

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HOMESCHOOLING AND THE
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND PEER RELATIONS OF HOMESCHOOLED
COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Angelo John Francis Salvo

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2018

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HOMESCHOOLING AND THE SOCIAL
BEHAVIOR AND PEER RELATIONS OF HOMESCHOOLED
COLLEGE STUDENTS

by Angelo John Francis Salvo

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2018

APPROVED BY:

Kathie May Carwile, Ed.D, Committee Chair

JoAnna Oster, Ed.D, Committee Chair

Tasha Lucas Youmans, Ph.D, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

Homeschooling is a rapidly-growing educational phenomenon in the United States that has attracted much attention. Parents who home school their children do so for a variety of reasons. Multiple studies have demonstrated that homeschooled youth performed academically at similar or better levels than students educated in mainstream schools. There is a dearth of studies which describes the social adjustment or socialization of homeschooled students when they reach college. The hermeneutical phenomenology presented here explored the social and academic experiences of college and university students living away from home who received a home education at some point during their K-12 educational lives. The theory guiding this study was Vincent Tinto's (1975; as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012) theory of the transition of adjusting to a college or university environment as it referred to the stages that homeschooled students experience as they continue on their paths as college or university students. My data collection method was face-to-face and telephone interviews with homeschooled college or university students. I sampled students from Berner-Carlson University and personal contacts, some of whom I obtained by contacting various local homeschooling organizations. My method of data analysis included taking notes on the responses provided in the interviews. I then formulated themes that came from the participants' responses and divided them into categories such as social adjustment, theme of communication, and positive impact on ability to relate to people. The purpose of this phenomenology was to describe the social experiences of college students living away from home in a college or university environment and homeschooled during their K-12 educational experience.

Keywords: homeschooling, incorporation, separation, socialization, transition

Copyright

@ 2018 by Angelo J. Salvo

Dedication and Acknowledgments Page

I dedicate this paper to the patient and knowledgeable professors and other gatekeepers who have assisted me on each step along the path toward this accomplishment and provided me encouragement. Also, I send dedication and much gratitude to my parents and other family members who have demonstrated patience and support as I have strived to achieve this milestone. I give deep thanks to God for his strength and wisdom in helping me to achieve this milestone. I give thanks to everyone who supported me on this journey as well.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Copyright	4
Dedication and Acknowledgments Page	5
List of Tables	10
List of Abbreviations	11
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	12
Overview.....	12
Background.....	13
Historical Contexts.....	13
Social Contexts	17
Theoretical Contexts	19
Situation to Self.....	19
Problem Statement	20
Purpose Statement.....	22
Significance of the Study	22
Research Questions	27
Definitions.....	30
Summary.....	31
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	32
Overview.....	32
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.....	32
Related Literature.....	37

Summary	68
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	71
Overview	71
Design	72
Research Questions	73
Setting	74
Participants	75
Procedures	76
The Researcher's Role	76
Data Collection	77
Data Analysis	80
Trustworthiness	81
Credibility	81
Dependability and Confirmability	81
Transferability	81
Ethical Considerations	82
Summary	82
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	84
Overview	84
Participants	85
Ms. C	85
Mr. D	86
Mr. E	86

Ms. E..... 87

Ms. Ethlen..... 87

Mr. J 88

Mr. R..... 89

Ms. S 89

Results..... 90

 Theme Development..... 90

 Research Questions..... 142

 Summary..... 147

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION..... 149

 Overview..... 149

 Summary of Findings..... 150

 Discussion..... 153

 Theoretical Literature Discussion..... 153

 Empirical Literature Discussion 158

 Implications..... 167

 Theoretical Implications 167

 Empirical Implications..... 170

 Practical Implications..... 171

 Delimitations and Limitations..... 172

 Recommendations for Future Research 173

 Summary..... 178

REFERENCES 181

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	192
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	194
APPENDIX C: RESPONSES FROM THE INTERVIEWEES.....	195
APPENDIX D: NOTES ON COMMON THEMES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	215
APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	222
APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	225
APPENDIX G: RECRUITMENT LETTER.....	226
APPENDIX H: E-MAILED FUTURE PROSPECTS QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS.....	228
APPENDIX I: SECOND E-MAILED QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS.....	229

List of Tables

Table 1. Themes With Associated Code Words.....	141
---	-----

List of Abbreviations

American College Test (ACT)

Children's Assertiveness Behavioural Scale (CABS)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

Revised Rutter Scale (RRS)

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Texas Academic Studies Skills Program (TASP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Homeschooling is a phenomenon that has become much more common over the years. Homeschooling is attracting the attention of parents from a variety of social and economic backgrounds that have concerns for their children in schools outside the home, such as the safety of their children or the fact that the homeschooled children have exhibited positive traits (Campbell, 2012). The freedom to exercise such an individual autonomy and power is vested in the Constitution and the liberties that this country affords to its citizens. Homeschooling does not imply that there is any dramatic or unwarranted separation from curricula and academic policies that are mandated by the state that supervises it. A general definition of homeschooling is “both a means of educating children according to parental standards and an alternative social movement embracing a unique set of cultural norms and values” (Campbell, 2012, p. 1). A significant number of research studies exist on the academic performance and characteristics of homeschooled children under the age of 18. However, the studies on the performance of homeschooled college or university students are relatively limited, especially the ones that provide a clear description of the effects of different social environments on homeschooled children (Guterman & Neuman, 2016). Researchers identified that homeschooled children come from positive family backgrounds (Lips & Feinberg, 2008).

I divided this chapter to include a background that explains the meaning of the literature that I have read on homeschooled students regarding historical contexts, social contexts, and theoretical contexts. Next, the situation describes how my background of working in a university library provided me the intellectual stimulation to study homeschooled students in a college or university environment. The situation to self also identifies the philosophical assumptions that I

bring to the research study and the social constructivist paradigm that I brought to my research. After the situation to self, there is a problem statement identifying why the research study is necessary relative to the study of homeschooled students. The purpose statement states the direct purpose of the research study and ties it to the context of the theory of Tinto's (1975) theory of integration into a college environment that I used (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). After the purpose statement, there is a significance of the study section that explains the practical significance of my research study. Afterward, there is a section that lists the research questions and provides a description of each of the research questions. After the section on research questions, there is a section that provides definitions of important terms for the research study. At the end of this chapter, there is a summary that provides a clear and concise definition of the chapter.

Background

Historical Contexts

Survey research has revealed a diverse population of homeschoolers and higher rates of minority homeschooling than assumed (Gaither, 2009). According to economist Guillermo Montes's analysis of data from the 2001 National Household Education Survey, "70 percent of respondents cited a non-religious reason as the top motivator in their decision to homeschool" (Gaither, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, the notion that parents who homeschool are right-wing or conservative Christian "activists" who are directly opposed to public or private schooling is not essentially accurate. The truth is that many parents have felt that it is their moral duty to fight the secular humanism and belief system taught in public schools (Snyder, 2013).

The improvement in relationships that seems to occur with homeschooling seems to work because 82.6% of the parents surveyed in the study reported that their children preferred being

schooled at home to being in a public or private school (Boschee & Boschee, 2011). One of the greatest concerns about homeschooling is the possibility that it may lead to a deficit of socialization or human-interaction skills in those students relative to children schooled in mainstream institutions. Researchers found that homeschooled children come from positive family backgrounds (Lips & Feinberg, 2008).

Even though homeschooling has technically been a feature of American education since early colonial times, it never became a prominent feature of the American education landscape until the 1950s and the 1960s (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). John Caldwell Holt, a pioneering education writer who founded a movement titled Growth Without Schooling, encouraged parents who read or followed him to be skeptical of the modern educational system (as cited in Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). The two books that John Caldwell Holt wrote were *How Children Fail* (1964) and *How Children Learn* (1967). Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) noted,

Holt's ideas concerning the basic dysfunctions of American education included the notion that when children are too often motivated by fear their natural desire for self-discovery is thwarted, and that they are too often taught for test-taking in American schools. (p. 20)

Beginning with the period of John Caldwell Holt in 1967, there was increasing parental dissatisfaction with public schools and other forms of schools in the community that led parents to take away their children from the schools. It was the increasing dissatisfaction with public and other forms of schools that led to rather rapid growth in homeschooling. Additionally, Holt provided the leadership in advocating a radical movement that stressed educational decentralization and greater parental autonomy (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). The greater amount

of autonomy that homeschooling education provides an impetus for more parents to homeschool their children.

Reliable nationwide numbers are not easy to obtain, but the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that from 1999 to 2003 the number of home-schooled children increased from around 850,000 to roughly 1.1 million, which is a 29 percent jump in four years. (Gaither, 2009, p. 12)

Overall, homeschooling students have been taught quite well by their parents, and they appear to learn the material in all the important academic areas at a rate that is equal to or greater than students educated in mainstream educational institutions. Homeschoolers whose motivations are mainly religious have certainly not gone away, but they have become joined by parents whose reasons range from concerns about special education to bad experiences with teachers as well as many other reasons (Gaither, 2009). The demographic characteristics of homeschooling families tend to fit the categories of either ideologues or pedagogues (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). According to another study, a researcher by the name of Van Galen supported the division of homeschoolers into ideologues and pedagogues as well (Green-Hennessy, 2014).

Glanzer (2008) argued that parents should be held accountable and that there needs to be assurance that the children are learning in a productive, safe, and nurturing environment. Glanzer stated, “. . . parental authority must end when its exercise compromises the development of their children into adults capable of independent functioning or when it disables or retards the development of minimalist autonomy in children” (Glanzer, 2008, p. 5). Then too, the population of parents who homeschool has become more diverse and multifaceted over time. In the 1960s and into the 1970s, many homeschool parents were members of a segment of society that was labeled the counter-cultural Left (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Both sides form a

significant sector of the population of homeschooling parents. Wilhelm and Firmin (2009) confirmed that “The ideologues are mainly, but not exclusively, religious conservatives, while the pedagogues are preoccupied with improving their child’s academic and social environment” (p. 1). Survey research has revealed a diverse population of homeschoolers and higher rates of minority homeschooling than assumed (Gaither, 2009). “Economist Guillermo Montes’s analysis of data from the massive 2001 National Household Education Survey found that 70 percent of respondents cited non-religious reasons as the top motivator in their decision to home school” (Gaither, 2009, p. 12). For example, homeschooling parents question if the public benefits provided by mainstream or public schools are the only benefits or the most important benefits that should be pursued (Merry & Karsten, 2010). Homeschooling parents value the benefits that come with independently controlling the schooling of their children. The Merry & Karsten study found that some home educators are opposed to state oversight.

Another study examined the test results of homeschooled on the Texas Academic Studies Skills Program (TASP) between homeschooled and traditionally-schooled students (Snyder, 2013). According to Jenkins (1998), the results from the TASP test showed that “homeschooled students performed significantly better than traditionally schooled students on the reading and math sections of the test; however, no significant difference was found between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students on the writing portion of the test” (as cited in Snyder, 2013, pp. 292-293). Therefore, despite the lack of exposure that homeschooled students have to traditional teacher lecture patterns or everyday schooling patterns that traditionally-schooled students receive, the standardized tests of homeschooled students appear to be higher quite often. This phenomenology is not focusing on the background of homeschooled students based on standardized tests.

Social Contexts

The study that contains a discussion of behavioral results as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Revised Rutter Scale (RRS) touch upon the social experiences of homeschooled students in college or university environments. The results of these studies did not demonstrate that homeschooled students showed a pronounced level of behavioral difficulties. Research revealed a threshold score of 11 for total difficulties on the RRS scale, and a mean score of 8.38 for the homeschooled students studied (Rothermel, 2012). Elander and Rutter (1996) stated, “However, ten home-educated children (23.80%) scored above 11. For those with scores above the cut-off, the area of specific difficulty is defined by the child’s highest score in either the ‘Emotional Difficulties’ or ‘Conduct Difficulties’ domain” (as cited in Rothermel, 2012, p. 22). The results obtained from those behavioral tests conducted on students who were only aged 5-11, but the examination of homeschooled young students may be evidence of possible problems or possible benefits regarding behavior when the students become older, and they are ready to attend a college or university. Furthermore, when three of the 10 “problem” children’s problems did not relate to their homeschooling, the percentage of children whose scores exceeded the threshold of 11 was put at 16.6% (Rothermel, 2012).

One good addition to the effects of homeschooling on college-educated students came from Lynn Phillips (2010). The studies on the academic performance of homeschooled children stated overall that those homeschooling had discussed little about the academic selections that homeschooled students make when they enroll in a college or university. The researchers of the study hypothesized that “students who had been homeschooled in high school would be less likely to major in the natural sciences than their non-homeschooled peers” (Phillips, 2010, p. 19). The results showed that homeschooled students were less likely to major in natural sciences,

math, and engineering than students schooled in public or private colleges (Phillips, 2010). As far as social effects of homeschooling, additional support may exist in a study that measured the self-esteem of homeschooled children with non-homeschooled children by using the Piers-Harrison Children's Self-Concept Scale. On the scale, no significant difference in self-esteem existed between the homeschooled and non-homeschooled children (Boschee & Boschee, 2011). Furthermore, parents of homeschooled children seem to be concerned about the social development of their children, but they have several reasons for not wanting to send their children to public or private schools. In conclusion,

the primary reasons for homeschooling were to strengthen relationships with children, the fact that public schools did not permit their children to learn about God, peer pressure, public schools not aiding in character development, and class size being too large.

(Boschee & Boschee, 2011, p. 296)

The networks that are available to homeschooling parents help with collaborative instruction and provide opportunities for the socialization of homeschooled students (Lips & Feinberg, 2008).

One of the greatest concerns about homeschooling is the possibility that it may lead to a deficit of socialization or human-interaction skills in those students relative to children schooled in mainstream institutions. Socialization is a continuous process through which an individual acquires an identity and learns the norms, values, behavior and social skills appropriate to his or her social position (Dictionary.com, 2018). Researchers admitted that homeschooled children do come from positive family backgrounds (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). The improvement in relationships that seems to occur with homeschooling seems to work because 82.6% of the

surveyed parents in the study reported that their children preferred being schooled at home to being in a public or private school (Boschee & Boschee, 2011).

Theoretical Contexts

Homeschooled students take part in social interaction activities such as religious activities and interactions with neighborhood children at fairly high percentages (Boschee & Boschee, 2011). By the 1980s, due to the more liberal nature of mainstream education, “. . . a new wave of parents choosing to homeschool in order to employ more traditional or classical learning methods” (Dumas, Gates, & Schwarzer, 2010, p. 70). Many parents became frustrated with the public schools in their communities for a variety of reasons and also felt that the schools where they lived failed to expose students sufficiently to the traditional social and religious values they cherished. Concern about the environment of schools, dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools, and a desire to provide religious or moral instruction were all listed as reasons for homeschooling children (Dumas et al., 2010). Parents seem to have an increasing number of resources at their disposal to help them with developing their children’s education. Athletic activities, speech and debate tournaments and other activities figure into the patterns that are available for homeschooled students (Lips & Feinberg, 2008).

Situation to Self

As the researcher in this phenomenological project, I intended to act as a human instrument to bring out the voice of the student and faculty participants. The phenomenology used an ontological assumption because the study viewed the reality of the social experiences of homeschooled students as subjective and multiple according to the participants in the study. I utilized a total of 16 semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix A) to help bring out the voice of the participants. I kept the interviews with the participants semi-structured, and I gave

the faculty participants in the study opportunity to discuss their experiences with a good deal of freedom. I had some experience in the field of higher education assisting students with finding resources in an academic library and using academic databases for research purposes, but I have no experience with the process of working with homeschooled students. The literature that I read on homeschooling suggested that homeschooled students might do as well or even better academically than traditionally-schooled students but may have problems with social adjustment in a higher education environment. I felt the responses the participants in the study provided shaped my role as an interpreter of what they told. The paradigm that I brought to this research study was that of social constructivism because I sought to understand the world of homeschooled students. I also wanted to understand how professors viewed the differences and similarities between homeschooled and traditionally-schooled students when it came to academic and social adjustment.

Problem Statement

The problem is that the perspectives of homeschooled students in the realm of higher education, as well as the perspectives of higher education teachers, require more study to determine the levels of social and personal adjustment of homeschooled students to higher education and adult life. It is evident that school is not the only place, and sometimes hardly the best place, where children are going to learn basic life skills. The connections that homeschooling parents establish with their children are not necessarily overprotective but are instead related to the building of healthy social relationships. Educators carry a common misconception that homeschooled children are socially awkward because of the supposed isolation and “cloistering in the house” that they experience. Parents may easily train their children to get involved in exercises as well as their routine academic training and give them

opportunities to interact with children of their ages if they balance the daily routines of their children properly.

Very little research exists on the perspectives of homeschooled students who are undergoing a college or university environment and living away from home as well as the needs of homeschooled students who have more leaps and bounds to experience to adjust to the social environment of higher learning. There is evidence to show that the outcomes for homeschooled students accepted into a college or university are quite positive. One homeschooled student who talked about her experiences of getting enrolled in college found the admissions counselors she encountered to be very supportive (McIntosh-Burke, 2013). According to McIntosh-Burke (2013), the student did not receive any rejection notices from any of the 15 schools where she applied. The level of social adjustment or competence among homeschooled students perhaps varies a great deal based on the personalities, family environment and rearing of individual homeschooled students themselves. The data on homeschooling showed that homeschooled students who grow up in relatively stable environments with two parents, and social environments in such atmospheres tend to be relatively healthy. The study from Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) concluded that homeschooled students adjust quite well to a college environment.

The outcomes for homeschooled youths are a topic of study that this research study is going to uncover through a qualitative data research method. One positive finding from a study stated that homeschooled college students have significantly lower depression scores than those who had never been homeschooled (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). Even though educational administrators have made such assumptions about newly-enrolled or enrolled homeschooled students, there may be quite a large difference between how the homeschooled students view their experiences and how the administration believes they might fare in the new environment of

a college or university. Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) admitted scant effort among government researchers or research organizations to provide a nationwide, comprehensive study of the outcomes associated with homeschooling. In my research, I did not seek to affirm the theory that homeschooling will lead students to do better when they have a college or university education. I simply sought to record the experiences of homeschooled participants living away from home while enrolled in a particular college or university environment. I also analyzed the experiences of those students and then added the results and discussion to the mass of literature on homeschooling. No literature existed which gave a voice to homeschooled college or university students who wanted to talk about their social or personal experiences while on a college or university campus.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenology is to describe the social and on-campus experiences for homeschooled college or university students who are living away from home in a college or university environment. At this stage in the research, the definition of homeschooling was “both a means of educating children according to parental standards and an alternative social movement embracing a unique set of cultural norms and values” (Campbell, 2012). The theory guiding this study was Vincent Tinto’s (1975; as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012) theory of the transition of adjusting to a college or university environment as it refers to the stages that homeschooled students experience as they continue their paths as college or university students.

Significance of the Study

A few studies have posed questions about the ability of homeschooled students to adjust to the realities of a higher education system that exposes them to peer influences and other

characteristics that they did not have to face while homeschooling. A researcher who claimed that he is no proponent of homeschooling developed a study in how and to what degree homeschooled students navigate the public university, its particular ideologies, and the expectations of their professors (Marzluf, 2009). The Marzluf (2009) study concluded that the homeschooled students demonstrated their ability to negotiate the transition from the private to the public space. One study pointed out that “much of the literature on homeschooling and its consequences is often a product of the homeschooling movement, so it contains obvious biases” (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012, p. 20). There needs to be more of an outside expert on the potentially positive social consequences of a homeschooling environment. One study suggested that the social interactions that children have with their parents when being homeschooled are similar to the interactions that children have with their peers in traditional school environments. There need to be more qualitative studies of homeschooled children, especially when they become young adults so that the youths can give their perspectives and then the literature does not primarily rely on homeschooling parents or other proponents of the practice. The Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) study shed some light on the realities that homeschooled students experienced as they became ready for college.

The results from the Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) study indicated that homeschooled students have levels of self-esteem that are no higher than students schooled in traditional school environments. The results from the study also indicated that “those students with a history of homeschooling did have significantly lower depression scores than those who had never been homeschooled” (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012, p. 30). However, it is also true that homeschooled applicants may not be completely comfortable with the institutional approach that is present in institutions such as community colleges (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Although they may be

somewhat uncomfortable with the institutional approaches at community colleges, homeschooled students will have to interact with non-homeschooled students just like non-homeschooled students need to interact and socialize. The results of one dissertation that discussed the freshman experience at a community college mentioned that creating positive interactions is crucial to retention on the community college campus (Hall, 2007). Despite of the positive findings from the study, the report on the study ends with a convincing statement of the need to carry out more comprehensive studies of the impact of homeschooling. The impact of homeschooling requires further investigation because there are varying opinions on the social preparedness of homeschooled students for the realities of higher education. For example, Sorey and Duggan (2008) made this conclusion:

While the respondents in this study perceived that homeschooled students were just as academically prepared as other students, they were not as unanimous in their view of the applicant's social preparation. (p. 28)

The Drenovsky and Cohen study (2012) identified little effort on the part of the government to carry out a comprehensive and scientific study of the outcomes associated with homeschooling. There is no doubt that homeschooled students have better academic outcomes than students not homeschooled. One study pointed out that homeschooled students receive considerably higher ACT scores and earn considerably higher GPAs than students who are not homeschooled (Cogan, 2010). It is possible that one reason why homeschooled students perform better academically than traditionally-schooled students is that parents who homeschool view the process of educating their children as more than just formal schooling (Kunzman, 2009). The parents see themselves as participating in a very serious commitment to the overall cultivation of their children and the development of their children into positive and well-adjusted adults. It is

true that a distinction between two types of homeschooling, one structured and the other one unstructured. Structured homeschooling has proven to produce more successful results than unstructured homeschooling. Structured homeschooling relies extensively on pre-made curricula and structured lesson plans, and unstructured homeschooling seldom relies on both of those characteristics (Martin-Chang, Gould, & Meuse, 2011).

I made no distinction in my study among college students who received what can be considered structured and those who received what may be considered unstructured homeschooling. The study that raises those two distinctions of homeschooling stated that the majority of homeschooling parents reported that they “often” or “always” followed a path that can be considered structured homeschooling (Martin-Chang et al., 2011). However, the researchers concluded based on the findings that “structured homeschooling may advance the development of academic skills (as measured by standardized tests) beyond what is experienced by attending traditional public school” (Martin-Chang et al., 2011, p. 201). Homeschooled students appeared to do quite well and adjust, but the college and university environments in this country have to develop an atmosphere that recognizes the socially-different nature of applicants and students who have limited exposure to mainstream K-12 schooling. Since the number of homeschooled applicants is increasing, community colleges must develop and publicize formal admission guidelines for this population (Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

At the same time, the unstructured homeschooling students on average scored below their expected grade level on the standardized test (Martin-Chang et al., 2011). Despite the academic advantages that are produced by homeschooling, there is a certain awkwardness and lack of preparation that college institutions may perceive in students who stayed at home for most of their childhood lives. “In a study of 210 four-year universities, Barnebey (1986) found that 96

percent of the admission officers reported that their jobs were more difficult when the applicants were unable to submit high school transcripts for evaluative purposes” (as cited in Sorey & Duggan, 2008, p. 24). A study on the social experiences of homeschooled students is very beneficial for a college or university environment because the number of homeschooled students in the realm of higher education is growing. At the University of Central Florida, there was a description within the website of a course that is titled “Homeschool with Success” (University of Central Florida, 2013).

There was also a discussion of special services provided at colleges to homeschooled students, such as providing counselors who work with homeschooled applicants on a one-on-one basis (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Specifically, the system of receiving records of grades or standards accomplished by homeschooled applicants needs to improve, and there needs to be an increased awareness of homeschooled students in colleges and universities. Many homeschooled students simply do not have clear documentation of academic performance at the high school level such as academic transcripts to provide during the application process. Instead of a grade record or transcript, “various credential tools were utilized ranging from standardized tests to a letter of recommendation” (Sorey & Duggan, 2008, p. 25). The description of the course at the University of Central Florida (2013) included a statement about how homeschooling would give parents an opportunity to socialize their children and build long-lasting and constructive relationships with peers and adults. The course description also mentioned that “We’ll also explore homeschool support groups, which provide resources for teaching your children and can be a source of friends, emotional support, and lots of fun activities with like-minded families” (University of Central Florida, 2013, Home page). Therefore, there is proof that the administration noted the increasing importance of homeschooling and was taking at least a

cautiously positive view of the subject. Another study in this area came up with the finding that nearly 35% indicated homeschooled students would have a harder time socially when compared to their traditional peers (Cogan, 2010). The level of social adjustment or competence among homeschooled students perhaps varies a great deal based on the personalities, family environment, and rearing of individual homeschooled students themselves. The data on homeschooling showed that homeschooled students grow up in relatively stable environments with two parents, and social environments in such atmospheres tend to be relatively healthy. Cogan (2010) made it clear that “As this group continues to grow, it is imperative that institutional researchers lead the way in developing a strong understanding of academic outcomes of homeschool students” (p. 7).

Research Questions

On the basis of the background of homeschooled students and their experiences in higher education, the research questions of this study (see Appendix B) are:

1. How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled students and in the higher learning environment?
2. In what ways may homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home ever feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff, and professors at the colleges and universities?
3. What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home?

4. In what ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled?

The first research question forms the basis of my research study as it focused on the core issue of the students' social adjustment. The question explores the homeschooled students' relations with other students from different perspectives. The basis for this research question comes partly from the Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) article, specifically encapsulated in that the researchers acknowledged that 45% of the homeschooled respondents rated their entire college experience as excellent while only 20% of those who had no homeschool experience rated their college experience as excellent. The second research question referred to the concept of alienation. Question two was written to elicit any sort of general description of a social experience that might include some feelings of fear and alienation (see Appendix A). The basis for this research question appeared in the Sorey and Duggan (2008) article as encapsulated in the quote ". . . the issue is not knowing exactly how to handle the traditional-aged student with a less-than-traditional background seeking admission" (p. 27). The second research question defined alienation in terms of the experience of challenging or harsh situations, and those questions were written to find out if the research participants had any experiences of that nature. The responses that I received for this research question also provided information about the strategies participants developed to cope with those challenging or harsh situations.

The third research question pertained to the problems the research participants experienced in their social adjustment or socialization while away at a college or university. This research question resembled the second one as it focused on problems or negative experiences. The basis for this research question is in an article cited here by Phillip Marzluf (2009), which stated that homeschoolers probably experienced the challenges of leaving from a

home-contextualized notion of private values and beliefs to new public values more than any other group. The third research question also explored the concept of possible problems that a homeschooled student experienced while adjusting or merging into the environment of college and university students. I wanted to prompt the research participants about what they learned to help them adjust to social environments that they envision for themselves after they graduate from college or university. Therefore, the language of the question implied that the experiences that participants had might prepare them for the future.

The last research question points to positive sentiments because it was written to produce information from the research participants about the beneficial social results they saw in homeschooling. The last question had some basis in the Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) article where the academic and social integration patterns of homeschooled students were measured. One critical point from that article was that the students indicated that homeschooling enabled them to have organizational skills and an ability to motivate themselves in their studies (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). The last research question built on the findings that suggested homeschooled students prospered from their schooling in terms of their levels of social adjustment. The research question was written to prompt the research participants about productive learning experiences and worthwhile classes that they felt they experienced. The research question was also written to measure positive social adjustment of the participants because they required them to mention learning experiences or classes in which they felt proud or satisfied. To mention learning experiences or classes that one felt proud about, one needs to have confidence in one's ability to adapt and integrate into an institution where those learning experiences or classes took place.

Definitions

1. *Communication Apprehension* – “Communication apprehension is categorized as a social anxiety disorder and, in its extreme form, is considered a social phobia, “a persistent fear of one or more situations in which a person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others and fears that he or she may do something or act in a way that will be humiliating or embarrassing”(Payton & Scott, 2013, p. 2).
2. *Homeschooling* – Homeschooling is “both a means of educating children according to parental standards and an alternative social movement embracing a unique set of cultural norms and values” (Campbell, 2012, p. 1).
3. *Incorporation* – The third stage of transition according to Tinto’s (1975) model of integration, known as incorporation into the college community (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012).
4. *Separation* – The first stage of transition according to Tinto’s (1975) model of integration, known as separation from past communities (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012).
5. *Socialization* – A continuous process through which an individual acquires an identity and learns the norms, values, behavior and social skills appropriate to his or her social position (Dictionary.com, 2018).
6. *Transition* - The second stage of transition according to Tinto’s (1975) model of integration, known as the transition between high school and college (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012).

Summary

I felt that the study of homeschooled students' experiences while away at a college or university had not received enough attention. The number of homeschooled students entering a college or university is increasing. Researchers have documented the academic benefits of being homeschooled well. However, the number of studies indicating the social or personal adjustment of homeschooled children, especially as young adults, was limited. The problem behind this study was that the perspectives of homeschooled students in the realm of higher education, as well as the perspectives of higher education teachers, required more study to determine the levels of social and personal adjustment of homeschooled students to higher education and adult life. I analyzed the experiences of homeschooled college and university students that I recruited, and then I added the results and discussion to the mass of literature on homeschooling. There was no literature giving a voice to homeschooled college or university students who wanted to talk about their social or personal experiences while on a college or university campus. The purpose of this phenomenology was to describe the social and on-campus experiences for homeschooled college or university students who were living away from home in a college or university environment.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature on the history, academic implications, and social impact of homeschooling itself in the United States and other countries is quite extensive at this point. The literature on the academic impacts of homeschooling is somewhat extensive. The literature on the history and social impact of homeschooling, especially as it relates to college or university students, is not as extensive or comprehensive. The homeschooling movement is primarily a product of the conservative Christian belief systems, but the parents who practice homeschooling come from many religious, ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds. Chapter Two contains a conceptual and theoretical framework that puts forth the theories and concepts behind the integration of children and homeschooling. In this chapter, I discuss the ideas of educational theorists such as John Holt (1967; as cited in Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012) and Vincent Tinto (1993; as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). The section on related literature gives extensive detail on the research that has revealed some established findings on the academic performance and social adaptation of homeschooled students. The summary that appears at the end of the chapter gives a concise conclusion of the basic messages that appear in the literature review.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

There are important authors and theorists in the area of homeschooling research that include Kunzman (2009), Drenovsky and Cohen (2012), and others who have made definitive discussions of the virtues of homeschooling for those who have experienced it. The theories of Tinto (1993) apply in some way as well because Tinto discussed the nature of student adjustment and student transitions into college environments (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). In his classic theory on retention, Tinto realized the importance of social integration, the feeling

of being accepted and part of a group as equally important to academic integration or academic success (Mottarella, Fritzsche, Whitten, & Bedsole, 2009). Therefore, the study of the adaptation of homeschooled college students to the realities of a public or private college had to question the level of acceptance and social integration that the homeschooled students felt.

Vincent Tinto (2016) also realized the importance of the perceived value of the curriculum to students. Tinto mentioned in a recent article that students need to perceive that the material they have learned is sufficiently good in quality and sufficiently important to their needs to feel like they have spent their time and effort well (Tinto, 2016).

One of the concepts that Robert Kunzman (2009) brought out is that parents view homeschooling as more than just schooling for their children; they view it as an experience that helps to shape their children's individual learning requirements. Therefore, most parents who homeschool are almost bound to express a positive and loyal attitude toward the process of what they are doing with their children, and they resent government regulation that they find to be intrusive and heavy-handed. Regulation of homeschooling varies tremendously from state to state, but some states have significant requirements for parents who homeschool. One area of concern regarding the regulation of homeschooling is the fact that child welfare advocates know homeschooled children may be at risk for undetected abuse (Pollack, 2012). Federal law plays an important role in defining the role of parents in educating their children. The Supreme Court has established that Fourteenth Amendment due process protects the basic right of parents to "make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children" (Walden, 2017). One study done on the medical conditions of homeschooled students concluded that homeschooled students tend to be disproportionately white and live with educated, two-parent families with three or more children, which are characteristics associated with higher access to

and utilization of health services (Cordner, 2012). Homeschooled children do not simply receive lessons mostly based on state-approved curricula in basic academic subjects. Homeschooling parents continue to train their children with little or no control from public officials, and in some states, public officials do not even need notification that particular parents intend to homeschool their children (West, 2009). In a doctoral thesis the researcher studied seven homeschooled graduates' transitions from home to college, the results revealed that each homeschooling parent played a significant role in assisting their child through the transition to college (Fink-Glass, 2016).

The education of homeschooling aims to develop the children into well-rounded and responsible citizens. It seems as if homeschooled students are quite prepared for the college experience when they are ready to enroll. However, homeschooling advocates have seen in the past that steps had to be taken to advance opportunities for homeschooled students when they enrolled in a college or university. Homeschooling advocates proposed an amendment to the Higher Education Act that would have forbidden colleges and universities from requiring alternative admission requirements (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Although the advocates did not enact the amendment, "institutions were cautioned from adopting or maintaining admission policies that unnecessarily discriminated against applicants from non-public, non-traditional settings-namely students who had been homeschooled" (Sorey & Duggan, 2008, p. 2). All educational theorists do not support homeschooling. One article identified theories which state that homeschooling undermines the public good by failing to grow important social networks in school that glue society together (Murphy, 2014). Another problem which opponents of homeschooling cited is that an increase in homeschooling leads to a decrease in financial support for public education (Murphy, 2014). Additionally, another study pointed to deficiencies in laws

in the particular state of New Jersey regarding homeschooling. In New Jersey, a parent who wishes to homeschool a child is not mandated by law to obtain any license or degree (Richardson, 2013). The New Jersey Department of Education released statements exhorting parents or legal guardians of schoolchildren to inform their superintendent of their intention to educate their child in a place that is different from school (Richardson, 2013). The increase in homeschooling will necessitate the increased development of legislation from each state that protects and preserves the rights of parents to educate their children at home within regulations. According to one study that analyzed the homeschooling of gifted children, one of the themes that emerged is that the parents seemed to know best about interpreting their child's gifted nature, the decision to homeschool and curricular choices (Jolly, Matthews & Nester, 2012). Another finding from the article was that the homeschooling parents believed that the public or traditional schools in their area did not properly fulfill the needs of their gifted children (Jolly et al., 2012).

However, the theoretical support that provides positive support for homeschooling appears to far outweigh the critics of homeschooling. Marzluf (2009) used examples in his study to demonstrate how the home-schooled students did indeed demonstrate their ability to negotiate the important transition from private to public educational space. The scholarly literature on the homeschooling movement seems to date back predominantly to 2003 and afterward. Mainly, this is because homeschooling was still an embryonic and very uncommon occurrence in the 1970s after the works of John Holt and Ivan Illich came out. However, by 2003, homeschooling was a noticeable phenomenon as roughly 2.2% of children ages five years to 17 years attended homeschool (Mackey, Reese, & Mackey, 2011). The scholarly literature in the area of homeschooling has discussed the experiences of parents who homeschool, the academic

performance of homeschooled students relative to non-homeschooled students and the transitions of homeschooled students into college or university environments. One study found that three major reasons for parents to homeschool their children was concern about the quality of the local school environment, a desire to provide a moral or religious education and dissatisfaction with the quality of academic instruction at other schools (Pollack, 2012). One other study included the possibility that there are homeschooling parents who view homeschooling as a particular escape or simply “‘ what is best’ for their children” (Morrison, 2014). The article by Morrison introduces the concept that homeschooling is in itself a form of “conscientious objection to conventional public education” (Morrison, 2014).

There is a program titled Generation J or Generation Joshua that is tailored to prepare homeschooled children to embrace civic duties (Kunzman, 2009). Kunzman (2009) stated that “In fact, in my ten years of teaching public high school English and social studies, I have rarely encountered students whose civic knowledge, skills and participation matched the members of Generation Joshua” (p. 13). Civic duties correspond to one of the segments of development included in the education of homeschooled students. In 2003, Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute surveyed 7,300 homeschooled adults in the age range of 18 through 24 (as cited in Lips & Feinberg, 2008). The adults reported involvement in their communities and civic affairs at higher rates than the average population (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). The high level of involvement of homeschooled students in their respective communities points to an atmosphere of connectedness to the social environment that is outside of the rather limited perspective of the home or immediate family. The study from Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) found that all homeschooled students they studied described their social experiences positively, but some students found that getting to know others was arduous.

Nevertheless, Kunzman (2009) believed that homeschooling has much potential to be a more important educational reality. In his article titled “Understanding Homeschooling,” Kunzman (2009) stated that extensive regulation and licensure requirements make take away the flexibility that is one of the strong points of homeschooling. Furthermore, many homeschooled students simply do not have clear documentation of academic performance at the high school level such as academic transcripts to provide during the application process. Instead of a grade record or transcript, community college officers are willing to accept alternate forms of documentation from standardized test results to a letter of recommendation (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). The application process for homeschooled students may entail what is termed a portfolio for college acceptance. The most important concept behind the acceptance of homeschooled students may be that new admissions officers need to have accurate data about these students to counter myths they may have about homeschooled students that are not backed up by evidence (McCulloch, Savage, & Schmal, 2013).

Related Literature

A research study by Martin-Chang et al. (2011) tied in with the principles from Kunzman’s (2009) article by stating that parents are often the ones who administer tests to children. The research study results by Martin-Chang et al. indicated that homeschooling parents might divide into structured and unstructured homeschooling groups. “The majority of the homeschooling parents reported that they ‘often’ or ‘always’ used premade curricula or structured lesson plans to teach their children” (Martin-Chang et al., 2011, p. 3). However, we must admit that even relatively well-educated or well-schooled parents may not have quite the credentials to be able to direct a curriculum or lesson plan in basic academic areas that lead to a proficient level of learning. On the other hand, academic researchers have determined that

family background characteristics are a crucial factor in shaping students' academic achievement (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Additional studies might be advisable in the area of studying the correlation between the level of education among homeschooling parents (i.e., no high school diploma, high school diploma only, bachelor's degree only, etc.) and the level of academic performance of their students.

One study found that most of the parents they observed had implemented homeschooling only after multiple failures to find a public school that they were satisfied with (Jolly et al., 2012). The same study declared that homeschooling parents decide to adopt the practice for many other reasons besides a need to provide religious education for their children. The study by Jolly et al. stated that the reasons for such a decision include a desire to meet the needs of a special child or children, prior negative impressions of schools, a desire to provide a better education and a poor opinion of public education . A research study that discussed misconceptions about homeschooled students found that one main reason for parents to choose homeschooling is so that they can implement a curriculum and learning environment that works specifically for their children (Turner, 2016). Homeschooling certainly appears to provide an environment to encourage parents to use their autonomy to train their children and tailor their educations as they see fit. One woman who wrote about homeschooling found reports which say that relationships between parents and children improve over time, especially for homeschooled teenagers (Wessling, 2013). Homeschooling parents either have ideological or pedagogical reasons for educating their children at home, but there are facts which distinguish the two types of homeschooling parents. Ideological or religious students were the least likely to be delinquent or substance abusers of a set of groups studied in a research article (Green-Hennessy, 2014). Over a third of less religious homeschoolers said that their parents had relaxed attitudes about

them misusing substances and some of them even denied having received any prevention messages when it comes to substances. Therefore, it is not true that homeschooling parents are a monolithic group. There are different reasons for homeschooling and different attitudes within the homeschooling population.

Parents who homeschool to provide their children with a religiously-oriented education present an interesting challenge. One article which discussed the attitudes of religious fundamentalists stated that homeschooling is a powerful way for religious fundamentalists to resist the temptations of secular culture (Kunzman, 2010). The Kunzman (2010) article also states that religious fundamentalism is a very general term and exists as a broad descriptor of various types of parents. Conservative religious homeschoolers oppose liberal values in varying degrees (Kunzman, 2010). The Kunzman (2010) article is very impartial. The article does not demonstrate support for either a conservative religious perspective over a more secular perspective or vice versa regarding the preferred methods of educating children. Despite the article's focus on the nature of religious fundamentalism regarding homeschooling, the author states that fundamentalist parents should be more willing to have their homeschooled children enroll part-time in selected classes at a public school (Kunzman, 2010). In the Cheng (2014) article, there is an analysis of a research study conducted on students in a private Christian university that is fundamentalist in nature. The results in the article about the private Christian university determined that increased exposure to private schooling does not reduce political tolerance (Cheng, 2014). Therefore, it is possible that a fundamentalist or religious perspective does not necessarily lead to pronounced hostility against opposite ways of thinking such as being pro-choice or being a proponent of homosexuality.

In contrast to the results of comparison between homeschooled students and students educated in public school, the results from the Martin-Chang et al. (2011) study showed that public school students did better than students who underwent unstructured homeschooling in seven different measures of testing). Therefore, the results of the study implied that parents needed to follow pre-made curricula and specific lesson plans if they hoped to achieve academic results that are truly better than those achieved by public school students. The parents needed the assistance of well-established guidelines and the expertise of educational professionals, but they were able to replicate an educational experience that is equal to or better than that which children received in school once they were able to follow the guidelines. Also, there were resources such as online learning services. One example of these online learning services is K12.com, which is a website that provides professionally-developed courses online for relatively low monthly rates (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Therefore, it was evident that homeschooled students had a large number of resources at their disposal.

Martin-Chang et al. (2011) did not go so far as to discuss the social benefits of homeschooling or talk in detail about how an environment of learning at home has advantages that school environments cannot offer. In the article “Four Grades and No G.P.A.,” the author recounted how she and her four siblings were homeschooled and did not have any set curriculum. The woman wrote that “. . . my four younger siblings and I read, studied, and practiced what my parents thought was important” (McIntosh-Burke, 2013, p. 1). The woman had no transcript to provide when she applied to community college, but she submitted a list of every book that she read academically and for pleasure, every museum exhibit that she visited, and so on (McIntosh-Burke, 2013). The young woman, whose name was Hannah McIntosh-Burke (2013), was able to enroll in a community college with the help of a community college

advisor. Results from a study of academic performance showed that homeschooled students were more likely to report that they received As in college than non-homeschooled students; and non-homeschooled students were more likely to report that they received Bs in college (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012).

Hannah wrote that none of the community colleges she applied to rejected her (McIntosh-Burke, 2013). Hannah's siblings also successfully enrolled in college environments, and it seemed like the varied learning experiences they underwent as children prepared them adequately for the curricula of college. Even though Hannah and her siblings underwent a homeschooling pattern that was unstructured, the admission counselors that she worked with “. . . were open-minded and willing to look beyond my unstructured schooling and lack of GPA and see that I had indeed been educated” (McIntosh-Burke, 2013, p. 5). Hannah and her siblings seemed to undergo the total learning experience conscientiously aimed for by homeschooling parents. In the realm of higher education, the data and perceptions of the academic performance of homeschooled students provided some encouraging signs as well. According to a study of the academic performance of homeschooled college students relative to traditionally-schooled college students, the homeschooled students had higher high-school GPAs, SAT scores and first-year college GPAs (Yu, Sackett, & Kuncel, 2016). In one particular respect, there was no significant difference found between homeschooled graduates and graduates from public schools and other types of schools. The respect with no significant difference was financial literacy. One research study found no significant difference between the mean score of homeschooled student graduates and the mean score of graduates of other forms of schooling in a personal finance test (Wright, 2016).

One rather sobering study of admissions officers' perceptions of homeschooled college students found that almost half the respondents saw those students as being somewhat badly socially adjusted (McCulloch et al., 2013). It is comprehensible that homeschooled students may have a limited level of exposure to adults and peers who are their age; it is also true that they are very likely to participate in groups within the community. However, according to another study that took place in the United Kingdom, a growing body of evidence suggested that home-educated children could succeed academically, and also have a relatively good level of competence when it came to social matters (Rothermel, 2012). The relative excellence of homeschooled students regarding leadership suggests that homeschooled students can use their abilities and influence for a strong effect in the social environment of college even though they have not experienced a mainstream school environment for some time in their lives. One study on the social interactions of homeschooled students in college found that not a single student indicated being socially isolated (Kranzow, 2013). However, homeschooled students found that traditionally-schooled students grew up with different value systems than them. One finding from the Kranzow article stated that homeschooled students found conversations with traditionally-educated students to be eye-opening at times.

The results of another study are even more promising. One study showed that homeschooled students scored in the 80th percentile or higher in every test category (i.e., reading, listening, language, math, etc.) while the national mean was at the 50th percentile (Dumas et al., 2010). A study of Stanford Achievement Test scores of homeschooled students in Washington state found their median test scores to be in the 65th to 66th percentile range (Dumas et al., 2010). Repeated studies have pointed to significantly higher scores from homeschooled students on different types of standardized tests compared to non-homeschooled

students. It is likely that homeschooling can help minority children overcome the barriers that cause lower achievement in public schools. Level of family income seems to have little effect on the ability of homeschooled students to perform better than their non-homeschooled peers.

Regression analysis of standardized test scores of homeschooled students in California showed that, unlike in traditional schools, family income and the race of the student have no statistical relationship with homeschooled students' achievement. One study also showed that homeschooled students performed as well in college as both privately- and publicly-schooled students regarding GPA and professional aptitude tests (Dumas et al., 2010).

One study on homeschooled college students found that nearly all students interviewed attributed their academic and social success to their homeschooling experiences (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). According to a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Rothermel (2012), homeschooled students performed academically well and in many cases quite a bit better than their school counterparts. There is an abundance of evidence, which discusses the academic benefits that homeschooled students received during the time that they were away from a regular school environment. According to a study conducted in 2006, results indicated that the mean score of homeschooled students on the SAT exam (the verbal and mathematics sections) was 1123 and the same study showed that the SAT scores of private-school and public-school students were 1054 and 1039 respectively (as cited in Snyder, 2013). It appeared as if, in most cases, parents were providing a successful academic environment for their children.

According to one study, students often reached out to their parents for financial support and (to some degree) emotional support (Kranzow, 2013). The relationship between homeschooling parents and children homeschooled is a close one. Researchers identified homeschooling parents as individuals who think outside the box. One study on homeschooling parents came up with a

finding which suggests that homeschooling parents want their children to have entrepreneurial characteristics because homeschooling is in itself entrepreneurial in nature (Pannone, 2017).

One homeschooled student who participated in the Pannone (2017) research study stated that homeschooling was a form of education for him that required more independent thinking than a public-school education.

One particular study on the college selection process of homeschooled Catholic students came up with some well-defined conclusions. The first conclusion that the author made was that homeschooled students in the study independently transferred through the college choice process while maintaining their Catholic faith and family values (Henry, 2012). This conclusion proves that homeschooled students can act as independent and self-reliant individuals while preserving the values that their parents instilled in them. Another conclusion which came up was that friends and peers did not play as important a role in the college choice process of homeschooled students in that study as in previous studies of traditionally-schooled students. Also, for the homeschooled students, friends of the family played a role that was equal in importance to that of friends and peers. On the negative side, the homeschooled students in this study often lacked enough guidance or support to enable them to navigate the college choice process with ease, particularly regarding scholarship opportunities and transcript requirements. The conclusion demonstrated the influence that home or community environments have on homeschooled students. The conclusion stated that social and cultural factors with which homeschooled students interacted structured the choices of colleges. These social and cultural factors included family values and their homeschooling environments (Henry, 2012).

Smiley (2010) discussed the effects of college experience on homeschooled students collected data through interviewing members of homeschooling families. To be included in the

study, the students involved had to be or have been enrolled in a public, four-year, degree-granting institution of higher learning or expecting enrollment in the next year at an institution of that nature. Also, the dissertation author was sure to interview students at various levels of college attainment. Parents also participated in the study because the study author viewed them as the best sources of information on homeschooling curricula. The results on the student data indicated that all the students interviewed were cognizant of negative perceptions that many individuals have about homeschooled students, such as being very religious or socially inept. The homeschooled students did talk about constructive social relations they had while at college. The results did not indicate specifically that any of the homeschooled students in the study struggled with any academic courses. However, the study noted that the homeschooled students had to adapt to the new reality of deadlines or due dates for assignments while in college. The value of the Smiley study had limitations because the research was limited to two states in the southern United States, and the author noted that the southern United States is a region quite characterized by conservative Christianity. Also, all but one of the student participants in the study was female as some male students were invited to participate but declined the invitation (Smiley, 2010).

According to a test titled the Children's Assertiveness Behavioral Scale (CABS) that was conducted on homeschooled and traditionally-schooled children in Florida, the homeschooled children showed marginally more passivity than the students in traditional school environments. The individual who carried out the study with the CABS test cautiously attributed that such passivity to children in this age range possibly being less conversant with socially appropriate behaviors (Rothermel, 2012). "Given their investment in home educating, parents were more likely to motivate their children through positive reinforcement rather than criticism"

(Rothermel, 2012, p. 17). Thus, it was unsurprising that the children were less skilled in handling conflict. Rothermel's (2012) study did not completely validate the social benefits of a homeschooling environment. The study objectively pointed out that the lack of social relationships that the students in a homeschooling environment experienced could lead to deficiencies to some degree, but there was no discussion of a particular social handicap that homeschooled students experienced as a result of their education. Another article discussed that critics of religious private school and homeschooling argue that the public education system is comparatively better at teaching children to be politically open or tolerant (Cheng, 2014). However, the Cheng articles also cited other theorists who stated that children who are homeschooled are not more narrow-minded or intolerant. The article cites a researcher by the name of Eisenstein (2006) who found that "Christians largely agree that the principles of their faith require them to be tolerant of others who hold views with which they disagree" (Cheng, 2014, p. 54). A profile of homeschooling parents indicated results from a 2010 study which showed that 65-66% of homeschooling parents had at least a bachelor's degree (Berwick, 2013).

The Rothermel (2012) study reiterated that homeschooled students seemed to perform better academically than students educated in mainstream schools. Rothermel found that the children performed at least as well as their school counterparts, and in many cases, significantly better (Rothermel, 2012). However, the study did not talk in detail about differences in grade averages, subject competency, or standardized test scores between homeschooled students and non-homeschooled students. Rothermel discussed emotional difficulties, conduct problems, and other issues related to the social functioning of homeschooled as opposed to non-homeschooled students. Furthermore, Rothermel stated caution should be used when utilizing behavioral-rating scales because "such scales are most likely to be standardized with school children and it is

almost inevitable that where school style behavior is expected, home-educated children are going to be different” (Rothermel, 2012, p. 31). It is likely that homeschooling can help minority children overcome the barriers that cause lower achievement in public schools (Dumas et al., 2010). Homeschooled students also do not seem to fare worse than traditionally-schooled students regarding communication apprehension (Payton & Scott, 2013). The Payton & Scott article tested the results of different categories of students including homeschooled students and public-school graduates using a test called the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24), homeschooling students were found to be no worse off than public school graduates or private school graduates. The results of the Payton & Scott study found that there was no statistically significant difference in communication apprehension reported by college freshmen, regardless of schooling background.

Positive findings on homeschooled students have been discovered in some foreign countries as well. For example, one study on homeschooled students in South Korea stated that school was a valuable place for homeschooled students to develop peer groups (Seo, 2009). An article that discussed the development of a homeschooling facility in Shanghai, China also pointed to the factor of parents who were dissatisfied with the education their children received (Sheng, 2015). Twelve parents started the homeschool facility in 2005, and the curriculum only focused on Confucian works; the facility also kept a low profile because homeschooling is still not legal in China (Sheng, 2015). The article also makes mention of homeschooling parents in Beijing (Sheng, 2015). The study of homeschooling in cultures that originate in foreign countries also applies to immigrant communities in the United States. In one dissertation by Zhang (2015), one central finding was that each of the Chinese Christian mothers who participated in the study emphasized building values and self-identities in their children through

their homeschooling practices (Zhang, 2015). Despite the documented differences between American and Chinese parenting styles, a central concept came up in the literature which underscores that the Christian-Chinese parents must restructure their lives in many ways after immigrating to the United States. In a dissertation thesis that discussed homeschooling in South Korea, a concept came out which stated that a competitive and morally damaging school environment was harmful to the development of positive social characteristics in children (Jung, 2008). The thesis also brought some cultural background into the research by stating that a Confucian culture puts more importance on parent-child interdependence.

In sum, the results or “Total Difficulties Score” of two behavioral questionnaires – the RRS and the SDQ – were consistent in explaining that the homeschooled students did not exhibit behavioral problems. There was a discrepancy on the Prosocial scales and a suggestion of a higher than expected rate of “Peer Problems” in the SDQ, and direct comparison with the RRS was not possible (Rothermel, 2012). The Rothermel (2012) study also put forth some ideas about the attitudes that homeschooling parents had regarding their practices. The percentage of children identified by the RRS as displaying behavioral problems “. . . may relate to the large quantity of time that the parents spent with their children, exposed as they were to the fullest range of their behavior” (Rothermel, 2012, p. 30). The parents in the study did not seem to be concerned about the development of social problems among their homeschooled children such as the relatively high levels of peer-relation problems. However, many college or university environments are at least building programs to help homeschooled students adapt. Sixty percent of admissions counselors reported having procedures in place for responding to homeschooled graduates seeking admission to their college (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Additionally, there are varying admissions policies at community colleges regarding homeschooled students. One

article found that some colleges only required homeschooled students to take the same college placement test taken by any other applicant who does not have a high school diploma (Duggan, 2009). Other colleges required the homeschooled applicant to finish an admissions packet that is to be individually reviewed by an admissions officer.

The Rothermel (2012) article had an interesting perspective about the claims from the Martin-Chang et al. (2011) study. The Rothermel article claimed that the conclusion from the Martin-Chang et al. study that unstructured homeschooling is deficient because it leads to lower standardized test scores is not completely valid because:

A relevant critique of using standardised testing with home educated children is provided by Hardenbergh (in press) and her criticisms are, to an extent, underpinned by the conclusions of Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse (2011) who find unstructured homeschooling deficient on the basis that the children in this group did less well on standardised tests. Meighan (2002, 2008) has described this approach as, ‘judging tennis by the rules of basketball.’ (p. 30)

Rothermel (2012) concluded that the parents viewed the children that they were homeschooling as members of the family with a level of rights and responsibilities that were equal to those of adults. According to one researcher who interviewed homeschooled students in a college environment, the students mentioned that they relied on family members as well as previous friends to obtain approval and social support (Kranzow, 2013). This finding seems to confirm the idea that parents are the individuals who know their homeschooled students the best, as is traditionally true of parent-child relationships. Despite this perception, there are concerns that homeschooled children are not subject to any evaluation to determine their academic progress (Walden, 2017). For example, in the case of the state of Missouri, a parent is legally

allowed to homeschool a child with almost no state oversight, which may result in avoidance of state child protective intervention (Walden, 2017). The Kranzow (2013) study also found that homeschooled students judged the quality of their social experiences while in college according to their experiences or interactions with faculty. Many participants in the study also placed some value on the importance of connecting with other homeschoolers, specifically within the first weeks of college (Kranzow, 2013). The Kranzow study did not make it clear that homeschooled students wanted to necessarily band very closely together or stick with each other. Also, one of the themes of the Kranzow article was that homeschooled students evidently are used to being in the minority and therefore felt little motivation to conform to the beliefs, ideas, and so forth, of traditionally-schooled students. One study on physical education for homeschooling parents at a university mentioned that the university and local homeschoolers were helpful in reaching out to their members (Wachob, 2015).

In one thesis that discussed the academic evaluation of homeschooled students, the author identified different methods which participants in her study used to evaluate students (Riddle, 2013). The author mentioned that 87% of the participants in the study included a personal interview with the homeschooled student, and that approximately 78% of the participants reviewed an academic portfolio (Riddle, 2013). The results of the Riddle (2013) study found that 75% of the participants in the research study believed that the practice of homeschooling “was comparable, if not superior to, traditional brick-and-mortar schooling” (p. 81). The recommendations for action in Riddle’s thesis stated that the feasibility of a non-government run registry for homeschool parents and evaluators needed consideration. The author stipulated that such a list should be voluntary and only available to provide support and that the list “should not be part of any homeschooling requirement, policy or law” (Riddle, 2013, pp. 84-85). The author

of the thesis appeared to be passionate about the benefits and growth potential of homeschooling. The author also placed great importance on a reliable system of academic evaluation of homeschooled education. Sheperd (2010), who studied homeschooling families and children, observed an impressive level of academic and job success in the students studied.

One research study spoke to some degree about the controversy surrounding the concept and reality of homeschooling. In one research study, the authors admitted that the research surrounding homeschooling was much politicized in nature (Wilkens, Wade, Sonnert & Sadler, 2015). It was apparent that the increase in homeschooling had a deleterious effect on both private and Christian schools (Bolin, Brian, & Floyd, 2013). Different individuals or writers on the subject themselves disagreed quite noticeably on the benefits of homeschooling. The advocates of homeschooling claimed that the practice led to more individual learning and greater academic performance. The critics of homeschooling claimed that the practice led to such problems as unreported abuse and psychological harm or pain. One positive finding from the Wilkens et al. (2015) article was that first-time homeschooled college calculus students who had not taken college pre-calculus had significantly higher mean scores than first-time calculus students of other school types.

Studies of the social adjustment or personality attributes of homeschooled students suggested that they coped as well or better than traditionally-schooled students when they were young adults. One study demonstrated that the homeschooled students reported significantly fewer anxiety symptoms than a matched sample of traditionally-schooled students (Dumas et al., 2010). “Using the College Adjustment Scale (a measure of emotional, behavioral, social, and academic problems used by university counseling centers), researchers found no other significant differences between the two groups of students” (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 77). Gifted children

may feel imprisoned or hindered when they feel coerced to mostly learn in classes where they are well ahead of the other students. Homeschooling parents know their children better than teachers in public or even private-school systems and can tailor the curricula that they teach to their children according to the needs of the children. Researchers identified two distinctions in parents who homeschooled their children. These homeschooling parents fit the definition of either ideologues or “believers”, or parents who wished to have more religious or Christian content in the schools or pedagogues or “inclusives” who believed that the structure of public education was deficient (Morrison, 2014). Although homeschooling parents take on a very important pedagogical choice, they also take on major lifestyles changes as a result of such a decision (Kolenc, 2016). The social adjustment of the homeschooled college students indicated promise. One study which used a tool titled the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales found that homeschooled students significantly outperformed traditionally-schooled students (Dumas et al., 2010). The results of this study suggested that future studies on the topic of the social adjustment of homeschooled students might produce findings that painted homeschooling as a positive factor related to documented social behavior. “The mean overall score for the homeschooled children on communication, daily living skills, socialization and social maturity subscales was at the 84th percentile compared to the 23rd percentile for the traditionally schooled students” (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 79). According to a study of self-esteem levels among homeschooled students presented in the Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) article, “one can conclude that whether or not the student has been homeschooled has no effect on their self-esteem in college” (p. 30). Of the various social activities measured as variables that affected self-esteem in the scale which included church activities, and so forth, the only activity found to have a negative effect on self-esteem was scouting (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012).

“Another study applied a Social Skills Rating System to evaluate thirty-four pairs of homeschooled and conventionally schooled children between the ages of five and eighteen” (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 79). The researchers found that homeschooled children attained higher scores on the Social Skills Rating System scale than their conventionally-educated counterparts (Dumas et al., 2010). The findings from this article are worth using as a launching pad for future studies that examine the social attitudes or social adjustment skills of homeschooled college or university students relative to college or university students who were not homeschooled. Regarding college preparedness, homeschooled students appeared to be operating on a relatively equal field relative to their non-homeschooled counterparts. According to a documented study by Jones and Gloeckner (2004), the academic performance analyses indicated that homeschooled graduates were as prepared for college as traditional high school graduates and that they performed as well on national college assessment exams as traditional high school graduates (as cited in Lips & Feinberg, 2008). The study of homeschooled students or college applicants requires further studies on the college preparedness of these students. One aspect of homeschooling is that it requires more self-reliance and independent learning on the part of students than other forms of schooling. One research study discussed the high potential effect that technology has on homeschooled children. The name of the concept that is used to describe the effect of technology on children’s ability to learn is “flipped learning” (Alamry & Khaarali, 2016).

Flipped learning is a prominent booster to self-learning and homeschooling (Alamry & Khaarali, 2016). Flipped learning may be benefiting their children. Many of the results in the research available on the academic performance of homeschooled children versus children from public school or other forms of schooling show the homeschooled children achieving higher

scores. One study cited in an article on homeschooling facts found that homeschoolers exceeded their counterparts in public schools by a range of thirty to thirty-seven percentile points in all subjects (Bolin et al., 2013). At the same token, the article cited an opinion from one researcher who claimed that homeschooled children are not as academically-prepared as their traditionally-schooled counterparts. The article by Alamry and Khaarali (2016) appeared to condone a homeschooling learning approach because it requires pupils to be more reactive and aware of what they are learning. The schooling that homeschooling parents inculcate in their children involves certain degrees of exposure to the environment around them. For example, homeschooling parents are known to take advantage of the resources that their communities can offer to them (Thomas, 2016). The Thomas article found that some families even designed their educational programs based on the schedules of libraries, museums, and state parks.

Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) stated that homeschooled students did not receive the benefit of regular peer interactions that high school students in mainstream school environments received. This concept echoed the measured deficiencies in peer adjustment as measured by the social scales mentioned in the Rothermel (2012). Possibly, the advent of the electronic age with its email and social networking capabilities can provide homeschooled students an opportunity to take part in social relationships of some type provided parents are supervising their interactions and disciplining them just in case they go over the line of what is acceptable. According to a study of self-esteem levels among homeschooled students presented in the Drenovsky and Cohen article, “. . . the results show that homeschooled college students do not have higher self-esteem levels than those who were educated in traditional schools before entering college, the homeschooled students are not significantly lower in self-esteem either” (p. 30). Therefore, there are studies which countered the concept that an education that is centered at home with the

parents in control for all or part of the time does not necessarily damage the self-esteem of youngsters just because they are not under the tutelage of state-sanctioned schools. In fact, sometimes homeschooled students choose the route of homeschooling for even social reasons. In the case of two siblings asking for homeschooling, the students found that homeschooling gave them the advantage of pacing themselves and having fewer distractions, according to the siblings' father (Wadsworth, 2009). The Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) article also matched other articles that discussed the relatively higher levels of academic performance among homeschooled students compared to students never homeschooled. One study from O'Shaughnessy (2010) cited in a dissertation reported that homeschooled students had a higher average 1-year cumulative GPA and a higher average 4-year cumulative GPA compared to traditionally-schooled students (as cited in Snyder, 2013).

Another research study which found that the cost to educate a homeschooled student is far less than the cost of educating a public-school student made a rather startling comparison of academic performance. The researchers found that homeschooled children scored on average in the 85th percentile on nationally standardized achievement tests while public-school educated children scored on average at the 50th percentile (Bolin et al., 2013). The overall higher education experience was apparently better for homeschooled students despite the perceptions that admissions officers and others may have had about their probable lack of ability to socially adjust rapidly. Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) acknowledged that 45% of the homeschooled respondents rated their entire college experience as excellent while only 20% of those who had no homeschool experience rated their college experience as excellent. Most of the non-homeschooled college students rated their overall experience as just good, and non-homeschooled college students were slightly more likely than homeschooled students to rate

their experience as fair or poor. Drenovsky and Cohen stated, “those students in the sample with homeschooled backgrounds are not only adjusted psychologically, but they also report higher academic achievement in many different college and university settings, ranging from private colleges to large public universities” (p. 31).

An attitude of wanting to resist the overriding bureaucracy of public and even private school systems characterizes parents of homeschooled students. It is not as if public school systems are lacking in innovation, but by their nature, they tend to be rigid and inflexible institutions (Patterson et al., 2007). Parents have varied documented reasons for deciding to homeschool their children. According to a recent dissertation, two important reasons for parents to homeschool their children were to provide religious and moral teaching and to provide a safe refuge for their children from negative characteristics that they perceive in the local school environment (Snyder, 2013). The negative characteristics that homeschooled parents identified included personal safety, negative peer pressure and encouragement to abuse drugs (Snyder, 2013). Future studies should look at the difference in types of relationships with adults between homeschooled students and non-homeschooled students. Some racial minorities, such as African-Americans, have their particular motivations for homeschooling their children. For example, many African-American homeschooling parents felt that a Eurocentric school curriculum risked destroying their children’s sense of personal worth and self-esteem (Mazama & Lundy, 2013). African-American homeschooling parents also reportedly had no doubts that their children were unfairly subjected to punishment or testing when they were in a traditional school setting (Mazama & Lundy, 2012). An additional study from Mazama determined that the material which black homeschooling parents teach their children depends on “their parents’ ultimate values” (Mazama, 2016, p. 41).

One article that discussed homeschooling as an alternative to traditional school emphasized that parents have to be the ones to determine the objectives they have for homeschooling their child and how they plan to accomplish that schooling (Ripperger-Suhler, 2016). The article also encouraged homeschooling parents to join a local homeschool network to foster connections and obtain more information. Some reformers have even called for the dismantling of the bureaucratic structure of schools and somehow replacing them with warm, caring, and family-like environments (Patterson et al., 2007). People who openly supported homeschooling declared that homeschooling parents obviously cared about education and were willing to support their children's lives (Priesnitz, 2012). The truth is that homeschooling is growing at a rapid rate. For example, roughly 1.1 million children identified as homeschooled in 2003, which was a 29% increase over the 800,000 students identified as homeschooled in 1998 (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Although parents who homeschooled had different levels of education and different motivations, parents had a few primary reasons for to homeschool their children. The reasons that families cited for homeschooling their children included concerns about the environment at other schools, dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools, and a preference for providing religious and moral education (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Also, homeschooling was found to provide equal, if not better, instructional environments for children with learning disabilities and could benefit gifted children as well (Dumas et al., 2010).

Although not all of the parents who homeschooled were conservatives, it was true that many of them were and often were Christian conservatives. One homeschooling parent who wrote an article even admitted that she found homeschooling to be a form of stress reduction (Weldon, 2013). A growing number of homeschooled students come from racial minorities. For example, in the case of African-Americans, the two highest motivating factors to homeschool are

dissatisfaction with the quality of education in the brick-and-mortar schools and a concern with racism (Mazama & Lundy, 2012). In fact, the most important reason for black parents to select homeschooling was dissatisfaction with the quality of education outside the home. Many Christian conservative parents who homeschooled believed that local public schools did not teach the values and beliefs that they wanted their children to acquire (Patterson et al., 2007). Furthermore, academic researchers have determined that family background characteristics were a primary factor in forming students' academic achievement (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Stable family backgrounds and households comprised of two parents are much more likely to lend themselves to homeschooling practices. Parents of homeschooled students were very concerned about the environments that their children were learning in when they were in school settings outside of the home.

Some adults homeschooled as children admitted that the homeschooling was beneficial to them, but they were careful not to describe it as a cure-all. Homeschooling seems to provide healthier lifestyle outcomes for homeschooled students. One study found that homeschooled adolescents were significantly more likely to disapprove of their peers using marijuana and drinking alcohol (Vaughn et al., 2015). The Vaughn et al. research study also found that homeschooled adolescents were less likely to report easier access to illicit drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and crack. According to the study in the article by Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012), some homeschooled students identified challenges in getting to know others. However, some homeschooled individuals have gratifying educational experiences. In one article, a homeschooled individual identified three important reasons for her gratitude for receiving homeschooling. To put it in a nutshell, this individual explained that she attained a love of

learning, learned important skills of self-direction, and felt free to be her own person (Noble, 2014).

The important educational theorist Tinto (1975) discussed three stages of transition students faced as they adjusted and became assimilated into college life: separation, transition, and incorporation (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). The Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) article was only one example of scholarship that had discussed the experiences that homeschooled students had in a higher education environment after they left home. In a doctoral dissertation that discussed student persistence and attrition in higher education, the author explains that Tinto views the social and academic integration of an individual into an institution and the student's interaction with the institution's systems as the main determinants of the student's persistence (Hall, 2007). The dissertation by Hall (2007) also mentions that Tinto (1990) stated that the higher the level of a student's integration into the college academic and social system, the greater the level of the student's commitment to the institution and college completion. Brian D. Ray, a homeschooling advocate and the editor of the National Home Education Research Institute's journal, *Home School Researcher*, discussed the lack of research evidence that being home educated was associated with negative behaviors or ineptitudes in adulthood (as cited in Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). Unlike the Sorey and Duggan (2008) article or even the Rothermel (2012) article, the Bolle-Brummond and Wessel article sheds light on the positive aspects that homeschoolers have in their social experiences in a higher education environment. In another article regarding the study of the academic achievement of homeschooled students versus traditionally-schooled students attending a Catholic university in Florida, the authors discussed that homeschooled students' achievement-test scores were significantly higher than those of their public- and private-school counterparts (Snyder, 2013).

One dissertation by Leeds (2009) stated that results verified that charter homeschooled students scored higher in reading and language than math as determined by a certain student achievement analysis.

One dissertation which discussed former homeschooled students' assessment of social skills shed a positive light on the former students' ability to form peer relationships (Dreyer, 2017). In a chapter summary, the dissertation states that the participants perceived themselves as being able to develop close relationships with other people as a direct result of homeschooling. An interesting finding regarding academic social skills in the dissertation indicated a well-developed sense of self-actualization. The former students in the Dreyer study made it clear that they were comfortable with whom they were when it came to academic skills and they each had their own way of maintaining an optimal efficiency for themselves. A dissertation by Soufleris explored the specific process of socialization as it affects homeschooled students who are transitioning to university life. The thesis used interviews of both homeschooled students and conventionally-schooled students to uncover the students' experiences of moving into a residence hall. The thesis found that upon examination of the interviews, the experiences of homeschooled and conventionally-schooled students were not noticeably different (Soufleris, 2014). The Soufleris thesis reported that the homeschooled students reported a higher level of satisfaction with their first roommate than their conventionally-educated counterparts. This concept appears to tie in with the ease that homeschooled students experience in forming peer relationships as described in Dreyer's (2017) thesis. The Soufleris thesis also cautions that engagement did not come easily to all the homeschooled students in her study. Nonetheless, Soufleris assessed that the general level of engagement on the part of the homeschooled students in campus activities was substantial.

On the negative side, the Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) article was rather limited in its scope. The study examined the experiences of six students in an original interview, and then five of the students returned for the follow-up interview (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). The ultimate purpose of one study by Marc Snyder (2013) was to evaluate the academic achievement of homeschooled students compared to traditionally schooled students attending a Catholic university. The study revealed that “While not statistically significant, the results indicated that homeschooled students scored higher in average GPA (2.78 compared to 2.59), credits earned, and ACT scores, when compared to their traditionally schooled counterparts” (Snyder, 2013, p. 292). There was plenty of documentation which showed that homeschooled students performed better academically in college and university environments as well as in less advanced levels of schooling. The documentation regarding the social experiences of homeschooled students in college and university environments was less consistent regarding the conclusions that it produced and was also less available.

There was a mixture of studies that discussed the social conditions of homeschooled students in college and other environments, but the research did not include comprehensive studies that compared homeschooled and non-homeschooled students on different social or psychological characteristics that are markers of either good or bad adjustment. One article which discussed the homeschooling of children with specific autism spectrum disorders such as Asperger’s Disorder interviewed a total of nine sets of parents about their perceptions of homeschooling children with autism spectrum disorder (Hurlbutt, 2011). The findings from the article raised a point of caution. Three of the sets of parents interviewed mentioned that the divorce rate for parents of children with autism spectrum disorder was believed to be 80% to 85%. Therefore, the participants made clear that parents of these children must agree on the

techniques they use, and they also must support each other. One positive finding from the Hurlbutt (2011) study was that the parents who participated mentioned that their children were developing and growing academically and socially because of the homeschooling programs in which they participated.

Among the other favorable comparisons made between homeschooled college students and non-homeschooled college students that are listed above, the homeschooled students in that study were proven to have even higher levels of self-esteem than students not homeschooled. Other studies concluded that levels of self-esteem among homeschooled college students were no higher than those of non-homeschooled students. One of the main findings of the study by Bolle-Brummond and Wessel was that “. . . the participants quickly met and developed relationships with fellow students” (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, p. 241). Also, the homeschooled students in the study seemed to be good at attracting interest from some students not homeschooled. Venues for homeschooled and non-homeschooled students to interact with each other and share their experiences included support groups. The relative excellence of homeschooled students regarding leadership suggested that homeschooled students could use their abilities and influence for a strong effect in the social environment of college even though they had not experienced a mainstream school environment for some time in their lives. The population of homeschooled students is growing, and there is an increased need for literature about homeschooling. One research study stated that nearly 80% of homeschoolers made use of public libraries as a resource for education (Forrester, 2016).

According to yet another study the findings seemed to be quite ironic but homeschooling, as confirmed in the study, tailored to the important learning needs of each student. “The students indicated that homeschooling equipped them with organizational skills and self-motivation in

their studies” (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012, p. 241). I did not find additional studies to support or enhance the theory that homeschooled students tend to be more timid or restrained than students educated in mainstream schools. The points about the characteristics of homeschooled students that may prevent them from flourishing in a higher education background are not well-covered in the literature and come back to my purpose for further exploration through my case study. Some studies determined that homeschooled students adjusted well to a higher education environment, but there was a lack of conclusive literature to approach that topic. One article found that students’ peer interactions was a determining factor in students’ success in college (Kranzow, 2013).

Additional studies have not primarily indicated problems with the way homeschooled students conducted themselves in K-12 schools or higher education environments. Studies have demonstrated additional positive consequences for homeschooled students in higher education. Therefore, colleges and universities are apparently obligated to provide the same financial aid opportunities to homeschooled applicants as they do to non-homeschooled applicants. From a student affairs perspective, college admission officers have reported admitting an increasing number of homeschooled students nationally and have spoken well of them regarding their ability to compete at the same level academically as traditionally schooled students (Snyder, 2013). Homeschooled applicants who seek admission to a college or university may apply for and easily receive a general equivalency diploma (GED) or provide a portfolio, which provides detailed records of major assignments they completed, books that they read, and so forth. Indeed, in the past, lack of familiarity with homeschooling drove some institutions to require proof of a GED from homeschooled applicants in addition to SAT or ACT scores (Turner, 2016).

The results of a study that measured academic aptitude and achievement using the categories of the ACT and SAT scores, overall college GPA, major GPA, and core GPA found that homeschooled students were as valuable as public-schooled and Catholic-schooled students (Snyder, 2013). The study did not define the term “valuable” relative to how educational institutions view students, but the results of the study implied that institutions viewed homeschooled students as an asset. A summary of academic literature by Dr. Paul Jones and Dr. Gene Gloeckner (2004) reported that evidence showed homeschoolers performed just as well as traditional public-school students on college preparatory exams and in first-year college grade point averages (as cited in Lips & Feinberg, 2008). However, the perspective behind this case study and the recommendations of the article concluded that further research was still needed to convince those who doubted the homeschooling phenomenon as a legitimate educational alternative (Snyder, 2013). Therefore, the only question that remained about homeschooled students’ adaptation to college or university life based on results of the most current research was the question of socialization. Before even going into detail about the nature of the transitions that homeschooled students experienced in college, is it essential to underscore the academic achievement of homeschooled college students. One study found that full-time homeschooled students had an average GPA of 3.06 compared to an average GPA of 2.56 among full-time, traditionally-schooled students (Snyder, 2013). The same study found that part-time homeschooled students had an average GPA of 3.28 compared to a 2.40 GPA among first-time, part-time traditionally schooled students. One study which compared the physical fitness levels and body fat levels of a set of homeschooled students with a set of traditionally-schooled students found that the traditionally-schooled students consumed considerably more calories, had poorer quality of diet and higher levels of body fat (Cardel et al., 2014). Another interesting

finding from the Cardel et al. research study showed that there was no difference between the homeschooled students and traditionally-schooled students in time spent on moderate to physical activity.

There was a history of legislation that formed the reception of colleges and universities to homeschooled applicants. Over time, it appeared that discriminatory approaches that colleges and universities had imposed toward homeschooled students and their families diminished, and the Higher Education Act of 1998 protected homeschooled applicants. The expansion of policies at colleges or universities to accommodate homeschooled students was also necessary. The review of materials from homeschooled applicants appeared to be more complex and arbitrary than the process of reviewing materials from non-homeschooled applicants. To summarize the progress that colleges and universities made, 52% of all colleges in the United States have instituted formal evaluation policies for applications from homeschooled students (Dumas et al., 2010). Therefore, much more progress needs to occur in the realm of higher education to fully merge homeschooled students into their student populations. Colleges and universities also need to do more to encourage homeschooled students to enroll in their institutions and take part in their academic and social cultures. Even with legal protections, there continue to be ongoing issues of which admissions officers and financial aid officers must contend. Despite promises from admission officers to regard homeschooled applicants like other applicants, families continue to worry that homeschooled students will be treated as different (Turner, 2016). One study found that the transitional support that homeschooled students receive from parents is critical as they merge into a college environment (Kranzow, 2013). This support took the form of phone calls and computer contact which stayed consistent from the first year to the second year.

“Over the past two decades, numerous state courts have ruled that homeschool parents should not be required to obtain teacher licensure” (Kunzman, 2009, p. 319). There was a way to provide a record of grades or assignments that homeschooled students received during high school, but it obviously did not always take the form of a formal record of grades like with traditionally-schooled applicants. The application process for homeschooled students may entail what is termed a portfolio for college acceptance. One requirement that was put forth by the HSLDA states that SAT and ACT scores or portfolios should be sufficient to provide schools with solid and adequate data for admission in order to determine the child’s ability to perform at an acceptable academic level (Snyder, 2013). The questions of policy at higher education institutions reflect varied policies at different colleges and universities regarding homeschooled students. While one college may have a formal admission policy in place for homeschooled students, another may not (Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

As stated in the literature, homeschooled students may not have the normally required documentation such as academic transcripts to submit as a reflection of their school achievement. However, homeschooled students may provide evidence of what they have learned and provide some record of grades from high school. Based on the results of a few studies about the perceptions of college admissions staff toward homeschooled students, it appeared that “. . . the issue is not knowing exactly how to handle the traditional-aged student with a less-than-traditional background seeking admission” (Sorey & Duggan, 2008, p. 27). One study revealed that the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA, 2018) came up with seven recommendations for colleges to integrate into their admissions policies regarding homeschooled students (Snyder, 2013). The official website of the HSLDA states that members of the organization receive services, special discounts, and advice to support their family’s homeschool

program (HSLDA, 2018). The HSLDA website also provides some information on homeschooling support groups. Another article that discussed the history of homeschooling stated that “The HSLDA took credit for court victories that stopped educators from curbing or stringently regulating homeschoolers” (Macleod, 2009, p. 180). The first two recommendations were that homeschoolers ought not to be required to provide a GED or accredited diploma and that college admission staff need to be accommodating regarding the homeschooled applicants’ documentation of high school credit hours if transcripts are required (Snyder, 2013).

Homeschooled applicants are now required to submit the Credit Evaluation form in place of providing traditional high school transcripts. Despite the difficulties of the admissions process, much quantitative and qualitative data showed that homeschooled students were quite well-prepared for the challenges of a college or university environment. A study from an article by Michael F. Cogan (2010) showed that homeschooled students had levels of engagement at a Catholic institution of higher education that were similar to those of students who were engaged in public high school, Catholic high school, and private high school-educated students (Cogan, 2010). Ray (2004) found that “homeschooled students achieved higher standardized test scores (e.g., ACT) compared to traditional-school students” (as cited in Cogan, 2010, p. 19). Regarding persistence, homeschooled high-school students had lower fall-to-spring retention rates and similar fall-to-fall retention rates relative to students from other high-school categories.

In other areas of persistence, homeschooled high-school students had higher 1-year cumulative GPAs and 4-year cumulative GPAs than students from other high school categories. Public high school presents a legal quandary of its own for homeschooled students. It is true that the constitution of every state allows a system of public education, and several states have determined that education is a fundamental right (Roberts, 2009). At the same time, the Supreme

Court has rejected the idea that participation in interscholastic athletics is a basic right. The Roberts article states that even in states that allow homeschooled students to participate in those sports, many have devised specific measures to ensure that homeschool cannot be the only factor to help maintain the athletic eligibility of an academically unqualified public-school student. The reason that school administrators gave for this exclusion was that the requirement to ensure that homeschoolers meet the same criteria as full-time students would place too great a burden on them. The factors that seemed to promote the positive correlation between length of time homeschooled and adjustment to college included degree commitment (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Additionally, the homeschooled high-school students had higher 4-year graduation rates than students from other high school categories. The study also concluded that all admission personnel surveyed perceived homeschooled applicants as successful academically as those schooled in a more traditional setting (Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

Summary

One study concluded that attitudes toward homeschooled students at college or university environments might be colored more by biases and prejudices (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). There were many reasons why parents chose to homeschool their children as opposed to sending them to public schools or having them attend expensive private schools. The concept I gathered from the evidence was that colleges and universities need to tailor their admissions policies to make the enrollment and admissions process for homeschooled students smoother. The studies presented in this chapter documented well that there was little evidence that homeschooling led to social or personal problems during adulthood. The studies briefly indicated that the academic performance and test scores of homeschooled students were quite high. It is possible that the problems or syndromes associated with the occurrence of homeschooled students entering from a

protected environment to the exposed environment of higher learning exist mostly in the minds of admissions officers and other staff at higher learning environments as well as the minds of professors themselves. None of the studies cited here that discussed the experiences of homeschooled students entering a higher learning environment or experiencing a higher learning environment pointed to any major negative aspects of the background of homeschooled students. The psychological adjustment of homeschooled college students appeared just as sound as those of students educated in mainstream educational environments. The academic performance of homeschooled college students in all the cases appeared to be significantly better than those of students educated in mainstream school environments. The main type of study that was missing from the literature was a qualitative measure of the experiences that both homeschooled college students and professors of homeschooled college students had regarding the academic and social experiences of the homeschooled college students themselves.

Additional studies of homeschooled students while in a college or university have underscored their relative academic success. One study mentioned two investigators who found that homeschooled students score “as well as or better than their public-school peers on college entrance examinations, both the ACT and the SAT” (Murphy, 2013, p. 264). Also, researchers who have studied homeschooled students have used two types of data to measure the so-called “preparedness” of homeschooled students. Researchers have used two factors called perceptual and harder indicators to measure the success of homeschooled students regarding preparedness (Murphy, 2013). Important researchers such as Sorey and Duggan (2008), Jenkins (1998), and Ray (2005) who examined the perceptual side discovered that admissions officers found homeschooled students to be as or more successful than graduates of public schools (as cited in Murphy, 2013). The harder measures of student success provide more mixed results. One

research study came up with an operational hypothesis which states that there are few meaningful differences between homeschooled students and public-school students in the areas of retention and academic performance (Murphy, 2013). As far as socialization, one article stated that Medlin cited a study by Ray (1997) which concluded that homeschooled students were comparable to traditionally-educated students as far as post-secondary education and employment (as cited in McCulloch et al., 2013). The same article stated that a study conducted by Saunders found previously homeschooled students to correlate positively on social integration variables such as institutional integrity, communal potential, and subsequent institutional commitment (as cited in McCulloch et al., 2013).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The approach used in this research study was a phenomenology that was an example of hermeneutical phenomenology referring to such theorists as Clark Moustakas (1994) and Van Manen (1990; as cited in Creswell, 2007). The central topic of this study was homeschooling, and the primary issue was the perspectives on the academic performance and primarily the social adjustment of homeschooled students in private and public college or university environments. I used purposive sampling to choose potential participants for the research. The homeschooled college and university students that I recruited made themselves available for face-to-face interviews or distant telephone interviews.

This chapter includes the interview questions used to address four different research questions. I describe the setting after the research questions. After the section on setting there is the section that describes participants. After the section on participants, I include a section that describes the data collection procedures. In the section on data collection, I state that I would use either face-to-face or telephone interviews to communicate with my research participants. I also state that I utilized semi-structured questions during the interviews. I also describe how I took notes based on the responses of the students to create a good descriptive narrative of what the students felt and believed about their experiences while at a college or university. The section on the researcher's role appears after the section on data collection procedures. In the section on the researcher's role, I describe my experience of working with university students while employed as a librarian at Berner-Carlson University and discuss my exposure to college and university students. I also discuss my expectations of the performance of homeschooled students based on the literature that I have read. After the section on the researcher's role, I

include a section on data analysis that lists each of the interview questions. After the section on data analysis, I include a section on trustworthiness. The section on trustworthiness discusses the discretion that I used when collecting data from the students and describes the notes that I used to describe the feelings that the students exhibited in their responses. After the section on trustworthiness, I add a section on ethical considerations. In the section on ethical considerations, I discuss the important step of using pseudonyms to disguise the names of the participants. In the section on ethical considerations, I also discuss ways in which I plan to keep my data secure. Finally, I end the chapter with a summary.

Design

In this phenomenology on homeschooled college and university students and some of the professors who work with them, I relied on identifying the phenomenon of the social experiences of homeschooled college students who were living away from home. I bracketed out my own experiences, and then collected data from several homeschooled college students living in that situation. Therefore, the type of phenomenology used in this research study was hermeneutical phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). Many of the studies conducted on the experiences of homeschooled students had looked at homeschooled students on an individual level and also studied multiple individuals. Most of the research studies examined here used the technique of interviews, including the Paula Jane Rothermel (2012) study, the Pamela Lou Rogers Campbell (2012) dissertation and the Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) study. In the Bolle-Brummond and Wessel study, the authors proclaimed that qualitative research methodology was selected based on the researchers' belief that the best way to understand college experiences was through "questioning, understanding, and analyzing individual experiences, searching for common

themes among these experiences, and comparing these experiences to Tinto's (1975, 1993) theoretical framework" (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012, p. 228).

Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) stated the necessity for the homeschooled students to adjust to a formal educational atmosphere and the varying teaching approaches of their professors did not endanger the students' ability to learn and succeed. Bolle-Brummond and Wessel admitted that "while the students were equipped for college to varying degrees, their homeschooled background did not seem to influence their persistence to graduation, or to negatively affect their college experience" (p. 243). In a dissertation related to homeschooled students written by Pamela Lou Rogers Campbell (2012), the researcher used interviews to delve into the process that parents went through when deciding to begin or discontinue the practice of homeschooling their children. Other studies used for the literature review relied on questionnaires, and emailed questionnaires are another method of inquiry used in my study. In the Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) and the Mackey et al. (2011) studies, the researchers used an online or emailed questionnaire as a single data collection instrument. Therefore, the methods of data collection of semi-structured interviews and two separate e-mailed questionnaires appear to be quite suitable for my phenomenological study.

Research Questions

1. How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled students and in the higher learning environment?
2. In what ways may homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home ever feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff, and professors at the colleges and universities?

3. What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home?
4. In what ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled?

Setting

My research site included Berner-Carlson University. At Berner-Carlson University, the demographic pattern was unique. The school had a total fall enrollment of 3,934 as of the Fall of 2016, and 60% of the undergraduate enrollment was female (Berner-Carlson University, 2016). At Berner-Carlson University, 94% of the students were African-American, and other racial groups made up of very small percentages of the student body (Berner-Carlson University, 2010). In addition to homeschooled students at Berner-Carlson University, I contacted local homeschooling organizations in my area to reach parents who had homeschooled their children or homeschooled college students themselves. I contacted local homeschooling groups such as CrossPointe Co-op (2017), Relying on Christ (R.O.C.) Homeschool Co-op (2015), Summit Homeschool Co-op (2018) and other similar groups which offered support to parents who were homeschooling their children (as cited in Homeschooling in Florida, 2014). CrossPointe Co-op was a Christian academic co-op that schooled homeschooled children in grades K-12 and based in Jacksonville, Florida (CrossPointe Co-op, 2017). R.O.C. Homeschool Co-op was a non-profit formed to support parents in their endeavors to home educate (Homeschooling in Florida, 2014). The organization offered weekly class options, monthly group meetings, Mom's night out, Dad's breakfast, field trips, and more (Homeschooling in Florida, 2014). Summit Homeschool Co-op's purpose was to provide a Christ-centered cooperative learning and social experience

(Homeschooling in Florida, 2014). Through contacting these organizations and other homeschooling organizations, I reached additional homeschooling parents or homeschooled students who lived either within or outside of Central Florida. I interviewed homeschooled student participants via telephone if they were not enrolled students at Berner-Carlson University who were staying on campus.

Participants

The participants in the study included eight homeschooled students who were living away from home at a particular college or university. The variety of homeschooled students represented a relatively good balance of majors. Even though the number of homeschooled college or university students within any college or university or local area is quite small, I spread myself out quite broadly regarding geographic area with my research participants. I used the address of Mr., Ms., or Mrs. next to the last name initial of each participant to develop pseudonyms. The method of sampling of the student participants in the study was purposive sampling that specifically relied on criterion sampling (Creswell, 2007). I used purposive sampling to select the participants for my research study because I wanted to add credibility to my sample when a potential purposive sample was too large (Creswell, 2007).

Even though the number of homeschooled college or university students within any college or university or local area is quite small, I spread myself out quite broadly regarding geographic area with my research participants. The demographic characteristics of the participants were varied. I interviewed a few students from Berner-Carlson University, a predominantly African-American university. I was able to include two African-American students in my research study. Also, I interviewed a variety of homeschooled students via telephone. The responses to the interviews indicated that the participants encountered surprise or

mild shock from non-homeschooled students when they mentioned being homeschooled (see Appendix C). One of the students that I interviewed was a senior at a military school. I interviewed another university student who was attending a Catholic university.

Procedures

I used either face-to-face or telephone interviews for data collection. I asked semi-structured questions in my interviews, and the structure of the questions that I asked during my e-mail questionnaires with students was also open in structure. The questions in the interviews were written to elicit participants' knowledge of the research and the literature on the development of homeschooling and the facts regarding homeschooled children in grade school and college environments. When conducting the interviews and the e-mail questionnaires, I gathered data by recording the interviews and took notes on what participants mentioned when they were speaking. The notes described what the participants said, and I recorded what they said until I reached a certain level of thick description of the meaning of being a homeschooled student at a college or university. Therefore, I described the meaning of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). To establish the validity of my questions, I was required to have my dissertation committee members review my questions and provide their approval of the questions. When my research consultant previously reviewed my interview questions, he had me edit the questions to remove all yes or no questions from the interviews. After I edited my interview questions, I applied for IRB approval from Liberty University and received it.

The Researcher's Role

As the researcher, I played the role of one who encouraged participants to speak of their experiences and open up about their feelings regarding the academic and social adjustment of homeschooled students. I encouraged the participants to talk about experiences they had so far

in their higher education courses, living situations, and interactions with other students who have been in a school environment for years. Personally, I have a background in education to a certain degree. I have a background in working at Berner-Carlson University, an institution of higher education in Central Florida as a Circulation Librarian in an academic library, as well as an Archivist, and an Interlibrary Loan/Technical Services Librarian who, on occasion, assisted students with database and book searches. I have some experience with educating college students in the task of conducting searches in academic databases and in discussing topics of research with students to help them narrow down their topics and conduct specific searches. I have no personal knowledge of the difference in motivation or learning between homeschooled and non-homeschooled college students. However, I can say that I have some experience with the type of school work and learning processes that college students exhibit. One of the biases that I brought to this phenomenological study was that I expected the participants to be mostly above average based on the material that I have read about the academic performance of homeschooled students from studies written by Gaither (2009), Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012), and others. I also expected the participants in this study to have a higher level of maturity and a higher level of reasoning based on the limited material I have read about evaluations of the behavior of homeschooled students. I tried my best to put my biases and prejudices aside about the success of homeschooled students or the awkwardness they might have felt while being educated in an environment far removed from the home environments where they received much of their schooling.

Data Collection

As stated earlier, the techniques of data collection I used in this phenomenology are semi-structured interviews and e-mailed questionnaires. I conducted the semi-structured interviews on

a one-on-one basis with each of the student participants. Next, I sent the e-mailed questionnaires via email to student participants. Afterward, I conducted two sets of e-mailed questionnaires with a smaller number of research participants.

I conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the participants. In the interviews, I asked participating students questions that addressed how they felt homeschooling had impacted their academic achievement regarding average G.P.A, the quality of their academic work, the quality of their social adjustment with their non-homeschooled peers, and the quality of their adjustment to the college and university environment as a whole. Also, I used the interview questions to hone in on the peer relationships they had with other homeschooled students and non-homeschooled students and the way they felt their homeschooling educations prepared them for the academic work required in a college or university setting. In the one-on-one interviews with the participants, I asked them what they knew about any research findings regarding the academic achievement of homeschooled students versus non-homeschooled students, the academic work, and results they saw with themselves, and any comparisons or contrasts that they noticed between the academic work of homeschooled as opposed to non-homeschooled students. During the interviews, I asked the participants what they saw regarding the social adjustment of homeschooled students and about the perspective that they and the teachers in their departments had about the ability of homeschooled students to adjust to a college or university environment.

Standardized Open-ended Interview Questions

1. What kind of social experience have you had in college so far?
2. Which courses, if any, have led you to a productive learning experience so far?
3. Which classes do you feel have been most worthwhile to you?

4. Which classes do you feel could have provided a better learning experience for you and describe why you feel that way?
5. What college-level work and assignments were you involved in when you were homeschooled?
6. Do you feel that your academic work compares favorably to the general college student population or to others in your classes?
7. How do other students respond to you if they know you were homeschooled?
8. Do your classmates know that you were homeschooled?
9. How relevant is it to you that other students know that you were homeschooled?
10. What do you define as popularity or “fitting in” relative to what is determined by the overall student body, professors or school administration where you are attending college or university?
11. What goals do you have in terms of being able to socially adjust and incorporate yourself into the college or university environment?
12. What have you learned as a college or university student that will help you with adjusting and incorporating yourself into social environments that you see yourself in after you graduate or leave college?
13. Describe any challenging or harsh situations you have encountered with other students, professors, or staff.
14. What strategies have helped you to cope when you have encountered challenging or harsh situations with other students, professors or staff?
15. Describe some positive situations you have encountered with other students, professors, or staff.

Data Analysis

I conducted a hermeneutical phenomenology. The study oriented itself toward the lived experience of the participants I interviewed (Creswell, 2007). A scholar by the name of Van Manen (1990) described phenomenology research as an interplay of six research activities (as cited in Creswell, 2007). The research started by turning to a phenomenon or “abiding concern” which deeply interests the researcher (Creswell, 2007, p. 59). Phenomenology is not focusing on a small number of cases or a particular case but is instead shedding light on the issue of homeschooled students in college or university environments. The hermeneutical phenomenology involved writing a description of the phenomenon and keeping a strong relationship to the topic at hand (Creswell, 2007), which in this case was homeschooling. I used purposive sampling to choose potential participants for the research. The description of the participants’ phenomenon appeared in the responses they provided during the interviews. I interpreted the responses when I wrote my notes, and I provided a complete interpretation when I discussed and summarized my findings. The discussion of my findings developed the themes that emerged from my notes.

I took notes on the responses provided in the interviews and the e-mailed questionnaires. I took extensive notes to fulfill the requirement for rich, thick narration. After I read and reviewed my notes, I composed a list of themes identified from the responses the participants provided. Afterward, I combined the themes into different categories such as social adjustment, academic preparation, and quality of college environment, and so forth.

Trustworthiness

Credibility

As the researcher, I was aware that the information the participants provided was sensitive, and some of the experiences that the participants recounted might have had an emotional effect on them. When I took notes on the responses provided in the interviews and e-mailed questionnaires, I relied on narrative description to help support the strength of the data (see Appendix D).

Dependability and Confirmability

I reviewed transcripts of what the participants said during the interviews and reviewed written copies of the questionnaires that they filled out. I identified the range of responses from the participants. As the researcher, I noted any emphatic responses. Also, I noted the frequency of particular events or incidents regarding the thoughts or experiences of the participants and professors that occurred repeatedly. The emotional responses and recollections of events were both important parts of the narrative that the participants discussed. Finally, I had prolonged engagement with the homeschooled student participants.

Transferability

I used purposive sampling to recruit student participants with a good variety of majors. The homeschooled students I interviewed came from a diverse variety of academic institutions and studying in a variety of majors. I interviewed two African-American students. An even number of males and females comprised the eight student participants. I felt that the diversity of my student participants regarding major, academic institutions, race, and gender helped the transferability of my research findings.

Ethical Considerations

In this phenomenological study on the experiences of homeschooled college or university students, I attempted to delve into participants' experiences and receive information about the academic and social adjustment of the students without becoming too personal. I officially respected the privacy and dignity of the participants throughout the extent of the study (see Appendix E). My research design consisted of good quality and diversity of data collection techniques, and sound methods of affirming the trustworthiness of the data. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data itself, I used pseudonyms for the participants who shared in the research study regarding the data results. Using email and telephone communication for relaying and receiving data instruments was most convenient. A participant who did not want us to have access to both an email address and a telephone number only communicated by one of those two information systems. If a participant refused access to either an email address or a telephone number, I selected another student to take the place of that participant in the study. When I oriented participants in this study, I made it clear that they may leave the study at any time they reported feeling uncomfortable or violated by the research study process (see Appendix E). Any participants younger than 18 who reported feeling uncomfortable or violated had the option to be pulled out of the study by adult guardians.

Summary

For this study, I used a hermeneutical phenomenological approach, as I sought to recruit a variety of homeschooled students. After I created and edited my interview questions, I applied for IRB approval from Liberty University and received it (see Appendix F). I then e-mailed a recruitment letter to my research participants to inform them of the details about the research study and to ask their official approval to participate in the study by signing an electronic

informed consent form (see Appendix G). I used interviews and two sets of e-mailed questionnaires as the data collection methods in my research study. I conducted the interviews either face-to-face or via telephone. I utilized a total of seven questions for my first questionnaire (see Appendix H). Some of the interviews occurred at Berner-Carlson University, a school where I am employed. My employment as a librarian provided me the intellectual curiosity to begin this study. My position at an academic university allows me to assist students with research queries occasionally. I used semi-structured questions during the interview process. I took notes on the responses that the participants provided and then used them to develop themes. I divided the themes into categories to look for code words. To ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I made sure that my notes reflected rich, thick narration from the participants' responses. I used participants from a diversity of races, majors, and academic institutions for my study. One important way in which I ensured that my study was ethical was that student participants interviewed were free to end the interview at any time they felt uncomfortable with my questions.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of my research was to describe the social experiences or socialization of college students who were living away from home and homeschooled at some point during their K-12 educational experience. I developed this purpose because I realized from the literature that I read that the experiences of homeschooled students while away at a college or university had received relatively little study and exposure in the literature that I reviewed. Researchers seemed to focus their attention primarily on the academic achievement of homeschooled students, mostly on the level of K-12 education. Some studies have pointed to results that rated success on measures such as ACT and SAT scores as well as college preparatory exams. According to one study, evidence showed that homeschooled students performed just as well as traditional public schooled students on college exams and in first-year college grade point averages (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). Apart from such information on the policy approaches of colleges and universities toward homeschooled students or applicants, I found little material on the experiences of homeschooled students in colleges or universities relative to other levels of education.

The research questions of this study were: (a) How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled students and in the higher learning environment? (b) In what ways may homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home ever feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff, and professors at the colleges and universities? (c) What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home? And, (d) In what

ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled? The first research question formed the basis of my research study because it focused on the core issue of the participants' social adjustment. The section after the research questions briefly provides information about the participants in alphabetical order using assigned pseudonyms. The participants section also provides brief detail about personal experiences that each participant had while in college and also discusses any interesting characteristics of these participants. After the participants section, the results section includes a theme development subsection where I discussed themes that I discovered from the notes taken from the responses that student participants provided. A subsection for research question responses provides concrete evidence of the responses from student participants in the study to show how the interview responses answered my research questions. Last, I included the summary which provides a concise conclusion to the chapter.

Participants

Ms. C

Ms. C was a biochemistry major who was at least in the top 5% of her class. Ms. C's GPA was very close to a 4.0. Ms. C hoped to have a future in medicine or medical school. Ms. C believed that she had a very enriching homeschooling experience. While she was being homeschooled, Ms. C was taking enrollment courses at a particular university, so in her words, she knew what to expect (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C was confident and aware of her abilities. Ms. C's responses showed that it was not relevant to her if many of her peers, teachers, etc. knew that she was homeschooled. Ms. C defined the concept of "fitting in" as having confidence in your personality and being able to express your thoughts and ideas to others (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C appeared to be so

well-adjusted that she told me that she was not dealing with any problems (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017).

Mr. D

At the time of this study, Mr. D had been doing very well while at the university. Mr. D wanted to be a biology major. Mr. D described himself as an advocate of homeschooling. Even though Mr. D was an obvious minority regarding his homeschooled status, he told me that it was very easy for him to acclimate into his environment (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D described himself as the guy who “knows everyone” (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D seemed to be extroverted and confident in what he believed and thought. Mr. D mentioned that he has been having a successful academic experience, but he did mention a scenario where he was enrolled in a class where the professor did not feel that him and his classmates were capable of learning the material. Mr. D seemed well-adjusted and he said that he is able to talk with parents and friends about his problems. Mr. D told me that he is an observer of people and that he notices how the individuals he comes across are acting. Mr. D told me that other individuals see him as a down-to-earth person once they begin to talk to him (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

Mr. E

Mr. E took some general education courses through an online program at Liberty University. Mr. E had taken online courses, and he had good experiences with the online courses. Mr. E was a relatively new college student, and he believed that his academic work was better than average. Mr. E told me that he was involved in social interactions at church every week while he was in dual enrollment (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017).

Mr. E described himself as an introvert (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). IN terms of his academic experience, Mr. E expressed his passion for history. In Mr. E's perspective regarding social interaction and social functioning, social skills are the most important factor. Mr. E believes it is important that two strangers who meet each other for the first time greet each other with eye contact, a smile, and a firm handshake. Mr. E believes in the importance of mingling and establishing a network of friends.

Ms. E

Ms. E said that she had a great experience in college. Ms. E was more comfortable being with older people than with her peers. However, Ms. E also did not say that she experiences discomfort with people her age. Ms. E also described herself as an extrovert, and she interacts in discussion boards. Ms. E seemed to have fun while communicating in discussion boards. Ms. E mentioned that she is in the habit of telling people about her life, but she did not go into specifics about her social interactions with others (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Even though she was young and had only started college, Ms. E mentioned that she had taken college-level courses in history, English, science, math, and language. Ms. E also took some undergraduate-level courses when she was in high school. Ms. E seemed to be an optimist about other people. Ms. E's strategy for dealing with challenging or harsh situations was to assume that other people have helpful intentions and that they are not deliberately trying to hurt you (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Ms. Ethlen

Ms. Ethlen was a senior in her fourth year at an Air Force academy. Ms. Ethlen said that she was friends with her squadron mates. At the time of this study, Ms. Ethlen was graduating in the top 2% of her class academically. Ms. Ethlen said that resilience was a characteristic she

acquired while in school. Ms. Ethlen has been academically very successful. The curriculum for this young achiever included a couple of classes through an online Christian school (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen's education in the military had helped her to develop a healthy camaraderie with her squadron mates. Ms. Ethlen discussed how she and her squadron mates knew particular acronyms and shared a sense of humor (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen discussed how she persisted through difficult situations in the past and had confidence in being able to face difficulties in the future. Ms. Ethlen discussed the importance of holding on to the values of persistence and confidence.

Mr. J

Mr. J had many special experiences while in college. For example, he joined the Chaplaincy Department while in college. Mr. J made it clear to me that he was a man of deep spiritual convictions, and he showed that spirituality by caring for his fellow man. Mr. J had a mentor in the field of religion. Mr. J also discussed his involvement in a university program that involved interacting with other males. Mr. J talked about how he had a very strong and rigorous academic program while he was being homeschooled. Mr. J liked to learn what other people thought or believed by starting conversations with them. Mr. J had a mentor in the field of religion. Mr. J shared his involvement in student politics. Mr. J told me that he ran for different offices. For example, Mr. J ran to be the chaplain of the Student Government Association in his sophomore year. However, Mr. J had yet to be interviewed for that position when he spoke to me (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J has various goals in mind, but he does not want those goals to interfere with his education.

Mr. R

Mr. R had been earning all As while enrolled at Berner-Carlson University. Mr. R took a class while in his high school years described as college level. Mr. R said that he never felt isolated while in college. Mr. R had a positive recollection of his academic experiences. Mr. R told me that he had a good learning experience at the university where he was enrolled and also at another university where he was taking courses. Mr. R was specifically homeschooled during the 11th and 12th grades with a particular state program. The college-level work and assignments that he completed during his homeschooling included a financial math class and a leadership course. Mr. R made it clear that it is not an important issue for him to know whether or not other students or individuals know that he was homeschooled (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29th, 2016). Mr. R was very confident with himself as an individual and was not interested in conforming to the student population at large or even with groups of friends. Mr. R was an individualist and a self-starter. Mr. R was very comfortable with his level of social adjustment.

Ms. S

Ms. S said she had very good experiences with groups of students. Ms. S told me that community was an important value at the school where she was enrolled (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S believed that the quality of her work was better than average. Ms. S had had a positive and productive educational experience. Ms. S mentioned to me that she relates to her professors (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S also wrote and published an article about being a homeschooled student. Ms. S expressed an opinion which stated that most people don't see homeschooling as strange anymore (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S was aware of the different categories of individuals and social groups that are out there, but she was not too preoccupied with fitting in

herself. Ms. S expressed that she learned practical skills such as how to apply for jobs and internships. Ms. S realized the importance of being able to sell herself as a skill after she graduates college and goes out into the world.

Results

Theme Development

Social development. The participants in the research study demonstrated a varying but relatively admirable level of social development in each of the three data collections instances. The interviews provided concrete examples of the level of social maturity and reasoning that the participants possessed. One participant even described his social experience as amazing (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22, 2017). The participants whom I interviewed exceeded my expectations as far as the level of social development or social skills they perceived in themselves. One female student whom I interviewed stated that some individuals have misconceptions of homeschooled students as being odd, but other people are surprised when she tells them that she was homeschooled (Ms. C, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). The only participants I interviewed who mentioned the perception that homeschooled students have poor socializing skills were Mr. D and Ms. S (see Appendix B). However, Mr. D did mention that other people are thrown off when he tells that he has been homeschooled because they seem to believe that his social skills are very good (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Ms. S said that she has had some good experiences with groups of students (Ms. S, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). A young participant by the name of Ms. E simply stated “I think people often expect homeschoolers to be socially awkward.” (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11, 2017). Awkward is a code word that appeared in another student’s interview responses (see Appendix C). However, the participants felt secure enough to the point

where they did not need to feel that they had to excuse themselves or explain their homeschooling as a reason for why their social skills appeared awkward. One participant was so confident with his level of social adjustment that he did not feel the need to establish any goals of helping himself to fit in more with others (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016).

The future prospects questionnaire which I sent out provides some fascinating reflections on the participants' perceived levels of social development. In response to a question about social characteristics or character traits which a participant developed that he or she didn't possess while in college, Ms. Ethlen responded by saying she didn't change much since college (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Another response from Ms. Ethlen that was a good reflection of her social development was her advice to homeschooled high school students who are about to apply to a college or a university. The response encouraged homeschooled high school students to be themselves when they get to college (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Also, Ms. Ethlen advised the students to be willing to make friends with individuals who don't come from the same backgrounds as them (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen gives this advice as well: "Maintain some space between you, yourself, and your performance". (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017).

Mr. R was another participant who sent back a future prospects questionnaire as well. In response to the question about character traits that he developed while in college, Mr. R said that the main characteristic that he was able to develop was his openness to expressing himself vocally (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R elaborated by saying that he became more confident in sharing with others how he felt and how he thought (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R had valuable advice for homeschoolers in

high school who are about to apply to a college or university. Mr. R advised these homeschooled students by stating “Take in the ups and downs that come along with life and always learn from them.” (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). One piece of advice which showed a high level of social adjustment was a statement when Mr. R advised homeschooled high school students to build connections with people around them because those connections may benefit them in the future (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Going back to the code word of different, Mr. D mentioned that the one characteristic or character trait which he learned while in college was “...the ability to adapt to different discourse / cultural communities.” (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). In terms of his advice to homeschooled students who are about to enter college, Mr. D echoed Mr. R’s sentiments by stating that he encouraged the students to be confident in who they were (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D added in his response that he wants homeschooled youths “...to enter your institutions with your morals/ethics at the forefront of your minds at all times.” (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017).

The code word of different under social adjustment comes up in Ms. S’s responses to the future prospects questionnaire. Ms. S mentioned that the character trait that she developed in college which she didn’t have before was more knowledge about the process of building connections and acquaintances that may be beneficial in the future (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S also mentioned that another social characteristic she learned while in college was a greater ability to understand the thought processes or feelings of individuals who are different from her in terms of personality and philosophical perspective (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). When Ms. S responded to the question which asked about any advice she has for homeschooled high school students about to enter a college or

a university, Ms. S encouraged the students to develop good personal relationships with their professors (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S went on to write that her experience taught her that most professors take time to help students when the students approach them with questions or problems (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S also advises homeschooled high school students to show their instructors or professors that they have an interest in they are learning (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017).

Ms. C's response to the future prospects questionnaire question which asked about characteristics first developed while in college mentioned that she developed teamwork skills while in college (Ms. C, personal correspondence, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C also wrote, "I have developed adaptiveness during my time in college. " (Ms. C, personal correspondence, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C didn't go into detail about the ways in which she learned to adapt more, but she mentioned that the adaptability she learned would help her to adjust to life changes and varying social settings as an adult (Ms. C, personal correspondence, December 3rd, 2017). In a second e-mailed questionnaire that I sent, I found the same code word of resilience regarding the social development of some of the participants. I asked Mr. R if he observed positive models for college life in the second questionnaire that I sent. Mr. R answered by saying that the main model which stood out to him was an opportunity to build and make connections while in college (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). The process of building connections is in itself an activity that requires resilience. The only other participant who responded to the second e-mail questionnaire was Mr. D. Mr. D stated that the positive role models he observed were confident in who they were as individuals and knew their purpose in life (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017).

Selling yourself. Ms. Ethlen demonstrated some level of the theme of selling yourself when I conducted an interview with her. At one point in her interview, Ms. Ethlen informed me that she acquired resilience from the experiences that she had (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen expressed to me that she developed confidence and endurance by her training in a military school. One statement that Ms. Ethlen made basically said that she can handle any situation she encounters if she is determined to do so (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, May 18th). Ms. C was selling herself when she told me, “Personally, I think my goals are already achieved.” (Ms. C, personal correspondence, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C demonstrated an ambition to pursue a future studying medicine because she had helped to conduct limited research with professors and fellow classmates (Ms. C, personal correspondence, January 22nd, 2017). One other skill which Ms. C mentioned which could involve selling yourself for a job or a position is her intellect. Ms. C admitted that she was able to hold an intellectual conversation with her professors (Ms. C, personal correspondence, January 22nd, 2017). Mr. J’s responses to my interview with him implied that he is probably preparing for a job in some ministry. As stated before, he ran to be the chaplain of the Student Government Association at the university where he is enrolled (Mr. J, personal correspondence, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J also told me toward the end of his interview that he likes to sit down with people and discuss religion, religious philosophy, and biblical texts with them (Mr. J, personal correspondence, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J discussed the important attribute that educated people are more likely to admit they are wrong when they are wrong because they are more likely to submit to the learning process (Mr. J, personal correspondence, March 31st, 2017). Mr. R sold himself in his interview with me by saying that he has received a lot of encouragement, especially from staff members in the School of Education where he was taking courses (Mr. R,

personal correspondence, September 29th, 2016). The main point of selling oneself which I saw in the interview with Ms. S was the point where she told me what she learned as a college student that would help her with adjusting to social environments she saw herself in after college. Ms. S told me that she learned a great deal in the realm of professional development (Ms. S, personal correspondence, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S also told me that she learned how to apply for jobs and internships (Ms. S, personal correspondence, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaires which I sent to the participants reflected even more about their abilities to sell themselves. Ms. Ethlen said that she already had a full-time job for at least the next eight years, which is evidence of solid job security, especially for a recent college graduate (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen told me that her career plan is to contribute to national security through her technical and leadership skills (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen went on to claim that her experience as a homeschooled student granted her the freedom to think for herself and be herself (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Other qualities which prospective employers look for are good study skills as well as an ability to think independently and rationally (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen mentioned the above qualities listed in that sentence. Mr. R sold himself to me in his future prospects questionnaire. Mr. R told me that his main goal in life was to make a difference in the world (Mr. R, personal correspondence, October 19th, 2017). Although this statement may seem vague, Mr. R went on to explain that he wants to make a positive difference in peoples' lives either through the field of education or another profession or career (Mr. R, personal correspondence, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R was specifically going to school to become a high school English teacher (Mr. R, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017).

Mr. R's answer to the question about his main goals in life showed that he is a generous man who wants to contribute positively to the lives of others (Mr. R, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Mr. R also mentioned that his new confidence in bringing out his voice would be beneficial to his desired future job of being an English teacher (Mr. R, personal correspondence, October 21st, 2017). Mr. D sold his homeschooling background in the future prospects questionnaire. Mr. D claimed that his upbringing in homeschooling gave him the diligence to persevere through challenges (Mr. D, personal correspondence, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D plans to enter a very challenging field because he wants to obtain an M.D. degree and become a cancer researcher (Mr. D, personal correspondence, October 11th, 2017). Ms. S demonstrated a strong background in learning skills that can lead to a job or a career. Ms. S mentioned that she learned more about building connections or acquaintances that may be useful for her in the future (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned that she hopes to go and earn a master's degree in speech language pathology after graduating from college; Ms. S hopes to go on and become a speech therapist (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S added by stating that her background as a homeschooled student has given her the motivation to complete those goals (Ms. S, personal correspondence, October 27th, 2017). Ms. C demonstrated a good career prospect by stating in the questionnaire that she scored in the 94th percentile on the MCAT exam and was accepted into medical school (Ms. C, personal correspondence, December 3rd, 2017). On top of those considerable accomplishments, Ms. C stated "My main goal in life is to become an excellent physician." (Ms. C, personal correspondence, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C went on to state that she developed the characteristic of professionalism through homeschooling (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017).

Mr. D also demonstrated that he had acquired some sense of professionalism. Mr. D mentioned in the second e-mail questionnaire that “I saw college as my first introduction to the real world. “ (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R’s second e-mail questionnaire mentioned that he realized opportunities to build or make connections while in college (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R went on to mention that college was a place where he made connections to future employers, community members, and opportunities (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R then made a powerful statement in the second e-mail questionnaire by stating “Because my identity is firmly rooted in Christ, there is no environment that is incompatible with me.” (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). The characteristic of being able to adapt to any type of environment and not feeling mismatched is a critical component of the flexibility that is required to adapt to a job or career environment.

Theme of camaraderie. Ms. Ethlen’s interview and future prospects questionnaire aptly demonstrated the power of camaraderie in a higher education environment. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she attended a military academy with a squadron of 100 people (Ms. Ethlen, personal correspondence, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen went on to say “I’m friends with my squadron mates.” (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen’s response to the question which asked her ability to incorporate herself into her college environment also showed that she had good camaraderie. Ms. Ethlen stated that she has close friends at the school and mentioned that she was going to be a bridesmaid at a friend’s meeting the week after the interview (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen said that she had many positive experiences. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she was involved in a Bible study (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017) The year before the interview, Ms. Ethlen took

part in an end-of-year banquet with her Bible study group (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Fellow students at the banquet mentioned that they were influenced by one of the seniors who was graduating (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen was admitted that she was surprised by how many kind things people had to say about her (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. C, on the other hand, talked very little about her relationships with fellow students. Ms. C only told me that she never had any experiences with fellow classmates or other students that she would consider negative (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Mr. E, a young man who was just beginning college at the time I interviewed him, stated “I haven’t thought a huge amount about what I would like to achieve socially.” (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). However, Mr. E did talk about the importance of good social skills, so he may have been developing a sense of camaraderie with fellow students (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E went on to describe that he had not encountered any tough situations (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). The only specific example which Mr. E gave about interactions with other students was that he participated in some discussion board posts and recalled the interactions as being very polite and respectful (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017).

Mr. J went into more detail about his social interactions. Mr. J mentioned that students who were traditionally schooled have a stereotype which tells them that homeschooled students are not really social (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J didn’t discuss any particular friendship or encouragement that he received from fellow students, but he did mention that he converses with them in order to learn how to “deal with them effectively” (Mr. J, personal correspondence, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J mentioned that the other students

were thrown off when he told them about being homeschooled because they found his social skills to be very good (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31, 2017). Mr. J said, “One thing I’ve always wanted to do is so sit down and talk with people about religion, religious philosophy, and biblical texts.” (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31, 2017). Mr. J mentioned he had not encountered any violent, verbal hostility, or physical hostility (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31, 2017). Mr. D, who is enrolled at the same university as Mr. J, demonstrated an important aspect of camaraderie. Mr. D said that he developed the ability to adapt to others who don’t have the same point of view as him (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D also admitted that he is capable of talking with friends about problems that he encounters (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. R mentioned that other students ask him how he had a social life while has being homeschooled (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Ms. S, who was one of the more studious participants in the research study, stated that not many people give her negative reactions when she tells them she was homeschooled (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaire provided more evidence of the camaraderie that the participants developed. Mr. D’s response to the seventh and last question on the questionnaire encouraged his fellow homeschooled students in high school to be confident in the individuals that they are. He also encouraged them to continue their educations in a college or university with their morals or ethics coming first always (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11, 2017). Therefore, Mr. D seeks to provide encouragement to his fellow homeschooled students who are starting college after him. The one important sense about camaraderie that came from Mr. R’s responses was his realization of the importance of building connections. Mr. R also

added that the connections that an individual produces need to be genuine (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R's definition of a genuine connection was a connection where one individual doesn't use another one simply for what the other person has to offer (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017).

Ms. S also mentioned that she had learned more about building connections and acquaintances from the college setting that she experienced (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S admitted that her background as a homeschooled student has given her the empathy and ability to relate to people of all age groups (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Certainly, the quality of empathy with others helps to support your camaraderie with them. Ms. S showed that she had gained some developed sense of camaraderie by working or interacting with others. Ms. S echoed Mr. R when she stated that working with others has given her the ability to express herself more clearly and to be aware that not everyone had the same conditions for personal growth that she had (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. C talked about her exceptional academic achievements in her future prospects questionnaire. Ms. C mentioned that she also had success in adapting to her college environment. Ms. C admitted that her homeschooling background enabled her to develop key social skills before entering college (Ms. C, personal communication, October 27th, 2017).

The second e-mail questionnaire which I sent out provided less support for the theme of camaraderie than my other two methods, but some points stand out. In the second e-mail questionnaire that Mr. D answered, Mr. D admitted that he had an understanding that not everyone one encounters submits to the same moral compass as himself or herself (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D added that he had been coping very well into his university environment (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R

repeated the code word of connections by stating in one response that he expected to receive valuable knowledge, wisdom, skills, and connections that would assist him for his future career (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R also mentioned that he did not face any problems while he was in college and did not anticipate any problems (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Therefore, Mr. R seemed to have a decent level of camaraderie with his fellow classmates.

Theme of communication. Ms. Ethlen's interview responses provided the best evidence for the theme of communication among all of the interviews. Ms. Ethlen aptly demonstrated that the level of communication with her squadron mates was strong. Ms. Ethlen emphasized that all of her squadron mates (including herself) knew the lingo that was required to communicate (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Although Ms. Ethlen did mention two specific negative experiences that she had while she was enrolled at an air force academy, she made it clear that her situation was positive overall and involved much communication. Ms. Ethlen implied that she shared a sense of loyalty and togetherness with her squadron mates when she mentioned that she was friends with the members of her squadron (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Another point which Ms. Ethlen mentioned which indicated her communication skills was that she considered herself able to determine how to respond appropriately to situations (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. E, who was one of the participants just starting college, mentioned that she communicated through discussion boards (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E also mentioned that she took a communications course which helped her to develop her communications skills (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Mr. E also mentioned his interactions through discussion boards, which he enjoyed (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). In other

respects, Mr. E told me that he hadn't thought a great deal about what he wanted to achieve socially (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E told me that he recognized the importance of overcoming shyness as well as the importance of establishing a network of friends (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. D exemplified a person who is comfortable with communication. Mr. D's answer to Question #2 of my interview with him stated that he had the stigma of being the man who "knows" everyone (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D went on to mention that he knows the difference between real friends and acquaintances (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). On the other hand, Mr. D showed that he understood the meaning of friendship when he said that he doesn't communicate with his classmates on a regular basis (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).. Mr. D explained that he mostly talks with acquaintances, and the acquaintances know that he was homeschooled (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

Mr. R, on the other hand, seemed to be almost as much of an introvert as Mr. D appeared to be an extrovert. Mr. R spoke very little about the quality of his communication with his classmates. Mr. R simply stated that he couldn't recall any animosity or problems with fellow students (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Ms. S, who came across as very academic and scholarly, spoke in some degree about the level of community where she went to school. Ms. S mentioned "With groups of students, I have very good experiences" (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S also admitted that she has done very well when working in pairs with other individuals (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S shared that she liked larger group projects where she can delegate tasks (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S indicated that she was possibly an extrovert

when she mentioned that she is usually the one to initiate a conversation with others (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaires provided more detail about the level of communication experience that the participants attained. Ms. Ethlen simply said that she obtained valuable experience in learning how to handle situations with others during the interview. In her questionnaire, Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she made quite a few new friends since starting at college (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen further elaborated by stating that she had a reasonable social life. Ms. Ethlen brought forth some significant advice for homeschooled high school students who are about to enter college. Ms. Ethlen encouraged students to make as powerful a case as they could to explain why they are well-prepared to succeed in college (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen mentioned the importance of effective spoken communication and good written communication. Ms. Ethlen advised homeschooled high school students by stating that admissions officers want to make sure that students can write effectively (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. S discussed the importance of working well with others in order to gain an ability to express herself with more clarity (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). When Ms. S mentioned that her background as a homeschooled student has given her empathy and the ability to connect with people of different age groups, she exemplified an important element of communication (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). When Ms. S answered the question which asked her about character traits that she developed while in college, she stated that she learned more about building connections that could be helpful in the future (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Mr. R exemplified the theme of communication in his future prospects questionnaire merely by stating that he has been finding

his voice and developing confidence in his voice (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R went on to describe himself as an individual who has become more confident in sharing how he thinks or feels (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned the code word of connections in her future prospects questionnaire (Ms. S, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). The second research questionnaire demonstrated that Mr. D received the benefits of networking while he had been enrolled in college (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R's second research questionnaire mentioned the code word of connections when asked about the positive models that he observed about college life (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018).

Theme of not relevant if other students know they were homeschooled. The interviews repeated the theme quite clearly that the participants did not seem to think that it was either relevant or important that other students knew they were homeschooled. Ms. Ethlen stated that most of her friends know that she was homeschooled, but most people that she talks to have no idea that she was homeschooled (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. E, one of the participants who had just started college, stated "I wouldn't think that it is really relevant at all" when I asked her if she thought it was relevant that other homeschooled students knew she was homeschooled (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. C and Mr. E also stated that it was not very important or relevant if other students know that they were homeschooled. One of the participants even stated that it is not very relevant if other students know that he was homeschooled because you learn basically the same math or literature whether you were homeschooled or educated in public school (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. R did not seem to think it relevant that others know that he was homeschooled (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R made it clear that he does not

volunteer the fact that he was homeschooled when he talks with other people. Mr. D was the only participant who said that it is relevant to him that others know he was homeschooled (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D stated that it is relevant to him because he said that he was a strong supporter of homeschooling (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D went on to opine that homeschooled students have very similar ideas in terms of what they see as important for success (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

None of the future prospects questionnaires gave evidence that the participants who answered them felt it was relevant or important for their peers to know that they were homeschooled. However, Mr. R responded that he wants to increase the level of marketing or promotion about the particular homeschooling program he experienced (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R did not mean to draw attention to the fact that he was homeschooled. Mr. R wanted to draw more attention to the particular program in which he was educated. Neither of the two second questionnaires that the participants answered showed any desire on the part of the participants to let their classmates or others know that they were homeschooled. Mr. D answered one question in the second questionnaire which implied that he felt his homeschooled upbringing helped to instill high moral standards in him. Mr. D answered one question by stating "...my morals come from a high standard that I am aware that few others agree with. However, I have grown comfortable standing out from the crowd in this way." (Mr. D, personal correspondence, December 13th, 2017).

Theme of ability to have a positive impact on people. In the interviews, the participants overall seemed to think they had a somewhat positive impact on their peers and other people around them. Ms. Ethlen described herself as quite well-adjusted (personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen made it clear that she had been able to build and develop positive

relationships with her squadron mates at the military college where she graduated. The positive impact that came out in Ms. E's responses discussed the enjoyment and stimulation she received from taking part in discussion boards. Ms. E discussed her positive impact on people by discussing her ability to be comfortable with older people (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E added that she did not have any significant trouble getting along with youths her own age (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Ms. E implied that her positive impact on people came about through her ability to have confidence when meeting people who have had lives that are different from hers (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E demonstrated the concept of adjustment when she said "Assume that they [other people] have good intentions and that no one is deliberately hurting you. Try to understand the other peoples' intentions and goals." (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E also mentioned that the discussion boards she participated in were fun (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Ms. C, an accomplished young woman who wants to apply for medical school, mentioned that her social experience and relationships have been positive (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C's adjustment came through when she said that other people react in a surprised way when she tells them that she was homeschooled (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C then stated that she does not want to fit the stereotype of socially-awkward children (Ms. C, personal correspondence, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C later mentioned in my interview with her that she believed her goals were already achieved regarding social adjustment (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C declared said, "I'm really doing well with my professors and among my fellow classmates and I haven't had any difficulties adjusting since my freshman year." (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd,

2018). In her response to the final question in my interview with her, Ms. C mentioned that all of the encounters she has had have been positive (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2018).

Mr. E seemed to be well-adjusted. It was more difficult for me to judge Mr. E's level of a positive impact on other people because he had just started college. Mr. E himself could not give a definitive picture of his ability to adjust to college life. However, he did not give any sense that he had negative experiences or that he was struggling to adjust. Mr. E's understanding of adjustment was reflected in the answer he gave where he said that social skills are the most important factor (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. J, on the other hand, could give a definitive picture of the positive impact he thought he had on other people. Mr. J spoke of a philosophy when he said "We try to adapt ourselves to conform to society in order to be liked or accepted." (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J's method of adjustment with others was to start conversations with them in order to see how their brains work (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J demonstrated apparent wisdom when he told me that he tries to observe people, study their body language, and notice any facial expressions or changes in the tones of their voices (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017).

Mr. D's interview demonstrated the code word of wisdom and not so much adjustment. Mr. D seemed very confident in what he believed and in what types of individuals he thought he could get along with. Mr. D mentioned that his strategy for coping with challenging situations was to discuss the problem with individuals from whom he could find wisdom and counsel (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). In terms of being able to make a positive impact on other individuals, Mr. D mentioned that whenever he met someone for the first time, he

would observe that person and see how he or she acts (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). In this sense, Mr. D's approach to people resembled that of Mr. J. Mr. D seemed to have a mostly positive experience while enrolled at the university because he said his positive experiences are why he has been able to stay at the university (Mr. J, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. R also said that he had a good social experience (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R elaborated on that perspective by stating that he did not know anybody at the university when he started there, but then he got along with his classmates and did well (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R felt well-adjusted even though he had no desire to conform to other groups of people he involved himself with. Mr. R mentioned that he felt pretty comfortable with his level of social adjustment (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R's sense of ease with his adjustment was so great that he admitted that he would probably continue being the way that he is even if he felt isolated (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).

Ms. S, who is an exceptionally-accomplished student, did not even speak much about the level of adjustment she felt she had. Ms. S did mention that she likes working in group projects, but she admitted "I fit in probably with one of the studious groups, but I don't try too hard." (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). When the interview directly asked Ms. S about her goals pertaining to social adjustment, Ms. S stated that she experienced her adjustment without even giving particular thought to the matter (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S even admitted that she did not need to make any noticeable adjustments (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaires elaborated on the points that the participants made in their interviews about their positive impact on other people. Ms. Ethlen discussed the nature of her

adjustment when she stated that she had to learn to stop, take a deep breath and let go so that she wouldn't drown herself in all her responsibilities (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen implied that her homeschooling prepared her to adjust to different environments when she stated that she felt that her educational background gave her the freedom to be herself and think for herself (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also admitted that she learned how to get a sense of what it's like for her to be the other person coming from the outside into new social situations (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also expressed wisdom when she wrote in her questionnaire, "Don't apologize for who you are, but do make the strongest case possible for why you are well-prepared to succeed at college." (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen's advice to homeschooled high school students then demonstrated the importance of adjustment when she told them to be flexible about making friends with people who don't come from the same background as they did individually (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017).

In the future prospects questionnaire that Mr. D provided, he mentioned that the social characteristic or character trait that he learned while in college was the ability to adapt to different types of people or different cultural communities (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D's future prospects questionnaire demonstrated wisdom when he advised homeschooled high school students to be confident in whom they are and to let their morals and ethics guide them as they are journeying through life (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. R's future prospects questionnaire discussed his level of adjustment and his perception of his positive impact on other people to a much greater degree than his interview. Mr. R mentioned how his self-motivation largely contributed to his success

in both public school and as a homeschooled student (Mr. R, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. R's advice for homeschooled high school students expressed definite wisdom. Mr. R advised homeschooled high school students to go to college for a reason and do what fills them with life and energy (Mr. R, personal communication, October 11th, 2017).

Ms. S sent me a thoughtful future prospects questionnaire which demonstrated a high level of adjustment. Ms. S's questionnaire demonstrated adjustment when she stated that she gained more experience while in a college setting (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned that the characteristics she learned in college that have helped her to develop a successful personal life as an adult were the understanding of thought processes and emotions of people who are different from her (Ms. S, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Ms. S's response, in this case, demonstrates an encouraging level of adjustment for a young person. The wisdom in Ms. S's questionnaire relative to her positive impact on people came through when she explained that homeschooled high school students need to develop an ability to have good personal relationships with their professors (Ms. S, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned that the relationships she developed with her professors have opened pathways to opportunities (Ms. S, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Ms. C's future prospects questionnaire demonstrated her level of adjustment because she mentioned that she developed the character trait of teamwork skills while in college (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C went on to say that she developed adaptability during her college education (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Adaptability is basically related to the term adjustment. Ms. C's wisdom came out in her future prospects questionnaire where she advised homeschooled high school students with the words, "I would advise them to relax. Many homeschooled students are afraid that they will be entering a

class of students who are much smarter than themselves because they have never been able to compare themselves to other classmates.” (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017).

The second questionnaire from Mr. D gave a further indication of his adjustment. Mr. D mentioned in the second questionnaire that he saw college as his true introduction to the real world (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D humbly admitted that he had a problem anticipating how he was going to adjust to the culture of the university campus (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D’s second questionnaire demonstrated his wisdom when he explained that he understood that not everyone one encounters in life submits to the same moral compass as that person (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D summed up the adjustment he felt he achieved when he simply answered “Yes” to the question which asked him if he was happy with the college environment that he immersed himself in (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R, the other participant who responded to the second questionnaire, demonstrated excellent adjustment when he admitted that he did not face any problems while in college and did not anticipate any problems (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R then answered that he expected to receive knowledge, wisdom, skills, and connections that would assist him for a future career (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R’s excellent level of adjustment came through when he wrote that he felt comfortable at Berner-Carlson University because he found the environment to be safe and the faculty to be supportive (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R went on to say that he felt that no environment is incompatible to him because he declared that identity was rooted in Christ (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R admitted that the only improvement he

could think of regarding his university environment would have been for him to have a few more meaningful courses (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). However, Mr. R made it clear that he had a very good educational experience overall and that he adjusted well to the environment at the university he attended.

No strong goals to further socially adjust. Most but not all of the participants in the study demonstrated that they did not feel that they needed to take further steps to improve or complete their adjustment to a college or university environment. Ms. Ethlen gave abundant evidence that she felt well-adjusted and at peace with her squadron mates at the military academy she attended (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen added “It’s not hard to fit in because there are so many shared experiences after being with each other for a couple of years.” (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen demonstrated confidence regarding her perceived level of adjustment. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she learned resilience because she described the college environment she went through as challenging (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also directly stated that she developed confidence through the training she received at the school she attended (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen did recall two unpleasant experiences she had while in college which caused her to have conflicts with a classmate in one case and a supervisor in another case. Both of those situations eventually defused and were solved. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that, by the time I held my interview with her, she was on friendly terms with the classmate she got into a confrontation with at one time (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017).

Ms. E, a student who had just been starting out in college, could not say whether or not she had any strong goals to further adjust. Ms. E was young and could conceivably see more

conflicts or challenges ahead as far as being able to adjust, but she did not express to me that was struggling at the time of my interview with her. Ms. E oddly stated “I am more comfortable with older people, adults.” (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E did not state specifically why she felt more comfortable with older people, but she did not indicate that she necessarily had problems with her peers (Ms. E, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. E demonstrated a level of confidence in her new college environment even though she did not mention the word confidence. Ms. E proved that she was well-adjusted when she said that her main strategy for dealing with challenging situations was to try to understand the intentions and goals of other people who were dealing with her (Ms. E, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. C demonstrated confidence in her ability to adjust to her college environment. Ms. C seemed to be more absorbed with academic issues and academic achievement than with social issues, but she did have a few things to say about the realities of homeschooled students. Ms. C said that she knew of other homeschooled students at the school she attended, and she said, “Some of the homeschooled students do struggle with communicating, some of them had few social interactions with others outside of family.” (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C then gave a definition of the word “fitting in” which stated that fitting in had to do with being confident in your personality and being able to relay your ideas and thoughts to others (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017).

Ms. C went on to say that she felt she already achieved her goals of social adjustment (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C reasoned that she achieved her goals of social adjustment because she was doing well with her professors and did not have any difficulties adjusting since her freshman year. Mr. E, another young student who was similar in age to Ms. E, defined what he thought of adjustment when he said that social interactions

determine how someone fits in (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E said, “On the discussion board posts, the interaction was very polite and respectful.” (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E’s statement that he hadn’t thought a great deal about what he wanted to achieve socially indicated that he didn’t have any more adjustments to make (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E also mentioned that he had not yet encountered any tough situations with students (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017).

Mr. J was an older student who had thought a great deal about his adjustment at the university. Mr. J said straightforwardly that he had a lot of social experiences (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J expressed his philosophy of adjustment when he said that people will work to imitate somebody else to try to match someone else’s consciousness (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J said that everyone has to form his or her identity (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J showed a good level of adjustment by saying that he had not encountered any violent verbal hostility while in college (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J added that he tries not to get involved in other peoples’ conflicts (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J did not explicitly state that he was confident in his level of adjustment, but he exuded confidence by showing that he understood the dynamics of good and honest communication. The only frustration that Mr. J demonstrated during the interview was at the point when he admitted that it was discouraging when he gave certain facts to people who would then deny his knowledge (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017).

Mr. D exuded a great deal of confidence as well. Mr. D’s mention of being known as the guy who “knows everyone” displayed a high degree of social adjustment. Mr. D exemplified

adjustment when he stated that the most important thing that he learned while at college was to adapt to others who don't share his point of view (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. R also showed a true level of confidence by making it clear that he was completely comfortable with being himself. First off, Mr. R said that he has gotten along well with his classmates (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R admitted that other students ask him what his homeschooling experience was like when he informs them about his experience (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R added "The students basically ask me what it is like, what experiences I had, and how do I have a social life with that?" (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Although Mr. R did define "fitting in" as conforming, he admitted that he himself has never aimed to conform (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R implied that he felt he had no greater need for social adjustment when he mentioned that he never even considered having goals of fitting in with those around him (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R expressed confidence in the positive effects of his upbringing when he told me that he was raised just to be himself and to not conform with what others are doing or how they are acting (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).

The future prospects questionnaires indicated that the student participants who completed them had a good deal to write about their accomplishments with social adjustment. In Ms. Ethlen's written questionnaire, she wrote that she learned to let go and detach sometimes from her responsibilities so that she wouldn't get overwhelmed (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen showed confidence when she wrote in her questionnaire that homeschooling endowed her with the freedom to feel like she could be herself and think for herself (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen then claimed that

she had the ability to look logically at a situation and be deft at how to manage it (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). The philosophy of being yourself chimed in with the advice that Ms. Ethlen gave to homeschooled high school students where she told them to not apologize for who they are (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. S's questionnaire echoed the concept of "being yourself" when she mentioned that one aspect of her performance as an individual in college was her passion which came from being enabled to find her own interests (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S evidently was a college student who discovered her own interests because she seemed certain about what degrees and fields she wanted to pursue after graduating from college. Ms. S stated that she wanted to achieve a master's degree in linguistics after college and then earn a master's degree in speech language pathology after the linguistics degree (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017).

Mr. D's future prospects questionnaire was simple and pointed. Mr. D reflected an individual who does not believe he needs to go much further in adjusting when he stated that his homeschooling has enabled him to be confident in the person he is (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D's advice to homeschooled high school students to maintain their confidence in who they are also echoed the code word of confidence for the theme of not having strong goals to adjust further into one's environment (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. R's point in his future prospects questionnaire where he discussed his newfound confidence in expressing himself echoed the code word of being yourself. Mr. R wrote "Lately, I've been getting more confident in sharing how I feel and what I think, recognizing that my voice (like everyone else's) truly matters." (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R wrote that he is finding his voice, so it was apparent

that Mr. R did not have to adjust much further in this respect (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Later on in the future prospects questionnaire, Mr. R wrote that he felt his homeschooling helped him to develop his ability to question things and learn just for the sake of learning (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). When Mr. R wrote that he developed his ability to question things, he showed confidence and showed that he did not seem to have much more progress to make in order to adjust. Ms. C clearly stated that she developed an ability to adapt during her time in college (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C's statement where she wrote that being adaptive would help her to adjust to life changes and differences in social settings reflected a high level of adjustment to her current situation. Ms. C provided advice to homeschooled high school students that encouraged them to relax and to basically be confident in themselves (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017).

The second questionnaires reflected confidence and a sense of ease on the part of the participants who answered them. In his second questionnaire, Mr. D humbly admitted that he expected to have a problem with adjusting to the culture of a university campus when he started college (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Later on in his second questionnaire, Mr. D stated that he had the benefit of positive role models whom he observed were confident in who they were as individuals (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Therefore, the positive role models whom Mr. D observed seemed to not have any strong goals to socially adjust further. Mr. D demonstrated that he had confidence in who he was because he wrote that he had grown comfortable with standing out from the crowd in his own way (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). In his second questionnaire, Mr. R

demonstrated the utmost confidence in who he was when he stated that he was not put off by places that he was not accustomed to (Mr. R, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Both Mr. D and Mr. R demonstrated that they did not feel much need to adjust much more to their environments.

Not alienated by faculty or students. Most of the participants whom I interviewed did not seem to be alienated by their faculty or by their fellow students. Ms. Ethlen talked about the very positive experiences she had with some of her courses. Ms. Ethlen mentioned how a History 200 course on American history was one of her favorite courses (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen talked about encouraging experiences with faculty while at college, not experiences that discouraged her. Ms. Ethlen said, “A lieutenant colonel who teaches history here helped me to think about what it means to be a military officer.” (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also mentioned that she had good experiences in an abstract algebra class and an Intro. To Psych. Class (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also mentioned that she was friends with her squadron mates even though she was in a squadron with a total of one-hundred people (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen was certainly not isolated by her fellow students.

The confidence in not being alienated by faculty or students came through in Ms. Ethlen’s response where she stated that she learned confidence just by being at the military school where she was enrolled (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. E, a recent college student, was not alienated by her university environment either. Ms. E talked positively about her interaction in discussion boards. Ms. E even mentioned “I have been telling people about my life.” (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E described “fitting in” as having a

circle of friends with whom she felt at ease associating with (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E's definition of "fitting in" did not imply that she felt any sense of isolation. Ms. E also showed a sense of not being isolated when she stated that her strategy for contending with challenging situations was to assume that other people who are giving you a "hard time" had good intentions and did not think that anyone was hurting them (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Ms. C demonstrated the opposite of isolation when she told me in her interview that her relationships have been positive (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C also showed that she had a good relationship with her faculty and did not feel isolated from them. Ms. C discussed a biochemistry course she took which she thought to be worthwhile (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C defined "fitting in" as being confident in one's personality and having a sound ability to relay ideas and thoughts to others (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). The code word in that definition was confident. Ms. C also discussed that she has learned to combat her awkward experiences by applying solutions she developed from previous experiences (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C summed up her lack of isolation by telling me "All of the encounters I've had have been positive." (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Mr. E, a student who had just started college, described himself as an introvert, but he also said that he felt very included (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E also demonstrated confidence and lack of isolation when he stated that social interaction was not hard for him (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E showed that he was engaged with his coursework. Mr. E discussed positive experiences that he had with a Math 121 course, a History of Life course, and a computer science course. The only example which Mr. E gave where he found a sense of

isolation with a faculty member was when he discussed an experience he had with a particular professor who took a long time to respond to his e-mails (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). The isolation he experienced in that case was a minor issue.

Mr. E demonstrated confidence regarding the theme of not being isolated by students and faculty when he stated that people can work toward fulfilling their own individual goals (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E showed that he was moving out from any impending isolation because he stated that he was overcoming his initial shyness and establishing a network of friends (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E spoke of the confidence that allows one to introduce oneself to a complete stranger with a smile and a firm handshake (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E also showed that he was able to have good-quality written interactions with others, and thus he showed that he was not isolated in the cyber world. Mr. R demonstrated a confidence in terms of not feeling isolated that was similar to that of Mr. E, but Mr. R's confidence was only more developed because he had spent more time as a college student. Mr. R displayed a complete confidence with who he was, and he said to me "I've had a good social experience, although I'm not the most social person." (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R also made it clear that he did not feel isolated from the faculty because he stated that he was able to find good aspects from each class that he attended (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). The only improvement that Mr. R could think of was a system where foreign language courses at the university require some type of activity or exercise that students have to complete over the summer so that they don't forget what they learned in those courses (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R denied that he had any sense of isolation when he

stated that he felt comfortable with his level of social adjustment (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).

Mr. J and Mr. D both did not give me any sense that they felt isolated from fellow students or from the faculty who taught them. Mr. J only had positive things to say about the courses he took. Mr. J mentioned that he enjoyed a special topics class that he took, and he also very much enjoyed his religion courses (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J went on to mention that his English classes helped him to develop his writing (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J also had an active campus life as a student. Mr. J mentioned that he joined the Chaplaincy Department on the campus where he was enrolled, and he was also involved in another university program called the Brother-to-Brother program (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J was confident in his relations with others, and he was definitely not isolated because he mentioned that he liked to start conversations with people and find out their opinions or thoughts on different subjects (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J may even represent the opposite of someone who isolates others because he talked about he enjoyed talking with students about religion, religious philosophy, and biblical texts (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017).

Mr. D was definitely not isolated during his educational experience. Mr. D mentioned that his experience while at a university was very productive (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D was not isolated from his faculty. Mr. D learned a lot from his courses, and he mentioned how his science classes, envirometrics class, and Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy class were all very beneficial for him (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D mentioned that people perceive his social skills as very good (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D's definition of "fitting in" did not discuss adjustment

to a social environment like definitions from other participants in this research study. Mr. D actually defined “fitting in” as a student’s willingness to embrace academic excellence and ambition toward attaining a degree (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D stated “I think the biggest thing that I’ve learned since I started here is to adapt to others who don’t have the same point of view as me.” (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D’s adaptability showed me that he was not suffering from isolation. Mr. D also showed a healthy sense of engagement with others when he stated that he was able to talk with parents and friends about any problems that he experienced (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

Ms. S did not demonstrate any true sense of isolation either with her faculty or with her fellow students. Ms. S told me in my interview with her that she knew in advance what her professors wanted from her (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S implied that she was fitting in and not feeling isolated at the university she was enrolled in when she stated that the university she was in emphasized community (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S demonstrated that she was not isolated from her faculty, because she told me that all her courses have been productive (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S specifically cited an Approaches to Literature course and an orientation course she took as useful and good classes (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S told me that she does not try too hard to fit in (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S capped off her interview with a very positive tone when she told me that the positive situations that she encountered with other students, professors, and staff were too numerous to count (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaires reflected that the homeschooled students had a sense of togetherness with faculty and students, not isolation. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she had a reasonable social life while being homeschooled (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen advised homeschooled high school students to be confident in being themselves (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen's advice doesn't imply that she was isolated while at a college or university. Ms. Ethlen advised homeschooled high school students to be willing to make friends with people who don't come from the same background as they did (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Mr. D did not show a sense of isolation when he mentioned that his homeschooling has given him a solid confidence in who he is (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Like Ms. Ethlen, Mr. D also advised homeschooled high school students to be confident in who they are (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. R talked about confidence and not feeling isolated when he mentioned that the main characteristic he has been developing is a willingness to express himself more vocally (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R mentioned that he has been gaining more confidence in sharing how he feels or thinks (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R expressed an ambition to make a difference in the world (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). An individual who aims to make a difference does not seem to have suffered a sense of isolation.

Ms. S's future prospects questionnaire mentioned that she developed character traits in college that involved learning more about building connections and acquaintances (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). If Ms. S learned more about building connections, then she did not experience a sense of isolation. Ms. S mentioned that she has come to understand the thought processes and feelings of individuals who are very different from her

in terms of personality (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned her upbringing as a homeschooled student has granted her the ability to have empathy and an ability to connect with people of different age groups (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017).. Ms. S clearly expressed that she was not isolated from her faculty when she stated that she developed skills at holding more personal relationships with her professors or instructors (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S advised homeschooled high school students coming into college to develop relationships with their teachers by asking questions about the material they are learning. Ms. C demonstrated thoughts and ideas in her future prospects questionnaire that were similar to those of Ms. S. Ms. C stated that the character traits she developed while in college included skills at conducting teamwork (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C also showed that she is familiar with other homeschooled students and does not suffer a sense of isolation from them. Ms. C demonstrated her knowledge of homeschooled students when she stated “Generally, I have found that homeschoolers are more knowledgeable than other students, and are more professional as well. “ (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017).

The second research questionnaire generally implied that the homeschooled study participants who answered them did not feel a sense of isolation. Mr. D gave no indication in his second questionnaire that he had difficulty adjusting to the culture of the university campus. Mr. D followed some positive role models whom he found to be confident in the types of individuals they were (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D also mentioned in his second questionnaire that he has been coping very well to his new environment (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R’s second questionnaire stated that he saw his college experience as an opportunity to create connections with others (Mr. R, personal

communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R also showed that he valued those connections because he saw them as bridges that led to potential employers and opportunities (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018).

Peacefully merging into college or university environment. The context of the interviews suggested that the homeschooled students merged peacefully into the colleges or universities where they were enrolled. Ms. Ethlen had a conflict at one point with one of her squadron leaders, but that situation settled down (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen also had a confrontation with a classmate who refused to cooperate with her, but she said that she was on good terms with the classmate by the time I held the interview with her (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Overall, Ms. Ethlen merged well into her new environment and had no trouble making friends with her squadron mates. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that she recalls experiences she had in common with her squadron mates (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen ended her interview by stating that she had very many positive experiences while enrolled in college (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. E seemed to be merging well into her new college environment even as a first-year college student. Ms. E spoke two times in her interview about using discussion boards to mingle with other students (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E mentioned that it was a pleasure to communicate in some of those discussion boards (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Ms. C seems to have merged very peacefully with her college environment partly because she was very focused on her academics. Ms. C showed that she was not one to make waves or “stir the teapot” with other students by bringing up the fact that she had a different educational background from most of them. Ms. C mentioned that she did not speak very often with her

classmates about her homeschooled experiences (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd 2017). Ms. C did admit “When I talk to professors, I definitely discuss my home school experiences.” (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). The theme of peaceful merging with others chimed in with Ms. C’s response to the question that asked her whether or not she felt her social goals were achieved. Ms. C stated that she felt her social goals were already achieved (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C mentioned “I haven’t had any difficulties adjusting since my freshman year.” (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Mr. E, another student who had just started out in college, could not give much detail about the nature of his merging into the college or university environment. Mr. E mentioned that he hadn’t encountered any tough situations at the time I interviewed him (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E mentioned that he had good, constructive discussion board interactions while at the university (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017).

Mr. J demonstrated amply that he had merged well into the college environment where he was enrolled. Mr. J seemed confident with his identity, and he was well-integrated into his college environment. Mr. J demonstrated that he was well-integrated into the college environment as he ran to be a chaplain for the Student Government Association (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J expressed a desire to be involved in college life without losing his focus on his education. Mr. J emphatically told me that he never encountered any violent verbal hostility or physical hostility from other students while in college (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J seemed to have an inclination to start conversations with people. Mr. J said during his interview, “One thing I’ve always wanted to do is to sit down and talk with people about religion, religious philosophy and biblical texts.” (Mr. J,

personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J mentioned that he could not get across to others successfully by conversing with them, but he did not give any sign of being discouraged from starting interactions with others.

Mr. D merged very well into his college environment. Mr. D mentioned that his college experience was very productive (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd 2017). Mr. D also used the words “It’s been amazing” to describe his social experience in college (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D definitely showed that he conducted conversations with people. Mr. D made it clear that he made many acquaintances. Mr. D certainly did not lose his focus from his education, because he described academic excellence and ambition as the reasons for being in a college (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D’s integration involved talking about any problem he has with parents and friends and going to seek advice from others. Mr. D mentioned that the positive experiences he has had are the reasons why he has been able to stay in college (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

Mr. R suggested that he had a positive experience even though he admittedly said, “I am not the most social person (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).” Mr. R does what he needs to do and is involved with group work. Mr. R directly mentioned the code word of “fitting in” when he said that you don’t necessarily have to conform to other students in order to receive acceptance and good social standing (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R suggested that he received acceptance from other students and good social standing. Mr. R further explained his peaceful merging into his college environment by stating that he could not recall any animosity or problems with students (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R also mentioned that he has received a lot of encouragement from staff members in the School of Education (Mr. R, personal communication,

September 29th, 2016). The last comment which Mr. R made in his interview which suggested that he peacefully integrated into his college environment was the point where he told me that he helps other students if they ask him for assistance (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).

Ms. S's interview indicated no problems with merging peacefully into her college environment. Ms. S mentioned that she had positive experiences with groups of students (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S told me that she was successful with group work and in working in pairs (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S admitted that she didn't even have to make adjustments of a social nature into her college or university environment (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S demonstrated values of peaceful merging just by stating that she handles harsh or challenging situations through persistence and not giving up when situations are hard (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. S clearly had no problems merging into her college environment.

The future prospects questionnaires also gave the participants who answered them an outlet for showing that they merged peacefully into their college environments. Ms. Ethlen mentioned that it was rather easy to get caught up in a need to perform academically, show good leadership skills, and demonstrate good physical ability as well (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen recalled that her experience as a homeschooled student gave her a good ability to look at a situation with objectivity and discretion and to be skillful in managing a situation (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). The best part of Ms. Ethlen's advice to other homeschooled students in terms of being able to merge peacefully was when she said she encourages homeschooled students to be humble (Ms. Ethlen, personal

communication, October 21st, 2017). Mr. D's future prospects questionnaire showed that he merged peacefully into this environment. Mr. D simply wrote "Yes" for the question that asked him if he felt his college experience would lead to continual academic success in a graduate or professional school (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D also mentioned that he developed the ability to adapt to different cultural communities while in college (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017).

Mr. R's future prospects questionnaire focused on his development as a person and his career ambitions as a high school English teacher. Mr. R only implied in his future prospects questionnaire that he merged peacefully into his university environment by stating that he advises homeschooled high school students to build connections with others that are genuine (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Ms. S made further discussion about her adaptation to her college environment in her future prospects questionnaire. Ms. S mentioned in her questionnaire that she learned more about building connections and acquaintances (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S stated that she has been working with others (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S expanded on that thought by stating that working with others has endowed her with the ability to express herself with more clarity (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. C's future prospects questionnaire suggested that she merged well with the college environment that she was enrolled in. Ms. C spoke more about her academic accomplishment than her social adjustment to her classmates. However, Ms. C mentioned that she developed teamwork skills and an ability to adapt while in college (Ms. S, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Those two characteristics alone suggested that she merged peacefully with her college environment.

The two second questionnaires basically repeated the responses that appeared in the future prospects questionnaires. Mr. D mentioned that he anticipated that he was going to have a problem with adjusting to the campus culture, but he did not appear to have actual problems (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D then said that he adjusted very well because he realized that not every individual that he encountered had the same moral development as him (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R even wrote in his second questionnaire that he did not face any problems and did not anticipate any problems (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R seemed to have a positive attitude, because he wrote that he expected to receive valuable knowledge as well as skills and connections that would assist him as he readied himself for his future career (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Additional evidence of Mr. R's peaceful merging into his university environment arose when he described the environment as safe (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R made it clear that the environment at the university where he was enrolled was compatible to him (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018).

Acquisition of social skills. The interviews that I conducted with the student participants demonstrated that they either acquired social skills to be able to succeed while enrolled in college or already had them when they were enrolled in college. Ms. Ethlen had to develop some social skills while she was in college. She described the environment where she went to school as a challenging environment (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). In spite of the fact that Ms. Ethlen was not certain about her plan for her life in the beginning of her education, she said that a lieutenant colonel who taught history at the school helped her to develop her identity as a military officer (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017).

Like almost all of the other participants in this research study, Ms. Ethlen mentioned that it is not especially important to her if other people know that she was homeschooled (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017).

Therefore, Ms. Ethlen demonstrated maturity by not having a need to draw attention to the fact that she was homeschooled. Ms. Ethlen had no trouble communicating with her squadron mates, and she seemed to be at home with them. Another example of maturity on the part of Ms. Ethlen as an expression of acquisition of social skills was when she said, “I’ve learned to know that I can handle something if I put my mind to it.” (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen did not go into detail about the situations that she needed to respond to, but she seemed confident in her ability to progress forward.

The two students who had just started college, Ms. E and Mr. E, were demonstrating that they were acquiring social skills as they were going through their first years of college. Ms. E demonstrated that she was acquiring social skills by attending discussion boards and by taking a communications course. Ms. E mentioned that a general communications course that she took contributed to a productive learning experience for her (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E had already acquired social skills to the point where it did not appear that other students found her to be socially awkward. Ms. E answered a question which asked her if her classmates knew that she was homeschooled by answering that other students usually know about it but may have forgotten about it (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Ms. E also demonstrated a mature understanding when she mentioned in her interview that factors like age, career situation, and family don’t make as huge of a difference in life as people in high school or middle school believe (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). Furthermore, Ms. E demonstrated maturity when she stated that one has to try to understand other peoples’

intentions and goals when encountering a problem with them (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017).

Mr. E amply demonstrated that he was acquiring social skills already at an early point in his college experience (Ms. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E directly stated that social interaction with other students in discussion boards was not difficult (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E implied that he developed maturity through his homeschooling experience when he stated that he had told students that he had to have an open mind and be responsible for himself as a homeschooled student (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Acquisition of social skills seemed to be very important to Mr. E because he stated that social skills are the most important factor for helping a student to fit in (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E then specifically mentioned that he had good experiences while participating in discussion board posts. Mr. E mentioned that when students gave criticisms in discussion board posts, they stated the criticism in a positive and respectful manner (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017).

Mr. J's interview demonstrated an excellent level of acquired social skills. Mr. J mentioned that the fact that he was homeschooled rarely came up in conversation with others (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J demonstrated that he understood why people try to conform to others, and he seemed very secure in the identity that he molded for himself. Mr. J mentioned that he observed that everybody has an identity in some particular respect (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J had acquired social skills where he felt comfortable at starting conversations with others in order to prepare himself for the career or job that he envisioned for himself (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J indicated that he was an acute observer of people. Mr. J mentioned in his interview that he was

an avid observer of people and that he looked for ways to effectively deal with people (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. D was also quite self-assured with his social skills. Mr. D clearly did not have problems interacting with others, and he said “I want to get to the point where the stigma of homeschooled students having horrible socializing skills is erased.” (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D echoed Mr. J in his approach to people when he stated that he observes an individual whom he meets for the first time and notices how he or she acts (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017).

Mr. R implied that he already acquired the social skills he needed when he was working his way through his college experience. Mr. R, who even suggested that he was an introvert, stated that he did not know anybody when he started college but did well socially by getting along with his classmates (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R demonstrated maturity by showing that he was secure with his identity and comfortable with the fact that he was homeschooled. Mr. R did not need to broadcast that he was homeschooled. He made a point when he said “I don’t really walk into a classroom and say ‘I was homeschooled’, if it comes up, it comes up.” (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R was secure enough in his social skills by stating that he did not try to conform (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R even stated that he probably continue having the personality that he had even he was isolated (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016).

Ms. S and Ms. C were both two highly-accomplished and very intelligent students who demonstrated a high level of social maturity. Ms. S seemed secure in her identity and had no need to sport the fact that she was homeschooled. Ms. S told that she doesn’t volunteer the fact that she was homeschooled. Ms. S told me, “Normally, I just wait until others ask to let them

know I was homeschooled.” (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). The characteristics which really proved that Ms. S had acquired a good level maturity for a college student was when she stated that she exercised persistence and calmness when facing a harsh or challenging situation (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). Ms. C had little to say about her acquisition of social skills. Ms. C said in her interview that she could not identify a negative experience she had while being a college student (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C defined “fitting in” as being confident with your own personality (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C appeared to be confident in the person she was.

The future prospects questionnaires also demonstrated that the participants in this study had acquired a desirable level of social skills for college students. Ms. Ethlen seemed to be very adept at communicating with her squadron mates when she was in college. Ms. Ethlen wrote that she made many new friends since starting her graduate program last fall (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). When Ms. Ethlen wrote about the homeschooling that she received, she stated that she had a reasonable social life and good memories of the extracurricular activities she was involved (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen advised homeschooled high school students to be open to befriending individuals of different backgrounds (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen then implied that she had been able to communicate with individuals of different backgrounds and upbringings. Ms. Ethlen also encouraged homeschooled high school students to maintain space between themselves and their academic or college performance (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Therefore, Ms. Ethlen seemed to encourage the students to relax and have an academic life that is balanced with personal and social

development. Ms. C also showed a sense of good adjustment in her future prospects questionnaire. Ms. C stated “I have developed teamwork skills in college through biochemical research projects as well as club events and study sessions.” (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). On the other hand, Ms. C also mentioned that she developed teamwork skills at club events and study sessions (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Therefore, Ms. C showed that she acquired a level of social skills which enabled her to flourish at extracurricular activities (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C also wrote that she received a well-balanced education and was involved in some social groups (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017).

Mr. D’s future prospects questionnaire implied that he developed the ability to adapt to different communities or types of social groups. Mr. D implied that he didn’t have trouble with other individuals or groups he encountered while in college. Mr. R stated that he recognized that his voice truly mattered (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). The fact that Mr. R became relatively comfortable at expressing his ideas and opinions implied that he reached a mature level of social skills. Mr. R also understood how his newfound ability to express himself would benefit him in his anticipated career of being a high school English teacher (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). The second questionnaires that Mr. D and Mr. R answered expanded on upon the confidence they displayed in their future prospects questionnaires. Mr. D stated that he expected to receive the benefit of networking by being at college (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Also, Mr. D seemed to feel that he was able to stand outside of the ordinary crowd based on what he perceived as his moral standards (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). However, Mr. D understood that there are differences between individuals and he was able to adapt to other students who

didn't adhere to what he saw as his standards (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R summed up his acquisition of social skills in his second research questionnaire by stating that he felt comfortable at the university he attended and by writing that he was not put repelled by places that he was not accustomed be in (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018).

Resolving differences with others. The interviews with the research participants either implied or directly stated that they were successful at resolving differences with others. Ms. Ethlen spoke about the resilience and strength that she developed by going through military school with a large squadron. Ms. Ethlen had a tough situation with one of her squadron leaders. Ms. Ethlen stated that the problem occurred because she worked at harder at certain activities than the squadron mate who was in charge of the activities (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen reported that the tough situation with the squadron leader calmed down (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen talked about a situation where she got into a confrontation with a classmate who refused to interact with her in a fair manner (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen told the student that she would not be working with her anymore, and then the student backed away (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). Ms. Ethlen recounted that the student was angry at her for a little while longer, but then the students were on friendly terms by the time I interviewed Ms. Ethlen (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18th, 2017). In both of those cases, Ms. Ethlen used communication to resolve her differences. Ms. C did not mention any situations in her interview where she had to resolve differences with others.

Mr. J was very good at using communication to relate to others. Mr. J admitted that it was not always easy for him to talk with students because it was easy to start a conflict due to

differences with others (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J admitted that if he sees a conflict escalating with another individual, he just walks away and avoids the issue altogether (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J's key to resolving differences or differences of opinion with others was communication, and he seemed to be adept at it. Mr. J liked to start conversations with individuals on different topics, but he was aware of the ever-present problem of difficulty getting across to others. Mr. D demonstrated that he had done well at adapting to others. However, Mr. D did mention difficulties he was having with a professor. Mr. D mentioned that he was encountering a bit of a scenario where it seems as if a professor felt him and his classmates were incapable of learning the material he was teaching (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D remarked that he had that professor last semester too, and he did see the professor's discouraging remarks as a setback (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Overall, Mr. D did not believe that his experience with that professor was a major problem for him because he found his educational experience overall to be productive and positive.

Mr. R did not specifically give examples of negative or challenging experiences he had with other students. Mr. R stated that other people respect an individual when he or she shows confidence in himself or herself (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Mr. R did not directly state that other individuals alienated him. Mr. R merely said that if an individual shows confidence and some people still alienate the individual, then the problem belongs to those who are alienating the individual (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). Ms. S did not give any examples of challenging or tough situations in her college experience. Ms. S simply stated that she approached difficulties by keeping her composure while remaining persistent (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017).

The future prospects questionnaires showed that the participants had the persistence to work to resolve any difficulties they had. Ms. Ethlen wrote in her questionnaire that she advised homeschooled high school students to not apologize for who they were (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen's other advice for homeschooled high school students to overcome difficulty was "Be humble." (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. Ethlen wrote that humility was necessary because it makes a person more agreeable when he or she succeeds and less likely to take flack from others when he or she fails (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Ms. S mentioned that she learned positive lessons by working with others (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S stated that working with others has given her the ability to express herself more clearly and to be mindful that not everyone had the same conditions that led to her own level of accomplishment or formation (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S mentioned that she has participated in an educational system that encourages persistence and self-motivation (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Ms. S's future prospects questionnaire demonstrated that she was learning to overcome difficulties with others by developing an ability to relate to individuals of all age groups (Ms. S, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). Individuals develop an ability to relate to other people successfully through communicating with them.

Ms. C's future prospects questionnaire implied that she was successful at resolving difficulties with others because she stated that she developed an ability adapt while in college (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Ms. C then stated convincingly "Being adaptive will help me to adjust to life-changes and differences in social settings as an adult." (Ms. C, personal communication, December 3rd, 2017). Mr. D did not mention or refer to any

difficulties with others when he wrote his responses to his future prospects questionnaire. Mr. D stated that he developed an ability to appreciate different discourses, systems of thought or value systems (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D also assured that he was confident in who he was (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. D also mentioned that his homeschooled background gave him the diligence that he needs to persevere through significant challenges (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Mr. R talked about the importance of communication as a method for asserting one's own opinions and perspectives (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. R did not specifically mention the use of communication to resolve conflicts, but he did state that he recognized that his voice mattered (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). One more point in Mr. R's future prospects questionnaire which pointed to the theme of resolving difficulties was when he stated "I want to be someone who isn't afraid of asking questions about the way things are, and asking how we can make them better." (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017).

The second student questionnaires did not indicate that either of the two participants who answered them had significant difficulties to resolve. Mr. D stated that he observed positive role models who were well-adjusted with themselves as individuals (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D also stated that the positive role models he observed had confidence in the purposes they chose for their lives (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. D's statement that he had been coping successfully while in college reflected his feeling that he had resolved difficulties successfully while in college (Mr. D, personal communication, December 13th, 2017). Mr. R clearly stated in his second questionnaire that he did not contend with any problems and did not expect to have problems (Mr. R, personal

communication, January 3rd, 2018). Mr. R mentioned that the college he attended was an easy environment for him to find peers who worked at successful academic lives just like he did (Mr. R, personal communication, January 3rd, 2018).

*Table 1**Themes with Associated Code Words*

Code words associated with themes	Code words
Research theme categories with themes:	
Social adjustment	Communication, resilience, awkward, different
Theme of selling yourself	Jobs, internships, career
Theme of camaraderie	Encouragement, social, connections
Theme of communication	Advice, discussion boards, networking, connections
Theme of not relevant if other students know they were home-schooled	Irrelevant
Homeschooling experiences:	
Positive impact on ability to relate to people	Adjustment, wisdom
No strong goals to socially adjust further	Confidence, resilience, being yourself
Quality of college environment:	
Not alienated by faculty or students	Confidence, positive, fitting in, different, connections
Peacefully merging into college or university environment	Discussion boards, conversations, productive, expressing
Acquisition of social skills	Maturity, lack of problems, conform, observe, fitting in
Resolving differences with others	Communication, difficulty, persistence

Research Questions

Research question one. The question which asked, “How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled participants and in the higher learning environment?” received a positive reception from the common themes I found in the responses (see Appendix B). The college experience partly included the level of social adjustment. The only participants I interviewed who mentioned the perception that homeschooled students had poor socializing skills were Mr. D and Ms. S. Otherwise, the participants seemed to mention that other students found their socializing skills to be fine. A young participant, Ms. E, stated that some people had a perception that homeschooled students could be socially awkward (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11, 2017). Many of the participants said that most students who talked to them did not realize they received an education at home. I used the technique of memoing to develop the code words that I devised from the themes listed in Table 1. I identified the common theme in the interviews as: homeschooled students only brought up the issue that they received homeschooling if asked by others. The participants felt secure enough to the point they did not feel the need to excuse themselves or explain their homeschooling as a reason as to why their social skills appeared awkward (see Appendix E). One participant felt such confidence with his level of social adjustment that he did not feel the need to establish any goals of helping himself to fit in more with others (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). The code word that best fit Mr. R’s situation was that of adjustment.

One young participant objectively said that the quality of your social interactions would determine how effectively you fit into the environment around you (Mr. E, personal

communication, May 14, 2017). This same participant also stated that he generally did not believe other students knew about his homeschooling. Mr. E said that that they would only know if he told them (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017). Therefore, I identified one common theme regarding the social adjustment of the participants. The common theme that I drew was that most of the classmates of the participants did not know that these participants received their education at home. The code word that related to the social adjustment of participants was communication. Therefore, the homeschooled participants socially adjusted quite well based on the reality that other students did not know or were not aware that they received their education at home. Most participants did not have any major or troubling conflicts to discuss, and the participants who endured problems with certain individuals solved them. The questionnaires also reinforced how the participants felt that they had positive educational experiences while enrolled at a college or university.

Research question two. The research question, “In what ways do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff, and professors at the colleges and universities?” had little evidence to support it in the interview responses (see Appendix B). None of the participants interviewed had indicated that they felt alienated by any set of faculty or students on campus. Each of the participants developed a method of connecting with others to feel socially adjusted. Some participants, such as Mr. R, indicated a level of comfort with their social adjustment and did not need to improve any aspect of their communication or bonds with others (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). Mr. R seemed to increase in his level of social adjustment while away at college because he wrote in his questionnaire that he had become more comfortable in sharing his thoughts and feelings (Mr. R, personal communication, Oct. 27, 2017). Others, such as Mr. J,

sought to iron out personal differences by conversing with people about basic topics like religion, religious philosophy, and biblical texts (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. J mentioned in his interview “I have not really encountered any violent verbal hostility.”(Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). Mr. D also felt he was able to maintain a positive and rigorous educational experience while in college (Mr. D, personal communication, March 21st, 2017). Mr. D simply said, “Yes” when asked if he believed that his experience in college would lead to continued academic success (Mr. D, personal communication, October 5th, 2017). The overarching theme that came from the students’ responses that fit in with research question two was that most of the homeschooled students I interviewed did not find it relevant if their schoolmates knew about their homeschooled backgrounds or not.

Research question three. The research question, “What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home?” received revealing responses in a few of the interviews that I conducted (see Appendix B). Some of the participants I interviewed had positive experiences. One participant whom I interviewed by telephone stated that most people did not have any preconceived ideas about homeschooled students (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. C also mentioned that she had already achieved most of her goals (Ms. C, personal communication, January 22nd, 2017). Ms. S did not mention any particular problems and mentioned she had too many positive experiences to count (Ms. S, personal communication, January 18th, 2017). The questionnaire from Ms. S underlined that she had positive experiences with her classmates while in college because she mentioned that her education allowed her to develop more empathy for people of different age groups (Ms. S,

personal communication, October 27th, 2017). One participant at Berner-Carlson University admitted that the positive experiences he had at the school were the reasons why he stayed at the university (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D's response to the seventh and last question on the questionnaire encouraged his fellow homeschooled students in high school to be confident in their identities and enter their colleges or universities with their morals or ethics at the front of their minds at all times (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017). Therefore, Mr. D had a straightforward moral approach to his adaptation to a higher education environment away from home. Ms. Ethlen also displayed a moral approach to her responses for the second research question, for she stated that she had a general goal of being regarded as someone who does the right thing and cares for others (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21st, 2017). Another participant at Berner-Carlson University told me that he did not know if he felt isolated at the university at any point (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). The participant was so well-adjusted that he would probably continue going on with his own identity even if isolated (Mr. R, personal communication, September 29th, 2016). The questionnaire from Mr. R allowed him to delve further into his experiences as a homeschooled college student and write about how his college education encouraged him to be more confident in himself (Mr. R, personal communication, October 27th, 2017). The code word "connections" related completely to Mr. R's experience. Mr. R's advised homeschooled students to build connections with those around them because they will never know who has connections that will benefit them (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Therefore, the responses from the questionnaires reflected that the research participants saw very little to change or improve regarding the homeschooled educations they experienced.

Research question four. The question, “In what ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled?” did not receive direct responses from the interviews (see Appendix B). The participants brought forth themes of confidence, resilience, and good communication to that question. The participants interviewed had learned more social skills and had expanded their confidence, resilience, and good communication. A few participants, such as Mr. D and Mr. E, discussed the importance of good communication that they acquired perhaps before they began college. Mr. E, early on in his college experience, already mentioned some specific social skills of importance for success as an adult (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14th, 2017). Mr. E seemed to be aware of the basic tenets of good communication. Mr. D from Berner-Carlson University also showed good awareness of the importance of communicating with others which revealed he had already benefitted socially. In his response to question 15, Mr. D said that when one has a problem, one should talk to individuals and find wisdom and counsel in other individuals (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Mr. D’s questionnaire echoed the concept of wisdom in that he advised homeschooled high school students to enter a college or university with their morals and ethics at the forefront of their minds all the time (Mr. D, personal communication, October 11th, 2017).

Ms. E said that you should assume that another individual had good intentions when you interact with him or her (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). The attitude expressed in this statement alone showed me that this participant had socially matured as a homeschooled student without a great deal of college education. The participant added that one should try to understand other peoples’ intentions and goals when communicating with them or arguing with them (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11th, 2017). A participant from

Berner-Carlson University also showed a good deal of maturity and understanding when demonstrating his acquisition of social skills. Mr. J from Berner-Carlson University talked about how he paused and surveyed a situation when he encountered a harsh or difficult situation (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017).

Mr. J demonstrated that he knew how to handle an argument or a disagreement with another individual with grace and ease. Mr. R admitted that his experience of being a homeschooled student at college helped him to be able to "...choose from unique courses and the opportunity to work on time management skills." (Mr. R, personal communication, October 19th, 2017). Mr. J's experiences demonstrated the code word of communication. Mr. J's religious upbringing showed in the fact that he had a mentor in the field of religion and that he liked to talk to people about religion (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31st, 2017). A young individual who felt comfortable talking with people about religion demonstrated a certain social maturity and intelligence that came from developing social skills.

Summary

I could not judge whether quantitative studies were less or more important than qualitative studies when measuring the social adjustment or psychological well-being of homeschooled students. However, I am convinced that both types of measures are important. I did not come across any examples of qualitative research studies on homeschooled college students in my primary research. I came across examples of mostly quantitative studies on the academic performance of homeschooled students at different education levels, the social adjustment of homeschooled students in their K-12 years, and a few examples of the social adjustment of homeschooled students while at a college or university. Qualitative studies are valuable in that they provide a level of personal and deep information from the research

participants not found in quantitative studies. Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) agreed and wrote that information from a qualitative study would help parents decide whether homeschooling is truly the correct option for their children and help them learn what to expect as their homeschooled children enter adult life.

The interviews with the participants succeeded in answering my research questions, and the overall sense I received was that the participants had productive and positive experiences while away at a college or university. The participants seldom if ever felt alienated by classmates, faculty, staff, and so forth. The code word that related to the participants in this respect was confidence. The problems or challenges that the participants experienced in a social or personal manner had been minor. The participants seemed to be working toward achieving their goals while maintaining positive and constructive personal relationships with their classmates. The participants made clear that they experienced positive experiences in their academic, social, and personal realms. The participants were already adjusted or well on their way to being adjusted in the college or university environments where they were enrolled.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

The participants demonstrated that they each had different strategies for helping to develop good and healthy social experiences while at a college or university. Some participants showed that they had stronger extrovert tendencies than others, but the participants who seemed to be more withdrawn seemed able to get along well with classmates and branch out with classmates if needed. An investigation of the responses to the interview questions revealed that the information found here went deeper than short answers from one or two surveys that often rate participants' feelings on a scale. The summary of findings section explains that the findings from this study indicated that homeschooled students did not aggressively promote their homeschooling in the first place. The summary of findings section also explains that homeschooled participants did not report any resentment or alienation from other students based on their non-traditional schooling environment. The discussion section explains the importance of the findings from this research study in the context of the past research that discussed the social and personal adjustment of homeschooled students. The implications section provides the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the findings from my research. The delimitations and limitations section of the chapter focuses on the delimitations or limits that I imposed on my study focus on a specific type of participant or setting for my research. In this section, I also discuss limits of the applicability of my findings that I could not control. The recommendations for future research provide multiple suggestions or directions for future research on the topic that I investigated. The summary section at the end of the chapter provides a final summary of my study and lists two important "take-aways" from the implications section that I obtained from my research.

Summary of Findings

Research question one, “How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled students and in the higher learning environment” received a fairly positive reception based on the common themes found in the responses (see Appendix B). The participants felt secure enough to the point that they did not feel they had to excuse themselves or explain their homeschooling as a reason for why their social skills appeared awkward. The participant at Berner-Carlson University said that he was not “super-involved” outside of class, but he said that he related well with his classmates and that he did a lot of group work with them (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). The male participant whom I interviewed via telephone also mentioned that he was active in conversation and in activities (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017). The participants in my study realized that most of their classmates did not know that these participants received their education at home. Therefore, the homeschooled participants had socially adjusted quite admirably. Two of the participants, Ms. S, and Mr. R told me that they felt they had no more progress to make in adjusting to their social environments. Also, most of the participants said that it was not an issue if other students knew of their homeschooling.

Research question two, “In what ways do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff, and professors at the colleges and universities?” had little evidence to support it in the interview responses (see Appendix B). None of the participants that I had interviewed indicated that they felt alienated by any set of faculty or students on campus. None of the participants, except for Ms. Ethlen, could identify any particularly harsh situations that they experienced. Ms. Ethlen talked about how she had difficulty with a team leader for a project she was engaged in, and she

also had problems with two other students with whom she worked (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017). However, Ms. Ethlen made it clear to me that she smoothed over her differences with those individuals (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017).

Research question three, “What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home?” received revealing responses in a few of the interviews I conducted (see Appendix B). One participant from Berner-Carlson University who admitted it was difficult to get the point across to other people or hold a discussion with them, talked about how he received support by attending social interaction at church every week (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31, 2017). The participant seemed to receive solace and spiritual support from his religious values (Mr. J, personal communication, March 31, 2017). One success-oriented participant brought up the theme of selling yourself regarding the question of social issues (Ms. S, personal communication Jan. 18, 2017). The participant is success-oriented and viewed social adjustment as knowing how to apply for jobs or internships (Ms. S, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2017). Ms. Ethlen, a participant enrolled in a military school, mentioned that she received encouragement from her friendships with her squadron mates (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017). The code words that apply to Ms. Ethlen in this regard are integration and maturity. Research question four, “In what ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled?” did not receive direct responses from the interviews (see Appendix B). I did not ask any questions in my interviews specifically to get information from the participants about how their childhood homeschooling experiences helped them socially. A few participants, such

as Mr. D and Mr. E, discussed the importance of having good communication. It was possible that those participants received some training in communication skills while being homeschooled, but I could not verify that because I did not seek any specific evidence of how their homeschooling experiences required them to practice or learn those skills. I was impressed by a young participant who had barely even started her college education. She said that you should assume that another individual has good intentions even when you disagree with him or her (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11, 2017). The three participants from Berner-Carlson University that I interviewed, Mr. D, Mr. J, and Mr. R, all demonstrated a fine level of maturity and understanding through the social skills they exhibited when I interviewed them.

Overall, I believe that the participants provided a revealing picture of the experiences they had while enrolled in a college or university or college-level schooling. An investigation of the responses to these interview questions revealed that the information found here went deeper than short answers from one or two surveys that often rate participants' feelings on a scale. The findings from this study indicated that homeschooled students did not aggressively promote the fact of homeschooling in the first place. The participants did not report any resentment or alienation from other students based on not receiving an education in a traditional school environment. Some participants showed that they had stronger extrovert tendencies than others, but the participants who seemed to be more withdrawn seemed able to get along well with classmates and branch out with classmates. One male participant whom I interviewed at Berner-Carlson University and another male participant whom I interviewed via telephone both described themselves as introverts, but they showed the ability and willingness to connect with their classmates and others around them. Therefore, the code word of communication applies to those students.

Discussion

Theoretical Literature Discussion

Homeschooling has its advocates, but the scholarship on these observations of the positive effects of homeschooling is limited. One advocate of homeschooling and editor of a homeschooling journal titled *Home School Researcher* purported there was no evidence that being homeschooled led to negative behaviors or lack of competence in adulthood (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). A study that compared homeschooled college students with traditionally-schooled college students showed homeschooled students more likely to rate their college experiences more positively (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). The Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) and Rothermel (2012) provided the only studies to report on detailed research about the social or psychological adjustment of homeschooled students. A relatively recent article stated little research existed about the outcomes of homeschooled students in higher education because only a small number of homeschooled students had been known to attend college (Cogan, 2010). Also, the large increase in homeschooled students included students at the K-12 level, so the students obviously had yet to enter a college or university (Cogan, 2010). A study of 55 admissions officers found that the officers believed that the homeschooled students would perform at or above the level of traditionally-schooled students in terms of GPA, credits earned, and retention (Cogan, 2010).

Vincent Tinto, a foremost theorist regarding the integration of students into a higher education environment, presented the stages that both homeschooled and non-homeschooled students must undergo in order to successfully matriculate. Tinto stated that the three values which point the most to a student's ability to succeed or integrate are the student's self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and perceived value of the curriculum (Tinto, 2016). The definition of self-

efficacy in this theory is “a person’s belief in their ability to succeed at a particular task or in a specific situation” (Tinto, 2016, p. 1). Tinto went on to explain that self-efficacy is learned or developed, not inherited (Tinto, 2016). The participants I utilized in my research study appeared to be comfortable with their level of self-efficacy. All of the students I utilized in my research study were either moderately successful or very successful in their academics. Tinto further defines self-efficacy by explaining that people with a large amount of it will be more ready to engage in a task and persist longer in its completion (Tinto, 2016). Lack of self-efficacy can appear in students who past experiences cause them to question their abilities to succeed in college (Tinto, 2016). The participants utilized in the research study demonstrated much persistence and had few experiences before college which led them to believe that they would have much trouble. The only participant who seemed to anticipate any problems was Mr. D, who anticipated that he would have some trouble adjusting to the culture on the university campus (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22nd, 2017). Tinto’s theory of self-efficacy ended by stating that it is important that students are able to obtain the support they need to succeed in a timely way (Tinto, 2016). None of the participants utilized in the study discussed they had to rely on resources on campus, such as counseling departments, in order to help them cope. Admittedly, I did not ask the students if they relied on on-campus counseling resources in order to assist them with coping with the unfamiliar college or university environment.

The second component of integration that Tinto discussed was a sense of belonging. Of course, transitions to the social environments of a college require much adjustment on the part of non-homeschooled or traditionally-educated students as well. Students of any educational background who see themselves as belonging are more likely to persist and succeed (Tinto, 2016). The participants utilized in this study viewed themselves as individuals who belonged to

the colleges or universities they were attending. Tinto mentioned that institutions can or should take steps to accommodate a diversity of social groups and organizations that allow all students to find a group of students with whom they share a bond (Tinto, 2016). By making this statement, Tinto might as well be including homeschooled students as a particular type of social group that requires a welcoming environment. An additional concept that Tinto brought out within a sense of belonging was that students need to feel they belong within the first year of college. Tinto stated that belonging during the first year enables other types of engagement that enhance student growth, learning, and completion (Tinto, 2016).

The third component of integration that Tinto discussed is students' perception of the value of the curricula they are going through (Tinto, 2016). The definition of the theme of perceived value of the curricula means that students need the material they are learning to be of a quality that they feel is beneficial to them. Also, the students need to feel that the curricula they are experiencing are relevant enough to justify the time and effort that they are putting into learning the material from the curricula. The participants of this research study gave abundant examples of courses that they felt were beneficial and useful to them. Overall, the participants in this study placed a high value on the curricula they went through even though they may have had a few courses that they saw as unimportant or difficult. The concept of the perceived value of the curriculum received modification from Tinto where he stated that students will not necessarily give up even if they do have little sense of belonging or do not see the value in their courses. Tinto went on to mention that some students will complete their college educations due to external pressures from family or due to the perceived value of obtaining a degree for the occupation or type of income they look forward to. The majority of the participants in the research study expressed to me that they were attending the colleges they were enrolled in

because they were studying material to prepare for particular occupations or wanted to achieve a certain level of success that they desired. Tinto went on to explain that colleges and universities must be receptive to the voices of their students. When Tinto stated that colleges and universities need to listen to those voices, Tinto meant that those institutions need to be aware of student perceptions that differ by racial group, income level, and cultural background.

Perhaps, as time goes on, the prejudices that admission officers have about homeschooled students will diminish. Past studies I have read pointed more to positive social characteristics among homeschooled students than negative or dysfunctional characteristics. I did not specifically measure levels of psychological development in my research. Apart from realizing that colleges and universities needed to do more to encourage homeschooled applicants to enroll in their institutions, I found no literature that implied a lack of socially prepared homeschooled applicants for a college or university environment. I found no studies that discussed negative social impacts or bad impacts on social development from homeschooling. Only a few of the sources in the background literature presented some of the arguments against homeschooling that were put forth by opponents of homeschooling.

Tinto's theory of integration appears in an article that discusses the low success rate of community college students (Karp, Hughes & O'Gara, 2010). The article mentions Tinto's theory that students are more likely to remain enrolled in an institution if they involve themselves in the social and academic life of the institution. The study in the article examined students in a community college setting during their second semester of enrollment. The students examined were from both genders and from a variety of racial groups. The findings of the study indicated that the students coded as being more integrated were more likely to continue in the college program. One finding states that "nearly 90% of students who were integrated into

the college persisted to the second year, while just over two-thirds of those who were not integrated did so.” (Karp, Hughes & O’Gara, 2010, p. 75). Therefore, the study seemed to provide some concrete support for the theory of college integration devised by Tinto. The article went further by describing one element of integration known as an information network. The authors describe an information network as social relations that ensure the spread of knowledge of the institution and its procedures.

In another article that studied the variables regarding student dropout from college in the United Kingdom, one sees an explanation of Tinto’s theory which states that the reason behind whether a student drops out or not is due to a combination of the student’s ongoing goal and institutional commitment (Dewberry & Jackson, 2018). The interpretation of Tinto’s theory in the article also stated that both the goal and the institutional commitment are influenced by the student’s original commitment and the student’s level of social and academic integration at the college. This statement seems to fit in most with the segment of Tinto’s theory of integration that discussed the importance of the student’s sense of belonging. The student participants in this research study seemed to have fairly good levels of commitment to the institutions they were attending, but they also remained steadfast in pursuing their academic goals. It appeared that commitment to goals of success or graduation was more important for the students than their commitment levels to the institutions they were attending. However, the students did seem quite satisfied with the environments at the institutions they were attending.

The article mentioned in the paragraph above mentioned that Tinto’s theory on student integration was very influential, but support for the theory has been uneven (Dewberry & Jackson, 2018). The article cited one study from 1983 that examined a large number of students from eleven different institutions. The results of that 1983 study showed that the importance of

academic and social integration of students over that of other characteristics such as type of institution, whether or not the student lived on campus, etc. was statistically significant but very slight. In one other study that the article discussed, the results found that the influence of social and academic integration on commitment to an institution was less than the influence of support or encouragement from friends and family. Tinto himself recognized the importance of encouragement from friends and family. The student participants in my research study did not appear to identify such encouragement as a strong factor in their success or persistence at the institutions they attended. The student participants appeared to be very self-motivated and sure of their ability to succeed. Although different approaches or theories to explain the possibility of a student's attrition other than Tinto's theory of integration have emerged, Tinto's theory still remains a commonly-discussed development regarding student adjustment to higher education institutions.

Empirical Literature Discussion

This research study pertained to the reality of homeschooled students entering college and studying in college. Colleges and universities are only entering the process of making themselves more open to homeschooled students. Researchers from several years ago shared that 70% of admission officers reported that the schools they worked at had no official policy regarding homeschooled students (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Homeschooled students and their parents might believe that those students are prepared socially for being away at a college or university; however, admission officers at colleges and universities did not always agree. Researchers found that 55% of admission officers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that homeschooled students appeared socially prepared to be in a college or university. The

participants I interviewed did not imply or state that the staff they worked with felt any reservations about dealing with them because they saw them as socially unprepared.

The Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) study underlined the need for qualitative studies of homeschooled students' psychological well-being or involvement with the community at a college or university. I feel that my study fit quite well into that category of qualitative research. The Drenovsky and Cohen study served as a mere introduction to this type of scholarship. One finding of the study was that 45% of homeschooled respondents rated their educational experience as excellent, whereas only 20% of the students not homeschooled judged their educational experience as excellent. This finding was interesting and pointed to some ability of homeschooled students to adapt to new environments even though they did not normally study in an institution with other students when they were younger. My research revealed that homeschooled students tend to have good ability to adapt to new social environments, but my questions were not a quantitative measure of their social adjustment.

Evidently, the number of homeschooled students in college is increasing. Colleges and universities must develop policies to help them easily accept and educate these students. The participants I interviewed made it sound as if the colleges and universities they attended were doing a satisfactory or good job of accommodating them. The only example of a bad experience with college staff, specifically the Financial Aid Department, came from a female participant (Ms. S, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2017). However, the problems that the participants experienced with various professors or faculty were relatively minor and easily solved. Also, the experiences that these participants had while being educated at home could have socially prepared them for the environment of a college or university. In one article from my literature review, the authors stated that the average homeschooled student might have received sufficient

preparation for the college or university environment from his or her home education (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). Also, homeschooled college students are known to be very self-motivated, and therefore they may seize opportunities to earn their degrees faster and save money in the process (Turner, 2016).

There are scant research studies that measured or reported the level of social preparedness that homeschooled students had attained for a college or university environment. One article supported this observation by stating that the literature largely ignored the study of homeschooled students' level of personal adjustment and sense of integration into their college community (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). Studies of social adjustment and performance of homeschooled students, especially in a college environment, were far less common than studies of their academic performance relative to traditionally-schooled students. The findings from this research study added to the literature on social and experiences of homeschooled students in a college or university. The findings of a study reflected the confidence and persistence the participants showed during the interviews. In the study, the researchers found that the self-esteem of homeschooled students was not lower than that of other college students. Also, on the factor of depression, homeschooled students had significantly lower scores on depression than other college students who had never been homeschooled. I did not measure specific facets of social adjustment or mental health in my research, but I was able to get a sense of happiness or satisfaction the students had with their progress while enrolled in school.

The Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) study was correct in that there had been a dearth of studies so far providing a scientific or comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes of homeschooling. The reality that there had been few studies that measured the outcomes of homeschooling spurred me into examining the experiences of homeschooled students while

being schooled at a college or university. Some researchers had discussed the social relations of homeschooled pupils while still children or before they began college. One study compared a set of homeschooled students with a set of traditionally-schooled students in the age range of eight years old to 10 years on self-concepts regarding passivity and aggression. The researcher found both the homeschooled and traditionally-schooled students had higher than average self-concepts (Rothermel, 2012). The researcher who observed homeschooled students compared to schoolchildren found that the homeschooled students controlled their emotions more and acted in a more acceptable way than the schoolchildren (Rothermel, 2012). On the other hand, the same article that discussed those two studies also admitted there had not been any extensive study in the U.K. or abroad that assessed the psychological well-being of homeschooled children (Rothermel, 2012). Also, 35% of the college officers believed that homeschooled students would have a more difficult time socially compared with their traditional peers (Cogan, 2010). I gathered from my literature review that admissions officers believed that homeschooled students would have a difficult time adjusting socially.

In my research on primary sources, I came across one study that interviewed seven predominantly homeschooled students of whom six mentioned the importance of their religious faith (Marzluf, 2009). Only one of the participants whom I interviewed mentioned his interest in religious matters or any value of religious faith to his education or his life. Marzluf (2009) also mentioned the conclusion that homeschooled students may become aware of secular genres, people, and values once they entered a college or university. None of the homeschooled students that I interviewed mentioned that they encountered any secular culture or belief system at the colleges of enrollment. One of the participants whom I interviewed had enrolled at a traditionally Catholic university. However, a future qualitative study could ask a set of

homeschooled students about whether they felt the atmosphere at the college or university they attend appears more secular than the upbringing they had. Overall, the Marzluf study gave a very good impression of the ability of homeschooled students to adapt. The Marzluf study quoted research on college students' self-report of knowledge and skills. Marzluf found that compared to publicly- and privately- educated college students, homeschooled college students had more confidence in their ability to speak and write effectively, think clearly, think analytically, develop career goals, and learn career or work-related knowledge and skills (Marzluf, 2009).

As far as emotional stability, one study showed that the reported self-esteem levels of college students homeschooled at the primary or secondary levels were not significantly different from that of students never homeschooled (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). My qualitative study did not measure the self-esteem levels of the participants interviewed, but my questions about the experiences that the participants had pointed to a level of confidence that reflected a healthy level of self-esteem. I asked questions about how far along the students felt they were in accomplishing their goals of being able to adjust themselves to the college or university environment socially. The participants responded that they either already accomplished their goals or were on the way to accomplishing their goals. None of the students reported a psychological setback in adjusting to the environment in the college or university environments they were attending (see Appendix C). The students whom I studied seemed to display a fine sense of integration into their college or university environments.

Perhaps, as time goes on, the prejudices that admission officers have about homeschooled students will diminish. Past studies I have read pointed more to positive social characteristics among homeschooled students than negative or dysfunctional characteristics. I did not

specifically measure levels of psychological development in my research. Apart from realizing that colleges and universities needed to do more to encourage homeschooled applicants to enroll in their institutions, I found no literature that implied a lack of socially prepared homeschooled applicants for a college or university environment. I found no studies that discussed negative social impacts or bad impacts on social development from homeschooling. Only a few of the sources in the background literature presented some of the arguments against homeschooling that were put forth by opponents of homeschooling.

In the study by Drenovsky and Cohen (2012), the authors found that the self-esteem of the homeschooled students they interviewed was not significantly lower than the self-esteem of homeschooled students. Based on previous research and the interviews I conducted, it appeared that homeschooling did not necessarily have negative impacts on the social development or psychological well-being of homeschooled students. It was true that homeschooled students did not have the same high school social relationships and experiences as their traditionally-educated peers (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). However, this personal transition was natural and even required some adjustment ability on the part of students who were traditionally-educated. The prior research on the topic of personal adjustment to the environment of a college or university reflected the positive and resourceful attitudes that I saw in the participants I interviewed. I also saw positive and resourceful attitudes reflected in the questionnaires that I received back from some of my research participants.

Another study that measured the college experiences of students from three different types of backgrounds (public school, private school, and homeschooling) found little difference between the three categories of students. However, I believe that the participants whom I interviewed provided a revealing picture of the experiences they had while enrolled in a college

or university or college-level schooling. An investigation of the responses to these interview questions revealed that the information found here went deeper than short answers from one or two surveys that often rate participants' feelings on a scale. The findings from this study indicated that homeschooled students did not aggressively promote the fact they received homeschooling in the first place. The participants did not report any resentment or alienation from other students based on homeschooling.

One research study on the perceptions that admission officers had of homeschooled students came with the finding that 44% of the officers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that homeschooled students had adjusted as well socially as public-school students (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). The homeschooled students themselves did not report that they felt less well-adjusted socially than their traditionally-schooled peers. The students seemed to be working toward achieving their goals while maintaining positive and constructive personal relationships with their classmates. The students made it clear they had positive experiences in their academic, social, and personal realms. The students either already adjusted or were well on their way to being adjusted in the college or university environments where they attended. The participants I interviewed seemed to have learned more social skills and had expanded their confidence, resilience, and good communication. A few participants, such as Mr. D and Mr. E, discussed the importance of good communication they seemed to acquire before they began college. Mr. E, early on in his college experience, mentioned some specific social skills important for success as an adult (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017). Mr. E seemed to be aware of the basic tenets of good communication. Mr. D from Berner-Carlson University also showed awareness of the importance of communicating with others which indicated that he had already benefitted socially. In his response to interview question 15, Mr. D

said that when one had a problem, one should talk to individuals and find wisdom and counsel in other individuals (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22, 2017). Ms. Ethlen experienced some problems with classmates and with a teacher she had during her college experience, but she managed to resolve those problems effectively (Ms. Ethlen, May 18, 2017). Ms. Ethlen's questionnaire responses presented her as a person who is capable of overcoming those problems, because she stated in her questionnaire that it is important to reach out and try to be friends with individuals who may have different opinions or perspectives compared to yours (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, October 21, 2017).

The personal investigation in the study that I conducted produced an honest and organic reaction from the participants I interviewed. I felt that the questions posed in the study were at times basic and at times more probing. None of the questions seemed to be overly probing. I came across several unanticipated findings that I repeatedly encountered in my interviews of homeschooled college or university students. The responses I received for interview question eight were quite unanticipated. I had anticipated that non-homeschooled students would easily figure out the homeschooled students did not have a normal educational upbringing. I also anticipated the fact that the homeschooled students appeared as a rather major issue that came up repeatedly in conversation. Most of the participants who answered that question reacted that non-homeschooled students reacted with some shock when they told those students that they received their education at home. One participant remarked that his well-perceived social skills would throw other students off (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22, 2017). Another participant who wrote an article about homeschooling claimed that she seemed "normal" to other students and that some people had a certain preconception of what homeschooled students behaved like (Ms. S, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2017). Another participant simply stated

the fact that she received homeschooling had not had a major impact on her social life (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017). None of the participants mentioned that any other students rejected them, gave them a hard time, or changed their perceptions toward them just because they found out about the homeschooling. The responses that the participants gave showed they had confidence that the relations they had with their non-homeschooled peers were healthy.

The responses to question 10 were quite unanticipated. I somehow had the impression that homeschooled students thought it quite important for other students to know that they received homeschooling because of documented ideation that homeschooled students achieve more academically than non-homeschooled students and proud of their backgrounds. Only one of the participants responded regarding the relevance to him for other students to know of his educational background. One participant said he would say it was relevant for others to know he received his education at home because he described himself as an advocate of homeschooling (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22, 2017). Mr. D explained that he had witnessed homeschooling work for other students (Mr. D, personal communication, March 22, 2017). Most of the participants simply did not think that it was a big issue to them if non-homeschooled students knew about their homeschooling.

The participants at no time raised any objections to the questions because they found them inappropriate. The only example where a participant declined to answer a question was when I asked Mr. E my interview question 15. In that case, Mr. E at first said interview question 15 was redundant because he covered material for that response with interview question 14 (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017). Nevertheless, I pressed Mr. E for a little more detail on his strategy for adapting to his harsh situation from question 14, and he acquiesced and talked

a little more about what he did to solve the problem (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017). The response that participants provided for question 14 was quite unexpected. I expected most of the participants to talk about having a negative experience that fastened strongly in their minds. I was expecting most of the participants to go into detail about negative reactions that they received from some non-homeschooled students. Most of the participants did not claim that they had experiences which they could label as particularly tough. The participants who had a negative experience to discuss talked more about tough situations with staff or professors, not with other students.

The phenomena of bullying and cyberbullying affect college students whether homeschooled or not. It is a natural part of growing up to come across tough or uneasy social situations while in a college or university, and each student who had those experiences found a way to adjust or solve problems with those students to have a functional college life. The homeschooled participants whom I interviewed seemed quite adept at solving any problems that came their way. For the most part, it seemed that the homeschooled participants interviewed in this study even avoided those problems. The homeschooled participants interviewed in this study demonstrated excellent adjustment as defined in my table of codes.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical background of Vincent Tinto (1993) spoke about the stages of transition one has to go through when starting in a college environment. The theoretical stages of separation, transition, and incorporation that Tinto brought forth implicitly reflect in the responses that the participants provided to me (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Separation is a painful and difficult experience for new college students with all types of

educational backgrounds, including homeschooled students. Tinto explained that for a successful transition to occur, the new college students must remove themselves and disassociate themselves from their former communities in a process known as institutional departure (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Homeschooled students seemed to adjust quite well despite the especially formidable separation process they had to undergo to move away from home-based schooling environments completely. According to one theory, a psychologist by the name of Richard Medlin (2000) found that the daily interaction that homeschooled students had with their parents provided a comparable socialization experience to the ones that traditionally-schooled students received (as cited in Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). The responses that the parents provided for me suggested that they had undergone the separation process quite gracefully, but there was sparse discussion of the first year or beginning of college for these students. Two of the participants whom I interviewed just began their college educations, one of them through dual enrollment with an online college program. Both participants did not seem to be experiencing any painful separation process. One female participant who just started out told of having a great experience and enjoying her classes (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11, 2017). A male participant just starting out showed an awareness of the social skills that are required to get along well with people and establish a network of friends (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017).

The second stage that Tinto (1993) discussed was transition, which is the period of time when college students are moving away from associations of the past and moving toward associations that they hope to develop in the present (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Transition also did not seem to present difficulties for the participants that I interviewed. The participants seemed eager to develop new friendships and associations. The participants

developed new associations even while contending with challenging environments. One participant, educated in a military college as a member of a squadron, discussed a few challenging situations that she had, but she felt a strong sense of camaraderie with her squadron mates (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017). When I asked the participants about the types of social experiences they had, they mostly discussed positive social relations and feelings of being included.

The study that examined the theoretical ideas of Tinto (1993) about adjustment into college also reported that homeschooled students acknowledged that the experience of being homeschooled affected their social and academic experiences in college (as cited in Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). The non-homeschooled peers with whom the participants interacted showed that non-homeschooled students had generally accepted them and sometimes gave them a reaction of surprise when they found out that the participants I interviewed received homeschooling. One intelligent and resourceful young participant mentioned she did not have to make any adjustments (Ms. S, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2017). I interviewed some of the participants in the transition stage that Tinto discussed, and they succeeded in developing ties with the communities they encountered while enrolled at a college or university. Some of the participants that I interviewed had already entered the phase of incorporation. Some participants, such as Mr. R, had become incorporated in a way that respected the social norms of the college while maintaining their identities. Mr. R told me that he was raised just to be himself and to not conform to what others do or how they act around him (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). Another participant, a high school senior enrolled in a military college, appeared to be incorporated. The participant told me that she felt adjusted and that she had close friends at the college she attended (Ms. Ethlen, personal communication, May 18, 2017).

I interviewed three of my participants at a historically Black university. One of the participants was White and the other two Black. Each of the three participants had unique approaches to transitioning to the college environment, but they all seemed to be well-adjusted. The White participant seemed to be unaffected by the reality of adjusting into a college environment, predominantly Black, and he showed that he never felt isolated at any point in his education (Mr. R, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). The two Black participants whom I interviewed at the majority-Black university seemed to be either in the transition or incorporation stages of Tinto's model, and they provided examples of positive social experiences they had without any expression of racial implications of being a Black, homeschooled college student.

Empirical Implications

The main reason why I chose to study the social experiences of homeschooled students in a college or university environment was that very little research existed on that specific topic. Apart from the studies that I reviewed, most of the studies examined had cited specific research on the academic performance of homeschooled students, the perspectives of homeschooling parents, or the general well-being of homeschooled students.

The qualitative study that I conducted on homeschooled college or university students brought to light the fact that homeschooled college students enter the transition stage and even the incorporation stage of social adjustment with more ease than the assumptions of many would suggest. There may be some confirmed reasons for the observed maturity of homeschooled students. The responses that the participants provided for me suggested they have undergone the separation process quite gracefully, but there was light discussion of the first year or beginning of college for these participants. Two of the participants whom I interviewed had just started their college educations, one of them through dual enrollment with an online college program.

Both of those participants did not seem to be experiencing any painful separation process. One female participant who just started out said she had a great experience and enjoyed her classes (Ms. E, personal communication, May 11, 2017). A male participant just starting out showed an awareness of the social skills required to get along well with people and establish a network of friends (Mr. E, personal communication, May 14, 2017).

Practical Implications

The participants whom I interviewed did not show any particular negative social or psychological characteristics linked to their homeschooling experiences. Each of the participants did not report any situations where they had to receive counseling or use counseling resources while away at a college or university to help them adjust. The participants may have needed help from others at one point or another, but they all stated that they talked to non-homeschooled students. For most of the homeschooled participants that I interviewed, the fact that they homeschooled did not even strike them as an important or critical issue. The participants whom I interviewed did not seem to undergo a particularly profound transition, but the younger participants realized that they needed to work more on adjusting to the college environment than more settled students. It seemed like the students experienced incorporation into the college community as they adjusted to college academics (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012).

The qualitative research study that I conducted did not attempt to indicate the level of transition or incorporation of the research participants, but the responses provided a sense that the participants at least found their niche at the colleges or universities where they had enrolled. My research study's implications regarding the theory of transition into college are limited because I did not ask my research participants if they commuted. The reality of whether to commute or not is significant because students who commuted generally did not experience any

traditional issues of separation from past communities (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Overall, the responses from the participants pointed to the fact that homeschooled college students could indeed develop positive social bonds with non-homeschooled students.

The negative perceptions that staff, such as admissions officers, may have the ability of homeschooled students to adjust to a college or university socially may be unfounded. According to one study, only a minority of admission officers expected homeschooled graduates to cope as well with college life as traditional high school graduates (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). However, these prejudices might be gradually going away as the number of homeschooled students enrolled in a college or university increases. I felt that colleges and universities will welcome homeschooled students more eagerly even though many of those students will not have usual high school transcripts to provide as a reflection of their academic achievement during their high school years. The homeschooled college or university participants whom I interviewed certainly provided a positive reflection on the ability of homeschooled students to incorporate themselves into a college or university campus.

Delimitations and Limitations

One of the limitations of my study included that the participants I interviewed had to be at least 18 years of age. I wanted to interview homeschooled college and university students, so my study was limited to getting a perspective on students who were not minors. To gain an understanding of the immediate effects of homeschooling on pupils while being homeschooled, a study must include participants younger than 18 years of age. To interview such participants, one would have to gain the consent of the children's parents. I did not include any observations of any of my participants while in action or interacting with their classmates. A study that

involves observation would provide more light on the actual nature of communication between homeschooled students and their non-homeschooled peers.

Additionally, I did not interview any of the professors or instructors of those homeschooled college or university students. I feel that interviewing professors aware of homeschooled students within any of their courses would provide an additional perspective on the social performance and adjustment of homeschooled students within a college or university.

Professors at a college or university are increasingly aware of the presence of homeschooled students within their college or university communities, and I think that they would be eager to answer questions about their perceptions of homeschooled students if approached. In further studies, the researcher may even choose to recruit non-homeschooled students identified by homeschooled students within a study to collect from non-homeschooled students who have interacted with a homeschooled student or friends with one. Non-homeschooled participants expressed some fascination or admiration for the accomplishments of their homeschooled peers, or they felt timid about approaching them because of their lack of traditional schooling environment. Either way, it would be helpful to the study of homeschooled students' adaptation to a college or university environment to include non-homeschooled peers as participants along with homeschooled students.

Recommendations for Future Research

I believe homeschooled students' experiences as college, or university students warrant future research. The discussion section of one article stated that it was desirable to have a qualitative study which uses interviews to ask participants to describe their experiences in life following homeschooling (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). The research study that I conducted paralleled such a structure. I cannot say that the results of my research study formed a complete

definition of homeschooled students' perspectives on their lives during a college or university education. My questions investigated their social experiences more than any other aspect of their college or university lives. I did not ask how they felt their experiences growing up in a homeschooling household prepared them for the realities of college life. My study indicated that their upbringing might have prepared them quite well for their interactions with other students in a college or university, but I did not ask them any questions about their upbringing. One article discussed that the results of interviews with homeschooled students might help parents determine if homeschooling is truly the best option for their children (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). It is not certain that homeschooling is the best option for all families that raise children because families across the social spectrum have different circumstances. It is obviously not true that all parents, even within the realm of middle-class or upper-class society can effectively homeschool their children.

The results of my study showed that homeschooled students could be adept at thinking for themselves and leading lives beyond the boundaries of their present communities (Kunzman, 2009). The participants I interviewed developed a constructive way of looking at the world. Obviously, many more studies of homeschooled students are needed to make the solid conclusion that homeschooled students have a constructive and well-adjusted way of interacting with the world around them. The number of qualitative studies that have been done on the social experiences of homeschooled students in college or after college was limited. Research studies on the perspectives of adult homeschooled students or homeschooled students who are almost adults continue to be few and far between. However, the results of a study like mine can indicate to parents of young children that homeschooling would not necessarily harm their children and deprive them of the ability to socialize effectively with their peers when they grow into

adulthood. In sum, the topic of homeschooled students in a college or university environment requires additional qualitative studies that utilize interviews or other techniques such as focus group interviews to illustrate the social adjustment of homeschooled students in higher education.

Another area regarding the social development or socialization of homeschooled students is the perspectives of homeschooling parents. The research on homeschooling needs to include more qualitative studies on the parents of homeschooled children. One researcher found that although homeschooling parents at first had concerns about the socialization of their children, the parents eventually conquered their concerns. In the study's conclusion, the researcher mentioned that the parents investigated all the different aspects of homeschooling and decided to provide socialization opportunities for their children (Campbell, 2012). Therefore, it is possible that homeschooling parents are normally quite aware of the situations that their children will face as they grow up. Qualitative researchers that use interviews with homeschooling parents should ask them about the strategies or techniques used to prepare their children to communicate well with others and develop healthy social lives.

In sum, future research should conduct qualitative studies with parents of homeschooled children as well as college professors of students homeschooled as children. Some studies exist on the perspectives of the admissions staff, but researchers have yet to discover many others. Homeschooling parents can provide accurate statements on the socialization of their students either while they are still at home or while they are away studying at a college or university. Professors or faculty at a college or university tend to be aware of the quality of work of their homeschooled students, as one participant whom I interviewed can attest. The results of my interviews suggested that professors or instructors at a college or university were quite interested

in knowing which of their students received their education at home. If specific professors or instructors provided consent interview in a research study, it could prove useful for providing perspectives on the academic and social performance of homeschooled students.

Another category of individuals that research studies may access to learn about the social adjustment of homeschooled students is college or university counselors. Therefore, qualitative research studies have yet to go further in communicating with various individuals who work with or parent homeschooled students. The study of homeschooled student socialization also needs more research studies that directly communicate with homeschooled college or university students themselves. A developing phenomenon like homeschooled students enrolling in colleges or universities deserves more research to assist institutions like colleges and universities with serving homeschooled students in the best way possible. Parents who are homeschooling their children could benefit by reading about these studies so that they can successfully pursue socialization strategies for their children to use once the children are ready for their higher education.

Additional qualitative researchers would do well to use interviews of homeschooled college or university students. Focus group sessions would be very helpful for gathering a small number of homeschooled students together to have them share their experiences face-to-face while conversing with fellow homeschooled students. I did not read of any research studies that used focus group sessions to obtain information on homeschooled students' experiences in a high school, college, or university. Increased findings on the social or psychological adjustment of homeschooled students in a college or university could lead to even greater flexibility on the part of colleges or universities to accept and welcome homeschooled students. Having a greater amount of flexibility on the part of colleges and universities, especially the admissions staff,

could lead to improvements for assisting both the homeschooling student and admission personnel (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). The number of homeschooled students who will apply to a college or university is only going to increase. Therefore, institutions such as community colleges need to develop and publicize formal admission guidelines for homeschooled students (Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

There has been a noticeable rash of school shootings and violence in the past year. Incidents such as the fatal school shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and the school shooting in Santa Fe, Texas certainly add to parents' discomfort with sending their children to a local public school or even a private school. Students themselves have become more anxious and upset about the possibility of a violent outbreak at a local school they attend. Parents probably fear the possibility of a violent incident at a community school more than before, and this possibility is just one more addition to the other additional negative influences that youngsters face in local community schools. In one dissertation which partly explored the factors that compelled parents to either move their children into homeschooling or to end homeschooling, the findings indicated that twenty-nine percent of the families in her study were concerned with school safety (Campbell, 2012). Although this may not seem like a large percentage, there is a grave fear on the part of parents that their children could face violence or violent situations while in school. One possibility for a future study on the perceptions of homeschooled students is to ask them how their feelings about the possibility of violence or a shooting at a school affect their attitudes toward their homeschooling experiences. The participants in this potential study could be high school students who are younger than eighteen, recruited with parental consent, or the participants could be college students who are at least eighteen years of age. The perceptions of homeschooled students regarding the issue of safety at

public or traditional brick-and-mortar schools may lead them to express even more appreciation of their home-based educational environments than they had in the past.

Summary

Therefore, a qualitative research study that examines the perceptions of homeschooled students' experiences in a college or university is more required. I feel that the responses from my research study do provide some knowledge of the perceptions that homeschooled college students have while away at a college or university. Even though my research study interviewed a relatively small number of students, I believe that my research study contributes to a new and growing subject area of study that needs more attention from educational researchers. Colleges and universities are constantly in the process of adjusting their admission policies to make themselves more amenable or welcoming to homeschooled students. Many college admission offices cannot rely on academic transcripts from homeschooled students who are about to enroll in school, but admissions officers evidently are confident enough to say that homeschooled applicants will exceed academically. One study's results showed that 63% of community college admissions officers expected homeschooled students to be as or more successful than students from accredited high schools (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Studies like this one research study only point to the importance of more available policies in colleges and universities of all types regarding acceptance of homeschooled applicants. After all, admissions officers seem to be extremely aware of the performance of homeschooled students on the campuses they serve (Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

If we wanted to use Tinto's (1993) schedule of college adjustment as a guide, it seems like most of the participants interviewed were well on the way to incorporation into the college environment. One participant with whom I spoke did not have any major issues with other

classmates, and when minor issues came up, patient reconciliation and communication solved the issue. One “take-away” that I received from my research is that homeschooled students generally undergo the separation process from their parents and communities quite gracefully. None of the homeschooled participants whom I interviewed mentioned any issues because of non-homeschooled students finding out they received their education at home. The main reactions the participants received from their counterparts included shock and admiration because their peers did not expect them to be socially adept and blend in so well with the majority of the students. None of the homeschooled participants whom I interviewed mentioned using counseling services to address any personal or social problems encountered while adjusting to a college or university. A second “take-away” identified from my research embodied the understanding that homeschooled participants did not seem to undergo a particularly profound transition, but younger participants realized they needed to work more on adjusting to the college environment than more settled students. However, I did not ask the participants specifically if they used any counseling services on campus. I simply asked them how they felt about their interactions with others on campus, their overall perceptions of their college and university experiences, and how their classmates perceived them if they learned they received their education at home. Future research studies on homeschooled college and university students should seek more detailed information about areas such as the use of counseling services, self-esteem, and so forth.

The prior research utilized in my literature review pointed to the fact that homeschooled students are becoming a more important presence in the world of higher learning in this country. Studies thus far indicated that homeschooled pupils may be on the way to a relatively good level of self-adjustment, but limited studies on the adjustment and social development of

homeschooled students exist. An extensive level of scholarship on homeschooled pupils from kindergarten through 12th grade exists in the literature. Researchers explored the academic performance of the homeschooled pupils more than their level of social adjustment with peers. The level of scholarship for homeschooled students in a college or university environment has been much more limited, and it needs more attention. I felt that the main reason why studies on the academic and especially the social performance of homeschooled college and university students needed more attention was that a college or university is often the last level of education youngsters receive before they go out into the world as adults, pursue their careers, and merge into society.

REFERENCES

- Alamry, A., & Karaali, A. (2016). Flipped education: transitioning to the homeschool environment. *Cogent Education*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2016.1224607> 5.
- Berner-Carlson University (2016). *Fall 2016 institutional profile – preliminary*. Retrieved from <https://www.berner-carlson.edu/fall-2016-institutional-profile-preliminary>
- Bolin, D., Brian S. G., & Floyd, K. (2013). Homeschooling facts vs. opinions. *Countryside & small stock journal*, 97(3), 14-17. Retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Homeschooling+facts+vs.+opinions.-a0335972857>
- Bolle-Brummond, M., & Wessel, R. D. (2012). Homeschooled students in college: background influences, college integration, and environmental pull factors. *Journal of Research in Education*, 22(1), 223-249. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1098414>
- Boschee, B. F., & Boschee, F. (2011). A profile of homeschooling in South Dakota. *Journal of School Choice*, 5, 281-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2011.604982>
- Campbell, P. L. R. (2012). *A qualitative analysis of parental decision-making in regards to homeschooling* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. (3548093)
- Cardel, M., Willig, A. L., Akilah, D., Casazza, K., Cherrington, A. Gunnarsdottir, T., . . . Fernandez, J.R. (2014). Home-schooled children are thinner, learner, and report better diets relative to traditionally schooled children. *Obesity*, 22, 497-503. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.20610>
- Cheng, A. (2014). Does homeschooling or private schooling promote political intolerance? evidence from a Christian university. *Journal of School Choice*, 8, 49-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2014.875411> .

- Cogan, M. F. (2010). Exploring academic outcomes of homeschooled students. *Journal of College Admission*, 208(Summer), 18-25. Available from <http://www.nacacnet.org>
- Cordner, A. (2012). The health care access and utilization of homeschooled children in the United States. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75, 269-273.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.02.002>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- CrossPointe Co-op. (2017). *Who is CrossPointe?* Retrieved from <https://www.homeschool-life.com/fl/crosspointecoop/>.
- Dewberry, C. & Jackson, D.J.R. (2018). An application of the theory of planned behavior to student retention. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 107, 100-110. Retrieved from <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/science/article/pii/S0001879118300289>.
- Dictionary.com (2018). *Socialization*. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/socialization>.
- Drenovsky, C. K., & Cohen, I. (2012). The impact of homeschooling on the adjustment of college students. *International Social Science Review*, 87(1/2), 19-34. Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41887517>
- Dreyer, M. C. (2017). *Former homeschooled students' perceptions of social skills attainment* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (10604353)
- Duggan, M. H. (2009). Are community colleges “home-school friendly?”: An exploration of community college web sites as an indicator of “friendliness”. *Community College*

Journal of Research and Practice, 34, 54-63.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920903385830>.

Dumas, T. K., Gates, S., & Schwarzer, D. R. (2010). Evidence for homeschooling: Constitutional analysis in light of social science research. *Widener Law Review*, 16(1), 63-88. Available from <http://widenerlawreview.org/>

Fink-Glass, S. (2016). *To college they go: A multiple case study of seven homeschooled graduates' transition from home to college* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global. (10250168)

Forrester, A. S. (2016). Encouraging educational diversity. *Children & Libraries*, 14, 13-18. <https://doi.org/10.5860/cal.14n2.13> .

Gaither, M. (2009). Home schooling goes mainstream. *Education Next*, 9(1), 10-19. Retrieved from <http://educationnext.org/home-schooling-goes-mainstream/>

Glanzer, P. L. (2008). Rethinking the boundaries and burdens of parental authority overeducation: A response to Rob Reich's case study of homeschooling. *Educational Theory*, 58, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2007.00272.x>.

Green-Hennessy, S. (2014). Homeschooled adolescents in the United States: Developmental outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence*, 37, 441-449.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.03.007>

Guterman, O., & Neuman, A. (2016). What makes a social encounter meaningful: the impact of social encounters of homeschooled children on emotional and behavioral problems.

Education and Urban Society, 49, 778-792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516677009> .

- Hall, R. A. (2007). *Freshman experience at a community college: Its relationship to academic performance and retention* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.
- Henry, L. M. (2012). *Understanding the college choice process of Catholic homeschooled students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. (UMI Number 3503041)
- Home School Legal Defense Association. (2018). *For members* . Retrieved from <https://hsllda.org/content/>.
- Homeschooling in Florida. (2014). Homeschool cooperatives in Florida. Retrieved from <http://www.homeschoolinginflorida.com/support/supportgroups/co-ops.aspx..>
- Hurlbutt, K. S. (2011). Experiences of parents who homeschool their children with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Development Disabilities*, 26, 239-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088357611421170>.
- Jolly, J. L., Matthews, M. S., & Nester, J. (2012). Homeschooling the gifted: A parent's perspective. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 57, 121-134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986212469999>.
- Jung, J. H. (2008). *Contested motherhood: self and modernity in South Korean homeschooling* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI Number 3370397).
- Karp, M.M., Hughes, K.L. & O’Gara, L. (2010). An exploration of Tinto’s integration framework for community college students. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 12(1), 69-86. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/abs/10.2190/CS.12.1.e>.

- Kolenc, A. B. (2016). Homeschooling and the perils of shared parental responsibility. *Florida Bar Journal*, 90(9), 44-50. Available from <http://www.floridabar.org>
- Kranzow, J. (2013). Social integration and transition experiences of homeschooled students. *College and University*, 89(1), 24-36. Available from <http://www.aacrao.org>.
- Kunzman, R. (2009). Understanding homeschooling: A better approach to regulation. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7, 311-330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509343740>
- Kunzman, R. (2010). Homeschooling and religious fundamentalism. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 3(1), 17-28. Retrieved from <https://iejee.com/index.php/IEJEE/article/view/236>.
- Leeds, M. A. (2009). *Academic achievement of students in a charter homeschool* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI Number. 3391739)
- Lips, D., & Feinberg, E. (2008). Homeschooling: a growing option in American education. *Backgrounder*, 2122, 1-8. Retrieved from <http://www.heritage.org/education/report/homeschooling-growing-option-american-education>.
- Mackey, B. W., Reese, K., & Mackey, W. C. (2011). Demographics of home schoolers: A regional analysis within the national parameters. *Education*, 132(1), 133-140. Retrieved from http://www.projectinnovation.biz/education_2006.html.
- Macleod, D. I. (2009). Homeschool: An American history. *The Journal of American History*, 96, 179-180. <https://doi.org/10.2307/27694744>
- Martin-Chang, S., Gould, O. N., & Meuse, R. E. (2011). The impact of schooling on academic achievement: evidence from homeschooled and traditionally-schooled students.

Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 43, 195-202.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022697>.

Marzluf, P. P. (2009). Writing home-schooled students into the academy. *Composition Studies*, 37(1), 49-66. Available from <http://www.compositionstudies.tcu.edu/>.

Mazama, A. (2016). African-American homeschooling practices: Empirical evidence. *Theory and Research in Education*, 14, 26-44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878515615734> .

Mazama, A., & Lundy, G. (2012). African-American homeschooling as racial protectionism. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43, 723-748. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934712457042>.

Mazama, A., & Lundy, G. (2013). African-American homeschooling and the question of curricular cultural relevance. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 32, 123-138. <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.2.0123> .

McCulloch, D. S., Savage, A., & Schmal, L. (2013). Admission officers' impressions of homeschooled applicants in evangelical and nonevangelical colleges and universities. *Christian Higher Education*, 12, 215-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2011.598380>

McIntosh-Burke, H. (2013). Four grades and no GPA. *Journal of College Admission*, (219), 5. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/Downloads/Four_Grades_and_No_GPA%20(1).pdf.

Merry, M. S., & Karsten, S. (2010). Restricted liberty, parental choice and homeschooling. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 44, 497-514. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2010.00770.x>

Morrison, K. (2014). Homeschooling as an act of conscientious objection. *Journal of Thought* 49(3/4), 33-56, 73. Retrieved from <http://journalofthought.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/07morrison.pdf>

- Mottarella, K. E., Fritzsche, B. A., Whitten, S. N., & Bedsole, D. (2009). Exploration of “good mother” stereotypes in the college environment. *Sex Roles, 60*, 223-231.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9519-y> .
- Murphy, J. (2014). The social and educational outcomes of homeschooling. *Sociological Spectrum, 34*(3), 244-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2014.895640>
- Noble, K. (2014). The top 3 reasons I’m grateful I was homeschooled. *Countryside & Small Stock Journal, 98*(5), p. 76-77. Available from <https://countrysidenetwork.com>
- Pannone, S. J. (2016). The influence on homeschooling on entrepreneurial activities: A collective case study. *Education and Training, 59*, 706-719. <https://doi.org/10.1108/et-05-2016-0091> .
- Patterson, J. A., Gibson, I., Koenigs, A., Maurer, M., & Ritterhouse, G. (2007). Resisting bureaucracy: A case study of home schooling. *Journal of Thought, 42*, 71-86, 142-143.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/jthought.42.3-4.71>.
- Payton, K. E., & Scott, J. A. (2013). Communication apprehension among homeschooled college freshmen. *Focus on Colleges, Universities and Schools, 7*(1), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalforum.com/Journals/FOCUS/FOCUS.htm>.
- Phillips, L. (2010). Homeschooling is an art, not a science: The impact of homeschooling on choice of college major. *Sociological Viewpoints, 26*(2), 19-25. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/870329519?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=12085>.
- Pollack, D. (2012). Homeschooling and child protection. *Policy & practice, 70*(1), 13, 29, 35. Available from <https://aphsa.org>.

Priesnitz, W. (2012). Homeschoolers in society. *Natural Life*, 23. Retrieved from the Proquest Central database at www.liberty.edu.

Richardson, E. (2013). Homeschooling laws (or lack thereof) in New Jersey – are children slipping through the cracks? *Journal of Law and Education*, 42(1), 173-181. Available from <http://www.law.sc.edu>.

Riddle, T. (2013). *Certified K-12 teachers' techniques for evaluating academic achievement of homeschooled students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI 3554037)

Ripperger-Suhler, J. (2016). Homeschooling: an alternative to traditional school. *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 32, 1, 5.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/cbl.30113>

Roberts, J. (2009). Dispelling the rational basis for homeschooler exclusion from high school intercollegiate athletics. *The Journal of Law and Education*, 38(1), 195-202. Available from <http://www.law.sc.edu>.

Rothermel, P. J. (2012). Home-educated children's psychological well-being. *Estudios sobre Educacion*, 22, 13-36. Retrieved from
<https://www.unav.edu/publicaciones/revistas/index.php/estudios-sobre-educacion/article/viewFile/2070/1935>

Seo, D. H. (2009). The profitable adventure of threatened middle-class families: An ethnographic study on homeschooling in South Korea. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10, 409-422.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-009-9036-x>.

- Sheng, X. (2015). Confucian work and homeschooling: a case study of homeschooling in Shanghai. *Education and Urban Society, 47*, 344-360.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513489707>.
- Sheperd, D. (2010). *Mommy is my teacher: Qualitative case studies of three families homeschooling experience* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI 3426298)
- Smiley, H. T. (2010). *She's leaving home: The effect of college experiences on homeschooled students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI 3413965).
- Snyder, M. (2013). An evaluative study of the academic achievement of homeschooled students versus traditionally schooled students attending a Catholic university. *Catholic Education, 16*(2), 288-308. Available from <http://www.bc.edu/catholicedjournal>.
- Sorey, K., & Duggan, M. H. (2008). Homeschoolers entering community colleges: Perceptions of admission officers. *Journal of College Admission, 22-28*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ829457.pdf>.
- Soufleris, D. M. (2014). *From home to hall: the transitional experiences of homeschooled students entering residential university settings* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI 3613104).
- Thomas, J. (2016). Instructional motivations: what can we learn from homeschooling families? *The Qualitative Report, 21*(11), 2073-2086. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2425&context=tqr>
- Tinto, V. (2016). From retention to persistence: Three major experiences shape student motivation to stay in college and graduate. *Inside higher ed*. Retrieved from

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/26/how-improve-student-persistence-and-completion-essay>.

Turner, M. L. (2016). Getting to know homeschoolers. *The Journal of College Admission*, 233, 40-43. Available from <http://www.nacacnet.org>

University of Central Florida (2013). *Homeschool with success*. Retrieved from <http://www.ce.ucf.edu/Program/2937/Homeschool-With-Success/>.

Vaughn, M. G., Salas-Wright, C. P., Kremer, K. P., Maynard, B. R., Roberts, G., & Vaughan, S. (2015). Are homeschooled adolescents less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other rugs? *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 155, 97-104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.08.010>

Wachob, D. A. (2015). Starting a university-based physical education program for homeschooled children. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 86, 36-42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2014.998396> .

Wadsworth, M. (2009, June). Home-schooled siblings earn college degree before turning 16. *Community College Week*, 21(21). Retrieved from <http://www.ccweek.com/news/articlefiles/1152-CCW061509-AllPgs.pdf>

Walden, D. (2017). The homeschooled child's right to attend public school: Is judicial bypass a solution? *The Urban Lawyer*, 49(1), 175-206. Available from <http://www1.law.umkc.edu/urbanlawyer/>

Weldon, L. G. (2013). Erasing my homeschooling misconceptions: a parent dispels six myths about educating your own children. *LILIPOH*, 71(18), 9-12. Available from <https://lilipoh.com/>.

- West, R. L. (2009). The harms of homeschooling. *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*, 29, 7-12. <https://doi.org/10.13021/g8pppq.292009.104>.
- Wilhelm G. M., & Firmin, M. W. (2009). Historical and contemporary developments in homeschool education. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 18, 303-315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210903333442>.
- Wilkins, C. P., Wade, C. H., Sonnert, G., & Sadler, P. M. (2015). Are homeschoolers prepared for college calculus? *Journal of School Choice*, 9, 30-48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2015.998963>.
- Wright, T. (2016). Comparing the financial literacy of public school, Christian school, and homeschooled students. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 1, 56-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2016.1140100> .
- Yu, M. C., Sackett, P. R., & Kuncel, N. R. (2016). Predicting college performance of homeschooled versus traditional students. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 35, 31-39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emip.12133>
- Zhang, C. (2015). *Challenging the tiger mother stereotype? Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parenting practices* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest LLC. (3733282)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What kind of learning experience have you had in your courses and in the course of everyday college life so far?
2. What kind of social experience have you had in college so far?
3. Which courses, if any, have led you to a productive learning experience so far?
4. Which classes do you feel have been most worthwhile to you?
5. Which classes do you feel could have provided a better learning experience for you and describe why you feel that way?
6. What college-level work and assignments were you involved in when you were homeschooled?
7. Do you feel that your academic work compares favorably to the general college student population or to others in your classes?
8. do other students respond to you if they know you were homeschooled?
9. Do your classmates know that you were homeschooled?
10. How relevant is it to you that other students know that you were homeschooled?
11. What do you define as popularity or “fitting in” relative to what is determined by the overall student body, professors or school administration where you are attending college or university?
12. What goals do you have in terms of being able to socially adjust and incorporate yourself into the college or university environment?

13. What have you learned as a college or university student that will help you with adjusting and incorporating yourself into social environments that you see yourself in after you graduate or leave college?
14. Describe any challenging or harsh situations you have encountered with other students, professors or staff.
15. What strategies have helped you to cope when you have encountered challenging or harsh situations with other students, professors or staff?
16. Describe some positive situations you have encountered with other students, professors or staff.

Appendix B: Research Questions

1. How do homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home feel that they adjust socially with non-homeschooled students and in the higher learning environment?
2. In what ways may homeschooled college and university students who are living away from home ever feel alienated by non-homeschooled students, staff and professors at the colleges and universities?
3. What problems or issues do homeschooled students living away from home perceive in their socialization or social adjustment while in college and living away from home?
4. In what ways do homeschooled students who are living away from home see themselves as benefitting socially as a result of being homeschooled?

Appendix C: Responses from the Interviewees

Ms. C responses:

1. I'm a biochem major. I am currently applying for medical school. I'm taking university physics. I also have to take a core curriculum. I've taken Latin courses and a number of liberal arts courses. When I was homeschooled, I was doing enrollment courses at FIU (Florida International University) so that I knew what to expect. I had a pretty good idea of the material that I was going to face.
2. My relationships have been positive and I've dated here. I've had very positive experiences.
3. All of my courses have led to a productive learning experience. The professors here are from Ivy League schools and they're very challenging.
4. I'd probably say that at least a couple of the courses that I've taken have been worthwhile. The most worthwhile course was from my Biochemistry major. The course was a course on HIV biochemistry. In that course, I had to do extensive treatment on biochemistry. The lessons included drugs, treatment, development of drugs used to inhibit HIV. At the end of the course, we would each have to propose our own drug to use against HIV prevention.
5. The one disappointing course I took was Latin. The only reason that I didn't get everything I wanted is that I could have put more time into Latin but I had other courses going on at that time that were taking up my time.
6. I took a 2-year AP Anatomy & Physiology course, and it was the course that prepared me the most for college. I took some primary-level college courses as well.

7. I'm at least in the top 5% of my class. My GPA is very very close to a 4.0.

Homeschooling has benefited me.

8. Most people think that homeschoolers are "freaks". People are surprised when I tell them that I was homeschooled. I don't want to fit the stereotype of socially awkward children.

9. Some of my classmates know that I was homeschooled. None of us talk much about our high school experiences. When I talk to professors, I definitely discuss my homeschool experiences.

10. The fact other students know that I was homeschooled is not very relevant to me. Most people don't really have any preconceived ideas (Note added: not even a big issue). Most people don't regard it as an issue when I mention that I was homeschooled.

11. I think that some homeschoolers may have struggled with "fitting in". There have been a number of homeschooled students here. When they were homeschooled, some of the homeschooled students struggled with communicating. Some of the students had few social interactions with others outside of the family. I define "fitting in" as being confident in your personality and being able to relay your ideas and thoughts to others.

12. Personally, I think my goals are already achieved. I'm really doing well with my professors and among my fellow classmates. I haven't had any difficulties adjusting since my freshman year.

13. With my experiences here, the majority of my experiences here pertain to, God willing, my future in medicine / medical school. So far, I've done limited research with professors and fellow classmates as well as other courses that I've taken here.

14. It's hard to name any harsh situations. I once asked a professor if she could raise my grade on a specific exam and that was an awkward situation. The professor ended up curving the grade at the end.
15. I can see from previous experiences that I've learned to combat my awkward experiences. I've learned to combat my awkward experiences by applying solutions from previous experiences. (Note: similar). I'm not dealing currently with any problem.
16. All of the encounters I've had have been positive. I'm able to hold an intellectual conversation with my professors. When it comes to fellow classmates and other students, I've never had a negative experience. If there was a negative experience, I may have gotten into a fight but that wasn't because I was homeschooled. I have had only positive situations, basically.

Ms. C agreed to give names and phone numbers of other homeschooled college students.

Mr. D interview responses:

1. My experience at college has been very productive. I like that I came to a college with a smaller class size. It was very easy to acclimate.
2. My social experience has been amazing. I actually have the stigma of being the guy who "knows" everyone. My parents raised me with extracurricular activities. I'm aware of the difference between real friends and acquaintances.
3. All my science classes have been the best classes since I want to be a biology major. The learning experience has definitely maintained its quality.
4. My favorite class has been my envirometrics class. The envirometrics is where you apply statistical methods in terms of scientific research and knowing how to back it up.

My goal is to be a researcher and when you talk about research you have to look at qualitative versus quantitative data. This will be very useful to me in the future.

5. The class that could have provided a better learning experience for me was Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy. The professor is the dean of the college and the professors appears swamped with duties. The class is broad and there is a lot of information. The professors don't have time to present information efficiently.
6. I was dual-enrolled. In the 10th grade, I began attending Daytona State College and started taking college-level courses.
7. I believe that my work does compare favorably. Yes, sir.
8. People usually respond by saying "You're homeschooled. I didn't know!". People get thrown off because my social skills are perceived as very good. People react with a mixture of awe and understanding sometimes.
9. My classmates really don't know. I don't communicate with my classmates on a regular basis. I mostly talk with acquaintances and they know that I was homeschooled.
10. I'd say that my experience as a homeschooled student is relevant because I am an advocate of homeschooling. Homeschooling worked for me. I've seen that it works for other students. We strive toward what we see as important for success. Us homeschooled peers are all like-minded in terms of what we see as important for success.
11. What I determine as "fitting in" involves working toward achieving an academic degree. You are here to attain your degree. Academic excellence and ambition define the reason for you being here.

12. I want to get to the point where the stigma of homeschooled students having horrible socializing skills is erased. If you can disprove the primary reason why people are against homeschooling, that will cause it to increase in the future.
13. I think the biggest thing that I've learned since I started here is to adapt to others who don't have the same point of view as me. After all, when you enter the working world, your main goal should be to be productive.
14. Right now, I'm encountering a bit of a scenario where a professor feels we're incapable of learning the material in the class. I had this professor last semester too. I see the professor's negative remarks as somewhat of a setback.
15. Talking about the problem to individuals in whom I can find wisdom and counsel. You shouldn't vent some negativity within yourself to the point where it affects your own health. Definitely, I can talk with parents and friends about any problems. I know that a person I talk to can either give me advice or point me to the person who can give the advice.
16. Positive encounters include when I meet someone for the first time, I observe a person and see how he or she acts, but then they see me as a down-to-earth person once they talk to me and get to know me. On a broad spectrum, the positive experiences are why I have been able to stay here. The mentors helped me to be able to go and see the opportunity to advance in my education and in my life in general.

Mr. E interview responses:

1. Well, the only experience I've had so far is through dual enrollment. I took some general ed courses through an online program at Liberty University. The majority of the courses were well set-up and well-executed. I don't have a lot of complaints.

2. When I was in dual enrollment, I would have social interaction at church every week. I was involved in athletics in high school. I'm actually an introvert. I always felt included. For the majority, I knew what the current topic was on news, politics, and I followed everything easily. Social interaction was not hard. It was not hard to talk with them.

(Note: active but introverted).

3. Currently, I took a Math 121 course. The course was basic college algebra but more than that. The math can be applied in walks of life. Ancient history and literature cannot be applied to daily life as well as mathematics.
4. Again, the math class. I'm a fan of history, and I really liked the history course that I took.
5. The History of Life course was the course that left me dissatisfied. The class was a required class that I took. The class was talking about creationism, but it was taught in a manner that was not very good. The faculty could have done a better job in teaching different viewpoints regarding creationism.
6. The math class, the literature class, etc. I took a science class. The classes were 101, 102 level classes and they taught basic material. I also took a computer science course that was Information 110 and showed you how to use the different Microsoft products.
7. I would say my academic work is better than average. I would say if a B is average, then my work is a little bit above B level.
8. Usually, they would ask question slice Do you not have any homework?, Do you wear your pajamas all day? I would answer No to those questions. They would ask me How do you like being homeschooled?, and I would answer that I had to have an open mind, be responsible for myself and fulfill my responsibilities.

9. If I told other students that I was homeschooled, they would know. Otherwise, no one would have any idea.
10. It is not very important to me that other students know that I was homeschooled. I'm the kind of person who believes that your origins don't necessarily determine your destiny. People can work toward fulfilling their own individual goals.
11. I would say that how your social interactions are will determine how you fit in. The classes you take do matter to some degree, but social skills are the most important factor.
12. I haven't thought a huge amount about what I would like to achieve socially. One thing that is definitely occurring is to overcome initial shyness, branch out and establish a network of friends.
13. I think one important skill is definitely to be able to introduce yourself to a complete stranger and smile with a firm handshake with eye contact. Good social skills that you develop in college can transition into the business world.
14. I haven't really encountered any tough situations yet. One of the professors that I had for one of the online dual enrollment courses was slow to respond to e-mails and it was frustrating. Therefore, I had to e-mail out my questions to that professor immediately.
15. In the case of the professor who took long to respond to my e-mails, I had to e-mail out any questions I had right away. I didn't have the telephone number for the professor. I could have contacted upper management, but I didn't feel like the situation needed it.
16. I can't really give you a whole lot. I'm not a residential student. On the discussion board posts, the interaction was very polite and respectful. If criticism was given in discussion board posts, then it was given in a respectful and constructive manner. For

example, a criticism was worded like “I don’t necessarily agree with you on this topic, but this is a very good post. Here’s what I think, what do you think about it?”

Ms. E interview responses:

1. I’ve had a great experience. I can enjoy all my classes. For the most part, it’s been a pretty good experience.
2. My social experience has mostly been interacting on discussion boards. I have been telling people about my life.
3. My communications course was my best course. It was just a general communications course which helped with my communication skills. I also took a geology course that was very interesting.
4. The communications class has been most worthwhile for me. This class has helped me to determine my major so that has been the most worthwhile.
5. I was dissatisfied with my History of Creation class. The class was a worldview / science class. I was frustrated. The class felt very one-sided. I wasn’t able to have discussions with students and teachers like I wanted because of the online format.
6. I’ve taken quite a few college-level courses. I took history, English, science, math and language. I took a lot of undergrad-level courses as a high schooler.
7. Yes – I do.
8. Other students usually assume you’re really smart and/or that you have something against public schooling.
9. Usually. I would guess that they forgot about it. I think people often expect homeschoolers to be socially awkward, and when you’re not, they forget you were homeschooled.

10. It is not very relevant to me that other people know that I was homeschooled. It can be useful as a different perspective in discussion, but it's not a big deal.
11. Having a circle of friends that I feel comfortable hanging out with would be "fitting in".
12. I am more comfortable with older people, adults. It can be harder overall to interact with peers. Overall, I don't have much trouble with children my age.
13. Things like age, career situation and family don't make as big of a difference as people in high school or middle school think. I can have confidence when meeting people who have lives that are different from mine. I can find common ground with them.
14. There was one situation where I misunderstood assignment directions and I was shocked by the grade I received. I had a conversation about what to do to change the grade. The conversation with the teacher was e-mail and it was hard for me not to sound disrespectful.
15. Assume that they have good intentions and that no one is deliberately hurting you. Try to understand the other peoples' intentions and goals.
16. Some of the discussion boards have been really fun. Getting great feedback from other students and discussing ideas together are also good experiences.

Ms. Ethlen interview responses:

1. I'm a senior and in my 4th year. I'm at the air force academy. I had a pretty standard curriculum. I took 2 semesters of calculus, 2 semesters of English, 2 semesters of history, 2 semesters of physics, 1 semester of electronic and computer engineering and 2 military and strategic courses. It definitely is a broad question.

2. It's an unusual experience because it is a military school. You get a squadron of 100 people. I'm friends with my squadron mates. I have my closest relations with people at my bible study.
3. One of my favorite courses was History 200 – American History. There were 8 of us in the class. The American history helped me to realize what I want do with my life. I joined the military not with a super clear purpose. A lieutenant colonel who teaches history here helped me to think about what it means to be a military officer.
4. I took an abstract algebra class which was really wonderful. I'm going to be a cyber officer when I graduate, so I needed to see the link between math and computer science. The Intro to Psych class also helped me to realize how people think.
5. Some of the introductory classes could have been accelerated (either they could have covered more material or covered the same material in less time).
6. I took dual enrollment Calc. 3 at the local community college. I took a couple of AP classes. I took those classes through an online Christian school. I also took a dual-enrollment humanities course.
7. Yes, I do. I'm graduating in the top 2% of my class academically.
8. Most people act surprised. At this point, it doesn't come up very often. When people find out, it really turns out not to be a good deal. It hasn't had a big impact on your social life.
9. Some of my classmates do know that I was homeschooled. Some of them don't know. Most of my closer friends know that I was homeschooled. Most people I talk to have no idea that I was homeschooled.

10. It's not especially important to me. It's not something I bring up on purpose. It's not something that I think is super-important to bring up.
11. It's a little hard to describe what it means to fit in. It's not hard to fit in because there are so many shared experiences after being with each other for a couple of years. All of us in the squadron know the lingo we use to communicate. We know the acronyms, the sense of humor that is shared by our squadron.
12. I think I'm pretty adjusted. I've got close friends here. I'm going to be a bridesmaid at a friend's wedding next week.
13. I've learned resilience because this is a challenging environment. I've learned to bounce back after a hard situation. I've learned confidence by being trained at this school. I've learned to know that I can handle something if I put my mind to it. I can determine how to respond appropriately to situations.
14. Not too many. We all have a chain of command within the squadron. I had a couple of situations where I wasn't in the best situation with my supervisor. In one case, I did more work at activities than the squadron mate who was in charge of the activities. The situation defused, though. I got into a confrontation with a classmate once who refused to compromise with me. I told her I wasn't going to work with her anymore and she backed down. The classmate was upset for a couple more classes but now we're on friendly terms.
15. Looking back on past situations, I found it was helpful to look back on past situations where I was nervous and thought to myself "I made it through that – now I can make it through this". In other words, I used the sense of persistence and confidence that I learned as explained in Question #13.

16. There've been so many positive situations. One really touching one was when we had an end-of-year banquet last year with our Bible study. There was an opportunity for people to say that they were influenced by one of the seniors who was graduating. I was surprised by how many kind things people had to say about me.

Mr. J interview responses:

1. When I first got here, I was in Algebra, Critical Writing, Freshman Seminar, etc. This semester, I have liberal arts, mathematics, religions of the world, Freshman Seminar II, etc. I really do think that I am learning as much as I was going to. The learning is transitioning into practical things. I have to learn how to function in society.
2. I would say that I've had a lot of social experiences. I've joined the Chaplaincy Department. I was involved in the Brother-to-Brother program. Note: involved.
3. My special topics class was very involving. The class involved a lot of philosophy and allowed you to engage in a rigorous thinking process.
4. One course or courses that were very worthwhile is (are) my religion courses.
5. I would have to say my English classes. They helped me to develop my writing a little bit more. I feel the study that I am trying is critical to becoming a good writer. I can't say I've had classes where a good learning experience has been lacking. I've been enrolled in good, difficult classes.
6. I would say the first year that I was homeschooled – third grade- I had to take college algebra. My mother used college-level books. I didn't understand a lot of the material. I had no idea. I was just pushed through it.
7. Not really. There are people who have higher grade point averages than me. Do I think that I am capable of it? Yes.

8. Well, they're actually pretty shocked. They have an idea about people who were homeschooled themselves. They think that homeschooled students are really smart. They have a preconceived idea that students who were homeschooled are not really social.
9. No, they do not know that I was homeschooled. It rarely comes up in conversation. Some of my teachers know that I was homeschooled, but my classmates generally don't.
10. I wouldn't think that it is really relevant that other people know that I was homeschooled. Whether you were homeschooled or in public school, you learn the same math, the same literature. When I was homeschooled, we finished doing an entire book within a course. In the public school, we never finished a book during a course. My mother has a vast library of books. When she would have us study a book, she would have us read the book and then watch a movie version of the book. She would then have us do a comparison of the movie and the book.
11. I tend to think of it as when you conform to the status quo or when you try to imitate somebody else. We try to adapt ourselves to conform to society in order to be liked or accepted. We work to imitate somebody else to try to match somebody else's consciousness or their idea of their persona – their identity. Everybody in some way, shape or form has an identity.
12. I've learned to run for different or various offices. In my sophomore year, I ran to be the chaplain of the Student Government Association. I have yet to be interviewed for that position. I have no other offices to mention. I have some goals of being involved but I don't want to get involved to the point where I can't commit to my education.

13. I think just culminating in connecting with all the vast majority of personalities that are all over this campus. I like to see how they react to different things. I like to start conversations with them and pick their brains about different things. I think that conversing with other people will prepare me for the career or job that I see myself in. In my line of work, I will be involving difficult conversations that will sometimes turn into debates. When I converse with others, I want to find what ways I can effectively deal with them. I took a psychology course last semester. I always try to really observe people and study their body language, facial expressions and even a change in the tone of their voice.
14. I have not really encountered any violent verbal hostility. No one has ever talked to me in a vicious manner. I have never encountered physical hostility from people. I try not to get involved in the conflicts of people. When I see something escalating with somebody, I just walk away and let it go.
15. I think that what really helped me is to pause and survey the situation. If that person is not worth arguing with or if I see that the subject is not worth arguing over, I just end the conversation. I either take my seat or walk away.
16. With professors, I have a mentor in the field of religion. One thing I've always wanted to do is to sit down and talk with people about religion, religious philosophy and biblical texts. It's not easy because talking with students because you could start a conflict. Many of the students feel like what they're saying is right and rightly so because they don't have the knowledge. It's kind of frustrating, though, when you give them facts and they still deny that knowledge. My mother said that people who are uneducated will not often admit that they're wrong when they could be wrong. Educated people are more

likely to admit they're wrong when they're wrong because they have submitted to the learning process.

Mr. R interview responses:

1. I've had a pretty good learning experience between here and Daytona State College. Since Daytona State, I've been earning all As here at Berner-Carlson University. I've definitely had learning experiences that have stimulated me to think. I've done more stimulated thinking as an English major because I've been exposed to more forms of writing.
2. I've had a good social experience, but I'm not the most social person. I knew friends from high school. Coming here, I didn't know anybody but I've gotten along with my classmates and done well. Berner-Carlson University has been about the same as anywhere else. I'm not "super involved" outside of class. We do a lot of group work with each other.
3. Here at Berner-Carlson, I've really enjoyed my literature class. I thought the readings were very thought-provoking. I enjoyed an African-American history class I took here last fall.
4. I can identify good from each class that I've been in. My favorite has been the African-American history class. I do like my education courses because they require us to think outside the box. Those classes are pretty motivating. Also, I would add the creative writing course I took this semester.
5. I have to take a foreign language course here. While I think the teachers are performing well, I think there has to be a way to teach foreign language here and in college. Over the

summer, the information can “wash away”. Foreign language courses should require some kind of activity (perhaps a summer exercise) to keep you fluent.

6. I don't know what can be defined as college level. While in the Florida Virtual School in 11th and 12th grade, I took whatever courses are required to complete the course. I took a financial math class. You might count that as college level. Also, I took a leadership course which helped to prepare me for daily life like leadership principles, setting goals, etc. The leadership course was amazing. The leadership course was probably college level.
7. I guess my work can be considered better than average. I'm getting all As.
8. The students basically ask me what it is like. Students wonder about what experiences I had and how do I have a social life while being homeschooled. People ask me if it was harder or easier than regular public school or classical learning.
9. If it comes up in conversation, other classmates do know that I was homeschooled.
10. I don't really walk into a classroom and say “I was homeschooled”. If it comes up, it comes up. When people ask me what high school I went to, I talk about how I went to Florida Virtual School in the 11th grade and 12th grade. Note: not a big issue
11. I would define popularity by the number of people who know you are but not necessarily know you. “Fitting in” is not really conforming but it sort of is. If you try to fit in it's conforming. It's never something that I've tried to do. I don't really fit even with the groups I hang out with or my close friends. I play basketball and I've always been an athlete. I don't fit in with most athletes because I love to read. I like *The lord of the rings*.

12. I've never thought of having goals of being able to fit in with those around me. I feel pretty comfortable with my level of social adjustment.
13. I don't know if anything that I've learned as a college student has taught me how to blend into social environments. I was raised just to be myself and not to conform with what others are doing or how they're acting around me.
14. I don't really know of any harsh situations that I've been in, especially with professors or staff. I can't recall any animosity or problems with students.
15. I don't know that I've felt isolated here at any point. If I was, my strategy for being here would be the same as the strategy that I've been using now. Even if I was isolated, I would probably continue being the way I am. If you show that you are confident with the person you are, then other people will respect that even if they can't relate to you. If you show that confidence and some people still alienate you, then that's "their problem".
16. I've definitely received a lot of encouragement, especially from staff members in the School of Education. I was recently made the president of the Academy of Men in Education. I've received praise and encouragement for the work that I've done in that position. I've had positive moments with students. If somebody needs help studying, I'll help with that. I've had 2 or 3 people come up to ask me for help with this or that.

Ms. S interview responses:

1. I found that for most of my classes I am doing more than my peers. I know in advance what my professors want. I enjoy essays because I did a lot of writing while homeschooled. I knew more than my peers already when I started college.
2. They really emphasize community a lot where I go to school. With groups of students, I have very good experiences. In smaller groups, I work very well. Being paired off works very well. When you have people with different cultural backgrounds, you get different perspectives. The situation you like the best is when you have larger group projects where you can delegate tasks. I've joined campus groups. Casually, I am usually the one to initiate the conversation. Note: Active, involved, maybe extroverted
3. All my courses have been productive. One very good class was Approaches to Literature. Professors gave a lot of opportunities to ask questions.
4. One of the very useful courses was one that I had to take in the beginning. The class was an orientation class. We had to find out if they would send us to the library to find out what books you could get there, and there were also career fairs. I took the courses Mathematics of Social Choice and Decision Making.
5. Most of the classes were worthwhile. A geometry math class was not the best. Teachers could have followed the book more on the tests.
6. The work that I did when I was homeschooled was most immediately applicable to college. I was able to do the CLEP test in Spanish so I don't have to take Spanish. Most of the writing I did in high school was similar to the Writing In Rhetoric 2 course that I had to take.

7. I absolutely think my work is better than average. The quality of my work is better than the general college student population. I care all the time. I relate to my professors.
8. I wrote an article about being a homeschooled student that went into a website. Most of the time, I would wait until they asked me the question. Mostly, people don't see it as strange anymore. I seemed "normal" to them. Some people get taken aback because they had a certain preconception of what homeschooled students are like.

Note: Has written about homeschooling experience

9. Nobody asks if I was homeschooled. The first year they would ask and then we would talk about it. Normally, I just wait until others ask to let them know I was homeschooled.
10. It usually only matters to me if they were to say something negative about homeschoolers. Mostly, it matters to me if the professors know because they see that you were homeschooled through the quality of your work. Not many people give negative reactions. One negative reaction was "Did you have friends?", but most people appreciate and admire. Note: More an issue with professors than others.
11. It depends. Most of the time, people just filter themselves into different groups. Some are athletes, some act out in class and some fit into studious groups. I fit in probably with one of the studious groups, but I don't try too hard.
12. I went into it without any particular thought to the matter. It ended up being that I didn't have to make any adjustments.
13. A lot of it has been in the professional development realm. I've been learning about how to apply for things like jobs and internships. I mostly learned that I have to sell myself to people who are looking to have me as an intern. My ability to sell myself will undoubtedly help me when I leave.

14. I've only had harsh situations with staff. The single department that I've had the most trouble with is Financial Aid. They don't know how to handle scholarships and they take forever. I didn't get a book advance on time last semester and they only gave it halfway through the semester.
15. My strategies for handling harsh situations are just persistence, not backing down when it gets hard and just keeping a calm and polite exterior and then being persistent.
16. I've had too many positive experiences to count. A lot of people have been supportive. One specific example is in one of my music classes where I did a paper and the professor still won't stop talking about it.

Appendix D: Notes on Common Themes to Interview Questions

Question #1 common themes: All of the interviewees had positive statements or comments to make about their learning experiences. Mr. E talked about how his background so far has only been in college-level dual enrollment online courses. Other homeschooled students that I interviewed have evidently taken classroom-based courses or courses on campus. The homeschooled students so far seem to be quite pleased with what they learned.

All of the students that I've interviewed have had positive statements to make about their learning experiences. The students overall have said that they knew what kind of material to expect after starting college. Ms. S emphasized the huge advantages she got from being homeschooled. Mr. J, Mr. D, Mr. R and all the rest had positive things to say.

Question #2 common themes: On Question #2, three interviewees specified that so far they have had good and positive social experiences. Ms. S added that she enjoys the interaction of working in pairs or in groups, especially in larger group projects where you can delegate tasks. Mr. R added that he's had good social experiences even though he's not "the most social" person.

Question #3 common themes: All of the students whom I interviewed mentioned that they've had positive learning experiences. The students mentioned specific classes that they liked.

Question #4 common themes: Some students went into considerable detail when describing what their most worthwhile classes were. Ms. C talked in detail about a biochemistry course she had to take for her major. Ms. C talked about what kind of project they had to develop in the course. Ms. C mentioned how each student in the class had to propose his or her

own drug against HIV. One of the students actually mentioned that she is going to be a cyber officer when she finishes school.

Different students gave somewhat different answers to Question #4. Ms. Ethlen and Mr. E talked about taking mathematics classes they enjoyed. One other student mentioned a biochemistry course. One student whom I interviewed at Berner-Carlson University mentioned a religion course. There were a good variety of answers here. Most of the students described the college-level courses they took as either enjoyable or worthwhile.

Question #6 common themes: All the students I've interviewed so far took some type of college-level courses or did college-level work while homeschooled. The types or subjects of coursework vary among the different students that I interviewed. Each of the students did college-level work while being homeschooled for a certain period of time.

Question #7 common themes: All the students I interviewed so far are either better than average when it comes to their grades or better than most of their classmates. The only student who didn't describe his grades or academic performance as above average was Mr. J. Ms. S even mentioned that she is in the top 5% of her class.

Question #8 common themes: Like Mr. R and Ms. S, Mr. J said that he encounters preconceived notions among people (or classmates) which say that homeschooled students generally are not very social. Mr. J remarked that students or other people get pretty shocked when he tells them of his homeschooling. Mr. D actually quoted a reaction he gets by saying "You're homeschooled, I didn't know!" and then remarked that other students get thrown off because he does have good social skills. Like Ms. S, Mr. D talked about his perspective on homeschooling, because he is an advocate of homeschooling.

Mr. R and Ms. S brought up the fact that students ask them if they had a good “social life” because of their homeschooling. Both Mr. R and Ms. S made clear that they didn’t have any problems with their social lives as they were educated. Ms. S even added that she wrote an article about homeschooling that went on to a website. Ms. S even mentioned that homeschooling no longer seems that strange to people anymore.

Question #9 common themes: Not all the students I interviewed seem to think it is important that others know of their homeschooling. The students overall didn’t seem to talk to many others about their experience of being homeschooled unless it comes up in a conversation. One student said that his teachers generally know that he was homeschooled, but his classmates don’t. One young student who is just starting college said that other people expect homeschooled students to be “socially awkward,” but that theme didn’t come up often. Other interviewees said that other students don’t know of their homeschooling until they tell others students.

Both Ms. S and Ms. C mentioned that nobody really asks about previous homeschool experience in high school. Ms. S says she normally waits until people ask to let them know of her homeschooling. Mr. R is basically the same way.

Question #10 common themes: None of the eight students I’ve interviewed at this point have expressed that it is particularly relevant to them that other students know of their homeschooling. The general sense that I get from the homeschooled students I interviewed is that it is not a big issue to them as to whether or not other students know of their homeschooling. The only student who stipulated that it is relevant is a student from Berner-Carlson University who said it is important because he called himself an advocate of homeschooling. The student said that he has seen homeschooling work for other students.

On the other hand, another student at Berner-Carlson University said that you learn the same math and the same literature whether you were homeschooled or in public school. In one interview I had over the telephone with a student, the student said that the issue is relevant to her only if a classmate or someone else says something negative about homeschoolers. The student who commented on negative reactions to homeschoolers also said the issue matters more with professors than with others.

Three interviewees said they don't feel it's very relevant to them or important to them that other students know of their homeschooling. Ms. S mentioned that the fact of other students knowing she was homeschooled only matter to her if someone says something negative to her. Ms. S mentioned that most people react with appreciation and admiration when she says she received homeschooling.

Question #11 common themes: Some of the students talked about the idea that "fitting in" matches the idea of conformity. They talked about the separation of the individual identity from the precepts that society has concerning what those individuals (i.e., college students) should be. One student mentioned that she has seen some homeschooled students struggle to communicate with others. This same student defined fitting in as being confident with your persona. This idea of being confident with who you are resonated with a male student I interviewed face to face. One student simply defined "fitting in" as having a circle of friends with whom you can hang out. One student enrolled in a military school talked about how her idea of "fitting in" involved the shared experiences she had with her squadron unit. The theme of being engaged with a group that shares experiences or interests with you was found in another student's answer. One student simply said that social skills were the most important factor. One

common unifying theme was that “fitting in” involved being able to identify or communicate with others while maintaining one’s identity.

Question #12 common themes: Different students stated different goals. One student I interviewed simply has the goal of removing the stigma that homeschooled students have bad socializing skills. Two of the students stated that they felt they had already accomplished their goals of socially adjusting. Interesting how one student talked about running for political offices on campus. Also interesting was how one student mentioned she is more comfortable talking with adults. The students seem to be quite well-adjusted. Only one student talked about the need to overcome shyness. One student at Berner-Carlson University told me that he doesn’t even have goals of “fitting in” because he feels comfortable with his level of social adjustment. One student I interviewed over the phone said she already achieved her goals in this respect.

All of the students that I interviewed said they were able to adjust quite well to their social environments once they started college. The students seem to feel pretty comfortable where they are going to school. Ms. C mentioned that she’s doing well with both her teachers and her classmates.

Question #13 common themes: As far as what students have learned to incorporate themselves into social environments, some students talked about preparing for the working world or their professions. Other students talked about their development into social environments based on the skills they have learned. One student gave an interesting answer about how he likes to start conversations with people and pick their brains. Another student enrolled in military school talked about resilience.

Some of the students talked about how they were preparing for some sort of future plan they had, be it a profession, the working world, etc. A few of the students talked about the level

of social progress they have already made. One student mentioned that he is already satisfied with his level of social adjustment because he is satisfied with being himself. Another student said that she has learned confidence and resilience by learning in the environment that she is enrolled in right now.

Codewords: confidence, career, working life

Question #14 common themes: Common themes are that most of the students did describe a harsh or negative situation, but those negative situations were relatively mild and not chronic. One of the students, who is a generally accomplished and positive student, talked about a situation where he has a class with a professor who evidently feels the students are not capable of learning. Two of the students said they have not encountered any harsh situations. One student who evidently has had a very positive educational experience talked about how she sometimes struggles with staff at the school, especially in the Financial Aid Dept. She struggles with staff in that department mainly because the department is slow to process applications. Most of the “harsh” situations the students described involved difficult professors or just situations where they were shocked by a low grade or couldn’t understand why they received a certain grade. It was good to hear one student say that he never encountered any vicious or violent hostility from others. One female student enrolled in a military squadron said that she had a negative situation with a squadron mate and another situation with a classmate, but was able to defuse both situations.

Codeword: frustrating

Question #15 common themes: The students mostly put forth some idea of communicating with others and trying to resolve the problem through talking. Sometimes, though, talking or discussing a problem you have with someone doesn’t help you reconcile with

that person, and that is when, in the words of one student, it's time to walk away. One young student said that it helps if you try to understand the other person's intentions and goals.

Question #15 common themes (continued):

Codewords: confidence, perspective

Question #16 common themes: The students I have interviewed have reported a large number of varied positive experiences. Some students talked about mentors that have helped them. One student said that he never had a negative experience. Another student talked about how he tries to connect with people by sitting down with them and discussing religion, religious philosophy, and biblical texts. Another student mentioned that mentors at the school where he is enrolled have helped him to see the opportunity to advance in his education and in his life in general. One student enrolled in a military college mentioned an end-of-year banquet she had last year with her Bible study group. Therefore, different students find positive experiences through different situations or experiences.

Appendix E: Informed Consent form

Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from

8/29/2016 to -- Protocol # 2339.082916

A phenomenological investigation of homeschooled college students in Central Florida

Angelo J. Salvo
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the social and emotional experiences of homeschooled students who are attending a college or university away from home. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a college or university student who was homeschooled at one point in your K-12 education. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Angelo J. Salvo, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to describe the social experiences, emotional reactions and feelings of the homeschooled college students regarding their personal and academic experiences at those colleges and universities.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Respond to the solicitation e-mail requesting your participation in this research study.
2. Help me to set up a date, time, and location for a one-on-one interview.
3. Agree via e-mail to meet with me at that particular time, day and place. I will also ask for you a cell phone number or a particular phone number at which I may be able to contact you. Please call me on my cell phone if you are going to be late for the interview or if you are going to have to reschedule. Each interview should be approximately 20 minutes to 30 minutes in length.
4. After you participate in the interview and I review my notes of your answers, I may ask you to take part in a focus group session if I find that your answers reveal certain strong emotions or interesting experiences about your time as a college or university student. We will schedule a focus group session with two student participants each, so there will be an additional student along with you discussing your experiences during the focus group session. Each focus group session should be 20 minutes to 30 minutes in length. (Don't worry about Step #4)

5. The data collection in this research study will not be anonymous because I will be keeping track of your name and will have access to you via an e-mail address. However, the data that I keep will be confidential. Your name will be replaced by a pseudonym when I refer to you in my data results.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The risks that are present in the study are no greater than the risks you might face on a regular basis in your daily lives.

There are no direct benefits to participants for taking part in the research study, but there is a benefit to society.

Compensation:

You will receive no compensation for taking part in this interview.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. We may share the data we collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if we share the data that we collect about you, we will remove any information that could identify you before we share it.

I will use pseudonyms in any document that contains data results from my research, including the doctoral dissertation itself. I will keep the data with the pseudonyms in locked cabinets, and only I will have access to the data for the course of the research. I will not use any audio or video recordings during the course of the interviews or the e-mailed questionnaires. The one limit that I have in my confidentiality is that I cannot assure that participants in the focus group sessions will completely maintain the privacy and confidentiality about what was said during those sessions.

Once the research process is complete and I successfully defend my dissertation, I will securely keep the responses given to me by the participants for three years in a locked cabinet. After three years have elapsed, I will shred the responses provided to me by the participants and I will shred any identifying information that goes along with them.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, [REDACTED]

If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Angelo J. Salvo. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at asalvo@liberty.edu. You may also contact the research’s faculty advisor, Dr. Kathie May Morgan, at kcjohnso@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu. *Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter

October 12, 2017 Angelo J. Salvo IRB Approval 2339.101217: A Phenomenological Investigation of Homeschooling and the Social Behavior and Peer Relations of Homeschooled College Students

Dear Angelo J. Salvo,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email. Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely, G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Appendix G: Recruitment Letter

Date: Feb. 7, 2016

Angelo J. Salvo
Interlibrary Loan Librarian

██████████ University
██████████ Blvd.
I ██████████

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the Doctor of Educational Leadership Department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed.D. doctoral degree. I am conducting research to better understand a process or phenomenon. The purpose of my research is to investigate and describe the experiences of homeschooled college students while they are attending a college or university away from home, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, were homeschooled at any point during your childhood, are living away from home at a college or university and are willing to participate, you will be asked to set up a time and location for an interview between me and you, and I may also select you for a focus group interview if you agree to do so. It should take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete the interview, and if you agree to sit down for a focus group interview, the focus group interview should take approximately 30 minutes. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and I will refer to you with a pseudonym whenever I cite information from you in my research. Your name, e-mail address and telephone number will be requested as part of your participation.

For you to participate, go to the consent form that is attached in my e-mail to you and print and sign the consent document. Afterward, please contact me to schedule an interview, and please submit to me your e-mail address and telephone number.

A consent document will be attached in the e-mail where I ask you to participate in the research study. Afterward, I will schedule an interview with you at an agreed-upon date, time and location. Please submit a copy of your signed informed consent form to me when we meet just before the beginning of the interview.

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this research study. I do appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Angelo J. Salvo

Interlibrary Loan / Technical Services Librarian

Appendix H: E-Mailed Future Prospects Questionnaire Questions

1. As a former homeschooled while enrolled at a college or university, do you think that your college experience will lead to continual academic success in a graduate or professional school?
2. What social characteristics or character traits have you developed that you didn't already possess while in college that are helping you with being able to launch or develop a successful career?
3. What social characteristics or character traits have you learned while in college that are helping you with developing a successful personal life as an adult?
4. What aspects of your performance as an individual in college and as a college student have convinced you that homeschooling produces intelligent, well-adjusted adults?
5. What changes would you recommend to the homeschooling you received?
6. Please describe your main goals in your life, and describe how your upbringing as a homeschooled student has helped to prepare you to achieve those goals.
7. What advice do you have for homeschooled high school students who are about to apply to a college or university?

Appendix I: Second E-Mailed Questionnaire Questions

1. Please introduce yourself.

Please give your educational background.

Please mention the grades in which you were homeschooled.

What type of curriculum did you experience while you were homeschooled?
2. What was your expectation of college? What problems, if any, did you anticipate while you were away at a college or university campus?
3. What benefits did you expect to receive by being at college?
4. Did you observe positive models for college life? What behaviors did you see that you were thought were positive?
5. Do you find that the environment at the college or university where you have been enrolled provides a moral setting where you feel comfortable?
6. Does the college where you are enrolled provide moral and/or Christian religious guidance which is compatible with the upbringing you had at home while you were being homeschooled? If you have found that your life on campus was not compatible with the upbringing you had at home while you were being homeschooled, how have you been coping with your life on campus?
7. Are you happy with the college or university environment that you have immersed yourself in?
8. What could have made your college or university experience better?