Educational Backgrounds and Their Effects on Students' Transition to College

Christen Walker

A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2010

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University

_____
Fred Volk, Ph.D.
Thesis Chair

_____
Elizabeth Sites, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Brenda Ayres, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Marilyn Gadomski, Ph.D.
Assistant Honors Director

_____
Date

Abstract

Home-school has become a common alternative to public- and private-school in America, but it is also highly controversial among researchers and society regarding educational rights and freedoms. Research indicated that these three methods of education do not differ significantly from one another, and there is little indication as to which educational background will best prepare a high school student for his or her adjustment to college. Academic preparation is found to be the most effective factor for a high school students' transition to college, but little research has been done concerning which education affiliation is most effective in achieving this preparation. It is questionable whether students who are homeschooled can keep up with the academic demands as well as those in private-school or public-school. This study seeks assessed whether students who were homeschooled throughout their high school years are more suited for the transition to college learning than those who attended a public or private-school.

Educational backgrounds and Their Effects on Students' Transition to College

Transitioning from high school to college can be a difficult endeavor. A wide array of contributing factors can either inhibit or expedite the assimilation of a student to college life. The education received prior to college, the interpersonal relationships sought, and the type of parenting received by a student prior to entering college are variables that can be assessed to hypothesize the student's behavior and academic success in a university setting (Balduf, 2009).

For the purpose of this study, the *education received prior to college* refers to high school education in a public, private-, or home-school environment. The definition of *interpersonal relationships sought or the socialization of an individual* in this study are the procedure through which students develop the ability to establish and maintain interpersonal connections, become functional within society, and measure their behavior according to the conventional culture within society (Lebeda, 2005). For the purpose of this study, the *type of parenting received by a high school student prior to entering a university* refers to the number of parents within the household, vocational status, income of the household, the involvement of the parent in the life of the student, and the number of people living in the house. For this study, *a high school student who is labeled academically higher than other students* refers to a student (a) has taken a standardized test to apply to a college or university; (b) has a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher upon graduating high school; (c) applies to college the semester finishing high school; and (d) is able to take enough credits to be considered full-time. The current study was chosen due to the limited amount of research that pertains specifically to a student's transition from high school to college, and the effects that educational background has on the individual's academic excellence.

Several of the reasons for a successful transition of a high school graduate into college are education, interpersonal relationships, and the type of parenting received in the student's life (Balduf, 2009). While the education received by a high school student incorporates interpersonal relationships and parental influence, the foundation of the student's method of schooling will determine which method best prepares a student for college. Both researchers and society have raised the question: what educational background best prepares students for their transition into college? (Goldrick-Rab, Carter, & Wagner, 2007). The percentage of high school seniors who expect to attend college immediately after graduation is 92%; however, this expectation of students does not predict college enrollment (Alexander, Bozick, & Entwisle, 2008). Despite the high percentage of high school students who expect to attend college, the preparation that they receive academically is a determinant of whether they will attend and succeed at a university. Research claims that students who have had better high school preparation (e.g. academic high school coursework at the college level, higher levels of mathematics) are more likely to attend a four-year university immediately after high school.

One of the most important factors regarding whether a student will succeed in a college setting is the student's education in high school and the preparation for college resulting from that education. Education plays a large role in the life of high school students and it is crucial in regard to a student's transition to college. Each type of school, whether public, private- or home-school offers unique opportunities expanding beyond the education a student is currently receiving.

Public-school

Public-school is a democratic means of education in which the government integrates schools to share strong traits found exclusively in the United States (Lubienski, 2000). The strongest reason for democratic education lies in the support the public receives through funds and governance, which expands from the school building to the community. An advantage of public-school in contrast to private- or home-school is the voice that the public is able to utilize regarding the changes that individuals, whether directly involved with the local education program or not, would like to see take place (Shanahan & Walberg, 1985). When national reports questioned the quality of public-schools and encouraged change for improvements of education, a comparison of public-school education and private-school education revealed no significant differences. The results were groundbreaking as equality was assessed to compare private-school and public-school education which provided foundational research for further studies to contrast one method of education with another.

Private-school

Private-school is similar to public-school in structure but differs in the funding and customs. Private-schools within the U.S. are generally described as non-profit facilities that are affiliated with the Catholic Church (McEwan, 2001). It has been shown that private-school surpasses public-school in teacher's quality of teaching and the disciplinary climate in the school (Willms, 1985). The conclusion of the study indicated that there are very few differences between private- and public-schools even though prior research hypothesized that private-schools produced better academic results. The main reason that parents may decide to send their child to private-school is family income;

families who enroll their children in private-school generally earn a significantly higher income than those who home-educate or send their child to public-school (Willingham, 2008).

McEwan (2001) researched public-school students who transferred to private-schools and found that their academics excelled more in public-school settings than in private-schools; however, it is important to note that this study took place in Chile, South America, where (a) private-schools are more common than other educational facilities as a means of educating students; (b) results are based on a different socioeconomic status (SES); and (c) the standards of social and academic achievement differ culturally from U.S. schools. Despite cultural differences, the results indicate that private-schools are not so different from the public-school alternative. While there is not a significant increase in academic achievement seen in this study, other improvements such as interpersonal relationships, teachers, and the overall quality of the school are some advantages found in private-schooling.

Home-school

Home-schooling is education provided for a child who is educated within the home and follows various guidelines (Willingham, 2008). Most home-schooled students are instructed by their parents in this type of environment (Wichers, 2001). The instruction provided by parents can range from "*un-schooling*," in which parents let the children decide how they will be educated, to a formal setting in which the child's day is structured much like a public-school agenda (Willingham, 2008).

Integrating a child into society is more observable in a home-school setting, as opposed to a private-school or public-school (Wichers, 2001). In describing the

educational method, each offers benefits that a student can apply to the rest of his or her life. According to Collom (2005), homeschooling is a recent topic to surface in the area of research, and it is difficult to gather the information necessary. Since Collom's research in 2005, the research has expanded as homeschooling has become an alternative to public and private-school that is equal to, or perhaps better than, other education methods.

The number of home-schooled students has climbed from 1.1 million students in 2003 to an estimated 1.5 million students in 2007 (1.5 million homeschooled, 2008). The Home school Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) estimated the number of students who are home schooled in North America, and saw an increase in the past 10 years from 850,000 students to around 1.5 million today (Ray, 2009). This number is each individual student rather than families who home-school multiple children. It is assumed that researchers who refute home-schooled students are concerned that an increase of children who are educated within the home will not become integrated into the democratic ideals of the country (Lubienski, 2000). According to Lubienski, researchers who study the idea of educating within the home often do not look at statistics or success rates, but instead implement personal attacks into proposed research. For example, Rothermel (2003) noted that children become home educated "due to being bullied at school and their homes become magnets for friends truanting from school, with the result that none of them got an education" (p.75). This presumed assumption of homeschoolers gives society a skewed view of these students as ill-prepared, flippant individuals who do not know how to interact with or relate to peers. In order to effectively compare home-school to public-school and private-school, knowledge of (a) how the school originated (b) the reason why

a parent decides to educate at home, (c) the legal issues of home-schooling, and also (d) the benefits and problems of home-schooling must be evaluated.

Homeschooling

History of Homeschooling

Homeschooling is not a concept that has recently surfaced in the realm of education (Lines, 2000), but it is rather the controversy of homeschooling that has brought about a newfound awareness of the method of education (Rothermel, 2003). Despite the controversy, homeschooling was not formed as an alternative to other methods of schooling; it was rather the preferred method of education before a government issued school was set in place.

It was not until the nineteenth century that an alternative to home-schooling was readily available; this dilemma began due to the uniformity of democratic ideals, and the values that this type of society wanted to incorporate into the school system (Lines, 2000). Educational critics also influenced families as they saw the public-school system as faulty and wanted parents and their children to be able to choose their method of education (Collom, 2005). The twentieth century still yielded the freedoms of home-school, but it was in this century that laws were implemented to institute the rights in the Constitution for home-school programs (Lebeda, 2005). Home-school is not easily compared to public- or private-school, but the validity of content that homeschooling offers in America is undeniable (Olsen, 2009).

Home-school and other methods of education are often difficult to generalize in regard to which is most conducive to a student’s social and academic growth. Some research studies concerning homeschooling often share more opinion than fact

(Rothermel, 2003). Parents who choose to educate their children at home are criticized for the religious focus and absence from the states' education.

Reasons for Homeschooling

Home-school advocates give different reasons for their support decision to use this method (Rothermel, 2003). One of the main reasons why families prefer home-schooling to other methods of education has to do with the societal influence placed unnecessarily on the child (Lines, 2000). Children within the public-school system are subject to peer-pressure, violence, drugs, sex, and other influences that the student would not face in the home environment. Parents also want to make a decision that they deem best for their child, and sometimes view public-school as a depravity of the child's capacity to retain information (Willingham, 2008).

Parents may also choose to home-school their children for religious freedom or other freedoms denied them within a private- or public-school setting (Lines, 2000). Children primarily enrolled in a public-school often do not implement the values and religious principles that parents teach from within the home (Lebeda, 2005). Another factor is the time that parents can spend with their child during the most imperative learning stages in life (Rothermel, 2003). Parents who home educate often believe that learning begins at birth, and therefore, want to provide the education they deem as best for their child. A school-aged child spends an average of six to eight hours of weekdays in a classroom, and parents view this time as opportunity to implement values and time spent with their child. Parents within the home often want to spend time working with their child rather than awaiting their arrival home from school.

Since the time that homeschooling became an alternative to other methods of education, it has received both positive and negative discussions regarding its effectiveness. Since homeschooling does not provide monetary compensation to a local school system, it can be seen by critics as an avoidance of financially supporting an education system that is equivalent to, if not better, than a home-school alternative. Despite these research studies, the evidence provided was not found to be substantial enough to be valid due to the bias of the researcher. Much of the research that counters homeschooling is based on the stereotypes and personal opinions of the researchers rather than the evidence that comes as a result of the studies that have been done (Rothermel, 2003). Research articles that refute homeschooling see those who do as legalistic, socially-outcast, and ignorant of the options available through the public and private-school systems. The research study done by Lubienski (2000) for example, views homeschoolers as a weak link in the democratic educational chain. There is further argument that while homeschooling parents understand the need for democratic education, they still go against their ideals and educate apart from the public-school.

Legalities of Homeschooling

No other method of schooling has faced the scrutiny of the public more than homeschooling (Olsen, 2009). There are numerous cases regarding the legality and ethics in question through families who have decided to educate in the home, but the most recent outcry was in 2008.The court case, titled Case re Rachel L., was an appeal to take away a parent’s right to educate a child in the home if the parent did not have a teaching licensure; the public immediately petitioned and put a stop to the limits that were proposed to homeschooling rights. Due to the actions taken by the public, there is little

chance of that type of ruling will ever come against the act of homeschooling, because the difference that homeschooling has made in America is evident.

Despite the evidence that homeschooling is a valid option for families in America today, there is still controversy regarding the democratic education of public-schooling and the deprivation that school systems face when children are not enrolled in school (Lubienski, 2000). The subject material provided in public-schools are what all individuals must obtain to function effectively in society; however, home-school families are described as abusing American rights because they have chosen not to utilize the material offered. Further, Rothermel (2003) observed that "while there is not necessarily a problem with home education itself, growing concerns from interested professionals are beginning to turn it into a problem" (p.74). Some researchers are justifying their bias against homeschooling and conclude that the negative results obtained in their studies are valid research. A lack of evidence or conclusive research by professionals only causes research studies to be invalid and unreliable (Rothermel, 2003). .

Benefits of Homeschooling

One of the positive reasons to home-school in society is found in the careful planning executed by a majority of parents in research and beliefs (Rothermel, 2003). The top three reasons for parents to home-school their children, are (a) the concern for the school system, (b) concern for the instruction children would be receiving within a school system, (c) and the religious beliefs of the family (1.5 Million homeschooled, 2008). Of all of the homeschooled families studied to link religion with the decision to home educate, less than five percent claimed a religion that was not considered Christianity (Ray, 2009). Despite the high percentage of those who claimed religion and

were homeschooled, religion has become the second reason to remove a child from public-school, following parents' disappointment with the way their child is being instructed in the public-school system (Lines, 2000).

Many researchers assume that homeschoolers are given little opportunity to socialize within the community; this assumption does not observe the opportunities given to homeschoolers who interact with peers, authority, and others within the student's social network (Rothermel, 2003). Rothermel found that homeschooling brings positive qualities to both families and communities. The smaller student-to-teacher ratio allows homeschoolers to have more intentional interactions with the teacher and peers (if the student is involved with a home-school peer group; Lebeda, 2005).

Not only are homeschoolers able to advance intellectually and socially, but students' scores on standardized tests are higher than peers in public or private-school (Ray, 2009). According to Collom (2005), who conducted a meta-analysis of 25 studies on home-school achievement, found only one negative correlation between homeschooling and achievement, which suggests that most research concerning homeschooling is consistent.

Problems of Homeschooling

The benefits of homeschooling only come as a result of the advantages and steps taken by homeschooling parents (*1.5 Million*, 2008). If the child does little in terms of receiving an education provided by parents, then the opportunity for the child to develop academically is in vain. Some parents who withdraw their child from public-school often do not teach curriculum that parallels education with which the child is familiar. Children in this environment often play video games all day or learn information relevant to

schooling when it is convenient. This is perhaps one of the factors that public-school advocates fear most (Rothermel, 2003). .

One of the main concerns of culture and its view of homeschooling is not academic but rather social achievements Many homeschooled families are questioned by those within society, because of incomprehension of societal integration within the home-school community. Many researchers assume that homeschoolers lack peer interaction and social development when interaction does not occur within a public or private-school. While homeschoolers do not have conventional interactions with peers on a daily basis throughout school days, researchers have found most social interaction to be negative within the public-school (Lois, 2009). Another concern of the public is the limited accountability found within the homeschooling rules and regulations. Parents who home-school may be very social, and will go certain measures to ensure that their child is involved in the community. Some parents, however, use homeschooling as an excuse to keep the child at home with limited social interaction (Lubienski, 2000). Homeschoolers may be deprived of peer interaction, but it should be the concern of researchers to look at the social integration of homeschooled individuals (Lois).

Importance of Academic Achievement

One of the main issues of high school seniors transitioning into a university or college is a lack of preparation for the vital transition a student will need to make (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007). According to Balduf (2009), nearly 50% of students who are enrolled in college are not academically prepared. In a public-school setting, there is a worse teacher-to-student ratio than in private-school or home-school, which negatively affects the student/teacher relationship. Another factor for choosing a private-school is

for an improved social environment conducive to the student's peer-relationships. Both of these factors help transition a student who attended a private-school to the interactions the individual will encounter in college. Private-schools may be equal to the education received in a public-school, but the peer and teacher interaction obtained often is a greater factor for parents in deciding whether private-school or public-school is right for their child.

While homeschooling was the original method of education prior to public education, the original purpose of public-schools was to bring uniformity to both democracy and public interest. Adolescents enrolled in the public-school system are fulfilling the democratic ideals that were originally set in place in America. Researchers who find themselves opposed to the idea of home-school often concur with one another regarding the depravity of unity and democracy upon which America was founded. There has been no other social trend in the past half century that has increased as quickly as homeschooling (Lines, 2000). While home-school is not seen as parallel to public-school, due to the type of education received it has become an alternative to a private-school for parents and their children. Despite the fact that America began with the concept of educating children within the household, there is controversy regarding the option and rights to home-school a child (Lubienski, 2000).

Factors for Academic Achievement in College

There has been much research done in regard to what drives a college student toward academic excellence. Research studies regarding the academic achievement of college students is the beginning of a process to find the cause of academic preparedness (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007). The preparation of high school students for the adjustment

to college is a rather new topic to the field of research; the reason for this is the hundreds of variables that could be affiliated with college success. According to Smith & Zhang (2009), some of the many variables for predicting the adjustment of a student from high school to college are peers, parental influence, high school faculty, college faculty, college and high school preparatory courses, and other seminars that teach a student basic skills to become more effective in college.

In regard to the entrance of a student into college, the assessment of accepting a high school graduate into a university often depends on the grades and transcript provided by the school (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). While colleges accept home-schooled individuals who provide documentation of courses and state assessments taken, admittance procedure is hesitant regarding home-school admittance due to a lack of orthodox documentation of achievements during high school. *Underachievement* is defined as "a severe discrepancy between expected achievement (as measured by standardized achievement test scores or cognitive or intellectual ability assessments) and actual achievement (as measured by class grades and teacher evaluations)" (Balduf, 2009, p.276). Despite the overwhelming bank of research concerning the reasons for predicted achievement or underachievement in a college university, a good predictor is found in the home and social environment rather than standardized tests. Academic achievement in high school students was correlated with peers and non-academic activities in which a student was involved. High school students with access to mentors and counselors tend to be better prepared for college than those who function independently in their coursework (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007).

Wichers (2001) sought to determine whether home-school students could handle the added responsibility and workload of higher education using a content analysis design to obtain data. The current study will focus on the student population available through a private-, evangelical university instead of using a qualitative sample like in Wichers' study. Samples of individuals who derive from public-school, private-school, and home-school educational backgrounds will be used to determine if home-school differs from public-school or private-school .There have been numerous research studies conducted regarding each individual schooling choice, but little research has been done to compare all three.

Jones and Gloeckner (2004a) compared students who have graduated from home-school to students who have graduated from traditional school regarding their academic achievement in college. According to the research, admission acceptance for home-school students entering colleges and universities is still being developed to assess the performance of the home-school students within a college setting. Many home-schooled students do not have transcripts or academic documentation provided outside of the home, and it is difficult for admissions counselors to assess where the home-school student stands in comparison to his or her peers in a traditional school setting.

One difference between home-schooled students and public- or private-schooled peers is the process of admittance into a college or university (Ray, 2009). Home-schooled students often go through a more complex process when being admitted into a college or university, and one reason is that there is no third-party proof that the student has completed all of the work he or she has stated (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004b). In a study that sought to find whether home-school students were prepared for college life, Ray

(2009) collected data in a cross-sectional descriptive study from 11,739 home-schooled individuals, all of whom represented all 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Despite the lack of preparation that some colleges still have for home-schooled students, Ray (2009) found that homeschooled individuals are achieving beyond their traditionally schooled peers regardless of socioeconomic status, family dynamic, or home-school curriculum. The results of the study also indicated that the amount of structure (unstructured could be eclectic teaching methods to highly structured which could be pre-planned lessons and activities), the amount of time parents directly work with the child, and the enrollment in a full-service curriculum, makes little to no difference in students' achievements.

In the study by Jones and Gloeckner (2004b), home-school students were measured against traditional school individuals to determine which method of education best prepared them for college. Through looking at other empirical studies regarding home-school verses traditional school, it was noted that students who were home educated scored higher than traditional schooled students on the ACT English subtest; also home-schooled students who attended community college had higher GPAs in college than traditional-schooled students. Discrepancies evolved throughout the study, however, as the null hypotheses indicated that there was little difference between home educated students and traditional schooled individuals. There was little difference found between students who were homeschooled and traditional-schooled students regarding GPA, credit hours earned, ACT composite scores, ACT English test scores, ACT mathematics test, reading test scores, and ACT science reasoning test scores (2004a).

Data were collected from 55 high school graduates who were enrolled in a four-year public college; a matched group design then paired these graduates with 53

traditional high school graduates. The dependent variables were GPA, cumulative credits earned, SAT test scores, gender, race/ethnic background, and ACT scores. The ACT has a Cronbach's alpha of α=96 which ensures that the dependent variables being collected are consistent with the study (2004a).

The dependent variables measured the academic achievement among students who graduated from home-school, and those who graduated from a public or private-school. Finally, the study determined whether statistical differences were found in the home-school and traditional school student's gender, race/ethnicity, and institution enrolled (college or university).. In the discussion of this research study, Jones and Gloeckner (2004a) noted that while the results were not statistically significant home-schooled students are as prepared as those who were in a traditional school.

Hypothesis

The current study seeks to find whether home-schooled students are better prepared academically than those who graduated from a public or private-school.

Purpose

The purpose of the current study was to collect data to determine whether students who graduated from home-school are better prepared academically for entering a college or university than those who graduated from either a public or private-school. There have been researched differences in students who were home-schooled in contrast to those who were traditionally-schooled, but little research has extensively looked at transitions from high school to college. Studies that have looked at educational backgrounds often overlook the transition from high school to college, but focus instead on each separate component. Several variables that will assess transition success from high school to

college and educational backgrounds are (a) age; (b) major; (c); retention (d) high school GPA in comparison to college GPA; (e) ACT and SAT scores; and (f) the current number of college credits taken.

Method

Participants

To assess the academic and social adjustment of current students, undergraduate students served as the population. An undergraduate population was chosen for several reasons; (a) the limited time frame between students' high school experience and time in college aids in the students' ability to remember their high school experience more clearly; (b) an undergraduate student typically lives on campus and are therefore able to measure students under similar living variables; and (c) the undergraduate population are also more likely to take the survey due to the incentive of Psychology activity credit that results from taking the survey. A total of 267 students participated in the survey.

Procedure and Materials

This study was conducted at a private-, evangelical university and was conducted during the spring semester of the 2010 academic school year. The data were collected through electronic surveys to obtain quantitative data. The survey was completed by students who desired to take it through the school's Psychology webpage. The incentive for students who participated in the survey was the offer of a Psychology activity credit upon completion. This particular university was chosen as the location for the survey due to the sample available to the researcher, as well as the prospective home-school admittance that the university offers. The admission process for a home-schooled individual is similar to that of a public-schooled or private-schooled individual who seeks

to enroll at this University, thereby, increasing the amount of home-schooled students that will be taking the survey.

One survey was used to accurately measure the academic achievements of a college freshman at the university. The survey was posted on the university psychology webpage to collect a convenience sample of the students participating in the study. The data was quantitative, using information about the students' educational background as well as their first year in college. Specific criterion was observed to determine whether the data given from the student was included in the study, such as, (a) the individual was either from a home-school, private-school, or public-school educational background; (b) and the student met the stipulation of being from either, private-school, or public-school which includes being in one of the three educational backgrounds for at least one year prior to enrollment at the university.

Academics were measured by using the demographics of (a) high school GPA; (b) current college GPA; (c) ACT scores (if applicable); (d); SAT scores (if applicable); (e) the amount of credits taken during the student's time at Liberty; (f) student retention; (g) and other forms of assessment that aid in understanding whether the student was adjusted prior to entering into a college or university. A convenience sample was used because the students were given the option to take the survey electronically on a volunteer basis. In the electronic notification students were made aware that they had the opportunity to receive incentive for taking the survey. The incentive was one Psychology activity credit for participating in the survey which is either extra credit or required for psychology courses.

Results

Surveys were distributed to assess whether cumulative undergraduate GPA was impacted by three different educational backgrounds. Group 1 attended public-school; Group 2 attended private-school; Group 3 attended home-school. Frequency variables were measured to find the mean and median of college GPA, high school GPA, the semesters at the current university, and educational background.

ACT scores were omitted from the analysis due to a lack of response among participants. SAT scores were also omitted because there was little way to distinguish between participants' scores and whether scores were taken from the old or new SAT scoring system. Variables including, age, ethnicity, gender, the number of credits taken, biblical background, and major were omitted due to lack of relevancy to the study.

Preliminary data screening was done to determine extreme outliers and distribution of scores. The preliminary frequencies that analyzed high school GPA contained outliers of weighted GPA that exceeded the typical 4.0 maximum and had a relatively high mean (M= 3.41, SD= .517). Participants survey scores were excluded if they obtained a GPA higher than 4.0 in the survey question. Another variable frequency containing outliers were the semesters the student had been at the current university; the mean was 3.02 (SD= 1.112). Participants that attended the university more than nine semesters were omitted. Levels of significance were not measured in the preliminary assessment due to outliers.

After preliminary data screening, a one-way ANOVA was run; the results indicated that educational background had a significant effect on high school GPA and college GPA: $F(2,336) = 6.200$, $p = .002$. See table 1.1. The one-way ANOVA Post Hoc test indicated that the cumulative GPA of high school students in public- and home-

school groups were significantly different, $p<.01$. See table 1.2. Private-school students were not compared and the analysis between groups was kept between home-school and public-school. An ANCOVA was done to determine significant differences between educational backgrounds and college GPA while controlling for high school GPA and no significant difference was found $F(2,355) = 2.46$, $p= .087$.

Table 1.1

Population, mean, standard deviation, confidence interval for GPA in college and high school

Grade point average	N	Mean	SD
Current college	365	3.060	.593
High school	375	3.377	.487

Table 1.2

Relation between educational background and GPA in college and high school

Educational Background	N	Mean	SD	.95 confidence interval
Public-school high school GPA	186	3.25	.5034	-.649- -.317
Public-school college GPA	181	3.01	.6061	-.567- -.149
Home-school college GPA	37	3.37	.4810	-.540- -.176
Home-school high school GPA	38	3.74	.2900	-.602- -.364

Discussion

The results of the study did not support the hypothesis, because there was no difference found between college GPA and educational background. The pretest of the analysis did not include levels of significance, but it indicated that very few variables could be used to assess educational background and GPA. While educational background had a significant difference on high school GPA, there was no significance in regard to educational background and college GPA. Educational background affecting GPA more

in high school than college was not predicted in the hypothesis, and the correlation among all educational backgrounds indicated two results: (a) educational background is not a predictor for college success; (b) home-school students do not have significantly higher scores for college GPA. There is not one educational background that is more effective than the others. There was no difference among education backgrounds and high school GPA which indicated that GPA could decline for various reasons: the range of intelligence among students who attend high school; the motivation of high school students (e.g. sports giving incentive for good grades); and the grade subjectivism that could occur among schools. College GPA showed a decline compared to the cumulative GPA earned in high school; this could be influenced by the standardized means used to assess the achievements of students in college. Home-school and public-school individuals revealed little difference in the success in transitioning from high school to college. While the results indicate that there is no difference between all educational backgrounds; this also reveals that home-school students are not at an academic disadvantage from public-school students entering college.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were (a) the university in which the study was conducted; (b) the type of questions asked in the survey (c) and the participants. The data was collected from a private- evangelical university that is doctrinally based on the Bible as its primary foundation. This school also offers admittance for home-schooled students which could be a different process at different colleges or universities. The study assessed the population of one university to determine whether homeschoolers differ from public-school or private-school individuals; this study will need to be conducted at

multiple universities to generalize the results. Another limitation is found in the religious affiliation of the university, and cannot be generalized with studies conducted on a non-evangelical campus. This is true when surveying those who were home schooled, because research indicates that students who are home schooled generally also are religiously affiliated. There was a limitation in the variables assessed in the survey because some questions needed to be omitted for clarity. The survey identified current college GPA and cumulative high school GPA but did not take into account that GPAs can be weighted. The data included weighted GPA because there was no indication of this GPA of students below the normal 4.0 mark; this caused data to be skewed and to extend beyond the 4.0 mark. The survey also included the SAT and ACT scores of students; however, due to a limited number of participants that took either one test or the other, the data was omitted from the study. Also, much of the data was omitted from the study due to a lack of relevance variables (e.g. ethnicity does not strongly impact course credits taken). Finally, the population surveyed in the research study produced a limitation. The sample was taken from students who needed to earn one Psychology activity credit to gain extra credit or course credit. The students enrolled in those two courses were not large enough to represent the educational backgrounds of the entire campus.

Conclusion

This study contrasted home-schooled individuals from public- and private-schooled individuals to determine whether home-schooled students could transition from high school to a university setting as well as or better than those from public- or private-school educational backgrounds. The academic aspect was the most prevalent and was the primary focus of the study regarding the college transition process. This study

examined the correlation between the type of schooling of each individual and the academic aspects that were affected by each schooling method. A quantitative survey was done to determine the transition success of current college students from high school. Further research is necessary to reach a generalized result regarding the study conducted, but the data gathered provided a foundation for more research to be completed in the future.

References

(2008, December). 1.5 million homeschooled students in the United States in 2007. *Issue Brief*, pp. 1-4.

Alexander, K., Bozick, R., & Entwisle, D. (2008). Warming up, cooling out, or holding steady? Persistance and change in educational expectations after high school. *Sociology of Education, 81*(4), 371-396.

Balduf, M. (2009). Underachievement among college students. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 20*(2), 274-294.

Collom, E. (2005). The ins and outs of homeschooling: The determinants of parental motivations and student achievement. *Education and Urban Society, 37*(3), 307-335.

Goldrick-Rab, S., Carter, D.F., & Wagner, R.W. (2007). What higher education has to say about the transition to college. *Teachers College Record, 109*(10), 2444-2481.

House, J., & Keeley, E. (1997). Predictive validity of college admissions test scores. *Journal of Psychology, 131*(5), 572.

Jones, P. & Gloeckner, G. (2004a). First-year college performance: A study of homeschool graduates and traditional school graduates. *The Journal of College Admission, 183*(1) 17-20.

Jones, P. & Gloeckner, G. (2004b). Perceptions of and attitudes toward homeschool students. *The Journal of College Admission, 185*(1), 13-21.

Lebeda, S. (2005). Homeschooling: Depriving children of social development. *Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues, 16*(1), 99-104.

Lines, P.M. (2000). Homeschooling comes of age. *Public Interest, 140*(1), 74-85.

Lois, J. (2009). Emotionally layered accounts: Homeschoolers' justifications for maternal deviance. *Deviant Behavior, 30*(2), 201-234.

Lubienski, C. (2000) Whither the common good? A critique of homeschooling. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(1 & 2), 207-232.

McEwan, P.J. (2001). The effectiveness of public, Catholic, and non-religious private-schools in Chile's voucher system. *Education Economics, 9*(2), 103-128.

Olsen, C. (2009). Constitutionality of home school: How the Supreme Court and American history endorse parental choice. *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal, 2*(1), 399-423.

Ray, B.D. (2009). Homeschool progress report 2009: Academic achievement and demographics. *Home school Legal Defense Association*, 1-7.

Rothermel, P. (2003). Can we classify motives for home school? *Evaluation and Research in Education, 17*(2&3), 74-89.

Shanahan, T. & Walberg, H.J. (1985). Productive influences on high school student achievement. *Journal of Educational Research, 78*(6), 357-363.

Smith, W., & Zhang, P.(2009). Students' perceptions and experiences with key factors during the transition from high school to college. *College Student Journal, 43*(2), 643-657.

Sorey, K., & Duggan, M.H. (2008). Homeschoolers entering community colleges: Perceptions of admission officers. *Journal of College Admission, 200*(1), 22-28.

Wichers, M. (2001). Homeschooling: Adventitious or detrimental for proficiency in higher education. *Education, 122*(1), 145-150.

Willingham, T. (2008). Libraries and homeschoolers. *Knowledge Quest, 37*(1), 58-63.

Willms J.D. (1985). Catholic-school effects on academic achievement: New evidence from the high school and beyond follow-up study. *Sociology of Education, 58*, 98-114.