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Helicopter Parenting in Higher Education: A Content Analysis of Parental Involvement As Discussed in the Media

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Abstract

Scholars and practitioners have differing views as well as definitions on overparenting at the college level, which has led to confusion in both the scholarly literature and news media coverage of the topic. The topic has become so popular in conversation that national news sources have covered it extensively, potentially influencing the priorities of policy makers and the formation of public opinion. Without a better understanding of the specific behavioral indicators of overparenting, it is unclear whether the phenomenon truly exists, and if so, what are its characteristics? Understanding how various groups in society have defined overparenting is an important part of undertaking policy analysis or action. The purpose of the current study was to analyze how national news sources have depicted overparenting within higher education. Drawing from media studies and the scholarly and higher education literature on parental involvement, the study was guided by one broad research question, "How do the media define the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education?" A content analysis was conducted by analyzing news articles published from 2015 to 2020. Results suggested that controlling students, both psychologically and behaviorally, was the most common behavior exhibited by parents. The second most frequently identified behavior was that of parents communicating frequently with their children followed by parents communicating with higher education professionals regarding their children. A low percentage of news articles referred to providing emotional and financial support as overparenting behaviors. Moreover, when discussing parental overinvolvement in news articles, most of the stories are anecdotal and subjective as they are shared by parents, faculty, staff, and employees, and then retold through the context of the article. Because numerous labels are used to discuss overparenting, it is difficult to arrive at a comprehensive definition of overparenting.

The current study contributes to the body of knowledge and extends the research by establishing a definition of overparenting as a foundation for further research and practical use both within and outside of education. Overall, overparenting at the college level seems to be defined as extremely involved parents engaging in codependent behaviors such as: solving problems for; making decisions for; frequently intervening on behalf of; trying to prevent harm and failure; and having constant communication, which dampen their children's ability to figure things out on their own, learn self-reliance, and transition smoothly from adolescence to adulthood. This study may help higher education institutions to better understand overparenting, its importance for both faculty and students, and how to leverage overparenting in today's parent-child-institution relationship. Implications of the key findings for policy making and future research are also discussed.

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Dedication

To my son Carter, thank you for giving me such purpose in life. You gave me strength through sleepless nights and determination on days when I all I wanted to do was to hold you. I hope I can inspire you to reach for your goals by persevering and living life to the fullest. Most importantly, I hope you always know how loved you are.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Helicopter Parenting in Higher Education as a Current Issue

After an internship recruitment presentation ended at an Ivy League institution, the presenter approached a group of prospective students who had attended. He asked these students (who were ineligible to intern due to age requirements) "Who suggested you attend the presentation?" and they all responded with "Our parents" (Selingo, 2018).

Jeff Selingo (2018), former editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, wrote about his experience at this recruitment presentation in The Washington Post. He noted his lack of surprise at the overinvolvement of parents of students over the last decade. Selingo thoroughly discussed one published study on the hovering by mostly affluent parents that takes place at colleges, compared to middle- and working-class parents. He concluded his piece by demanding that colleges put programming in place for students who are unable to "find the right mentors…and navigate the journey towards graduation."

Selingo (2018) discussed only one of the many characteristics of overinvolved parents at the college level: parental income. He called on universities to make changes to support students who are not exposed to the "college concierge" experience by this group of parents. Selingo argued that wealthier students obtain degrees more than poorer students due to their parents' involvement (frequent communication, advisement on tutors, direction on universities, and classes to attend, etc.). However, the article does not discuss other factors that may contribute to student graduation rates. Selingo then concludes by claiming that colleges and advisors do not do enough to address and prevent overparenting.

This is just one example of the many articles publicly available on parental involvement at the college level. This article was easily accessed by a Google search, meaning that others can readily find it, read it, and form an opinion on it.

The national news media are a primary source for information attainment by the broader public. Such information leads to the formation of public opinion. Whether the information is disseminated by televised media or news articles, Americans live in a media-infused environment. As of April 30, 2018, the term "helicopter parents" yielded 2 million hits on Google. From March 2014 to February 2018, the keyword "helicopter parents" was searched monthly: on average, approximately 10,000 to 100,000 times or 14,800 times per month (Google AdWords, searched March 28, 2018; Wordtracker.com, accessed March 28, 2018). National news outlets not only inform the public of major events and issues, but also influence what the public identifies as important issues to bring to light (McCombs, 2014). There has been extensive media coverage of the term "helicopter parent," which refers to a parent who becomes overly involved in their child's life within higher education (Coburn & Treeger, 2009; Lum, 2006).

Recent headlines have been delivering news of excessive parental involvement, specifically at the college level. Why did this topic rise to prominence in the media? Was it a significant trend? Experts state that the key to writing an effective news release is to determine whether the topic is newsworthy for its targeted readers (Bivins, 1999). The topic of parental involvement at the college level displays several criteria of newsworthiness—it contains elements of conflict, timeliness, overall human interest, and celebrity involvement (Zoch & Supa, 2014). Communication through national media outlets needs to be newsworthy in order to resonate with the public and influence the formation of public opinion and continued discussion.

Defining Parental Involvement

What is helicopter parenting? Helicopter parenting takes place when parents become increasingly involved, and students lose opportunities to find independence, autonomy, and, self-sufficiency (Lowe & Dotterer, 2017). Research shows that there are different degrees of parental involvement and an abundance of definitions can be found on the Internet. There is no consensus on whether students benefit from or are harmed by such involvement and how the stance universities take on the topic impacts students. Parental involvement has become a broad term and is not consistently defined or measured by researchers. Therefore, interpreting and understanding the behaviors and levels of involvement can be challenging (Bakker & Denessen, 2007). Bakker and Denessen (2007) have proposed utilizing specific behavioral indicators and direct observation, as opposed to questionnaires, to further the overall understanding of what parental involvement entails.

Statement of the Problem

Scholarly literature on parental involvement in higher education is scarce. Several factors may contribute to parental involvement, including parents' prior involvement in their child's K-12 education; parents hovering due to unwarranted fears; advanced technology; as well as an increase in educational costs, where parents are more invested in their child's education and therefore must protect their investment and act as responsible consumers (Johnstone, 2005). Cell-phone technology facilitates communication between students and parents, enabling more frequent communication, where parents call multiple times daily in order to stay in touch (Ford & Thompson, 2007; Vicario, Henninger, Austin, & Chambliss, 2002). With such increased frequency of communication, the intensity of the relationship, and the intricacies of the

parent/child relationship, postsecondary institutions have noted an increase of parental involvement on campus (Bernstein & Triger, 2011; Vinson, 2012).

Student affairs professionals have expressed distress over the numerous interactions they have with parents who are concerned about their student's well-being and academic progress (Wolf, Sax, & Harper, 2009). They decry the rapid growth of parental involvement, which occurs at a level of intensity, and in "matters of minutiae" never experienced before (Cutright, 2008, p. 39; Ford & Thompson, 2007). A popular topic amongst conversations, "educators and administrators share 'can-you-top this' stories in person and in print about moms calling college president over grades and dads angry with deans threatening tuition cost over [their] son's nightlife and absences" (Cutright, 2008, p. 39). Some universities have embraced parental involvement and used it to work together toward supporting students, while other institutions try to prevent parental interference to allow their students to mature independently (Hunt, 2008; Vinson, 2012). In response to the outcry from higher education professionals, Taub (2008) addressed the phenomenon of parental involvement and offered advice for working with parents to support student development. Influencing a student's choice on which institution to attend, supporting their academic achievements, developing their decision-making skills when conflicts or problems arise, and impacting their career aspirations and development are just a few examples of how parents become involved in their student's higher educational experience (Carney-Hall, 2008; Silverman, 2000; Toor, 2000; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). The impact of helicopter parenting on the parent-student relationship may affect the way in which students learn, how information is taught, how the curriculum is developed and implemented, and how employees of higher education institutions are affected by this enmeshed relationship (Gharakhanian, 2007; Vinson, 2012).

There has been no examination of the newsworthiness and coverage of overparenting at the college level by national news sources. Scholars and practitioners have not reached consensus on a definition on overparenting at the college level, which has led to confusion in the scholarly literature and national coverage of the topic. Even though scholars have defined a variety of parenting behaviors and practitioners have discussed their experience with such a phenomenon, a single coherent viewpoint and understanding has not emerged. Much of the current literature discusses the lack of a clear definition of overparenting at the college level and speculates about its theoretical components. A variety of terms are used to identify the phenomenon, including, but not limited to: overparenting, helicopter parenting, hovering, overinvolved parenting, and parental overinvolvement. Each of these terms has its own definition, which typically includes a different criterion from the others. Without a robust dataset from which to draw proper conclusions and a better understanding of the specific behavioral indicators of over involved parenting, it is unclear how serious the phenomenon truly is, as we are left with only intuition and conjecture, which skew the perceived reality.

A social construction, like parental overinvolvement, does not mean anything until humans give it a meaning. Understanding how various groups in society have decided to understand a concept is one of the most important parts of undertaking policy analysis or action. National news sources have the potential to influence the priorities of policy makers and the formation of public opinion. “When the mass media present an object—and when the public thinks about and talks about an object—some attributes are emphasized” (McCombs, 2008). Because the media have a great deal of influence, when problems are represented in the media with bias, it is critical to understand how the topic has been socially constructed. Without an accurate representation of parental overinvolvement, we cannot address problems that stem from

it. The language, concepts, and categories used in framing parental involvement in higher education have complicated our ability to create sound and unbiased policies. Inconsistencies and omissions in representations of overparenting could be missing important perspectives that have been silenced. Bacchi (1999) stresses the importance of reflecting and considering issues and perspectives that are silenced when a problem is represented. She argues that, in the "What's the Problem?" approach of policy making process, identifying the implied problem and analyzing how it is represented are the first steps.

Furthermore, without a concrete multidisciplinary definition of overparenting, it is difficult to set a standard for assessment, determine its role in education, and work toward solving policy problems through this social construction. Universities would likely benefit from clarification of this issue to support effective teaching, learning, and further improvements in higher education.

Why We Should Study the Discourse on Parental Involvement?

National news sources have the potential to influence the priorities of policy makers and the formation of public opinion. Such an influence is referred to as "agenda-setting," where there is a relationship between how the media emphasize certain issues and their significance as perceived by the audience (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In order to understand the overall impact of overparenting at the college level on the public, this study will: first, study the discourse on overparenting at the college level as a phenomenon constructed by the media; and second, examine emergent themes from the content analysis based on how the discourse has changed over time and what assumptions are made by news media sources when discussing overparenting at the college level.

While this study does not examine the relationship between the quality and quantity of stories with the formation of opinions held by the public based on these stories, it will generate information on the way in which the parent-child relationship has been represented by national news media and whether or not the coverage is truly demonstrative of the dynamics seen within postsecondary institutions. Cohen (1963) discussed the difficulty in identifying a relationship between what the media present, and what the public typically thinks. Therefore, this study will examine what the media present about helicopter parenting within college, but how readers interpret that information will be challenging to identify.

There are a variety of ways to gain a better understanding of overparenting at the college level. National news sources will be analyzed in this study through a content analysis as this is debatably the best way to gain an understanding through what the media share. Though there are limitations to such a study (i.e., not speaking with producers or writers), utilizing national news archives will shed light on the topic, because there is an abundance of data in these publicly available sources. Furthermore, analyzing such documents helps the researcher gain perspective on how the media shape the opinions of and what impressions their reporting makes on its consumers.

This study examines the phenomenon of overparenting at the college level and how it is constructed and portrayed through media discourse. This study will uncover prevalent themes consistent with most experiences of overparenting at the college level, as well as additional themes that may emerge from analyzing the content. Additionally, it is important to note that discourse related to news media is ever changing; therefore, this research will discuss how the discourse of overparenting at the college level has developed over time. By investigating the

newsworthiness of parental involvement at the college level, we can move toward establishing reasons why the subject interests the public, journalists, policy makers, and university personnel.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how national news have depicted overparenting issues within higher education by conducting a content analysis of the ways in which national news sources have defined and contextualized overparenting behaviors at the college level. To answer the question, *How do the media define the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education?* I analyze data gathered through a content analysis of national news sources. Awareness of specific behavioral indicators of helicopter parenting discussed through the media can help university stakeholders (parents, students, and, administrators) better support students' academic experience and growth. If we better understand how helicopter parenting is defined, we can (1) implement programming for parents who display such behaviors, (2) identify skills needed for faculty and administrators who work with parents who exemplify helicoptering tendencies, and (3) identify and support the students who need help in functioning autonomously. It is hoped that the data gathered from this study will support community discussions on the phenomenon of overparenting by providing specific criterion that can be used when discussing and potentially implementing policy and procedural changes, as well as opportunities for future researchers to further develop theory and potential measures of overparenting for both educational and research purposes. Therefore, educational policy makers, stakeholders, and experts may benefit from this study.

This study is not about how the news shapes public perception of overparenting; rather, it is an attempt at understanding how national news attempts to define and contextualize the behaviors associated with overparenting at the college level. Chapter 2 provides a thorough overview of the scholarly literature on this topic. Chapter 3 provides a methodological

framework intended to accomplish the research goals. Chapter 4 outlines the findings and Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with a discussion of the results, limitations, and future recommendations for research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Before delving any further into helicopter parenting at colleges, it is important to first discuss the type of helicopter parenting that we are examining: parental involvement within higher education. Parental involvement is exemplified when parents display interest in their child's life. However, the concept of "parental involvement" has been deemed a "value loaded term" in that there is an overabundance of literature on the topic but few texts discuss its "origin, nature, and connotations" (Bakker & Denessen, 2007). Desimone (1999) defined parental involvement as "a set of group-specific actions, beliefs, and attitudes that serve as an operational factor in defining categorical differences among children (and their parents) from different racial-ethnic and economic backgrounds." Regarding education specifically, Fantuzzo, Davis, and Ginsberg (1995) referred to the term as a "variety of behaviors that directly or indirectly influence children's cognitive development and school achievement."

Parental involvement is not a new phenomenon, as it became common around the beginning of the 20th century when parents were more involved in their children's nursery school education (Kemal, 2011). Stay-at-home parents were able to attend cooperative education where they could partake in their child's education by facilitating learning at home that capitalized on the work taught in the classroom. From this point, programs such as "Head Start" and "Even Start" were implemented in order to gain the fullest participation of family members in their child's educational progress, especially those from low-income homes in order to bridge the readiness gap between peers of different socioeconomic status (Kemal, 2011). Additionally, laws were put into place (which will be discussed later) to give parents more information on their child's educational progress and provide flexibility in order to ensure full parental participation and cooperation in their child's academic endeavors (Kemal, 2011). Policy makers and educators

implemented ways to overcome educational inequalities (i.e., social class differences) by encouraging parental involvement to prepare children for success in their educational endeavors (Lareau, 1992).

There are three prominent theories related to parental involvement in their children's education: (1) Piaget's cognitive development theory, (2) Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and (3) Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Piaget's theory posited that children actively learn and construct with new experiences to develop their cognitive abilities, benefiting from the social element of interacting with people (Tekin, 2011). Therefore, an example of parental involvement that Piaget would find crucial to the child's development could be help with homework. Vygotsky's theory built on Piaget's views by supporting social and physical relationships with the environment in the support of development and learning (Tekin, 2011). When children interact with their community, they are learning and developing. A child's ability to learn on his/her own may reach a threshold that cannot be surpassed without the support of an adult or peer (Vygotsky, 1978). An example could be learning to drive a car, a skill that is learned through the guidance of an adult or competent peer. Finally, Bronfenbrenner discussed the impact of those surrounding a child within a social microsystem. For instance, parents can communicate with teachers to encourage progress toward a shared goal. These theories are pertinent to understanding the parent-child relationship and its importance for healthy development. However, these theories apply to child and adolescent development and are not as instructive to the relationship between a parent and an emerging adult.

At a collegiate level, parents become invested in their child's college experience by gaining information about college and appropriately providing reassurance and guidance for their child (Wartman & Savage, 2008, p. 5). When the involvement increases and potentially

interferes with the child's development, it can be deemed as unhealthy and is defined as parental overinvolvement (Levine, 2006, p. 138). In some instances, overinvolvement can lead to parents who are unwilling to let their child develop as an individual because they are always hovering and protecting them like a helicopter (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 11).

Helicopter Parent

"Helicopter parent" was a term first coined by Cline and Fay (1990) describing a parent who "hovers" over their child and quickly offers unwanted help. Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, and Taylor Murphy (2012) described helicopter parenting as a way that parental involvement exceeds the accepted amount of involvement as parents utilize developmentally impeding strategies to stay involved in their child's life at a time when the child can assume adult responsibilities and a sense of independence and autonomy.

There are different socially constructed subspecies of helicopter parents, such as black hawk parents (whose behavior is not only excessive but could be seen as unethical); lawnmower parents (mowing down anything or anyone in their way); submarine parents (they will hide below the surface but will quickly resurface when things go wrong); and stealth missile parents (who will arrive under the surface and destroy any obstacle along their path) (Coburn, 2006). A commonality of all subspecies of helicopter parenting is the frequent monitoring, micromanaging, and overall contact with the child including intervention in academic, social, and personal matters.

Parental involvement has been heavily researched in the K-12 literature. Topics such as development of skills, student success, parental engagement, regulation of technology, and cyberbullying have been studied where having parental involvement is critical to the child's emotional and intellectual development as well as increase their academic success (e.g., Epstein,

1995; Jeynes, 2007). Parental involvement in K-12 is encouraged by educators, specifically in urban communities with students from lower income families, since parental involvement is associated with academic achievement and persistence (Jeynes, 2007).

This literature review examines the empirical research regarding the relationship between parents and college-aged students. More specifically, it provides an overview of the ways in which parents are involved and overinvolved in their college-aged child's life and how institutions are responding to such involvement. This literature review will begin with a discussion of the evolution of parental involvement in higher education from a legal perspective. This perspective allows the reader to understand the initial goal of attending a university in developing a student as well as the intention of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). After this, the literature review moves through a background discussion of helicopter parenting and how it is discussed in the scholarly literature, both within and outside the context of higher education. Here, a framework will be utilized to organize the literature into different dimensions of parental involvement, such as parental support giving, parent-student contact, and parental academic engagement (Lowe & Dotterer, 2017). This discussion will help the reader understand how parental involvement is constructed through a multidimensional scope. This is followed by a review of the ways in which institutions have responded to parental involvement, including the addition of social-media-networking, followed by suggestions to ensure a partnership among students, families, and institutions. Additionally, this literature review will cover media framing and will briefly discuss how mass media outlets portray helicopter parenting at the college level. These sections conclude with suggestions for future research as well as a proposed research agenda for this dissertation on the how mass media outlets portray helicopter parenting at the college level.

This literature review aims to provide a synthesis of the current literature on parental involvement with their college-aged students most relevant to the field of higher education. While this literature review attempts to cover an abundance of existing knowledge on the topic, it does not cover all of the literature associated with parental involvement, and is, therefore, not an exhaustive review. The scope of this literature review is primarily comprised of empirical research conducted in the United States and is supplemented with public and educational news reports only if they added a distinctive element to the discussions. Ultimately, the aim of this literature review is to frame the current discussion and facilitate further research in order to update new practices and procedures related to parental involvement within higher education.

Parental Involvement in Higher Education from a Legal Perspective

Higher education continues to evolve, specifically regarding the relationships among the institution, student, and parent. The doctrine of *in loco parentis* refers to a "legal relationship in which a temporary guardian or caretaker of a child takes on all or some of the responsibilities of a parent," articulated by Sir William Blackstone in 1869 (Garner, 2009, p. 858; Lee, 2011). This view, adopted by higher education institutions during the early U.S. Colonial Era, allowed for institutions to continue to operate as a learning community while concurrently caring for students and regulating their personal lives (Thomas, 1991). The decision to control students' lives, including their "speech, association, movement and disciplinary action" was left with the university in order to apply a set of "character-building" rules (Lee, 2011). As illustrated in *Gott v. Berea College (1913)*, the *in loco parentis* doctrine was applied and students were expelled for visiting a restaurant not controlled by Berea College. According to the college, this was a form of character building in the sense that they wanted to make sure students were deterred from

wasting their time and money and focused on studying instead (Gott v. Berea College, 1913, p. 378). The doctrine was used to discipline students through restraint and coercion.

In the 1960s, the court systems recognized that college students had constitutional rights specifically under the 14th Amendment, known as the Due Process Clause. A landmark case, Dixon v. Alabama (1961) found that students could not be expelled without due process when the college tried to expel six students for "unspecified reasons." The State of Alabama alleged that the students participated in the Civil Rights Movement, and that is the reason given for why they were expelled. The court held that the students could not be disciplined without the opportunity to be heard and could not be disciplined without due process (Dixon v. Alabama, 1961). At this point, such rights applied primarily to public institutions. There was a turning point during the 1970s, where the 26th Amendment lowered the minimum voting age to 18. This fast-tracked the termination of *in loco parentis* at universities, justified students' wishes for autonomy, and realigned universities' policies and procedures to match the students' wishes (Grossi & Edwards, 1997). Such policies, including tort laws, defined by courts as the law governing civil wrongs that cause someone else to "suffer loss or harm resulting in legal liability for the person committing the tortious act, and the bystander era applied to both public and private institutions" (Lee, 2011). Edwards (1994) and Bickel and Lake (1999) discussed factors that contributed to the demise of *in loco parentis,* including "an increase of older students on campus, a lowering of the age of majority to 18 years, a liberal shift in student thinking, a rise in civil rights, a rebellion against authority, and, the rise of student economic rights" (Henning 2007, p. 541). Students exercised activism and looked at their education from a consumer perspective, effecting a shift in their thinking (Edwards, 1994). Such practices grew as campuses became more diverse, and less of a consensus existed regarding values as they once were put into

place with *in loco parentis*. Therefore, 1961 marked the end for *in loco parentis*. Due to the demise of *in loco parentis*, the relationship among students, parents, and the institution shifted into students rebelling against supervision and insisting upon increased autonomy and authority over their academic experience.

In response to the student rebellion and an outcry of parents wanting to be involved in their students' college lives, Congress responded with the implementation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), also referred to as the Buckley Amendment, which was passed in 1974 and enacted as an amendment to make sure parents had access to students' records while simultaneously protecting students' privacy (Lowenstein, 2016). The Act has been modified nine times since 1974, with the most recent amendment in 2011 (Lowenstein, 2016). FERPA allows students the right to access and to examine their personal educational records while making sure identifiable information is not released without written consent of the student, if the student is no longer a minor (FERPA, 20 U.S.C.S. 1232g). Student account information is restricted only to the student, unless the student is a minor, or the student permits his or her parent's access to his or her student records (Lowenstein, 2016; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Some parents believe they should have access to their student's records, primarily because they are paying for their child to attend the college or university (Gibbs & Szablewicz, 1988; Lowery, 2005; Wartman & Savage, 2008). However, if a student who has reached the age of 18 has not consented, the institution is prohibited from communicating with the parent about matters regarding the student, including their attendance and grades. Currently, FERPA is still in place and revisions allow parents to be notified on certain topics, but parents may become frustrated when they are unable to access all of their student's information, including their student records, even when they are providing the educational funding (Henning, 2007).

In the 1980s, postsecondary institutions established safety protocols and support services including career centers, academic advising, and student programming, as they instilled methods to monitor student behavior and safety (Wartman & Savage, 2008). With such programming available to students, universities actively guided students toward success after graduation.

Current practice in higher education institutions places responsibility on both the students and university where students are perceived as adults. It is assumed they can make their own choices while they simultaneously follow rules and responsibilities implemented by the university. At the same time, the university respects student rights, including due process, particularly when disciplinary actions are put into place (Bickel & Lake, 1999, p. 163; Lee 2011). This model is referred to as a Facilitator Model, a term coined by Bickel and Lake (1999) to define the relationship between students and higher education institutions as "shared responsibilities and rights" (p. 163). Even though this model is currently most commonly used, the growth of parental involvement has made it challenging to adhere to because parents are not a component of the model.

Henning (2007) suggested a new model that can be utilized by those in student affairs to support the work they do with both students and parents, *in consortio cum parentibus*, a model in which the parents and university work together in partnership to guide students (Henning, 2007). The students still primarily work with the institution, but there is a working relationship between parents and institutions since they are part of the model. Such a partnership allows success for the students both within and outside the classroom and guides policy implementation and program development. Additionally, to accommodate parental involvement, positions or offices targeted to work with parents, such as a liaison or parental outreach office, have been implemented since 2006 in over 70% of 4-year-institutions (Henning, 2007; Lum, 2006).

Institutions include language in their student handbooks that refers to the implementation of a safe environment and a partnered community working toward student development and expectations in conjunction with newsletters, information on parent websites, and supplementary information to help in the joint support of effectively taking part in the child's college career (e.g., Delaware Valley College, 2010; Harvard College, 2011; University of California at Berkeley, 2011; Syracuse University, 2011).

As seen through a brief summary of the history of the evolution of parental involvement, there has been a recurrent theme on the best ways to instill value and growth for students. Whether it be parents supporting students or administrators leading students toward educational success, guiding students through their academic endeavors has been the primary goal of university stakeholders. What is lacking is consistency in the way in which stakeholders are expected to support these goals; with ever changing policies and procedures, it becomes challenging to know how much support is too much support, and whether the support is successful in promoting academic achievement.

Parental Involvement in Higher Education as Discussed in the Literature

Federal, state, and local governments have emphasized the importance of parental involvement in education, specifically in the K-12 arena where The No Child Left Behind Act was created to increase parental involvement through mandatory meetings, parental notification, and accountability in order to support student academic success (Carney-Hall, 2008). Such involvement has now moved from a K-12 setting to higher education where parents, who are accustomed to being notified about and engaged in their child's education, are now interested in remaining involved in their child's college career. As previously noted, Wartman and Savage (2008) defined parental involvement on college campuses as "parents who show interest in the

lives of their students in college, gaining more information about college, knowing when and how to appropriately provide encouragement and guidance to their student connecting with the institution, and potentially retaining that institutional connection beyond the college years" (p. 5).

Lowe and Dotterer (2017) combined the definition from Wartman and Savage with previous literature to form their definition of parental involvement as "a multidimensional construct, composed of three distinct involvement strategies including parental support giving, parent-student contact, and parental academic engagement" (p. 3). This multidimensional construct will be utilized as a framework to discuss the current context of parental involvement in the literature and how helicopter parenting tendencies are exemplified through this construct. Behavioral tendencies that fall into these strategic involvement strategies can be deemed as "too much" and therefore may help in further defining helicopter parenting seen in higher education.

Parental Support Giving

Lowe and Dotterer (2017) defined parental support giving as the support parents provide, both tangible (financial, practical) and nontangible (advice, emotional, and listening), to students as they develop as emerging adults. Students may reach out to their parents when they believe they need emotional and/or social support. Some forms of emotional support are beneficial to student development, such as autonomy support, which refers to the encouragement parents provide to their child to feel the confidence necessary to independently make decisions and solve problems (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Kouros, Pruitt, Ekas, Kikriaki, & Sunderland, 2017; Soenens et al., 2007). If such support is overdone and parents become overinvolved, the ability to achieve a sense of autonomy and competence could impede the child's development toward becoming an adult. Openly giving money (tangible financial support) rather than encouraging summer

employment is an example of this strategic parental involvement becoming excessive. Regarding nontangible support, becoming emotionally invested and involved in a roommate altercation is an example of an extreme behavior that could impact the development of the student.

LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) and Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) analyzed the parental dimensions and empirical perspectives of helicopter parenting. Differing from traditional parenting styles, Padilla-Walker and Nelson have stated that helicopter parents exhibit high parental warmth/support, high control, and low levels of granting autonomy. LeMoyne and Buchanan found helicopter parenting to be negatively correlated with the psychological well-being of a student, a concern shared by those in higher education institutions. Additionally, studies have identified negative outcomes on the students' sense of self due to over parenting, and such parental interference could hinder a student's overall development toward adulthood (Cullaty, 2011; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Mattanah, Hancock, and Brand (2004) looked at the benefits of autonomy development when students separate from their parents in order to adjust to college as an individual rather than being attached to their parents. This is not to suggest that students should no longer be attached to their parents; rather, they should practice secure attachment, where the individual can bounce between attachment and separation-individuation when necessary to support their developmental adjustment (Mattanah et al, 2004). Another popular theory used when discussing the developmental stages of adolescence into adulthood is referred to as emerging adulthood. Arnett (2006) identified five life stages of emerging adulthood: identity exploration, instability, being self-focused, feeling in-between (childhood and adulthood), and the abundance of possibilities presented during emerging adulthood. The developmental stage of emerging adulthood refers to a time after adolescence, between the ages of 18 to 25, when an individual begins to take

responsibility and make independent decisions prior to becoming completely independent during their adult stage of life (Arnett, 2000; Jablonski & Martino, 2013). The emerging adulthood theory takes into account demographic changes that have occurred in recent decades (e.g., the average age when one gets married and reaches parenthood has shifted from one's teenage years to one's late twenties). There is significant diversity among people in this age group, including place of residence, educational aspirations, and level of education attained, as well as independent living and work situations (Arnett, 2000). The commonalities of this developmental stage are the instabilities associated with it, such as residential changes, school attendance, and employment. A number of studies have suggested the top criteria for the transition into adulthood are accepting responsibility for one's self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent (Arnett, 1997; Arnett, 1998; Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006, p. 12; Greene, Wheatley & Aldava, 1992; Scheer, Unger & Brown, 1994). If an individual does not meet the noted benchmarks, objectively, they may not consider themselves as reaching emerging adulthood; such development is reached through a gradual separation from one's parents.

However, not all helicopter parenting relationships end up being a threat to emerging adulthood (Kouros et al., 2017). Contrary to exaggerations of parental involvement in the media and administrators' complaints, students themselves welcome parental involvement, report their parents as being the most influential people in their lives, and generally are satisfied with communicating with their parents (Levine & Cureton, 1998; Sax & Weintraub, 2014). However, as with any behavioral tendency, having a balance is typically the healthier option.

Parent-Student Contact

Lowe and Dotterer (2017) described parent-student contact as the utilization of communication technologies, and the frequency of such utilization between students and parents.

It does not necessarily differentiate from parental support giving but describes a means of communication between students and parents. Somers and Settle (2010) believe that, due to the growth of technology, helicopter parenting has increased as parents can now engage with their children seamlessly through electronic communication. Studies have noted that frequent contact between students and parents exists, specifically with their cell phones, which has been referred to as an "electronic umbilical cord" (Chen & Katz, 2009; Green, 2007; Lee, Meszaros, & Colvin, 2009). For instance, the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) (2007), which asked students to respond about aspects of college life, reported that overall, 60% of respondents contacted their parents a few times a week, at minimum, and first- and second-year students reported higher levels of contact than third- and fourth-year students (Wolf, Sax, and Harper, 2009). Ninety percent of respondents from The College Parents of America (2006) reported frequent communication with their children and 34% of those parents reported the communication was at least once a day. Such levels of contact have been associated with a feeling of closeness between parents and students who maintain healthy parent-child relationships, while for those with overinvolved parents, a need to keep such communication to a minimum (Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Miller-Ott, Kelly, & Duran, 2014). Due to its convenient and safe nature, mobile communication has been favored and has become a direct way for parents and children to interact while apart (Chen & Katz, 2009; Ling, 2004; Palen, Salzman, & Youngs, 2000). As students enter their college careers, whether residing on campus or commuting, mobile communication creates an ease of access between parents and children, while also establishing a sense of individuality when avoidant or separated from one another. Direct communication keeps the parent engaged in their child's life.

Such ease of communication did not always exist. Prior to the creation of mobile technology, students would find the nearest payphone to call home or wait until a break to travel home and update their parents on their academic and social lives. A 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reported 70% of students communicated with their parents through mobile technology throughout the academic year (Lowe & Dotterer, 2017).

Kelly, Duran, and Miller-Ott (2017) studied the relationship between frequent communication and helicopter parenting. They looked at the cell phone usage patterns of students, as well as their satisfaction with such closeness to their parents. To frame the results, a relational dialectics theory (a theory that looks at contradictions) was used to analyze how meanings are constructed through relationships between those of two different backgrounds when tensions and contradictions occur. Their findings suggested that parents who exhibit helicopter parenting behaviors report increased levels of cell phone conflict, including arguments over the phone, as well as a lack of established availability rules for both parties (Baxter & Norwood, 2015; Kelly et al., 2017). Such rules refer to the expectation of both parties being readily available by phone, specifically parents for students when students choose to reach out for help and support. When there is tension between students and parents who exhibit helicopter parenting behaviors, students may try to regulate such contact by allowing the call to go to voicemail. Sometimes students come up with excuses such as their phone being on silent or out of battery to avoid communication (Green, 2001; Ling, 2004). This allows students to control the type and amount of conversation they choose to have with their social network, including peers and parents. As discussed, a collective consensus of studies on the parent-student interaction is that students are utilizing ways to communicate that allow for immediate feedback.

Chen and Katz (2009) noted six themes that emerged in their study regarding the use of mobile technology between students and family members: the mobile phone provides direct contact with family, and it allows them to share experiences, ask for help from each other, fulfil family roles, and depend on parents for emotional support. Female participants seemed to have more frequent contact than male participants with family by use of the mobile contact. Their findings suggested that students believe mobile communication is important for conveniently and instantaneously keeping in contact with their parents. Topics of conversation also varied from updates by students on their academic and social lives, asking for support when students needed help, or wanted to feel safe while traveling. When it comes to discussing conflicts, getting mental health support, accommodations, or having someone to discuss their stressors with, the use of mobile technology allows students to immediately and continuously contact their parents to engage in such conversations (Carney-Hall, 2008). Kastner and Wyatt (2002) used the term "dump phone call" to refer to times when students feel stressed and reach out to their parents to discuss their feelings of helplessness and stressors. Notably, some studies have found that high levels of parent communication and involvement are highly correlated with negative outcomes for the students including academic, social, and developmental outcomes (Harper, Sax & Wolf, 2012; Lowe & Dotterer 2017). As students lean on their parents to become overly involved in their academic and social lives, students are not connecting with their peers and academic community and are consequently not benefiting from the "college experience." Therefore, some may see cause for concern about appropriate levels of parent-student communication.

Parental Academic Engagement

Lowe and Dotterer (2017) described the assistance and encouragement parents provide to their students, with specific focus on their academic career such as course selection and

discussions around learned material during their classes, as parental academic engagement. This strategy of support focuses primarily on the student's success in academia and the support parents provide to ensure the student meets graduation requirements. Empirical evidence has suggested it is important to maintain a healthy balance between parental support and engagement, as academic achievement and school engagement are negatively associated with parental overinvolvement (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, & Neilson, 2015; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009). Furthermore, higher levels of parental involvement have also been associated with a negative impact on student motivation, which affects academic performance (Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar 2005; Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Utman, 1997). Studies have reported negative experiences due to higher levels of parental involvement such as lower grades and entangled parent/student relationships (NSSE, 2007; Somers & Settle, 2010; Toepfer, 2008). Additionally, Schiffrin and Liss (2017) found that students reported they were concerned about their mother's helicopter parenting behavior and felt incompetent and low self-efficacy when they attempted to perfect or master a subject but did not exude a sense of perceived competence due to their mother's over-involvement (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Schiffrin, et al, 2014; Van Ingen et al., 2015). The pressure to choose a career path driven by a parent and attend courses that is challenging for a student could exemplify the repercussions of helicopter parenting tendencies that could hinder the student's academic successes.

The National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) conducted the first survey on parental involvement in higher education in 2007. After surveying 9,000 students from 24 colleges, NSSE found that 13% of first-year students reported their parents frequently intervened to help them solve problems and 25% indicated their parents' involvement "sometimes" (NSSE,

2007). Those who reported higher levels of involvement also conveyed increased levels of support by parents. NSSE findings also suggest that students who reported helicopter parenting behaviors also displayed increased levels of engagement in their higher learning institution as well as greater satisfaction with their overall college experience (NSSE, 2007). Such results seem encouraging as parental involvement becomes more prevalent; however, NSSE also found that those with more involved parents have substantially lower grades. However, they do not report whether parents become more involved due to lower grades and such involvement encourages students to engage more in their institution or whether their parental involvement causes lower grades. The Higher Education Research Institute also implemented an annual survey (Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP] Freshman Survey) to better understand trends in incoming students' characteristics and expectations for their college career. The CIRP Freshman Survey (2007) examined a trend of parental involvement, reported by institutional faculty and administrators (Pryor, Hurtado, Sharkness, & Korn, 2008). When asked about their parents' involvement regarding college applications, college selection, communication with college administration, course selection, and activity participation, approximately 75% of students reported increased rates of their parents being involved just the "right amount" (Lowe & Dotterer 2017; Pryor et al, 2008). NSSE reports the amount of involvement students report in referring to their parents whereas CIRP (2007) looks at the type of parental involvement, specifically for first-year students (Pryor et al., 2008). It should be noted that the CIRP (2007) survey questions on parental involvement have only been utilized in the 2007 survey, whereas NSSE has included parental involvement questions in all of their surveys since 2007. Specific questions on the amount of involvement were only included in the CIRP (2007) survey, but current surveys include questions about from whom students ask for

help or guidance (peers, professors, family members etc.). This is a shortcoming of the data from CIRP (2007). It would be instructive if CIRP revisited this issue to see if there are any substantial differences in the type of parental involvement since the survey was administered over 10 years ago. Likewise, it would aid researchers of this topic if the NSSE asked questions that specified family members' role individually in future surveys.

Within higher education, parental involvement includes various forms of behaviors in which parents interact with their child and/or the university regarding their student's collegiate experience. The topics are usually in relation to academics, finances and relationships, coupled with instant communication technologies to address these topics (Kastner & Wyatt, 2002; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

Carney-Hall (2008) stated that families are invested emotionally and financially in their students' college choices, and as previously noted, such involvement related to students' college choices has been confirmed in the CIRP (2007). According to Carney-Hall, parents are highly involved in their student's college selection, including completing applications and attending campus visits. They involve themselves in decisions about where their student should attend, which courses they should take, and what activities they should participate in (Pryor et al., 2008). Parents may also be invested financially in their student's college education by discussing financial involvement in higher education, funding of postsecondary education, and the process of gathering family income and tax information for financial aid (Carney-Hall, 2008). Sax, Astin, Korn and Mahoney (1997) reported that 76% of all first-year students received parental financial assistance. Steelman and Powell (1991) also found parental willingness to provide financial support to their child if they received familial financial support for their own personal education. According to Ford and Thompson (2007), parents justified their involvement in their child's

education by noting the high cost of tuition and ensuring their child reaps the full benefit of attending a post-secondary institution.

Howe and Strauss (2003) have suggested an increase in parental involvement could be due to many variables, including the familial environment, family support system, and cultural environment (Carney-Hall, 2008). According to Howe and Strauss, parenting styles are different with parents being more involved and overprotective than in 1980. Additionally, Howe and Strauss (2003) state that students come from more diverse backgrounds than previously, adding to the varying types of family structure and support systems. They reported that in 2000 the number of single custodial fathers grew to approximately 3.1 million and mothers who have never been married increased to approximately 7 million (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Such diverse support systems also include divorced parents, same-sex families, and blended families. Coburn (2006) states that racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversities among today's students could influence the parent-child relationship. Parents have served as advocates for their child's mental health and wellness. Their involvement, prevalent during their child's K-12 education, has continued into higher education where parents seek out administrators to ensure their student's success (Carney-Hall, 2008). Students seem to welcome their parents' involvement, especially when it is beneficial to their success (Carney-Hall, 2008). They yearn for contact with their parents, not necessarily to solve problems for them but to receive reassurance and support during their college career (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Advocacy, which may be related to accommodations for the student, including mental health as well as roommate conflicts, choices around consuming alcohol, and exercise, is advantageous for the student (Carney-Hall, 2008; Lehr, Dilorio, Dudley, & Lipana, 2000; Reisberg, 2001). As Ford and Thompson (2007) stated, parents may not be visibly present, but they are always in the background communicating with

their child, nagging the disability office or bothering professors as they entangle themselves in their child's college experience.

Studies have examined parental expectations for their student's academic success in college. As previously mentioned, the safety of students has been a concern of parents, especially with campus tragedies like the mass shooting that took place at Virginia Tech University in 2007. Parents want to guarantee student safety and use immediate means of communication to make certain that administrators can ensure minimized risks (Carney-Hall, 2008; Wills & Hines, 1994). Furthermore, parents expect students' due process rights to be met regarding discipline because once a student is charged with violations, they could face major consequences that might be irrevocable (Carney-Hall, 2008; Janosik, 2001). Moreover, parents become increasingly involved in their student's experience, including decisions with faculty and administrators, specifically to ensure their student maximizes their educational experiences and reaches desired outcomes including career development, job preparation, and potential work placement (Carney-Hall, 2008; Turrentine, Schnure, Ostroth & Ward-Roof, 2000).

As Ford and Thompson (2007) suggested, the college experience should be divided into two categories: one in which it is acceptable for parents to stay involved and the other where parents should disengage. Class choices, accommodations, and financial matters are a few examples of decisions parents can stay involved with and be an extension of advocacy for their child. This does not mean that parents should personally engage, but should guide students on how to properly handle such matters (Ford & Thompson, 2007). On the other hand, Ford and Thompson believed social experiences such as dealing with campus life and roommates are experiences in which parents should stay away.

Higher Education Institutional Response to Increased Parental Involvement

From the parent's standpoint, attending a university is viewed as a contractual agreement where families paid for services such as an education in exchange for future job security. Scott and Daniel (2001) examined the ways in which the parent-student dynamic has changed, as well as the impact of familial involvement in the higher education community. Due to the increased interactions with parents in postsecondary institutions, this discussion continued through the mid-2000s where publications and conversations on parental involvement became highly prevalent, and parents were referred to as "co-investors" in their child's education (Carney-Hall, 2008; Keppler, Mullendore, & Carey, 2005; Sax & Wartman, 2010). Such a partnership, which may not have been relevant 20 years ago, is one university administrators should be open-minded about as 40% to 60% of parents on college campuses are estimated to be helicopter parents (Somers & Settle, 2010). Once a student nears graduation, parental involvement increases as the student searches for a job or applies for continued education and seeks parental support and guidance for these activities (Somers & Settle, 2010).

Based on their interview findings, Somers and Settle (2010) identified five different socially constructed types of helicopter parents prevalent in higher education: *Fairness* (concerned about how their student is treated), *Consumer Advocate* (have expectations for what their student gains from the postsecondary educational experience for the price paid), *Safety Patrol* (invested in their child's safety), *Vicarious College Student* (lives through the child's collegiate experience and participates as if part of the institution), and *Toxic Parent* (nothing is good enough, their student is incompetent). They offered advice to university professionals on how to work with each parental typology, specifically, how best to communicate in order to effectively interact and support student success.

As previously discussed, a single model, such as the Facilitator Model, of working with and engaging parents seems unrealistic as students and parents come from differing backgrounds and may not have access to certain communication technologies. Additionally, parents may also have differing resources such as availability of time and money (Lareau, 2011). College and university administrators should recognize the support parents can provide to foster student success and their willingness to be involved as they show an interest in their child's education. For instance, Carney-Hall (2008) stressed that parents are able to provide information on the mental health history of their student, as well as intervene when students are making poor social or academic decisions. Parents who are involved in the financial aspect of their child's higher education may, therefore, remain involved in their student's choices. Institutions are encouraged to articulate the parental relationship in their institutional mission and communicate with parents in order to engage in a working relationship with them (Carney-Hall 2008).

Some institutions have recognized this and accommodate parental involvement by providing information sessions intended to educate parents on their child's development into adulthood on topics such as changes students and parents may incur during the transition; what they will be doing as students and expectations they should meet; and, how parents can best support their students during this period without overparenting (Cutright, 2008; Vinson, 2012). Higher educational associations, including the American College Personnel Association and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, have provided information resources to college campuses on parental involvement. Such resources aim to help administrators better understand the parent population and how best to serve them.

Additionally, parental involvement has led campuses to create offices specifically for open communication between parents and administrators, so parents feel they are able to get the

information needed to support their student (Savage, 2008). Two parent services models have been discussed by Savage and have proven successful: the "student development" model and the "financial development" model. By practicing the "student development" model, student affairs professionals would respond to parents' questions in a way that best serves the students (Savage, 2008). Utilizing this model means that parents fully understand and support institutional goals of how to best serve students and support their development without interfering. Utilizing a "financial model," the institution views parents as donors and customers, therefore giving leeway to rules and adjusting policies in order to support the parent and institution rapport (Savage, 2008). Institutions may also consider or have already begun to implement programming for parents including hiring a full-time parent coordinator, creating handbooks, developing websites, writing blogs, communicating through Facebook pages, hosting parent advisory councils, holding parent orientations, posting newsletters, and encouraging involvement with family weekend events (Carney-Hall 2008; Dickerson, 2007; Gibbs, 2009; Scott & Daniel, 2001; Vinson, 2012). For example, Coburn (2006), an assistant vice chancellor for students and associate dean for the freshman transition at Washington University in St Louis, delivered a discussion intended for parents at an orientation at Skidmore College called "Letting Go," touching on topics parents might be unaware of such as campus communities and safety protocols put into place to protect their children. Additionally, Coburn suggested that parents encourage their students to take charge of their own appointments, finances, and laundry while still showing interest in their student's life. The college further expressed its intention of educating parents on student development and reinforcing the basic principles of "emerging adulthood" as part of student development (Coburn, 2006). Other institutions (e.g., North Carolina State University, Central Washington University, Miami University, and University of

Minnesota) have implemented websites, webcasts, resources, and presentations on counseling services and topics such as depression and substance abuse and have hired parent coordinators to respond to inquiries by parents (Coburn, 2006). This is beneficial for both students and families in order to keep parents involved as much as necessary and to answer any lingering questions they may have without having to interrupt focus on students at the given institution. In order to foster a partnered relationship between families and institutions, higher education institutions, such as, Augsburg College developed a mission for their parent program "to facilitate communication between parents/families and the College in order to develop and nurture meaningful, lasting relationships between Augsburg College and our parents and families" (Sally Daniels, June 11, 2007; Savage, 2008). Western Washington University also has a mission statement directed toward family outreach, where their parent services department is focused on supporting both new students and family members (Savage, 2005; Savage, 2008).

As of 2003, the parent program at the University of Minnesota has provided data from their biannual survey of parent programs across the country. The most recent report stated that between 2003 and 2015, there was an increase from 61% to 98.3% of parent and family orientations offered at different universities, as well as an increase in parent-focused websites from 8.3% to 100% (Lowe & Dotterer, 2017; Savage & Petree, 2015). Such findings suggest institutions are responding proactively to increased parental involvement. For some institutions, the implementation of parent programming may not be feasible and may depend on the size, mission, and philosophical approach of the institution toward parental involvement, as well as budgeting and staffing restraints (Scott & Daniel, 2001). Therefore, institutions may differ in their response to parental involvement.

Cutright (2008) has reminded us that the college environment in the 21st century differs from the college environment experienced a few decades ago. As previously discussed, the laws have changed regarding parents, students, and institutions with the demise of *in loco parentis* and the implementation of FERPA (Cutright, 2008). Communication between students, parents, and institutions are omnipresent and continually growing. Parents' morning phone calls are "alarm clocks" for students; parents help with homework; and the communication between parents and students extends to text messages, emails, and video chats (Cutright, 2008). It is challenging to differentiate between a difficulty of letting go and positive familial connection and support (Cutright, 2008). College is considered a personal investment by parents and students who are shocked by the high cost of an education, previously viewed as a "societal good" (Cutright, 2008). Cutright also reminded us that students and parents come from different backgrounds and levels of interaction with the college environment. Due to this, the parental understanding of how a university works varies and educators have difficulty determining how much is too much information to provide versus too little information being provided, particularly to parents of first-generation college students (Cutright, 2008). Institutions can now address this challenge by working with "parent offices" to learn how to provide the best outreach and communication with parents. The final point Cutright made is that the relationship between parent and student really comes down to an emotional relationship that trickles into the college environment, "may it be anger, fear, or joy…the interaction typically stems from parent and child love" (Cutright, 2008, p. 39).

As discussed, institutions have acknowledged the increased contact with parents and their college-aged children. Some institutions have embraced this involvement by implementing programs for parents, while others have been resistant. Adapting and responding to the increased

involvement has affected the "collegiate experience" for parents, students, as well as institutions. It is unclear whether [the relationship parents have with their students should continue to be entwined or if] universities could take a different approach to support student growth with less or minimal parental interaction. Furthermore, the models previously discussed on higher education institutions working with parents are mere suggestions and have not been further analyzed once implemented.

Parental Involvement in K-12 Education

Though this study is not focused on parental involvement in K-12 education, it is valuable to note the research that has been conducted and how it may apply to the way we think and research parental involvement in higher education. Specifically, it is useful to note (a) what we might learn about parental involvement in higher education based on what has been covered in K-12 education, and (b) what is distinct about the contexts that would make some of that thinking not generalizable from K-12 to higher education.

Three frameworks that have served as the groundwork of the majority of research on parental involvement in K-12 education have looked at the different types of interactions that exist. Grolnick (1994; 1997) identified three dimensions to analyze parental involvement: behavioral involvement, personal involvement, and cognitive/intellectual involvement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995; 1997) defined parental involvement through two categories, home-based activities and school-based activities, and argued that being involved is part of the responsibility of being a parent. Lastly, Epstein (1995; 2001) discussed the importance of collaboration between school, family, and community for students' educational development. Epstein (1995; 2001) discussed six types of involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration. Though each

framework highlights a different aspect of the parental involvement dynamics, these frameworks have been utilized to better understand the precursors to and the effects of parental involvement and have served as a foundation for subsequent studies.

Research has shown that, regardless of socioeconomic status or background, students who had involved parents performed better academically, with higher test scores and grades, better attendance records, stronger social skills, and overall improved behavior and adaptability (Benner & Mistry, 2007; Seyfried & Chung, 2002; McNeal, 2001). Though valuable across all academic levels, parental involvement is typically higher in elementary and middle school and decreases significantly as students reach high school and pursue post-secondary education (Epstein, 1995). As previously stated, overly involved parents are seen across all academic levels, and these types of relationships have shown negative repercussions in regard to psychological development and academic achievement. For example, a parent may be at the school so often and be so involved with administrators, class parents, and teachers their presence becomes a distraction for the child and could potentially interfere with the child's developmental growth.

What we might learn from previous research on parental involvement during the college admissions process is that high school students fare better in pursuing their college degree when their parents are involved (Tierney, 2001; Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). Examples of successful support during this process are college preparatory curriculum, test preparation, and working with school officials to help navigate the college admissions and financial aid processes (Tierney, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Brown, Rocha & Sharkey, 2005).

Some aspects of parental involvement may not apply to students in post-secondary institutions compared to those in K-12 establishments. Arnett (2000, 2006) suggested college

students are viewed as “emerging adults” where they are neither children nor adults and therefore should have their own developmental category where some parental involvement behaviors may apply but not all are appropriate at this stage. Furthermore, the intensity of parental involvement should decrease as the student becomes older and understands the college setting better. Perhaps anecdotal, a parent providing advice and guidance to a first-year student on course selection seems reasonable since most students may be new to this as classes are typically assigned during the K-12 academic career. However, a college student is generally expected to be responsible for time management, including getting to class on time and completing assignments on time, without their parents’ help.

Media Framing

Frame analysis, a term coined by Erving Goffman (1974) has been applied to many research concepts including Gitlin’s (1980) description as “frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (p. 7). Entman (1993) discussed media framing as a process where issues discussed include “problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Cohen (1963) stated “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (p. 13). Additionally, frames may promote policies by highlighting the source of the problem, a modality utilized when discussing parental overinvolvement at the college level (Entman, 2007). Content bias in the media is demonstrated when a story is framed to endorse one side and sway the audience to support those views.

Parenting as Discussed in the Media

Dating back to the ancient Greeks, the media have provided advice on parenting and created instruction manuals on child rearing (Simpson, 1997). *Parent's Magazine* was launched in 1926, which fueled a demand for expertise on parenting from providers and professionals. In 1970, there was a proliferation of parenting books, magazines, and publications throughout major cities in the United States. This eventually led to televised series and public broadcasting on children's issues (including parenting) in the mid 1990's. Thus, the topic of parenting has been extensively covered and framed through the media over the last century.

Few studies have examined the influence of mass media on parenting practices and none have examined the role of mass media in parental involvement in higher education. Sanders and Prinz (2008) have noted that a media-based discourse has the ability to access a greater audience and has the potential to destigmatize discussions on parenting. Mass media have disseminated useful information on health, youth violence, substance abuse prevention, as well as promoted healthy behaviors.

Simpson (1997) sought to better understand how parents are informed and supported mass media. He found four strengths in the coverage of parenting in the media: there are a large number of articles on parenting; printed information can now be discovered through electronic media outlets; parents continue to seek information on topics such as child-rearing; and there have been studies on the influence the media have on parental strategies, attitudes, and outcomes (Simpson, 1997). On the other hand, four weaknesses he found were: the inaccessibility and scarcity of information on certain parenting topics; the information available is conflicting and confusing; information provided to parents is primarily on pre-adolescent children even though adolescence may be the most critical time for parenting; and entertainment television has not

been utilized as a stable means of communication with parents, and provides conflicting storylines (Simpson, 1997). It is important to note that since the article discussed is more than 20 years old, most of these criticisms may no longer be relevant. For example, information on parenting is abundant and widely accessible with the Internet. Nevertheless, information on parenting and child-rearing is still conflicting, confusing, and there is a lack of consensus when it comes to whose article is worth reading and what advice to follow.

Assarsson and Aarsand (2011) explored and compared linguistic patterns of parental representations in a U.S. Magazine and a Swedish TV show. Their data defined parenting demonstrated in the media as "a multifaceted activity where parents are expected to look after their children's health; well-being; mental and physical development; school activities; extracurricular activities; and, vacations. *L.A. Parent*, the magazine analyzed during this study, provided advice on how to be a good parent through a 'parenting to-do list.' The only recommendation formulated in a negative voice without much explanation was #8: 'Don't be a helicopter parent' (*L.A. Parent*, March 2009, pp. 16-17 as in Assarsson & Aarsand, 2011). Assarsson and Aarsand predicted that overparenting behavior would endure even through continual debate and negative media coverage of the subject. By utilizing examples, the concept of 'how much is too much?' was applied to each sentence where the parent micromanages the child's life to the point of constant intrusion. They noted the importance of continual self-reflection, correction, and improvement that needs to take place in order to become a 'good parent,' and acknowledged the media's role in reinforcing these learning practices.

These are only a few examples of how the parent-child relationship has been portrayed in the media. As previously stated, no studies have examined how this relationship at the college level has been discussed in the media. Simpson (1997) and Assarsson and Aarsand (2011)

discussed the ways in which the media can deliver messages to parents to further educate and reassess their parenting strategies. By extension, the media could also inform parents of the boundaries that may be crossed as students enter college and how best to navigate this new phase of parenting. As Simpson (1997) also noted, the information on parenting is conflicting and confusing. This is also applicable when skimming through articles that provide information on parenting within college. There are conflicting views when it comes to whether parental involvement is acceptable within the collegiate environment, how stakeholders feel about helicopter parenting, and what types of parental behavior are desirable and constructive.

Media Framing, Public Opinion and Policy in Education

According to Beckett (1994), the ways in which the state and the media frame events influences public opinion, which shapes the discourse on politics and formation of policies. Beckett's research has shown that "state elites and the mass media play a prominent role in the construction of social issues, and, as a result, in the generation and shaping of public concern around those issues" (p. 426). Within education, media framing has been identified as a factor in public discourse about teachers' unions, education reform, standard evaluation, test scores and curriculum as well as budgeting (Goldstein, 2011; Tamir & Davidson, 2011).

When it comes to understanding the public's perspective of helicopter parenting in college, blogs; discussion boards; and online comments on articles are valid sources for gathering information without having to survey individuals. Gray (2015) blogged about the rising levels of depression and anxiety and attributes the increase in helicopter parenting to the decline of coping abilities. Gray supported his theory by mentioning surveys of college students and their parents on parenting styles, self-efficacy, and helicopter parenting (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz & Segrin, 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Shiffrin et al,

2014). His views primarily pointed fingers at parents who want to protect and help their children but are unable to do this in a reasonable manner that is not overbearing. He suggested society re-examine its parenting approaches to encourage children's healthy growth and development. It is unclear what the threshold of "a reasonable manner" is, and when parenting becomes "overbearing." Apparently, these are boundaries that parents and we as a society still need to sort out.

Hymowitz (2019) discussed the positive implications of helicopter parenting, such as the correlation between intensive parenting and higher achievement, as well as the pursuit of finding happiness and individual passion. The investment parents have in their children's personal preferences, interests, and talents shows how devoted they are and the extent they are willing to go to cultivate self-esteem through praise (Hymowitz, 2019). My takeaway of her piece is that even though the extreme involvement of helicopter parenting may be annoying, it may not be irrational given the outcome.

With a quick Google search, bold enticing headlines ensue, such as: The Bad News About Helicopter Parenting: It Works; No, Don't Be a Helicopter Parent. But Be Involved; Snowplow Parenting Replaces Helicopter Parents; Well-meaning, Helicopter Parents Can Rob Kids of Individuality, Coping Mechanisms; and, College Admissions Scandal: When Parents Don't Trust in Kids. All of these articles take a different perspective of parental involvement at the college level, and all utilize a different definition without actually discussing the threshold of how much is too much. As noted from these headlines and the public articles previously discussed, it is evident that this discourse is widely accessible to the public, alluring, and persuasive. Helicopter parenting has become a trending topic of discussion that has been flagged

as a social dilemma, leading to opinion formation among both the general populous as well as policy makers.

Theoretical Framework

Analyzing the literature on parental overinvolvement, three thematic classifications of helicopter parenting behaviors are common: support, control, and contact. The literature provides examples of these behaviors routinely seen in helicopter parenting and suggests reasons for such behaviors. For instance, researchers have noted the increase in contact between parents and children due to the ease of communication through mobile technology. The accessibility of technology has vastly increased and has allowed parents and students to stay in touch at any given opportunity. Studies discussed in this literature review have noted reasons why parents tend to stay in contact, such as fear of letting go or missing out, but this study is primarily focused on what those behaviors look like rather than why they are exhibited. The behaviors discussed throughout the literature will be utilized to create a coding framework for content analysis of news media stories.

Summary

While the topic of parental involvement as a whole is not new, there is limited information on parental involvement specifically related to higher education. Parental involvement in higher education has become newsworthy, but studies on its newsworthiness have yet to be conducted. The parent-child dynamic is ever changing, with increased parental involvement in post-secondary institutions in recent decades. As we have shown, this involvement has changed higher education programming for parents and students. Therefore, research on the topic may be beneficial for informing higher education policy and best practices.

The scholarly literature on parental involvement in higher education is scant, but the phenomenon, specifically helicopter parenting, is covered unevenly by the mass media. From this literature review, there are some key takeaways. First, when discussing parental involvement, it is worth noting the benefits associated with involvement at the college level. As found in the literature, parents can be helpful in supporting their students' academic, social and personal goals, as long as it is through advising their child rather than doing for them. Institutions could communicate with parents through programming, social-media networking, or a parent web portal or page to articulate their philosophies and best ways to support student development in a healthy manner.

Many universities are paying increased attention to establishing best practices and policies for their employees to engage and work with parents. Developing clear, institution-wide policies can support expectations for regularity in parent-student relations and contact.

Examining discourse about helicopter parenting in higher education can reveal how beliefs have been influenced by media sources. News media bring different groups and communities closer through their perception of popular topics discussed in the news, such as helicopter parenting. The effect of consensus building is a consequence of agenda setting in a media infused world.

News media have the ability to affect societal beliefs by focusing on a current phenomenon within society and deliver a limited representation of issues on the topic. The public takes these pieces, develops opinions, and discusses them as common conversation points within different societal groups (McCombs, 1997; Shaw & Martin, 1992; McCombs, 1997). Some topics of discussion may lead to conflicting beliefs and differences (i.e., politics), however, there are topics that bring groups together and act as a consensus function, such as parental

involvement. Because topics represented by the media have significant cultural effects, including opinion formation and policy discussion and changes, it is critical to recognize how topics, such as parental involvement, are framed and narrated. Rhetoric and misinformation could generate support for ill-advised laws and policies. Furthermore, such policies and procedures may be inequitably implemented, disadvantaging or penalizing minorities, when parental involvement could actually be beneficial.

Chapter III: Methodology

Seeking to better define what constitutes parental overinvolvement in higher education, my initial aim was to explore how national news sources have portrayed parental overinvolvement in higher education, specifically the behaviors associated with it. Utilizing mass media messaging to better understand how national news sources discuss parental overinvolvement is valuable, because the media convey messages to large audiences and have the ability to sway the readers' and consumers' opinions: "Mass messaging is the creation of messages that are intended for a relatively large, undifferentiated audience" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 22). Therefore, the messages are disseminated to a plethora of readers who then interpret the articles and form opinions on topics discussed.

In this chapter, I outline the methodology that was implemented for this study, including an overview, research questions, research design, sample selection strategies, and data collection methodologies. Furthermore, I discuss the strategies and safeguards used to ensure validity and reliability, as well as the limitations of my methodology. Finally, I present my content analysis procedures.

Overview of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine how parental overinvolvement in higher education is defined and discussed within the United States through mass media messaging. I used a deductive framework to examine how parental overinvolvement is communicated through national news sources, specifically the ways in which the public has interpreted the behaviors associated with overparenting at the college level. I examined media framing and agenda setting and summarized how these sources defined the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education. This study focused on the behaviors of parents, not the

emotions of parents. While emotions, such as parental anxieties, may have led to certain behaviors, I focused only on their behaviors for this research.

First, qualitative data was collected on behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education using a thematic content analysis by comparing behaviors discussed in scholarly literature with those discussed through national news sources retrieved from ProQuest US Newsstream. Next, descriptive data was collected on the number of articles associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education, the dates published, universities named, and overall themes discussed. By gaining a better understanding of parental overinvolvement as discussed through media outlets, we can see how overparenting is portrayed and what topics are covered for the public to form opinions on.

Content Analysis

This study employed a content analysis, a common methodology used to identify characteristics in messages in order to make inferences (Berg, 2001). Useful in deciphering themes, this technique has been used historically to examine newspaper articles through counting thematic units to understand the coverage of a topic. By using a deductive coding framework, patterns and themes that have emerged through the analysis are grouped into categories and can be further analyzed for similarities, disparities, and overall relationships (Berg, 2001). The framework includes an opportunity to utilize open coding and code emerging themes in order to reinforce the accuracy and relevancy of the data. Having a theoretical framework establishes a reference model to support the interpretation of the analysis by creating a referable link between the scholarly literature on overparenting behaviors and what is communicated through news articles. Though quantitative measures are used to code and categorize the emerging patterns and themes, understanding the language used within the article is crucial to detecting and coding

particular phrases and their meaning and importance. Additional quantitative measures are used in this study to gather descriptive data through analysis.

Newspapers have a responsibility to cover topics, such as catastrophes, and analyze emerging patterns and themes. Such coverage aims to enhance the awareness and understanding of the subject presented. Coding and organizing articles are two critical aspects of addressing and examining how national media outlets determine the extent to which coverage is useful; specifically, to the sociological understanding of parental overinvolvement, as originally framed.

The content typically analyzed in a content analysis can refer to "words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated" through communication media (Neuman, 2006; p. 322). A researcher utilizes a content analysis methodology to compare and reveal content across texts and discover different interpretations of such texts. As previously mentioned in the literature review, those who communicate texts (i.e., magazines, newspapers, advertisements) frame the content in order to deliver an opinion forming piece. Iyengar and Scheufele (2011) discuss the concept of framing within communication. They define this as a "dynamic, circumstantial process of opinion formation in which the prevailing modes of presentation in elite rhetoric and news media coverage shape mass opinion" (p. 1). Further, the effects of communication framing are not what is being communicated, but rather how information or a particular topic is presented in public discussion (Iyengar and Scheufele, 2011). Therefore, perhaps the effects of opinion forming are not based solely on the content of messaging on overparenting at the college level but how the media present information on this topic and utilize specific rhetoric and coverage.

Research Question

1. How do the media define the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education?

Research Design

This study was quantitative in nature as data was collected through a content analysis of national news articles. This section will discuss the data selection process, coding scheme, validity and reliability, and how the data will be analyzed. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) provide examples of a qualitative content analysis in order to aid researchers in their studies. After going through the stages of analysis, Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) offer helpful tips for researchers including: recognizing your biases and personal assumptions while approaching your data, utilizing and embracing personal intuition as a tool for analysis; and being open-minded when it comes to data that does not directly answer the research question. They stress the importance of reflexivity and flexibility during analysis and remind the researcher that, even though having a method as a guide supports the trustworthiness of the analysis, it is a tool and the process takes time and reflection. Throughout this study I intend to be mindful of their suggestions.

In the first phase of this study, a thematic content analysis of national news articles was performed. I looked for patterns of topics discussed, shared characteristics amongst behaviors, and overall analysis of the message delivered through national news articles on parental overinvolvement in higher education. This study spans a 31-year time period between 1989 and 2020 of data available from ProQuest US Newsstream. The rationale for selecting ProQuest US Newstream as the primary data source was the ability to access multiple newspaper sources online through a single database. I had access to a variety of articles dealing with higher

education, parenting, and college student development along with a broad collection of linguistic variations of the terms.

I conducted the search using the following keywords: higher education, college, university, postsecondary, helicopter parent*, overparent*, overinvolved parent*. This search yielded 2,477 articles published since January 1, 1989. The rationale for selecting the time frame stemmed from the desire to cover the entire period of the change in the role of the parent-child relationship after the term "helicopter parent" was defined by Cline and Fay (1990). Though the term helicopter parenting may not have been evident at the college level or even discussed throughout this period, it is worth including into this study to be thorough in examining the literature.

Initial screening of the field of study was narrowed down to articles written about students who are going through the college admissions process or are already admitted into college. Abstracts dealing with students who are in elementary and middle schools well as international educational issues were eliminated from the analysis. Additionally, I was interested in articles that focused on the parent-child relationship, specifically parental involvement in college, rather than articles that briefly mention the topic or speak of it broadly. Furthermore, an article must use the term "helicopter parent," or one of the subspecies of overinvolved parents: bulldozer, lawnmower, black hawk, or stealth missile, etc. Lastly, it is important to note that Generation Z students are currently replacing Millennials on college campuses. Therefore, I included articles that examined Generation Z students only when their college application process and academic experience were thoroughly discussed in the article regarding parental involvement.

The samples collected were imported into an Excel spreadsheet and grouped by (a) newspaper that published the story, (b) date published, (c) title, (d) summary of the article, and (e) geographical area, if applicable, (f) postsecondary institution mentioned, if applicable, (e) parental overinvolvement behaviors, for descriptive statistical analysis and organizational methods. If abstracts were provided, they were utilized as they could potentially provide key points discussed within the news articles that would be useful in organizing the issues covered.

Positionality

The following discussion outlines my personal experiences relevant to this study. I am a white female born into an upper-class family and I was raised in northern New Jersey. I attended private school during K-12 and graduated from The George Washington University with a dual Bachelor's degree as well as a Master's degree. My background is in Psychology, Criminal Justice, Forensic Psychology and Education. I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Seton Hall University to better understand the leadership of higher education, as well as how to work with students attending post-secondary institutions.

I decided to research helicopter parenting when I realized that the topic of overbearing parents was becoming prevalent in many conversations and I had become familiar with it from my own personal experiences. Furthermore, stories on the topic fascinate me because they feel extremely current, relatable, and easy to discuss. My dream was to research a topic that felt relevant and I had some connection with.

There is no doubt that my personal experiences and values have shaped the research I have decided to pursue. However, I hope to demonstrate that I am both an insider as well as an outsider when it comes to this topic. While I do believe that my personal biases and values can never truly be removed or controlled for, I do feel that recognizing such biases and

demonstrating self-awareness can create a level of transparency during my interpretations and findings. This approach does not try to eliminate bias but brings it to the forefront, so the validity of the study can be properly contextualized (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Additionally, I obtained input from a peer, who checked my interpretations for bias.

Article Selection

ProQuest US Newsstream was used to search the U.S. news coverage on parental overinvolvement. ProQuest has access to *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* as well as *Chicago Tribune* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Using terms such as: overparenting, helicopter parent, college, university, postsecondary, and higher education, I purposefully selected articles with abstracts related to the topic. These keywords were chosen based on common words and themes found within the studies discussed in the literature review associated with parental involvement in higher education.

While not a random sample, the articles were chosen because they contributed to the understanding of the behaviors of overinvolved parents within higher education as depicted by national news sources. Using this search method allows a researcher to find varying target words and phrases to limit or focus the intended area of study.

Sample and Population

The news articles that I analyzed were published between 1989-2020. They varied in length, when written, and publication source. I read the chosen articles in their entirety and analyzed all words related to the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement. If an article described a behavior of overinvolvement, I recorded the words used and the direction in which the article went with this description of behavior; whether it was a positive or negative take on the subject.

Analysis Procedures

Each article was coded using ATLAS.ti, which was useful in documenting analytical findings while systematically supporting transparency. For each of the articles, a series of descriptors and classification data were provided. This study determined the leading themes of parental overinvolvement in higher education presented by national news media over the past 30 years and utilized a thematic mapping of the stories about overinvolved parenting behaviors. The study focused on detecting patterns that have been established by the news media and their depiction of parental overinvolvement in postsecondary institutions.

Summary of Articles

After reading the 44 news articles chosen for content analysis, I summarized the main takeaways into different categories according to the purpose of the articles. Here I present summary statistics on the content of the articles: (1) 34% (n=15) provided an anecdotal example to illustrate overparenting behaviors; (2) 32% (n=14) gave background information on the history of helicopter parenting and how it came about; (3) 32% (n=14) also provided statistical information gathered from polls or surveys regarding overparenting behaviors; (4) 25% (n=10) discussed the harm helicopter parenting behaviors caused students; (5) 23% (n=10) gave tips to professionals on how to work with helicopter parents within educational settings; (6) 23% (n=10) used a typology other than "over parenting" when discussing these behaviors (including, but not limited to helicopter, bulldozer, black hawk); (7) 18% (n=8) specifically mention the Varsity Blues College Admissions Scandal that took place in 2019; (8) 18% (n=8) refer to the educational practitioner and former Dean Lythcott Haims as a helicopter parenting expert; (9) 16% (n=7) refer to the increase of technology and communication as a gateway for overinvolved parents; (10) 14% (n=6) provide tips on how to not be a helicopter parent with through guidance

and fact checks; (11) 11% (n=5) of the news articles discuss the positive aspects of overinvolved parenting and how helicopter parenting helps for students; (12) 1% (n=4) were written to parents to encourage them to let go of their children and allow some freedom to fail; (13) <1% (n=2) specifically mention parents allowing their children to make decisions on their own. Though other themes arose when reading the news articles, these themes were the most common throughout the sample.

Coding

In order to code the content analysis, I systematically converted the data collected into quantitative and qualitative data in order to better organize and analyze the text. I coded based on frequency, direction, and intensity of the message. I utilized both manifest coding where I developed a list of common phrases and words used when discussing overinvolved behaviors, as well as latent coding where I subjectively interpreted the meaning of common themes (Neuman, 2006).

Categorization schemes are critical to the content analysis process. By using coding and classification schemes, the analysis results become more structured, organized, and useful. I gathered both intrinsic themes emerging from the text, as well as extrinsic, which are imposed by the researcher. I deployed a deductive coding approach, using themes and ideas that emerged from the literature as a coding framework to assess the information analyzed from news sources in order to develop a theory on the behaviors associated with overinvolved parenting at the college level. I chose a deductive coding approach because helicopter parenting has been described in specific instances but there is no general understanding of the common behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement at the college level. Furthermore, I have noted additional themes that emerged through my analysis, labeling them Emerging Themes.

Deductive Coding Framework

Based on a review of scholarly literature and a preliminary examination of relevant news articles about parental involvement, eight overparenting behaviors were utilized as a coding framework for this content analysis as seen in Table 1. Additionally, Table 2 provides a framework for conducting a Content Discourse Analysis, which was also utilized for this study.

Table 1

Deductive Coding Framework of Overparenting Behaviors

Behavior	Goal/Explanation	Authors
Control (Psychological and Behavioral; both within and out of academic setting where the child is unable to act independently)	A preoccupation with the child's happiness by managing emotions and mood Decision Making Problem Solving Intrusive Behavior Limit Setting Monitoring and Supervision, Risk Aversion Protection Removing Obstacles/Paving the Way Parental Intervention Loss of Independence Micromanage	Segrin (2012) Fingerman (2012) Carney-Hall (2008) Padilla-Walker & Nelson (2012) Shoup (2009) Baxter & Norwood, (2015) Kelly et al., 2017 Leymone & Buchanan (2011) Ballish (2006) Lowe & Dotterer (2017) Pryor et al, (2008) Wartman & Savage (2008) Turrentine, Schnure, Ostroth & Ward-Roof, (2000) Ford & Thompson, (2007)
Workplace Engagement	Involvement in career development, job preparation, and potential work placement. Speaking with current or potential employers	
Tangible/Practical Support	Transportation, food and clothing; Hands on tasks; running errands; Making appointments	
Financial Support	Funding of postsecondary education, and the process of gathering family income and tax information for financial aid Providing an allowance	

Behavior	Goal/Explanation
Emotional Support	High levels of love and care for; Acceptance, affection, nurturance
Socializing/Communication	Contact with offspring Frequency of communication and frequency of parental interventions (very often/often = helicopter); means of communication
Educational Communication	Interacting with campus staff, faculty & administrators
Emerging Theme (Behaviors that do not fit into the behaviors mentioned in the scholarly literature)	As I read through the literature any theme that does not thematically fit into the categories developed from the scholarly literature will be labeled as Emerging Themes and will later be defined.
Wielding Financial Influence (Emerging Theme)	Parents paying extra money to get their children into institutions through bribery or additional support with the admissions process
Overly Focused (Emerging Theme)	Reoccurring presence without the act of controlling Broadly referred to being involved without specific goal or intention Hovering Overly involved

Table 2

General Analytical Framework for Content Discourse Analysis

Stage of Analysis	Description	Example
1. Select the discourse	Select a discourse related to injustice or inequality in society	Helicopter parenting at the college level; portrayal of helicopter parents in the media
2. Locate and prepare data sources	Select data sources (texts) and prepare the data for analysis	Newspaper articles
3. Explore the background of each text	Examine the social context and producers of the texts	Characteristics of the genre, publisher characteristics, and writer characteristics
4. Code texts and identify overarching themes	Identify the major themes and subthemes using choice of qualitative coding methods	Thematic analysis, deductive coding
5. Analyze the external relations of the texts (interdiscursivity)	Examine social relations that control the production of the text; examine how the texts affect social practices and structures. How do social practices inform the arguments in the text? How does the text in turn influence social practices?	Dominant social practices and norms; social structures (class, legal system, govt.; schools)
6. Analyze the internal relations in the texts	What is the text set out to accomplish? Representations of social context, events, and actors; speaker's positionality.	Headlines & leading statements, structural organization or layout, use of quotes, grammar, voice.
7. Interpret the data	Interpret the meanings of the major themes, external relations, and internal relations	Revisit the features and place them into broader context and themes

Note. General Analytical Framework for CDA; Mullet, D. (2018) A General Critical Discourse Analysis Framework for Educational Research. *Journal of Advanced Academics* 29(2) 116-142.

Validity and Reliability

Validity within a qualitative analysis primarily focuses on whether the units selected to organize and categorize the schemes accurately measure the phenomena being studied.

Demonstrating a credible case that patterns deciphered from the texts are key to what is being studied is one method of supporting the validity within this content analysis. An additional method I utilize to add rigor to my analysis is peer review. I have asked a peer to review, interpret, and compare coding from the data in order to provide an external check (Creswell, 2007). This will minimize any bias that may occur if only the researcher engages in the data collection and coding process. Furthermore, I have verified that my keyword search offers content validity by affirming that the same articles appeared when the keywords, obtained through scholarly literature and previous research, may have been different.

Formally, measuring for reliability is not a factor in content analysis. Nonetheless, coding is still appropriate in order to properly organize and analyze the data. Moreover, I employed intercoder reliability to test the coding protocol to establish the probability that the study results could be replicated if done by another researcher utilizing the same design and measures. Finally, I documented everything I did throughout this process in a research diary in order to have a reference point for when my views changed or developed. Furthermore, a research diary helped me keep detailed history of the research and helped trace the development of my skills.

A sample of news articles (2) was provided for a second coder to establish the probability that the study results could be replicated if utilizing the same design and measures. This second coder holds a Juris Doctor and is an attorney who has had experience analyzing and reviewing cases and legal documents as part of his day-to-day work. He is accustomed to looking for specific issues and relevant facts in those aforementioned cases, which would make him adept in conducting a content analysis for this study. The coding performed by the second coder indicated a high level of agreement with 15 of 16 coding matches (94%), indicating reliability in the study's coding scheme.

Limitations

While a content analysis can serve as an excellent research tool to systematically evaluate large samples of media content, the methodology does have limitations. One limitation is that the analysis does not provide a tangible scientific answer to the problem analyzed. Content analysis is a thorough interpretation of the text, however, there may not be an absolute answer deciphered for the problem at hand. Furthermore, because this analysis is based on interpretation, it is also never fixed and therefore open to negotiation and other interpretations. Nonetheless, this study will help the reader better define overinvolved parenting at the college level by utilizing findings to address and understand future research on the subject. Therefore, additional methodologies such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups would need to be conducted to further identify more definitive results on behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement as well as the effects of media framing.

Summary

A coding frame derived from and based on the literature on overparenting behaviors captured a range of characteristics and variables that fit the criteria of the study framework. This study examined all 44 news articles that qualified to be included in a purposeful sample and compared behavioral characteristics of overparenting as described within the articles. A content analysis was the research technique utilized to examine and code the 44 news articles to establish how news media discuss the behaviors associated with overparenting within higher education.

Chapter IV: Results

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand how national news sources discuss parental overinvolvement in higher education by using a deductive framework to examine how parental overinvolvement is communicated through national news sources, specifically the ways in which the public has interpreted the behaviors associated with overparenting at the college level. Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the research question, 'How do the media define the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education?' which was conducted using a deductive content analysis reviewing each news article in the sample to identify the common themes discussed by publishers on overinvolved parenting behaviors.

I begin by presenting the data on sample descriptive characteristics, including news articles analyzed, year published, and publisher characteristics; and gender, journalist employment status, and writer interests of authors. This is followed by coding results and descriptive summaries on each of the following questions:

a. How many articles used each code within the sample?
b. How many times was a behavior coded in the sample?
c. What percentage of articles coded each behavior?

Additionally, when the definition of "helicopter parent" or a related label was used in an article, it was coded for the following questions:

a. How many articles defined "helicopter parent" or a related label within the sample?
b. How many times was the definition of "helicopter parent" or a related label coded in the sample?

c. What percentage of articles utilized the definition of "helicopter parent" or a related label?

Sample Characteristics

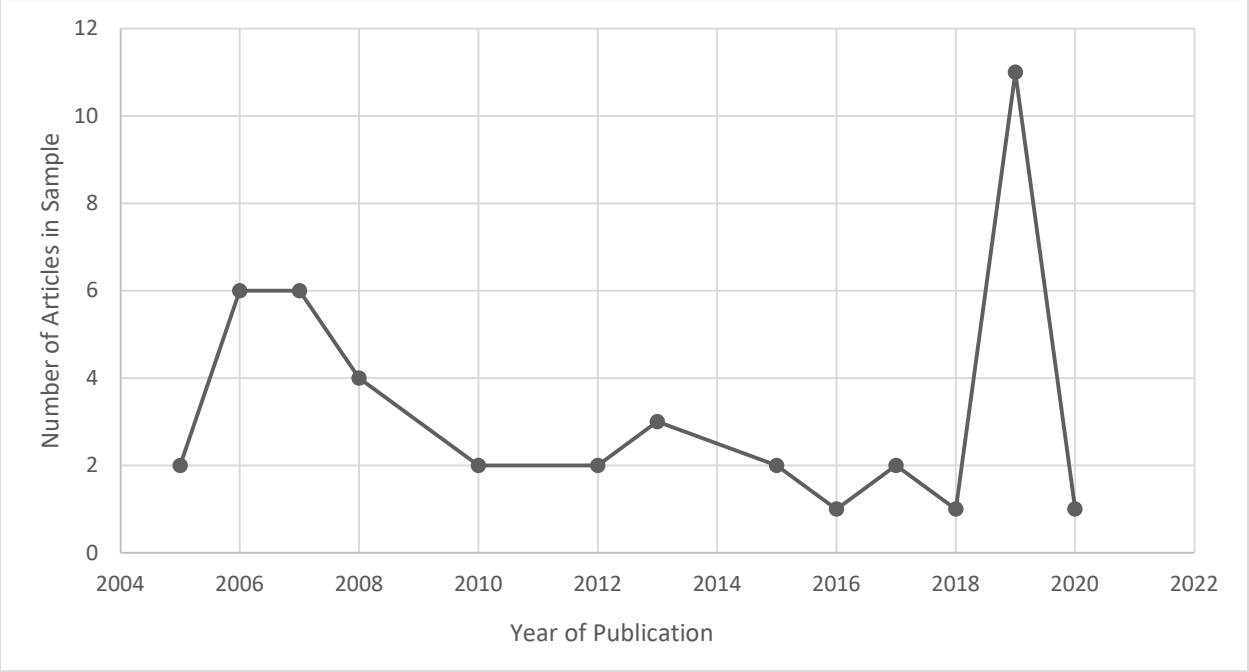
The sample of news articles analyzed came from 32 publishers with multiple articles written in 7 of the sources: *The Boston Globe, The Daily Journal, The Daily Press, The Indianapolis Star, The New York Times, USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Table A in the Appendix shows the representation and description of publishers included in the sample. *The Boston Globe* and *The New York Times* were the most frequently cited publishers in the sample (n=3) with *The Daily Press*, *The Daily Journal*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *The Washington Post*, *University Wire*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal* following (n=2). Other publishers in the sample were each cited once.

Knowing the characteristics of the newspaper is valuable because there may be certain factors that influence the journalist's ability to reliably and effectively cover a story. The circulation size and location of the newspaper may affect what topics are covered, how topics are covered, and where they are mass circulated. Additionally, research has shown that the journalist's personal characteristics influences the quality of their work.

Originally omitted from the search criteria, *University Wires* accounted for 2 sources. The articles were published from 2015-2020 with the most published in 2019. Figure 1 shows the varied publication dates. An increase of publications in 2019 could be due to the news coverage of the Varsity Blues scandal, an overparenting celebrity scandal, which took place in early 2019. According to *Inside Higher Ed*, the Varsity Blues College Admissions Scandal involved students of wealthy families faking their athletic status, cheating on standardized tests, and using millions of dollars to bribe coaches and proctors to admit their children into elite colleges (Jaschik, 2019).

Figure 1

Year of Publications



Note. Sample articles' dates of publication.

In order to gain insight into the journalists who wrote the sampled publications, I researched their background information through Google and LinkedIn and made inferences on my findings. I was able to find 33 women, 8 men, and 3 unidentified authors who published the news articles[1]. Additionally, 2 separate articles were jointly written by the same female but different male journalists in subsequent years. This female journalist was the only journalist to appear twice within the sample. Table 1 displays the representation of these findings. Additionally, the employment status and writer's interests were both gathered through a web-

[1] Guessing people's gender is not necessarily fully accurate.

based analysis. Table 3 highlights the findings, which indicate the majority of authors were employed journalists. Additionally, all male journalists from the sample were employed by the publisher. Though this study did not analyze the quality of the writing, there may be differences between articles from those who write full-time compared to those who are freelance writers.

Those authors that identified as "freelance writers" had careers in psychology, child advocacy, former reporting, college essay coaching, and journalism. Figure 2 represents interests the authors from the sample noted in their personal bios identified online. Parenting/Family was the most frequently cited topic of interest for the writers from the sample. The next commonly written subject was Education, but they did not differentiate which educational level (Pre-K or Higher Education). Even though there is a large number of writers with "Other" interests, this may suggest only one writer is interested in Criminal Justice, whereas another may be interested in Travel. Knowing the most common topics writers typically research and write about may help the reader understand whom the article was written for or the goal of the article. For instance, a freelance psychologist may focus on the psychological outcomes of overinvolved parents, whereas, an educational consultant may provide suggestions on how institutions can better work with overinvolved parents.

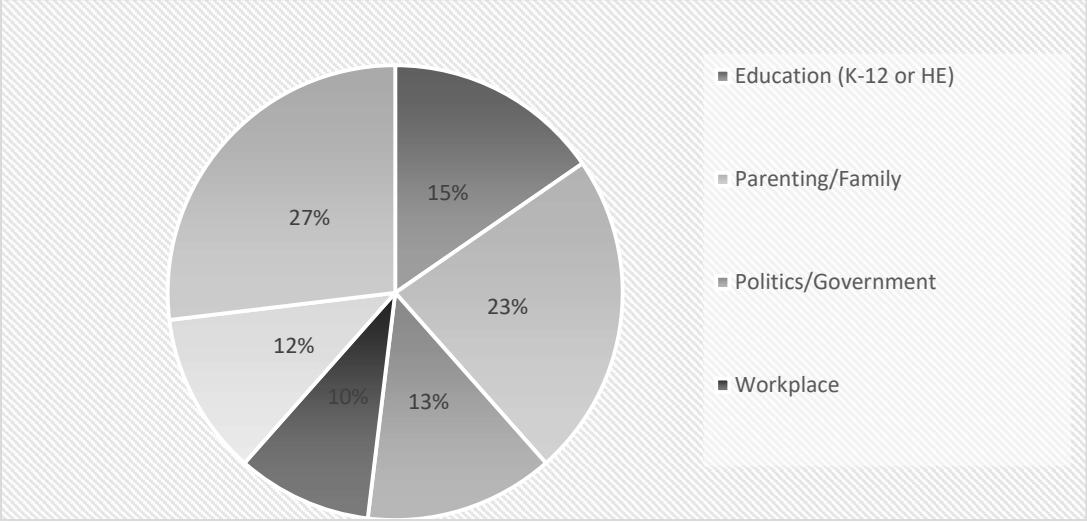
Table 3

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Journalists

Baseline characteristic	Journalists in Sample
	n
Gender	
Female	33
Male	8
Unidentified	3
Employment status	
Employed	28
Freelance	12
Unidentified	3

Figure 2

Journalist's Published Topics of Interest



The sample characteristics from the 44 news articles suggest an overall movement toward similar journalist identities across the sample. Although inferences can be drawn on identifiable

characteristics of the authors, their professional profiles exemplify diversity in regard to the background of the authors and their topics of interest. Though a large percentage of the journalists primarily write on topics involving families and parenting, the majority also mention other interests including: Crime, Health, Travel, Economics, and Culture. This is an interesting finding because the journalists writing on parenting and families may not be subject experts on such topics. Therefore, it would be beneficial to include references to subject matter experts when discussing a topic that one may not be well versed in. Overall, the news articles were published across the United States with little intention in a specified region. Furthermore, the sample covers a 15-year span of published material, inferring that those years not covered within the time period may still have articles on the subject outside of the sample size.

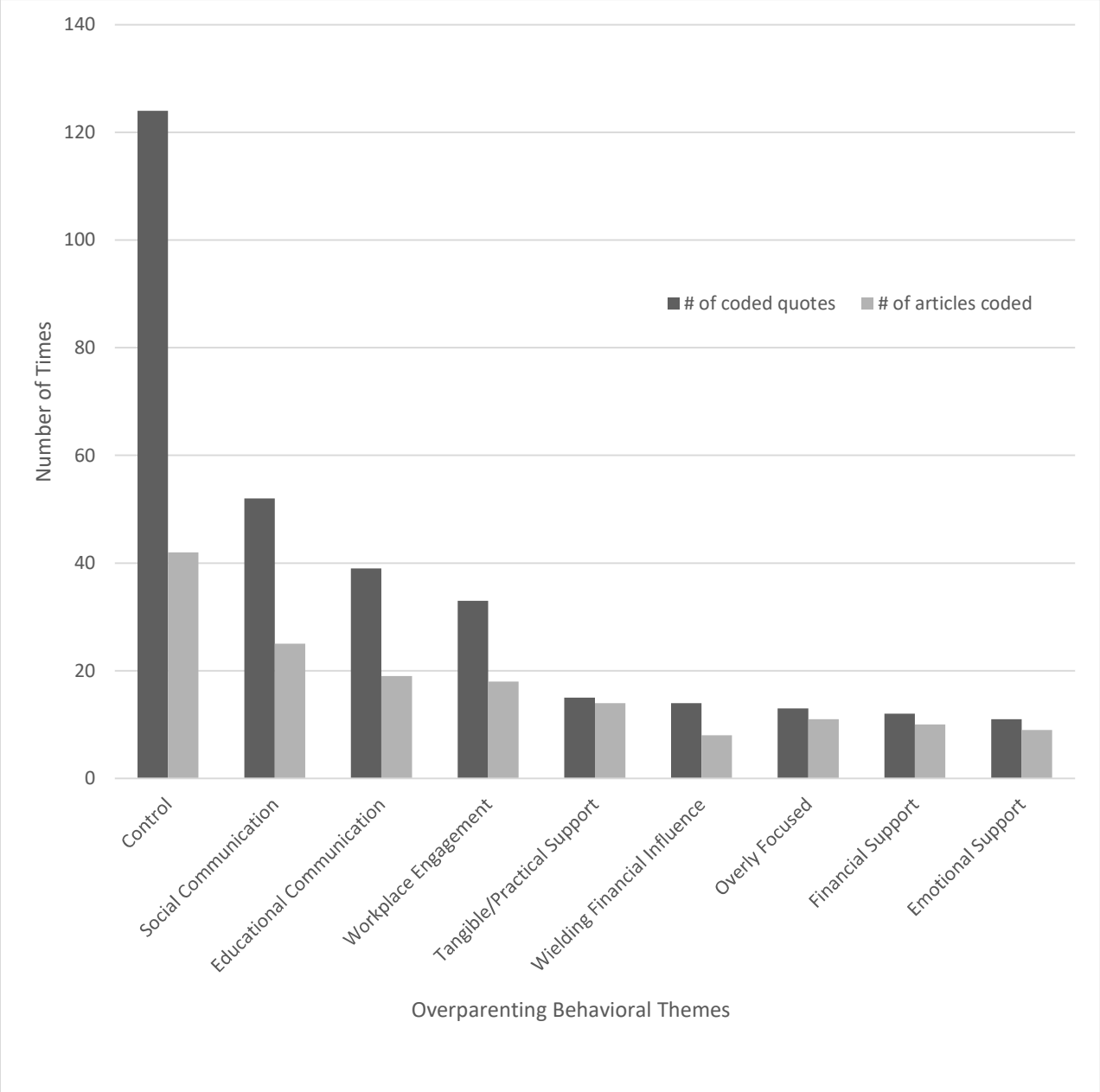
Deductive Content Analysis

As previously noted, the content analysis, in total, included 44 news articles. Before conducting the data analysis, I specifically read through 95 news article abstracts or full articles when no abstract was available to select a purposeful sample for this study. Additionally, after reading through all articles and coding them, I found several codes would need to be altered or deleted in order to reflect a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. For example, Psychological Control, Behavioral Control, and Autonomy Granting were originally listed as separate behavioral themes, however, there was overlap in coding them, so it was valuable to the outcome of this to combine these types of behaviors. New codes were also created after initial coding. Workplace Engagement was initially coded with Parental Academic Engagement, however, this code was removed because it was a broad code, whereas Workplace Engagement included specific behaviors parents conducted in regard to their child's future and current employers.

The results of the content analysis are below in Figure 3. The information gathered from the analysis generally seem to be similar across the 44 articles with the control theme being the most prevalent theme in each article. With that said, there is a variation across the articles for themes not involving controlling behaviors. This study indicated frequency of common themes as well percentage of variables discussed across the sample in response to the subsidiary questions which were implemented to seek answers to very specific identifiers that would lead to answering the primary research question.

Figure 3

Overparenting Behavioral Themes



Note. This graph displays the number of articles that used each code within the sample, as well as the number of times a behavior was coded in the sample.

Table 4
Occurrence of Overparenting Themes in News Articles

Overparenting Themes	Percentage of Articles
	%
Control	95.45
Social Communication	56.82
Educational Communication	43.18
Workplace Engagement	40.91
Tangible/Practical Support	31.82
Overly Focused	25.00
Financial Support	22.73
Emotional Support	20.45
Wielding Financial Influence	18.18

How many articles used each code within the sample?

The number of times a behavior was mentioned within the data sample was analyzed in order to note the density of the behavior. As show in Figure 3 and Table 2, from the sample of news articles, Control was cited most frequently and Emotional Support was the least common overparenting behavior.

How many times was a behavior coded in the sample?

The number of articles that mentioned the behavior within the data sample was analyzed in order to see how frequent the behavior was discussed in association with overparenting. As shown in Table 2, from the sample of news articles, Control was the most common behavior displayed in the most news articles, and the Emerging Theme, Wielding Financial Influence was mentioned less frequently.

Another way to analyze the above findings is as a percentage of the total in order to clearly see what percentage of articles mention a given overparenting behavior. As noted above, Control was found in a higher percentage of articles than Wielding Financial Influence with

95.45% (n=42) of news articles mentioning Control compared to 18.18% (n=8) citing Wielding Financial Influence. Regardless, the order seems the same in terms of prevalence.

Control

By far, the most commonly cited theme was Control; it was cited 124 times. In total, 42 out of 44 articles discussed an element of control, whether it be psychological or behavioral. Cited in 95% (n=42) of the articles, this theme was one of only two themes cited in more than half of the articles. Within this theme, codes were applied to parents committing an act of control, compared to just being involved or frequently around. For example, "Last semester, not once but twice there were two different parents who came to class in place of their kid" (Couturier, 2017). This quote shows the parent doing a specific act for and in place of their child. Another example of control is mentioned in the article, *When Parents Jump in Even When You're 28*: "They have called their children's roommates to resolve disagreements or to check on their children's whereabouts" (Quealy & Cain Miller, 2019). This type of behavior was also the most commonly cited behavior within a single article. The article, *It's Time to Let* Go (Bliss, 2010) described the mother's reaction when her son chose his course schedule without his overinvolved mother, 'I was just appalled,' she said. 'How could you have made this decision without me? I was hurt.' And later when Bliss (2010) states, "The thing is, many of them still rely on their parents' input and approval as much as ever, from simply decisions like which summer classes to take to more involved interactions…" A quote was coded as "Control" when it exemplified a situation where the parent's behavior promoted their child's codependence and loss of autonomy. In one article, a chemistry major talks about the relationship between her friends and their parents: "I have friends whose parents micromanage them…They think they're helping but they make it difficult for their kids to figure things out on their own" (Burger, 2019).

When parents solve problems, remove obstacles, and display intrusive behaviors, they are labeled as displaying controlling, overparenting behaviors. Paired with the terms parents and students or children, common terms such as decision, involved, intervene, and control were most frequently found in articles and coded as 'Control.'

Initially psychological and behavioral control were listed separately but were later merged, as there was an overlap of the two types of overparenting styles, such that it was difficult to differentiate them at times. As seen in the examples, there is an overlap between control and other behavioral traits. When parental control was illustrated within an article, parents were most commonly cited for micromanaging (which is a judgment-laden description), selecting academic courses, and intervening to solve problems. The motive most often cited behind this behavior was to prevent the child's failure by being overly involved to the point of control.

Social Communication

The second most commonly cited theme was Social Communication, with 25 of 44 articles discussing a mode of social communication or frequency of contact between parent and child. Coded 52 times, this theme was coded in 57% (n=25) of the sample articles, and is the second most frequent theme coded in more than half of the articles. For example, "For many college students, the calls, e-mails or texts from home come every day, or even twice a day. Some parents communicate by Facebook, Twitter or Skype" (Diskin, 2010). This type of behavior was coded when the article discussed a parent contacting their offspring, including the frequency of communication. One student, Ariel, recalls her first week of college when her mother "…called me nearly every day. Sometimes to check in, sometimes to confer on problems" (Dribben, 2006). Another example in *Families Must Find a Proper Balance* (*2013)*

describes a phone exchange between child and parent: “MOM! I have to go. Class is starting! This is a familiar refrain outside of classrooms on college campuses where young adults are supposed to be taking their first steps into independence” (Hatchard, 2013). This overparenting behavior is differentiated from educational communication, which distinctly notes the parent directly interacting with someone at their child’s postsecondary institution. Words such as phone, often, technology, communication, and constant were most frequently found in text and coded as ‘social communication’ when paired with the child.

Educational Communication

Less than half (43%) of the articles cited Educational Communication (or 19 of 44 articles). This is different from the theme Social Communication, as a parent is purposefully contacting a professor or representative from their child’s educational institution. This is illustrated in *Case of the Hovering Parents; Universities Laying Ground Rules to Give Freshmen More Independence*: “But college and university administrators say that parental overinvolvement, from overcalling a student to over contacting administrators, has become a pressing issue” (Schweitzer, 2005). English (2013) also demonstrates this behavior in *When Mom and Dad Just Won’t Let Go*: “At Boston University, one father was so upset over his daughter’s A- final grade that he called the professor to complain, and then the department chair, and then the academic dean.” As previously noted, this overparenting behavior was coded when a parent interacted with campus staff, faculty, and/or administrators. Paired with the term parents, words such as: college student, university, call, complain, grades, professors, administrators were frequently found in quotes coded as Educational Communication. Within the sample, parents are most commonly cited for contacting professors in regard to bad grades, as well as contacting the institution when problems arise, such as roommate conflicts and routine

affairs. Also mentioned in the sample are anecdotes universities have shared procedures put into place on how to work with badgering parents. Denise Mooner, director of the University Service Center at Boston University shares, “Staff trained to handle parents' calls follow guidelines that encourage parents to permit students to handle routine affairs… We have found ourselves more often raising the question: Where is the student in this conversation, literally?” (Schweitzer, 2005).

Workplace Engagement

Approximately 41% (n=18) of the sample articles mention Workplace Engagement. Initially, this theme was combined with Control, however, this study is primarily interested in Parental Academic Engagement and therefore it was valuable to code when the parental behavior was connected to the workplace rather than an academic institution. Coded 33 times, in 18 of 44 articles, workplace engagement was reported when parents were attending interviews, contacting employers, and submitting resumes on their child’s behalf. Such behavior can be seen here: “It's not uncommon for a parent to send an e-mail following a job interview, attend job fairs with—or on behalf of—their child, or even assist with the selection of benefits after a hire has been made,” said Patricia Shelton, a recruiter for Comcast (Bliss, 2010). In *‘Bizarre and Unusual’: Readers Respond to Helicopter Parenting*, Couturier (2017) illustrates how parents engaged in the workplace by “showing up at their children’s job interviews, trying to negotiate their salaries and other benefits and even intervening to smooth out their work-related difficulties—some organizations appear to be struggling with the increased meddling.” Coding for overparenting behaviors when parents engaged with a child’s workplace included reporting that described involvement in career development, preparation, and contacting potential or current employers. Paired with the terms parents and children, common words such as job, interview, career, call,

and salaries were most frequently found in quotes coded as Workplace Engagement. When discussing workplace engagement, parents are most commonly cited for looking for jobs for their children, interfering in the job process (including interviews, salary negotiations, and job searches and resume writing), as well as engaging and communicating with employers about their children. From the sample articles, it is difficult to determine whether children were asking for help or advice from their parents prior to their direct intervention with their children's employer.

Tangible/Practical Support

Originally identified as two separate themes, the theme Tangible/Practical Support represents parents engaging in hands-on tasks and errands for their child, as well as providing essentials such as food, clothing, and transportation. When discussing practical/tangible support within an article, parents are most commonly cited for doing tasks that adult children are capable of doing on their own, including cooking meals, making appointments, and doing laundry. This theme was identified only once per article in 32% (n= 14) of the articles. Examples of Tangible/Practical Support range from "…making doctor's appointments, telling them what career to pursue, helping them get jobs…" Auchter (2020), to "…news stories about parents doing students' laundry…" *Madison Capital Times* (2007). This overparenting behavior has significant overlap with many of the other behaviors, including Educational Communication, Control, Financial Support, and Workplace Engagement. However, Tangible/Practical Support takes place when tasks are completed by the parent, including errand running and appointment making. In *Helicopter Parenting Affects Older Kids* Too, Goldsmith (2013) summarizes Holly Schiffrin's research: "turbocharged parents still running their college-age children's schedules, laundry and vacations could be doing more harm than good." Paired with the terms parents and

children, words such as appointments, school, laundry, and help were usually found in text coded as Tangible/Practical Support.

Overly Focused

Initially, this theme was not represented in the coding scheme, however, the frequency of its occurrence made it a relevant theme to code. Overly Focused, a theme that emerged from the analysis was coded in 11 of 44 articles (n=13). Overly Focused behavior was coded when the text illustrated parents' involvement or presence without actually controlling their child. The act of hovering and being overly involved without a specific goal or intention would be coded as overly focused. In *Are Over-Involved Parents Raising Wimps?* Clifford (2008), refers to instances when she, and other parents, cruise "college kids' Facebook pages and track their bank balances online." Colvavecchio-Van Sickler (2006) stated that, "one-quarter of the students polled think their parents are 'overly involved' to the point of embarrassment or annoyance." This poll was conducted through an online survey by career services entitled the "Helicopter Poll." When paired with parents and college, terms such as involved, helicopter, hover, and constant were most regularly found in quotes coded as 'overly focused.' When overly focused behavior is apparent within an article, parents are most commonly cited for monitoring and hovering and being overinvolved without actually controlling and decision making. Balint (2012) wrote, "…and college administrators openly beg parents of incoming students to stop daily monitoring of their children's activities via Facebook or by cell phone." When this behavior is coded, parents are hyper focused on the child, but there is no direct action taken related to the child's decision making.

Financial Support

A common reason cited in the literature as to why parents are involved is connected to financial support; they provide funding for their student's college education. However, with only 12 codes found in 10 of 44 articles, it is surprising to find that this theme was not more prevalent. Within the 22% (n=10) of news articles, examples of this theme are: "While they recognize parents often are footing the bill, officials say that doesn't give them the right to make decisions children need to make." As well as: "One in three parents said they gave their 18-and-over children $100 or more a month, and 44% of those with children in college made tuition or loan payments for them" (Berggoetz, 2006; Quealy & Cain Miller, 2019). As previously noted, this overparenting style was coded when the mention of funding for education or student's allowance was cited in the article. When paired with parents and children, common words such as financial, tuition, and payments were most frequently found in quotes coded as Financial Support. When financial support is illustrated within an article, parents are most commonly cited for being involved in tuition, rent payments, as well as monthly allowances. In regard to allowances, *The Madison Capital Times* (2007) states, "Some [parents] even give their children $500 a month or more for living expenses."

Emotional Support

The least commonly coded theme was Emotional Support with only 11 coded quotes in 9 of 44 articles. Cain Miller & Bromwich (2019) reported how a student described her parent's behaviors: "They do give me a lot of emotional support, but they haven't really been able to tell me about what I should be doing, like next steps." Here, emotional support is used generically without describing when emotional support is demonstrated. When paired with parents, common terms such as support, emotional, and advice were most generally found in quotes coded as

Emotional Support. When emotional support is shown within an article, parents are most commonly cited for being intrusive out of concern, providing advice, giving support when there is visible conflict, and providing other emotional support when the child reaches out.

Wielding Financial Influence

Initially, this theme was not represented in the coding scheme, however, its frequent occurrence made it relevant theme to code, and the second theme to emerge from the content analysis. Though it was only coded in 18% (n=8) of the sample articles, this theme was discussed 14 times. It is important to note that all of these articles were written after March 2019 when news of the Varsity Blues College Admissions Scandal broke. The code Wielding Financial Influence was applied to the article, *College Admissions Scandal Highlights Modern-Day Parenting At Its Very Worst*. An "FBI investigation revealed a massive college admissions scam in which parents paid a consultant millions to get their kids into some of the country's most prestigious universities by any means necessary—bribing entrance exam administrators, paying off people to take tests for their students, phony resumes, doctored exam scores, bribing coaches to say kids were athletes when they weren't and more" (Manieri, 2019). This overparenting behavioral style differentiated itself from others in that parents were paying extra money to get their children into specific institutions through bribery or additional support with the admissions process. It is important to note that the bribery was not associated with grades and their child's academics but more specifically on getting into a specific post-secondary institution. Another distinguishing feature of these behaviors is that they are criminal, which is perhaps a separate indicator of excessive overparenting, with potentially negative consequences for all actors involved. Instead of helping their children, parents acting in these ways may be inflicting damage on their children's educational and employment prospects.

Some examples of Wielding Financial Influence parenting did not apply to the behaviors seen in the Varsity Blues Admissions Scandal, such as stories shared by Abby Mims during her time as an educational consultant helping students get into schools: "When I started in college admissions the better part of a decade ago, I was stunned at how much parents were willing to pay for the promise of getting their children into an elite school" (Mims, 2019). Though finances were involved in this type of behavior, it is distinct from financial support as the money was not directed into the student's pockets or as tuition for the academic school year. Paired with the terms parents, children and college, words such as bribing, paying, and scandal were regularly found in quotes coded as Wielding Financial Influence. In regard to this behavioral theme, parents were most commonly cited for doing all they could, including hiring tutors and bribing institutions, to get their children into college.

Summary of Content Analysis

After analyzing the sample of news articles, this study found that every article cited at least one or more of the behavioral themes listed in the coding scheme. The most prevalent theme was Control, where many articles appeared to use an anecdotal story or research-based example of the controlling behavioral tendencies helicopter parents exhibited. Additionally, when giving an example of these behaviors it was the "act of doing," such as writing a paper, filling out an application, or choosing a class for their child. Within the coding scheme I have applied, "helicopter parenting" refers only to those who hover, whereas other labels apply to parental behaviors such as decision making, which is rarely discussed in scholarly literature, as well as control.–As I have shown, overparenting has been a highly covered topic in the news media. The data from this content analysis reflects different levels of overparenting along with catchy labels associated with those behaviors. Though Wielding Financial Influence was an

emerging theme, it did bring the trending topic back into the spotlight and propelled higher education institutions to recognize and take actions to come to terms with this overparenting behavior.

Chapter V: Conclusion

This final chapter reviews the purpose and significance of the study, as well as discusses the research findings. The last section of this chapter provides some implications of this study and how it can be utilized for practice as well as suggested future research.

A review of the literature identified a handful of studies directly related to my research question. These studies were used to categorize common themes when discussing overparenting behaviors. Although existing research identified these behaviors, there was no information on how they were portrayed through national media outlets. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were included in this study in order to thoroughly examine the research question. The purpose of this study was to understand how national news sources discuss parental overinvolvement in higher education by using a deductive framework to analyze the content of newspaper articles. The results of this study will be informative to college employees who work with parents of college students, helping them to recognize common behaviors, as well as to parents of college students to help them better understand how their behaviors are interpreted by others. Furthermore, understanding how journalists discuss overparenting behaviors in the news media is valuable in helping us better understand and define the current trend of overinvolved parenting, specifically at the college level.

Summary of the Findings

The current study focused on establishing a sound framework to explore the term "overparenting" and to examine the interrelationships among variables generated by this framework. The goal of this study was to answer the research question, how do the media define the behaviors associated with parental overinvolvement in higher education? As discussed in Chapter 4, Control was the most prevalent overinvolvement theme discussed within news

articles. Examples of parents solving problems for their children as well as safeguarding against potential risks were common trends illustrated in the sample of periodicals. Stories about parents micromanaging their children's lives by selecting courses, academic majors, and extracurricular activities are just a few examples of how they demonstrate controlling behaviors and impede their children's growth.

In order to have insight into their child's life, many parents are constantly in Social Communication with their offspring, which helps explains why communication is the second most common behavior of overinvolved parents. Many parents who are overinvolved communicate often and intervene frequently. This behavior was only seen between parent and child, whereas the theme of Educational Communication was about the child but between parents and university faculty, staff, and administrators. Examples of parents calling professors regarding grades and calling resident life staff concerning roommate conflicts were the most common behaviors discussed in the news articles.

Parental overinvolvement was not only prevalent in the academic world, but stories of parents contacting future employers and submitting resumes were a few examples of the next most overparenting theme: Workplace Engagement. Parents also communicated with career counselors at postsecondary institutions to ensure their children were receiving internship opportunities and to guarantee their children got the best opportunities with future employers.

The next most commonly discussed themes were Tangible/Practical Support, Wielding Financial Influence, Overly Focused, Financial Support, and Emotional Support. Though not as commonly discussed as the previous behaviors, journalists still provide examples of these common overparenting behaviors.

As a researcher, I assumed emotional support would be the healthiest and most acceptable form of parental involvement, where a parent showers their child with love and affection, however, it is rarely discussed within the sample. After further interpretation of the data, emotional support may not be considered a thematic overparenting behavior, but may be a reason why parents become overly involved. Additionally, financial support, when it pertains to paying for tuition and school costs, may not be an overparenting behavior, but a reason why parents become overly involved, because they feel invested in their child's education. The literature review as well as the content analysis findings reveal that parents become highly involved because they are paying for their student's education, and therefore believe they must ensure the student is getting the most out of their education.

Finally, it is important to note that I believe providing Tangible/Practical Support is not necessarily negative parenting, but if overdone, could become detrimental to the development of the child, as previously discussed in the literature review. Determining the threshold for what exactly is "too much" parenting could be a topic for future research.

Summarizing the findings of this study, the media define overparenting at the college level as extremely involved parents exhibiting codependent behaviors such as solving problems; making decisions; frequently intervening; preventing harm and failure; and having constant communication, which dampen their children's ability to figure things out on their own, learn self-reliance, and transition smoothly from adolescence to adulthood. Overparenting is not portrayed as a positive behavior within the media, but rather is depicted as unhealthy, overbearing, and controlling. Parental involvement is typically not requested by their children, but it may be due in part to the child's inability or lack of confidence to solve problems. Examples of overparenting behaviors are not apparent in contexts when there are indications of

mental illness or disabilities. Additionally, advice giving and emotional support were not portrayed as overparenting behaviors. Parental behaviors that are encouraged and not equated to overparenting are: offering support and advice; advising and guiding; and a commitment to caring for their children. Some journalists have taken the steps to help readers self-identify as overinvolved parents and teach them how to correct their behaviors. Furthermore, in my research, any background information provided on overparenting is backed by stories from students, parents, and higher education professionals rather than by previous scholarly research and findings.

Overparenting Behavioral Framework

This dissertation presents a first-of-its-kind framework that future scholars can use to study the dynamic nature of parenting and overparenting within higher education. Prior to this framework, conversations involving parental overinvolvement commonly began with infuriated comments about the frustrations of those involved, but there was a lack of consistency among definitions of the behaviors. This study offers a framework to help integrate the disparate, subjective definitions into a better understanding of overparenting behaviors.

By leveraging and integrating the abundance of information on the parent-child relationship, including theories and perspectives generated by Carney-Hall (2008), Padilla-Walker & Nelson (2012), and Wartman & Savage (2008), I was able to comb through, create, and propose a framework for exploring overparenting behaviors seen within higher education. The framework presented is intended to be flexible, offering the opportunity for subjective and personalized narratives within the categories. For example, though this research referred to controlling behaviors as both psychological and behavioral, it would be equally appropriate to distinguish the orientations differently depending on future researchers' purposes for applying

the framework. Future researchers might wish to refine some aspects of the framework or how they apply it, depending on their focus and findings. Most central to this framework are the categories themselves as they can offer useful strategies or tools for reviewing literature on the subject and approaching new and innovative research questions.

The full power of this framework has yet to be harnessed. The first run of this framework has already yielded valuable information on the resurgence of discourse regarding overparenting as it pertains to the Varsity Blues scandal, the overlap between labels of overparenting styles, and the disconnect between emotional support as communicated in the literature and overparenting as portrayed in the media.

Definition of Helicopter Parenting

Although excluded from the research question, it is important to address how journalists defined helicopter parenting (and other labels for overinvolved parenting) throughout the sample. A definition of helicopter parenting was provided in 82% (n=36) of the sample articles. Though not an overparenting behavioral theme, I did code certain sections of the text that provided a definition on helicopter parenting as this served for a very specific purpose. Additionally, some articles provided checklists for the reader to determine if they were a helicopter parent, as seen in *Boomer Parents Hover Over Careers of Offspring,* "HELICOPTER PARENT? You might be, if you: drive your son or daughter to a job interview, then try to sit in on it; Accompany your child to the registrar's office and select his or her classes …" (Joyner, 2007). It is valuable to distinguish between how overparenting was described when the author explicitly gave a definition and how it was described when examples are primarily used to discuss the theme. Therefore, this code will be briefly discussed as it informs future researchers of how overparenting behaviors are purposely defined by mass media.

Within the sample, definitions on helicopter parenting and other overparenting styles were provided to give the reader background information on the topic or to lead into the story about to be shared on an overinvolved parent. Shkolnikova (2019) quotes a market manager for Robert Half who agrees with the overlap in labels for overinvolved parenting, stating, "Bulldozer parents and helicopter parents are kind of similar in that really they just want what's best for their kid, so they want to try and help them to be as successful as possible. But that can sometimes blind them to the fact that maybe they're being too involved or their involvement can be inappropriate or certainly unprofessional when looking for a job." Also, when Zimmer (2019) discusses the term Snowplowing, "Snowplowing is just the latest metaphor used to label overinvolved parenting, or 'hyper-parenting' as it has sometimes been called. The first and still best-known of these is 'helicopter parenting' (which, like 'snowplowing,' can be shortened to 'helicoptering'). That term is already three decades old…" These are a couple examples of journalists taking note of the redundancy of metaphors used to label overparenting behaviors and the similarities across these metaphors.

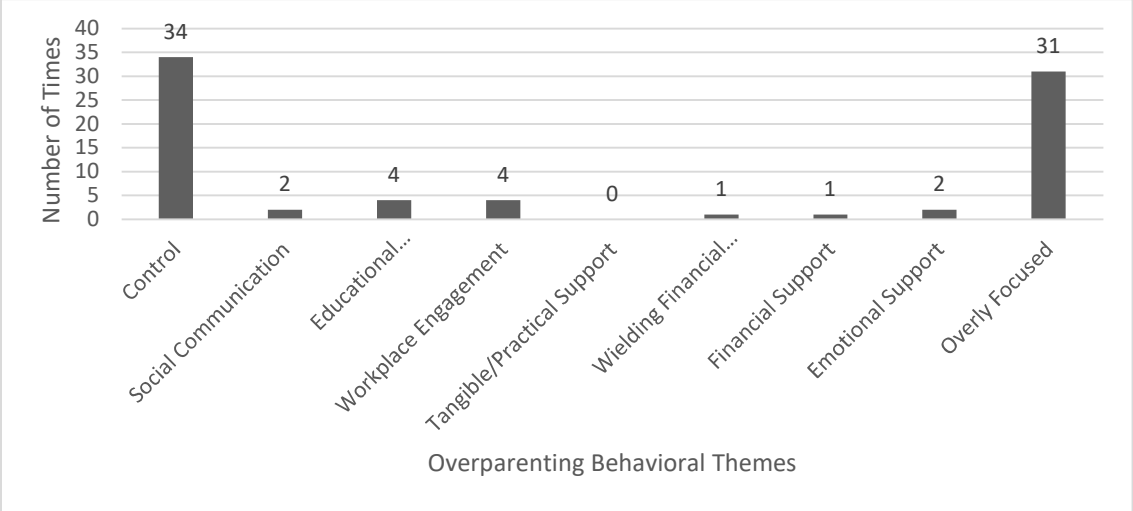
In regard to the overparenting themes discussed in the theoretical framework, and seen in Figure 4, when a journalist provided a definition for helicopter parenting, Control was the most commonly cited overparenting behavior theme (n=34) followed by Overly Focused (n=31). Tangible/Practical Support was not mentioned at all when providing a definition for helicopter parenting. This differs from what the content analysis of the sample reveals when it comes to overparenting and parents doing tasks versus hovering over the student. Such a disparity could be a reflection of the language used when describing a helicopter (as hovering) and the various other labels given to different overparenting styles. Furthermore, the term "helicopter parent" may actually not accurately represent the behaviors parents are presently exhibiting. Therefore,

the use of an updated definition of the current state of parental overinvolvement behaviors could be helpful in further clarifying and understanding this phenomenon.

After thoroughly reading these mass-media sources, I found the inclusion of a variety of overparenting labels to be confusing. Each of these labels entails a parent overdoing a behavior to the point of intrusion or loss of autonomy for the child. The commonly used labels are also catchy and indicative of the most popular types of behavioral themes, including the act of clearing any obstacles out of the way/path (bulldozer/lawnmower), swooping in to take action (black hawk) and hovering overhead at all times (helicopter). To the reader, it seems as though the proliferation of all these labels is to try to set a trend and see which label will become the next popular term. It may be more beneficial to understand this overparenting phenomenon as an all-encompassing whole and combine all of the behaviors previously discussed into a label entitled unhealthy overparenting. A list of overparenting labels and the frequency of their occurrence can be found in the Appendix in Table B.

Figure 4

Overparenting Behavioral Themes within Helicopter Parent Definition



Note. The number of times an overparenting behavioral theme occurred within newspaper articles when defining helicopter parenting.

Limitations

Rather than employ a content analysis as a single method, researchers have suggested the use of multiple methods to analyze a topic in order to improve the validity of the results and reduce biases. Though this was the first study that conducted a content analysis of news articles on overparenting, a survey or qualitative method (interview or focus group) could help better illuminate other perspectives and interpretations of the phenomenon and the terminology.

This study utilized a single database to gather news articles for the sample. This may create concerns regarding reliability and validity, because it may not gather a wide enough range of news articles or may only choose articles from specific publishers and exclude others. I used keyword searching in order to identify articles that discussed overparenting within higher education. While it was effective in gathering the exact types of news stories I was looking to

analyze, the search often returned irrelevant and duplicate results. For example, one author published their story in multiple newspapers, and all articles appeared in the results. Additionally, the term "helicopter parent" returned high results but after reading the article or abstract the focus was primarily used in a setting other than higher education. Furthermore, the keyword searches may have missed relevant articles that did not show up in the results, thus, omitting information pertinent to my research.

As previously discussed, there are disadvantages to conducting a content analysis. Even though I created a framework of overparenting behaviors, this study primarily looked at word counts and minimally analyzed the context of the text. Additionally, there was no way to automate or computerize the data entered into ATLAS.ti, therefore, the data utilized was based on my interpretation and at my discretion. Finally, the coding scheme used may not reveal some nuances of the text as it is taken quite literally.

In regard to the role of the journalists in this study, one final limitation worth mentioning is whether journalists' perspectives represent societal perspectives. Journalism provides information at large for society to form opinions and make choices. However, what journalists publish may not accurately reflect broader societal perspectives, especially if biases, politics, and pressures influence the writer. Hackett (2009) discussed repercussions of prejudice and bias in reporting due to political motivations. It could be seen as problematic if journalists use their opinions to report on topics rather than facts (Chong, 2019). Additionally, Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) developed a measure of newspaper slant and found an economic incentive for newspapers to adjust their slant in order to entice the innate tendencies of consumers. As seen in this study, some of the authors come from backgrounds of writing about parenting and education, but others primarily write about travel, government, and employment. This is a limitation, as their

interpretation of the phenomenon might be limited and therefore the information gathered for this analysis could reflect that. Furthermore, if a journalist was hired by an organization to write on a specific topic, as some journalists were freelance writers, they may not be given the authority to express a different standpoint or their piece may have been selected to be published due to what is included in the article. What is known is journalism is linked socially, culturally, and at times has the inability to escape vagueness.

Theoretical Implications

Though discussed in the literature as forms of parental involvement, emotional support; tangible/practical support; and financial support may not necessarily be negative. However, it is possible that anything overdone can become detrimental to the development of a child, as noted in the literature. It would be beneficial for further theory to be developed on defining the "too much" threshold related to these behaviors and when they become overinvolved and harmful.

Additionally, the labels used to describe overparenting in higher education are numerous, redundant, and confusing. This may explain why it is so challenging to define overparenting. Developing a better understanding of labels that are used to describe different extremes of similar overinvolved behaviors, could help us define and analyze this social construct so we can work toward addressing parental overinvolvement from a policy standpoint.

Finally, the framework that has been developed here can help shape a clear definition of overparenting behaviors and benchmark the perspectives of citizens, parents, students, as well as professionals in higher education. It can be used to assess overparenting behaviors, analyze the prevalence, causes and impacts; and develop a cohesive theory. The framework can be used to set a standard for assessment, determine the role of parental overinvolvement in education

(including K-12 and higher education), and work toward solving policy problems, the ultimate end goal.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The implications for practice include the potential for assisting college administrators and employers with research-based decisions regarding admissions, recruitment, assessment, and the transition from college into the workplace. This study's findings have the potential for influencing teaching practices and enriching students' learning through better understanding of how parenting and overparenting behaviors profoundly impact the parent-child relationship during post-secondary education.

If we better understand and define overparenting behaviors, we can potentially implement programming for parents who display such behaviors, develop skill building for faculty and administrators to work with parents who exemplify overinvolved tendencies, and identify and support the students who need help in functioning autonomously.

The data gathered from this study can support informed social discourse on the phenomenon of overinvolved parenting by providing individuals with specific criterion that can be used when discussing and implementing policy and procedural changes. Resources could be made available to students like tutoring, employment, and health and counseling services, as well as opportunities for members of the community to support student groups to help them transition from high school to college and then into the workforce. Finally, it is crucial to mention the importance of encouraging students to become more autonomous prior to their college education. Trying to teach students these critical skills to independently function in college when they are already enrolled and have begun freshmen year coursework may be too late. Therefore, by providing the skills for high school students to act autonomously in some of their decision

making could help them feel confident and comfortable in their transition into higher education. Additionally, educating parents on overinvolved behaviors and what is or is not acceptable once their child transitions into college could further benefit the parent-child-postsecondary institution relationship.

Implications for Future Research

This study created a framework that future researchers could use to assess overparenting behaviors; analyze their prevalence, causes, and impacts; and further develop a theory of overparenting at different stages of student's life. Additionally, the framework could be used to benchmark the perspectives of citizens, parents, students, as well as professionals in higher education so that each constituency becomes more aware of the role they play in fostering a child's growth into autonomous adulthood.

It would be meaningful for future researchers to consider the phenomenon both empirically and theoretically, enlisting its use in everyday conversation. A more exhaustive study would involve a clearly defined version of overparenting, examined or tested within the expressed behavioral parameters.

Furthermore, as noted in the limitations, this study used a keyword search to identify specific news articles, therefore, additional research through a broader lens with a larger sample and additional keywords may add value in describing how overparenting behaviors are discussed through mass media. For example, this dissertation focused on identifying the presence of overparenting behaviors rather than focusing on one type of behavior and its prevalence across a broader range of articles.

Additional research should be conducted to create a more comprehensive definition of overparenting, as well as an analysis of the most commonly utilized definitions of the

phenomenon. Having a multitude of overparenting labels leads to confusion. In the majority of the articles within this study, the writer described the different behaviors through examples and defined them having done little applied research. Having a better understanding of specific behaviors or narrowing down the number of definitions could make policy solutions to this phenomenon more approachable. Additionally, as pointed out in the article, *It's Time to Let Go,* "Venable said, 'redefining the term could go a long way toward creating a more positive impact on the young adults.' She would like a helicopter parent to be 'involved, but not solving the problem' and 'empowering (young adults) to be independent'" (Bliss, 2010). Furthermore, this research did not consider the powerful influence news headlines have as the first words a reader encounter. Headlines could influence the reader to continue to read the piece or interpret what the piece is about by the meaning of the words in the headline alone. Readers could make inferences on the impact of the subject and share their impression without actually reading the text of the article. Therefore, analyzing headlines on parental overinvolvement could help further understand readers' interpretation of key messages portrayed through media outlets. Finally, by gathering information and conducting analysis on how articles defined helicopter parenting by looking at common words, behaviors, and sources discussed could contribute to a generalized definition of overparenting. This could be further analyzed by looking at both print versions of publications and electronic journals in order to examine the location of the article within the periodical as well as intentional placement of words and phrases on the page.

Problem Definitions

As problems are socially constructed, it is possible that the Varsity Blues College Admissions Scandal and/or Covid-19 might (or might not) change people's perceptions about overparenting and how it is defined. When thinking about the Varsity Blues scandal, the most

common behavior cited was parents financially bribing university professionals in order to gain admission to prestigious universities for their child. This behavior may not actually be typical amongst all parents, but it does impact the way the public thinks of ways in which parents can be involved. Such behaviors may be out of the question for those who do not have the financial means, and therefore, they might find other ways to support their child's college admissions (i.e., completing assignments, writing papers, etc.). Furthermore, even if some parents stop bribing their child's way into universities, there are still many other overinvolved behaviors that take place, so it does not seem as though overinvolved parenting is going away any time soon.

With Covid-19, online education has taken precedence, with students "attending" classes online from the comfort of their home. Some in academia may be concerned that parents could be taking the time to attend these courses, complete assignments, and earn grades for their children. However, it is too soon to know what is actually going on behind the screen. Perhaps remote learning could create new forms of overinvolvement and impact how we think of overinvolved parenting in both K-12 and higher education. Further research of this dynamic could be beneficial as education and society evolve to cope with the public health crisis.

Conclusion

The mass media are a major force that shapes and impacts social formation of meaning and people's daily lives through the news, as well as other types of communication. Not only do stories shared impact people's perceptions and judgments, but they also influence the social consensus on the subject. At times, it is only the media outlets that are educating the public on certain topics, and unfortunately, the message delivered may be skewed and confusing. This study was designed to provide insight on how mass media discuss parental overinvolvement behaviors in news articles. Though the often-stated goal is to narrate news stories from an

objective and factual standpoint, the news articles from the sample were heavily anecdotal, with few factual, value-free perspectives, which is unavoidable but potentially intentional. No definitions are value free.

The media coverage of overparenting behaviors illustrated the findings from a number of previous studies on the subject, but mainly exemplified the controlling behaviors overinvolved parents display. It was particularly interesting to see the nuanced nature of the portrayal of overparenting as being very emotionally invested and involved in their child's life, and how the context of overparenting behaviors actually functioned in the narrative as psychologically and behaviorally controlling. It was also not surprising that the negative aspect of parental overinvolvement was the dominant focus. This study showed a clear example of how an entire phenomenon can be portrayed by news sources, while the scholarly literature showed different manifestations of the same themes.

It is also interesting to consider whether the portrayal of overparenting changes over time. Given that the trend of overparenting within higher education has been noted over a long period of time but the sample size only covers a short period, it is difficult to assess whether the portrayal of overparenting would differ if the data was analyzed during a period that did not include the Varsity Blues scandal. The Varsity Blues scandal was a major focus of news articles written on the topic within the last five years because it was one of the most prominent stories on parental involvement in higher education. This prominent news story may have swayed the public's view on and created more awareness of parental involvement within higher education. Therefore, the specific years chosen to write on the subject could have affected specific stories and how they were delivered, but it is unlikely that the overall narrative of the subject would have changed.

The scholarly literature covering overinvolved parenting is overwhelmingly consequence driven with information on how best to collaborate for the benefit of the student within higher education. However, this perspective was minimally discussed within the news articles. Instead, news stories focused on anecdotal examples of a parent calling an institution or dealing with roommate issues on behalf of the student. The literature on the behaviors associated with overparenting was minimal, and this study sought to provide insight into which behaviors were discussed more than others in news stories.

There are significant implications for when a phenomenon, such as overparenting within higher education, is covered in both scholarly literature and the news media. There are also implications for when a topic is not covered. Without information, it would be hard to understand the frustrations of higher education faculty and staff in working with parents, as well as the struggles students face when their parents are not allowing them to express their independence. Policy makers can have more of an impact implementing procedures on how to collaboratively work together with knowledge of overparenting behaviors and trends than without such information. For those not directly connected to higher education, it is important to understand what is going on behind the scenes, and the news coverage on parental overinvolvement provides some insight. However, what has been shown through the news coverage may not have always been an unbiased view. As seen in the literature, overparenting may have some benefits for all stakeholders, and it would be helpful if the media provided all views on the subject.

In conclusion, this study was designed to determine the behaviors that were associated with overparenting in the media. Having a concise empirical definition of overparenting may lay the foundation for a research-based decision-making process involving stakeholders in higher

education. This study focused on integrating theories and literature on parental involvement in order to develop a foundational base to approach the theoretical and empirical analysis of the phenomenon, in order to develop a comprehensive definition for both researchers and practitioners.

The results presented the behaviors aligned with those discussed within the literature and supported the development of the theoretical framework. Such conclusions drawn from the data revealed that parental overinvolvement is still a topic that is discussed within periodicals with little reference to research supporting the news media's portrayals, and therefore neither discrediting nor supporting perspectives in the news media. The identification of specific common overparenting behaviors could help create a comprehensive definition of overparenting and help guide stakeholders in higher education to create ways to work with these behaviors. Although this research helps us better understand common overparenting behaviors as discussed in the media, additional research is needed to formulate an overparenting definition and find ways to support policy makers in developing procedures for how to work with both children of overinvolved parents, and the parents themselves.

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Appendix

Table A. Description of Newspaper Publishers

Newspaper	Number of Articles in Sample	Description of Publisher
Boston Globe	3	The Globe has a long tradition of being a progressive institution, and especially on social issues. We are pro-choice; we're against the death penalty; we're for gay rights. But if people read us carefully, they will find that on a whole series of other issues, we are not knee-jerk. We're for charter schools; we're for any number of business-backed tax breaks. We are a lot more nuanced and subtle than that liberal stereotype does justice to
Chicago Tribune	1	Most read daily newspaper of Chicago metro area. Reputation as a crusading paper
Columbia Daily Tribune	1	Widely circulated in mid-Missouri
Contra Costa Times	1	Bay Area News Group (largest publisher in Bay Area). In 2016 became East Bay Times.
Courier Post	1	Serves South Jersey and Delaware
Daily Journal	2	Main focus is on communities in and around vineland and Milville, New Jersey.
Daily Press	2	Bought by Tribune Company/Publishing and covers Newport News, Virginia area
Daily Record	1	A statewide business and legal paper
Deseret News	1	Moderate to conservative tone reflecting values of the LDS Church.
Indianapolis Star	2	Only major daily paper in Indianapolis, Indiana
Lincoln Journal Star	1	Daily newspaper serving Lincoln, Nebraska
LNP	1	Daily paper in Lancaster; published by LNP Media Group, a division of Steinman Enterprises
Madison Capital Times	1	Vigorously progressive in its editorial voice, opinion voices and news reporters act separately
New York Times	3	Liberal; American publisher with international views
Oakland Tribune	1	Weekly newspaper in the Bay Area
Philadelphia Inquirer	1	Pro-union; pro-Republican; now says independent but swings left

Newspaper	Number of Articles in Sample	Description of Publisher
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	1	The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, also known simply as the PG, is the largest newspaper serving metropolitan Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
St. Petersburg Times	1	Currently Tampa bay times as of 2011
Star Tribune	1	Largest newspaper in Minnesota; It typically contains a mixture of national, international and local news, sports, business and lifestyle content
Sunday Gazette	1	The Charleston Gazette-Mail is the only daily morning newspaper in Charleston, West Virginia. It is the product of a July 2015 merger between The Charleston Gazette and the Charleston Daily Mail.
The Atlanta Journal	1	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC) is the only major daily newspaper in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia. It is the flagship publication of Cox Enterprises.
The Baltimore Sun	1	Owned by Tribune Publishing; largest general circulation daily newspaper in Maryland covering local and regional news, etc.
The Brattleboro Reformer	1	Third largest daily newspaper in Vermont
The Christian Science Monitor	1	Nonprofit news organization that publishes daily articles founded by the Church of Christ, Scientist. Not a religious themed paper and avoids sensationalism
The Post Crescent	1	Part of the Gannett chain of newspapers, primarily distributed in counties surrounding Appleton/Fox cities Wisconsin
The Poughkeepsie Journal	1	Owned by Gannett; Oldest paper in New York state. Primary coverage area is Dutchess County
The Record	1	New Jersey newspaper that reads like a magazine
The Tennessean	1	Daily newspaper owned by Gannett, which also owns several smaller community newspapers in Middle Tennessee, including The Dickson Herald, the Gallatin News-Examiner, the Hendersonville Star-News, the Fairview Observer, and the Ashland City Times. Its circulation area overlaps those of the Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle and The Daily News Journal in Murfreesboro, two other independent Gannett papers.

Newspaper	Number of Articles in Sample	Description of Publisher
The Washington Post	2	Majority readership Northern Virginia; Increase in political stories and stories focused in Washington, D.C. area
University Wire	2	Unable to attain
USA Today	2	USA Today is an internationally distributed American daily middle-market newspaper that is the flagship publication of its owner, Gannett. It has been shown to maintain a generally centrist audience, in regard to political persuasion
Wall Street Journal	2	American business focused journal with international audience readership; conservative bend; non-partisan reporting

Table B. Overparenting Typologies Used in News Articles

Overparenting Typologies	Number of Times Used in Definition of Helicopter Parent
Helicopter	37
Snowplow	10
Lawnmower	5
Bulldozer	3
Blackhawk	2
Broker	1
Banker	1
Agent	1
Jet Fighter	1
Tiger	1
Elephant	1
Hot House	1
Death Grip	1
Hyper Parenting	1
Advocate Parent	1