



Research Article

A new-generation parental attitude affecting gifted adolescents' psychological resilience: helicopter parenting¹

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Abstract

This study was conducted with adolescents aged 12-18 who continue their education in Science and Art Education Centers. The effects of the helicopter parenting attitude perceived by the adolescents on their psychological resilience levels were investigated. This research is in relational screening model. The general universe of the research comprises gifted adolescents aged 12-18 years (N=533) who study at Science and Art Education Centers covering all regions of Turkey (Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia and Black Sea regions). The official approval of the Ministry of National Education Special Education and Guidance Services Presidency and the approval of the Ethics Committee were obtained. Data collection tools were applied to adolescents in Science and Art Education Centers institutions across Turkey. In the research procedure, the data have been collected via "Personal Information Form"; "Helicopter Parenting Scale" and the "Child and Youth Psychological Resilience Scale". The significant relationship between the mean scores obtained from the scales was analyzed with the correlation test. Binary variables; independent groups were analyzed by t-test; One-factor analysis of variance was used in the comparison of more than two groups. When the age and psychological resilience of the study group are examined; a negative relationship was found between father's age and helicopter parenting. A significant correlation was found between perceived helicopter parenting attitude and psychological resilience. The psychological resilience levels of adolescents whose parents live together are higher than those whose parents live separately.

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Introduction

The number of studies on parental attitudes towards gifted children with superior intelligence and the coping methods of such children is increasing day by day. Gifted children come up with different psycho-social reactions compared to children with normal development (Liebenberg, Ungar & LeBlanc, 2013). Mothers and fathers may affect the psychological reactions of these children positively or negatively by reacting differently from their normally developing children and often end up acting overprotectively (Okray, 2016).

The ability of gifted children to cope with crisis situations is also attributed to the concept of resilience. Once a problem arises, the reactions to giving up after being exhausted or how to solve the problems by rearranging the relations with the environment are related to the concept of resilience (Markstrom, Marshall & Tryon 2000). Thus, the notion of resilience plays an important role in how individuals respond when encountered with stressors. Psychological resilience refers to the ability to quickly recover from physical and mental illnesses, changes or bad situations in life, the ability to heal oneself, as well as the capability to return to one's former self after sadness and tension. Skills and traits that enable them to function at their best despite stress and disaster are as follows: Flexibility

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(Ramirez, 2007) stands for the capacity to adapt positively in difficult life situations (Lightsey, 2006), stress resilience (Markstrom, Marshall & Tryon 2000), mastery capacity (Mandleco and Peery 2000; Tusaie and Dyer 2004). Psychological resilience is the ability of an individual to adapt to the change in his/her life in the process that occurs as a result of the interaction of risk factors and protective factors when faced with a negative situation (Kararmak, 2006); it also includes the ability to use several protective factors, such as personal and social resources and perceived level of family harmony, to maintain mental well-being in the face of stress and adversity (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie & Chaudieu, 2010; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

Some studies that reveal that gifted children are individuals who are self-confident, determined, problem-solving, and develop strategies to cope with adverse environmental conditions in addition to their superior intelligence (Alexopoulou et al. 2019). On the other hand, superior intelligence is not the sole condition for resilience. Cognitive ability plays a supportive role in problem solving and decision making processes (Kitano & Lewis, 2005). It is evident that giftedness affects the psychological well-being of individuals (Neihart, 1999).

A child with a diagnosis of "special talent and/or giftedness" needs to have certain boundaries, discipline, unconditional acceptance by their parents, and taking responsibilities. Directing gifted children to merely success-oriented study and being overprotective negatively affects their curiosity or motivation towards their skills of investigation and discovery (Okray, 2016). If parents adopt an attitude such as providing the gifted children the opportunity to research and experiment, the children can solve problems in crisis situations; they can adapt to new changes or bad situations by finding out solutions; they can heal themselves against problems and have the ability to recover after stress (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sternberg, 2005).

Generally, every parent exhibits the love and discipline components to their children as they have observed, learnt and experienced formerly. Helicopter parenting attitudes, which are described as an overprotective and intrusive behavior, are a child-rearing approach brought about by the marginal ends of the love and discipline components (Yılmaz, 2019). These behavioral patterns significantly tend to affect the psychological resilience of children (Okray, 2016).

Problem of Study

In addition to investigating the mental health of gifted children, it is important to know the factors that increase development and competence, the factors that cause stress and the protective aspects in coping with them. Due to the disadvantages of adolescence and giftedness, it is necessary to support the adaptation processes of gifted children. Experts working with gifted children or the ones with superior intelligence should be knowledgeable about the family environment that influences the psychological resilience of these children. In the light of this data, the statement of the research problem has been determined as "Does the helicopter parenting attitude perceived by gifted children have an effect on their psychological resilience levels?"

Method

Research Model

This study has been designed as the relational screening model to identify the effects of helicopter parenting attitudes perceived by adolescents in the 12-18 age group who continue their education at BİLSEM (Science and Arts Centers for the Gifted Children) on their psychological resilience levels. Among the general screening model types, relational screening model aims to determine the presence and/or degree of co-variance between two or more variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The dependent variable of the study is helicopter parenting attitude and psychological resilience levels perceived by gifted adolescents; whereas the independent variables are gender, age, number of siblings, parents' being alive or dead and marital status, educational and occupational backgrounds of parents, and the income status of the family.

Sample

Covering all regions of Turkey (Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia and Black Sea regions), the general universe of this research comprises 12-18- year-old adolescent students diagnosed with superior intelligence or giftedness and continue their education in Science and Art Centers-BİLSEM (N=533). According to the official data of the Ministry of National Education, Special Education and Guidance Services Presidency, the number of adolescents aged 12-18 years studying at BİLSEM is 15,871. In the calculation of the sample, the study group was determined by utilizing the suggested formulas by using the literature (Brasher & Brant, 2007; Giraudeau, Ravaud & Donner, 2008). The sample group of the study included 12-18-year-old adolescents

($\bar{x} = 19.62 \pm 1.73$), 55% female and 45% male (N=533). 40.9% of mothers and 46.3% of fathers in the study group were undergraduate graduates. 45% of mothers did not work. 31.5% of fathers were self-employed.

Data Collection

First of all, we have reviewed the literature on resilience and helicopter parenting attitude, and the research on the subject and the scales based on this theory were examined respectively. As a result of the examinations, we have determined that we could use the "Helicopter Parenting Scale" (Okray, 2016), which covers overprotective parental attitudes and helicopter parenting behaviors during adolescence, and the "Child and Youth Psychological Resilience Scale" (Arslan, 2015), which measures psychological resilience in adolescents.

To determine the sample group, we have identified the official data of the Ministry of National Education Special Education and Guidance Services Presidency and revealed that the number of 12-18 year old adolescents studying at BİLSEM (Science and Arts Centers for the Gifted Children) throughout the country was 15,871. Ethics committee approval (KTO Karatay University Ethics Committee, approval dated 11.03.2021 and numbered 2021/014) was obtained, and then an official application was submitted to the Ministry of National Education and approval for the research was provided in the end. A pilot study was conducted by the researcher by applying data collection tools to 11 adolescents. Permission slips were sent to all BİLSEM (Science and Arts Centers for the Gifted Children) institutions throughout the country; we have reached a total of 533 gifted adolescents who filled out the forms on a voluntary basis. After the applications were implemented, all the answers were examined and analyzed respectively.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Data Form

To reach some personal data about the participants, demographic characteristics were determined via this form.

The Helicopter Parenting Scale

The Helicopter Parenting Scale was developed by LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011). Later, the scale was adapted into Turkish by Okray (2016); and its validity and reliability tests were conducted consecutively. Participants were asked about their level of agreement with statements about their experiences while growing up with their parents. The lowest score was assigned as 7 points and the highest 35 points in the scale. Higher scores represent higher helicopter parenting levels perceived by participants. The Cronbach Alpha determined for this study was 0.72.

Child and Youth Resilience Scale

The scale is used to identify the psychometric characteristics of high school students. The short version of the scale was created by Liebenberg, Ungar, and LeBlanc (2013), and primarily, it was made up of a 12-item construct. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Arslan (2015). The scale, which has a five-point Likert type, is ranked among "Describes me completely (5)" and "Does not describe me at all (1)". A minimum of 12 points and a maximum of 60 points can be obtained from the scale. A high score indicates a high level of psychological resilience. Cronbach Alpha value in this study has been detected as .91.

Data Analysis

First of all, we tested whether the scores obtained from the scales were normally distributed among the groups. When the kurtosis and skewness values (Skewness and Kurtosis) showed normal distribution, the correlation test was performed. Independent groups t-test was applied when the distribution between groups was found to be normal. One-factor analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) was applied to compare more than two groups. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used when the groups were not normally distributed, and the Kruskal Wallis H test was performed to compare multiple groups.

Results

Scores related to perceived helicopter parenting attitude and psychological resilience values are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

The Highest-Lowest Value Scores, Mean and Standard Deviation Scores, and Skewness- Kurtosis Scores of Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitude and Psychological Resilience Levels

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	\bar{x}	S	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitude	533	1,00	5,00	3,03	,72	-,144	-,251
Psychological Resilience	533	1,83	5,00	3,89	,57	-,349	-,146

Pearson Correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between “the ages of their parents” and “perceived helicopter parenting attitude and psychological resilience” in the study group. There was a negative and significant relationship found between the father's age and helicopter parenting. Correlation test was performed to analyze the negative and significant relationship between perceived helicopter parenting attitude and psychological resilience, and the findings are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

The Relationship between the Ages of the Children and Parents in the Study Group and the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitude and the Psychological Resilience of the Adolescents

Variables	1	2	3	4
Adolescent’s age	1			
Mother’s age	,352***	1		
Father’s age	,277***	,735***	1	
Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitude	,033	-,084	-,119**	1
Psychological Resilience	-,229***	-,082	-,024	-,431***

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of helicopter parenting attitude perceived by the adolescents in the study group regarding the level of resilience. We revealed that the perceived helicopter parenting level affected the resilience level negatively and significantly ($\beta = -.431$, $p < .001$). In other words, as the perceived helicopter parenting level increased, resilience decreased respectively. On the contrary, as the perceived helicopter parenting level decreased, the level of resilience increased too. The relevant findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

The Findings of the Regression Analysis Regarding the Effect of Helicopter Parenting Attitude Perceived by the Study Group on the Level of Resilience

	R	R ²	B	Error	F	β
Constant			4,892	,094		
Model	,431	,186	-,330	,030	121,191***	-,431***

*** $p < ,001$

The graphical representation of the results revealed is shown in Figure 1

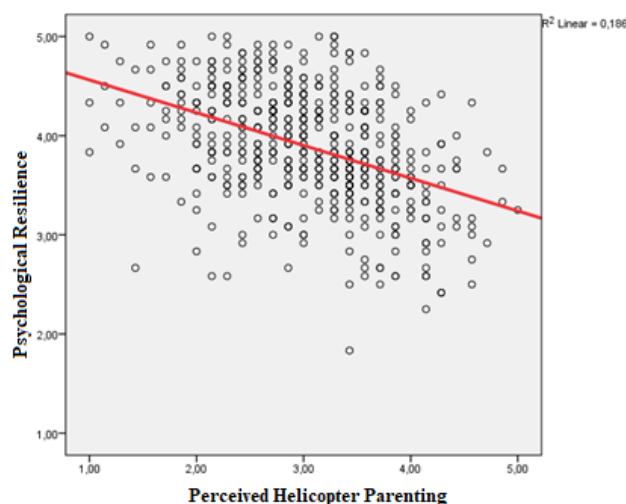


Figure 1.

The Results of the Regression Analysis Regarding the Effect of Helicopter Parenting Attitude Perceived by the Study Group on the Level of Resilience

As seen in Figure 1, the marked red line illustrates the averages of the scores in the figure. Each spot indicates each individual, and the helicopter parenting perceived by each individual represents the dimension of psychological resilience. The red line is moving down, which refers to the fact as individuals' perceived helicopter parenting increases, their level of resilience decreases correspondingly.

Discussion

The effects of helicopter parenting attitude perceived by gifted adolescents on resilience levels have been discussed by reviewing the studies conducted in the relevant literature based on the findings of the Helicopter Parenting Scale, Child and Adolescent Resilience Scale and various demographic characteristics. Since there is little research found on the helicopter parenting perception of gifted adolescents, studies on the effects of other parenting attitudes, normally developing adolescents and their psychological resilience, and parental attitudes on adolescents' mental health have also been included accordingly.

Helicopter parenting is a concept that expresses parental attitudes that focus on their children's behaviors, overprotect them, interfere and supervise them too much, and often do things for their children that they can actually realize on their own (Yılmaz & Büyükcebeci, 2019). There is evidence pointing out that the negative effects of helicopter behavior will occur mostly during adolescence and adulthood (Loukas, 2009; Nelson, 2010; Stafford et al. 2016). Such negative effects can enhance the risk factors of psychological resilience and neutralize the protective factors. In the current study; a negative and significant relationship has been found between perceived helicopter parenting and psychological resilience. The results we have reached indicate that perceived helicopter parenting level predicts psychological resilience negatively and significantly ($\beta = -.431$, $p < .001$).

There is increasing data showing that overprotective parenting is associated with weaker self-efficacy, less problem-solving capacities, and lower interpersonal sensitivity (Schiffirin et al. 2014; Reed et al. 2016; Scharf et al. 2017). These characteristics tend to increase the risk factors of psychological resilience.

Children with helicopter parenting mothers and fathers have higher levels of depression, neurotic tendencies, higher anxiety and risky behaviors, dependency on others, ineffective coping skills, emotional disorganization, lower autonomy, less competence, and decreased satisfaction with life, resulting in lower academic and social life satisfaction; hence, some studies reveal that it is related to compliance levels (Odenweller et al. 2014; Darlow et al. 2017; Kwon et al. 2017; Schiffirin et al. 2019; Cui et al. 2019) as well.

When the studies conducted in Turkey on helicopter parenting attitudes are reviewed; Okray (2016), a study that analyzed the psychological well-being, basic psychological needs, and depression level of first and second year undergraduate students of the Helicopter Parent Scale, adapted into Turkish for validity and reliability, concluded that as the helicopter parenting perceptions of the participants increased, they exhibited more depressive characteristics and less autonomy. The results are in line with our current study.

The results of Mueller's (2009) research reveal that social support at home and at school can play a remarkable role in reducing problems such as depression and increasing psychological resilience for both gifted and non-talented

adolescents. Another study examining the variation of psychological resilience scores of children studying at BİLSEM according to their parents' attitudes has determined that the psychological resilience of children who perceive their parental attitudes as democratic is significantly higher than those who perceive their parental attitudes as indifferent, oppressive-authoritarian and overprotective (Yıldırım, 2019).

The findings in our study shows that there is no significant difference in perceived helicopter parenting attitudes depending on gender and other variables (age, number of siblings, parent relationship status, mother and father's education levels, family economic status). The relevant literature have exhibited similar results with the findings of our study. We have found out that helicopter parenting attitude perceived by adolescents does not vary according to gender, and both genders perceive it in a similar framework (Leung & Shek, 2019; Taymaz, 2019; Lapsekili Uysal, 2020; Alpsoy, 2021).

In our study that there is no significant difference detected in psychological resilience levels between female and male gifted adolescents, depending on gender and other variables (mother and father's education levels, family economic status). Investigating the social adaptation of gifted children, another study has determined that the mean scores of social relations, family relations, social adaptation, anti-social tendencies and social norms of the gifted children participating in the study do not differ according to the gender variable (Öğretici, 2017). The research by Şahin (2018), examining the social skills of gifted children such as school social behaviors, family and peer relations, has revealed that there is no difference according to the gender variable. In another study conducted by Yörük (2019), which investigated the psychological resilience of gifted adolescents, the resilience appears to have differed according to the gender and age variable, but do not differ according to other variables; In Azboy's (2020) study, gender factor does not seem to vary according to the education level of the parents; Yıldırım's (2019) study has found that the education level of the parents and the income level of the family do not vary, but the total psychological resilience score of boys has been found to be significantly different.

In our study, among the age and psychological resilience factors there are negative and significant relationships revealed between father's age and helicopter parenting. As one grows older, the attitudes of parents towards their children may change. Studies indicate that mothers and fathers mostly exhibit overprotective and strict attitudes at a young age (Ertuna, 2016).

Analyzing the changes in emotional resilience of gifted girls, the study by Kline and Short (1991) has concluded that there is a significant decrease in the self-esteem aspect of these children throughout their school development. They have also observed that as emotional vulnerability increases, inner courage and self-confidence decrease in children until the twelfth grade. In another study involving gifted children, the psychological resilience of 7th grade children has been found to be significantly lower than that of 5th grade children (Yıldırım, 2019). Thus, the study is in line with our research based on the issue that as age increases, psychological resilience decreases correspondingly. In our study, a significant difference has been found in psychological resilience levels depending on the relationship between parents ($\chi^2(2) = 6.64, p < .05$). Three separate Mann-Whitney U analyzes have been conducted to examine the rationale of the difference. The results point out that the psychological resilience levels of adolescents whose parents live together are significantly higher than those whose parents live separately ($z(521) = -2.14, p < .05$). Parallel with our findings, some studies have determined that the psychological resilience is higher among the adolescents living with the whole family (Baltacı & Karataş, 2015; Özcan, 2005; Şahin, 2018).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Families

- Families should be made aware of the negative consequences of the overprotective attitude of the families from childhood, the increased behavioral addiction of adolescents and the negative consequences of risk-taking, which is one of the characteristics of adolescence.
- Both parents and children should be informed about the harms and effects of helicopter parenting.
- It was determined that the fathers of law enforcement officers exhibited more helicopter parenting behavior among the children participating in the study and the psychological resilience of the children of these professionals was lower. Based on the current findings: awareness studies and psychoeducation programs can be organized for those working in stressful professions to reduce their negative attitudes towards themselves and their families.

- Educational activities and psychoeducational programs can be organized for the solution of the problems encountered during adolescence, taking into account the psychological resilience, risk and protective factors of adolescents at all age levels.
- Programs with frequent interaction between school administrators and families should be increased, focusing on gifted children; Emphasis should be placed on the role of flexibility in shaping the quality of life of each gifted child and the effectiveness in society of a highly interactive network between school, family and students.

Recommendations for Further Studies

- Efforts are needed for how to develop and develop in parents' self-awareness, correctness and demand from interior space.
- Parenting similarities in different cultures (helicopter), small and small practices are ingenious.
- To develop special education teaching development with helicopter parent.
- Cross-sectional research can be conducted on overprotective families and their children (for example, gifted children and their families can be followed up to adulthood).
- Awareness and psychoeducation programs can be organized to increase the psychological resilience of both family and gifted children, taking into account the possible risk and protective factors. Because resilience has effects that improve social and academic results, develop children's abilities and give them a new vision.

Limitations of the Study

- The research is limited to the 2021-2022 academic year.
- The research is limited to the information obtained from adolescents aged 12-18 years registered with the Science and Art Center across the country.
- Although the results of the research include gifted adolescents with different socio-demographic variables studying at BİLSEM in many different provinces of Turkey, the results cannot be generalized.

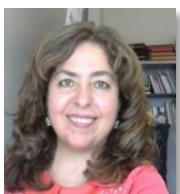
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