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Parenting the Millennial Generation

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Helicopter Parents

- National Survey of Student Engagement found that college students whose parents intervene on their behalf are more active in college and more satisfied with college experience
- However, these students often feel an incredible amount of pressure
- Parents of sons more likely to enforce rules through trust building and constant involvement than traditional orders and punishment
- Parents of daughters more likely to enforce their will and saying no



Student Independence

- College life is a transition to a more independent adult college experience (Lucas)
- Regardless of independence level, men and women both desired approval, closeness, and emotional support from their parents (Lucas)
- Men were more likely to be perceived as a result of "parenting" and dependence on approval and reinforcement (Twenge)



Methods

•National survey of 25 Hope College students with Sociology/Social Work majors
 •All phone numbers received
 •Able to contact 15 parents (60%)
 •Survey of 92 Hope College seniors, 10 Juniors, 32 Freshmen in 2 work classes

Initial Study

Hypothesis 1: Better parents are more likely to be Helicopter Parents
 FALSE: $r = -.459, n = 15, p = .09$

•We found that good parents are less likely to be helicopter parents, but our finding was not statistically significant. Due to our small sample, we might still suggest that the hovering of helicopter parenting is not the best parenting practice even if students do appreciate it.

Hypothesis 2: Helicopter Parents are more likely to have high levels of contact with students.
 TRUE:

•This is partially true by definition: helicopter parents are more likely to be highly involved in their children's lives and therefore are more likely to maintain high levels of contact. Interestingly, college students say their parents call them more often than the parents report calling their students.

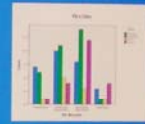


Hypothesis 3: Helicopter parents are more likely to have dependent college students.
 FALSE: $r = -.352, n = 15, p = .23$

•While helicopter parents were more likely to have college students with higher measures of dependence, the finding was not statistically significant. We did find that women were more dependent than men. We wondered if senior and graduates were more independent than first year students just due to aging.

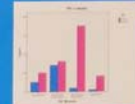
This led us to conduct a follow-up survey

Follow-up Study



PSI x Class
 $\chi^2 (3, n = 92) = 11.860, p = .05$

First year students and seniors are more dependent on their parents. When we looked at this further, we found that first year students needed parents to help them get bank accounts and things related to getting settled into college, while seniors needed parents to help with resume writing and things related to getting them launched from college. It suggests that we need to be more intentional with who we are studying when we research college students.



PSI x Gender
 $\chi^2 (1, n = 92) = 16.818, p = .001$

Women are more dependent on their parents than men. This may be due to socialization that encourages daughters to be more attentive to family matters and boys to be more independent.

Implications

- Over-involved, helicopter parents impeding their children's independence and development may be inevitable
- Parents' involvement appears to be helpful and extensive
- Rather than focusing on the parents of current college students, educators and employers should direct their attention to characteristics specific to the Millennial Generation

Notes:

Need more information?
www.hope.edu/academic/sociology

The mission of Hope College is to educate students for lives of leadership and service in a global society through academic and co-curricular programs of recognized excellence in the liberal arts and in the context of the historic Christian faith.



Hope College
CONNECTIONS



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Reasons to study Sociology & Social Work At Hope College

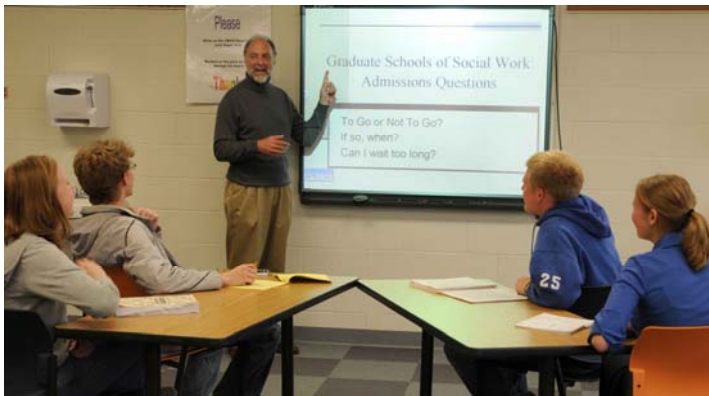
You will learn about interesting relevant social issues like the challenges of dating and marriage; inequality based on race, gender, poverty; and the changing face of religion and culture; and the impact of technology in a changing world.

You will understand more about social institutions that impact your life including family, government, religion, mass media, education and politics.

You will have opportunities to volunteer in community agencies, participate in service-learning projects, and do internships in West Michigan, Chicago, or Philadelphia.

You will be prepared for a career in the helping professions and understand human behavior in a social environment.

You will be infected by the contagious enthusiasm of our faculty who want to help you become an agent of change in a diverse global society.



Advice

from students

"In my experience, social work students have more face-to-face experience than students majoring in other helping professions. Social workers are concerned about the whole person and I think it is important to consider the person in the context of their environment."

Anne Lockwood, '08

"I had the opportunity to volunteer, job shadow and an internship. All these experiences helped me realize I had made the right decision to major in social work."

Effie Van Dyke, '08

"I enjoy studying sociology because it helped me to understand my position as a global citizen. It challenges me to think beyond my own narrow perspective and instead focus on grander issues in the world."

Amanda Bruff, '10

"Studies in sociology include so many areas in life and all the classes are interesting and thought provoking. Sociology prepares me to live and work in a diverse and changing world."

Tara Salas, '09