



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Relationship between Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes and Communication Skills of Nursing Students

Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Algılanan Helikopter Ebeveynlik Tutumları ile İletişim Becerileri Arasındaki İlişki

Dilek Uludaşdemir¹, Mine Nur Temuçin², Evrim Kızılar¹

¹Department of Pediatric Nursing, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ankara, Türkiye

²Department of Pediatric Nursing, Ordu University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ordu, Türkiye

Abstract

Introduction: Individuals' social, emotional, and cognitive skills develop through free experiences and independent interactions. However, helicopter parenting attitudes can prevent children from developing risk-taking, problem-solving, coping, and social skills and self-esteem by keeping them under constant supervision. The aim of this study was to determine the effect of perceived helicopter parenting on communication skills of nursing students.

Methods: This descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted with 443 nursing students. Data were collected between November 2023 and April 2024 using the sociodemographic questionnaire, the Communication Skills Scale, and the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis H test, and Spearman correlation with SPSS 24.0.

Results: The mean score of Communication Skills Scale of nursing students was 95.97 ± 13.71 . On the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale, the mean scores were 42.19 ± 9.91 for the maternal dimension and 36.95 ± 9.07 for the paternal dimension, with the maternal scores being statistically significantly higher. Furthermore, statistically significant weak negative correlation was found between the Communication Skills Scale scores and the basic trust subscale scores of the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale ($r = -0.101$; $p = 0.037$).

Discussion and Conclusion: The study determined that maternal helicopter parenting perceptions in the basic trust dimension adversely impact the communication skills of nursing students. These results underscore the critical importance of fostering communication skills during nursing education. It is essential to design and implement programs that enhance students' self-confidence and strengthen their communication abilities throughout the nursing education process.

Keywords: Attitudes; Communication skills; Helicopter parenting; Nursing students

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Correspondence: Mine Nur Temuçin, R.N. Ordu Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi, Çocuk Sağlığı ve Hastalıkları Hemşireliği Anabilim Dalı, Ordu, Türkiye

E-mail: minenurtemucin@odu.edu.tr **Submitted:** 18.04.2025 **Revised:** 25.05.2025 **Accepted:** 10.07.2025



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In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of parents who display overprotective parenting attitudes, commonly referred to as helicopter parenting. The relevant line of studies have shown that university students raised with such parenting styles experience a range of outcomes primarily negative ones.^[1-5] Helicopter parenting is an approach in which parents actively involve in their childrens' lives, even after the child becomes an adult.^[6] Helicopter parenting refers to a controlling and overly involved parenting style, where parents frequently intervene in their child's daily life, make decisions on their behalf, and limit their autonomy and independence.^[5-7] In other words, helicopter parents constantly hover around their children like a helicopter and solve their problems on their behalf.^[8] Helicopter parenting has been reported to negatively impact children's self-efficacy levels, leading to increased dependence on their parents.^[2] The individuals raised by helicopter parents have been associated with negative effects on the social and psychological development of children and adolescents, such as low self-esteem, poor coping skills, reduced levels of adjustment, increased depression and anxiety, and negative social relationships.^[2-5] These types of parenting behaviors are also thought to potentially negatively impact nursing students' communication skills.

Communication skills refer to the ability to accurately interpret and understand the context of what the other person says, taking into account the other person's social relationships during a conversation, and to communicate and interact with one's intentions verbally and nonverbally.^[9] The effective delivery of health care requires understanding the living conditions, beliefs, perspectives, concerns, and needs of patients, and this relies heavily on communication skills.^[10] Effective communication skills are critical for all health professionals, especially nurses who are in constant communication with patients and their families, to reduce medical errors and increase patient satisfaction.^[11,12] Therefore, one of the goals of nursing education programs is to improve the communication skills of nursing students.^[13] However, studies have shown that communication skills of nursing students are affected by factors such as age, academic achievement, satisfaction with their academic program, satisfaction with clinical practice, and parental child-rearing attitudes.^[14-16]

Previous studies have investigated the relationship between helicopter parenting and academic achievement,^[5] learning competence,^[6] depression and anxiety^[1,2] in undergraduate students. However, there is no existing research examining the relationship between helicopter parenting and nursing

students' communication skills. Therefore, more studies are needed to confirm this relationship and provide deeper insights into its implications.

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of perceived helicopter parenting on nursing students' communication skills. The research findings aim to reveal the level at which students perceive helicopter parenting behaviors, the current status of their communication skills, and the relationship between these two variables. In addition, the potential effects of sociodemographic characteristics on both perceived helicopter parenting attitudes and communication skills will be evaluated. The results obtained will provide basic data to understand the communication characteristics of nursing students raised by helicopter parents and to develop strategies to improve effective communication skills.

Materials and Methods

Study Place, Design and Research Type

This descriptive, cross-sectional, and correlational study was designed to examine the effects of perceived helicopter parenting attitudes on communication skills of nursing students. The research was conducted with nursing department students of the Faculty of Health Sciences of a state university in Ankara/Türkiye between November 15, 2023 and April 15, 2024.

Population

The population of this study consisted of nursing students enrolled in the nursing department of a public university in Ankara/Türkiye during the 2023–2024 academic year. During this period, the department had a total of 665 students, distributed as follows: 184 first-year, 164 second-year, 165 third-year, and 142 fourth-year students. The required sample size was calculated using the Sampsiz program (<https://app.sampsiz.org.uk/>) based on known population sampling techniques. The minimum number of participants needed to achieve sufficient statistical power was calculated as 243 students (Precision: 5%; Prevalence: 50%; Confidence Level: 95%). To ensure proportional representation, the population was divided into four strata based on academic year levels. Using the Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Method, the formula " $n_i = (N_i/N) \times n$ " was applied, where N_i is the number of individuals in a stratum, N is the total population, and n is the required sample size. Each stratum's weight (a_i) was determined by dividing N_i by N , and the weight was then multiplied by n to calculate the number of participants (n_i) to be included from

each stratum.^[17] This method was chosen to ensure adequate representation of each academic year level in the study. To achieve the calculated sample size, all nursing students were invited to participate. The study was completed with a total of 423 nursing students (63.6% of the population).

Questionnaires

Sociodemographic Form

This form, developed by researchers, consists of nine questions exploring nursing students' gender, academic year, number of siblings, parental education level, family income status, willingness to choose nursing, the reasons for unwillingness, and place of residence during their education.^[1-4]

Communication Skills Scale (CSS)

The scale, developed by Owen and Bugay in 2014, consists of 25 items and 4 sub-dimensions (Communications Principles and Fundamental Skills, Self-Expression, Effective Listening and Nonverbal Communication, Willingness to Establish Communication). The scale is scored using a 5-point Likert type system (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always), with a maximum possible score of 125 and a minimum score of 25. Higher scores on the scale indicate improved communication skills among university students participating in the study. In the validity and reliability study of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was determined to be " $\alpha=0.88$ ".^[18] In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.92.

Perceived Helicopter Parent Attitude Scale (PHPAS)

The scale developed by Yılmaz (2019) consists of 21 items and four subdimensions: Ethics-Morality, Academic/School Life, Basic Trust/Life Skills, and Emotional/Personal Life. The scale, used by researchers to identify individuals' perceptions of helicopter parenting attitudes, is a 4-point Likert-type scale and does not contain reverse-scored items. When scoring the scale, the maternal and paternal forms are scored separately. For the comparisons between subdimensions, the total score obtained from each dimension is divided by the number of items in that dimension. The highest possible score from the maternal or paternal section of the scale is 84, while the lowest is 21. In scoring, a score between 21-31 indicates an uninvolved parenting attitude, 32-55 reflects normal levels of involvement, and 56 or above indicates a helicopter parenting attitude. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.85 for the maternal section and 0.83 for the paternal section. Furthermore, the construct validity tested with two

separate instruments demonstrated sufficient validity for both forms and all four subdimensions.^[19] In this study, the reliability coefficient for the maternal was found to be 0.868 and paternal subdimensions was found to be 0.863.

Data Collection

Prior to the survey, oral and written explanations were provided about the aim and scope of the study, personal information privacy and withdrawal of consent. The written consent form was obtained from those who voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. The students completed the structured sociodemographic questionnaire, the Communication Skills Scale, and the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale by themselves in the classroom. It took an average of 20 minutes to respond to the questionnaires. The principles of the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights were adhered to at all stages of the study.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were presented as frequency, mean, standard deviation. The normality of data distribution was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Since the data did not exhibit a normal distribution, non-parametric methods were applied. The "Mann-Whitney U" test (Z-score) was used for comparing measurement values between two independent groups, while the "Kruskal-Wallis H" test (χ^2 -score) was used for comparisons among three or more independent groups. For variables with significant differences among three or more groups, pairwise comparisons were conducted using the Bonferroni correction (Bonferroni correction formula= significance level/number of groups). In this context, the significance level of the Mann-Whitney U test used to test the difference between the groups after the Kruskal-Wallis H analysis was accepted as $p=0.012$ for grade level, $p=0.017$ for number of siblings, $p=0.012$ for mother's education level, $p=0.01$ for father's education level, $p=0.017$ for family income level, and $p=0.017$ for place of residence during the education process. In other comparisons made in the study, the significance level was accepted as $p=0.05$. The Spearman correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between two non-normally distributed quantitative variables. To measure the effect size of score differences between groups identified in hypothesis testing, Cohen's d value was calculated. A Cohen's d value of 0.2 was interpreted as a small effect, 0.5 as a medium effect, and 0.8 as a large effect.^[20] All statistical analyses were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows software package (Version 24.0; IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

Ethical Approval

After obtaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Health Sciences at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University (27.10.2023/387-08), additionally, institutional permission was granted by the nursing department (07.11.2023/27139605-605.01-232342). Written scale usage permission was obtained from the owners of the scales used in the study. Data were collected by a researcher who was not involved in undergraduate student courses to avoid any conflict of interest.

Results

A total of 423 nursing students participated in the study. Among the participants, 84.9% were female, 27.0% were second-year students, and 75.9% had three or more siblings. The mothers of 49.6% of the students were primary school graduates, while 34.8% of the fathers were primary school graduates. Additionally, 79.4% of the students reported that their income was equal to their expenses. A total of 52.0% of the students indicated that they did not choose the nursing department willingly; among these, 80.5% stated that they selected the department due to better job opportunities. It was determined that 67.8% of the students lived in student dormitories during their education (Table 1).

The mean score of nursing students on the CSS was 95.97 ± 13.71 . An analysis of the PHPAS revealed that the mean score for perceived helicopter parenting attitudes toward mothers was 42.19 ± 9.91 , while the mean score for fathers was 36.95 ± 9.07 , indicating a higher score for mothers. Among the subdomains of the PHPAS, the ethical-moral domain had the highest mean score for both mothers (2.41 ± 0.72) and fathers (2.09 ± 0.63). Conversely, the basic trust domain had the lowest mean score for both mothers (1.54 ± 0.45) and fathers (36.95 ± 9.07) (Table 2). Additionally, although not presented in the table, 12.5% of nursing students perceived their mothers as helicopter parents, whereas 3.5% perceived their fathers as such.

An analysis of the PHPAS revealed that male students scored significantly higher than female students on both the Perceived Helicopter Maternal Attitudes Scale ($Z = -2.512$, $p = 0.012$, $d = 0.46$) and the Perceived Helicopter Paternal Attitudes Scale ($Z = -2.676$, $p = 0.007$, $d = 0.10$). Perceived Helicopter Maternal Attitudes Scale scores differ significantly according to academic year ($\chi^2 = 18.647$; $p < 0.001$). As a result of Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons; it was determined that the scores of 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students were significantly higher than those of 4th grade students. According to the father's education

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the nursing students (n=443)

Variables	n	%
Gender		
Female	359	84.9
Male	64	15.1
Academic year		
1 st year	104	24.6
2 nd year	114	27.0
3 rd year	105	24.8
4 th year	100	23.6
Number of siblings		
1	14	3.3
2	88	20.8
3 or more	321	75.9
Mother's education level		
Primary education	120	49.6
Secondary education	96	22.7
High school	90	21.3
Bachelor's degree	27	6.4
Father's education level		
Primary education	147	34.8
Secondary education	70	16.5
High school	129	30.5
Bachelor's degree	68	16.1
Postgraduate degree	9	2.1
Family income status		
Income lower than expenses	79	18.7
Equal income and expenses	336	79.4
Income exceeds expenses	8	1.9
Willingness to choose nursing		
Yes	203	48.0
No	220	52.0
If "No," the reason:		
Parental influence	21	9.5
Better employment prospects	177	80.5
Others	22	10.0
Place of residence during education		
Dormitory	287	67.8
Family residence	118	27.9
Shared student housing	18	4.3

level, Perceived Helicopter Maternal Attitudes Scale scores ($\chi^2 = 15.347$; $p = 0.004$) differ statistically significantly. According to the Bonferroni test, nursing students whose

Table 2. Nursing students' mean scores on the PHPAS with sub-dimensions and the CSS

Scales	Mean±SD	Median	Min–Max
PHPAS-maternal			
Basic trust	1.54±0.45	1.5	1–3
Emotional-personal life domain	2.19±0.52	2.3	1– 4
Academic/school life	1.94±0.68	1.8	1– 4
Ethical and moral	2.41±0.72	2.3	1– 4
Total	42.19±9.91	41.0	21–72
PHPAS-paternal			
Basic trust	1.26±0.29	1.2	1–2.8
Emotional-personal life domain	1.89±0.55	2.0	1– 3.5
Academic/school life	1.66±0.57	1.6	1–4
Ethical and moral	2.09±0.63	2.0	1– 3.8
Total	36.95±9.07	36.0	21–61
CSS	95.97±13.71	96.0	49–125

SD: Standard deviation; Min: Minimum; Max: Maximum; PHPAS: Perceived Helicopter Parent Attitude Scale; CSS: Communication Skills Scale.

fathers have secondary school and postgraduate education have higher scores. According to the father's education level, Perceived Helicopter Paternal Attitudes Scale scores ($\chi^2=15.347$; $p=0.004$) differ statistically significantly. As a result of Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons conducted to determine which group caused the significant difference; students whose fathers had a postgraduate education had significantly higher mean scores compared to those whose fathers had completed primary school, middle school, high school, or undergraduate education. A statistically significant difference was determined in terms of the Perceived Helicopter Paternal Attitudes Scale scores according to socioeconomic level ($\chi^2=6.004$; $p=0.049$). As a result of the Bonferroni test, it was determined that the scores of those with high socioeconomic level were significantly higher than those with medium socioeconomic level (Table 3).

Factors such as gender, academic year, parental education level, and willingness to choose the nursing department significantly influenced the students' communication skills levels (Table 3; $p<0.05$). Female students had significantly higher mean scores on the CSS compared to male students ($Z=-2.796$; $p=0.005$; $d=0.10$). A statistically significant difference was found in terms of communication skills scale scores according to academic year ($\chi^2=29.093$; $p<0.001$). Bonferroni-corrected post hoc tests were conducted to determine the source of significant group differences. Accordingly, third-year students demonstrated significantly higher mean scores on the CSS compared to those in the first, second, and fourth years. Additionally, an increase in

parental education level was associated with higher mean scores on the CSS. As a result of pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni correction to determine which group caused the significant difference according to mother's education level; students whose mothers had completed high school or undergraduate education scored significantly higher than those whose mothers had only completed primary education ($\chi^2=13.878$; $p=0.003$). According to the result of Bonferroni correction made to determine the source of the significant difference students whose fathers had a postgraduate education had significantly higher mean scores compared to those whose fathers had completed primary school, middle school, high school, or undergraduate education ($p<0.001$). Furthermore, students who chose the nursing department voluntarily had significantly higher mean scores on the CSS compared to those who did not ($Z=2.154$; $p=0.031$; $d=0.24$, Table 3).

There is no statistically significant relationship between nursing students' CSS and PHPAS total scores ($r=0.021$, $p=0.661$) statistically significant, very weak negative correlation was found between the basic trust subdimension scores of the Perceived Helicopter Maternal Attitudes Scale and CSS ($r=-0.101$; $p=0.037$). This suggests that as students' communication skills decrease, their perceived basic trust scores for helicopter mother attitudes increase (Table 4).

Discussion

One of the most critical factors directly influencing the quality of patient care in healthcare services is the effective communication skills of nurses. While the development of

Table 3. PHPAS and CSS the scores according to nursing student's sociodemographic characteristics

Variables	PHPAS		CSS
	PHPAS- Maternal Mean±SD	PHPAS-Paternal Mean±SD	Mean±SD
Gender			
Female	41.51±9.55	36.40±8.90	96.78±13.01
Male	46.02±11.06	40.08±9.44	91.42±16.46
Analysis	Z=-2.512 p=0.012 d=0.46	Z=-2.676 p=0.007 d=0.10	Z=-2.796 p=0.005 d=0.10
Academic year			
1 st year (1)	44.77±11.21	38.44±10.07	95.19±14.50
2 nd year (2)	41.42±8.54	36.91±8.09	92.00±13.03
3 rd year (3)	43.19±10.54	36.76±9.30	101.51±12.26
4 th year (4)	39.33±8.45	35.65±8.68	95.47±13.37
Analysis	$\chi^2=18.647$ p<0.001 [1,2,3-4]	$\chi^2=5.514$ p=0.138	$\chi^2=29.093$ p<0.001 [3-1,2,4]
Number of siblings			
1	44.29±13.98	38.71±12.67	99.57±12.63
2	42.03±8.88	35.70±8.84	97.61±12.97
3 or more	42.14±10.02	37.22±8.94	95.36±13.92
Analysis	$\chi^2=0.876$ p=0.645	$\chi^2=2.965$ p=0.227	$\chi^2=4.190$ p=0.123
Mother's education level			
Primary education (1)	41.78±10.65	36.75±9.33	94.59±13.59
Secondary education (2)	43.51±9.53	39.14±8.83	94.66±14.90
High school (3)	42.26±9.11	35.60±8.79	99.30±11.85
Bachelor's degree (4)	40.48±7.44	35.30±7.69	100.26±13.91
Analysis	$\chi^2=1.796$ p=0.616	p=0.064 $\chi^2=7.265$	$\chi^2=13.878$ p=0.003 [1-3,4]
Father's education level			
Primary education (1)	41.08±11.31	34.16±8.45	96.13±14.16
Secondary education (2)	43.50±7.66	38.43±8.18	97.60±13.12
High school (3)	43.33±10.02	39.38±9.11	92.37±13.01
Bachelor's degree (4)	39.97±7.57	35.28±8.23	98.93±12.21
Postgraduate degree (5)	50.44±9.34	48.89±11.15	107.44±18.62
Analysis	$\chi^2=15.347$ p=0.004 [4-2,5]	$\chi^2=33.088$ p<0.001 [1-2,3,5] [2-4,5] [3-4,5]	$\chi^2=22.080$ p<0.001 [5-1,2,3,4] [3-1,2,4]
Family income status			
Income lower than expenses (1)	42.61±9.56	37.28±9.23	2.89±0.86
Equal income and expenses (2)	42.01±10.03	36.70±8.96	2.99±1.15
Income exceeds expenses (3)	45.50±8.86	44.25±9.97	2.86±0.98
Analysis	$\chi^2=1.748$ p=0.417	$\chi^2=6.004$ p=0.049 [2-3]	$\chi^2=0.157$ p=0.924
Willingness to choose nursing			
Yes	41.96±11.06	36.82±9.47	97.65±13.96
No	42.40±8.74	37.08±8.69	94.41±13.32
Analysis	Z=-1.149 p=0.251	Z=-0.664 p=0.607	Z=-2.154 p=0.031 d=0.24
If "No," the reason			
Parental influence	44.05±8.77	37.71±7.19	93.95±12.36
Better employment prospects	42.04±8.67	36.90±8.90	94.77±13.31
Others	39.55±8.78	36.55±7.92	98.09±16.32
Analysis	$\chi^2=0.625$ p=0.429	$\chi^2=0.195$ p=0.659	$\chi^2=0.078$ p=0.781
Place of residence during education			
Dormitory	41.76±9.77	36.94±9.38	96.29±13.16
Family residence	43.20±10.34	36.92±8.54	95.52±15.10
Shared student housing	42.33±9.43	37.28±7.65	93.83±13.01
Analysis	$\chi^2=1.216$ p=0.544	$\chi^2=0.027$ p=0.986	$\chi^2=0.996$ p=0.608

Z: Mann-Whitney U test; χ^2 : Kruskal-Wallis H test; SD: Standard deviation; d: Cohen d; CSS: Communication Skills Scale; PHPAS: Perceived Helicopter Parent Attitude Scale.

Table 4. The Relationship between PHPAS and CSS

Scales	Test value	Communication Skills Scale
Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale- Maternal		
Basic trust	r	-0.101
	p	0.037*
Emotional-personal	r	0.050
	p	0.301
Academic/school life	r	-0.003
	p	0.944
Ethical and moral	r	0.063
	p	0.196
Total	r	0.028
	p	0.560
Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale- Paternal		
Basic trust	r	-0.046
	p	0.340
Emotional-personal	r	0.009
	p	0.848
Academic/school life	r	-0.024
	p	0.622
Ethical and moral	r	0.069
	p	0.155
Total	r	0.021
	p	0.661

*: $p < 0.05$; r: Spearman's correlation test; CSS: Communication Skills Scale, PHPAS: Perceived Helicopter Parent Attitude Scale.

these skills in nursing education holds great importance, how students' perceptions of helicopter parenting attitudes shape this development remains a significant question.

In this study, it was unearthed that 12.5% of nursing students perceived their mothers and 3.5% perceived their fathers as helicopter parents, and these rates were found to be higher compared to the study by Tepebaş and Poyraz (2024).^[21] Similarly, in the study by Hwang et al. (2023),^[4] university students perceived their mothers as helicopter parents more than their fathers.

The study found that perceived helicopter parenting attitudes differed by gender. Male students scored higher on the PHPAS compared to female students (Table 3). In the literature, it is reported that male students have higher scores on the perceived helicopter mother attitude scale compared to female students,^[22] but the perceived level of helicopter fathering does not differ by gender.^[21] This

result is thought to stem from traditional gender roles in Türkiye, where parental interventions normalized during the upbringing of females may be perceived as helicopter parenting attitudes by male students.^[21] However, further studies are recommended to determine the impact of gender on perceived helicopter parenting levels. Similarly, it was determined that communication skill levels also differed by student gender. Female students demonstrated higher communication skills compared to males, consistent with the literature (Table 3). This may be attributed to both the earlier cognitive development^[23] of girls compared to boys and the child-rearing practices shaped by societal gender roles.^[22]

It was detected that perceived helicopter mother attitudes and communication skill levels differ according to academic year. Fourth-year students scored lower on the perceived helicopter mother attitude scale compared to first, second, and third-year students. Although not statistically significant, a decrease in perceived helicopter father attitude scores was observed from the first to the fourth year (Table 3). Similarly, Darlow et al. (2017)^[24] found that first-year university students were more open to parental intervention compared to final-year students. As academic year increases, university students' ability to take on academic, social, emotional, and personal responsibilities, and thus their adaptation to university life, may explain their reduced perception of maternal intervention. Similarly, consistent with Hendekci's (2020) study, the increase in students' communication skills as their academic year rises can be interpreted as a result of both improved adaptation to university life and the impact of nursing clinical practices and communication-based courses.^[15]

In this study, while the scores obtained from the perceived helicopter parenting attitude scale did not change according to the mother's education level, the perception of helicopter parenting among nursing students increased with the father's higher education level (Table 3). In the study by Shaki et al. (2022),^[25] it was found out that helicopter parenting attitudes increased with higher parental education levels. In helicopter parenting, parents expect consistently better performance from their children in every aspect of life. Therefore, the expectations and interventions of highly educated fathers may increase the perception of helicopter parenting among their children. It was also observed that as both maternal and paternal education levels increased, the communication skill levels of nursing students improved (Table 3). Contrary to this study, there are studies in the literature reporting

that the communication skills of nursing students are not affected by parental education levels.^[26,27] Considering the significant contributions of highly educated parents to child development, it can be suggested that they positively influence their children's communication skills.

This study found that nursing students with higher income levels also exhibited an increased perception of helicopter father attitudes. The students with higher income levels perceived their fathers as more intrusive. Perceived helicopter mother attitudes and communication skills did not differ according to economic income levels (Table 3). Similarly, it has been reported that students' economic income levels do not affect perceived helicopter mother attitudes or communication skills.^[22] However, more studies examining helicopter parenting and economic income levels are needed to make comparisons. Moreover, the reason why economic status does not influence communication skills may be attributed to the fact that communication skills can be learned and developed. Regardless of economic conditions, university life provides students with significant opportunities to improve their communication skills.

The perception of helicopter parenting among nursing students is similar regardless of whether they chose the nursing department willingly or due to external reasons, and there is no significant difference between the groups (Table 3). Helicopter parents are generally more intrusive regarding their children's education and are more likely to guide their children toward selecting the department and university they deem appropriate.^[20] However, in this study, only 9.5% of nursing students reported choosing the nursing department based on their parents' wishes (Table 1). Similarly, as noted in the study by Ait Ali et al. (2024),^[28] the desire to contribute to society and to have a positive impact on individuals' lives also emerged as one of the primary motivational factors for students. It was also observed that the communication skill scores of students who willingly chose the nursing department were significantly higher (Table 3). Similarly, Aktan and Khorshid (2021)^[29] reported that individuals who chose the nursing profession willingly exhibited higher levels of communication skills. Considering the positive impact of communication skills on patient satisfaction,^[12] the contributions of students who willingly choose this communication-based profession to the quality of patient care will be highly significant. Moreover, making career choices consciously, in line with one's interests and abilities, ensures satisfaction both during the educational process and in professional life.^[30]

This study spotted a significant negative and negligible relationship between the perceived helicopter mother attitude scale's basic trust scores and communication skills. On the other hand, perceived helicopter father attitudes were found to have no relationship with communication skill levels (Table 4). The basic trust subdimension of the perceived helicopter parenting scale addresses parental interference in areas such as clothing, friend selection, and school life.^[19] Therefore, it can be suggested that the perception of helicopter mothers in the basic trust dimension negatively impacts nursing students' communication skills. However, more studies are needed for this.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The first is that it includes only nursing students from a single public university. Another limitation is that the scales used in the study are based on self-reporting; therefore, the evaluation was conducted based on the responses provided by the nursing students.

Conclusion

This study is prominent in that it investigates the relationship between helicopter parenting and the communication skills that form the basis of the nursing profession. It is also important in terms of revealing the level of basic communication skills that undergraduate nursing students must have. According to the study findings, students' gender, academic year, parents' education level, income level, and willingness to become a nurse are factors that affect students' communication skills and perceived helicopter parenting. In addition, students perceive more helicopter parenting attitudes than their mothers. There is a statistically significant inverse correlation between the Communication Skills Scale scores and the basic trust subscale scores of the Perceived Helicopter Parenting Attitudes Scale. This finding suggests that helicopter parenting may have a negative impact on students' communication skills.

In line with this study, it can be suggested that nursing departments create educational modules and activities to develop students' self-confidence, independent decision-making and problem-solving skills. In addition, it is thought that real-life scenarios presented in clinical education can support students in acquiring effective communication skills. This approach can contribute to nursing students delivering high-quality care in the future. Nurses play an important role in coping with helicopter parenting attitudes. It can be recommended that parents organize informative and educational programs to encourage children's independence while guiding their children, and to support their own decisions and communication skills.

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