Participants provide informed written consent to participate in this study.

Consent for publication

We verify that this article is original and has not been published in any other journal, and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Availability of data and materials

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors without any unjustified circumstances.

Conflicts of interest statement

All authors declare that this manuscript has no conflicts of interest.

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Authors contributions

RA: Study conception and design, data collection, and draft manuscript preparation. NM: Analysis, interpretation of result, and conclusion. Both authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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