

The Effect of Perceived Parental Overprotection on Morality in College Students

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Abstract : Parental overprotection is known to have negative effects such as low independence, immature emotion regulation, and immoral behaviors on children's development. This study investigated the effects of parental overprotection on Korean college students' moral behaviors. In order to test the hypothesis that overprotected participants are more likely to show immoral behaviors in moral dilemma situations, we measured perceived parental overprotection using Korean-Parental Overprotection Scale (K-POS), Helicopter Parenting Behaviors, and Helicopter Parenting Instrument (HPI) for 200 college students. Participants' level of morality was assessed using two types of online experimental tasks consisting of a word-searching puzzle and a visual perception task. Based on the level of perceived parental overprotection, 14 participants with high total scores in overparenting scales and 14 participants with average total scores in the scales were assigned to a high perceived overparenting student group, and control group, respectively. Results revealed that the high perceived overparenting group submitted significantly more untruthful answers compared to the control group in the visual perception task ($t = 2.72, p < .05$). However, there was no significant difference in immorality in the word-searching puzzle ($t = 1.30, p > .05$), yielding inconsistent results for the relationship between. These inconsistent results of two tasks assessing morality may be because submitting untruthful answers in the word-searching puzzle initiated a larger sense of immorality compared to the visual perception task. Thus, even the perceived overparenting participants seemingly tended not to submit immoral answers. Further implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

Keywords : college students, morality, overparenting, parental overprotection

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