RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT ATTACHMENT AND

PARENTING BEHAVIORS ON

SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

ENDORSED BY EMERGING ADULTS

By

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Title of Study: RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT ATTACHMENT AND PARENTING BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT GOALS ENDORSED BY EMERGING ADULTS

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Abstract:

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive parenting behaviors, and attachment on the social achievement goals (i.e., social development goal, social demonstration approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal) endorsed by emerging adults. Multiple regression analyses were run in order to examine the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors, and parental attachment with social achievement goals. Mothers and Fathers were examined separately, thus resulting in two separate datasets. Interaction effects testing for attachment as a moderator between helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals were run for both mother and father datasets.

Findings and Conclusions: Regression analyses revealed helicopter parenting behavior was a significant predictor of social demonstration avoid and social demonstration approach goals for both the mother and the father. A significant interaction effect was revealed with attachment serving as a moderator for the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors by the mother and social demonstration avoid goal. Emerging adults endorsed social demonstration avoid goal when they perceived high helicopter parenting behaviors and high attachment from the mother. In addition, a significant interaction effect was revealed with attachment serving as a moderator between helicopter parenting by the father and social development goal. Emerging adults endorsed social development goal when perceiving high helicopter parenting behaviors and high attachment from the father. It is noteworthy that although emerging adults may have the same perceptions of helicopter parenting behaviors for both mothers and fathers, they will endorse different social achievement goals depending on the gender of the parent who enacts those behaviors. These findings warrant further exploration. By examining the relationship of parental influences on social achievement goals, this study contributes insight for ways in which parents can support their emerging adult child's transition to college, ultimately helping their child achieve positive social and academic outcomes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College can be a time of uncertainty and excitement for undergraduate students.
Although students attending college feel the need to exert a sense of independence, they
are in need of continued familial support during this transitional time. One way in which
emerging adults receive support is through parent relationships, which is related to the
level of parent-child attachment (Hiester, Nordstrom, & Swenson, 2009). There are
changes and transition taking place as emerging adults navigate their new environment,
which often includes establishing a new set of friends (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, &
Cribbie, 2007). Social goals endorsed throughout college have implications on academic
outcomes as well as psychological well-being (Shim & Ryan, 2012). Therefore, gaining
a clear understanding of factors that may contribute to the development of social goals is
of great importance.

Background to the Problem

The Changing Role of Parents

Due to societal changes in the past few decades, the level of parent involvement
and the role parents play in their children's lives have increased (Arnett, 2000). Today's
emerging adults are relying more on their parents than in prior generations (Padilla-
Walker & Nelson, 2012), fundamentally changing the nature of parent-child relationships

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(Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans, & Carroll, 2011). Recent research has identified two distinct types of parenting behaviors relevant to this particular age group: helicopter parenting behaviors, which is a form of control parenting, and autonomy supportive parenting behaviors, which involves supporting children in ways that encourage them to be self-initiating (Kouros, Pruitt, Ekas, Kiriaki, & Sunderland, M., 2017; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012, Schiffrin et al., 2014). Unlike other forms of parental control that focus on behavioral and psychological aspects, helicopter parenting consists of over involvement in the child's life, as parents attempt to spare their child from potentially detrimental outcomes (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012).

Helicopter parenting, also known as overparenting, has been associated with personal traits and behaviors that are generally considered to be maladaptive. For example, in one study, helicopter parenting was positively correlated with neuroticism, increased levels of dependency, and less desire for new experiences (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz & Montgomery, 2013). In another study, helicopter parenting discouraged emerging adults from developing the skills and qualities needed to exude independence and act on their own; instead, encouraging them to rely heavily on external resources, such as their parents or teachers, for effective functioning (Hastings, Nuselovici, Rubin, & Cheah, 2010). For example, emerging adults with at least one helicopter parent may not take the initiative to meet with a professor to discuss a low or unfair grade, as they expect mom or dad to call on their behalf. Not only does such behavior reflect helicopter parenting, it is also a violation of FERPA regulations.

Although a certain level of parent involvement is positively related to outcomes, such as one's intentions to attend graduate school and a sense of social self-efficacy, the high degree of involvement characteristic of helicopter parenting has been associated with

negative outcomes such as lower self-efficacy (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014). Furthermore, helicopter parenting was found to be positively related to emerging adults' sense of entitlement and comfort with allowing others to solve personal problems (Segrin et al., 2012) and negatively related to their psychological well-being (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). When parents display more negative behaviors towards their children by being over controlling, these children often experience negative peer interactions (Isley, O'Neil, & Parke, 1996). A higher level of control from parents is related to lower levels of perceived competence and lower achievement (Gurland & Grolnick, 2005). Overall, emerging adults with a helicopter parent are at a disadvantage, as they are less invested in their own development and growth (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

In contrast to helicopter parents are those who exhibit more autonomy-supportive parenting behaviors. Autonomy support is defined as "the degree to which parents value and use techniques which encourage independent problem solving, choice, and participation in decisions versus externally dictating outcomes, and motivating achievement through punitive disciplinary techniques, pressure, or controlling rewards" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, pg. 144). Essentially, autonomy supportive parents allow for more give-and-take between parent and child regarding control and decision-making. Autonomy is important for emerging adults to experience and is often met when these individuals experience the freedom to experience, express, and value their own emotions, feelings, and thoughts (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Eccles, Early, Frasier, Belansky, & McCarthy, 1997).

Individuals are experiencing profound physical and psychological changes during emerging adulthood and it is of great importance for them to perceive their parents as supportive, involved, and able to adequately meet these ever-changing needs. When parents

are able to respond to their child's needs, a secure attachment between parent and child is established. Original research conducted on parent-child attachment focused primarily on attachment during infancy (Bowlby, 1977). However, further examination has revealed that attachment established during infancy has lifelong effects on both social and romantic relationships throughout emerging adulthood (Ainsworth, 1989; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Nada Raja, McGee, & Stanton, 1992).

In addition to parent involvement and parent-child attachment, parents play another important role in the lives of their children by providing an internal working model for relationships established throughout life (Bowlby, 1969). Through quality parent-child interactions, parents influence their child's peer relationships by providing support and advice regarding ways to successfully navigate relationship issues with peers (Brown & Bakken, 2011; McDowell & Parke, 2009). Children who experience warm and nurturing interactions with their parents display increased levels of social competency (Isley et al., 1996), which affects the relationships they develop throughout life, such as friendships and intimate relationships (Boling, Barry, Kotchick, & Lowry, 2011; Einav, 2014). In addition, parents provide their children with important opportunities to socially interact with peers (McDowell & Parke, 2009). While relationships with parents set the stage for peer relationships established, it is important for emerging adults to transfer social skills learned from relationships they have with their parents to those they maintain with peers.

Social Goals in Emerging Adulthood

During the transition to college, emerging adults are establishing new friendships, which often occurs outside the purview of their parents. The new relationships young adults pursue depend on their social goals (Ryan & Shim, 2006), which have important implications

for academic outcomes and psychological well-being. According to social achievement goal theory there are three distinct goals: social development goal, social demonstration-approach goal, and social demonstration-avoid goal. Of these three goals, social development goal has been most consistently related to positive outcomes such as better social adjustment, higher self-esteem, and greater self-acceptance (Ryan & Shim, 2006) as well as increased social satisfaction and intrinsic motivation for engaging in school activities (Shim, Cho, & Wang, 2013). Furthermore, individuals endorsing a social development goal seek to develop social competence and are intrinsically motivated to learn, grow and expand their success in relationships (Ryan, Jamison, Shin, & Thompson, 2012).

In contrast to pursuing a social goal aimed at developing social competence, other individuals desire to show off their social competence to others, a defining characteristic of the social demonstration-approach goal. Emerging adults adopting this goal orientation need positive affirmation and judgments from their peers in order to feel successful in their relationships (Ryan et al., 2012). These individuals need to feel popular among their peers and have "cool" friends, as their main goal for friendships centers around the idea of how others can make them look more attractive and desirable to their peers (Ryan & Shim, 2006). Individuals who pursue a social demonstration-avoid goal have a heightened concern for other people's perceptions and opinions. However, unlike those who maintain a social demonstration-approach goal, these individuals would rather avoid social situations altogether than be negatively judged by their peers (Ryan & Shim, 2006). Having a social demonstration-avoid goal orientation is related to negative outcomes such as decreased levels of self-esteem (Ryan & Shim, 2006) and poor social adjustment (Shim & Ryan, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Although an extensive amount of literature exists on the outcomes related to the three types of social achievement goals (e.g., Ryan & Shim, 2006, 2008; Shim et al., 2013), there is limited research to date examining factors that may have a predictive relationship with them. Due to this limitation, exploring the relationship of variables that may predict the development of these goals is warranted and contributes to a more holistic view of social goal theory. We know from prior research that parental control and parent attachment have a relationship with an individual's psychological well-being (Pomerantz & Wang, 2009), social competency (Isley et al., 1996; McDowell, Parke, & Wang, 2003), and relationships established outside the family (McDowell & Parke, 2009). However, it is unclear to what extent these variables are related to the social achievement goals endorsed during emerging adulthood. Due to relationships previously established between social achievement goals and the outcomes of psychological well-being and academic achievement, it is important to explore variables that may be related to the endorsement of different social achievement goals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive parenting behaviors, and attachment on the social achievement goals (i.e., social development goal, social demonstration approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal) endorsed by emerging adults. Through examining the relationship of parental influences on social achievement goals, this study contributes insight for ways in which parents and families can support their emerging adult child's transition to college, ultimately helping their child achieve positive social and academic outcomes.

In addition, few studies examine the unique relationships mothers and fathers have with their emerging adult children (Laible & Carlo, 2004). For those studies that have examined mothers and fathers separately, findings suggest the importance of examining maternal and paternal impacts independently of one another (Bosco, Renk, Dinger, Epstein, & Phares, 2003; Laible & Carlo, 2004). By examining mothers and fathers separately, this study adds to existing literature in providing some explanation of unique contributions made by each parent regarding their relationship with social achievement goals.

Research Questions

The research questions examined in this study are as follows:

1. Do emerging adults' perceptions of their caregiver's parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting, autonomy supportive parenting) and their attachment to this caregiver affect the social achievement goals they endorse?

2. Does parent-child attachment moderate the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals?

Definition of Key Terms

Attachment: strong affectionate bonds to particular others (Bowlby, 1973)

Autonomy support: the degree to which parents value and use techniques which encourage independent problem solving, choice, and participation in decisions versus externally dictating outcomes, and motivating achievement through punitive disciplinary techniques, pressure, or controlling rewards" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, pg. 144)

Emerging adult: young adult between the ages of 18 – 25. Emerging adulthood is neither adolescence or adulthood, but rather a developmental time period in which individuals have

left the dependency of childhood, but not yet taken on the responsibilities normative of adulthood (Arnett, 2000)

Helicopter parenting: parents are both warm and caring towards their children while allowing their children low-level autonomy and exhibiting controlling behaviors towards their children (Schiffrin et al., 2014)

Internal working model: formed mental representations of themselves and others developed by the child through original experiences with attachment figures (Bowlby, 1973)

Social demonstration approach goal: At the core of social demonstration-approach goal is the desire to achieve a particular social status and exude social competence (Ryan & Shim, 2006)

Social demonstration avoid goal: Individuals endorsing social demonstration-avoid goal are more likely to experience worry of ridicule from peers, being excluded, and being labeled a "nerd" or "geek". Therefore they would rather avoid social interactions at all cost and rarely see positive reasons for engaging in social situations (Ryan & Shim, 2006)

Social development goal: Focus is on developing meaningful friendships and associated with increased competency, a better understanding of friendships, and deeper social relationships (Ryan & Shim, 2006)

Overview

In Chapter Two, I present an overview of current literature focusing on four distinct areas of research: helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors, attachment theory, and social achievement goal theory. In addition, I explain how these theories are related to one another and provide a rationale for examining such variables. In Chapter Three, I present the method used to answer research questions for this study with a brief

rationale and anticipated results, descriptions of the population surveyed in this study, the specific measures used, and the procedure followed for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of my analyses, with chapter 5 providing a summary of the results, limitations to the study, and areas for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive parenting behaviors, along with parent attachment on social achievement goals. While most literature to date has focused on outcomes associated with social achievement goals, few researchers have examined possible factors related to these social goals. Since I focused on the developmental stage of emerging adulthood in this study, I discuss in more detail research that further explains emerging adult needs, such as the need for autonomy, attachment, and social relationships. Drawing from the literature on development, parenting, attachment, and social achievement goals, this chapter provides an overview of relevant theories and previous research related to each construct.

The Developmental Stage of Emerging Adulthood

In the 1960s, Erik Erikson (1902 – 1994) proposed a developmental theory relevant to the entire lifespan. One of the first theorists to expand developmental theories into adulthood, Erikson (1963) posited that social factors influenced development throughout one's entire lifetime. During adolescent development, Erikson believed children experience a crisis known as Identity versus Role Confusion. During this

developmental stage, the primary goal is for individuals to develop their ego identities and learn how to be true to themselves. Erikson (1968) believed it was of great importance for adolescents to gain a strong sense of self during this developmental stage. His theory recognizes a crisis during the young adulthood stage known as Intimacy versus Isolation. This developmental stage is not defined by age, but rather covers a wide age period depending on life circumstances of each individual. Bridging from the crisis of Identity versus Role Confusion, Erikson posited young adults must develop a strong sense of identity before being able to develop intimate relationships with others. Those who have not overcome this crisis may fear being intimate with others out of fear of losing their identity through this relationship process.

Although Erikson's theory first gained prominence a half century ago, contemporary theorists and researchers continue to recognize that development occurs throughout the lifespan. One such researcher focusing specifically on the developmental stage referred to as emerging adulthood found this to be a time period in which individuals desire more autonomy and self-reliance in areas of decision-making (Arnett, 2000, 2004). Arnett marks this stage of emerging development to be between the ages of 18 and 25. Although researchers, such as Schiffrin and colleagues (2014), showed that during this time emerging adults desire increased autonomy, they are also caught between wanting to make decisions on their own, yet still needing their parents guidance and support. For some emerging adults, the transition into adulthood can seem onerous and they would rather have their parents help them navigate this change (Arnett, 1997). Even though many emerging adults may no longer live at home, they may still have regular

communication with their parents and the parent-child relationship has not been

eliminated (Arnett, 2000).

Parenting Behaviors

Research in the area of parenting has revealed different types of parenting

behaviors, characterized by the degree to which parents seek to control their child's

actions and the degree to which they are responsive to their child's needs. Two primary

types of parenting behaviors have emerged from this body of research, helicopter

parenting and autonomy supportive parenting, which I explain in further detail below.

Helicopter Parenting

Researchers have shown a shift in parenting behaviors evolving with the changing

times of our society (van Ingen et al., 2015). With technological advances it is easier

than ever for parents to stay in close communication with their child. Hofer (2008) found

emerging adults communicate with parents in a variety of ways (e.g., email, text, phone)

on average over 10 times per week. This increase in communication, along with

changing social structures throughout the last two decades, has contributed to a parenting

behavior known as helicopter parenting (Arnett, 2000). At the center of helicopter

parenting research is the Millennial generation, individuals born between 1980 and the

early 2000s at a time in which technological advances have become a part of daily living.

Helicopter parenting offers a unique contribution in that parents are both warm and

caring towards their children (i.e., high in responsiveness) while allowing their children

low-level autonomy and exhibiting controlling behaviors towards their children (i.e., high

in demandingness) (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin, Givertz, Swaitkowski, &

Montgomery, 2015).

Helicopter parenting, also known as overparenting, involves parents being very engaged in their children's lives and wanting to protect their children from any harm or distress. This parenting practice is often marked by inappropriate levels of control and constant tangible assistance during a time when children should be experiencing higher levels of autonomy (Segrin et al, 2013). Although helicopter parenting could theoretically occur at any developmental stage of childhood, it is most often in reference to parenting practices during late adolescence and early adulthood. An example of helicopter parenting would be a parent contacting a college professor to inquire about their child's grade in the class, which is a violation of FERPA, rather than advising their child to contact the professor directly.

These parents want to keep their children from experiencing any form of hardship, which in turn prohibits their child from learning effective self-help and problem-solving skills. Once these children graduate college and are working full time in the work force, they lack the ability to engage in appropriate interactions with others, especially during times of difficulty. Helicopter parents micromanage their children in an attempt to control the outcomes experienced by their child. In addition, children of helicopter parents create expectations of privilege, expect problems to be solved for them, and lack the skills needed to appropriately solve their problems (Segrin et al., 2012).

Helicopter parenting is positively related to both behavioral and psychological control (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) and with parental reports of anxiety when the child leaves home (Segrin et al., 2013). Adult children of helicopter parents experience high levels of narcissism and ineffective coping skills (Segrin et al., 2013). In addition, such ineffective coping has been associated with increased stress and greater anxiety in

emerging adults (Segrin et al., 2013). Helicopter parenting is positively related to outcomes such as anxiety, depression, insecurities, and being more withdrawn from peers (Gar & Hudson, 2008). Research has also shown helicopter parenting to have a positive relationship with dependent personality traits, meaning children depend more on others, and a negative relationship with measures of psychological well-being such as positive relations with others and self-acceptance (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Segrin et al., 2013). Helicopter parenting is related to a lack of interpersonal skills and positively related to maladaptive outcomes such as depression and pain pill consumption without a prescription (Lemoyne & Buchanan, 2011). Willoughby, Hersh, Padilla-Walker, and Nelson (2015) found helicopter parenting influences the age in which an individual chooses to get married as well as their beliefs about marriage, with emerging adults of helicopter parents more likely to marry at a later age and see advantages to remaining single longer.

While previous researchers focused on negative aspects of helicopter parenting, more recently researchers have explored potential benefits to helicopter parenting. Positive outcomes of helicopter parenting reported by children include perceived emotional support from parents (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) and reports of increased life satisfaction (Fingerman et al., 2012). Helicopter parents have amplified knowledge of their child's activities, social groups, and whereabouts. As a result, these emerging adults are less likely to engage in risky behaviors (Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen, & Barry, 2008).

It is important to note the vast majority of helicopter parenting studies have examined mothers and fathers together as one unit (i.e., as parents), or studied the mother

specifically. Few studies have examined the similarities or differences in mothers' and fathers' overparenting behaviors. However, some researchers have started to recognize the importance of examining mothers and fathers separately, by suggesting that doing so will help us gain a clear understanding of the unique contributions made by each parent (e.g., Schiffrin et al., 2014).

Autonomy Supportive Parenting

When parents exhibit autonomy support, they allow their children opportunities to engage in the decision making process and for children to make their own choices. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) define autonomy support as "the degree to which parents value and use techniques which encourage independent problem solving, choice, and participation in decisions versus externally dictating outcomes, and motivating achievement through punitive disciplinary techniques, pressure, or controlling rewards" (p. 144). Autonomy is critical for children to experience and is often met when children experience the freedom to experience, express, and value their own emotions, feelings, and thoughts (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Eccles et al., 1997).

When individuals attain a sense of autonomy, they are more likely to exhibit adaptive behaviors and use positive coping strategies (Ryan, Connell, & Grolnick, 1992). However, when individuals perceive their parents as being overly controlling and lacking a sense of autonomy, they show lower levels of motivation as well as decreased levels of school performance (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991). In a research study by Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap, and Hevey (2000), autonomy support was found to build self-regulation, increase autonomous behavior, and allow children to be flexible in their choices.

Autonomy supportive parents foster their child's values, beliefs, interests, and sense of volition while controlling parents put measures on the child's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Autonomy supportive behaviors exhibited by parents include providing informative feedback, positive encouragement, suggesting strategies, giving hints, and allowing the child to try on their own to complete a task before intervening (Whipple, Bernier, & Mageau, 2011). Ryan and Deci (2006) focused on autonomy support within relationships and found it to be related to both need fulfillment and relationship quality. Receiving autonomy support is thought to be a crucial element of relationships because when individuals receive such support there is satisfaction of basic psychological needs. When individuals perceive they are receiving autonomy support within their relationships, they experience greater attachment security, adjustment, emotional reliance, and increased need fulfillment (Ryan & Deci, 2006).

Parent-Child Attachment

Researchers have shown that parenting behaviors influence the level of attachment established and sustained between parents and their children. When children feel their needs are being met (high level of responsiveness), they are more likely to trust their parents and seek proximity to parents in times of need. First established by John Bowlby in 1977, attachment theory has continued to be a topic of interest for child development researchers for the past four decades. According to Bowlby, attachment theory explains "the propensity of human beings to make strong affectionate bonds to particular others" (p. 201). Bowlby believed responsiveness to the child and emotional availability from the parent were both critical in the formation of children's beliefs about themselves and others with whom they interact.

Initially, researchers focused primarily on attachment during infancy, when children rely heavily on their parents to meet their basic needs, such as food, comfort, and love (Bowlby, 1977). Children's perceptions of a parent's ability to adequately meet these needs plays a significant role in the level of attachment established during infancy. When children perceive their needs are adequately met, they learn to trust their parents, and therefore establish a secure attachment with their parents. However, if the child perceives their parents as being unstable or inconsistent in responding to their needs, they are likely to establish an insecure relationship (Bowlby, 1977). Theorizing that individuals at any age experience increased well-being when they have a level of confidence in the responsiveness and availability of their caregiver, Bowlby's views have since expanded beyond infancy to include life-long effects of attachment. Attachment extending beyond early childhood involves a continuity of the child's perceptual-emotional system, otherwise known as their internal working model (Bretherton, 1985).

To study the effects of attachment on the way in which children respond to others in unfamiliar settings, Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) established the strange situation experiment. This experiment, originally conducted with infants and toddlers, consisted of children being exposed to a new situation so that researchers might observe how these children reacted when their parents left them alone, as well as their behavior when their parents returned. Children with a secure attachment to the parent often responded by displaying positive and happy behaviors upon the mothers return and used their mother as a secure base to explore the unfamiliar environment. However, those who had a less secure attachment to the parent showed little interest in the mother upon her return and sometimes even pushed her away.

Attachment theorists agree that a primary function of parents is to provide a secure base for their children, one that allows children a source of help and comfort (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1988). Therefore, when children are experiencing new situations and transitions, they rely on support and involvement from their parents even more. This secure base serves as a way to regulate anxiety and distress once the individual is faced with stressful situations (Muris, Mayer, & Meesters, 2000). In many ways, changes during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, such as those experienced by young adults who leave home to attend college or move into the work force, mimics the "strange situation" experiment conducted with young children.

Just as children experience immense change and transition during infancy, the same can be said for children during late adolescence and early adulthood. Late adolescents and emerging adults are experiencing significant psychological changes and making important life decisions during this stage of development. The quality of established relationships during late adolescence and early adulthood have a significant correlation with current and future achievement, in addition to well-being (Brooks & DuBois, 1995; Fass & Tubman, 2002). For these reasons, it is of great importance for adolescents to perceive their parents as supportive, involved, and able to adequately meet their ever-changing needs. Such perceptions contribute to the type of attachment children have to their parent, each of which have been associated with different outcomes, which are explained in further detail below.

Types of Attachment

Early researchers in this area found two distinct types of attachment: secure and insecure (Bowlby, 1988). In general, secure attachment is related to more positive

outcomes than insecure attachment. Later researchers identified two distinct forms of insecure attachments: anxious-ambivalent and avoidant (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Secure attachment. Children who are securely attached to their parents will experience a balanced level of autonomy and relatedness, both of which lead to increased psychological well-being. In addition, children experiencing psychological well-being, are more likely to have an increased quality of life, and tend to function well at school, home, and in their communities (Hoagwood, Jensen, Petti, & Burns, 1996). Securely attached adolescents are also more likely to feel confident about their own actions. Research has shown children are more likely to display higher levels of attachment, especially to their mother, over best friends and other social relationships when they have established a secure attachment with a parent (Chauhan, Awasthi, & Verma, 2014).

Overall, securely attached individuals report increased social support from their peers (Kobak & Sceery, 1988), experience higher levels of quality interactions within their peer network, and have less feelings of loneliness (Kerns & Stevens, 1996). Furthermore, these individuals are often more accepted by their peers (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998), experiencing less peer conflict and more positive friendship qualities such as security and closeness (Lieberman, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 1999). Such findings have been upheld within the emerging adult population as well. For example, Parade, Leerkes, and Blankson (2010) found that secure attachment experienced by emerging adults was associated with positive friendship outcomes as reported at the end of their first semester in college. In addition, they found a link between parental attachment and ease of forming new friendships. When these adolescents maintained a secure attachment with their parents, they had an easier time forming new friendships.

Insecure attachment. Two types of insecure attachment have been delineated in

the field: anxious ambivalent and avoidant. Anxious-ambivalent attachment involves

children being hesitant to explore their new environment, even when the parent's support

is present, whereas children with avoidant attachment will often ignore the caregiver and

shows little emotion towards the caregiver. Of the two types of insecure attachment,

children displaying anxious-ambivalent attachment style tend to have an increased desire

for proximity and intimacy to parents, with this desire for proximity present even during

non-stressful situations. These children display anger and distress when they experience

separation from their parents or a lack of involvement from parents. Avoidant attachment

is characterized by a lack of desire for proximity to parents and often involves children

avoiding and making few attempts to maintain this proximity.

Adolescents who are insecurely attached to their parents are at risk of anxious and

submissive behaviors (Chauhan et al., 2014). Brown and Whiteside (2008) found

insecurely attached adolescents reported increased levels of worry and anxiety. In

addition, research shows insecure attachment is positively associated with shy social

behaviors (Kokkinos, Kakarani, & Kolovou, 2016). Researchers have shown insecure

attachment styles to be consistent from infancy through adulthood (Hamilton, 2000;

Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Influence of Attachment on Later Relationships

Bowlby (1973) showed that in addition to support and security, parent-child

attachments contribute to internal working models, which serve as a blueprint for

relationships established outside of the family. He indicated that these internal working

models refer to mental representations formed through original experiences with

attachment figures. Such models significantly impact subsequent development by influencing how individuals perceive new experiences (Bretherton, 1985). A secure attachment, developed when individuals perceives their parents to be supportive and reliable, is associated with the development of internal working models in which they see themselves as having increased social competence and others as being trustworthy and reliable. In contrast, when an insecure attachment is established as a result of parents showing rejection and unreliability, adolescents perceive themselves as incompetent and unappreciated and view others as unreliable and untrustworthy (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999).

Earlier researchers who examined help-seeking behaviors during adolescence from parents or peers displayed a major shift from seeking help from parents to seeking help from peers. When adolescents perceive a sense of rejection or lack of support from their parents, they are more likely to rely on support from peers (Larson, 1972; Smith, 1976). However, additional research has added to our understanding of this shift, by revealing parental support is often preferred over peer support during late adolescence, especially in situations involving future decision-making, values, and beliefs (Rosenberg, 1965; Smith, 1976).

Burke and Weir (1978, 1979) examined the issue of parent versus peer support and found support and help from parents, along with satisfaction of this support, was related to overall psychological well-being, even more so than peer support. Greenberg, Siegel, and Leitch (1983) found individuals seek and utilize parent support quite frequently even when they perceive their parents as being unsupportive or unresponsive.

They were one of the first researchers to find that both secure and anxious/ambivalent children seek support from and proximity to parents.

Although relationships with parents during childhood set the stage for peer relationships established later in life, it is necessary for emerging adults to generalize social skills learned from parents to the relationships they have with peers. Through quality parent-child interactions, parents influence their emerging adult's peer relationships by providing them with support and advice regarding successful ways to navigate relationship issues with peers. In addition, parents provide their children important opportunities for social interactions with their peers (McDowell & Parke, 2009).

Social Goal Theory

Social goals refer to the goals individuals are trying to achieve when interacting in social situations or endorsing particular friendships. Researchers in this area have taken two major approaches: achievement orientation approach (Ryan & Shim, 2006) and goal content approach (Kiefer, Matthews, Montesino, Arango, & Preece, 2013).

Researchers taking an achievement orientation approach within the social domain focus on children concerned with developing or demonstrating social competence. This approach focuses on relationships between children's beliefs, actions, and goal orientations (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Ryan & Shim, 2006) as well as children's social goals and reasons for wanting to achieve their goals (Horst, Finney, & Barron, 2007; Ryan & Shim, 2008). Taking a different perspective on social goals, goal content approach places the focus on cognitive representations of the goal an individual is trying to achieve in a particular situation (Wentzel, 2000). Patrick, Anderman, and Ryan (2002)

found this approach to help with gaining a more clear understanding of goals in social situations such as intimacy, responsibility, and social status.

These two approaches do not compete with one another, as each provides a unique perspective to adolescents' social motivation. However, for the purpose of my current research, the focus in this study aligns with an achievement orientation approach, which was derived from achievement goal theory and has been utilized within academic domains (Elliot & Dweck, 2005).

Achievement Goals in the Academic Domain

Achievement goal theory posits students adopt conscious goals that guide their behavior in an academic setting (Dweck & Elliot, 1983) and serve as the benchmarks used to evaluate success (Pintrich, 2000). Within achievement goal theory, there are two primary types of goals: mastery goals and performance goals. Mastery goals focus on developing the competence and skills needed to be successful; whereas performance goals focus on demonstrating competency and ability to others (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998). It is possible for individuals to pursue competence for very different reasons such as demonstrating their competence by outperforming others on an exam (performance) or attempting to develop competence by studying and learning as much as they can about the subject (mastery). These two primary types of goals are further delineated as approach or avoid, creating four distinct goal orientations: mastery-approach (desire to develop competence), mastery-avoidance (desire to avoid not mastering a particular goal), performance-approach (desire to show competence to others), and performance-avoidance (desire to avoid looking incompetent in front of others). It is important to note that achievement goal theory focuses on reasons students

endorse a particular goal in an academic setting (Pintrich, 2000). By contrast, social achievement goal theory focuses on reasons individuals endorse a particular goal in a social context (Ryan & Shim, 2006).

Achievement Goals in the Social Domain

Similar to achievement goal theory within an academic domain (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Smiley & Dweck, 1994), social achievement goal theory distinguishes between demonstrating and developing competence within the social domain (Ryan & Shim, 2006). Social achievement goal theory provides an explanation for how and why individuals engage, approach, evaluate, and function in social situations. Similar to the different achievement goal orientations found in the academic context, different orientations for developing and demonstrating social competence exist within the social context (Ryan & Shim, 2006). However, unlike the four goal orientations delineated within the original achievement goal theory, social achievement goal theory recognizes only three distinct types of social goals: social development, social demonstration-approach, and social demonstration-avoid (Ryan & Shim, 2006, 2008). Like mastery goals within the academic domain, social development goals are focused on learning new things and developing social competence. Thus, those who endorse a social development goal measure success by whether they are improving social competence and skills, and how they are developing social lives with peers.

By contrast, individuals who endorse a social demonstration-approach goal are focused on demonstrating social competence while increasing positive judgments from others and looking socially desirable, whereas those who endorse social demonstration-avoid goals are focused on demonstrating that they do not lack social competence (Ryan

& Shim, 2006). Consequently, these individuals often avoid participating in social events that may lead to negative judgments from peers and might make them appear less socially desirable.

      Social development goal. Social development goal is similar to mastery goal in the academic domain in that both of these goals measure success based on internal standards rather than external social comparison. Ryan and Shim (2006) found social achievement goals to be independent of academic achievement goals and critical for academic adjustment during adolescence. Through their research, they found social development goals to be positively associated with self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relationships. Social development goal was found to be positively associated with both psychological and social adjustment (Shim & Ryan, 2012). Ryan and Shim (2008) found social development goal to be associated with increased competency, a better understanding of friendships, and deeper social relationships, all of which are related to increased satisfaction and connection with others. Furthermore, individuals endorsing this particular social goal are more likely to exhibit higher levels of care towards others, increased consideration of others, and experience social quality (Ryan & Shim, 2008). When individuals adopt a social development goal, they are likely to focus on developing intimate relationships with their peers, being prosocial, and accepting responsibility, all of which promote academic adjustment and engagement (Shim et al., 2013). In addition, individuals who adopt a social development goal tend to enjoy their learning experiences more than those that adopt social demonstration-avoid or social demonstration-approach goals (Shim et al., 2013).

Social demonstration-avoid goal. Social demonstration-avoid goal in the social domain mirrors performance avoid in the academic domain. Individuals endorsing social demonstration-avoid goals are more likely to experience worry of ridicule from peers, being excluded, and being labeled a "nerd" or "geek." Therefore they would rather avoid social interactions at all cost and rarely see positive reasons for engaging in social situations. These concerns associated with social demonstration-avoid goal are associated with negative emotions (Ryan & Shim, 2006). In addition to a heightened concern of other's perceptions and opinions, social demonstration-avoid goal is associated with decreased levels of self-esteem (Shim, Wang, & Cassady, 2013) and is shown to hinder social adjustment (Shim & Ryan, 2012). The social demonstration-avoid goal orientation is found to be negatively associated with autonomy, self-acceptance, positive relationships, and personal growth (Ryan & Shim, 2006). In addition, social demonstration-avoid goals are associated with maladjustment along with increased levels of relationship dissatisfaction, decreased potential for personal growth, and low self-regard (Shim & Ryan, 2006).

Congruent with previous studies examining performance-avoidance within achievement goal theory, a social demonstration-avoid goal orientation is positively correlated with increased social worry (Kuroda & Sakurai, 2011; Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009) and social-emotional maladjustment (Ryan & Shim, 2006). Although social demonstration-avoid goals are associated with less disruptive behavior in academic settings, it is not a positive goal orientation for students to adopt, as these students might be perceived as passive and become overlooked or invisible in the classroom (Shim et al., 2013).

Social demonstration-approach goal. A social demonstration-approach goal orientation involves social comparison, much like the performance approach goal orientation within the academic domain (Ryan & Shim, 2006). However, unlike the performance goal, in which one is focused on getting better grades than other students in the class, a social demonstration-approach goal is focused on being seen as popular among their friends. This type of social goal involves a simultaneous need for achievement and a fear of failure. Of the three social achievement goals, the social demonstration-approach goal is most complex. At its core is the desire to achieve a particular social status and exude social competence. Past research has shown this goal to be positively correlated with aggressive and disruptive behaviors and negatively associated with social satisfaction and academic engagement (Shim et al., 2013). In other words, the desire to achieve high social status and the need to look "popular" to their peers often leads individuals to developing maladaptive social and academic behaviors. Social demonstration-approach goal has been shown to hamper social adjustment during transition periods and is associated with maladjustment during adolescence (Ryan & Shim, 2006). This goal is positively associated with anxious and internalizing behaviors and negatively associated with social competence and popularity (Shim & Ryan, 2012).

Summary

Whether or not an individual desires companionship, intimacy, or revenge in a social situation, individuals have a desire to feel socially competent. This desire can take the form of developing or demonstrating social competence, with either view having implications for the individual's goals, behavior, beliefs, and functioning (Ryan & Shim, 2006). Social competence includes social skills and abilities that encourage healthy

formation of friendships and social acceptance from peers (Rubin, Coplan, Nelson, Cheah, & Lagace-Seguin, 1999). Social achievement goal theory encompasses how and why children approach, engage in, function, and evaluate social relationships (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Currently, there is little literature exploring potential factors influencing social achievement goals. In order to better understand why students are endorsing particular social goals, it is important to understand the background of such goals and begin exploring influencing factors.

The Connection between Parental Factors and Social Achievement Goals

Although little research has explored possible factors related to the endorsement of social achievement goals, prior research established parenting behaviors (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006; Spera, 2006), including helicopter parenting and autonomy support, (Ciani, Sheldon, Hilpert, & Easter, 2011) as well as attachment (Elliot & Reis, 2003) are related to achievement goals established by students in an academic setting. Due to the parallel theoretical frameworks between social achievement goals and achievement goal theories, it is worthwhile to consider whether parenting behaviors and attachment may be related to social achievement goals, particularly as these parental factors provide children with internal working models from which they learn the competence needed to form other relationships outside of the home.

Prior research has already examined how autonomy support may be related to achievement goals endorsed by students in the academic domain. Ciani et al. (2011) examined the relationship between autonomy support and achievement goals endorsed by students in an undergraduate education course and found a significant, positive relationship between autonomy support and mastery-approach goals. That is, when

students perceived increased levels of autonomy support, they were more likely to endorse a mastery-approach goal. Findings from this study revealed students who received autonomy support three months before the beginning of the class reported increased levels of self-determined motivation for taking the course, showing autonomy need satisfaction is related to increased self-determined motivation, which leads to mastery-approach goals. Harackiewicz et al. (1998) examined achievement goals in undergraduate college students and found student's goals change over time due to external influences such as environment and levels of support.

In addition to the influence autonomy support and parenting practices have on achievement goals, Elliot and Reis (2003) found attachment and achievement goals to be correlated with one another. In their study examining emerging adults, they found a significant link between attachment and achievement goals during this developmental stage. When emerging adults experience a secure attachment, they are more likely to have an increased need for achievement accompanied by a low fear of failure. This secure attachment often serves as a positive predictor of mastery goals (Blankenship, 2001). In contrast, insecure attachment has been positively correlated with performance avoidance achievement motivation. In addition, Blankenship (2001) found less securely attached students scored higher in areas of validation-seeking and performance orientation, while students reporting secure attachments with caregivers reported growth-seeking behaviors and a mastery orientation.

In two studies conducted by Moller, Elliot, and Friedman (2008), college students' achievement goals were related to their perceptions of attachment to their parent. Following an exam, but prior to receiving feedback, mastery-approach goals

positively predicted perceived closeness to parents. In their subsequent study, mastery-approach goals once again positively predicted perceived closeness; however, poor exam performance was related to feeling distant from parents among those endorsing performance–avoidance goals, which suggests that parental attachment is related to the achievement strivings of adults.

Individuals who have a high level of perceived attachment establish a secure base with their parents (Nada Raja et al., 1992) and this secure base is related to increased social competency (Ducharme, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2002). In addition, when parents are perceived as being caring, warm, emotionally responsive, and nurturing, their children experience increased social self-efficacy (Mallinckrodt, 1992). Social competence and social self-efficacy are both important factors within social achievement goals: when students experience increased levels of competence, they are more likely to endorse social development goals rather than social demonstration-avoidance or social demonstration-approach (Ryan & Shim, 2006).

To date, there is very little literature examining the relationship between parenting behaviors and social achievement goals. As these behaviors have the potential to influence outcomes such as competence, self-esteem, anxiety, emotional and psychological well-being, and self-efficacy (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Segrin et al., 2013), it is important to examine how an individual's perception of parental support may be associated with goals endorsed when establishing friendships.

With social achievement goal theory deriving from achievement goal theory, it is no surprise much of the research conducted has revealed parallel outcomes. As research has already revealed factors influencing achievement goals to include parenting

behaviors, attachment, and perceived support from parents (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006; Moller et al., 2008; Harackiewicz et al., 1998), it makes sense to consider how these same variables may serve as possible factors influencing social achievement goals.

Summary of Chapter

As explained in this chapter, helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors, and attachment have been shown to have significant relationships with achievement goals and social relationships established outside the family. Researchers have previously demonstrated that late adolescents and emerging adults rely on parental support during this transitional time. Researchers have explored the ways in which this parent support and attachment is related to motivational outcomes and the development of competency. Although these variables have been explored as factors influencing academic achievement goals, there is little literature examining these variables in the social domain, particularly with regards to social achievement goals.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of parenting behaviors and parent-child attachment with social achievement goals. As such, I examined in this study the relationship between the predictor variables (helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors, and attachment) and the criterion variable of social achievement goals (social development goal, social demonstration-approach goal, and social demonstration-avoid goal).

Overview of Research

Few researchers have examined possible factors related to the social achievement goals endorsed by emerging adults. With social achievement goals having an established relationship with both academic and social outcomes, it is important to gain a clearer understanding of potential factors that may influence social achievement goals. A clearer understanding in this area would allow parents to support their emerging adult children better during the transition to college and could give professors and administrators insight to their students' social motivation and adjustment during this transitional time. In addition, researchers previously identified communication between parents and emerging adult children as a salient factor during the transition to college, indicating parents

continue to serve an important role in the lives of their children during this developmental stage (Burke, Ruppel, & Dinsmore, 2016). With additional understanding of the ways parent-child interactions are related to social goals pursued during emerging adulthood, parents can aim to have a more positive influence on their children during this transitional time.

<div align="center">**Research Questions**</div>

For the purpose of this study, two research questions were examined. The first question examined the relationship of parenting behaviors, attachment, and social achievement goals. The second research question explored attachment as a moderator between helicopter parenting and social achievement goals. For each of these research questions, I provide a rationale and anticipated results below.

Research Question 1

Do emerging adults' perceptions of their caregiver's parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting, autonomy supportive parenting) and their attachment to this caregiver affect the social achievement goals they endorse?

Rationale. Previous research on achievement goal theory, the theory from which social achievement goal theory was derived, has already revealed such relationships within the academic domain. For example, Elliot and Reis (2003) established a link between attachment and achievement goals. Their findings revealed that when individuals experienced a secure attachment, their need for achievement increased and fear of failure decreased. As the need for achievement is associated with social development goal and a fear of failure is associated with both social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals (Ryan & Shim, 2006), it may be expected

that similar relationships exist between attachment and social achievement goals, however such relationships have not yet been explored. A secure attachment has been shown to have a relationship with mastery goals (Blankenship, 2001). As mastery goals within the academic domain are similar to social development goals in the social domain, a similar relationship between attachment and social development goal might be expected, but has not yet been explored. Furthermore, a secure attachment between parent and child provides children with a source of help and comfort (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1988), which is related to increased social self-efficacy (Nada, Raja et al., 1992). As social development goals are associated with social self-efficacy (Ryan & Shim, 2006), it might be assumed that a relationship between attachment and social development goal exists when in fact, these relationships have not been explored.

A link between attachment and performance-approach and performance-avoid goal orientations within the academic domain has previously been established. For example, individuals reporting decreased levels of parent attachment scored higher in areas of performance orientation than those reporting increased levels of attachment (Elliot & Reis, 2003). Therefore, I anticipated that social demonstration approach goal and social demonstration avoid goal would have a negative significant relationship with attachment.

Gar and Hudson (2008) found that helicopter parenting is related to individuals being more withdrawn from their peers. In addition, McDowell, Parke, and Wang (2003) found increased levels of control from parents was related to low social competence, which would be associated with social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goal. For the purposes of this study, I expected that both social demonstration

approach and social demonstration avoid goals would be associated with helicopter parenting behaviors.

Findings in the academic domain provide a foundation for anticipated results in the social domain, but without systematic exploration, no conclusions can be made. Thus, in this study I explored whether the findings related to parenting behaviors, attachment, and academic achievement goals are relevant within the social domain. To summarize, the anticipated results for this study are as follows:

Emerging adults' perceptions of high attachment to their parents will have a:

- positive relationship with social development goals and a

- negative relationship with social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals.

Emerging adults' perceptions of their parents engaging in helicopter parenting behaviors will have a:

- positive relationship with social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals and a

- negative relationship with social development goals.

Emerging adults' perceptions of their parents engaging in autonomy supportive behaviors to their parents will have a:

- positive relationship with social development goals and a

- negative relationship with social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals.

Although previous research has not yet examined the relationships as listed, it is important to recognize that the effects of mothers and fathers may be unique. In fact,

Schiffrin et al. (2014) recommended examining the impact of fathers separately from mothers in order to gain more insight into the impact of helicopter parenting by fathers. Other researchers who compared mother and father parenting behaviors found differences in level of control exhibited, parenting styles, closeness, and communication frequency (McKinney & Renk, 2008; Nielsen, 2006; Nielsen, 2014). In this study, I considered maternal behaviors and attachment to the mother separately from paternal behaviors and attachment to the father in an exploration of the impact these parental factors have on the social goals endorsed by emerging adults.

Research Question 2

Does parent-child attachment moderate the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals?

Rationale. Although parent involvement is related to positive outcomes, such as higher levels of academic engagement and increased satisfaction of the college experience, negative outcomes arise once the level of involvement and parental influence is perceived as controlling or unwanted (Urry, Nelson, & Padilla-Walker, 2011). Helicopter parenting behaviors can be perceived as over-controlling and intrusive (Schiffrin et al., 2014); however, because parents who engage in these behaviors are often well-intentioned, such behaviors can be interpreted as a sign of caring and responsiveness (Willoughby et al., 2015). Therefore, the emerging adult's experience of helicopter parenting behaviors could be positive or negative. That is to say it is possible some emerging adults might desire this increased level of involvement from their parents. Nelson, Padilla-Walker, and Nielson (2015) discovered a relationship between helicopter parenting and parental warmth. In their study, they found that emerging adults who

reported low levels of parental warmth and increased perceptions of helicopter parenting behaviors experience decreased levels of self-worth and higher levels of risk behaviors. With parental warmth serving as a component of attachment theory, I proposed in the current study that for emerging adults who perceived a high level of attachment to their parents, helicopter parenting may not seem as overbearing or negative as it may for those young adults who perceived a low level of attachment. Attachment to the parent may influence the perception of helicopter parenting as being a negative or positive aspect of the parent-child relationship. To repeat, there are few, if any, research studies that examined unique interactions between maternal behaviors and attachment to the mother or paternal behaviors and attachment to the father in regards to social achievement goals. Consequently, I explored these interaction effects separately for mothers and fathers.

Participants

Data was collected from 376 undergraduate and graduate students at a large comprehensive university in the Midwest. Both males and females participated, as well as students living both on and off campus. Integrity questions were built into the survey to ensure participants were reading statements and answering questions as directed. Of the 376 participants who completed the survey, 297 answered two out of the three integrity questions as directed. Participants were asked at separate times in the survey if they grew up with a mother figure and/or father figure in their lives. Of the 297 participants included in the dataset, 293 answered survey questions for their mother and 270 participants answered survey questions for their father. After assessing for outliers, three participants were removed from the maternal dataset and seven were removed from the paternal dataset. In addition, because I examined emerging adults specifically, defined as

between the ages of 18 and 25 (Arnett, 2000), any participant over the age of 25 was deleted from the dataset. This resulted in 13 participants being deleted from the maternal dataset and nine participants being deleted from the paternal dataset. The final datasets consisted of 277 participants entered for maternal analyses and 254 for the paternal analyses.

Participant demographic characteristics are given in Table 3.1. The majority of participants indicated they were female (65.3 percent maternal dataset; 65 percent paternal dataset), White (77.6 percent maternal dataset; 78.7 percent paternal dataset), and between the ages of 18 and 21 (70.5 percent maternal dataset, 79.1 percent paternal dataset).

Table 3.1.

Descriptive Statistics of Participant Demographics

	Maternal Dataset $N = 277$		Paternal Dataset $N = 254$	
Variable	Frequency (*n*)	Percent (%)	Frequency (*n*)	Percent (%)
Gender				
Female	181	65.3	165	65.0
Male	96	34.7	89	35.0
Race/Ethnicity				
White	215	77.6	200	78.7
African American	33	11.9	26	10.2
Hispanic	17	6.1	15	5.9
Asian American	3	1.1	2	0.8
American Indian	21	7.6	19	7.5
Other	14	5.1	13	5.1
Classification				
Freshman	54	19.5	50	19.7
Sophomore	74	26.7	66	26.0
Junior	61	22.0	55	21.7
Senior	66	23.8	63	24.8
Graduate Student	21	7.6	19	7.5
Missing	1	0.4	1	0.4
Age of Participant				
18-21 yrs old	195	70.5	178	79.1
22-25 yrs old	79	28.9	73	19.5
Missing	3	1.1	3	1.2

Procedure

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), students were recruited through the College of Education's Sona system, which registers approximately 900 students each semester. Data were collected in a computer-mediated setting using an online survey system (i.e., Qualtrics), which is a secure online data collection instrument. Interested participants confirmed their consent at the beginning of the 138-item survey and confirmed they were at least 18 years of age. If participants were unable to confirm the minimum age requirement of 18 years, they were taken to the end of the survey. Participants first answered questions regarding social achievement goals. They were then asked if they grew up with a mother figure in their life. If they selected the "yes" option, they were taken to the survey questions related to mother before being taking the same question regarding whether or not they had a father figure. If they answered "no," they were taken immediately to the question asking if they grew up with a father figure in their life. Those who answered "yes" to this question were taken to the survey questions for father. Participants who answered "no" to the father figure question were taken to the end of the survey to complete the demographic questionnaire.

Instruments and Data Collection

Instruments for this study were selected based on their use in helicopter parenting, attachment, and social achievement goals literature as well as their sound psychometric characteristics. Each of the following measures are widely used in the literature and allowed the researcher to successfully collect data essential for examining the current research problem.

Parenting Behaviors

Helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviors were assessed using the Helicopter Parenting Behaviors measure (Schiffrin et al., 2014). This inventory includes two subscales of parenting behaviors. One subscale, consisting of nine items, focused on helicopter parenting behaviors (e.g., *My mother had/will have a say in what major I chose/will choose; My mother regularly wants me to call or text her to let her know where I am*) and the second subscale, consisting of six items, focused on autonomy supportive behaviors (e.g., *My mother encourages me to discuss any academic problems I am having with my professor; My mother encourages me to make my own decisions and take the responsibility for the choices I have made*). The Helicopter Parenting Behaviors measure consisted of 15 items total. The 15 questions used for the mother were repeated for the father. Each item was scored on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). For this study, Cronbach's internal consistency reliability for the subscales were as follows: $\alpha = .83$ for Mother Helicopter Parenting Behaviors, $\alpha = .76$ for Mother Autonomy Supportive Behaviors, $\alpha = .87$ for Father Helicopter Parenting Behaviors, and $\alpha = .82$ for Father Autonomy Supportive Behaviors. These results are comparable to those originally reported by Schiffrin et al. (2014) for helicopter parenting behaviors ($\alpha = .77$) and autonomy supportive behaviors ($\alpha = .71$).

Attachment

Attachment was assessed using the Revised Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). This inventory is designed to assess attachment to parents and peers during adolescence and emerging adulthood. For the purpose of this study, I utilized the parent scales of attachment only. A higher score

indicates a more secure attachment between the parent and child. The measurement

consists of 25 items for the mother (e.g., *My mother can tell when I'm upset about*

something; *I trust my mother*) and 25 items for the father (e.g., *My father accepts me the*

way I am; *I can count on my father when I need to get something off my chest*).

Participants rated each item on a five-point Likert-type scale of 1 (*almost always true*) to

5 (*almost never true*). Cronbach internal consistency reliability for the Revised Inventory

of Parent Attachment used in this study was $\alpha = .96$ for Mother Attachment and $\alpha = .95$

for Father Attachment. These results are similar to those previously reported by Armsden

and Greenberg (2009) for mother attachment ($\alpha = .87$), and father attachment ($\alpha = .89$).

Social Achievement Goals

Ryan and Shim's (2006) measure of social achievement goals was utilized to

assess students' social achievement goal orientation. The measure contains three

subscales: Social Development, Social Demonstration Approach, and Social

Demonstration Avoid. The Social Development scale consists of six items, with each

item focusing on developing social competence (e.g., *I try to figure out what makes a*

good friend; *One of my goals is that my friendships become better over time*). The six

Social Development-Approach items focus on positive judgments from peers and

demonstrating social competence (e.g., *It is important to me that other people think I am*

popular; *It is important to me to be seen as having a lot of friends*). The Social

Demonstration-Avoid scale includes six items and measures the desire to avoid negative

judgment from others and to demonstrate one is not socially undesirable (e.g., *It is*

important to me that I do not embarrass myself around my friends; *When I am around*

other people, I do not want to get made fun of). Each subscale was measured on a five-

41

point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 5 (*very true of me*). For

this study, Cronbach's internal consistency reliability for the subscales are reported as

follows for the maternal dataset: $\alpha = .83$ for Social Development Goal, $\alpha = .84$ for Social

Demonstration Approach Goal, $\alpha = .84$ for Social Demonstration Avoid Goal. For the

paternal dataset, Cronbach's scores were similar: $\alpha = .82$ for Social Development Goal, α

$= .84$ for Social Demonstration Approach Goal, and $\alpha = .83$ for Social Demonstration

Avoid Goal. These results are comparable to Ryan and Shim's (2006) reported scores for

Social Development Goal ($\alpha = .85$), Social Demonstration Approach Goal ($\alpha = .84$), and

Social Demonstration Avoid Goal ($\alpha = .83$).

Data Analysis

The original dataset contained minimal missing data at random. In order to

address this issue, a mean score was computed for each question within the measure and

this mean score replaced the missing item score. Reverse coding and composite scores

were computed for all measures, and descriptive statistics, including means and standard

deviations, were obtained for each composite score. Correlation matrices were generated

for predictor and criterion variables.

Regression analyses were run in order to examine the relationship between

helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors, and parental attachment

with social achievement goals. Because there is little research to date directly connecting

the predictor variables (helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy supportive behaviors,

and attachment) and criterion variables (social development goal, social demonstration

approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal), I conducted exploratory analyses in

order to gain more insight into whether these predictor variables might be related to

social achievement goals. Three separate multiple regression analyses were conducted

for each of the three criterion variables for both mother and father, resulting in a total of

six regression analyses.

Finally, interaction effects testing for attachment as a moderator between

helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals was run for both mother and

father datasets. Variables were centered before running the regression analyses.

PROCESS macro (version 2.16) was downloaded and applied in SPSS in order to test for

two-way moderation effects. PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) produces output using a

bootstrapping procedure to test three levels of the moderator variables: 1) one standard

deviation above the mean, 2) at the mean, and 3) one standard deviation below mean.

Bootstrapped output is interpreted using 95% confidence intervals such that an effect is

significant when the confidence interval does not contain zero. Social goals were entered

as the criterion variable, with helicopter parenting behaviors entered as the predictor

variable and attachment serving as the moderator. Unlike the literature that suggests a

moderating effect of attachment between helicopter parenting behaviors and social

achievement goals, there was no literature to provide a rationale for testing autonomy as a

moderating variable. Therefore, the autonomy supportive variable was not included in

testing for interaction effects. See Figure 3.1 for the interaction effect model.
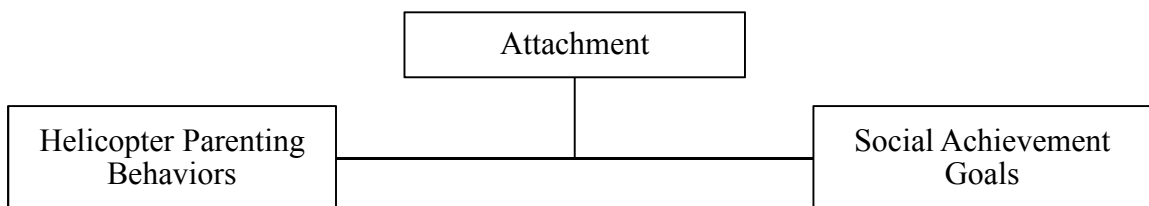
Figure 3.1. Model for Interaction Effect

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this study, I examined the relationship of emerging adults' perceptions of parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting behaviors and autonomy supportive) and parent attachment on social achievement goals (i.e., social development goal, social demonstration approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal). Specifically, I addressed the following research questions:

1. Do emerging adults' perceptions of their caregiver's parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting, autonomy supportive parenting) and their attachment to this caregiver affect the social achievement goals they endorse?

2. Does parent-child attachment moderate the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals?

Based on previous research findings reported in the literature on academic achievement goals, the theory from which social achievement goals was derived, the social goals endorsed by emerging adults was expected to be related to their perceptions of their caregiver's parenting behaviors and the attachment they had to this caregiver.

Maternal Findings

Correlation analyses and regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the relationship between maternal parenting behaviors, mother-child attachment, and social achievement goals. In addition, interaction effects were tested for with attachment serving as a moderator between helicopter parenting and social achievement goals. Each analysis is discussed in further detail below.

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlational analyses were conducted to identify correlations between the predictor variables (attachment, helicopter parenting, and autonomy support) and the criterion variables (social development, social demonstration approach, and social demonstration avoid). As indicated in Table 4.1, no correlations were found between the predictor variable of attachment with any of the criterion variables. The predictor variable of helicopter parenting was correlated with the criterion variable of social demonstration approach ($r = .29$, $p = .00$) and social demonstration avoid ($r = .14$, $p = .02$). The predictor variable of autonomy support was not correlated to any of the criterion variables. Of note, the predictor variables of autonomy support and attachment were correlated ($r = .53$, $p = .00$), as were the predictor variables of autonomy support and helicopter parenting ($r = .17$, $p = .004$). The criterion variables were all correlated with each other.

Table 4.1.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Mother Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Attachment	-					
2. Helicopter Parenting	.02	-				
3. Autonomy Support	.53**	.17**	-			
4. Social Development	.12	-.01	.12	-		
5. Social Demonstration Approach	-.13	.29**	-.13	.33**	-	
6. Social Demonstration Avoid	-.08	.14*	-.07	.37**	.58**	-
M	103.75	23.17	28.85	23.39	13.90	17.88
SD	17.99	8.80	5.07	4.19	4.60	5.08
Scale Reliabilities	.96	.82	.74	.84	.85	.84

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Regression Analyses

Preliminary analyses revealed no linear relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable of social development goal, which is an assumption that must be met in order to run a regression analysis. Due to the violation of this regression assumption, regression analyses were not conducted for the social development goal. However, regression analyses were conducted to examine whether attachment, helicopter parenting behaviors, and autonomy supportive behaviors were related to social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals. Two separate regression analyses were tested with social demonstration approach goal and social demonstration avoid goal serving as the criterion variables. As shown in Table 4.2, overall, the regression analyses examining the relationship of the predictor variables of perceived attachment to mother and maternal parenting behaviors (helicopter parenting and autonomy support) on social demonstration approach goal ($R^2 = .12$, $F(3, 273) =$

12.36, $p = .00$) and social demonstration avoid goal ($R^2 = .03$, $F(3, 273) = 2.80$, $p = .04$) were significant.

Table 4.2

Maternal Regression Analyses Predicting Social Achievement Goals

Predictors	Social development		Social demonstration approach		Social demonstration avoid	
	β	*t*	β	*t*	β	*t*
Attachment	-	-	-.05	-.75	-.05	-.66
Helicopter parenting	-	-	.32	5.52**	.15	2.52*
Autonomy support	-	-	-.16	-2.30*	-.07	-.95
F	-		12.36**		2.80*	
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	-		.12 (.11)		.03 (.02)	

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Relationship between mother attachment and social achievement goals. Two multiple regressions were conducted to examine the relationship of the mother's parenting (i.e., attachment, helicopter parenting behavior, autonomy supportive behavior) and social achievement goals (i.e., social demonstration approach, social demonstration avoid). Inspection of these regression analyses revealed that attachment with the mother did not show significant main effects on social demonstration approach goal ($β = -.05$, $t = -.75$, $p = .46$), or social demonstration avoid goal ($β = -.05$, $t = -.66$, $p = .51$).

Relationship between mother parenting behaviors and social achievement goals. After examining the separate multiple regression analyses, helicopter parenting behaviors were significantly and positively related to social demonstration approach goal ($β = .32$, $t = 5.52$, $p = .00$) and social demonstration avoid goal ($β = .15$, $t = 2.52$, $p = .01$). Autonomy support did not result in any relationship with social demonstration avoid goal

(β = -.07, t = -.95, p = .34). However, autonomy support did have a significant negative

relationship with social demonstration approach goal (β = -.16, t = -2.30, p = .02).

Testing for Interaction Effects

Attachment was tested as a possible moderator between helicopter parenting

behaviors and each of the social achievement goals. Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro

(model 1) was employed to assess for a moderation effect. Findings revealed there was

not an interaction effect for the social development or social demonstration approach

analyses. However, attachment did moderate the relationship between helicopter

parenting behaviors and social demonstration avoid goal (R^2 = .05, F(3, 274) = 5.67, p =

.00). Simple slopes test of this interaction at $\pm$ 1 SD and at the mean of the moderator

indicated that the association between helicopter parenting and social demonstration

avoid goal was significant and positive at high levels of attachment with the mother (b = -

.17, t = 3.72, p = .00). The interaction effect is displayed in Figure 4.1.
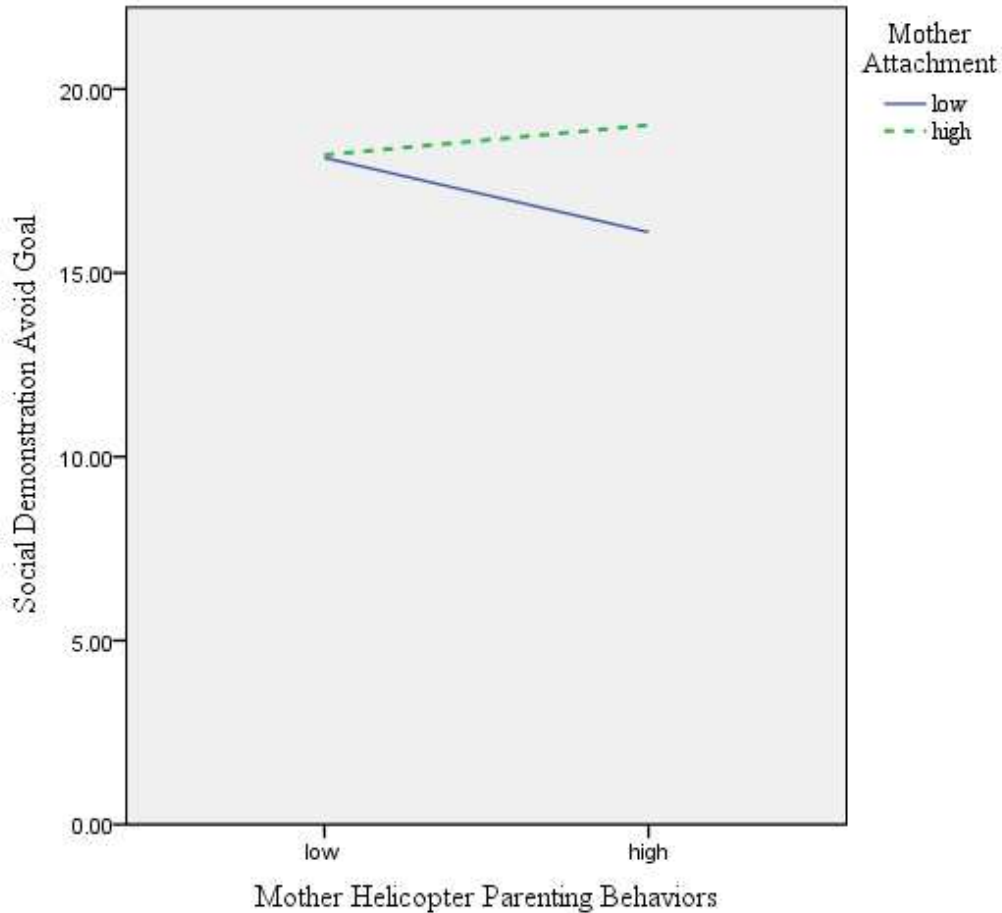
Figure 4.1 Two-way interaction on social demonstration avoid goal

Paternal Findings

Correlation analyses and regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the relationship between paternal parenting behaviors, father-child attachment, and social achievement goals. In addition, interaction effects were tested for with attachment serving as a moderator between helicopter parenting and social achievement goals. Each analysis is discussed in further detail below.

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlational analyses were repeated using the paternal dataset to identify correlations between the predictor variables (attachment, helicopter parenting, and autonomy support) and the criterion variables (social development, social demonstration

approach, and social demonstration avoid). The correlation coefficients are listed in

Table 4.3. Social development goal was correlated with attachment ($r = .21, p = .001$)

and autonomy support ($r = .28, p = .00$). Social demonstration approach goal ($r = .39, p = .00$) and social demonstration avoid goal ($r = .16, p = .01$) were correlated with

helicopter parenting. Social demonstration avoid goal ($r = .15, p = .01$) and social

development goal ($r = .28, p = .00$) were correlated with autonomy support. There were

also correlations between the predictor variables of attachment and helicopter parenting

($r = .13, p = .03$) as well as between attachment and autonomy support ($r = .54, p = .00$).

Helicopter parenting was also correlated with autonomy support ($r = .30, p = .00$). All

three criterion variables were correlated to each other.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Father Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Attachment	-					
2. Helicopter Parenting	.13*	-				
3. Autonomy Support	.54**	.30**	-			
4. Social Development	.21**	.09	.28**	-		
5. Social Demonstration Approach	.01	.39**	.07	.32**	-	
6. Social Demonstration Avoid	-.02	.16**	.15*	.31**	.57**	-
M	95.66	20.60	27.39	23.43	13.93	18.08
SD	19.59	9.69	6.37	4.05	4.47	4.92
Scale Reliabilities	.95	.87	.81	.82	.84	.83

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Regression Analyses

        Like the mother analyses reported above, regression analyses were conducted on

the father variables to examine whether perceived attachment to the father and

perceptions of the father's parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting, and autonomy

support) had a relationship with social achievement goals. Unlike the social development analysis run with the maternal data set, the father dataset met the assumptions of linearity, allowing for further inspection of the relationship on each of the social goals. Three separate regression analyses were tested with social development goal, social demonstration approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal serving as the criterion variables. As shown in Table 4.4, overall, the regression analyses examining the effects of the father's parenting behaviors and attachment were significant for social development goal (R^2 = .08, $F(3, 250)$ = 7.42, p = .00), social demonstration approach goal (R^2 = .16, $F(3, 250)$ = 15.54, p = .00), and social demonstration avoid goal (R^2 = .05, $F(3, 250)$ = 4.71, p = .00).

Table 4.4.

Paternal Regression Analyses Predicting Social Achievement Goals

Predictors	Social development		Social demonstration approach		Social demonstration avoid	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Attachment	.08	1.17	-.02	-.32	-.15	-1.97[*]
Helicopter parenting	.01	.10	.41	6.71[**]	.13	1.93
Autonomy support	.23	3.06[**]	-.04	-.59	.20	2.56[**]
F	7.42[**]		15.54[**]		4.71[**]	
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.08 (.07)		.16 (.15)		.05 (.04)	

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Relationship between father attachment and social achievement goals. Three multiple regressions were run to examine relationship of father's parenting (i.e., attachment, helicopter parenting behavior, autonomy supportive behavior) and social achievement goals (i.e., social development, social demonstration approach, social demonstration avoid). Inspection of these regression analyses revealed attachment with

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the father was not related to social development goal ($\beta = .08$, $t = 1.17$, $p = .14$) or social demonstration approach goal ($\beta = -.02$, $t = -.32$, $p = .71$). However, father attachment had a significant negative relationship with social demonstration avoid goal ($\beta = -.15$, $t = -1.97$, $p = .05$).

Relationship between father parenting behaviors and social achievement goals. Perceptions of the father's helicopter parenting behaviors did not reveal a significant relationship with social development goal ($\beta = .01$, $t = .10$, $p = .90$). However, unlike the significant findings reported for mothers, the relationship between fathers perceived helicopter parenting behaviors and endorsement of social demonstration avoid goal did not meet the threshold for statistical significance ($\beta = .13$, $t = 1.93$, $p = .07$). In addition, results revealed helicopter parenting had a positive relationship with social demonstration approach goal ($\beta = .41$, $t = 6.71$, $p = .00$). Regression results revealed autonomy support had a positive relationship with both social development goal ($\beta = .23$, $t = 3.06$, $p = .00$) and social demonstration avoid goal ($\beta = .20$, $t = 2.56$, $p = .01$). However, autonomy support did not produce a significant relationship with social demonstration approach goal ($\beta = -.04$, $t = -.59$, $p = .57$).

Testing for Interaction Effects

Attachment was tested as a possible moderator between helicopter parenting behaviors and each of the social achievement goals for the father dataset. Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro (model 1) was employed to assess for moderation effect. Findings revealed there was not a significant interaction effect for the social demonstration avoid or the social demonstration approach analyses. However, there was a significant two-way interaction between attachment and helicopter parenting with social demonstration

avoid goal ($R^2 = .07$, $F(3, 250) = 6.01$, $p = .00$). Simple slopes test of this interaction at $\pm$ 1 *SD* and at the mean of the moderator indicated that the relationship between helicopter parenting and social development goal was significant and positive at high levels of attachment with the father ($b = .09$, $t = 2.65$, $p = .01$). The interaction effect is displayed in Figure 4.2.

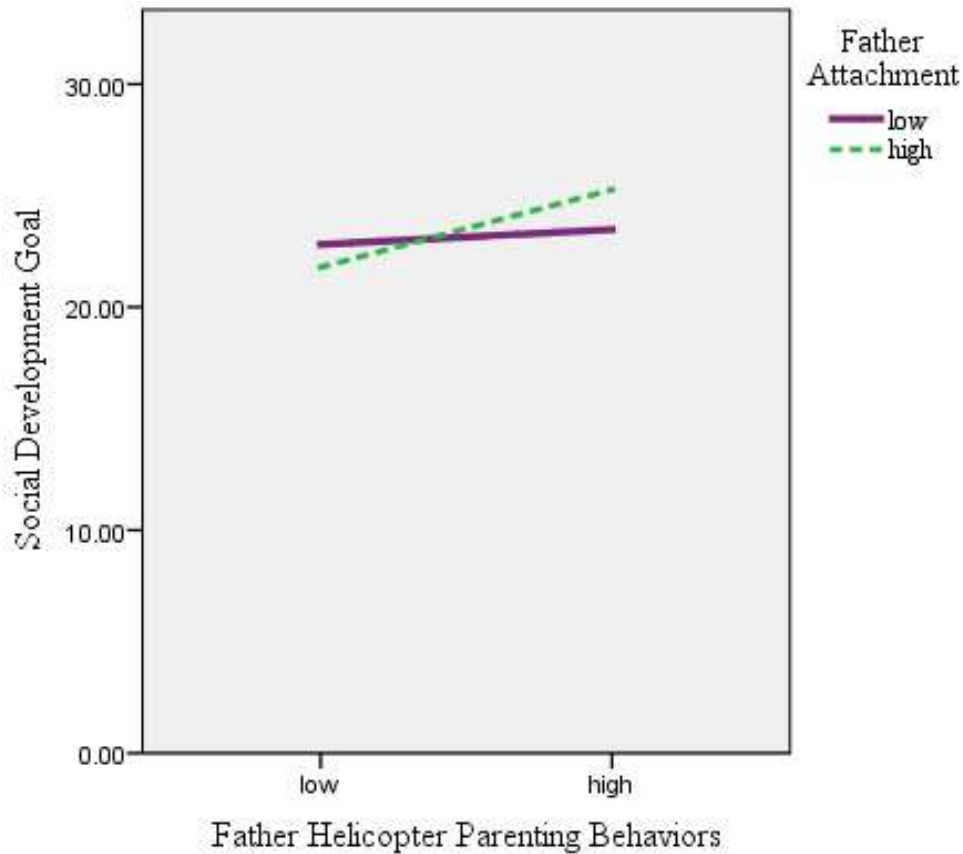*Figure 4.2* Two-way interaction on social development goal

Additional Analyses

In order to further explore the differences in perceptions of mother and father parenting behaviors by emerging adults, I utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to conduct Independent Samples T-Test analyses. The t-test was used to compare differences between two independent groups consisting of males and female

participants. Results of the t-test analyses revealed one significant finding for analyses of

the maternal data set. There was a significant difference between male and female

emerging adults in their perception of autonomy support from their mother. Results of

this analysis are listed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Maternal Independent t-test Analysis (Autonomy Support)

Group	M (SD)	t(df)	p value
Male	27.94 (5.61)		
		-2.20(275)	.029
Female	29.34 (4.71)		

In addition, I found a significant finding for the analyses of the paternal data set. Results

of the independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the perception of

father helicopter parenting among male and female emerging adults. Results are listed in

Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Paternal Independent t-test Analysis (Helicopter Parenting)

Group	M (SD)	t(df)	p value
Male	23.33 (10.00)		
		3.37(252)	.001
Female	19.13 (9.21)		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate whether certain perceptions emerging adults hold regarding their parents (i.e., parent attachment and parenting behaviors) were related to the social achievement goals they endorse. While prior researchers focused on the outcomes associated with these social achievement goals, few examined factors that may have a predictive relationship with the type of social achievement goal an individual endorses, and even fewer considered such relationships with the social goals of emerging adults. In this study, I aimed to address this gap in the research.

Social achievement goal theory was derived from academic achievement goal theory. With previous studies on the outcomes related to different goal orientations revealing similar findings in both the academic and social domain, it was possible that similar findings would be found to be related to the endorsement of social goals as has been shown within the academic domain. Two variables shown to have a relationship with academic achievement goals are parenting behaviors and parent-child attachment,

providing a rationale for exploring whether such parental factors have a relationship with social achievement goals.

In this study, I investigated whether emerging adults' perceptions of their mothers' parenting behaviors were related to social achievement goals differently than perceptions of fathers' parenting behaviors. Previously, McKinney and Renk (2008) found differences between mothers and fathers in regards to attachment and parenting behaviors. Thus, in an effort to avoid missing a critical element of the possible relationship between parental factors and social achievement goals, I examined perceptions of these behaviors by mothers separately from those of fathers.

With social achievement goals related to important and distinct academic outcomes, it is important to understand factors that might be related to the social goals endorsed by emerging adults. Parents and teachers are in a position to influence the social relationships these young adults establish during their college years. Thus, it is important to have a better understanding of which factors are related to each of these social goal orientations so that those in a position of influence can more effectively interact with individuals in ways that are more likely to lead to positive academic outcomes.

This final chapter is broken into four distinct sections. The first section addresses a summary of the study results and conclusions based on my findings. The second section discusses implications of these results within the context of parent, university staff, and the social domain. The next section recognizes the limitations of this study and the final suggests areas for future research.

Summary of Findings

In the current exploratory study, I examined two research questions through six separate regression analyses and tests for possible interaction effects. For the regression analyses, predictor variables (parent attachment, helicopter parenting, and autonomy support) were analyzed for their relationship on each of the criterion variables (social development goal, social demonstration approach goal, and social demonstration avoid goal). Attachment was tested as a possible moderator between helicopter parenting behaviors and social achievement goals. In addition, constructs for mothers and fathers were examined individually to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. These results were examined further for distinct differences or similarities among the relationship of parental factors with social achievement goals based on gender of parent.

Relationship of Parenting Behaviors and Attachment on Social Achievement Goals

Based on previous research findings in the academic domain regarding attachment, parenting behaviors, and achievement goals, I expected similar relationships between these constructs within the social domain. More specifically, I anticipated that a high degree of attachment and autonomy support would be positively related to social development goal whereas a low degree of attachment would be related to social demonstration approach goal and social demonstration avoid goal. In addition, I expected perception of high levels of engagement in helicopter parenting behaviors to be positively related to both social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals.

Social development goal. Although regression analyses for social development goal were not possible with the maternal data set due to a failure to meet the assumption of a linear relationship between predictor variables (i.e, helicopter parenting behaviors and autonomy supportive behaviors) and the criterion variable (social development goal), correlational analyses revealed no significant correlations between any of the predictor variables and this particular goal. Considering most emerging adults report being closer to their mother (Nielsen, 2012), it was surprising that the mother did not play a more significant role in the endorsement of social development goal. It may be that mothers and fathers establish different relationships with their emerging adult children and relationships with the mother have less of a relationship with social outcomes than do fathers. Further exploration in this area is needed to gain more understanding in the ways mothers might influence social development goal.

However, for the analyses of the paternal data set, there was a significant correlation between perceived paternal attachment and autonomy support with social development goal, as expected. In addition, regression results revealed autonomy support was significant and positively related to social development goal. These results indicate when emerging adults perceive a high level of attachment to their father, accompanied by autonomy supportive behaviors, they may be more likely to endorse a social development goal, meaning their focus is on developing intimate relationships with their peers, being prosocial, and accepting responsibility, all of which promote academic adjustment and engagement (Shim et al., 2013).

These findings are different from what I expected, which was a positive relationship between both attachment and autonomy support with social development

goal for both mother and father. The fact that this relationship only held true for the father implies there may be distinct parent-child relationships taking place, meaning the relationship emerging adults have with their mother may be relatively different from the relationship with their father.

Social demonstration approach goal. Correlational analyses revealed a positive relationship between helicopter parenting and social demonstration approach goal, regardless of the parent's gender. This result can be explained by earlier research results revealing that helicopter parenting is related to lower competence levels (Schiffrin et al., 2014). With social demonstration approach goal being associated with low competence (Ryan & Shim, 2006), it makes sense that helicopter parenting would be associated with endorsement of this goal. That is to say, the relationship established here between helicopter parenting and the need to feel popular and accepted by peers (social demonstration approach goal) is logical given the relationship previously established between helicopter parenting and decreased competence. While helicopter parenting had the strongest relationship among the predictor variables with social demonstration approach goal, it is important to note the low amount of variance explained in the regression analysis of only 11 percent in the maternal analysis and 15 percent in the paternal analysis. Therefore, while it is possible helicopter parenting may be predictive of social demonstration approach goal, this finding warrants further research and exploration.

For the mother analyses, neither attachment nor autonomy support was significantly correlated with social demonstration approach goal. In addition, regression results for social demonstration approach goal revealed attachment was not related to this

particular social goal. However, regression results revealed a significant negative relationship with autonomy support and social demonstration approach goal. With prior researchers finding attachment (Groh et al., 2014) and autonomy support (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005) linked to increased competence, these predictor variables were not expected to have a positive effect on social goals associated with low competence, such as social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals. Therefore, these findings align with my expectations in this current study.

Similar to the mother analysis, in the father analysis, there was not a relationship between attachment or autonomy support with social demonstration approach goal. In addition, regression results indicated these two predictor variables did not have a significant relationship with endorsement of this social goal.

Social demonstration avoid goal. For the mother analyses, helicopter parenting had a significant positive correlation with social demonstration avoid goal, and served as a significant predictor in the regression analysis. Again, this result can be explained by earlier research results revealing helicopter parenting results in a decrease of competence (Schiffrin et al., 2014). Like social demonstration approach goal, social demonstration avoid goal is related to decreased levels of competence.

In the regression analysis for the father, attachment was negatively related and autonomy support positively related with social demonstration avoid goal. This indicates that for emerging adults who experience low levels of attachment with their father accompanied by autonomy support, social demonstration avoid goal may emerge. It is important to note this result is unique from prior research reporting a negative relationship between autonomy support and social demonstration avoid goal (Ryan &

Shim, 2006). It may be that autonomy support from the father specifically is not enough to outweigh the negative effects of low attachment, therefore leading the emerging adult to still adopt a maladaptive social goal such as a social demonstration avoid goal. Other researchers have not examined the relationship of attachment and autonomy support together as potential factors influencing social achievement goals as I did in this study.

Interaction Effects between Attachment and Helicopter Parenting Behaviors on Social Achievement Goals

With the sample in this study, I also found interaction effects for two of the three social goal orientations. In terms of perceptions related to mothers, increased helicopter parenting was related to the endorsement of social demonstration avoid goal for emerging adults reporting high levels of attachment to their mother. In the case of the mother, even when there is a high level of attachment, helicopter parenting is still related to social demonstration avoid goal. This finding is different than what I expected, which was that increased levels of attachment would have a negative relationship with social development goal.

In addition, increased helicopter parenting was related to the endorsement of social development goal for those emerging adults reporting high levels of attachment to their father. This data suggest that even though emerging adults may perceive increased helicopter parenting behaviors from the father, a high level of attachment may serve to buffer the negative effect helicopter parenting might otherwise have on endorsement of social development goals. These findings are different than what I expected and contribute to the field of helicopter parenting and social achievement goals. In addition,

these findings begin to explore the role of the father specifically with regards to the relationship their parenting behaviors may have on the endorsement of social goals.

Similarities and Differences of Maternal and Paternal Findings

Researchers who previously examined mothers and fathers separately suggest the importance of investigating maternal and paternal impacts independently of one another (Bosco et al., 2003; Laible & Carlo, 2004). In this study I examined mothers and fathers separately because they each offer unique contributions to outcomes experienced by emerging adults. In addition to the regression analyses and testing for interaction effects, I also conducted an exploratory t-test examining differences in which male and female participants perceive parenting behaviors and attachment. This exploratory t-test revealed a significant difference in the way male and females perceive autonomy support from the mother and helicopter parenting from the father. This finding provides a rationale for further exploring the similarities and differences among mothers and fathers separately.

Similarities. Helicopter parenting behaviors were associated with social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals for both mothers and fathers. Even though helicopter parents are warm and caring towards their children, they exhibit high levels of control, which is related to high levels of narcissism, ineffective coping skills (Sergrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013) and children being more withdrawn from peers (Gar & Hudson, 2008). Helicopter parenting is related to a lack of interpersonal skills and positively related with maladaptive outcomes (Lemoyne & Buchanan, 2011). Thus, it is unsurprising that helicopter parenting would have a

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significant relationship with social demonstration approach goal and social demonstration avoid goal.

  Differences. Upon inspection for differences of the mother and father analyses, I found the father analyses resulted in significant regression analyses for each of the social achievement goals, whereas mother was significant only for social demonstration approach and avoid goals. Such findings suggest the father may have a greater impact on social achievement goals than do mothers based on the correlation and regression results. A possible explanation for this is that the majority of participants were female. A difference in the relationship among females with their mothers and fathers has been established in prior studies (McKinney & Renk, 2008; Nielsen, 2014). As Hosley and Montemayor (1997) proposed in role theory, although mothers have traditionally been seen as the caregiver and fathers as the disciplinarian, these roles are shifting due to changes in social structure over time. While emerging adults may still consider their mother to be the primary caregiver, change in family arrangements have led to increased father involvement (Fagot & Leinbach, 1995; Hosley & Montemayor, 1997). This increase in father involvement can have significant implications on the father-daughter relationship. Fathers of emerging adult daughters influence their daughter's career path (Flouri, 2005), athletic achievements (Kay, 2010), anxiety levels (Last, 2009), and academic achievement (Flouri, 2005). Findings of the current study support the idea that fathers may also have a significant influence on their daughters in the social domain, which could have an effect on social goals endorsed during emerging adulthood.

  In addition, as illustrated in the significant interaction effects, in this sample there were different outcomes associated with mothers and fathers exhibiting increased

helicopter parenting behaviors in tandem with high attachment. Even if the emerging

adult perceives a high attachment with their mother, results suggest they may still endorse

social demonstration avoid goal if the mother displays increased helicopter parenting

behaviors. However, when emerging adults perceive a high level of attachment with

their father, accompanied by amplified helicopter parenting behaviors, these individuals

may still be more likely to endorse a social development goal. It is interesting to note

that mothers and fathers are perceived to be exhibiting similar parenting behaviors, yet

the outcomes are dissimilar. These findings indicate there may be some significant

differences in the relationship emerging adults have with their mothers and fathers.

Conclusions

With regards to social development goal, only father attachment and father

autonomy support were positively correlated with this criterion variable. In addition,

perceived autonomy support by the father served as a significant predictor of social

development goal. However, only 7 percent of the variance was explained by this

predictor variable and while it was statistically significant, the practical significance

needs further consideration.

Helicopter parenting had a positive correlation with and was a significant

predictor of social demonstration approach goal for both the mother and father analyses,

explaining 11 percent of the variance for the mother analysis and 15 percent of the

variance for the father analysis. Further investigation is needed to explore the

relationship between helicopter parenting and the endorsement of social demonstration

approach goal among emerging adults. In addition to helicopter parenting serving as a

significant predictor of social demonstration approach goal, further analyses revealed this

parenting behavior is also positively correlated and a significant predictor of social demonstration avoid goal for both the mother and father analyses.

In addition to the regression analyses, two significant interaction effects were found in this study. Perceived high helicopter parenting behaviors from the father, in addition to high attachment with the father, resulted in emerging adults endorsing a social development goal. However, when the same parenting behaviors (high helicopter parenting behaviors and attachment) were perceived for the mother, findings revealed emerging adults endorse a social demonstration avoid goal. This finding provides a rationale for further exploration in the differences between mother and father parenting behaviors with their emerging adult children. In further analyses of the data for mothers and fathers, exploratory t-tests revealed a significant difference in the perception of autonomy support from the mother and helicopter parenting behaviors from the father with male and female emerging adults. These exploratory t-tests indicate gender differences reflecting differing perceptions that young men and women have of their mothers and fathers, warranting the need for further exploration of these differences.

Implications of Conclusions

One of my principle aims of this study was to examine whether certain parenting variables have a relationship with social achievement goals endorsed by emerging adults. The results with this sample suggest that parenting behaviors of helicopter parenting and autonomy support, as well as parent-child attachment have a significant relationship with the social goals endorsed by emerging adults. These results point to the need to educate parents of emerging adults of the negative effects helicopter parenting can have on their emerging adult children in terms of their social achievement goals.

Emerging adulthood is a developmental time in which individuals need autonomy support from parents rather than over parenting. One way to help parents understand how to support this transitional time effectively could be accomplished through parent workshops offered during freshmen orientation. Such workshops could serve to educate parents on the importance of displaying warm and nurturing behaviors to their emerging adult children while also supporting their child's need for autonomy. Although educating parents on the detrimental effects of helicopter parenting does not guarantee a change in parenting practices, for some parents it may serve as a wake-up call. Meaning, it may cause parents to reflect on their own parenting practices, sparking a change towards more autonomy supportive behaviors. Helicopter parents want the best for their children and while they have the best intentions, it is this overwhelming desire to protect their child that is related to over involvement and intrusive parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin et al., 2015). However, if parents were educated on the negative outcomes of such intrusive parenting, they may better be able to see the value of engaging in more autonomy supportive behaviors. While the findings of the current study alone may not warrant such interventions, when coupled with previous literature, there is reason to suggest that colleges/universities might consider how to inform parents about the changing needs of their children during this transitional time.

In addition, there are important implications for the role of the father during this developmental phase. Considering that in this sample, father parenting behaviors and attachment were significantly associated with social achievement goals, it might be expected that fathers play a significant role in the lives of their emerging adult children while away at college. Fathers need to understand the impact they are continuing to

make on their emerging adult children with regards to social goals endorsed during college.

Another of my primary purposes for this study was to contribute to the field of social achievement goal theory and to enhance this theory by exploring potential parenting behaviors that may be related to social goals endorsed by emerging adults. With previous researchers finding that critical academic outcomes are associated with social achievement goals, it is vital to understand ways in which these parents and instructors may be able to influence the social goals endorsed by emerging adults in order to create interventions for parents and students. The results of this study have meaningful implications for both parents and university instructors.

Based upon the findings with this sample, it appears that helicopter parenting is a robust predictor of maladaptive social achievement goals (i.e., social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid). Quite often it is university faculty and staff that have the most direct interaction with college students and helicopter parents. Having a more holistic view of helicopter parenting equips administrators and faculty for more positive interactions with this form of over parenting, better enabling them to educate parents on the negative outcomes of such parenting behavior. In addition, universities need to be aware of the contact they initiate with parents. While parents are allowed to be an open part of the financial process of their emerging adult's education, it goes against FERPA for them to discuss their child's grades with university faculty. This might cause some confusion and frustration from the parent if they are not fully aware of what is and is not appropriate parent involvement in a university setting. Ultimately, educating both university faculty and parents on the dangers of helicopter parenting is a

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start in diminishing this negative parenting behavior, which may ultimately lead to emerging adults endorsing maladaptive social achievement goals (social demonstration approach and social demonstration avoid goals) less frequently.

In addition, results of this study suggest a difference in the way male and female emerging adults perceive parenting behaviors from their mother and father, specifically with autonomy support from the mother and helicopter parenting from the father. These results provide justification for further research in this area to gain a clearer understanding of these differences reflected by gender.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this current study. One limitation is that all participants were undergraduates enrolled in the same state university, representing a somewhat homogenous sample of people that, considering they are pursuing a higher degree and striving to better their life, may well have a support network already in place. The majority of participants were female, which did not lend to comparing or finding significant results between male and female participants during the analyses. In addition, over three fourths of the participants in this study were Caucasian. Data was collected at a large Midwestern University, one in which a large population of students are from the Midwest, limiting the ability to generalize this study's findings to a national level. Furthermore, it may be more difficult to generalize these findings to emerging adults coming from more diverse home demographics, such as same-sex parent homes or single parent homes. Although the demographics pose limitations to this study, these findings provide evidence to support additional research related to parental relationships and social achievement goals with a variety of populations. Given such homogeneity might

lead to spurious results, it would be beneficial to examine further these same variables within a variety of populations, including emerging adults in and out of college settings.

In addition to limits posed by a fairly homogenous sample, limitations of the instruments used must also be considered. Although the scales used to measure the main effects of attachment (Inventory of Parent Peer Attachment – IPPA), helicopter parenting, and autonomy support (Helicopter Parenting Behaviors) exhibited sound psychometric properties, the helicopter parenting measure might serve as a limitation for this particular study, particularly with regards to the autonomy support subscale. Specifically, Schiffrin and colleagues (2014) have acknowledged that there is a fine line between promoting independence and promoting autonomy, both of which are important during emerging adulthood. As they go on to explain, even though parents may be striving to provide their emerging adult child with opportunities to practice autonomy, they may actually be forcing their child towards unwanted independence if the child still needs the guidance and support of the parent (Schiffrin et al., 2014). This difference in emerging adult's perceptions of autonomy support versus forced independence may lead to inconsistencies within their measure. For example, one of their statements measuring autonomy support relates to parents encouraging their emerging adult to speak with the professor if they have a problem rather than involving the parent. To some individuals, this could be seen as unsupportive. While parents may have the intent of encouraging autonomy, they may be forcing their emerging adult child towards independence at a time when some guidance and support is still needed.

Future Directions

There is much additional research needed to further explore factors that are related to social achievement goals endorsed by emerging adults. Findings in this study suggest fathers play a significant role with regards to parenting and attachment on social goals endorsed by their emerging adult children. Therefore, researchers should further investigate the relationship between emerging adults and their fathers, specifically with regards to how parenting behaviors and attachment with fathers impact social relationships established during this time.

Based on the findings of this research, there are differences in the relationships emerging adults have with their mothers and fathers. This deserves future examination and might lead to an exploration of the different relationships emerging adults have with the parent of the same gender (i.e., mothers have with their daughters, sons have with their fathers) as well as the parent of the opposite gender. In addition, findings from a recent study revealed helicopter parenting behaviors by the mother are not always perceived as negative by their sons (Rousseau & Scharf, 2015). That is, this form of overparenting from mothers was associated with positive emotional and social outcomes for sons specifically. Future research should include a more balanced representation of males and more nuanced analyses by gender in order to gain a better understanding of how helicopter parenting is related to emerging adult males.

The current study was an exploratory study, one in which the purpose was to explore whether attachment and parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting and autonomy support) had a relationship with social achievement goals. With the results of this study suggesting there are significant relationships between these variables, it is

important for future research to explore this relationship further to gain a better understanding of how parental factors might be related to social achievement goals.

While much of the previous research related to helicopter parenting has focused on negative outcomes, it is important to consider the potential positive aspects of helicopter parenting as well. Helicopter parenting may not always be perceived as negative, especially when emerging adults associate this parenting behavior with emotional support (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). In future studies, researchers could strive to deepen this alternative perspective and explore factors that may serve to moderate or mediate the influential relationship revealed in these findings that helicopter parenting had on social achievement goals.

There were significant results found in this sample for the relationship between helicopter parenting behaviors, autonomy support, and attachment on social achievement goals. Helicopter parenting is related to social achievement goals associated with maladaptive outcomes. In addition to these findings, emerging adults who perceived low attachment to their fathers appeared more likely to endorse social demonstration avoid goal, meaning they lack the social competence needed to feel confident around peers and therefore might avoid social situations altogether. Autonomy support and attachment from the father had a significant relationship with the endorsement of social development goals, signifying that when fathers are supportive of autonomous behaviors, accompanied by perceived attachment, their children may endorse social achievement goals related to positive outcomes. Such findings are noteworthy given the relationship already established between achievement goals and positive outcomes within the academic and social domains. The results of this study ultimately reveal a significant relationship

between parent attachment and parenting behaviors (i.e., helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive) with social achievement goals. Such findings contribute to social achievement goal theory and set the stage for future studies to further explore factors related to social achievement goals endorsed by emerging adults.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Tuesday, April 05, 2016
IRB Application No	ED1669
Proposal Title:	Relationship of parent involvement, parent attachment, and social achievement foals endorsed by emerging adults at college
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 4/4/2019

Principal
Investigator(s):

Amanda McCabe
402 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

Jane S. Vogler
424 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.
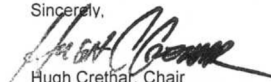
☐ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Hugh Crethar, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

Demographic Survey

1. What is your gender?
   □ Male
   □ Female

2. Age? _____ Years Old

3. Classification?
   □ Freshman   □ Sophomore   □ Junior   □ Senior   □ Graduate Student

4. Please check the item that best describes your ethnicity. Check all that apply.
   □ White   □ African American
   □ Hispanic/Latino   □ American Indian
   □ Asian American   □ Other (please specify): _____

5. How far away do you live from your parents?
   □ Same City   □ 1-2 Hours
   □ 3-4 Hours   □ 5 -8 Hours
   □ Same House   □ Other (please specify):
   _____

6. In what type of living demographic do you currently reside in?
   □ Dorm   □ Fraternity / Sorority House
   □ At home with parents   □ Off campus – alone
   □ Off campus – with roommate(s)

7. Growing up, who did you live full time with?
   □ Both mom and dad   □ Mother
   □ Father   □ Grandparent
   □ Aunt / Uncle   □ Other (please specify): _____

8. Who do you consider to be your primary caregiver growing up?
   □ Mother   □ Father
   □ Grandmother   □ Aunt
   □ Grandfather   □ Uncle
   □ Other (please specify): _____

9. Who do you consider to be your secondary caregiver growing up?
   □ Mother   □ Father
   □ Grandmother   □ Aunt
   □ Grandfather   □ Uncle
   □ Other (please specify): _____

10. How many siblings do you have?
   □ Only child   □ 1
   □ 2   □ 3
   □ 4   □ Other (please specify): _____

VITA

Amanda Lea McCabe

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT ATTACHMENT AND PARENTING
BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT GOALS ENDORSED BY
EMERGING ADULTS

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational
Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in Auguat,
2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Educational
Administration at Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri in 2008.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood
Education at Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri in 2006.

Experience: Graduate teaching assistant in Educational Psychology at
Oklahoma State University (2013 – 2015). Courses taught include
Psychological Foundations for Childhood and Child and Adolescent
Development. Seven years experience as an Early Childhood Teacher,
grades taught include Kindergarten through Third Grade (2006 – 2013).

Professional Memberships: American Psychological Association, Division 15,
Educational Psychology; American Educational Research Association,
Division C, Teaching and Learning