

**IMPACT OF HELICOPTER PARENTING ON SELF-HELP SKILLS AMONG  
YOUNG ADULTS: A CASE OF LANGATA SUB COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**MASTER OF ARTS COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY**

**KCA UNIVERSITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ARTS &  
SOCIAL SCIENCES AT KCA UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER, 2025**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously published or submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree. I also declare that this contains no material written or published by other people except where due reference is made and author duly acknowledged.

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# **IMPACT OF HELICOPTER PARENTING ON SELF-HELP SKILLS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A CASE OF LANGATA SUB COUNTY, KENYA**

## **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, the phenomenon of helicopter parenting, characterized by excessive parental involvement in children's academic, social, and emotional lives, has gained global attention. While extensively studied in Western contexts, its emergence in urban Kenyan settings remains underexplored. Langata Sub-County, a diverse and rapidly urbanizing area within Nairobi County, presents a unique socio-cultural landscape where traditional parenting norms intersect with religion and modern pressures. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact of helicopter parenting on the development of self-help skills among young adults in Langata Sub County, Kenya. The primary objectives of this study were to assess the relationship between helicopter parenting and three key developmental outcomes among young adults' self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving capacity. The study utilized the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Family Systems Theory in understanding the helicopter parenting. The study employed both structured questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews for qualitative insights. A target population, consisted of 300 young adults aged, between 18 to 30 years, from a population of approximately 1200, drawn from five different churches in Langata sub-county, Kenya. From this population, a sample of 100 participants, was selected through purposive sampling to ensure participants have experienced some form of helicopter parenting. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests such as Pearson's correlation and chi-square, while qualitative data was examined thematically. The findings were expected to provide critical insight into the behavioral and psychological outcomes associated with overprotective parenting styles, contributing to more effective parenting approaches and youth empowerment strategies. The findings are significant as they provide insights into how overprotective parenting undermines the development of essential life skills among young adults, offering guidance for parents, educators, and counselors in promoting balanced autonomy. The results revealed that helicopter parenting was highly prevalent among young adults in Langata Sub-County, with an overall mean score of 3.55 on the helicopter parenting index. Approximately 69.5% of respondents reported parental interference in their personal decisions, while 63.1% indicated constant parental monitoring. A significant negative correlation was found between helicopter parenting and self-reliance ( $r = -0.687, p < 0.01$ ), and between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation ( $r = -0.621, p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, young adults raised under helicopter parenting exhibited lower levels of confidence in handling new challenges (Mean = 2.97) and emotional independence (Mean = 2.77). Qualitative findings reinforced these results, revealing patterns of emotional dependency, indecisiveness, and limited problem-solving initiative, as observed by youth leaders and counselors. The study concludes that helicopter parenting significantly undermines young adults' ability to develop independent life skills, contributing to emotional dependence and reduced self-efficacy. It further establishes that cultural norms, Christian values, and economic dependency exacerbate this pattern by reinforcing parental control well into adulthood. The study recommends that parents adopt more autonomy-supportive parenting approaches that allow young adults to make decisions, take risks, and learn from mistakes. Faith-based organizations and schools should provide mentorship and

psychoeducational programs that promote self-determination, confidence-building, and problem-solving competencies among young adults. Future research should explore the long-term psychological and social outcomes of helicopter parenting in diverse cultural contexts across Kenya.

**Key words:** Helicopter Parenting, Self-Reliance Skills, Emotional Regulation Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, Self-Help Skills.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved family for their unwavering love, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. Your faith in me has been my greatest strength.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I wish to acknowledge my supervisors Dr. Priscilla Gachigi and Dr. Susan Kimotho, for the constant guidance that they have continued to give throughout the proposal writing process. They have been resourceful sounding board with depth of insights into research and writing that has helped me to put this proposal together. I am also grateful to all faculty and staff of the School of Education at KCA University for every contribution they have made to develop me as a scholar. I cannot forget my family and friends for their moral support, that has continued to energize me every day.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|                |                                                            |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ANOVA</b>   | Analysis of Variance                                       |
| <b>FST</b>     | Family Systems Theory                                      |
| <b>NACOSTI</b> | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| <b>P-Value</b> | Probability value                                          |
| <b>SDT</b>     | Self-Determination Theory                                  |
| <b>SEM</b>     | Structural Equation Modelling                              |
| <b>SPSS</b>    | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences                |

## OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

| Term                          | Operational Definition                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emotional Regulation</b>   | The ability of young adults to identify their emotional triggers, manage stress and anxiety, and respond appropriately to emotional challenges without parental intervention.            |
| <b>Helicopter Parenting</b>   | The degree of parental overprotection, control, and excessive monitoring experienced by young adults regarding their academic, social, financial, and personal life decisions.           |
| <b>Problem-Solving Skills</b> | The capability of young adults to identify problems, generate alternative solutions, evaluate options, and implement decisions independently when facing life challenges.                |
| <b>Self-Help Skills</b>       | The combined competencies of young adults in managing their lives independently, regulating emotions effectively, and solving problems autonomously.                                     |
| <b>Self-Reliance</b>          | The extent to which young adults independently manage their finances, career choices, daily living tasks, and personal responsibilities without seeking parental approval or assistance. |
| <b>Young Adults</b>           | Male and female individuals aged between 18 and 30 years who are members of churches in Langata Subcounty, Nairobi County, Kenya.                                                        |

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presented the foundation of the study by outlining the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and research hypothesis. It also included the assumptions, significance, and scope of the study. The study was justified by the growing need to understand how contemporary parenting styles, particularly helicopter parenting, impact the development of essential self-help skills among young adults.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Helicopter parenting refers to parenting being extremely protective and controlling, thus limiting the child's freedom and autonomy (Vigdal & Bronnick, 2022). It has become an important subject in the field of psychology and education because it affects young people's self-reliance, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills.

This style of parenting has been described and researched mainly in societies such as the United States and Europe where early findings have associated this practice with increased level of anxiety, decreased self-efficacy and poor coping skills among college students (LeMoynes and Buchanan, 2011; Segrin et al., 2015). However, due to globalization, change in the economic systems and emerging cultural practices, helicopter parenting has gradually shifted to other parts of the world including Africa. In Kenya, modernization through urbanization, education, and economic development has changed the structure of parenting or childcare, and parental involvement extends to early adulthood years (Githinji, 2012).

Despite the best intentions of providing children with what they need to succeed and be safe, helicopter parenting is problematic. Helicopter parents deny their children the chance to build their own self-help skills making them helpless whenever they face challenges in life. This is particularly worrisome especially given the Kenyan context where the young adults are supposed to assume the roles of working citizens who are capable of being self-reliant, concerning their career paths, family issues and even finance (Odenweller et al. 2014). The issue of helicopter parenting therefore called for this study especially with its relevance in the Kenyan society particularly to the young adults in urban areas.

Western research on helicopter parenting has been conducted pointing out that it contributes to reduced independence, increased anxiety levels and poor problem-solving skills among young adults (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). As noted by Odenweller et al. (2014), helicopter parenting is more rampant in middle to upper classes in the United States since the parents have the financial ability to oversee their children's decisions concerning their academic work and choice of careers. Such parenting has been further advanced by the use of digital technology as parents are now in a position to closely monitor their children by use of mobile phones and social media. Fear-based arrangements are observed in Asian societies where the Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean parents similarly practice helicopter parenting due to cultural beliefs and academic competitiveness. Chinese parenting or "tiger parenting" focuses on strict control and high performance especially academic achievement (Chao, 1994). Although it may have positive effects on academic achievement, research indicates that it can predispose individuals to long-term stress, lower levels of resilience and coping skills to adapt to adulthood (Wang & Kenny, 2014).

According to Githinji (2012), in East Africa, and particularly in Kenya, the phenomenon of helicopter parents has shifted to the urban areas where parents focus their child rearing practices on education and occupational success, regardless of the personal maturity of the child. There has been an increase in the rates of helicopter parents in Kenya, but not much has been done to analyze the effects on the young adult's self-reliance and problem-solving skills.

Previous research on self-help skills has primarily focused on their role in fostering emotional regulation, self-awareness, resilience, and problem-solving abilities in young adults. Studies indicate that individuals with well-developed self-help skills exhibit greater adaptability in academic, social, and professional settings (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). Conversely, overprotective parenting styles, such as helicopter parenting, have been associated with delayed development of these skills, leading to increased dependency and reduced self-efficacy (Segrin et al., 2015).

In this study, the researcher focused on self-help skills, specifically self-reliance, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills, as these are crucial in determining a young adult's ability to function independently. Self-reliance enables individuals to manage personal responsibilities, make independent choices, and develop problem-solving strategies without excessive parental intervention. Self-awareness is a fundamental skill that helps young adults recognize their emotions and triggers, allowing them to manage stress, anxiety, and frustration effectively. It promotes emotional intelligence, enabling them to handle interpersonal conflicts more maturely as well as help them set realistic goals and take responsibility for their actions (Segrin et al., 2015). Emotional regulation allows young adults to handle setbacks and disappointments more effectively, and builds confidence and self-efficacy. Problem solving skills are essential for young

adults as they help them navigate challenges in education, career, relationships, and personal growth.

Focusing on church-based young adults in Langata Subcounty was strategic because they are part of closely-knit religious communities where parental involvement is often reinforced by faith-based values. Langata's diverse, semi-urban population, mainly middle to upper-class, makes it a fertile ground for observing modern parenting trends like helicopter parenting. Churches offer organized and accessible youth groups, facilitating effective data collection and honest engagement. This demographic was under-researched, and studying them offered valuable insights into the cultural and religious dynamics influencing helicopter parenting in Kenya.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The transition to adulthood is a crucial phase where young individuals are expected to cultivate independence, self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. These competencies are essential for navigating academic, professional, and relational challenges in adulthood.

In Kenya, particularly in urban Christian communities such as CITAM Karen, anecdotal evidence from youth counselling sessions and church-based mentorship programs has revealed that many young adults struggle with making independent decisions, managing emotional stress, and solving everyday challenges without relying on their parents. This trend aligns with findings by Wambugu and Muthaa (2020), who observed that over-involved parenting practices in Nairobi's middle-class families often undermine youths' ability to take responsibility for their lives. However, the increasing prevalence of helicopter parenting—a highly controlling and

overprotective parenting style-is threatening the development of these crucial life skills, especially in countries that are less developed. While this parenting style is well documented in Western contexts, where it has been linked to reduced autonomy, low self-efficacy, poor decision-making, and emotional dependency among young adults, less research has been conducted in most African countries (Segrin et al., 2015; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011).

There is a growing under-researched concern that similar patterns are emerging in Kenya and other African urban centers. It is becoming more common particularly among middle- and upper-income families, who—often with good intentions—micromanage their children's academic, social, and personal decisions. Traditionally, many African societies, including those in East, West, Central, and Southern Africa, have emphasized parenting approaches rooted in communal values, respect for elders, and social responsibility. These approaches often fall within authoritative or authoritarian frameworks that prioritize discipline and family cohesion (Nsamenang, 2010; Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). However, across the African continent, including Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana, there has been a noticeable shift toward more modern, individual-centered parenting styles. This transformation is largely driven by globalization, exposure to international education systems, urbanization, and evolving family dynamics (Adegoke, 2015; Vilakazi & Tema, 2020). One of the emerging trends in this context is helicopter parenting, characterized by excessive parental involvement in children's lives—particularly in decision-making, academic choices, and daily responsibilities—often continuing into young adulthood (Segrin et al., 2012).

In Kenya, for instance, studies have begun to document changing patterns of parental involvement, especially in urban settings. Research by Gichuru and Githinji (2021) highlights the

increasing influence of parental control on adolescent social development in Nairobi County. Similarly, Mutua and Kimani (2020) note that high parental involvement, while sometimes beneficial academically, can border on control and hinder the development of autonomy, with young adults increasingly struggling to make independent life choices, including career decisions, financial management, and personal relationships. This trend mirrors findings from Nigeria, where Adegoke (2015) established that certain parenting styles can affect self-concept and personal development, and from South Africa, where Vilakazi and Tema (2020) observed increasing parental control among urban families due to competitive academic environments.

Despite these observations, there remained a gap in scholarly literature regarding the impact of helicopter parenting on young adult development in Kenya. Many young adults remain reliant on parental guidance due to excessive involvement in their upbringing, limiting their ability to function autonomously. This study sought to address the gap in understanding how helicopter parenting influences young adults' self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills, particularly in an urban, church-based setting.

Conducting this research has provided valuable insights into the complex ways that parental overinvolvement affects emotional and psychological maturity. Through both quantitative and qualitative findings, the study has helped me recognize that helicopter parenting is not merely a family issue but a social and developmental concern that shapes the future independence of a generation. It has deepened my understanding of how cultural, religious, and economic factors intertwine to perpetuate dependency and delay adult readiness. Moreover, engaging with youth leaders, counselors, and parents throughout the study revealed that many overinvolved parenting behaviors stem from fear of failure, moral decline, or social judgment rather than intentional

control. This realization underscored the importance of empathy and education in addressing the problem.

The research has, broadened my perspective on the need for holistic interventions that balance guidance with autonomy. It has shown me that effective parenting in faith-based contexts should not be about withdrawal or control, but rather about gradual empowerment—allowing young adults to make decisions, experience consequences, and grow from them within a supportive environment. Practically, this study has helped me appreciate the role that churches, schools, and community programs can play in reshaping parental mindsets and nurturing independence in young people. By identifying the social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of helicopter parenting, the study contributes to ongoing discourse on youth development in Kenya and provides a foundation for designing workshops, parenting programs, and mentorship initiatives that encourage autonomy-supportive family practices. Ultimately, the research process has reinforced my awareness that building self-reliant, emotionally stable, and adaptive young adults requires a collaborative effort between parents, educators, faith institutions, and policymakers. The findings offer both academic and practical value by highlighting the need for a balanced parenting model that supports independence while maintaining strong family connections.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of helicopter parenting on self-help skills (self-reliance, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills) among young adults in Langata Subcounty, Kenya.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research were:

1. To determine the extent to which helicopter parenting impacts the self-reliance skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty.
2. To examine the relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty.
3. To explore how problem-solving skills are influenced by helicopter parenting among young adults in Langata Subcounty.
4. To identify the challenges to developing self-help skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The following research questions were utilized in the study:

1. What levels of self-reliance skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty are affected by helicopter parenting?
2. What are the levels of emotional regulation skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty as a result of helicopter parenting?
3. What are the forms of problem-solving skills among young adults in response to helicopter parenting in Langata Subcounty?
4. What are the challenges to developing self-help skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty?

## **1.7 Research Hypothesis**

*Ha<sub>1</sub>: Helicopter parenting negatively affects the development of essential self-help skills, such as self-reliance, problem solving and emotional regulation skills, among young adults in Langata sub county.*

## **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

In social science research, assumptions are the underlying beliefs that the researcher accepts as true for the purpose of the investigation. They help define the boundaries of the study and clarify the conditions under which the research is conducted. This study on helicopter parenting and young adult development was guided by specific assumptions concerning the honesty of participants' responses, the relevance of selected variables, and the representativeness of the chosen sample. These assumptions were critical in framing the interpretation of results and ensuring that the findings reflect the lived realities of young adults within the Kenyan urban Christian context. The following were the assumptions;

- I. It was assumed that young adults exposed to helicopter parenting face difficulties in attaining self-reliance due to lack of self-help skills.
- II. It was assumed that parental involvement affects emotional regulation and problem-solving ability of young adults in their everyday activities.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it provides a comprehensive understanding of how helicopter parenting influences the development of self-reliance, emotional regulation, and

problem-solving skills among young adults. By exploring these dimensions, the research will contribute valuable insights that can guide parents, educators, counsellors, youth workers, and policymakers in promoting balanced parenting practices and youth empowerment.

Through this research, Parents- will gain awareness of the negative consequences of overprotective and overly controlling parenting. The study will help them recognize how excessive involvement can limit their children's ability to think independently, manage emotions, and make sound decisions. As a result, parents will be encouraged to adopt more autonomy-supportive approaches that promote responsibility, resilience, and self-confidence while maintaining emotional support and moral guidance. This understanding will also help parents strike a balance between guidance and independence, ensuring that their children are better prepared for the demands of adulthood.

For young adults- the study will serve as a reflective tool that helps them understand how helicopter parenting may have influenced their behaviors, attitudes, and personal growth. By recognizing the patterns of dependency and emotional insecurity linked to overparenting, young adults will be empowered to take deliberate steps toward becoming more self-reliant, emotionally stable, and proactive in solving everyday challenges. The findings will also encourage them to engage in self-development activities that enhance autonomy, critical thinking, and emotional maturity.

Teachers and educators will also benefit from the study's findings, as they often play a key role in shaping young adults' learning experiences and personal development. The research will help them understand how parental overinvolvement outside the school environment can affect learners' confidence, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. With this knowledge, educators will

be better positioned to design learning strategies and mentorship programs that encourage independent thinking, responsibility, and resilience among students. They will also be able to collaborate more effectively with parents in promoting healthy boundaries that support both academic success and personal growth.

For counsellors, youth mentors, and social workers- this study will provide practical insights into how helicopter parenting contributes to emotional and behavioral challenges among young adults. The results will help them develop targeted intervention programs that address dependency, anxiety, and low self-efficacy among youth who have been overparented. Counsellors will also be able to guide parents in adopting healthier communication and problem-solving patterns that foster mutual trust and independence in family relationships. In church-based or community mentorship settings, the findings will be useful in developing faith-based life skills training that supports holistic youth development.

Policy makers and stakeholders in education and youth development- the findings will inform the formulation of policies and programs that promote positive parenting practices, mental health awareness, and life skills education among families and schools. The study will encourage policymakers to design frameworks that strengthen family support systems, promote youth autonomy, and integrate parental education into national youth empowerment initiatives.

Finally, future researchers will find this study valuable as it adds to the limited body of literature on helicopter parenting in African contexts, particularly in urban Christian settings like Langata Subcounty. It will serve as a reference point for comparative studies exploring parenting styles, emotional development, and youth empowerment in other cultural and religious environments. In summary, this study will help parents balance support with independence, equip

young adults to take control of their personal growth, guide educators and counsellors in mentoring resilient learners, and inform policymakers about the importance of autonomy-supportive environments. Ultimately, the research will contribute to building a generation of emotionally stable, confident, and self-reliant young adults who are better prepared to face the challenges of modern life.

### **1.10 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study sought to analyze the effects of helicopter parenting on self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills among young adults in Langata Subcounty, Nairobi County. Specifically, the study targeted respondents aged between 18 and 30 years who were members of churches in the area. The survey aimed at evaluating the prevalence of helicopter parenting, its effects on self-assertiveness, and the ways in which it molded the decisions made in careers, finance, and other significant relationships.

The investigation used both quantitative research questionnaires and qualitative interviews to capture comprehensive data. The target population was young adults attending churches in Langata Subcounty, and the sample involved both males and females through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to administer the survey while in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to explore the helicopter parenting experience. The study used previous studies to build a theoretical framework and to aid in understanding the research findings. As a cross-sectional study, the findings may not apply to all young adults in Kenya since the study focused on Langata Subcounty. Nevertheless, the study had the potential of offering crucial information that could help in parenting practices and youth development policies within the urban

Kenyan context. The study did not examine helicopter parenting in rural areas to avoid confounding factors different from those in urban environments.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discussed the rationale, evidence base, conceptual framework, and theoretical framework that guided the research study. It also described the theoretical and conceptual paradigms used in the study.

#### **2.2 Empirical Literature Review**

##### *2.2.1 Helicopter Parenting and Self-Reliance Skills*

Helicopter parenting has been widely associated with noticeable differences in how young adults develop and express independence, particularly in their capacity to handle life's responsibilities and challenges. Individuals who grow up under this parenting style often enter adulthood with limited opportunities to make decisions independently, resulting in reduced confidence in managing responsibilities, adapting to new environments, or dealing with setbacks. Over time, such experiences raise critical questions about how parental overinvolvement influences self-reliance, a key developmental outcome that determines how effectively young adults transition into independent living, careers, and relationships.

Research across different global contexts has consistently demonstrated that helicopter parenting can hinder the development of self-reliance. In the United States, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) conducted a quantitative correlational study involving 438 emerging adults to examine the relationship between parental overcontrol and independence. Using multiple

regression analysis, the researchers found that participants who experienced higher levels of parental control scored significantly lower on indicators of self-reliance. These indicators included the ability to make independent life choices, manage personal responsibilities, and maintain confidence when facing challenges. The study concluded that helicopter parenting fosters dependency by limiting opportunities for self-directed decision-making during adolescence. However, the research focused primarily on university students in Western contexts, where family structures and cultural expectations differ significantly from African settings. This creates a gap in understanding how cultural values and collective family norms interact with helicopter parenting in shaping independence.

A similar pattern was observed in East Asia, where collectivist values already encourage close family ties. Lee & Kang (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 300 South Korean university students using structural equation modelling (SEM) to explore the link between helicopter parenting and autonomy. The findings revealed that parental overinvolvement significantly predicted lower autonomy and reduced self-confidence among students. The study noted that even in societies that emphasize family interdependence, helicopter parenting amplifies dependency beyond culturally accepted norms, preventing youth from developing individual responsibility. However, the study did not account for religious or contextual factors that may either reinforce or weaken the effects of parental control.

In Nigeria, Okafor et al. (2020) adopted a mixed-methods approach with 120 undergraduate students and combined statistical data with thematic analysis of interviews. Their findings echoed previous results, showing that excessive parental supervision and decision-making reduced students' self-initiative and willingness to take risks. The qualitative data revealed that

many participants viewed independence as disobedience, a belief reinforced by strict parental expectations. This suggests that helicopter parenting may manifest differently across cultural contexts, blending traditional authority with modern overprotection. Nonetheless, the study's small sample size and focus on a single university limited the generalizability of its findings.

In China, Wang & He (2019) conducted a longitudinal study of 250 high school students to assess how continued parental monitoring affected independence over time. Using path analysis, they found a progressive decline in independent behaviors such as time management, goal-setting, and decision-making among those exposed to sustained helicopter parenting. The researchers attributed this decline to learned helplessness and the internalization of dependency, where children assume that their parents' involvement is necessary for success. The longitudinal design provided strong evidence of causality, but again, the study did not consider how different socioeconomic or faith-based contexts might mediate these outcomes.

Closer to the Kenyan context, Mugure & Githinji (2021) carried out a descriptive survey among 160 church-going youth in Nairobi County. Through ANOVA tests, they found that individuals exposed to helicopter parenting exhibited limited decision-making abilities and a preference for parental approval before acting. The study was one of the few to explore this topic in a faith-based African setting, highlighting that religious and cultural norms around obedience and respect for authority might intensify the effects of helicopter parenting. However, while it established the relationship between overparenting and reduced self-reliance, it did not deeply explore how these effects interact with emotional regulation or problem-solving skills. This leaves a gap in understanding the broader developmental impact of helicopter parenting on multiple life domains.

Kibet and Muriuki (2021) conducted a quantitative study among 150 university students in Nakuru County using structured questionnaires to examine parental influence on autonomy. Their findings revealed a strong negative correlation between parental over-monitoring and self-reliant behaviors such as independent financial management, job-seeking, and personal goal-setting. Participants from overinvolved families were more hesitant to make major decisions without parental consent, even when they were capable of doing so. This study provided valuable Kenyan data but was limited to university students, leaving out other groups of young adults who may not have had access to higher education but face similar parenting challenges.

Similarly, Adebayo & Ogunleye (2019) conducted a large-scale survey among 200 college students in Lagos, Nigeria, using multiple regression analysis to test the relationship between helicopter parenting and self-initiative. Their results showed that individuals raised under overprotective parents were significantly more likely to seek parental approval for important life decisions such as career choices, relationships, and relocation. The authors concluded that helicopter parenting fosters emotional dependency, delays maturity, and reduces motivation for self-directed growth. However, they acknowledged that most existing studies, including theirs, have largely focused on academic settings rather than examining how these parenting styles affect broader social and spiritual aspects of independence.

Collectively, these studies affirm a consistent pattern: helicopter parenting, regardless of cultural context, undermines young adults' ability to become self-reliant by limiting their exposure to risk, decision-making, and accountability. Yet, the research gap remains in understanding how this phenomenon operates in African urban Christian communities, where both traditional and faith-based values shape parenting behaviors. Few studies have explored how parental

overinvolvement interacts with religious teachings that emphasize obedience and family cohesion, potentially intensifying the suppression of autonomy. This study, therefore, fills that gap by examining helicopter parenting's impact on self-reliance within a faith-based urban setting in Kenya, providing culturally grounded insights into how parenting practices influence young adults' transition into independent adulthood.

### *2.2.2 Helicopter Parenting and Emotional Regulation Skills*

The association between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation has been the subject of extensive global inquiry, reflecting growing concern about how parental overinvolvement affects young people's emotional development and psychological resilience. Emotional regulation—the ability to manage and respond appropriately to emotional experiences—is a fundamental skill that underpins mental health, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being. Helicopter parenting, characterized by excessive control and emotional overprotection, often undermines the acquisition of these self-regulatory skills by preventing young individuals from experiencing and managing emotional challenges on their own. Consequently, a large body of research across diverse cultural contexts has examined the extent to which overprotective parenting compromises emotional regulation among adolescents and young adults.

In the United States, Segrin et al. (2015) conducted one of the most influential longitudinal studies on this topic, involving 462 undergraduate students to assess emotional distress and parental involvement. Using structural equation modelling (SEM), the researchers demonstrated that high levels of parental control and intrusive support were significantly associated with poor emotional regulation and heightened anxiety symptoms. The study revealed that young adults raised under helicopter parenting conditions were more prone to emotional dependency and less

likely to develop coping mechanisms for stress. The longitudinal design strengthened the causal interpretation that parental overcontrol contributes to emotional maladjustment over time. However, the study was limited to a Western population, where independence is a strongly valued cultural norm, raising questions about whether similar emotional outcomes would manifest in collectivist or faith-based contexts where interdependence is more socially accepted.

A comparable pattern was observed in South Asia. In India, Sharma & Agarwal (2019) employed a descriptive correlational design involving 210 college students to examine the relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional control. Using Pearson's correlation analysis, they found a strong negative correlation between the two variables. Students who reported high levels of parental monitoring and decision-making interference also reported greater emotional volatility and lower self-confidence when dealing with interpersonal conflicts. The researchers attributed this to limited exposure to emotional challenges, as overinvolved parents often resolved problems on behalf of their children. Although this study established a clear statistical link, it did not explore the long-term psychological consequences or contextual factors such as religious upbringing, gender norms, or socio-economic influences that may shape the impact of helicopter parenting on emotional regulation.

Ng et al. (2020) in Malaysia conducted a cross-sectional survey with 320 adolescents to further analyze how helicopter parenting affects emotional stability. Through regression analysis, the study revealed that adolescents with helicopter parents displayed higher tendencies toward emotional dysregulation, social withdrawal, and avoidance behaviors. The researchers argued that parental overprotection limits exposure to emotionally demanding situations that are necessary for developing adaptive coping strategies. Interestingly, the study highlighted that emotional

suppression was more common among females, suggesting a gendered component to how helicopter parenting affects emotional expression. However, as a cross-sectional study, it could not establish causality and did not account for religious or cultural factors that could either amplify or mitigate these emotional effects.

In Ethiopia, Tesfaye & Abebe (2021) adopted a mixed-methods approach involving both interviews and surveys with 100 urban youths in Addis Ababa. Their findings indicated that overparenting acted as a major barrier to independent emotional decision-making. Thematic analysis revealed that many participants struggled to manage emotional stress without parental input, often relying on parents for reassurance and guidance during personal conflicts. Quantitative data from their survey supported these themes, showing a strong negative relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional autonomy. While this study provided valuable insight into the African context, it did not explore how religious values or urban Christian norms might interact with overparenting to influence emotional outcomes.

In Kenya, Wambui & Njoroge (2022) conducted a survey among 150 university students in Nairobi and analyzed the data using chi-square tests. Their results showed a significant association between helicopter parenting and poor emotional control, as well as delayed emotional maturity. Students who reported high parental involvement were more likely to experience emotional instability, indecisiveness, and anxiety during challenging situations. The authors suggested that this dependency pattern may be reinforced by urban family structures where parents closely monitor their children's academic and social choices. Despite its relevance, the study was limited by its focus on university students in general, with little attention given to how faith-based environments such as Christian youth communities may reinforce or challenge parental

overinvolvement. This gap highlights the need for studies exploring emotional development within spiritual and communal frameworks, such as in Langata's urban Christian setting.

Mwangi and Ochieng (2022) extended this line of inquiry in Kiambu County, Kenya, by conducting a mixed-methods study among 120 young adults. Their results indicated that emotional dependency behaviors were highly correlated with perceived parental overcontrol, which in turn disrupted emotional self-regulation and increased anxiety. Participants who described their parents as "constantly involved" in their daily decisions demonstrated less emotional resilience and were more likely to experience stress when separated from parental support. This study provided valuable local context and confirmed that helicopter parenting may have similar emotional outcomes in African societies as in Western and Asian contexts. However, it focused primarily on emotional dependency, overlooking how parental control influences other related developmental skills such as problem-solving and social adaptability.

Chen & Lee (2021) in Taiwan investigated 260 adolescents using structural equation modelling (SEM) to explore the relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional resilience. Their results showed that adolescents raised under overprotective parents scored significantly lower on measures of emotional resilience and adaptability. The researchers concluded that emotional regulation was frequently outsourced to parents, meaning that youths relied on their caregivers to manage stress and emotional challenges instead of developing these abilities independently. While this finding aligns with studies in other regions, the researchers noted that collectivist family values in East Asia may complicate how autonomy and dependency are perceived, suggesting that cultural context plays an essential moderating role.

Taken together, these studies provide consistent evidence that helicopter parenting negatively affects emotional regulation across diverse cultural settings. Yet, a significant research gap persists concerning how these dynamics unfold within African urban Christian environments such as Langata Subcounty. Most studies have not examined the role of religion, communal expectations, and cultural beliefs in shaping both parental behaviors and emotional outcomes among youth. This current study addresses that gap by investigating how helicopter parenting influences emotional regulation among young adults in a faith-based urban community, offering contextually relevant insights that integrate psychological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of emotional development.

### *2.2.3 Helicopter Parenting and Problem-Solving Skills*

Problem-solving is one of the most crucial skills for successful transition into adulthood, as it allows individuals to navigate complex life situations, make informed decisions, and adapt to challenges independently. However, helicopter parenting characterized by excessive control, protection, and parental decision-making has been found to interfere with the natural development of these skills. When parents consistently intervene to prevent failure or discomfort, young adults often lack the opportunity to engage in experiential learning, which is essential for cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making competence. A growing body of research from different cultural contexts provides consistent evidence that helicopter parenting hinders the acquisition of effective problem-solving abilities.

In the United States, Schiffrin et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study that followed 300 undergraduate students over a three-year period to examine how parental involvement influenced cognitive and emotional competence. Using latent growth curve modelling, the

researchers found that participants with overinvolved parents demonstrated significantly lower levels of problem-solving and conflict resolution skills compared to those with autonomy-supportive parents. Overparented individuals tended to avoid taking initiative in addressing challenges and displayed dependency patterns when faced with academic or interpersonal problems. The longitudinal approach strengthened causal inferences, showing that sustained parental overcontrol gradually eroded young adults' confidence in their ability to make independent judgments. However, the study's limitation lies in its focus on Western populations, where individualism is prioritized, potentially exaggerating the negative implications of close parental involvement compared to more collectivist cultures.

A similar pattern was observed in Ghana, where Boateng and Agyeman (2018) employed a mixed-methods study involving 140 urban youth. The researchers combined surveys and interviews to explore how helicopter parenting influences creative thinking and decision-making among young people. Through thematic and statistical analysis, they found that excessive parental involvement reduced opportunities for independent problem-solving, leading many participants to rely on their parents when facing social or academic challenges. Participants from middle-income families reported that their parents often dictated their career and education choices, leaving little room for personal exploration or experimentation. The researchers concluded that while parental support is culturally valued in Ghana, overprotection stifles creativity and adaptability skills that are essential for success in modern, competitive environments. However, they noted that their study did not account for the moderating role of religion or community-based influences that may either buffer or intensify the effects of helicopter parenting.

In Asia, Li and Zhang (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study in urban China involving 280 adolescents to assess how changes in parental control affect youth problem-solving competence. Participants underwent pre- and post-intervention assessments that measured critical thinking and self-resolution abilities. Results indicated that when parents were guided to reduce control and encourage independent decision-making, young adults demonstrated notable improvements in analytical reasoning and creativity. This finding suggests that helicopter parenting behaviors can be modified and that empowering youth to take responsibility enhances problem-solving outcomes. However, the study's quasi-experimental nature limits generalizability, as participants may have been influenced by social desirability or awareness of the intervention's goals. Still, its implications are valuable in highlighting that the negative effects of overparenting are not permanent and can be mitigated through intentional parenting interventions.

In East Africa, similar concerns have been documented. Namusoke and Mbabazi (2019) in Uganda surveyed 90 university students to investigate the link between perceived parental overinvolvement and practical problem-solving skills. Using regression analysis, they found a significant negative association, with students reporting that their parents often solved their academic and social problems for them. Consequently, these students displayed limited initiative, struggled to handle academic stress independently, and exhibited lower persistence when faced with challenges. The authors noted that helicopter parenting was particularly pronounced among urban, educated families, possibly due to parents' aspirations for academic excellence and social mobility. However, their study lacked a qualitative component that could provide deeper insight

into how youth interpret and internalize parental overcontrol within their socio-cultural and familial contexts.

In Kenya, several studies have begun to shed light on how helicopter parenting affects young adults' cognitive and behavioral development. Nduta & Karanja (2021) conducted a descriptive survey with 200 young adults in Nairobi and found that helicopter parenting significantly hindered the use of trial-and-error learning strategies, which are essential for problem-solving and innovation. Participants who grew up under strict parental supervision were more hesitant to make independent decisions, fearing disapproval or failure. The study concluded that by shielding youth from mistakes, helicopter parents inadvertently deprive them of learning opportunities that foster critical thinking and adaptability. Nevertheless, the study's scope was limited to general urban youth populations, without exploring specific contexts such as faith-based communities where obedience and parental authority might be viewed positively.

Further insights were provided by Musyoka & Wambua (2022), who conducted a cross-sectional study among 180 university students in Machakos County. Using correlation analysis, they found a strong negative relationship between parental micromanagement and young adults' ability to adapt to unpredictable academic and relational challenges. The findings suggested that helicopter parenting limits cognitive flexibility the capacity to adjust problem-solving approaches when faced with new or ambiguous situations. Students from highly monitored homes were less likely to take initiative in group projects or extracurricular activities requiring independent judgment. The authors concluded that restricted independence during adolescence contributes to poor adaptability in early adulthood. While the study offered valuable quantitative evidence, it did

not address cultural or spiritual nuances that might influence how young people interpret parental involvement.

Complementing these findings, Omondi & Atieno (2023) conducted a qualitative study involving 20 young participants from Christian youth groups in Kisumu. Using focus group discussions and narrative analysis, the researchers found that many participants viewed their parents' overinvolvement as both protective and restrictive. While parents' intentions were grounded in love and spiritual responsibility, their excessive control over their children's daily choices often left youth unprepared to handle social, spiritual, and economic dilemmas independently. Participants reported difficulty in making decisions related to finances, career paths, and relationships without parental consultation. The study provided critical insight into how religious and moral values intersect with helicopter parenting, but its small sample size limited generalization.

Overall, these studies collectively demonstrate that helicopter parenting consistently undermines problem-solving development across diverse contexts by limiting exposure to independent decision-making, reducing self-efficacy, and discouraging creative risk-taking. However, a critical research gap remains in understanding how faith-based urban settings—such as Langata Subcounty mediate these effects. In Christian communities where parental authority, obedience, and collective decision-making are culturally and spiritually reinforced, overparenting may manifest differently, potentially shaping youth problem-solving behaviors in unique ways. This study therefore seeks to fill this contextual and spiritual gap by examining the relationship between helicopter parenting and problem-solving skills among young adults in a church-based

urban environment, offering insights that integrate psychological development with cultural and faith dimensions.

#### *2.2.4 Challenges of Developing Self-Help Skills*

Multiple barriers hinder the acquisition and growth of self-help skills among young adults raised under helicopter parenting styles. These challenges often originate from parental behaviors that, although well-intentioned, inadvertently suppress independence, experimentation, and confidence-building during crucial developmental stages. Helicopter parenting tends to limit opportunities for decision-making and personal responsibility by prioritizing control and safety over autonomy and self-efficacy. Over time, such environments create dependency patterns, where young people become accustomed to parental intervention in their daily choices, ultimately weakening their self-help capacities. A review of empirical studies across different cultural contexts reveals consistent patterns of inhibited self-reliance, yet also exposes contextual differences that demand further exploration in faith-based and urban African settings.

In Canada, McGinley and Rojas (2018) adopted a mixed-methods approach involving 220 college students to examine the psychological implications of overparenting. Through thematic coding and descriptive analysis, they identified key barriers to self-help development, including diminished self-esteem, heightened social anxiety, and reliance on external validation. The participants often described feeling unprepared to manage everyday adult responsibilities such as budgeting, resolving interpersonal conflicts, or setting personal goals. Many reported that their parents' persistent involvement—ranging from managing academic schedules to intervening in social relationships—left them uncertain about their own abilities. The study concluded that this lack of confidence fostered chronic dependency, with many young adults continuing to consult

their parents for even minor decisions. McGinley and Rojas emphasized that helicopter parenting creates an external locus of control, where young adults attribute success or failure to parental oversight rather than personal effort. This psychological mechanism weakens motivation to engage in self-help activities, reinforcing a cycle of dependency that persists into adulthood.

Similar findings emerged from South Africa, where Mkhize and Dlamini (2020) conducted a survey among 180 urban youth to explore factors limiting self-help development. Using ANOVA testing, they found that financial dependence, lack of decision-making experience, and emotional insecurity were prevalent among individuals raised under overprotective parents. Participants expressed difficulty adapting to independent living situations, especially after leaving home for higher education or employment. Many lacked the resilience and initiative necessary to manage challenges such as budgeting, social integration, and stress management without parental input. The researchers noted that helicopter parenting, while less common in traditional African households, was becoming increasingly visible in middle-class urban families. This shift reflected changing aspirations among parents who associate close supervision with social mobility and academic success. However, the unintended outcome was the emergence of young adults who were academically competent yet socially and emotionally unprepared for independent life. Mkhize and Dlamini recommended promoting experiential learning programs that encourage youth to develop life management skills outside parental influence. While their findings were relevant to urban African contexts, they did not address the role of religion or community norms in shaping these patterns—a gap your study seeks to explore.

In India, Patel et al. (2017) provided further insight through a qualitative inquiry involving 70 adolescents. The study examined how parental micromanagement influenced adolescents'

capacity for self-help and initiative-taking. Through structured interviews, the researchers discovered that parental overinvolvement discouraged risk-taking behaviors such as applying for leadership roles, exploring new hobbies, or seeking part-time employment. Adolescents raised in such households frequently expressed fear of making mistakes, preferring to defer decisions to their parents to avoid criticism or disappointment. Patel et al. observed that these patterns of fear and dependence hindered the development of self-efficacy—the belief in one’s ability to overcome challenges through effort and learning. Moreover, many adolescents internalized the notion that their parents’ guidance was superior to their own judgment, leading to chronic hesitation and avoidance of independent decision-making. While the study was situated in a collectivist culture similar to Kenya’s, it did not examine how community institutions, such as religious organizations, might reinforce or mitigate these effects.

Closer to the Kenyan context, Kamau and Nzioka (2020) conducted a mixed-method study involving 110 youth from Nairobi’s Eastlands area, combining focus group discussions and structured questionnaires. Their analysis revealed that beyond parental behavior, broader social and cultural expectations also limit the development of self-help skills. Young women, for example, faced strong pressure to remain under parental supervision well into adulthood, a reflection of cultural norms emphasizing female obedience and protection. Conversely, young men were discouraged from displaying emotional vulnerability, making it difficult for them to seek help or build supportive relationships that could foster emotional growth and independence. Kamau and Nzioka concluded that helicopter parenting in Kenya operates within a framework of gendered expectations, where traditional norms intersect with modern overprotectiveness to create unique barriers to self-development. However, they acknowledged that their study did not explore

how faith-based values—especially within Christian urban communities—interact with these cultural and gendered constraints.

The combined evidence from these studies paints a consistent picture of helicopter parenting as a barrier to self-help skill development across cultural and economic contexts. Overprotective parenting limits autonomy by discouraging experimentation, fostering dependency, and creating fear of failure. However, a significant gap persists in understanding how this dynamic unfolds within faith-based urban communities such as those in Langata Subcounty. In these contexts, parental control may not solely arise from anxiety about safety or success but may also be reinforced by religious teachings that emphasize obedience, submission to authority, and collective family decision-making. These values, while morally grounded, can inadvertently stifle young adults' capacity to act independently, manage emotions, and develop resilience when faced with life's challenges. Furthermore, urbanization introduces additional complexities, such as exposure to global parenting ideals and increased academic pressure, which may intensify parental monitoring.

This study therefore sought to address these contextual and cultural gaps by investigating how helicopter parenting influences self-help skill development among Christian urban youth in Langata. By focusing on a faith-based setting, the research aimed to explore the nuanced interaction between spiritual beliefs, modern parenting trends, and youth development. Understanding these intersections is vital for developing culturally and spiritually responsive interventions that promote autonomy while preserving family cohesion. Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on youth empowerment by identifying the unique barriers to

self-help skills in Kenya's evolving urban and religious landscape and proposing strategies that encourage a healthier balance between parental guidance and individual independence.

The reviewed literature provides substantial evidence that helicopter parenting has significant implications for the development of key life skills among young adults particularly self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving. Across diverse cultural contexts, the findings consistently demonstrate that excessive parental control undermines the autonomy and adaptive capacities required for successful adult functioning. Despite variations in methodology, cultural orientation, and sample characteristics, most studies converge on the conclusion that helicopter parenting inhibits independence and emotional maturity.

Globally, empirical studies from the United States, South Korea, India, China, and Nigeria have established that overinvolved parenting reduces opportunities for young people to make independent decisions and learn from personal experiences. These studies show that when parents frequently intervene in their children's affairs—ranging from academic tasks to social relationships—youth are less likely to develop confidence in their own judgment. The evidence from longitudinal and cross-sectional designs alike underscores that the suppression of autonomy leads to dependency, diminished initiative, and a delayed transition into adulthood. However, much of this research has focused on Western and Asian societies, with limited exploration of how these dynamics play out in African settings.

With regard to emotional regulation, numerous studies highlight that helicopter parenting contributes to emotional immaturity, heightened anxiety, and poor stress management. Overparented youth often outsource emotional coping mechanisms to their parents, leading to difficulties in managing distress independently. Research from the United States (Segrin et al.,

2015), Asia (Sharma & Agarwal, 2019; Ng et al., 2020), and African countries such as Kenya (Wambui & Njoroge, 2022) consistently shows that emotional dependency is a recurrent outcome of excessive parental involvement. Although cultural and familial expectations may differ, the underlying psychological mechanisms overprotection, lack of autonomy, and avoidance of failure appear universal. Nevertheless, gaps remain in understanding how religious and spiritual frameworks might mediate these effects, particularly in faith-based communities where obedience and dependence on authority figures are culturally reinforced.

In the domain of problem-solving, evidence indicates that helicopter parenting limits creativity, critical thinking, and adaptive decision-making. Studies conducted in the United States (Schiffrin et al., 2014), Ghana (Boateng & Agyeman, 2018), and Kenya (Nduta & Karanja, 2021) demonstrate that young adults raised in highly controlled environments often avoid risk-taking and exhibit a fear of making mistakes. Such tendencies hinder the trial-and-error learning that is essential for building resilience and problem-solving capacity. While these findings are consistent across regions, they also reveal a lack of exploration into context-specific influences such as faith-based norms, urbanization, and evolving family structures, which may shape how young people internalize parental involvement.

Overall, the reviewed studies converge on three key themes. First, helicopter parenting consistently diminishes young adults' capacity for self-directed growth by restricting autonomy and opportunities for decision-making. Second, it fosters emotional dependency and poor regulation skills, as parents often act as emotional managers rather than guides. Third, it impedes the acquisition of critical problem-solving abilities by discouraging exploration, risk-taking, and independent reasoning. Despite these insights, most existing literature remains concentrated in

Western or Asian contexts, with African studies only beginning to emerge. Moreover, few investigations have integrated religious, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions factors that are particularly relevant in urban.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The research was based on two psychological theories, namely Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Family Systems Theory. These theories helped in explaining how helicopter parenting may affect the development of self-help skills such as self-reliance, self-regulation, and problem-solving among young adults. The theoretical background chosen offered the conceptual foundation for understanding how overprotection influences self-development and self-organization during emerging adulthood.

### *2.3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)*

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was conceptualized by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in the 1980s and is a macro theory aimed at explaining human motivation, personality, and optimal functioning and well-being. At the core of SDT is the belief that people are born with innate potential to develop and to have autonomy, but this potential can be supported or thwarted by the environment, of which parenting is a critical context.

SDT outlines three psychological needs that are crucial for psychological development, personal integration, and psychological health: autonomy (the extent to which individuals can control their behavior and achieve their objectives), competence (the desire to acquire knowledge and master skills), and relatedness (the need to have affiliation with people or objects).

When these needs are met, people function in purposeful, self-directed ways and gain competencies like problem-solving and self-reliance skills. Yet when these needs are prevented, particularly by outside intervention or over guarding, normal development can be compromised. Schifffrin et al. (2014) used SDT to explain the effects of helicopter parenting on college students' wellbeing, finding that this style of parenting, by intervening in the child's affairs, causes lack of autonomy in young persons and robs them of the ability to have control in their lives. This can deter intrinsic interests and hinder the acquisition of self-help skills. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), individuals need intrinsic motivation such as self-organization to help build problem-solving and self-regulation skills.

In the context of Kenyan urbanity where this study was set, youth are under rising pressure to succeed academically, socially and professionally. This may stem from positive motivation as parents wish their children to succeed or to shield them from certain dangers in society, but the end result is that young adults are not able to be self-reliant. SDT helped explain why this particular style of parenting may prevent the attainment of psychological needs, hence impeding self-help skills.

### *2.3.2 Family Systems Theory*

Family Systems Theory by Bowen (1978) postulates that a family is a unit of specified emotional interconnected systems where members function at different levels interchangeably and affect each other. The theory focuses on processes that define how a family operates, such as the creation and sustaining of roles and communication patterns. Christine Claudie et al. (2025) found that helicopter parenting negatively affects emerging adults' self-differentiation, especially reducing emotional distancing and relational sensitivity. This finding was supported by FST.

In Bowen's model, one of the significant roles of a family system is to find the intermediate between being connected with other individuals and being a unique and independent personality. Close-knit families where people are enmeshed and attached to one another are counterproductive when it comes to personal growth within the family, especially for children. Helicopter parenting usually arises where the child is regarded as an appendage of the parent and not a separate person.

In these cases, parents may experience anxiety regarding the child's future or their rank or status and to alleviate that anxiety, they may attempt to heavily control the child's environment. Though this may seem to give the child a sense of comfort or structure, it can greatly hamper their personal development including in the areas of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and problem solving without parental assistance.

Family Systems Theory also outlines the differentiation of self as the extent to which an individual stays connected to the family while maintaining their own ideas, feelings, and actions. Lack of differentiation results in dependence on family members for decision making and emotional support. Moreover, helicopter parenting hinders the development of differentiation since it stifles the ability for independent thinking while cultivating emotional dependence on the parent.

The integration of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Family Systems Theory (FST) offered a unique lens for examining helicopter parenting. SDT emphasized the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for personal growth, while FST viewed the family as an interconnected emotional unit that shapes individual behavior. When helicopter parenting disrupts autonomy, as highlighted in SDT, it also creates overdependence within the family structure, a phenomenon explained by FST's concept of poor differentiation. Together,

these theories revealed that the denial of autonomy and competence within family systems fosters emotional enmeshment, limiting young adults' capacity for self-reliance and problem-solving.

Existing literature provides substantial evidence that helicopter parenting negatively influences young adults' autonomy, emotional well-being, and problem-solving abilities across diverse cultural settings. Studies conducted in the United States (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin et al., 2015), Asia (Lee & Kang, 2018; Li & Zhang, 2020), and parts of Africa (Okafor et al., 2020; Namusoke & Mbabazi, 2019) consistently indicate that excessive parental control is associated with lower self-reliance, poor emotional regulation, and weak problem-solving competence. These findings have established a general consensus that helicopter parenting hinders independent functioning among emerging adults. However, despite this growing body of knowledge, several critical gaps remain, particularly in the African and Kenyan contexts.

Most existing studies have been conducted in Western or Asian societies, where parenting styles, family structures, and youth transitions to independence differ significantly from those in African urban communities. Few studies have examined how helicopter parenting manifests and affect youth in Kenya, especially within faith-based urban settings such as Langata Sub-County. In such contexts, parenting is deeply intertwined with cultural expectations of obedience, Christian values of submission, and extended family influence — factors that may shape both parental involvement and youth responses in unique ways. While Kenyan studies (Mugure & Githinji, 2021; Nduta & Karanja, 2021) have begun to explore overparenting, they often focus on academic or behavioral outcomes rather than the broader domain of self-help skills, which encompass self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving.

Moreover, most previous research relies predominantly on quantitative designs, which, while effective in identifying correlations, provide limited insight into the lived experiences and cultural interpretations of helicopter parenting. There is insufficient qualitative understanding of why and how overparenting persists in urban Kenyan Christian families, and how young adults perceive its influence on their readiness for independent living. The interaction between parental religiosity, cultural norms, and youth autonomy remains largely unexplored, leaving a contextual blind spot in current scholarship.

Therefore, this study addressed these gaps by employing a mixed-method approach to explore both the measurable patterns and the lived experiences of helicopter parenting among young adults in Langata Sub-County. It integrated quantitative data on self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving with qualitative insights from youth leaders and counsellors to reveal how parental over-involvement shapes the development of self-help skills in faith-based urban settings. By situating the analysis within Kenya's socio-cultural and religious environment, this study provides a more contextualized understanding of helicopter parenting and its implications for youth independence and psychosocial growth — an area that remains underrepresented in current research.

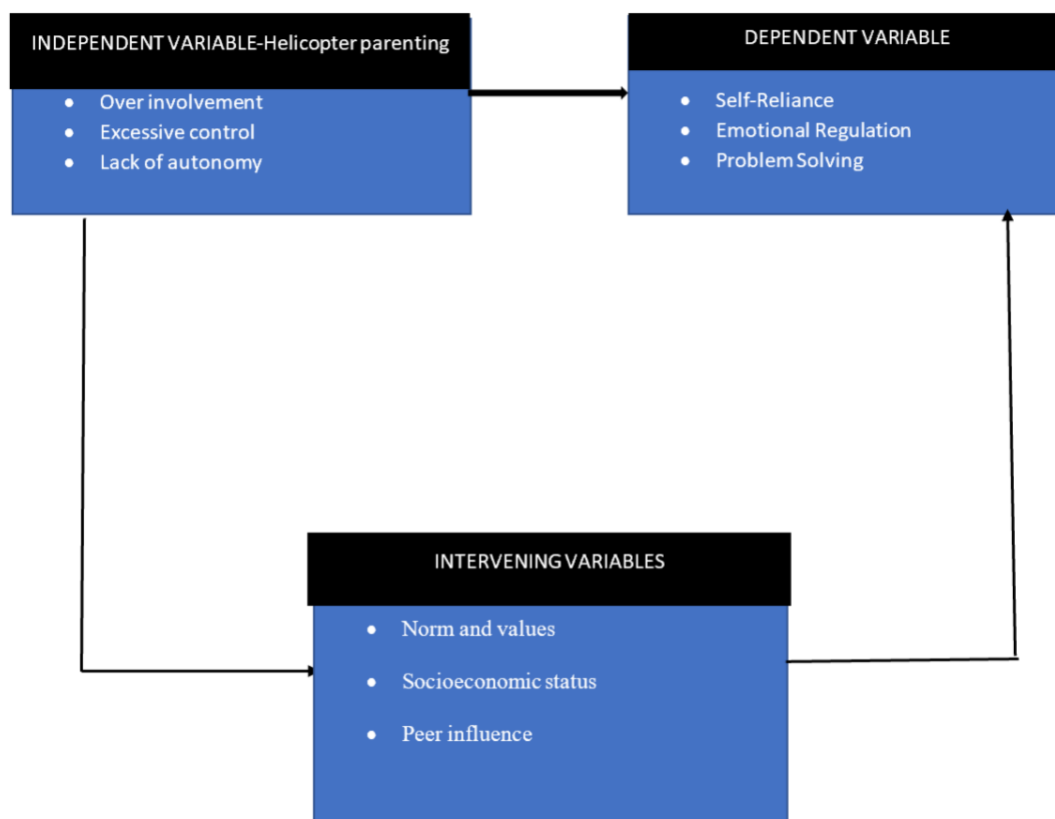
## **2.4. Conceptual Framework**

This study investigated the relationship between helicopter parenting (independent variable) and self-help skills (dependent variables), particularly focusing on self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills among young adults. The study also recognized the role of intervening variables such as norms and values and socioeconomic status, which may

shape or moderate the impact of helicopter parenting on the development of self-help competencies.

**Figure 2. 1**

**Conceptual Framework**



In this study, the independent variable was helicopter parenting, referring to a parenting style characterized by over-involvement, excessive control, and lack of autonomy in young adults' activities and decisions. The dependent variables were the self-help skills of young adults, including competencies such as self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. These skills are crucial for independence and adult functioning.

The relationship between helicopter parenting and self-help skills may not exist in isolation. Intervening variables are those that may influence or mediate this relationship. In this study, key intervening variables included norms and values (which may be influenced by cultural or religious expectations). Values such as obedience, collectivism, and respect for authority may intensify the effects of helicopter parenting, as youth raised in such settings might accept parental control as normal, limiting self-reliance and decision making. Socioeconomic status was another intervening variable, as in low SES families, helicopter parenting may worsen dependence since limited resources reduce opportunities for independence growth such as job seeking or financial management. In high SES families, overparenting might reduce autonomy as parents make education, career and relational decisions for young adults. Peer influence was also considered, as supportive and independent peers can counteract the effects of helicopter parenting by modeling autonomy, whereas dependent peers may worsen the lack of self-help skills.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter was to explain and describe the approach that was used when conducting the study. It explained the research design, the population in focus, sample size determination and sampling technique, instruments, data collection techniques, research validity and reliability, data analysis approaches, and considerations of the ethical nature of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Based on the research questions and objectives, this study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design. A descriptive design was useful when the goal was to gather detailed information that reflected the current status or perceptions of a specific population. This enabled the researcher to identify patterns, frequencies, relationships, and behaviors without manipulating any variables (Doyle et al., 2020). This design was useful because it enabled the researcher to obtain quantitative data about self-help skills of young adults resulting from helicopter parenting. A descriptive study was most suitable for establishing features, actions, and trends within the population of interest without changing the environment (Siedlecki, 2020). This research facilitated the identification of the link between helicopter parenting and self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities.

### **3.3. Study Location**

The research was primarily undertaken among the congregations of several churches in Langata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. This location was appropriate because it has a large population of young adults of different economic statuses and cultures, offering the perfect context in which to study helicopter parenting among young urban individuals and investigate their ability to develop self-help skills.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The target population was young adults aged between 18 and 30 years who were either members or regular worshippers in Langata Subcounty, with a target population of 300 from different churches. This age group was relevant as it represented the transition between childhood and adulthood where self-help skills ought to be in development but may be hindered by overprotective parents.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design and used purposive sampling to identify respondents. The target population comprised approximately 300 young adults aged 18-30 years who actively participated in youth fellowships and programs across churches in Langata Subcounty from a population of 1200. This age group was ideal because it represented the transition to adulthood, a phase during which the development of self-help skills such as independence, emotional regulation, and problem-solving becomes critical.

From this population, a sample of 100 participants was drawn. While purposive sampling may have limited generalizability, it was justified here as it ensured that individuals with relevant exposure to helicopter parenting were represented. Unlike earlier designs that restricted participation to those scoring above a certain threshold of helicopter parenting, this study included participants across the full spectrum of exposure (low, moderate, and high). This allowed comparative analysis of how different intensities of helicopter parenting influenced self-help skills. To enhance diversity and inclusiveness, the sample was drawn to balance age brackets (18-22, 23-26, 27-30), gender, and church backgrounds.

### **3.6. Data Collection Instruments**

The study employed structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interview guides as the primary tools for data collection. The structured questionnaires were designed to capture demographic information and examine parenting styles alongside the development of self-help skills, specifically focusing on self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving. Most questions were close-ended and coded on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while a few open-ended items allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences. This design ensured both quantifiable data and deeper insights into personal perspectives.

In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were formally included to explore shared experiences of helicopter parenting. Each discussion group comprised 8-10 young adults and was guided by semi-structured prompts targeting issues such as independence, problem-solving, and parental influence. These FGDs served to validate and enrich data collected from the questionnaires. Furthermore, interview guides were used to conduct semi-structured interviews

with youth leaders and counsellors. Their selection was purposive, based on at least one year of experience mentoring young adults and dealing with issues such as dependency on parents, decision-making, and emotional regulation. The insights from these leaders provided valuable expert perspectives on the behavioral and emotional development of young adults in Langata subcounty.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection process followed a systematic sequence. To begin with, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the university's graduate school and secured a research license from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Following this, authorization letters were presented to church authorities in Langata Subcounty to gain permission to collect data during youth fellowships and related activities. Once approvals were in place, participant recruitment was carried out using a preliminary screening tool embedded in the questionnaire to categorize young adults into low, moderate, or high exposure to helicopter parenting. This classification ensured diversity in the analysis of varying levels of parental influence.

After recruitment, the main phase of data collection commenced. Questionnaires were distributed to 100 purposively selected young adults during scheduled youth meetings, while 3 focus group discussions, each involving 8-10 participants, were organized to elicit collective insights into experiences of helicopter parenting. Additionally, interviews were held with 7 youth leaders and counsellors who met the inclusion criteria. Throughout the process, participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, reassured about confidentiality and anonymity, and reminded of their right to withdraw at any point without any repercussions. This systematic

approach ensured that data were collected ethically, inclusively, and with adequate rigor to support the objectives of the study.

### **3.8. Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research findings, both validity and reliability measures were rigorously applied during the development and testing of the research instruments. Content validity was achieved through expert review and iterative refinement of the questionnaire and interview guides. The instruments were assessed by professionals in psychology, counselling, and educational research to determine the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of each item in relation to the study objectives. The research supervisors played a key role in this process by providing constructive feedback and ensuring that all questions accurately reflected the dimensions of helicopter parenting and self-help skills specifically self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. Based on their recommendations, ambiguous items were reworded, redundant questions were eliminated, and the overall structure of the tools was aligned with the conceptual framework of the study. To further enhance content validity, a pilot exercise was conducted with five participants who shared similar characteristics with the target population but were not included in the main study. The pilot helped identify unclear instructions, leading to minor adjustments in question wording and sequencing to improve comprehension and flow.

Reliability of the instruments was established through a pilot test involving a small sample of respondents who were excluded from the final survey. This pilot data was subjected to internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which determines how closely related a set of items are as a group. The results yielded reliability coefficients of 0.78 for helicopter parenting items, 0.81 for self-reliance, 0.79 for emotional regulation, and 0.76 for problem-solving

skills. All coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), indicating acceptable internal consistency and suggesting that the items within each construct reliably measured the same underlying concept. The high reliability coefficients also reflected the coherence of the items and the effectiveness of the pilot phase in refining them for clarity and precision. The combined use of expert validation, pilot testing, and statistical reliability assessment ensured that the data collection instruments were both conceptually sound and empirically stable. This methodological rigor increased confidence that the tools accurately captured the constructs under investigation, thereby enhancing the credibility, replicability, and overall robustness of the study's findings.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in line with the study objectives and hypotheses. Quantitative data from the structured questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To test the stated hypotheses, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between helicopter parenting and the development of self-help skills, such as self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving. Where appropriate, an Independent Samples t-test was applied to compare mean differences in self-help skills development between groups experiencing different levels of helicopter parenting. Additionally, the Chi-square Test was employed to test for associations between relevant categorical variables, particularly living situation and self-help skills development.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that helicopter parenting predicts self-help skills development. The regression model examined helicopter parenting as the

independent variable and composite self-help skills as the dependent variable. Model fit statistics including R-squared, ANOVA results, and regression coefficients were calculated to determine the predictive power of the model.

Qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically, guided by the study objectives. The thematic analysis process involved transcribing all audio recordings, reading through transcripts multiple times to familiarize with the data, coding data segments based on emerging patterns, grouping codes into themes, and selecting representative quotes to illustrate key themes. This enriched the interpretation of the statistical results and provided context to the findings.

The mixed-method approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between helicopter parenting and the development of self-help skills among young adults. Quantitative data, gathered through structured questionnaires, provided measurable insights into the prevalence and intensity of helicopter parenting behaviors as well as their statistical association with self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. This numerical evidence established patterns and correlations that could be objectively analyzed. However, the phenomenon of parenting and its psychological impacts are deeply influenced by context, culture, and individual experiences—factors that cannot be fully captured through numbers alone. Therefore, qualitative methods, including focus group discussions and interviews with youth leaders and counsellors, complemented the quantitative findings by providing depth, context, and personal narratives that explained why and how helicopter parenting affects young adults' independence and emotional development. Combining these two approaches enhanced the validity and richness of the findings by allowing triangulation,

where results from one method reinforced and clarified those from the other. Overall, the mixed-method design was suitable because it integrated both breadth and depth of understanding, producing a more holistic and nuanced picture of the issue within the unique socio-cultural context of Langata Sub-County.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical clearance was sought from KCA University's Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (SERC). This clearance confirmed that the study met ethical standards for research involving human participants. Only after obtaining this approval did data collection begin. The researcher also sought formal permission from church leadership in Langata Subcounty to conduct the study within the targeted youth groups. A research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which authorized data collection within the country and ensured the study was aligned with national research priorities and standards.

Several key ethical considerations guided the research process. First, informed consent was obtained from all participants. All participants were fully informed about the nature, purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of the study. They were required to sign a written informed consent form before participating. Second, participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences or coercion.

Third, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Participants' identities were protected throughout the research process. No names or identifying information were recorded or

published. All data collected were coded and stored securely to ensure confidentiality. Fourth, the principle of non-maleficence was observed. The research was designed to minimize any potential harm, discomfort, or distress to the participants. Questions were posed respectfully and sensitively, especially given the personal nature of some parenting experiences.

Finally, the information collected was used strictly for academic purposes. It was not shared for commercial or non-research-related use. By adhering to these ethical standards, the study aimed to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of all participants while ensuring that the findings were credible and ethically grounded.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the study on the impact of helicopter parenting on self-help skills among young adults in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. The data was collected from young adults aged 18-30 years through structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews with youth leaders and counsellors. The findings are organized according to the four research objectives, with each section presenting results followed by immediate discussion of their implications.

## 4.2 Response Rate

**Table 4. 1**

**Demographic profile of respondents (N=92)**

| Variable          | Category         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age               | 18-22 years      | 30        | 32.6           |
|                   | 23-26 years      | 38        | 41.3           |
|                   | 27-30 years      | 24        | 26.1           |
| Gender            | Male             | 48        | 52.2           |
|                   | Female           | 44        | 47.8           |
| Education Level   | Secondary School | 14        | 15.2           |
|                   | College/Diploma  | 27        | 29.3           |
|                   | Undergraduate    | 43        | 46.7           |
|                   | Postgraduate     | 8         | 8.7            |
| Employment Status | Employed         | 36        | 39.1           |
|                   | Self-Employed    | 26        | 28.3           |
|                   | Unemployed       | 30        | 32.6           |
| Living Situation  | With Parents     | 42        | 45.7           |
|                   | Independently    | 26        | 28.3           |
|                   | Student Housing  | 16        | 17.4           |
|                   | With Relatives   | 8         | 8.7            |

Table 4.1 above presents the response rate and the demographic characteristics of the respondents, in this survey; number of questionnaires admitted and the number which was filled and returned and its representation in term of percentage.

In this study, collection of the data had a sample of 100 collected from the 300 targeted population. Out of 100 questionnaires distributed to young adults across five churches in Langata Sub-County, 92 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 92%. Additionally, three focus group discussions were conducted with 24 participants (8 per group), and seven interviews were held with youth leaders and counsellors out of the planned eight. The high response rate of 92% for questionnaires, 100% for focus groups, and 87.5% for interviews enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings, providing a robust dataset for analysis.

#### **4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

In this study, the demographic characteristics of the respondents provided essential context for interpreting the study's findings. The age distribution indicated that a large proportion of participants (41.3%) were between 23–26 years, followed by 18–22 years (32.6%) and 27–30 years (26.1%). This range captured young adults at different stages of psychosocial and economic transition, from those newly entering adulthood to those expected to have achieved a degree of independence. Such diversity in age provided a balanced understanding of how helicopter parenting affects self-help skill development at varying maturity levels.

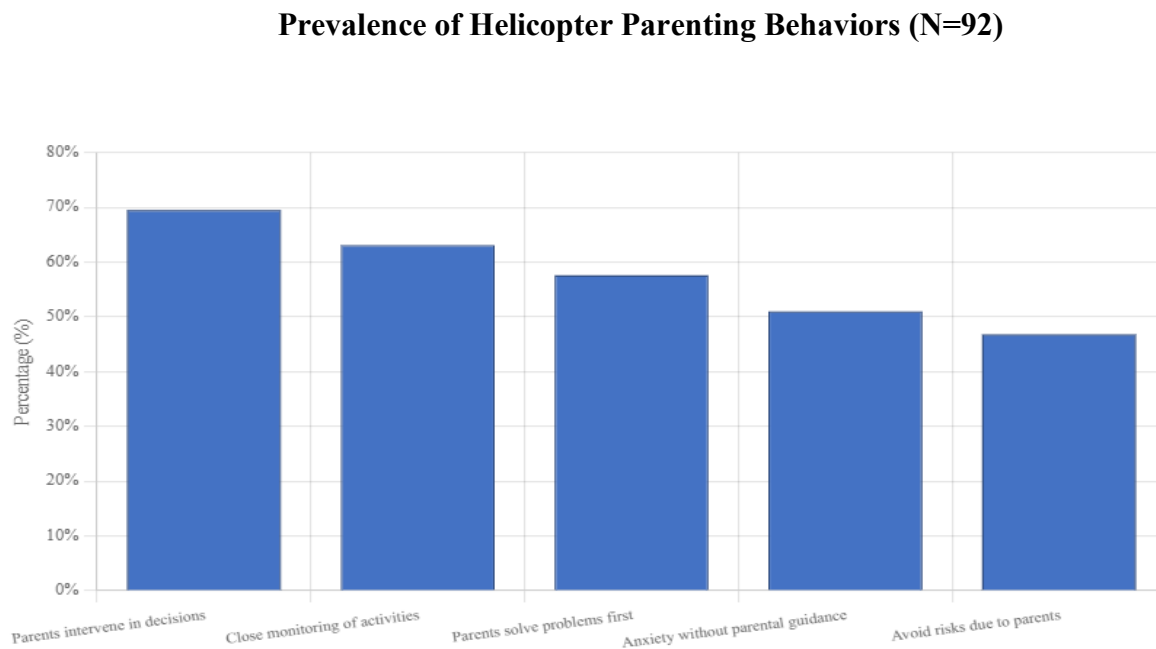
Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 52.2% male and 47.8% female respondents, ensuring that the study reflected experiences across both genders. This balance enriched the analysis by allowing comparison of how helicopter parenting manifests differently in

male and female young adults. Regarding educational attainment, most respondents were well-educated: 46.7% had undergraduate degrees, 29.3% held college diplomas, 15.2% had completed secondary education, and 8.7% were pursuing postgraduate studies. This education profile reflected the middle-class, urban character of Langata Subcounty and underscored the participants' capacity for self-reflection and understanding of parental influence. The study revealed employment of mixed economic engagement: 39.1% were employed, 28.3% self-employed, and 32.6% unemployed. This pattern is typical of urban Kenyan youth and highlights the socio-economic challenges young adults face despite educational progress. Living arrangements further illustrated the dynamics of dependency and autonomy, with 45.7% living with parents, 28.3% living independently, 17.4% in student housing, and 8.7% with relatives. The high proportion of young adults still residing with their parents points to sustained parental influence, which may reinforce helicopter parenting behaviors and delay full independence. The demographic patterns observed in this study have significant implications for understanding the impact of helicopter parenting on young adults' self-help skills. The concentration of respondents within the 18–30 age range highlights a population actively navigating the balance between dependence and autonomy—making them particularly vulnerable to overprotective parenting practices. The relatively high educational attainment, coupled with notable unemployment and continued co-residence with parents, suggests that economic dependency may reinforce parental control, limiting opportunities for decision-making and self-reliance. Moreover, the gender balance offers insights into potential gendered experiences of helicopter parenting, such as stricter control over daughters or higher performance expectations for sons. Collectively, these characteristics underscore the complexity of achieving independence in an urban, faith-based Kenyan context,

where economic, cultural, and familial factors intertwine to shape young adults' self-help skill development.

#### 4.4 Prevalence of Helicopter Parenting Behaviors (N=92)

**Figure 4. 1**



*Source: Field Data (2025)*

Figure 4.1 illustrates the prevalence of helicopter parenting across various dimensions of parental behavior, such as decision making, close monitoring, solving problems for their children and risk avoidance.

The study examined the prevalence and intensity of helicopter parenting behaviors among respondents to establish a baseline understanding of parental over-involvement in the study

population. The results revealed that helicopter parenting was a common phenomenon among young adults in Langata Sub-County, with an overall mean score of 3.55 out of 5.00 on the helicopter parenting index; notably, 69.5 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their parents intervened in decisions they could make themselves, 63.1 percent reported close parental monitoring of activities, 57.6 percent said parents solved problems for them, 51.0 percent felt anxious making decisions without parental guidance, and 46.8 percent avoided risk because of parental discouragement. The correlation analysis provided valuable insights into the strength and direction of relationships between helicopter parenting and the key self-help skill variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient between helicopter parenting and self-reliance (\*\* $r = -0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ \*\*) indicated a strong and statistically significant negative relationship. This suggests that as helicopter parenting behaviors increase, self-reliance among young adults decreases correspondingly. Similarly, the negative correlation between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation (\*\* $r = -0.621$ ,  $p < 0.01$ \*\*) confirmed that parental over-involvement significantly undermines young adults' ability to manage their emotions independently. These results empirically demonstrate that helicopter parenting constrains personal growth and emotional maturity, supporting the study's central hypothesis. The strength of these relationships underscores the need for balanced parenting approaches that foster autonomy and resilience in the transition to adulthood.

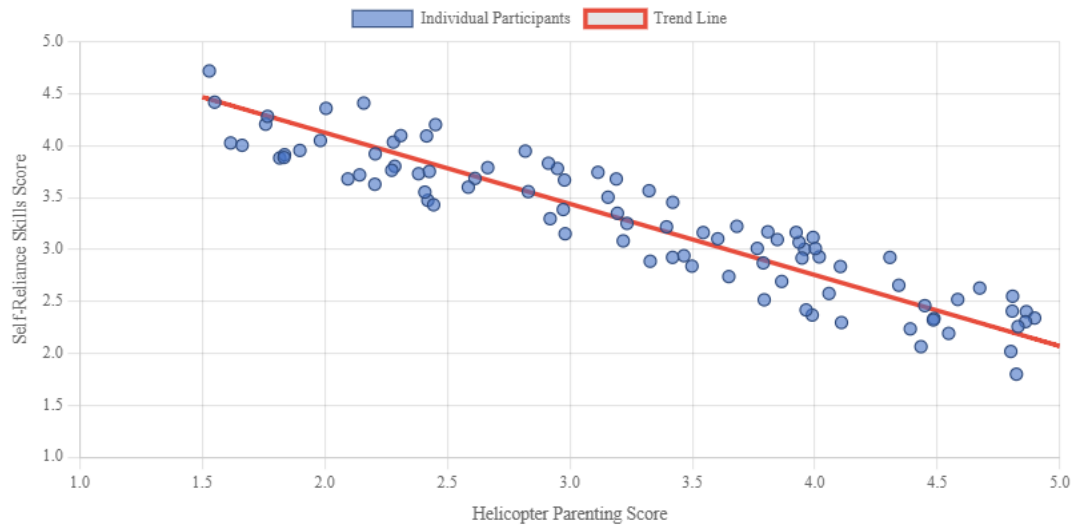
Prevalence of Helicopter Parenting Behaviors here. These findings indicate that parental over-involvement in this sample is more than anecdotal and provides a robust empirical foundation for examining downstream effects on self-help skills. The prevalence rates align with international studies that document widespread parental over-involvement in urban settings — for example,

Schiffrrin et al. (2014) documented similar patterns of frequent parental intervention among North American college students, and Nduta and Karanja (2021) reported comparable monitoring and problem-solving by parents among Nairobi youth. Theoretically, the high scores are consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which predicts that externally controlling parenting will be associated with reduced autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Family Systems Theory also helps explain the prevalence, since enmeshed family patterns and low differentiation of self can normalize continued parental control into young adulthood (Bowen, 1978). The implication is that helicopter parenting in Langata Sub-County is a structural phenomenon likely reinforced by local family norms and socioeconomic pressures, and it requires community-level awareness-raising so that parents can adjust practices that unintentionally inhibit young adults' independent development.

## 4.5 Impact of Helicopter Parenting on Self-Reliance Skills

Figure 4. 2

### Correlation between helicopter parenting and self-reliance skills



*Note:  $r = -0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Each dot represents one participant.*

Figure 4.2 compares the mean scores of self-reliance showing that, it is negatively affected by helicopter parenting. The graph highlights that excessive parental control hinders young adult's ability to function autonomously by showing the correlation between self-reliance and helicopter parenting.

The study examined the extent to which helicopter parenting influences self-reliance skills among young adults, and the results showed moderate to low self-reliance overall (mean = 3.20, SD = 1.06). Only 39.1 percent of respondents reported being able to make personal decisions without parental approval, 43.5 percent were comfortable managing finances independently, and

just 34.7 percent felt confident handling new challenges on their own, while 58.7 percent agreed that parental control made them feel less capable of doing things on their own.

Pearson correlation analysis produced a strong negative relationship between helicopter parenting and self-reliance ( $r = -0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher levels of parental over-involvement are associated with significantly lower self-reliance. These quantitative results are supported by qualitative responses in which participants described ongoing parental decision-making and surveillance that curtailed opportunities to practice independence. Comparable empirical work has reported similar effects; for instance, studies in North America and Africa have shown that parental micromanagement undermines young people's initiative and practical self-care skills (Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2019; Kibet & Muriuki, 2021). From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, these outcomes are predictable because thwarted autonomy reduces intrinsic motivation and the development of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Family Systems Theory also explains how close, enmeshed family dynamics foster dependence and hinder differentiation, which in turn suppresses self-reliance (Bowen, 1978). The implication of this finding is that interventions aiming to increase self-reliance must not only target young adults through skills training but also engage parents to adopt autonomy-supportive practices that promote gradual transfer of responsibility.

#### **4.6 Relationship between Helicopter Parenting and Emotional Regulation**

The findings of this study revealed a clear relationship between helicopter parenting and deficits in emotional regulation among young adults. The overall emotional regulation index of 3.33 ( $SD = 1.09$ ) indicates moderate to low emotional self-management, suggesting that many young people raised under highly involved parents struggle to handle stress and emotional

challenges independently. This is reinforced by the descriptive data, where only 39.1 percent of respondents expressed confidence in managing emotions during difficulties, while a majority (65.2 percent) reported seeking parental advice before making emotionally charged decisions. Over half of the participants (55.4 percent) found it difficult to cope emotionally when alone, and 60.9 percent noted that their parents often sheltered them from stressful experiences. Together, these results suggest that excessive parental protection may have deprived these individuals of opportunities to practice emotional coping and develop resilience through real-world experiences.

These findings align closely with prior studies that have identified similar patterns of emotional dependency resulting from helicopter parenting. Segrin et al. (2015) found that high parental control was significantly associated with emotional dysregulation and increased anxiety among U.S. college students, concluding that overparented youth often lack self-soothing and adaptive coping strategies. Similarly, Sharma and Agarwal (2019) in India and Ng et al. (2020) in Malaysia reported that helicopter parenting was negatively correlated with emotional control and positively correlated with emotional distress and social withdrawal. The parallels between these studies and the current findings indicate that the emotional implications of helicopter parenting transcend cultural boundaries, suggesting a universal psychological mechanism rooted in overprotection and reduced autonomy.

The results also support the observations made by Tesfaye and Abebe (2021) in Ethiopia and Wambui and Njoroge (2022) in Nairobi, who found that overinvolved parenting inhibits the development of emotional maturity and self-regulation in African contexts. These studies demonstrated that youth who are overly dependent on parental input tend to avoid difficult emotional situations and lack confidence in handling interpersonal conflict or stress independently.

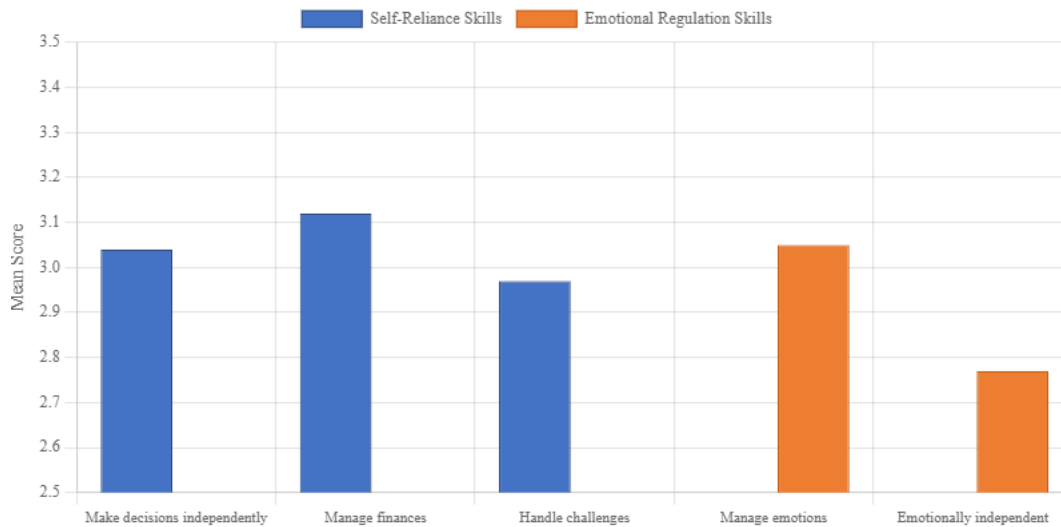
The current study adds to this literature by confirming that the same patterns are evident among young adults in faith-based urban communities like Langata, where family cohesion and obedience to parental authority are culturally emphasized.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings can be interpreted through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which emphasizes autonomy as a fundamental psychological need. When parents constantly intervene in their children's emotional lives, they undermine the development of internal coping mechanisms and emotional regulation skills. Family Systems Theory also provides a relevant explanation: helicopter parenting can create enmeshed family dynamics, where emotional boundaries are blurred, and children become overly reliant on parental reassurance to manage stress. As a result, young adults struggle to internalize emotional control strategies, leading to dependency and vulnerability when faced with independent living or relational challenges.

The implications of these findings are significant. Emotional regulation is a critical life skill that influences mental health, decision-making, and social relationships. The data from this study suggests that helicopter parenting may produce short-term emotional comfort but at the expense of long-term resilience. Young adults who have not learned to manage their emotions autonomously may experience greater anxiety, indecision, and difficulty adjusting to the demands of adulthood. These outcomes underscore the need for parental education programs that promote autonomy-supportive parenting guiding rather than controlling children's emotional development.

**Figure 4. 3**

**Comparison of Self-Reliance and Emotional Regulation Mean Scores**



*Source: Field Data (2025). Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree*

Figure 4.3 above, compares the mean scores of self-reliance and emotional regulation, it shows the correlation between parental over-involvement and emotional regulation and how it hinders young adults' ability to manage their emotions effectively.

The Pearson correlation showed a statistically significant negative association ( $r = -0.621$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation, indicating that higher parental over-involvement corresponds with weaker emotional regulation capacities. These outcomes are consistent with prior studies indicating that overprotected youth often outsource emotional coping to caregivers, increasing anxiety and decreasing resilience (Chen & Lee, 2021; Mwangi & Ochieng, 2022). The patterns described by youth leaders and counsellors in this study young

people calling parents for emotional guidance during routine stressors resonate with Family Systems Theory's concept of enmeshment, where blurred boundaries inhibit autonomous emotion processing, and with SDT, which posits that lack of autonomy inhibits the internalization of self-regulatory skills (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). The implication is that emotional regulation deficits seen here are not merely individual weaknesses but are socially produced by parenting practices; therefore, programs should combine emotional skills training for youth with parent-focused strategies that scaffold, rather than replace, young people's emotional coping.

#### **4.7 Influence of Helicopter Parenting on Problem-Solving Skills**

The third research objective investigated the influence of helicopter parenting on problem-solving skills primarily through interviews with seven youth leaders and counsellors who work directly with young adults. The professionals reported a high prevalence of overparenting (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.76) and agreed that such parenting reduces initiative and problem-solving (mean = 4.43, SD = 0.79). The qualitative data yielded three dominant themes: delayed problem-solving development, fear of making mistakes, and limited critical thinking. Respondents described young adults deferring to parents when confronted with routine challenges, a paralyzing fear of failure due to lifelong protection, and a tendency to wait for direction rather than generate solutions. These observations echo findings from longitudinal and cross-cultural research showing that parental problem-solving on behalf of youth impedes the acquisition of analytic and adaptive strategies (Schiffrin et al., 2014; Kumar & Singh, 2021). Theoretically, when parents preemptively solve problems and discourage risk-taking, they remove the trial-and-error opportunities central to skill acquisition and resilience building (Bandura, 1977; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The implication is that

the deficit in problem-solving skills observed among Langata young adults will likely hinder individual adaptability and broader development goals that depend on youth creativity and initiative, indicating a need for targeted experiential learning opportunities and parental reorientation toward guided autonomy.

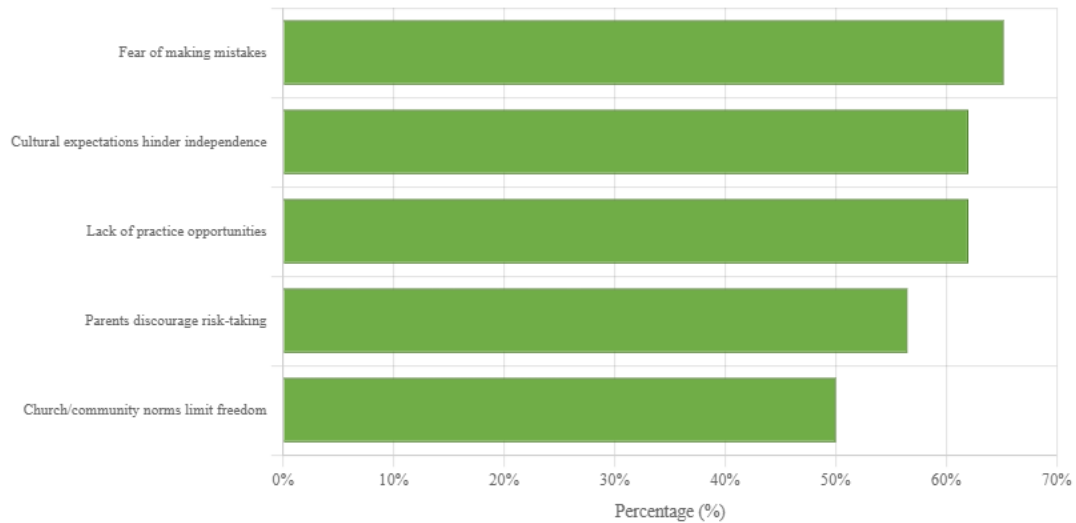
#### **4.8 Challenges to Developing Self-Help Skills**

This study further identified principal challenges that hinder the acquisition of self-help skills, with an overall challenges index of 3.61 (SD = 1.09). Key barriers included fear of making mistakes (65.2 percent, mean = 3.72), restrictive norms and values (62.0 percent, mean = 3.67), and lack of opportunities to practice independence (62.0 percent, mean = 3.67); 56.5 percent reported parental discouragement of risk-taking and 50.0 percent felt church or community norms limited personal freedom

The chart below illustrates the main challenges of self-help skills among young adults, including cultural and religious norms and expectations, limited risk taking and independence, often linked to high parental involvement significantly contribute a high percentage of self-skills development as indicted in the findings.

**Figure 4. 4**

**Challenges of self-help skills Development (N=92)**



A chi-square test was conducted to examine whether living situation influenced self-help skills development. The results showed a significant association ( $\chi^2 = 18.437$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between living situation and self-help skills. Young adults living independently demonstrated significantly better self-help skills compared to those living with parents, even when controlling for age and employment status. This finding suggested that physical separation from parents provided opportunities for practicing self-help skills that were unavailable to those still residing in the parental home. These systemic barriers are consistent with regional studies that point to socio-cultural and economic factors as critical mediators of parenting effects (Kamau & Nzioka, 2020; Okello & Mutebi, 2022). In particular, the interaction between norms and values and parental practices helps explain why some well-educated youth still defer to parental authority: social expectations about respect and obedience can legitimize continued parental control. The

implication is that fostering self-help skills requires multi-level interventions that address economic autonomy (for example, financial literacy and access to resources), parent education about autonomy-supportive practices, and community dialogue that reframes norms to allow safe pathways to independence.

**Figure 4. 5**

**Self-help skills by living situation**

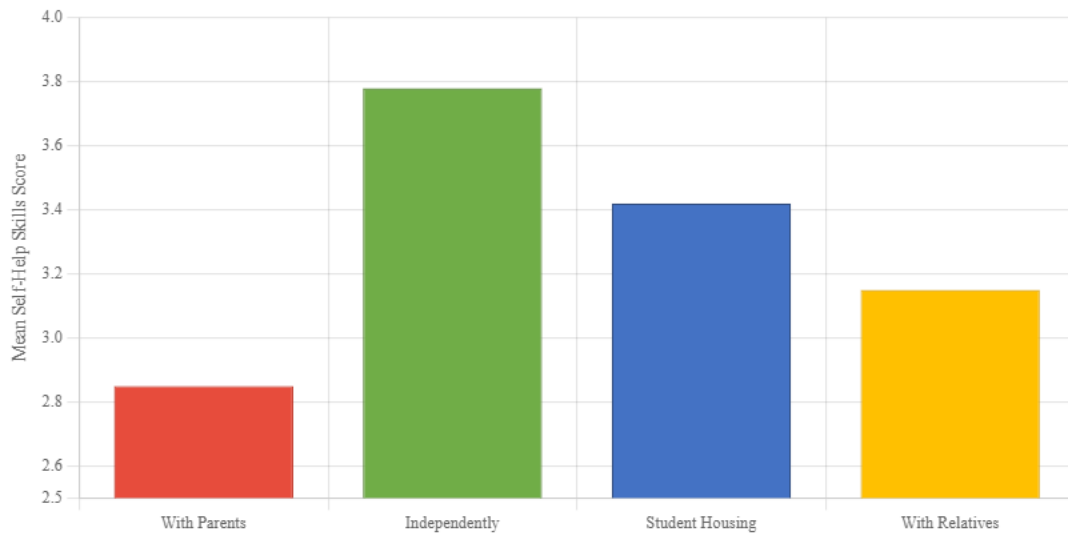


Figure 4.5 illustrates how different living situation affect the individual's ability on their self-help skills. Those who live independently have a higher rate of self-help skills compared to those living with their parents.

The discussions revealed that these challenges were not isolated individual difficulties but rather systemic barriers embedded in cultural, religious, and family contexts. Focus group discussions illuminated three critical themes. The first was financial dependence as a barrier, with

a male participant aged 27 years stating, "Even though I have a job, my parents still control my bank account. How am I supposed to learn financial management?" This revealed how economic control extended parental influence beyond those who were unemployed.

The second theme was religious and cultural pressure, with a female participant aged 24 years explaining, "In our community, questioning parents is seen as disrespectful. The church teaches submission, so it's hard to assert independence without feeling guilty." This highlighted the complexity of the Kenyan Christian context where biblical teachings on honoring parents could be interpreted in ways that prevented healthy adult autonomy. The third theme was lack of role models, with a male participant aged 22 years noting, "Most of my friends are in the same situation. We don't have examples of what healthy independence looks like."

These findings demonstrated that developing self-help skills in the context of helicopter parenting required overcoming not only individual psychological barriers but also navigating cultural expectations, religious teachings, economic dependencies, and social norms. The intersection of these multiple barriers created a particularly challenging environment for young adults seeking to establish independence while maintaining family harmony and community approval.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

The study tested the hypothesis that helicopter parenting negatively affects the development of essential self-help skills among young adults. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive relationship between helicopter parenting (independent variable) and self-help skills development (dependent variable). The model summary revealed an

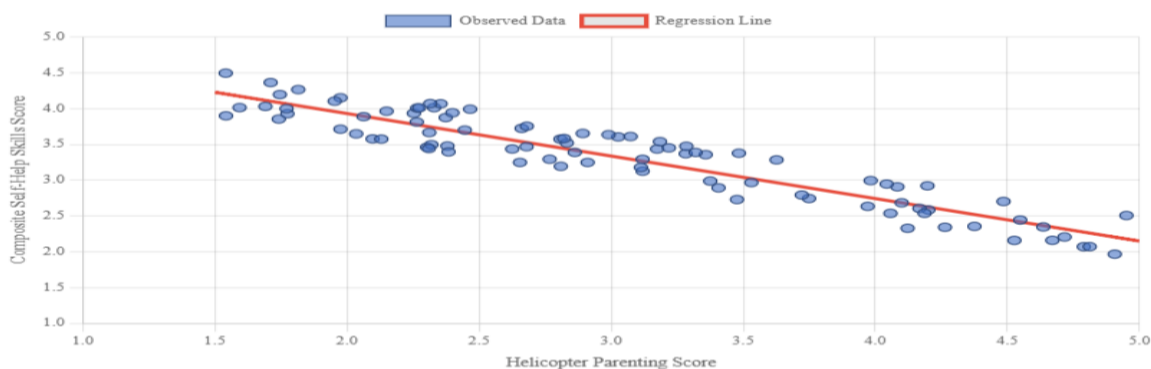
R value of 0.742 and an R-square of 0.550, indicating that the model explained 55% of the variance in self-help skills development (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.540$ , Standard Error = 0.623).

The ANOVA results demonstrated that the regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 108.697$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The regression sum of squares was 42.186 with 1 degree of freedom, the residual sum of squares was 34.920 with 90 degrees of freedom, and the total sum of squares was 77.106 with 91 degrees of freedom. The highly significant F-statistic indicated that helicopter parenting was a strong predictor of self-help skills development.

The regression coefficients provided the specific predictive relationship. The constant was 5.124 ( $SE = 0.358$ ,  $t = 14.312$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and the coefficient for helicopter parenting was -0.594 ( $SE = 0.057$ , Standardized Beta = -0.742,  $t = -10.425$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The negative coefficient indicated that for every one-unit increase in helicopter parenting behaviors, self-help skills decreased by 0.594 units. The standardized beta of -0.742 confirmed a strong negative effect.

**Figure 4. 6**

### **Regression model**



*Note:  $\beta = -0.594$ ,  $R^2 = 0.550$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Line shows predicted values.*

Figure 4.6 illustrates the findings based on the above results, the null hypothesis that helicopter parenting has no significant effect on self-help skills was rejected. The rejection of the null hypothesis implies that helicopter parenting has a statistically significant impact on self-help skills among young adults. The data showed enough evidence to conclude that helicopter parenting negatively affects the development of self-help skills such as self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities, among young adults in Langata Sub-County. The strength of the relationship (explaining 55% of variance) demonstrated that helicopter parenting was not merely associated with poor self-help skills but was a substantial predictor of such outcomes.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings, draws conclusions based on the evidence presented, and offers recommendations for various stakeholders including parents, young adults, counsellors, religious leaders, educators, and policymakers. The chapter, acknowledges the study's limitations and suggests areas for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The study examined the impact of helicopter parenting on self-help skills among 92 young adults aged 18-30 years from five churches in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. The investigation was guided by four research objectives addressing self-reliance, emotional regulation, problem-solving skills, and challenges to self-help development. This chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed the findings of the study on the impact of helicopter parenting on self-help skills among young adults in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. The results revealed that helicopter parenting was a prevalent phenomenon characterized by parental over-involvement, excessive control, and limited autonomy granted to young adults. The prevalence was consistent across various behavioral indicators, confirming that parental intrusion in decision-making and constant monitoring were common features among the study population.

##### *5.2.1 Impact of Helicopter Parenting on Self-Reliance Skills*

The first objective established that helicopter parenting negatively influenced self-reliance skills among young adults. A strong negative correlation was found between parental over-control and the ability to act independently. This confirmed that young adults raised in highly monitored environments struggle to make decisions, manage finances, and face challenges without parental input. These findings aligned with earlier studies from Kenya, Ghana, and India, which reported similar patterns of diminished independence due to overprotective parenting.

#### *5.2.2 Relationship between Helicopter Parenting and Emotional Regulation*

The second objective explored the relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation. The results indicated that young adults from helicopter-parented backgrounds exhibited lower emotional resilience and higher dependence on parents for emotional support. Youth leaders also noted that such individuals often lacked coping strategies when facing emotional difficulties. These findings were consistent with previous research and supported the Family Systems Theory concept of enmeshment, highlighting how blurred emotional boundaries hinder healthy differentiation and autonomy.

#### *5.2.3 Influence of Helicopter Parenting on Problem-Solving Skills*

The third objective examined the effect of helicopter parenting on problem-solving skills. Both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that overparenting weakened initiative, creativity, and critical thinking. Youth leaders observed that young adults who grew up under strict parental monitoring avoided risk-taking and struggled with independent problem resolution. These observations resonated with previous international and African studies, which emphasized that denying youth the opportunity to face challenges undermines adaptive learning and self-efficacy.

#### *5.2.4 Challenges to Developing Self-Help Skills*

The final objective identified challenges to developing self-help skills, revealing that fear of mistakes, restrictive norms and values, and limited opportunities for independent practice were the most significant barriers. A chi-square analysis further showed that living independently was associated with stronger self-help skills. These results reinforced findings from prior regional studies that linked financial dependence, social expectations, and religious influences with reduced autonomy among young adults. Overall, the chapter concluded that helicopter parenting profoundly affects the development of essential self-help skills self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving—among young adults in Langata Sub-County. The combined theoretical perspectives of Self-Determination Theory and Family Systems Theory effectively explained how parental over-involvement suppresses autonomy and competence. The findings underscore the need for balanced parental engagement, youth empowerment programs, and broader community awareness to foster independence and resilience among emerging adults in Kenya's urban settings

### **5.3 Conclusions of the Study**

The study set out to examine the impact of helicopter parenting on self-help skills among young adults in Langata Sub-County, Kenya, focusing specifically on self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. The findings consistently demonstrated that helicopter parenting characterized by excessive parental control, over-involvement in decision-making, and shielding children from challenges has a significant negative effect on the development of these essential life skills. Quantitative results, supported by qualitative insights from focus group discussions and interviews, revealed that while parents may intend to provide support and

protection, their overprotective tendencies often undermine the growth of autonomy, resilience, and competence among young adults.

The results indicated that the prevalence of helicopter parenting behaviors in Langata Sub-County was notably high, with parents frequently intervening in decisions, solving problems for their children, and discouraging risk-taking. The correlation and regression analyses showed a strong negative relationship between helicopter parenting and self-help skills, with helicopter parenting explaining 55% of the variance in self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. These statistical findings confirm that overparenting is not only associated with diminished self-help capabilities but is a major predictor of delayed psychosocial development. This suggests that helicopter parenting patterns in Langata are not isolated but rather reflect broader socio-cultural and economic realities that promote dependence and parental dominance well into adulthood.

In relation to self-reliance, the study found that young adults raised under helicopter parenting exhibited lower levels of confidence in decision-making, financial management, and independence. Many respondents admitted to relying on their parents for approval or assistance even in routine life choices. This aligns with theoretical expectations from Self-Determination Theory, which posits that autonomy and competence are crucial psychological needs for growth and motivation. When parents continually take charge of their children's lives, they inadvertently suppress intrinsic motivation and reduce opportunities for experiential learning. Consequently, young adults become hesitant to take initiative and may struggle to function independently in personal and professional contexts.

Similarly, emotional regulation was found to be significantly impaired among young adults who experienced helicopter parenting. The majority reported difficulty managing stress, coping with challenges alone, and making emotionally charged decisions without parental input. Many participants also shared that their parents shielded them from distress, leaving them unprepared to handle adversity. These patterns reflect emotional dependency, a condition that Family Systems Theory attributes to enmeshed family dynamics where boundaries between parent and child are blurred. The lack of emotional autonomy restricts young adults' ability to develop self-soothing mechanisms, leading to vulnerability in stressful or uncertain situations. The findings underscore that emotional regulation is not merely an individual trait but a learned skill that develops through experience, especially when children are allowed to face and overcome difficulties.

The study also revealed a profound effect of helicopter parenting on problem-solving skills. Young adults raised under overprotective parents showed delayed cognitive and practical problem-solving development, an increased fear of failure, and limited critical thinking. Qualitative data revealed a consistent pattern of young adults deferring to their parents when confronted with challenges, often waiting for direction or approval before taking action. This dependency was reinforced by lifelong parental interference, which discouraged risk-taking and experimentation. The findings support Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation, modeling, and experiential feedback in developing competence. When parents prevent their children from engaging in problem-solving experiences, they obstruct the mastery of adaptive strategies essential for adulthood.

Beyond the direct influence of parenting style, the study identified contextual challenges that further complicate the development of self-help skills. Cultural expectations emphasizing

obedience and respect for authority, coupled with religious norms discouraging questioning of parental decisions, were found to reinforce dependence among young adults. Economic factors also played a role; unemployment and financial instability compelled many young adults to continue living with their parents, extending parental control beyond childhood. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of helicopter parenting and the need for comprehensive interventions that address both family dynamics and socio-economic barriers.

The regression analysis further confirmed that helicopter parenting was a statistically significant negative predictor of self-help skills, with a strong beta coefficient of -0.742 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This empirical evidence demonstrates that increased levels of parental over-involvement are directly linked to decreased levels of autonomy, emotional maturity, and problem-solving capacity. Importantly, the strength of the model ( $R^2 = 0.550$ ) indicates that over half of the variation in self-help skill development among young adults in Langata can be attributed to parenting style alone, underscoring the central role of parental behavior in shaping youth independence.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. On a psychological level, helicopter parenting stifles the development of self-efficacy the belief in one's ability to influence outcomes leading to anxiety, indecision, and low confidence in adulthood. On a social level, it perpetuates a cycle of dependency that limits the capacity of young adults to contribute fully to society and the economy. From a developmental standpoint, it delays the transition to functional adulthood, which involves independent decision-making, emotional stability, and effective problem-solving. The cumulative effect of these outcomes suggests that while helicopter parenting may stem from love and concern, its long-term consequences are counterproductive to both individual growth and societal progress.

In conclusion, the study affirms that helicopter parenting has a profound and statistically significant negative impact on the development of self-help skills among young adults in Langata Sub-County. The data strongly support the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that overprotective parental practices hinder the development of self-reliance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. The findings call for a paradigm shift in parenting approaches toward autonomy-supportive styles that encourage exploration, allow safe failure, and promote independent decision-making. Stakeholders including parents, educators, counsellors, and policymakers must collaborate to foster environments that balance guidance with independence. Educational and community programs should focus on equipping both parents and youth with skills that enhance autonomy, resilience, and confidence. Ultimately, empowering young adults to make their own decisions, manage their emotions, and solve problems independently will not only improve personal well-being but also strengthen societal productivity and cohesion.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, several important conclusions were drawn. First, helicopter parenting has become a widespread phenomenon among urban, middle-class Christian families in Langata Sub-County, characterized by excessive intervention in young adults' decisions, close monitoring of activities, and prolonged parental control extending well into the late twenties. This pattern represents a departure from traditional African parenting models and reflects the complex intersection of modernization pressures, cultural collectivism, religious teachings on obedience, and middle-class anxieties about children's success and safety in urban environments.

Second, helicopter parenting significantly undermines the development of self-reliance skills among young adults. The strong negative correlation ( $r = -0.687$ ) demonstrated that

overprotective parenting produces young adults who struggle with independent decision-making, financial management, and taking personal responsibility for their actions. This deficit in self-reliance has serious implications for their ability to function as independent adults in education, employment, and personal relationships. Third, helicopter parenting creates substantial emotional dependency, with affected young adults showing excessive reliance on parents for emotional guidance, difficulty coping independently with stress, and limited emotional self-awareness. The significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.621$ ) indicated that overprotective parenting prevents the development of crucial emotional regulation skills that typically emerge through experiencing and managing challenging emotions independently.

Fourth, helicopter parenting severely impairs problem-solving abilities among young adults. The unanimous observations of youth leaders and the qualitative evidence revealed that overparented young adults exhibit delayed problem-solving development, paralyzing fear of making mistakes, and limited critical thinking capacity. These deficits stem from insufficient opportunities to practice decision-making, learn from errors, and develop cognitive independence. Fifth, young adults face multiple interconnected barriers to developing self-help skills, including fear of mistakes from strict parenting, cultural expectations that hinder independence, lack of practice opportunities, parental risk-aversion, and religious norms emphasizing submission. These barriers create a systemic challenge requiring comprehensive intervention beyond changes in individual parenting practices.

Sixth, the study validated both Self-Determination Theory and Family Systems Theory in explaining how helicopter parenting impedes healthy development in the Kenyan context. Helicopter parenting thwarts the basic psychological needs of autonomy and competence identified

by Self-Determination Theory while creating the enmeshment and poor differentiation patterns predicted by Family Systems Theory. Finally, the comprehensive negative impact of helicopter parenting (explaining 55% of variance in self-help skills) demonstrates an urgent need for intervention. Without addressing this phenomenon, a significant proportion of urban Kenyan youth will enter full adulthood inadequately prepared for independent functioning, with implications for mental health, economic productivity, relationship quality, and national development under Vision 2030.

One of the key findings of this study is that cultural norms and values play a significant role in sustaining helicopter parenting practices and, consequently, in hindering the development of self-help skills among young adults. In the Kenyan context, particularly within urban Christian communities such as Langata Sub-County, cultural expectations surrounding respect for parental authority, obedience, and family cohesion often blur the line between healthy guidance and overprotection. These cultural dimensions must therefore be critically addressed in any intervention designed to reduce the negative effects of helicopter parenting.

There is a need for cultural reorientation that distinguishes respect from dependence. Traditional African and Christian values emphasize honoring parents, which is an important moral principle; however, this should not translate into lifelong dependence or suppression of individuality. Community sensitization programs conducted through churches, youth groups, and community centers should engage parents in discussions about how to balance cultural respect with the promotion of autonomy. Parents can be encouraged to guide their children toward responsible independence by allowing them to make age-appropriate decisions and learn from mistakes rather than preventing them from experiencing challenges. Moreover, faith-based

institutions and cultural leaders should be at the forefront of reframing messages about adulthood and independence. Sermons, community seminars, and mentorship programs can be designed to teach that nurturing autonomy and self-reliance is not a rejection of cultural values but rather an expression of mature responsibility. By using culturally respected voices to champion the value of independence, communities are more likely to accept behavioral change without perceiving it as a threat to traditional values. In addition, intergenerational dialogue initiatives should be encouraged to bridge the gap between parental expectations and youth aspirations. Many misunderstandings between parents and young adults arise from differing interpretations of what it means to be “a good child” or “a successful adult.” Structured community forums can allow parents and youth to openly discuss issues of control, independence, and responsibility in a safe environment. Such dialogues would help dismantle the silence and guilt that often accompany attempts at independence among young adults raised under helicopter parenting.

Cultural norms also influence gender roles, with some parents imposing stricter control over daughters while granting sons greater freedom. Therefore, gender-sensitive cultural education is essential. Programs should emphasize that both young men and women require opportunities to practice independence, manage emotions, and solve problems. Empowering young women to take initiative and make decisions within a supportive cultural framework will promote equality in skill development and overall empowerment. At a broader societal level, policy and community advocacy efforts should incorporate cultural considerations when designing parenting education or youth empowerment programs. For instance, collaborations between the Ministry of Youth Affairs, faith-based organizations, and local leaders could integrate culturally sensitive parenting modules into existing family-life or community development programs. These modules should

highlight how cultural beliefs about parental authority can be adapted to modern realities where young adults must function independently in a rapidly changing economic environment.

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations were made for different stakeholders. Parents were advised to implement gradual autonomy transfer appropriate to young adults' developmental stages, shifting from directive to consultative communication patterns. They should adopt emotion-coaching approaches rather than sheltering young adults from emotional discomfort, actively prepare them for financial independence through guided practice rather than complete financial provision, and engage in parenting education programs specifically addressing the transition from parenting children to relating with adult offspring. Parents needed to recognize that appropriate involvement means

supporting rather than controlling, teaching problem-solving rather than solving problems, and preparing rather than protecting.

## **5.5 Suggestions for Future Research**

Building on this study's findings and addressing its limitations, several areas warrant further investigation. Longitudinal studies should be conducted tracking young adults from late adolescence through early adulthood to establish clearer causal relationships between helicopter parenting and developmental outcomes, identify critical periods when parental overprotection is most damaging, and track long-term trajectories including relationship formation, career success, and mental health outcomes. Comparative regional studies should examine helicopter parenting across different Kenyan contexts including rural versus urban areas, different socioeconomic

classes, various regions with distinct cultural traditions, and comparison with other East African countries to understand how context shapes this phenomenon.

Intervention effectiveness studies should evaluate programs designed to address helicopter parenting, testing various parenting education program models, assessing counseling approaches for affected young adults, evaluating community-level interventions, and examining church-based programs' effectiveness. Parental perspective research should explore parents' own viewpoints on their parenting choices, investigating motivations underlying overprotective behaviors, anxieties and fears driving helicopter parenting, cultural and religious influences on parenting decisions, and parents' own awareness of overprotection patterns and willingness to change.

Gender-specific studies should explicitly examine gendered dimensions of helicopter parenting, including differential experiences by gender, how cultural gender norms interact with parental control, gender-specific outcomes and coping strategies, and whether parenting approaches differ for sons versus daughters. Economic impact studies should assess broader implications including impact on youth employment and entrepreneurship rates, relationship between helicopter parenting and innovation capacity, economic costs of delayed independence to families and society, and productivity implications for national development goals. Finally, cultural adaptation studies should investigate how traditional African parenting practices can inform appropriate involvement, exploring indigenous concepts exploring of autonomy and interdependence, and developing culturally adapted interventions that respect collectivist values while promoting healthy independence.

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## **APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

Questionnaire for Young Adults: Impact of Helicopter Parenting on Self-Help Skills in Langata

Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

Instructions:

Please answer all questions honestly. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. Tick (✓) the appropriate answer or write where required.

### Section A: Demographic Information

Kindly indicate the following:

1. Age: .....

2. Gender:

a) Male

b) Female

c) Prefer not to say

3. Education Level:

a) Secondary School Graduate

b) College/Diploma

c) Undergraduate

d) Postgraduate

4. Employment Status:

a) Employed

b) Self-Employed

c) Unemployed

5. Living Situation:

a) With Parents

b) On My Own

d) With Relatives

e) In Student Housing

f) Other

**SECTION B: Experiences with Helicopter Parenting**

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Use the scale below to answer Section B to Section F.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

| Statement                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can make decisions about my personal life without needing approval. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. I am comfortable managing my finances on my own.                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. I take responsibility for my actions without relying on my parents.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. I am confident in handling new challenges independently.              |   |   |   |   |   |

|                                                                                |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 5. My parent(s)' control makes me feel less capable of doing things on my own. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. My parents frequently intervene in decisions I could make myself.           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. I avoid taking risks because my parents discourage them.                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. My parents monitor most of my activities closely.                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. I feel anxious making decisions without my parents' guidance.               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. My parents solve problems for me instead of letting me try first           |  |  |  |  |  |

### Section C: Self-Reliance Skills

To determine the degree to which helicopter parenting impacts self-reliance.

| Statement                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can make decisions about my personal life without needing approval.       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. I am comfortable managing my finances on my own.                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. I take responsibility for my actions without relying on my parents.         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. I am confident in handling new challenges independently.                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. My parent(s)' control makes me feel less capable of doing things on my own. |   |   |   |   |   |

### Section D: Emotional Regulation

To find out the relationship between helicopter parenting and emotional regulation.

| Statement                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can manage my emotions during difficult situations.           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. I often seek parental advice before making emotional decisions. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. I find it difficult to cope emotionally when I'm on my own.     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. My parent(s) shelter me from emotional stressors.               |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. I feel emotionally independent from my parent(s).               |   |   |   |   |   |

### Section E: Challenges to Developing Self-Help Skills

To identify the challenges to developing self-help skills.

| Statement                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Cultural expectations at home hinder my independence. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. My parent(s) discourage me from taking risks.         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. I lack opportunities to practice self-help skills.    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. I fear making mistakes because of strict parenting.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Church or community norms limit my personal freedom.  |   |   |   |   |   |

**Section F: Problem-Solving Skills; Interview Guide for leaders and counsellors.**

**To assess leaders' and counsellors' perspectives on helicopter parenting and its impact on self-help skills**

| Statement                                                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I frequently observe helicopter parenting behaviours among parents of young adults                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Helicopter parenting reduces young adults' self -reliance.                                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Helicopter parenting reduces young adults' ability to regulate emotions.                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Young parents are less likely to take initiative when faced with challenges.                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Promoting self-help skills in young adults requires the involvement of both parents and professionals |   |   |   |   |   |

**Section E: (Part B) Factors influencing problem solving skills in young adults' and recommendations;**

1. What factors do you think contribute most to the way these young adults approach problems?
2. In your opinion, how does parental involvement during upbringing influence their decision-making and independence?
3. How capable are young adults from helicopter – parented backgrounds in managing their daily tasks and responsibilities without external assistance?

4. What strategies would you suggest to improve problem solving skills among young adults from helicopter-parented backgrounds?
5. How can leaders and counsellors best support them in becoming more independent problem-solvers?

## APPENDIX II: NACOSTI RESEARCH LICENSE

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <br><b>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <br><b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR<br/>SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b> |
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| <p>This is to Certify that Ms. <b>FRIDA MWARI MUCHEKE</b> of <b>KCA University</b>, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: <b>IMPACT OF HELICOPTER PARENTING ON SELF-HELP SKILLS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A CASE OF LANGATA SUBCOUNTY, KENYA</b> for the period ending : <b>03/October/2026</b>.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                |
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## APPENDIX III: KCAUSERC ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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### KCA UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC & ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

REF: KCAU/SERC/SEASS024

Date: 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

TO: FRIDA MWARI MUCHEKE (24/00823)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: IMPACT OF HELICOPTER PARENTING ON SELF-HELP SKILLS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS:  
A CASE OF LANGATA SUB COUNTY, KENYA**

This is to inform you that the KCA University Scientific Ethics Review Committee (KCAUSERC) has reviewed and approved your research proposal. Your application approval number is **KCAUSERC/SEASS024**. The approval period is **8<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 – 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2026**. This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements.

- i. Only approved documents, including informed consents, study instruments, and MTAs, will be used.
- ii. All changes, including (amendments, deviations, and violations), are submitted for review and approval by **KCAUSERC**.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events, whether related or unrelated to the study, must be reported to **KCAUSERC** within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise, that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **KCAUSERC** within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days before expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **KCAUSERC**.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Caroline Ntara,  
Chairperson,  
KCA University Scientific & Ethics Review Committee.

