A CASE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDERS' MOTIVATION TO INVEST IN CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by

Cory James Merante

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2019

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2019

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education in a modern American K-12 school. The theory guiding this study is expectancy-value theory as it relates to the evaluative aspects of stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education and their motives to become involved in it. Classical Christian education includes the concepts of the trivium, explicit instruction, the Socratic method, and basic skills mastery, as well as carrying on the traditions of the West; all steeped in a Christian worldview. Data came in the form of interviews, documents, and focus groups from parents, teachers, and school board members who are involved with a classical Christian education. An analysis of the data revealed that stakeholders are motivated to invest their efforts in a classical Christian school by a variety of factors including, a disapproval of the mainstream educational philosophy and a strong desire to experience the core elements of the classical Christian philosophy. This study found that no matter what participants believed about classical Christian education, they placed a great deal of value on their expectations about the philosophy, and those expectations were being met, with few exceptions.

Keywords: classical Christian education, liberal arts, expectancy-value theory, trivium

Acknowledgements

All the glory to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you, God for answering prayers and wrapping me in your Holy Spirit when things got really difficult!

Thank you to my saint-of-a-wife, Stacy, for your support and encouragement. I love you so very much! Thank you to my children, Cade, Ruby, Maeve, Nora, and Elsie for your patience and obedience when I asked for uninterrupted time. I love you, God bless you!

Thank you to Dr. Spaulding for giving me the initial support and a chance to complete this process. Thank you also to Dr. Yocum for coming on board to help see me through the process. Finally, a tremendous thank you to my chair, Dr. Wimberley. You encouraged me, challenged me, and never gave up on me, even when it looked like certain failure. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to prove that I had what it took to complete this monumental task!

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List of Abbreviations

Association for Classical Christian Schools (ACCS)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Educational Saving Account (ESA)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Sons of Light Academy (SLA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study sought to find out how and why a classical Christian education appeals to various stakeholders who subscribe to it in America today. The background for this study includes the theoretical framework of expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Eccles and Wigfield (2002) stated of the expectancy-value model that "achievement performance, persistence, and choice [are linked to] expectancy-related and task-value beliefs" and that expectancies and values are positively related to each other (p. 118). Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) stated of the expectancy-value model that attitudes are "assumed to be determined by beliefs about the likely outcomes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs or outcome expectancies) weighted by the evaluations of these outcomes" (p. 18). Since it may take years for stakeholders who are involved in a classical Christian education to see the fruit of their efforts, this study sought to find out the motivation of the stakeholders in the first place. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) stated that, "individuals' choice, persistence, and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they value the activity" (p. 68). Theorists who study achievement motivation include not only an "individuals' choice persistence, and performance," but also the "vigor in carrying them out" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 68). Expectancy-value theory relates to the evaluative aspects of stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education and their motives to pursue it.

The study also includes an in-depth look at classical liberal arts education, from its beginnings, to how it is employed in modern American schools. It is important to understand that when the word modern is used in this study, it is referring to schools in the present era utilizing a centuries-old philosophy known as classical liberal arts. There is evidence that the classical

liberal arts educational philosophy may predate the philosophers of ancient Greece (Cook, 2014). Researchers found evidence that prominent Greek philosophers studied classical liberal arts in what is now the country of Egypt (Cook, 2014). Another aspect of this study included an examination of classical Christian education. The goal of classical Christian education is to develop "a graduate who knows what they believe and why, and can positively impact the community around them" (Association of Classical and Christian Schools, 2017, "What is CCE?", para 12). This chapter is organized in such a way as to provide information about the background of the research and of myself as the researcher, significance of the problem and the purpose of the study, and research questions.

Background

For thousands of years, the primary philosophy of education consisted of the study of the liberal arts (Cook, 2014). During the middle-ages, terms like the trivium and quadrivium were used to describe the classical philosophy as it spread across Europe (Clark & Jain, 2013). A century after the founding of America, the classical model started to decline and the model known as progressive education began to take root (Moore, 2014). For decades philosophies and practices have cycled through schools in an attempt to reform education (Iorio & Yaeger, 2011; Ravitch, 2000).

Historical

Socrates asserted that one of the most critical parts of an argument is the definition of terms (Ferejohn, 2013). Therefore, the definition of classical liberal arts education must be established. Originally, classical liberal arts education consisted of the liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium (Veith & Kern, 2015). The trivium consists of logic, grammar, and rhetoric (Veith & Kern, 2015). Joseph (2002) described the trivium as, "The three arts of language

pertaining to the mind" (p. 3). The second part of the liberal arts, the quadrivium consists of the subjects of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music (Clark & Jain, 2013; Conrad, 2014). The trivium "are the tools of language" and the quadrivium "are the tools of mathematics" (Clark & Jain, 2013, p. 324). Sayers (1979) stated that while the quadrivium consists of subjects, the trivium are the "methods of dealing with subjects" (p. 93). Logic is the foundational quality of thinking and it can also be used to support grammar and rhetoric (Poythress, 2013). Classical liberal arts education is an unfamiliar concept in main-stream American education (Clark & Jain, 2013); however, Joseph (2002) stated, "The trivium formed the base of education during the classical times, the Middle Ages, and the post-Renaissance" (p. 6).

Some researchers argue that classical liberal arts education is rooted in the Middle Ages (Howe, 2011; Joseph, 2002). Others date the origins of classical liberal arts education to the classical period (Conrad, 2014). Some historians provide an argument that classical liberal arts education, with the trivium and quadrivium predates the classical period altogether (Cook, 2014). There is evidence that schools utilizing a liberal arts model existed in Egypt long before the Athenians documented liberal arts education in Greece (Cook, 2014). Between 4,400 and 4,000 B.C., Egypt (then known as Kemet) instituted in their Mystery Schools, seven liberal arts (Cook, 2014). There is also evidence that Greek philosophers (e.g., Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato) studied from the Mystery Schools in ancient Egypt (Cook, 2014). Ancient Greek thinkers and teachers brought back to Greece what they learned from Egypt and incorporated it into their teaching.

From ancient Greece, classical liberal arts education made its way across Europe throughout the Middle Ages (Cook, 2014; van der Wende, 2011). Colleges and universities such as the University of Bologna, Oxford University, and Cambridge University that were

established during the Middle Ages, all employed a classical liberal arts educational model (Cook, 2014; van der Wende, 2011). By the end of the Enlightenment, classical liberal arts education found its way to America (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; van der Wende, 2011). Many of the founding fathers such as Jefferson, Madison, and Webster received a classical liberal arts education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; DeMille, 2006).

Social

Some researchers believe that a classical liberal arts educational model is purely an American idea (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; DeMille, 2006; van der Wende, 2011). No matter its age or origin, classical liberal arts education was a prominent philosophy in American colleges and universities in the early nineteenth century (Howe, 2011). Classical liberal arts education has maintained two commonalities through the ages: first the art of language (trivium), and, second the subjects to which that language is applied (quadrivium) (Cook, 2014; Clark & Jain, 2013; Conrad, 2014).

Over a century ago, classical liberal arts education was phased out in American schools (Fallace, 2011) and was replaced by what is known as progressive education (Moore, 2014) with a primary focus on the social aspect of learning (Dewey, 1897). Classical liberal arts education, that produced such personages as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Daniel Webster (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; DeMille, 2006), was cast aside early in the history of the United States. Nearly all children in America today receive a progressive education (DeMille, 2006). As the progressive model began to dominate education in America, it gradually pushed out the classical liberal arts educational model, and along with it its Christian foundation (Veith & Kern, 2015).

Long before the gospel made it to Greece, early Greek philosophers searched for truth through discourse and examined all possible points of reference (Poythress, 2013). The use of

logic was a key component to arriving at truth with the Greek philosophers. That is why the Socratic method was so important, because truth claims had to be defended with valid evidence through rigorous questioning by the philosopher's peers (Poythress, 2013). Another contributor to the classical philosophy was the thirteenth century Catholic priest, Thomas Aquinas who understood the merits of a classical liberal arts education (Conrad, 2014; Veith & Kern, 2015). More recently, Dorothy Sayers and Sister Miriam Joseph have championed the cause of classical liberal arts education.

Classical liberal arts education, utilizing the constant methods of the trivium (Joseph, 2002) is derived from a God-centered worldview that is based on biblical truths that are absolute in nature (Wilson, 1991). The man-centered worldview that comprises the ever-changing nature of the progressive educational model provides no foundation upon which truth can rest. A search did not reveal any traditional public schools that utilize a classical liberal arts educational model; there are private schools (Association of Classical Christian Schools, 2017), public charter schools (Classical Charter School Essential Elements and Model Mission Statement, n.d.), and even homeschool parents (Sherfinski, 2014) that subscribe to it.

Since the fall of Athens, there has been a gradual disintegration of the liberal arts through the centuries with only a few resurgences (Conrad, 2014). Even though the majority of schools in America today subscribe to a progressive model, classical Christian education appeals to some individuals. Those individuals include: parents, teachers, and, school board members.

Theoretical

Educational reform in the United States intensified following World War II (Iorio & Yaeger, 2011; Ravitch, 2000). Individuals who remain hopeful that reform is possible may want to question whether or not reform is the desired goal. Critics of public schools assume that the

goal of the established governance of the U.S. Department of Education is to educate (Wilson, 1991). Wilson (1991) argues, "education bureaucracies, like all bureaucracies, tend to replace their original task with the goal of self-perpetuation. And in the achievement of *that* goal there has been tremendous success" (p. 1534). Reforms have not improved achievement to expected levels, evidenced by the continual demand and call for perpetual reforms, not to mention legislation like GOALS 2000, No Child Left Behind (Iorio & Yaeger, 2011), Race to the Top, and most recently Common Core Sate Standards (Au, 2016). This has caused some individuals to look for something beyond reform, and instead seek a replacement for the educational philosophy. (Wilson, 2003). Wilson (2003) states,

> As Christian educators, we are to understand first who God is in His triune sovereignty, and secondly what He has done in the history of the created order – in the Creation, in the Incarnation, and in the final glory. In light of who God is and what He has done, true education is possible. Outside that light, all attempts at education are fundamentally idolatrous and self-contradictory. (p. 229)

This case study attempted to describe why classical Christian education appeals to parents, teachers, and school board members in a modern American K-12 school. Research has been conducted regarding the process Christian parents go through while deciding on where to send their children to school (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). However, no studies provide an in-depth explanation about what motivates parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education in America today. This study has added to the expectancy value theory by researching how stakeholders' choices to remain involved in classical Christian education is linked to their expectancy-related beliefs (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This study also showed how expectancies and values are positively related to each other

within the participants' perceptions of classical Christian education (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Finally, this study attempted to surmise the value of stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education and their choice to pursue it.

Situation to Self

Like any good teacher, I found myself continually exploring improved techniques to help my students learn more proficiently. For years new techniques came and went with little sustainable evidence that they worked. By scaffolding my instruction, I found that I was scaling my lessons back to much lower grade levels far too often in order to teach my fourth graders in each subject. I spent most of the year remediating, even with average to above-average achievers. It got to the point where I began every lesson with the assumption that my students did not know the basic elements of the subject, so I would start with an elemental review of basic concepts. I found there was an astonishing amount of basic facts and skills that my students did not possess. In my frustration, I spent years researching and trying to develop a philosophy of education that focused on mastery of the basics. Unfortunately, I felt like I was groping in the dark trying to create an all-encompassing sequence for mastery from the ground up. That is when I came across the concepts of classical liberal arts education and classical Christian education. Because I taught in a public school, I could not implement the classical Christian educational model. However, I was able to implement some elements of classical liberal arts education into my daily instruction.

The first thing I did when I began to implement elements of a classical liberal arts educational model into my classroom was to rearrange students' desks into rows where students were facing the teacher and not each other in pods around the room. My new room arrangement symbolized the source from where the information originated (the teacher). The arrangement

also helped to stop students from receiving incorrect information from each other. The next thing that I did was to find out the basic information that students did not know. I discovered that most of my fourth graders did not know their addition facts or multiplication facts. Students did not know the various sounds that many letters and letter combinations make (e.g., the letter "a" makes four sounds, not just two like most students are taught). Students did not understand the key elements of sentences while writing; nor could they point out key elements of a story while reading.

It was only when I began teaching the basic skills in order to build up to fourth grade level content expectations that I realized how grave the problem was. Students had so little basic knowledge from previous grades, that remediation interfered with meeting the content expectations of their current grade level. I found that I could not use a strict classical liberal arts educational model unless the previous grade levels used the classical liberal arts educational model as well. When I collaborated with my colleagues about my new-found philosophy, I found they agreed with the problem that students do not know basic facts. However, there was a reluctance to implement solutions to remediate as it would interfere with students learning the content expectations for each grade level. After researching more about the transition from classical education to the progressive model I understood from where my colleagues' reluctance came.

The current philosophy of education that the vast majority of schools use, known as the progressive model of education, is at great odds with the classical liberal arts model. As I dug into the differences between these competing philosophies, my research revealed disturbing information indicating that the classical liberal arts model might be too effective at educating a

common future employee. While president of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson stated in a speech to the New York High School Teachers Association,

> It is imperative that we distinguish between education and technical or industrial Training. . . We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class, of necessity, in every society, to *forego the privileges of a liberal education* [emphasis added] and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks (Wilson, 1909, p. 22)

My personal philosophy of education was to teach in such a way that my students would receive the very best education in order to be the very best educated individual possible regardless of their future vocation. If my students were going to be a construction laborer, I wanted them to be a construction laborer who could think for him or herself. If the progressive model did not agree with this, I felt it was worth studying in greater detail. That was the catalyst that prompted this study.

Creswell (2013) provides four philosophical assumptions that researchers bring to a study: Ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. As the researcher, I understood that all stakeholders within this study may not have shared my ontological assumptions about classical Christian education. We may not have shared the same definition of what a classical liberal arts education is or possessed the same degree of knowledge about the history of classical liberal arts education. I reported the nature of reality of the participants by analyzing and reporting stakeholders' motivation for investing their efforts in classical Christian education, even when their nature of reality did not match my ontological assumptions. I spent considerable time with my participants in order to develop an epistemological awareness of their knowledge claims. By getting as close as possible to the participants (Creswell, 2013) and

spending time with them in the field, I was able to know what they know and therefore bring an accurate as possible epistemological assumption to the study. I also brought certain axiological assumptions that explained the value that I have for a God-centered approach to learning. Axiological assumptions can be seen in the "value-laden nature of information gathered from the field" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). My axiological assumptions included the notion that classical Christian education is by far superior to the progressive model. Another one of my axiological assumptions is that classical Christian education is much more rigorous but requires substantial groundwork of building basic skills at the early grade levels. I was cognizant of my axiological assumptions during data collection and it helped to minimize my biases from interfering with the study. The methodological assumptions were inductive and emerging (Creswell, 2013); that is, the procedures of data collection and analysis changed as the study unfolded. I also brought a biblical worldview to this study that assumed that knowledge of truth is essential to living a Christian life. The assumption I brought to this study was that pursuing truth in order to know Christ and him crucified is a noble and liberating undertaking; as John 8:23 explained when he stated, "Then you will know truth and the truth will set you free" (New International Version).

Problem Statement

Classical education was the primary model of education for hundreds, if not thousands of years (Gaillet & Horner, 2010; Joseph, 2002). Since the progressive model began to dominate education there have been very few K-12 schools in America using classical Christian education (Veith & Kern, 2015). Instead, DeMille (2006) explained that, "we turned to a system which dismissed God, the classics, and the proven methods of the centuries" (p. 109). The problem with doing away with classical liberal arts education, rooted in the trivium, is that it essentially did away with the pursuit of biblical truth: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"

(Proverbs 9:10, New King James Version). Through the centuries, classical liberal arts education maintained many of the same characteristics; which included: the liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium (Clark & Jain, 2013; Veith, 2012), explicit instruction from teachers, and a teacher-centered classroom environment (Taş & Coşkun, 2014; Zohrabi, Torabi, & Baybourdiani, 2012), as well as the Socratic method (Yudcovitch, & Hayes, 2014; Zou et al., 2011). Classical Christian education provides a vehicle to bring back concepts like the trivium that will lead students to the truth (Veith & Kern, 2015). Classical Christian education produces "a graduate who knows what they believe and why, and can positively impact the community around them" (Association of Classical and Christian Schools, 2017, "What is CCE?", para 12). This study sought to find out the motivation for individuals to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. No studies provide an in-depth explanation about why classical Christian education appeals to parents, teachers, and school board members who subscribe to it in America today.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe why classical Christian education appeals to parents, teachers, and school board members at a modern American K-12 school. At this stage in the research classical Christian education is a pedagogical approach that utilizes the three elements of the trivium with an "emphasis of passing on the heritage of the West" (Wilson, 2003, p. 84). Since its inception, Christianity has grown the most in Western civilization, requiring the emphasis noted by Wilson (2013) within classical Christian education (Wilson, 2003). The theory guiding this study is the expectancy-value theory as it relates to the evaluative aspects of stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study provided information about the perceived value of classical Christian education for K-12 students in America. No research exists to explain why classical Christian education appeals to parents, teachers, and school board members who subscribe to it in America today. I provided empirical evidence for the motivation of stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. I collected data in the forms of documents, interviews, and focus groups in order to arrive at, as well as verify conclusions.

This research will inform all who are involved in education and reform of the perceived value of classical Christian education. The value of classical Christian education was studied both from the classical liberal arts philosophy (Joseph, 2002; Poythress, 2013; Sayers, 1979), as well as from a God-centered approach (Joseph, 2002; Poythress, 2013; Sayers, 1979, Wilson, 2003). Data collected from stakeholders was analyzed to identify themes relating to the motivation for those involved in classical Christian education.

Research Questions

The theoretical framework for this study that informed the research questions is the expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The expectancy-value theory explains the motivation that individuals possess based on their beliefs about an object and the evaluation of those beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Research questions were designed first to determine the motivation that individuals in different groups within the case possess (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Research questions were then designed to assess the evaluation of the beliefs of individuals in different groups within the case (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Research questions were directed at multiple groups within the case because, “no single personality or situational

variable is likely to provide a sufficient explanation of. . . behaviors" (Jessor, Jessor, & Finney, 1973, p. 2). Because an individual's attitudes toward an object can affect their decisions about the object (based on perceived value; Fishbein, 1963), it was important to examine those attitudes closely through robust data collection. This study extended the expectancy-value theory by providing information about the motivation of stakeholders based on their perceived value of a classical Christian education.

Research Question One

What is the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education?

Stakeholders who are involved in classical Christian education are motivated in some way. The key question in this study was to find out what that motivation was for various stakeholders. In most cases, the neighborhood school does not utilize a classical Christian educational model. Therefore, it was important to understand why parents chose to send their children to a classical Christian school instead of the traditional neighborhood school (Sherfinski, 2014). Most teachers use a student-centered approach to education (Dewey, 1897); some have either been trained in or experimented with direct explicit instruction (Taş & Coşkun, 2014) or teacher-centered educational methods for education (Zohrabi et al., 2012); which are components of a classical Christian educational model. Based on the structure of the trivium, high academic standards are implemented and also easily tracked from grade level to grade level. As far as the Christian aspect goes, Wilson (2003) stated that teachers need a Christian worldview expressed in these terms:

> When we are walking in obedience to the Gospel, worshiping and living as God requires us to do—hearing His Word, singing His psalms, eating at His table, honoring our

> parents, loving our wives, respecting our husbands, teaching our children because we cherish them, mowing the lawn when we should, and also reading and teaching our history, science, literature, and so on—then we have a Christian worldview. At that point, and not before, our children are safe under our instruction. (p. 96)

School board members volunteer their time to participate on school boards. Their efforts go externally unrewarded, other than for political gain, if desired; although, understanding the motivation for board members not interested in political gain is significant.

Research Question Two

What beliefs do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Stakeholders should understand their beliefs (if any) about classical Christian education. Some of the stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education were based on their perceived knowledge of the subject material (Towler & Shepherd, 1992). It was important to understand stakeholders' perceived knowledge of classical Christian education through their beliefs. This is because expectancy-value theory posits that attitudes about classical Christian education will be shaped from their beliefs (along with how those beliefs are evaluated by the stakeholders themselves). Bagozzi (1984) asserted that beliefs can be determined through "standard open-ended elicitation procedure" (p. 302). Therefore, part of the data collection for stake holders' beliefs consisted of open-ended elicitation (Bagozzi, 1984).

Research Question Three

What expectations do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Of expectancy-value theory Fishbein (1963) stated,

> an individual's attitude toward any object is a function of (1) his beliefs about that object (i.e. the probability that the object is related to other objects, concepts, values, or goals) and (2) the evaluative aspect of those beliefs (i.e. the attitude toward the related objects). (p. 238)

It was important to determine the expectations that stakeholders possessed about classical Christian education for two reasons. One reason was so stakeholders could determine if their beliefs and expectations aligned together within the framework of classical Christian school. Another reason for stakeholders to understand their expectations of classical Christian education was so they could evaluate their own expectations so that they could determine if their expectations were being met.

Research Question Four

What are the parents', teachers', and school board members' perceptions of the value of their investment in classical Christian education?

Once the stakeholders' beliefs toward classical Christian education were ascertained, then the "evaluative aspect of those beliefs" could be assessed in order to determine the attitude of the stakeholders toward classical Christian education (Fishbein, 1963, p. 233). Finally, once it was determined "how beliefs and evaluations combine, the role of beliefs, evaluations, and attitudes in decision making and choice behavior can be scrutinized along with other determinants" (Bagozzi, p. 304). Participants attitudes toward classical Christian education were scrutinized to determine their perceptions of the value they placed in classical Christian education.

Definitions

1. *Classical Christian Education* – Classical Christian education is a pedagogical approach that utilizes the three elements of the trivium with an "emphasis of passing on the heritage of the West" (Wilson, 2003, p. 84).
2. *Classical Liberal Arts Educational Philosophy* – The classical liberal arts education philosophy includes the liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium (Joseph, 2002; Sayers, 1979), explicit instruction from teachers, and a teacher-centered classroom environment (Taş & Coşkun, 2014; Zohrabi, Torabi, & Baybourdiani, 2012); as well as the Socratic method (Ferejohn, 2013; Yudcovitch, & Hayes, 2014; Zou et al., 2011).
3. *Heritage of the West* - Since its inception, Christianity has grown the most in Western civilization (Wilson, 2013). The spread of the gospel West coinciding with the development of education is significant within the story about how both classical education and the gospel found their way to America (Wilson, 2003).
4. *Progressive Educational Model* – The progressive educational model is primarily focused on the social aspect of learning first and on academics secondary (Dewey, 1897).
5. *Quadrivium* – The quadrivium consists of the subjects of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music (Conrad, 2014; Joseph, 2002).
6. *Trivium* – The trivium consists of logic, grammar, and rhetoric; the "methods of dealing with subjects" (Sayers, 1979, p. 93).

Summary

This study sought to find out the motivation for parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education. By utilizing the expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) as the theoretical framework

for this study, the evaluative aspects of stakeholders' beliefs about classical Christian education were determined. There is a marked difference between progressive education and classical liberal arts education and it is important to understand the history of both. It is also important to understand what is unique about classical Christian education compared to the progressive model. As the researcher, I have had experience in both classical liberal arts education as well as the progressive philosophy. The research questions helped to guide the study into determining the motivation of stakeholders who are involved in classical Christian education in a modern K-12 American school.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Expectancy-value theory explains the motivation that individuals possess based on their beliefs about an object and the evaluation of those beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This study sought to determine the motivation of various stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education in a modern American K-12 school. After a discussion of the elements that characterize expectancy-value theory, a review of the related literature ensued.

The first component of the literature review explored aspects of school choice. School choice affords parents an alternative to their local, district-zoned neighborhood school (Darby & Saatcioglu, 2015). The discussion regarding school choice is related to the value that parents place on their children's education. School choice can include such areas as private schools and charter schools; vouchers, tax credits, and Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). The literature revealed concerns regarding inequalities in school choice programs including discrimination and decreased diversity in charter and private schools. Christian parents have a number of factors available to help them to decide where to send their children to school. Most parents typically do not complete an exhaustive search of the options available to them in their decision-making process. Instead, a common theme emerged, called "satisficing", to show that parents were comfortable with their decisions because they met their minimum requirements (Prichard & Swezey, 2016).

The review of the additional related literature explained of what a classical education consisted, what replaced it in America, and what a classical Christian education is today. Classical education was the primary model of education for centuries (Gaillet & Horner, 2010;

Joseph, 2002). The core elements of a classical education include: The trivium, explicit teacher instruction and teacher-centered classrooms, importance of building background knowledge, the Socratic method, the mastery of basic skills, and traditional aims and methods. This literature review will also explore the core elements of a progressive education. After a brief history of classical Christian education, a review of the philosophies of classical Christian education are explained. Philosophies of a classical Christian education include: The trivium in light of classical Christian education and the heritage of the West (Wilson, 2003). No literature was found that provided an explanation about why a classical Christian education appeals to various stakeholders who subscribe to it in America today.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Eccles and Wigfield (2002) stated of the expectancy-value model that "achievement performance, persistence, and choice [are linked to] expectancy-related and task-value beliefs" and that expectancies and values are positively related to each other (p. 118). Wigfield and Eccles studied how expectancy and value constructs develop and how they relate to performance and choice.

> Expectancies and values are assumed to be influenced by task-specific beliefs such as ability beliefs, the perceived difficulty of different tasks, and individuals' goals, self-schema, and affective memories. These social cognitive variables, in turn, are influenced by individuals' perceptions of their own previous experiences and a variety of socialization influences. (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 69)

Wigfield and Eccles found that achievement-related choices are directly influenced by expectancies and values. If students value high achievement and expect to achieve at a high

level, then they will choose activities that will put them in the position to achieve. Fishbein (1963) stated, “all beliefs about an object are related to an individual’s attitude since all beliefs about an object contain an evaluative aspect” (p. 234). Given the choice to watch T.V. or to study, students who value and expect high achievement will choose to study. Wigfield & Eccles (2000) also found that expectancies and values "influence performance, effort, and persistence." (p. 69). Students who value high achievement will put forth the effort to perform. Students who expect to achieve will also persevere through challenges to achieve their goals.

Another aspect affecting the expectancy and value construct is the factor of one's ability or the perception of one's ability. “Ability beliefs are defined as the individual's perceptions of his or her current competence at a given activity" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 70). An individual's previous experiences will influence his beliefs about his abilities (Wigfield & Eccles). If a student previously experienced difficulty in math class, he may believe that he has low ability in math. A student's beliefs about his abilities will influence his expectancies and values (Wigfield & Eccles). If a student believes that he is bad at math then he will place little value on math and expect failure in math. The reverse is true as well: If a student believes that he is good at math, then he will place more value on math and expect to succeed. It is important to note that while ability and expectations are to a high degree related to each other, one's *ability* is focused on the present, while one's *expectations* are focused on the future (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

There are strong correlations between students' expectancies for success and their subsequent performance (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). If one expects to succeed, one tends to succeed. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) also found beliefs about one's ability strongly predicted future achievement; leading to the conclusion that there are links "between previous performance

and subsequent ability beliefs and ability beliefs and subsequent performance" (p. 78). A virtuous cycle of achievement can be attained through the construct of previous performance effecting belief, which in turn effects performance, and so on.

No studies provide an in-depth explanation about why a classical Christian education appeals to various stakeholders who subscribe to it in America today. In order for this to be accomplished, certain information must be obtained about the stakeholders. First, the participants' beliefs about classical Christian education needed to be ascertained. Participants beliefs may be influenced by their previous experiences in education (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Next the severity or degree of strength of the participants' beliefs needed to be determined. Finally, the individual's attitude toward classical Christian education needed to be assessed (Fishbein, 1963).

Related Literature

In order to appreciate the process that stakeholders go through when making the decision to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education, it is important to understand the nature of the models of classical education and classical Christian education. It is also important to understand the antithesis of the aforementioned models therefore, the progressive educational model will be explored. However, without the ability to choose a school, stakeholders would never have the opportunity to make the decision to invest their efforts into classical Christian education. Consequently, the concepts of school choice will be explained as they relate to the expectancy-value theory and the motivation that stakeholders have based on their beliefs and the evaluation of those beliefs and the likely outcomes that their choice have given them (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

School Choice

Parents who send their children to a classical Christian school are looking for something different than their neighborhood school can provide. School choice is described as "an approach to educational governance where parents are given greater discretion in selecting schools, free from the limited options made available by districts based on zoning assignments" (Darby & Saatcioglu, 2015, p. 62). Many individuals, with a great deal of sincerity, believe that when parents are provided with a choice for where to send their children to school, they are given an escape route from failing public schools (Teasley, 2017).

Different schools and school-related programs have been developed over the years in order to provide parents choices; including private schools and charter schools, vouchers, tax credits, and ESAs. Parents need to consider the benefits and drawbacks to each of these choices before making a decision about where and how their children should be educated.

Charter schools. Charter schools provide parents with alternative choices to their neighborhood school. A charter school is defined as:

> a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract (or charter) with the state, district, or other entity. The charter exempts the school from certain state or local rules and regulations. In return for flexibility and autonomy, the charter school must meet the accountability standards outlined in its charter. A school's charter is reviewed periodically by the entity that granted it and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or if the accountability standards are not met. (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2018)

"The first law allowing the establishment of public charter schools was passed in Minnesota in 1991" (NCES, 2018). As of the Fall of 2016 (the most recent year available), 43 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation allowing charter schools (NCES, 2019). Charter schools are different than traditional public schools in that they have a high degree of autonomy, increased accountability (in most cases), and alternative oversight from their governing bodies (Convertino, 2017). The 2009 Race to the Top grant included funding incentives to states that included charter school legislation for their "innovative reforms" (Convertino, 2017, p. 158). The Race to the Top grant provided evidence that may lead to the conclusion that the U.S. Department of Education considered charter schools an avenue for reform and parents continue to choose charter schools for their children's education.

Private Schools. Private schools are schools that are strictly tuition-based, as opposed to publicly funded charter schools. Parents can be limited by the tuition, restricting the choice for sending their children to private schools. In some states, monetary constraints can be lessened with school vouchers, tax credits, and ESAs (Egalite & Wolf, 2016; Lubienski & Brewer, 2016). In their quantitative study about religion, religiosity, and private school choice, Cohen-Zada and Sander (2008) found that, "both religion and religiosity have important effects on the demand for private, Catholic, Protestant, and non-sectarian schools" (p. 86). Religious aspects drive much of the demand for private schools as evidenced by Cohen-Zada and Sander's (2008) study when they found, "even if a religious household has a high-income level, it will be less likely to locate in a school district with good public schools" (p. 99). This is because parents find more value in paying for a private education than paying a higher cost of living through housing and tax increases for what they perceive as only a marginally higher public education (Cohen-Zada & Sander, 2008).

Market-based reform. School vouchers, tax credits, and ESAs are all examples of market-based educational programs (Egalite & Wolf, 2016; Lubienski & Brewer, 2016) and all represent a vehicle for parents to choose a school other than their neighborhood school. "School choice, as a component of market-based reform, is touted as the solution to the bureaucracy and long-standing problems within public education" (Teasley, 2017, p. 131).

Much research has been conducted regarding the voucher system pertaining to student achievement (Lubienski & Brewer, 2016). Lubienski and Brewer (2016) conducted a quantitative study of 12 studies listed on the Friedman Foundation's website of "Gold Standard Studies" about the impact of vouchers on student achievement (as cited in Lubienski and Brewer, 2016). Lubienski and Brewer's (2016) study found that although various grade levels, subjects, and ethnics groups showed significant student achievement compared with control groups in schools utilizing vouchers, "A closer look reveals that there is simply no consistent or compelling impact of vouchers on student achievement" (p. 462). Parents may conclude that choosing a school other than their neighborhood school may not necessarily increase their children's quality of education.

For parents who want to pursue schools of choice, another deferment of funds can come through the form of tax benefits for contributions to scholarships for private school tuition (McCarthy, 2016). Using tax benefits for tuition for a private school education can provide an enticing alternative to voucher programs. This is because, unlike vouchers, tax codes in most states that provide tax benefits for private school tuition do not require restrictions for certain entities like religious schools. (McCarthy, 2016, p. 474).

Another option afforded to parents by market-based school comes in the form of ESAs in states that have introduced them (Ladner, 2016, p. 1). An ESA can be used by parents to fund an

alternative education than that of the public schools (Egalite & Wolf, 2016; Ladner, 2016; Lubienski & Brewer, 2016). Ladner (2016) explained how ESAs can be used by parents to make a more informed decision because public accounting systems in public education, "make it impossible to track how much is spent on a particular child or school. . . Districts can't choose the most cost-effective programs because they lack evidence on costs and results" (p. 1). With an ESA system, parents are able to report online, via a rating system about how they feel a certain school served their children. Some parents cited that searching the test scores on school web sites as strongly influencing their school choice decision (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). Other parents may find first-person parent reporting more valuable versus school districts doing their own reporting and touting their own programs (Ladner, 2016).

School choice and discrimination. Parents who value the experiences that their children gain when they are around a diverse group of other children in a school setting daily may have concerns about school choice and discrimination. There is at least a perception that the concept of school choice can lead to discrimination and a less diverse environment in private and charter schools. Critics of school choice argue that "antidiscrimination language in voucher program provisions does not mirror the antidiscrimination language that appears in statutes governing traditional public schools or public charter schools." (Eckes, Mead, & Ulm, 2016, p. 554). This can lead to discrimination against other "marginalized populations (i.e. at least religion, race, national origin/ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation)" (Eckes et al., 2016, p. 551). There is a concern that because of the lack of laws for providing protections, discrimination may occur, especially when it comes to a voucher system (Eckes et al., 2016). In their qualitative study about race, inequality of opportunity, and school choice, Darby and Saatcioglu (2015) found that, through circumstances beyond their control, some parents of disadvantaged students of color are

unable to “pursue high-quality options in the school choice market” (p. 63). These circumstances would also contribute to the reduction of diversity in some schools of choice.

If, in fact school choice programs decrease the diversity of private and charter schools, research has shown that choosing a private school and especially a religious school, can create a positive effect on the diverse population within those schools by closing the achievement gap (Jeynes, 2010). The results from a nationwide meta-analysis, “suggest that personal religious faith among African Americans may potentially play a prominent role in reducing the achievement gap” (Jeynes, 2010, p. 274). Jeynes’ (2010) meta-analysis found that religious faith produced the largest effect size at .38. “Religious schools also yielded a statistically significant result” (Jeynes, 2010, p. 274). One of the reasons for the perceived discrimination is that not all races subscribe to the same religion and, based on the availability of the religious school, may not agree with the religious affiliation of an available school. For instance, Sander (2015) found that in the Chicago area African Americans were less likely to attend a private school, “partly a result of Blacks being disproportionately Protestant while private schools are disproportionately Catholic” (2015, p. 279). Parents who want their children in a diverse environment with a closer achievement gap could find value in the education provided by a private religious school.

Christian parents and school choice. Parents have the option of utilizing a number of factors while researching their selection of where to send their children to school. Factors can include religion and religiosity (Cohen-Zada and Sander, 2008), social networks (Cohen-Zada & Sander, 2008; Prichard & Swezey, 2016), customary enrollment patterns, and children’s academic histories (Bell, 2009). In their qualitative, grounded theory study, Prichard and Swezey (2016) found the following factors that parents use to make decisions about schools of choice:

"(a) Decision-making process, (b) influence on or by the child, (c) parents, (d) academics/extracurricular activities, and (e) religion" (p. 3).

A review of the literature found that parents typically do not engage in a comprehensive, exhaustive search or employ a detailed plan in their decision-making process to figure out where to send their children to a school (Bell, 2009; Prichard & Swezey, 2016). Instead, research revealed that parents "relied on input from limited social networks to make their decisions" (Bell, 2009; Prichard & Swezey, 2016, p. 12). It was also found that parents typically did not invite their children to participate in the decision-making process when they were young. Conversely, it was found that when children were older, their preferences carried more weight toward parents' decision-making processes (Prichard & Swezey, 2016).

Parents indicated that, among other factors, their own school and school choice experiences contributed to how they made the decisions for and with their children (Bell, 2009; Prichard & Swezey, 2016). A holistic approach of parents "own experience, life contexts and cultures, and their specific doctrines and beliefs must be considered" for how parents involve themselves in the faith formation of their children (Bunnell, Yocum, Koyzis, and Strohmyer, 2018, p. 2). However, parents do not typically agree about what attributes constitute a quality education. Parents related that they value (with varying degrees of significance): How well schools prepare students for college, schools with caring teachers, and schools with lower student-to-teacher ratios (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). The literature also revealed that parents are concerned about how schools deal with what is eternal (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). It was found that parents who choose to homeschool or send their children to Christian schools allowed their religious beliefs to influence their decisions (Cohen-Zada & Sander, 2008; Jeynes, 2010;

Prichard & Swezey, 2016). The literature also revealed that "some parents had religious reasons for sending their children to public school" (Bunnell et al., 2018, p. 15).

The literature revealed certain aspects about parents' satisfaction with the choices they had made about where to send their children to school. Regarding their school choice decisions, parents "were satisfied and comfortable for the most part with their choices but not enthusiastic" (Prichard & Swezey, 2016, p. 13). Even though there is evidence that the factors that Prichard and Swezey (2016) found contributed in varying degrees of significance to how parents chose schools for their children, one common theme emerged. The common theme was that of "satisificing". Herbert Simon, an economist who published a great deal of literature regarding theories of economic decision making, discovered a theory he called "satisficing" (The Economist, 2018). "Satisficing is the process (Buckley & Schneider, 2003) by which parents conduct a search for a school and conclude that search once they find a school that meets their minimum requirements" (Prichard & Swezey, 2016, p. 16). Prichard and Swezey (2016) found that, "The theme of satisficing was the one theme that was present in every interview without regard to which type of schooling was chosen" (p. 15).

Core Elements of Classical Education

Through the centuries, classical education maintained many of the same characteristics; which included: The liberal arts of the trivium (and quadrivium) (Joseph, 2002; Sayers, 1979), explicit instruction from teachers (Alfieri, Brooks, Aldrich, and Tenenbaum, 2011), and a teacher-centered classroom environment (Taş & Coşkun, 2014; Zohrabi, Torabi, & Baybourdiani, 2012); as well as the Socratic method (Ferejohn, 2013; Yudcovitch & Hayes, 2014; Zou et al., 2011). According to Moore (2014) classical education is a "return to traditional aims and methods" (p. 2) and,

> values knowledge for its own sake; upholds the standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts; demands moral virtue of its adherents; and prepares human beings to assume their places as responsible citizens in the political order. (p. 2)

Wise Bauer and Wise (2004) provided the following definition for classical education:

> It is language-intensive – not image-focused. . . It is history-intensive. . . It trains the mind to analyze and draw conclusions. It demands self-discipline. It produces literate, curious, intelligent students who have a wide range of interests and the ability to follow up on them. (p. xx)

Wilson (1909) explained that:

> A liberal education consists in putting the mind in such shape that all its powers, like the muscles of the body, will have been called into exercise, will have been given a certain degree of development, a certain uniformity and symmetry of development, so that the mind will not find itself daunted in the midst of the tasks. . . (p. 25)

The purpose of a liberal education was to improve the mind of the student. "Such an education was called 'liberal' because it was intended to be liberating and hence suitable for a free person (*Liber* means 'free' in Latin)" (Howe, 2011, p. 32).

The trivium. The first part of the classical liberal arts model; the trivium places importance on the logical acquisition of knowledge, or the label that Joseph (2002) prescribed to it: "Logic" (p. 5). This began with language, "not just how to order a meal in a foreign language, but the structure of a language, and hence of language itself – what it was, how it was put together, and how it worked" (Sayers, 1979, p. 92). Wolf (1995) stated that, "the purpose of liberal arts education was to acquire both knowledge and virtue" (p. 470). Looking strictly at

knowledge, students begin learning by memorizing information in order to accumulate facts (Wilson, 2003). This is best accomplished at a young age when memorizing is much easier (Sayers, 1979). Building a firm foundation in basic knowledge is necessary in order to progress to the next level of the trivium.

The second part of the trivium that Joseph (2002) labeled as "grammar" (p. 5) can be explained as the "grappling with facts and ideas" (p. 7). Grammar is when a student, "learns how to use language: how to define. . . terms and how to make accurate statements; how to construct an argument and how to detect fallacies in an argument" (Sayers, 1979, p. 92). Grammar is when the facts that were memorized in the knowledge phase of the trivium are synthesized and, therefore bring about greater understanding of all things. Poythress (2013) pointed out that, "Greek philosophers wanted to make the nature of things transparent to the human mind. And we can sometimes achieve a good deal by seeking to understand more deeply."

The final method of the trivium is what Joseph (2002) called "rhetoric" (p. 5) where, "the student learns how to express what he thinks" (Wilson, 1991, Rhetoric, para. 1). Wilson (1991) explained that, "rhetoric is built on a foundation of accumulated knowledge. . . and disputations about the reliability of that knowledge" (Rhetoric, para. 3). Students who learn through a liberal arts educational model acquire the knowledge necessary to apply to higher-level thinking. Wolf (1995) reaffirmed that the goals of a liberal arts education include, "acquisition of both knowledge and critical thinking skills" (p. 462). Joseph (2002) synthesized how the three parts of the trivium come together by stating, "The function of the trivium is the training of the mind for the study of matter and spirit, which together constitute the sum of reality" (Joseph, 2002, p. 8). When students are not only *allowed*, but *expected* to master basic skills, higher-level thinking can occur because students possess the knowledge and understanding required to *apply* higher-

level thinking skills. The task for educators is to help students learn basic skills effectively in order to progress through the higher levels of thinking included in the trivium, eventually arriving at rhetoric.

Explicit teacher instruction and teacher-centered classrooms. In the teacher-centered classroom students are instructed in a direct, explicit nature. The teacher (as well as the text) is the authority on the subject and while students are able to discover various aspects regarding the subject material, the majority of the learning comes directly from the teacher. Taş and Coşkun (2014) explained that to be instructed explicitly is "conscious (intentional) learning processes, in which learners are aware" (p. 20). Strictly lecturing students is not necessarily required in order to provide students with direct instruction (Alfieri et al., 2011). Instead explicit instruction includes lecturing as well as the teacher providing, "guidance as to what learners should expect as evidence of successful learning and then giving them opportunities to practice using such skills on their own" (Alfieri et al., 2011, p. 2).

In their quantitative study of English as a foreign language for middle school students, Zohrabi, et al. (2012) provided evidence that when students are learning the correct information directly from the teacher; in a teacher-centered learning environment, they have a better chance at acquiring correct knowledge about new subjects. A meta-analysis conducted by Alfieri, et al. (2011), "revealed that outcomes were favorable for explicit instruction when compared with unassisted discovery under most conditions (d = -0.38, 95% CI)" (p. 1). An effective way to provide explicit instruction, especially early in the process of learning a new skill is through a teacher-centered, rather than a student-centered approach, to learning (Zohrabi et al., 2012). Zohrabi, et al. (2012) admitted that, "The data generated by this study suggests that implementing student-centered activities within a communicative domain would be interesting to

both teachers and learners, but could not fulfill the learners' needs on English education in both communicative and traditional learning" p. 28. When students are explicitly taught concepts rather than being allowed unassisted discovery, they learn a great deal more (Alfieri et al., 2011; Taş & Coşkun, 2014).

The Socratic method. The Socratic method is one of the components of the classical liberal arts educational model; although during the classical era, many felt Socrates asked more questions than he answered (Ferejohn, 2013). By his modeling, Socrates gave insight into learning by continually asking questions and then listened to answers that were eruditely defended with accurately defined terms. Zare (2015) stated that the, "Socratic approach follows a chain of orderly and structured questions which assist learners to become aware of their weaknesses in thinking, lack of knowledge, wrong inferences, and false hypotheses" (p. 256). With the Socratic method, a student can use the knowledge and understanding he or she has acquired and apply them to an argument within a unique situation in order to defend his or her position about a particular subject. Students can apply knowledge and understanding even if the subject to which their knowledge and understanding is being applied is not completely familiar. This kind of thinking allows a trained mind to decipher unfamiliar material, rather than an untrained mind trying to apply familiar material, which will only get him or her so far (Wilson, 1991).

Research has shown that students who experience the Socratic method in schools today prefer it to other teaching methods (Yudcovitch & Hayes, 2014; Zou et al., 2011). Preference is not the only reason to use the Socratic method. While conducting a quantitative study on the effects of Socratic questioning on critical thinking skills, Shahsavar, Hoon, Thai, and Samah (2013) found that "using [Socratic questioning] caused the a [sic] significant increase in the

students' [critical thinking] ability" $t(38)=-4.83$, $p<.05$ (p. 64). By mastering the art of Socratic questioning, students can learn more in many different academic areas as well aiding in the ability to utilize "questions concerning the issues in their daily life in a meaningful way" (Shahsavar et al., 2013, p. 65). Socrates originally used his method of questioning to deal with moral and psychological issues as well (Ferejohn, 2013).

The importance of building background knowledge. The first method of the trivium, knowledge is the building of background knowledge. Hirsch (1987) argues that the background information known by the current youth is extremely narrow. Background information is the basic knowledge one should possess in order to apply to higher-level concepts. Background knowledge is how we know the difference between a tiger and a leopard or an elm tree and a beech tree. Hirsch (1987) contended that, "In order to speak effectively to people we must have a reliable sense of what they do and do not know" (p. 16). Issues arise when one assumes that a student knows something that he really doesn't, and one asks him to apply that knowledge. The problem is, that if no one has taught him (including his teachers) to know, he cannot apply the knowledge that he does not possess.

The notion that a student would be expected to apply knowledge that he does not personally possess can be better understood by looking at different systems of education. DeMille (2009) describes "three systems of schooling" (p. 19). The first system, DeMille (2009) has labeled "Conveyor Belt education, which tries to prepare everyone for a job, any job, by teaching them *what* to think" (p. 21). The next system is "Professional education – which creates specialists by teaching them *when* to think" (DeMille, 2009, p. 21). Based on these first two systems, what we see in American schools is not educating, it is schooling (Gatto, 2003). "We have been taught (that is schooled) in this country to think of 'success' as synonymous with, or at

least dependent upon, 'schooling'" (p. 34). Gatto (2003) argued that what the progressive education movement did to students was, "encouraged them not to think at all" (p. 37).

The last system DeMille (2009) calls Leadership education as it "teaches students how to think and prepares them to be leaders in their homes and communities, entrepreneurs in business, and statesmen in government" (p. 21). DeMille (2009) contends that the majority of American students receive a conveyor belt education while some go on to receive a professional education. The reason these two types of education are so prevalent is because, just like the name conveyor belt suggests, they produce the greatest amount of products (students) from the resources available (DeMille, 2009). A leadership education, while possibly taking more time and some restructuring of resources could produce far more educated citizens (DeMille, 2009). DeMille, 2009 concludes, "Those who know how to think are able to lead effectively and are able to help society remain free and prosperous" (p. 23-4).

An example of the importance that background knowledge plays in everyday speech can be found in the form of common phrases or allegory. The level of literacy required to understand common phrases involves "decoding context: the surrounding matrix of things referred to in the text and things implied by it" (Liu, 2015, p. 54). For instance, in order to understand the phrase: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country" one would need to know the context of the biblical reference of this phrase. In the gospel of Matthew, after gaining a following for his teaching and performing of miracles, Jesus returned to his home synagogue in Nazareth. There he was met with curiosity but was not taken seriously as a rabbi because all the people there knew him as the carpenter's son and there was nothing exceptional about him. Jesus stated that "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country" (NKJV). Someone may repeat this phrase as an allegory in order to explain why he has been treated in a disrespectful way around

his family or those close to him. If the hearers of this phrase are not aware of the context, the meaning and its impact would go completely unnoticed. Background knowledge and context of phrases or allegory are required to understand much of "everyday life, in commercial culture, in sports talk, in religious language, in politics" (Liu, 2015, p. 55).

Importance of basic skills mastery. One of the most easily recognized areas to assess mastery for basic skills is in mathematics (Ballard & Johnson, 2004). In their quantitative study, Ballard and Johnson (2004) found that the most important factor for a successful upper-level math class was the mastery of basic level concepts. Basic computation skills like addition and multiplication are both simple to acquire and easy to assess. It is important to learn computation skills because they are used to solve higher-order problems later on in more complex math classes. Basic computation is also used on a daily basis, calculating time, temperature, or the simple cost of gas or groceries. Seeking to find out which skills would help students experience the most success in a microeconomics class, Ballard and Johnson (2004) studied students using the four measures: The math section of the ACT assessment, experience in calculus, participation in remedial math, and basic math concept test. Ballard and Johnson (2004) found that, "All four measures have significant effects in explaining performance in an introductory microeconomics course" (p. 3) n(646): ACT was 0.58 ($p < .001$), calculus was 4.06 ($p < .001$), remedial math was -3.45 ($p < .005$), and students math quiz was 0.58 ($p < .05$). Ballard and Johnson (2004) concluded that, "mastery of extremely basic quantitative skills is among the most import factors for success in introductory microeconomics" (p. 21). As an aside, it is important to mention that Ballard and Johnson (2004) note: "The results of the quiz were interesting because they indicated that the substantial numbers of college students were unable to solve even very basic math problems" (p. 4).

The mastery of basic skills has been found to be important in chemistry as well. Chebii, Wachnga, and Kiboss (2012) quantitatively studied the effects of a program known as Science Process Skills Mastery Learning Approach (SPROSMALEA). Students who were taught via the SPROSMALEA method showed significant improvement over traditional approaches for learning chemistry (Chebii et al., 2012) $F(3,155) = 6.38$, $p < .05$. One of the requirements for SPROSMALEA was that students had to master the objectives from each lesson. Remediation was provided for those who did not master the concepts and skills (Chebii et al., 2012). One aspect of mastering basic skills is to make objectives clear and attainable through enough practice (Whiting & Render, 1987). This process takes more time and therefore could be resisted by teachers and administrators (Whiting & Render, 1987).

Another study of the importance of basic level mastery in science revealed that surface level learners greatly benefited from the process of mastery learning (Lai & Biggs, 1994). Formative assessments were given after a science concept was taught and students who received a score of less than 80% received corrective exercises, until the concept was mastered (Lai & Biggs, 1994). Those who had already mastered the concept did not benefit nearly as much from the mastery approach as those who had not yet mastered the basic science skills. The fact that those who were ready to move on to applying the skills did not benefit as much is not surprising as Lai and Biggs (1994) concluded, "learning takes place cumulatively, changing quantitatively as it grows in complexity" (p. 21). Surface level learners in this study found success by at least learning something (through basic-level mastery) instead of failing at most things (Lai & Biggs, 1994).

The discussion of mastery of basic skills could not be complete without mentioning the importance of Latin. Over half of the words in the English language were originally derived from

Latin root words (Joseph, 2002; Kopff, 2000). Knowing and understanding the grammar of a subject being studied is an important part of building basic background knowledge in order to learn more about that subject. Each subject has its own vocabulary, therefore in order to truly understand the subject, one must learn the grammar of history, the grammar of mathematics, the grammar of science, geography, and theology (Sayers, 1979). Sayers (1979) stated,

> I will say at once, quite firmly, that the best grounding for education is the Latin grammar. I say this, not because Latin is traditional and mediaeval, but simply because even a rudimentary knowledge of Latin cuts down the labor and pains of learning almost any other subject by at least fifty percent. It is the key to the vocabulary and structure of all the Teutonic languages, as well as to the technical vocabulary of all the sciences and to the literature of the entire Mediterranean civilization, together with all its historical documents. (p. 94)

The recitation of Latin (along with the recitation of grammar of other subjects) starting at an early age helps students build the foundation of basic skills mastery that lead to wisdom (Sayers, 1979).

Traditional aims and methods. One study stated that, "65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist" (World Economic Forum, 2016). Part of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) address college and career readiness (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2018). The very nature of the language of college and career readiness implies that education should be used for specific preparation for an individual's future career. One might question how CCSS could prepare students for careers that do not exist. Classical education "values knowledge for its own sake" (Moore, 2014, p. 2). The nature of the language of classical education, with its liberal

learning, implies that pupils from a classical background will know a lot and value that knowledge, and thus will be able to apply that knowledge to a myriad of careers.

Education is something to be valued. To be educated should not be taken for granted. “To be ‘classical’ means to uphold a standard of excellence” (Moore, 2014, p. 4). The precise use of language is just one example of how the philosophy of classical education is elevated to a level of excellence. The importance of language cannot be overstated in a classical education as language was given to us by God and is beautiful when used conscientiously (Joseph, 2002; Poythress, 2013). A classical education, “teaches students from an early age high standards of grammar, precision in word choice, and an eloquence that can emanate only from a love of the language” (Moore, 2014, p. 4).

Discipline or lack thereof can affect how much learning takes place in any particular institution. Moore (2014) stated that the issue of moral virtue can be approached in three ways in schools: “They can try to ignore moral issues altogether. They can open up moral questions for student to explore in a ‘non-judgmental’ and noncommittal environment. Or they can teach classical views of self-command using traditional teaching methods” (p. 5). Instead of encouraging students to dodge the subject of moral virtue, the philosophies of classical education, “confronts them with the great stories of self-command and self-sacrifice found in literature and history” (Moore, 2014, p. 5). Within these narratives there is a clear line between right and wrong (Moore, 2014) and good and evil (Joseph, 2002) that is not in any way subjective (Poythress, 2013).

Core Elements of a Progressive Education

Classical education was relatively short lived in America compared to the age of the country. Education in America began to change from a classical to a progressive model during

the mid-1800s (Veith & Kern, 2015). Prior to that, philosophers like Jean Jocques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Frobel, and Charles Darwin influenced the progressive movement from Europe. Much like Darwin, who promoted a humanist worldview, the French philosopher Rousseau maintained a philosophy of education that was derived from a scientific viewpoint (Koops, 2012). Rousseau rejected book learning as well as learning from history (Koops, 2012). Rousseau's philosophy of learning was focused on the here and now, the natural environment, and observational learning (Koops, 2012).

In Switzerland, Pestalozzi took up where Rousseau left off (Henson, 2003). Pestalozzi believed in educating the whole child and began the movement of child-centeredness (Henson, 2003). In Germany and its neighboring country Prussia, Froebel used Pestalozzi's philosophies to start the first kindergarten (Henson, 2003). After the Civil War in America, soldier-turned-teacher, Colonel Francis Parker visited Germany and brought back to the United States the burgeoning ideas of progressive education characterized by the Enlightenment culture with the premise that man can perfect himself (Henson, 2003).

While working at the Normal School in Chicago, Colonel Parker passed along his educational philosophies to John Dewey (Henson, 2003). Through his laboratory schools that eventually spread across the country, Dewey helped to transform the model of education in America to a progressive approach (Henson, 2003).

An examination of John Dewey's (1897) philosophy of education that he called "Looking Back: My Pedagogic Creed" (p. 540) reveals the basic elements of a progressive education. First and foremost, Dewey's (1897) philosophy rests on the precepts that education should be rooted not in academics, but in social constructs, illustrated in the statement, "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in

which he finds himself" (p. 540). Like Rousseau, Dewey (1897) believed that education was "a process of living and not a preparation of future living" (p. 541) and that "the school must represent present life" (p. 541). Dewey (1897) felt that book learning was secondary to real life experiences, "Much of present education fails because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life" (p. 541). Dewey (1897) believed in a student-centered approach and felt that teachers interfered in the important social aspect of school. Dewey (1897) stated that "At present we lose much of the value of literature and language studies because of our eliminations of the social element" (p. 541) and found that learning was nearly impossible without a social construct. The spread of Dewian philosophy through American schools throughout the 1900's created a dramatic shift in how students learned and continue to learn.

Classical Christian Education

Classical education was the primary model of education for hundreds, if not thousands of years (Gaillet & Horner, 2010; Joseph, 2002). Classical Christian education contains many of the elements of a classical education but steeped in a Christian worldview. Wilson (2003) is quick to caution, that "unless faithful worship of the living God is at the center of our lives and our communities, and therefore at the center of our children's education, 'Christian worldview education' will simply be one more hollow, intellectualistic experiment" (p. 96). Much like classical education, Classical Christian education contains five domains: "(a) Age-specific K-12 learning, (b) time-tested method and content, (c) Christ-centered curriculum, (d) Academically rigorous, and (e) Nurturing community" (Association of Classical and Christian Schools, 2017). A goal of classical Christian education is for students to be "brought to know the truth, understand the good, and attain wisdom in that which is lovely" (Wilson, 2003, p. 138). Classical Christian education results in "a graduate who knows what they believe and why, and can

positively impact the community around them" (Association of Classical and Christian Schools, 2017, "What is CCE?", para 12).

History of Classical Christian Education. In order to appreciate exactly what constitutes a classical Christian education, a history must be established. Cassiodorus, a Roman statesman in the fifth century A.D., organized various educational elements into the seven liberal arts (Wilson, 2003). Both Cassiodorus and Augustine wrestled with the concept of bringing the liberal arts, which were considered pagan, into a Christian context (Wilson, 2003). This dilemma was not resolved until the Middle Ages by Charlemagne,

> The great monarch (Charlemagne), however, even before becoming emperor, had realized that a genuine unity of his people could be brought about only through the inner life by means of a common language, culture, and set of ideas. To produce this, he felt that a revival of learning was necessary. (Graves, 1910, p. 27)

Later in the Middle Ages, in an effort to reconcile the liberal arts with the church, an organization known as the Brethren of Common Life was started. The Brethren of Common Life began to institute educational reforms just prior to the Reformation (Wilson, 2003). Graves (1910) explained of the Brethren of Common Life that, "The order was founded in 1376 by Geert Groot (1340-1384) at Deventer, Holland, and was composed of pious men devoted to industry, learning, and popular education" (p. 146). The Brethren of Common Life continued to reform education throughout the Reformation.

One important element of classical Christian education during the Middle Ages was the total acceptance of the authority of Christ within education (Wilson, 2003). It was communicated by church leaders like Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) that coming to faith in Christ and believing in the truths of the Christian faith are paramount to and should precede any other

knowledge learned (Graves, 1910). To exemplify how important this concept was, Wilson (2003) explained, “Faith was not added on to the life of the mind; it was the only possible foundation for the life of the mind” (p. 124). Martin Luther supported a classical education as opposed to the traditional high school and monastery education of his time (Wilson, 2003). Luther also emphasized the importance for education to be grounded in Christian principles, “‘Where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule’ he says, ‘I should advise no one to send his child’” (as cited in Graves, 1910, p. 186). John Calvin agreed with Luther’s conviction about the importance of the Word of God in education while he influenced the opening of many schools in Europe (Wilson, 2003). When Scotland’s John Knox visited Geneva, he took back with him Calvin’s example of classical Christian education where the philosophy influenced British schools (Wilson, 2003). When the Puritans came to the New World, they brought with them the philosophies of classical Christian education (Wilson, 2003).

During the Founding Era in America, classical education “produced the likes of Jefferson, Madison and Webster” (DeMille, 2006, p. 109). Some historians disagree and feel that the Founders had only a superficial knowledge of the ancients (Kopff, 2000). A deeper look into the writings, and especially the correspondence of individuals such as Adams and Jefferson reveal that most of the Founders possessed a deep knowledge of antiquity (Hirsch 1982, Kopff, 2000), and were well versed in the cycles of history (DeMille, 2006).

By the 1850s the classical system began to decline (DeMille, 2006) and the progressive model started to take hold (Veith & Kern, 2015). In his book *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis (2013) writes a scathing critique of a grammar school English book that he felt intended to “produce what may be called Men without Chests” (p. 16). Lewis (2013) maintained that the progressive model of education systematically (and deceivingly) destroyed a Christian

worldview through public education. Lewis contended that the "Chest" included both the head and the heart; "the seat of the intellect…" and "the seat of the affections" (Wilson, 2003, p. 96). With training aplenty, the student educated through a progressive philosophy may be creative or driven but lacks the emotions that marks a truly honorable individual (Lewis, 2013).

> In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful (Lewis, 2013, p. 17)

The consequences of educating individuals by seeking to improve only the mind, absent of the heart can be of grave concern (Sayers, 1979; Wilson, 2003).

During the last part of the twentieth century, revivals of the classical Christian philosophy floundered under well-meaning reformers. Despite a recognition of declining achievement, a dedication to classical literature, and a deep love for democracy, Mortimer J. Adler did not employ a God-centered approach to a classical reformation of education (Adler, 1982; Wilson, 2003). David Hicks also called for a return to classical education with a Christian layer in the latter half of the 1900's in what can be described as "moral classicism" (Wilson, 2003, p. 81).

It wasn't until Douglas Wilson, utilizing Dorothy Sayers works along with the philosophies of the ancient classicists began the classical and Christian school movement that classical Christian education started to show signs of recovery (Wilson, 1991). With a membership of over 240 schools across the U.S., the Association for Classical Christian Schools (ACCS) has truly begun a movement back to classical Christian education (Association of Classical Christian Schools, 2017).

The trivium in light of classical Christian education. Wilson (2003) stated the definition of classical education should include, "two basic things – the methodology of the Trivium and the heritage of the Western civilization" (p. 132). Wilson (2003) provides an explanation of how each of the three elements of the trivium fit together within an educational model:

> This view of the Trivium assumes the course of study to be chronological. First we have grammar—the accumulation of factoids. Then comes dialectic—the sorting out of facts into truth and goodness. Then rhetoric is the presentation of that truth and goodness in a lovely form. (p. 133)

Each of the elements of the trivium need to be examined in light of Holy Scripture in order to explain the relevance of the trivium in modern classical Christian education.

The trivium consists of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric or more simply put, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom (Booth, 1997). Each element of the trivium maintains a high place of importance in Scripture. Booth (1997) stated that, "In Scripture, knowledge (grammar) seems to be focused on particular words, information or instructions that must be received or rejected by the hearer" (p. 1). Students can choose to learn (or not) basic information, Proverbs warns us, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive *in him* the lips of knowledge" (14:7, NKJV). Malachi spoke of the high standards that teachers and leaders must maintain when he stated, "For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge, And the *people* should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts" (2:7, NKJV).

Of the second element of the trivium, understanding, Booth (1997) explained, "Understanding (dialectic) in Scripture is directed toward discerning good from evil, truth from falsehood. In other words, the one who has understanding has good judgment" (p. 2). Scripture

provides a revelation into one of the purposes of Christ's coming in 1 John 5:20, "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding" (NKJV). Wilson (2003) warned of the dangers of teaching without revealed Scripture, "To teach the dialectical stage without a constant grounding in the ethical absolutes of Scripture is worse than folly" (p. 134). King Solomon prayed for understanding in 1 Kings 3:9, "Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil" (NKJV).

Booth (1997) explained of the third and final element of the trivium, "Wisdom (rhetoric) is the ability to arrange, articulate, and apply knowledge and understanding in a variety of circumstances" (p. 2). The writer of Proverbs exemplifies what it means to be educated into the level of wisdom, "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom" (10:31, NKJV). 2 Timothy 3:15 stated that knowing Scriptures, "are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (NKJV). To illustrate the importance of wisdom within a Christian context, Wilson (2003) stated, "At this point, all Christian educators must know that *clear thinking is a moral issue*. Blurry thinking is one of the greatest sins of the age" (p. 134). Joseph (2002) added, "The function of the trivium is the training of the mind for the study of matter and spirit, which together constitute the sum of reality" (p. 8).

Heritage of the West. The other of the two basic things that Wilson (2003) said should be included in the definition of classical education is the "heritage of the Western civilization" (p. 132). Because of the geographical nature of how the Gospel spread after the death of Christ (North and West), particular attention must be paid to the development of Western civilization within classical Christian education (Wilson, 2003). Wilson (2003) is quick to warn,

> the kingdom of God is not to be identified with Western culture, but we must say at the same time that the stories of each are so intertwined that we cannot hope to understand

> the course of one without knowing the history of the other. (p. 136)

Tracing the spread of the gospel to the West and how it coincided with the development of education is significant as indicated by Wilson's (2003) statement that, "the stories of each are… intertwined" (p. 136). It is a story about how both classical education and the gospel found their way to America. In a succinct history, Dawson (1961) stated that classical education,

> had its origins some twenty-four centuries ago in ancient Athens and was handed down intact from the Greek sophists to the Latin rhetoricians and grammarians and from these to the monks and clerks of the Middle Ages. These in turn handed it on to the humanists and school-masters of the Renaissances from whom it finally passed to the schools and universities of modern Europe and America. (p. 5)

Through classical Christian education, students who learn the history of Western civilization spreading via the gospel, can gain a greater appreciate of America's Christian heritage.

Summary

The theoretical framework of the expectancy-value theory that drove this study was used to attempt to understand the motivation of various stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. Parents who decide to send their children to a charter or private school rather than their neighborhood school carry a burdensome decision. Parents who take the time to examine what they value when it comes to their children's education might find that they must give up certain aspects in order to gain other, more important ones. Some parents may have to make financial sacrifices, others may sacrifice their preference for a diverse environment, and others may send their children to a school that subscribes to a different religion than their own. It was also found that parents completed their searches for schools once the minimal number of

expected criteria for a school choice had been met through a decision-making process called satisficing (Prichard & Swezey, 2016).

Classical education includes the core elements of: The trivium, explicit teacher instruction and teacher-centered classrooms, importance of building background knowledge, the Socratic method, the mastery of basic skills, and traditional aims and methods. Although this literature review avoided comparing progressive education and classical education, there are distinct differences. The former employs a man-centered worldview (Henson, 2003; Koops, 2012); while the latter's worldview is predominately God-centered (Joseph, 2002; Poythress, 2013; Sayers, 1979; Wilson, 1991). The classical model can also be described as *education* while the progressive model can be described as *training* (Kopff, 1992). A compelling argument can be made that both models are essential in society. Kopff (1992) noted that "A society without trained workers will not get its work done" (p. 135). He also warned that "A society without educated citizens will collapse in times of crisis and will wither away in times of ease and prosperity" (Kopff, 1992, p. 135). The progressive model or model of *training* dominates the educational landscape of America today (Kopff, 1992).

This literature review explained the philosophies of classical Christian education including elements of the trivium in light of classical Christian education as well as aspects related to the heritage of the West (Wilson, 2003). There are very few K-12 schools that utilize a classical Christian philosophy in modern America (Association of Classic and Christian Schools, 2012). No studies examine why a classical Christian education appeals to parents, teachers, and school board members in American schools today.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education in a modern American K-12 school. This chapter explains the methods of the research. The research design, method, and approach are described. Research questions are provided that have guided the study. The participants and setting are described as well as the role that I took as the researcher. The execution of the research is discussed through the data-collection procedures. The data analysis is also explained and a discussion of the trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations concludes the chapter.

Design

The research for this study was qualitative in nature. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that qualitative research is "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (p. 3). For this research to be conducted successfully, I had to "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Qualitative research is not measured by amounts or frequency like an experiment is in quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Instead, "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). Therefore, this study examined the intimate relationships within the case and how they related to the expectancy-value theory that provided the theoretical framework for this study (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

The qualitative approach that I took to conduct my research was case study. Yin (2018) stated that, a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in its real-world context" (p. 2). Creswell (2013) stated that case study is, "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a *case*). . . over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information*. . . and reports a *case description* and case *themes*" (p. 97). For my study, the central phenomenon was the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. The site of the case was Sons of Light Academy and was bound by the following criteria: The school must be a member of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools, the participants must be 18 years of age or older, the parent of a student(s) attending, a teacher at, or a school board member of Sons of Light Academy. Stake (2006) stated that, "Qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation" (p. 2). A case study allowed me, as the researcher, to experience the complex social phenomenon (Yin, 2018) of the motivation of stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. Multiple groups and data sources were studied in a classical Christian school within the bounded system for this case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). The approach for this study was pragmatic because it focused "on the outcomes of the research - the actions, situations, and consequences of the inquiry - rather than antecedent conditions" (Creswell, 2013, p. 28).

Research Questions

Research Question One

What is the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education?

Research Question Two

What beliefs do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Research Question Three

What expectations do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Research Question Four

What are the parents', teachers', and school board members' perceptions of the value of their investment in classical Christian education?

Setting

The setting for this study was Sons of Light Academy in Michigan. The K-12 classical Christian school for this setting, within an hour drive from where I live, was selected as the case. Yin (2018) explained the rationale for studying a single case, "where the case represents an extreme case or an unusual case, deviating from the theoretical norms or even everyday occurrences" (p. 50). Sons of Light Academy was an unusual case. The founders of the school chose not to pursue accreditation by the Association for Classical Christian Schools (ACCS), although the school remains a member (Association for Classical Christian Schools, 2012).

The city where my case was located had a population of around 70,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2018). The community was made up of the following populations: 87.7% white, 6.6% Hispanic or Latino, 4.8% Black or African American, 1.9% Asian, and .4% American Indian and Alaskan Native (United States Census Bureau, 2018). The median household income was $58,327 and the median value of a house in the community was $145,900 (United States Census Bureau, 2018). 40.14% of the community was considered white collar and 11.46% was

considered blue collar (Point 2 Homes, 2017). The median age of the population was 40.4 years old (Point 2 Homes, 2017). Within the community there were 9 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 1 community college. The education levels of the community were: 13.32% bachelor's degree, 7.46% associate degree, and 5.88% graduate degree (Point 2 Homes, 2017).

The school that I chose for my case study was a member of the ACCS. According to the Association of Classical Christian Schools (2017), "To become members, schools must affirm standards regarding their faith and educational vision, and certain practices unique to classical Christian schools. Our member schools affirm their compliance annually" (Accreditation Section, para. 1). The mission of the Association of Classical Christian Schools (2017) is to, "promote, establish, and equip member schools that are committed to a classical approach in the light of a Christian worldview" (The Mission of the ACCS, para. 1).

Participants

The type of sampling for this study was purposive sampling. As the name suggests, purposive sampling is selecting participants that "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 156). Of purposive sampling Stake (2006) points out that it "will build variety and create opportunities for intensive study" (p. 24). Purposive sampling is an appropriate method for my study because "all participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied" (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). I employed purposive sampling by choosing participants who were stakeholders in a classical Christian school and met the selection criteria. The selection criteria were that the school needed to be a member of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools, the participants needed to

be 18 years of age or older and, the parent of a student(s) attending, a teacher at, or a school board member of Sons of Light Academy.

After I received permission to conduct research from the school, as well as approval from the IRB, I identified the school's gatekeeper and gained insight about making contacts within the school. I then contacted participants from each of the three groups of stakeholders; parents, teachers, and school board members. Interviews were scheduled through emails. Focus groups were also scheduled via phone calls and/or emails. Focus groups included: Teachers, parents, and school Board members. Embedded within the school, initial samples consisted of the following stakeholders: parents, teachers, and school board members; however, I continued to sample until I reached saturation within the case (Stake, 2006).

Procedures

I acquired a Permission to Conduct Research form from Sons of Light Academy on school letterhead, signed by the head of school (Appendix A). I also acquired a Permission to Conduct Research form from the Association of Classical Christian Schools on letterhead, signed by the director of member services (Appendix B). No research was conducted without Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. However, as soon as IRB approval (Appendix C) was obtained, I contacted the school and notified the headmaster by email that the study could commence. At that time, I provided the headmaster with a copy of my proposal. During a phone conversation, I discussed the details of my study with the headmaster, along with timelines for initial data collection. The headmaster introduced me at a school staff meeting and allowed me to speak about my study. I provided a recruitment letter (Appendix D) and consent form (Appendix E) to the teachers and the school's gatekeeper that explained, in greater detail the intensions of my study and expectations of the participants, as well as my role as the researcher.

I contacted all participants by telephone or email and scheduled interviews with the following stakeholder groups: parents, teachers, and school board members from the site. Prior to interviewing, I attempted to develop rapport with participants in order gain trust for the interview process (Creswell, 2013). I developed rapport by engaging in small talk about local events or discussing things we had in common (i.e. teaching philosophy, parenting, or sports) I also discussed with participants some of my background as a parent, teacher, or founding school board member and why I was pursuing my doctorate in education. This let the participant know that I had something in common with their stakeholder group and helped me gain credence with them. I audio recorded each of the interviews and transcribe them immediately, adding notes from nonverbal behavior that I observed in the interview process (Creswell, 2013). I used a digital voice recorder for the primary recording device. For a backup recording device, I used my cellphone. I collected documentation in the form of: Emails, agendas, minutes from meetings, and written reports (Yin, 2018). Documents were provided to me through the gatekeeper of the school and other participants in the study. Focus groups were scheduled as well within the site with all three stakeholder groups; parents, teachers, and school board members. Focus groups were established based on individual interviews and participants' desire to share more information. Focus groups helped to, "examine naturalistic discourse for thematic content" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 223). After I collected the data, I analyzed it. The strategy I used to analyze the date was to use the answers to the interview and focus group questions to identify keywords as codes in the data. I used the codes to identify patterns and themes from the data. I used the themes to answer the research questions.

The Researcher's Role

I have been a teacher for 18 years. I have taught in elementary school for my entire career, primarily in the third or fourth grades. I have also been an administrator of a school for one semester. I did not have a personal or professional relationship with any of the participants in this study; nor did I hold a position of authority over any of the participants. I was both the instrument and agent within the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011); and as the "human instrument" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) I assumed the role of a critical analyst by collecting data related to the central phenomenon. I was a participant observer while collecting data by facilitating the interviews and focus groups. I became a participant of sorts, by asking follow-up questions during interviews and focus groups, thus my role became more salient than a pure researcher's role (Creswell, 2013). One bias that I brought to the study was that I firmly believe that a classical Christian education is a far superior education to that of a progressive model. "A good case study researcher… will strive for the highest ethical standards while doing research" (Yin, 2018, p. 87). One way I reduced bias was by reporting my findings, while still in the data collection phase, to close colleagues and asked for alternative explanations to contrary findings (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection

No data was collected until IRB approval. Data was collected in three forms to ensure triangulation (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). Triangulation "reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5) and "essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (Yin, 2018, p. 128). The three forms of data that I collected were: Documentation, interviews, and focus groups. First, I conducted interviews with individual participants. As I anticipated, the interview process helped to expand

participants' beliefs about their involvement in classical Christian education. Next, I facilitated focus groups. As I expected, participants were more open during focus group conversations. I collected documentation along with conducting interviews and focus groups, when opportunities to ask for documents came up in conversations. After my interviews and focus groups concluded, I was able to discern and obtain more relevant documentation from the school's website.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that "Triangulation is a display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously" (p. 5). The multiple forms of data that I collected gave me an in depth understanding of the reality of stakeholders' motivation to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education and thus achieved triangulation. Yin (2018) stated, "When you have really triangulated the data, the case study's findings will have been supported by more than a single source of evidence" (p. 128). The findings from this case study were supported by my three sources of evidence. As the researcher, I bracketed my biases for a classical Christian education out of my data collection procedures.

Documentation

One form of data that I collected was documentation. Yin (2018) stated, "Because of its overall value, documentation can play a prominent role in any data collection in doing case study research" (p. 115). Documentation collection was obtained through permission from phone calls and/or interviews as well as consent forms. Documents consisted of: blank student applications, budgets, core curriculum of the school, mission statements, and notes from early board meetings. As predicted, the documents that I collected provided information that revealed the motivation, beliefs, expectations, and perceptions that stakeholders had about a classical Christian education. Qualitative inquiry can create a "crisis of representation" where there can be an "uncertainty within the human sciences about adequate means of describing social reality" (Schwandt, 2015,

p. 45). Because of this, documents were analyzed with the spirit of the author or originator in mind in order to find messages between the lines of the documents which were then corroborated with other data sources in order to validate its meaning (Yin, 2018). When possible, I confirmed the spirit of the author by asking the author to read my analysis for the purposes of accuracy.

Interviews

Yin (2018) stated, "Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or actions" (p. 121). Because I studied the actions of people, based on their motivation, interviews provided substantive information that helped me understand what motivated stakeholders to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education. "Well-informed interviewees can provide important insights into such affairs or actions." (Yin, 2018, p. 121).

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013) took place with parents, teachers, and school board members. Semi-structured interviews utilize a set of questions, but leave room for follow up questions, based on participants' responses. Participation in interviews was voluntary. Interviews with teachers took place in their classrooms. Interviews with parents and school board members took place either at the school, or an alternate location. The average interview session lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. I audio recorded each of the interviews with a digital voice recorder for the primary recording device. For a backup recording device, I used my cellphone. I tested both recording devises in advance to ensure they worked properly and this prevented technical difficulties. Recordings were used to transcribe interviews immediately and notes were added from nonverbal behavior that I observed in the interview process (Creswell, 2013).

Interview questions were designed to allow participants to analyze their own thinking about their beliefs, expectations, perceived values, and attitudes about classical Christian education. As anticipated, some stakeholders had stronger beliefs and expectations than others. I also anticipated that some stakeholders valued classical Christian education a great deal more than others. Interview questions were as follows:

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. Please walk me through how you came to the decision to get involved in classical Christian education.
3. Of the reasons for your decision you identified in the previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
4. What made them significant?
5. Is there anything else you would like to add about your decision that you haven't already?
6. What do you believe to be true about a classical Christian education?
7. Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
8. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward classical Christian education?

Questions one through five were knowledge questions (Patton, 2015). These questions were designed to help me develop rapport with the participants (Patton, 2015). The questions were adjusted for each participant, based on their role as a stakeholder in the school. Questions six, seven, and eight were intended to ascertain the participants' attitude toward classical Christian education.

Interview questions were reviewed by experts in the field. After receiving IRB approval, interview questions were piloted outside the study sample to ensure clarity of questions and wording.

Focus Groups

Another valuable form of data collection came from focus groups. Developed during World War II and later used for market research, focus groups are similar to interviews because they can also be used to learn about stakeholders' sense of reality and corroborate each stakeholder's thoughts (Yin, 2018). I moderated discussions with each group of stakeholders (Yin, 2018), including teachers, board members, and parents involved with my study's setting of a classical Christian school. Focus groups encouraged participants to share their perceptions in a "comfortable, permissive environment" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 5). Qualitative researchers "seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). Therefore, focus groups were an appropriate data collection tool for a study involving how social experiences among stakeholders are given meaning regarding their perceptions about classical Christian education.

"Focus groups work when participants feel comfortable, respected, and free to give their opinions without being judged" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 4). I anticipated that teachers, parents, and board members would not feel comfortable speaking freely in front of each other, therefore I chose to keep each stakeholders' focus group separate. As anticipated, focus groups provided participants with a common vocabulary surrounding classical Christian education. Focus group participants helped remind each other of their personal beliefs, expectations, expected value, and attitudes toward classical Christian education, where common themes could be identified (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Focus group questions were as follows:

Teachers. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.

1. Please tell me why you chose to teach in a classical Christian school.
2. Of the reasons for your decision you identified in the previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
3. What made them significant?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your decision that you haven't already?
5. What do you believe to be true about teaching in a classical Christian school?
6. Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
7. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward teaching in a classical Christian school?

Board members. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.

1. Please walk me through how you came to the decision to get involved in classical Christian education.
2. Of the reasons for your decision you identified in the previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
3. What made them significant?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your decision that you haven't already?
5. What do you believe to be true about a classical Christian education?
6. Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
7. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward classical Christian education?

Parents. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.

1. Please tell me why you chose to enroll your child(ren) in a classical Christian school.

2. Of the reasons for your decision you identified in the previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
3. What made them significant?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your decision that you haven't already?
5. What do you believe to be true about having your child(ren) attend a classical Christian school?
6. Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
7. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward having your child(ren) attend a classical Christian school?

Questions one through five were knowledge questions (Patton, 2015). These questions were designed to help me develop rapport with the participants (Patton, 2015). The questions were adjusted for each participant, based on their role as a stakeholder in the school. Questions six, seven, and eight were intended to ascertain the participants' attitude toward classical Christian education.

Interview questions were reviewed by experts in the field. After receiving IRB approval, interview questions were piloted outside the study sample to ensure clarity of questions and wording.

Data Analysis

A single case study focuses on a specific issue within the case (Creswell, 2013). In this case study, I focused on the phenomenon of the motivation of stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education, framed by expectancy-value theory. Subgroupings of participants were embedded within the case to develop a more complex design (Yin 2018). Yin (2018) stated, "The subunits can often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis,

enhancing the insights into the single case" (p. 54). Baxter and Jack (2008) stated, "The ability to look at sub-units that are situated within a larger case is powerful when you consider that data can be analyzed *within* the subunits separately (within case analysis), *between* the different subunits (between case analyses), or *across* all the subunits (cross-case analysis)" (p. 550).

Data was analyzed for significant keywords within each case of stakeholders (Yin, 2018). The keywords were then coded for similar themes (Saldaña, 2013, Yin, 2018). "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). Creswell (2013) stated that, "forming codes or categories. . . represents the heart of qualitative data analysis" (p. 184). Coding is an integral part of the process of developing themes through detailed descriptions, "within the context of the setting of the person, place, or event" (Creswell, 2013, p. 184).

Documentation, interviews, and focus groups. Documents were analyzed and coded for significant keywords (Yin, 2018). All documents were read and significant keywords were recorded. Keywords were used to establish themes within the documentation in the case. I transcribed interviews and focus groups using audio recordings and analyzed the transcriptions for keywords and then coded them for themes within the case (Yin, 2018). I also used the memoing that I collected based on the focus group discussions and analyzed the memoing for keywords and coded them for themes within the case (Yin, 2018). The use of the computer program ATLIS.ti8 was used to aid in the coding process. ATLAS.ti8 was also used to aid in the process of theme development. I used the codes to triangulate the themes within the documentation, interviews, and focus groups while looking for similarities across sources of data within the case (Yin, 2018).

Coding. Keywords from interviews, documents, and memoing, based on focus group discussions were color-coded based on similarities. Synonyms were identified while compiling keywords and color-coded with the significant keywords. Along with color-coding, ATLIS.ti.8 was used for coding significant keywords and synonyms. Themes were identified through the patterns of significant keywords that were identified from the data.

Trustworthiness

Validating or providing evidence for the trustworthiness of a qualitative study is important (Creswell, 2013). Trustworthiness was developed through the following criteria: Dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Credibility

Credibility is the trustworthiness and the validity of the data within a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Member checking provided an internal check of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I asked all participants to check the data for accuracy upon completion of the interviews and/or focus group sessions. A peer review provided an external check of the research process (Creswell, 2013). A peer review was accomplished by two individuals with doctoral degrees with many years of experience in education. Triangulation occurred through the three forms of data collection including: Interviews, documentation, and focus groups, thus strengthening validity (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) stated that triangulation is "Determining the convergence of the data collected from different sources of evidence, to assess the strength of a case study finding and also to boost the construct validity of measures used in the case study" (p. 288) Sources included member checking within the case, documentation validation, and focus group validation.

Dependability and Confirmability

Reflexive journaling strengthened dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A reflexive journal by myself, as the researcher was maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process by a careful organization of both electronic and physical data as well as annotating. Confirmability was provided through the reflexive journal to confirm procedures and results.

Transferability

Transferability means that the results of a study can be "applied to a wider population" (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). Transferability was established through thick, descriptive data so that conclusions can be transferred to another context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

Case studies almost always deal with human subjects (Yin, 2018). Therefore, it was important to exercise ethical considerations in order to protect the human subjects within the study. No research was conducted without first obtaining IRB approval. No human subjects were harmed for this study (Creswell, 2013). Another ethical consideration was confidentiality and was addressed by using pseudonyms for the site and participants. Informed consent forms were provided and signed by each participant before data collection commenced. I ensured that I did not have any influence over the participants during the conducting of this study by being open to contradictory evidence (Yin, 2018). All hard-copy data was locked in a filing cabinet in my office where only I have access. All data stored electronically was secured with a password-protected file on my computer where only I have access. I will personally destroy all data once the three-year retention period required by federal regulations expires.

Summary

This section outlined the methods that I used to conduct a qualitative case study. The case study examined the perceptions that stakeholders had of a classical Christian education and how those perceptions related to the expectancy-value theory that provided the theoretical framework for the study (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The setting of the case was established as Sons of Light Academy in Michigan and a variety of participants were identified. This chapter included how data was collected and analyzed for trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also described. No studies examine why parents, teachers, and school board members are motivated to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative case study was designed to describe stakeholders' motivation for investing their efforts in a classical Christian school (Sons of Light Academy). In this chapter, I will provide a description of all of the participants from each of the stakeholder groups: Parents, teachers, and school board members. I will present the result of the data analysis by describing the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the keywords and code segments within the data. Data from the case were collected from the interviews, focus groups, and documentation. I will also provide answers to the research questions with descriptions from the data.

Participants

All of the volunteer participants in this study were involved in Sons of Light Academy (SLA) as Board members, teachers, or parents. Compensation for participating in the study was the chance to win a gift card in a raffle. Three $25 Visa gift cards were raffled off; one for teacher participants, one for parent participants, and one for board member participants. There was a total of fifteen participants in this study; eight teachers, four parents, and three board members. Each of the interviews and focus groups was scheduled in advance and either conducted at SLA or at a location nearby the school. Descriptions of each of the participant volunteers are written below.

Mrs. Carroll

Mrs. Carroll is a parent of two boys who are in sixth and seventh grade respectively. Her children have been attending SLA for three years. As Christian parents, Mrs. Carroll and her husband originally felt led for their children to be a light in the traditional public school system. After a few years however, Mrs. Carroll stated that, "I just felt like for my children to be in these

classes for eight hours a day not hearing about Christ at all, was just, I almost felt this like, I have to get out of this" (personal interview, May 22, 2019). Mrs. Carroll and her husband found what they were looking for in a school when they toured SLA. Of the classical Christian philosophy, Mrs. Carroll expressed that she could not teach her kids what they are learning at SLA if she decided to homeschool them and she would not know what to do if it were not for SLA.

Mr. London

Mr. London is a parent of two boys in the lower school (consisting of kindergarten through sixth grade) at SLA: One in kindergarten and the other in second grade. Mr. London and his wife both attended Christian schools while growing up, but Mr. London was attracted specifically to the classical Christan school for his children because of the school's philosophy. He appreciates the disciplined approach to teaching and learning as well as the expections for student behavior at SLA. Mr. London's main goal for his children is for them to understand their own thinking and to defend their thinking. Mr. London rejects much of what is happening in the typical public school system and has sent his children to a school with alternative philosophies in the past. He is excited to keep his children at SLA as long as its philosophy holds true.

Mrs. Montgomery

Mrs. Montgomery's childen began attending SLA during the school's first year. All three of her children have graduated from SLA. Last year she started working in the office at SLA. As a former parent, and now part of the staff, Mrs. Montgomery has a unique perspective about the philosophy of education at SLA. She confirmed that the things she had hoped were going on behind the scenes for eight years while she was a parent, were in fact what she had found when she saw for herself, after becoming a staff member.

Mrs. Oleson

Mrs. Oleson is a parent of three children at SLA. Mrs. Oleson and her husband originally enrolled their children in a Christian school and after a move, switched them into a traditional public school. When the public school experience turned negative, Mrs. Oleson and her husband began to explore alternative school options for their children. After touring SLA and praying about the school for their children, they enrolled them in the lower school. The next year Mrs. Oleson started teaching at SLA. She expressed her appreciation for the school becoming partners with the parents while using biblical concepts to instruct throughout the curriculum.

Mrs. Alcott

Mrs. Alcott has been teaching at SLA for one year and had an interesting journey to the school. When she lived in the southern United States, Mrs. Alcott adopted a bi-racial girl. After trying out a couple of schools in the area, she was attracted to a school that catered to a more diverse population. The school Mrs. Alcott chose for her daughter subscribed to a classical Christian philosophy. At first Mrs. Alcott did not know much about the classical Christian philosophy however, she came to appreciate it while her daughter attended the school. After moving to Michigan, she enrolled her two children into a classical Christian school. A vetran teacher herself, Mrs. Alcott eventually started teaching at the school and found that she enjoyed the classical Christian philosophy as a teacher as much as she did as a parent.

Mr. Cooper

Mr. Cooper is the upper school (consisting of seventh through twelfth grade) Latin, logic, and geometry teacher at SLA. He is a graduate of a classical liberal arts college and decided to teach at SLA because of some connections he made at his college. Mr. Cooper subscribes to the notation that classical education, in its very nature is Christian and that using the term

"Christian" within the classical Christian philosophy is redundant. Mr. Cooper is not a teacher by trade, but has been motivated to teach at SLA for this second year there because he wanted to inspire his students, like his favorite teachers and professors inspired him. Some of Mr. Cooper's most inspiring moments at SLA came when he and Mr. Crane taught a seminar that they called, consciousness, archetypes, and dragons.

Mr. Crane

Mr. Crane graduated from a classical liberal arts college and teaches math and science in the upper school at SLA. He loves the idea of challenging students to think, not only in the academic sense, but also thinking through issues that arise or may arise in the life of a child. Mr. Crane appreciates the value of hard work and is excited when his students are challenged to work hard to learn and achieve. He wants his students to recognize how expanding their capacity for learning actually feels and he described the learning process as violent.

Ms. Cuthbert

Mrs. Cuthbert has been teaching kindergarten for 25 years. She was one of the first teachers hired at SLA and has taught there for nine years. Mrs. Cuthbert is a quintessential kindergarten teacher. She loves five and six year olds and beamed as she enthusiastically talked about how much she likes to watch her kids discover new things. Mrs. Cuthbert helped the founding board of SLA set up the school and has been slowly learning about, and growing in the classical Christian philosophy ever since. Mrs. Cuthbert admitted that she still does not know a lot about the classical Christian philosophy as it relates to the upper grades. However she saw the fruit of the classical Christian philosophy in her own children as they graduated from SLA. Mrs. Cuthbert utilizes a more traditional philsophy with her kindergarten students and understands her job is to begin laying a foundtation for learning.

Ms. Dickens

Ms. Dickens said that the reason she chose to teach at SLA had nothing to do with the classical Christian philosophy at first. She was excited about the prospect of teaching at SLA because she lives close by and she is friends with many of the teachers at the school because she taught with them at a different school years ago. Ms. Dickens came to SLA about six years ago, initially teaching part time. Currently Ms. Dickens teaches full time in the lower school and is a math teacher by trade. As she continues to learn more about the classical Christian philosophy, she is encouraged by the results that it brings, especially with the fundamental approach to math. Ms. Dickens recognizes that the classical Christian philosphy is very different than the philosphies at the average public school.

Ms. Fisher

Ms. Fisher is very familiar with the classical Christian philosophy. She was homeschooled as a child and her family utilized a classical curriculum. She also attended a classical liberal arts college. Ms. Fisher graduated with a degree in educaiton and she specifically wanted to teach at a school that subscribed to a classical Christian philosophy. Ms. Fisher has been teaching at SLA for three years. She predominantly teaches in the upper school, however she helps teach some of the lower school classes as well. As a classically trained educator, Ms. Fisher strongly believes that the elements of the classical Christian philosophy should be utilized in their purest form in the clssroom.

Mrs. Ingles

Mrs. Ingles has been teaching for many years, most of which were in Christian schools. When it came time for Mrs. Ingles and her husband to send their children to school, they chose a Christian school. After Mrs. Ingles and her husband discovered the classical Christian

philosophy they moved their children to a school that subscribed to it. Eventually Mrs. Ingles began teaching at the classical Christian school that her children attended. After a couple of years Mrs. Ingles removed her children from the school and eventually quit teaching at the classical Christian school because of challenges with the leadership and some of the decisions that were being made. Mrs. Ingles enrolled her children in SLA and began teaching there shortly thereafter. She has been teaching in the lower school at SLA for a couple of years.

Ms. Melville

Ms. Melville has taught in both Christian and traditional public schools in the past. She first came to SLA a few years ago as a parent. Ms. Melville was friends with a former administrator at SLA and really liked what she heard when conversing about the school. When she toured SLA, she found that the school used much of the methods and curriculum that she was using while homeschooling her children. After enrolling her children, Ms. Melville began volunteeing at SLA. The school staff and administration noted that Ms. Melville had a background in teaching, so she became a substituute teacher at SLA last year. Ms. Melville is now on staff as a part-time teacher at the school.

Mr. Clemons

Mr. Clemons is a founding board member of SLA. He and his wife were disappointed with what was happening at the Christian school where their three children were attending. That ultimately led them to visiting a school that subscribed to a classical Christian philosophy. One of the things that concerned Mr. Clemons and his wife about the school that their children were attending was a movement toward government funding, that they thought would result in a reduction or elimination of the Christian philosophy. He appreciates that the classical Christian philosophy at SLA supports a Christian worldview and provides a well-rounded education.

Mr. Finch

Nine years ago, Mr. Finch's children were attending a Christian school at a time when some parents at the school were exploring the possibility of opening a classical Christian school. Mr. Finch decided to help and joined the founding board. Admittedly, Mr. Finch did not fully understand the classical Christian philosophy. However, he fell in love with the philosophy over time and has since shared it with many others. At one point Mr. Finch stepped into the role of head of school for a period of four years. Mr. Finch appreciates SLA's motto of "rigor with joy" and stated that he "values the love and the beauty of what the classical Christian education is" (personal interview, April 28, 2019).

Mr. Hawthorne

Mr. Hawthorne is a founding board member of SLA and has remained a board member since the school started. His motivation to start SLA came from watching the Christian school in which his children were enrolled move more and more toward a progressive philosophy. Specifically, Mr. Hawthorne's concerns were that his children's school was interested in pursuing popular philosophies like international baccalaureate and global citizenship programs. He and his wife became interested in the classical Christian philosophy nine years ago when they visited a classical Christian school. Since there were no classical Christian schools near where they lived, they along with a few other dedicated parents, decided to start one.

Results

The results of this case study show that parents, teachers, and school board members were motivated to invest their efforts in classical Christian education. Data were analyzed for key words and code segments when participants shared their specific reasons for becoming involved and for staying involved in classical Christian education. Data were also collected from

the documentation that was procured from SLA. Themes and sub-themes emerged from the key words and code segments. Theme development is presented below.

Theme Development

In this case study, I focused on the phenomenon of the motivation of stakeholders to invest their efforts in classical Christian education, framed by expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Raw data came in the form of participants' answers to interview and focus group questions as well as documents about SLA. As I looked through the raw data and my memoing, I noticed similar phrases that were repeated and I categorized alike phrases into code segments (Creswell, 2013). Sub-themes were identified from the code segments, many of which were similar across all of the sources of data. I analyzed the sub-themes for similarities and from the sub-themes, I was able to identify themes (Appendix H).

I used a speech to text app titled Otter© to help transcribe recordings of interviews and focus groups. Otter© only produced a rough transcription, so I listened to each of the recordings multiple times to ensure accurate transcriptions. While refining the transcriptions, I began analyzing the data by highlighting similar terms. I also analyzed my memoing from the transcripts for each of the interviews and focus groups. Once the transcriptions and memoing were completed, I uploaded them into ATLIS.ti8. I also uploaded a number of documents from SLA into ATLIS.ti8. I used ATLIS.ti8 to analyze all of the data to select key words and code segments for each of the stakeholder groups: Parents, teachers, and board members. I then used ATLIS.ti8 to analyze the code segments to find sub-themes. Finally, themes were identified from the sub-themes.

The first theme, "Disapproval of Mainstream Educational Philosophy" was unexpectedly identified. As I interviewed participants in each group of stakeholders, I noted that many of the

participants wanted to leave a certain philosophy of education rather than, or in combination with, pursuing a school with a classical Christian philosophy. Participants used words and phrases like: “no consistency”, “indoctrination”, “frustrating”, and “it was broken” to describe their experiences in the schools where they were. I found the same words and phrases in some of the documentation as well. Based on the code segments, I sorted the data into two categories, or sub-themes: (a) those who were specifically against the progressive philosophy and (b) those who were against the mainstream philosophy, but uncertain about what, specifically. An excerpt of the data matrix for this theme is shown below:

Table 4.1 Data matrix for theme 1

Codes Segments	Sub Themes	Themes
Opposite of classical philosophy	Against progressive philosophy	Disapproval of Mainstream Educational Philosophy
No consistency	Against mainstream but unknown about what, specifically	
No truth		
Constantly changing		
Common Core State Standards		
Non-Christian/Non-Biblical		
Indoctrination		
No foundation of knowledge		
Frustrating		
It was broken		

As a teacher, Ms. Ingles understood the philosophy of education at the school that she left and stated, “I was at a school that I felt was becoming very progressive and… I felt like they were jumping from every new philosophy that was out there.” She added, “[They] didn’t take a stand on their educational philosophy… I was not able to teach, using my gifts and abilities” (personal interview, April 24, 2019). On the other hand, some participants felt that something was amiss in their school, but could not explain it. Mrs. Carroll, a parent exemplified this notion when she described the school in which her children were enrolled before coming to SLA and stated, “they were going so far off our beliefs as things started to change and they were allowing certain things… and I felt like they were going to do more damage” (personal interview, May 22,

2019). Both participants were against the mainstream educational philosophy, and found what they were looking for in the classical Christian philosophy.

The second theme, "Beliefs About Classical Christian Education" was identified much more predictably because of the nature of the interview questions. Key words and phrases indicated that participants fell into three categories: (a) Higher level of understanding of the classical Christian philosophy, (b) Lower level of understanding of the classical Christian philosophy, and (c) Ignorant of the classical Christian philosophy, but aware that it is different. The relationships for the data used to find this theme are shown below:

Table 4.2 Data matrix for theme 2

Codes Segments	Sub Themes	Themes
Consistent process	Higher level of understanding	Beliefs about Classical Christian Education
Truth, goodness, beauty	Lower level of understanding	
Rigor with joy	Ignorant of classical Christian philosophy,	
Trivium	but aware that it is different	
Latin & French		
Virtue and wisdom		
Recitation		
Judeo-Christian/Greco-Roman		
Well-rounded education		
Building foundation		
Defend your learning		
Educate the whole child		
New to the philosophy		
Knew nothing		

The participants were eager to share what they believed about classical Christian education. While conducting a focus group with SLA teachers, Mr. Cooper showed he had a higher level of understanding about classical Christian education when he stated:

> Classical Christian education unifies the content of the trivium, classical language, and contemporary disciplines, in order to develop critical thinking skills. Students enjoy the rigors of their in-depth studies as they prepare for a lifetime of service to God and their fellow human beings. (personal interview, May 15, 2019)

Some participants used vague terms that depicted a lower level of understanding. Mr. Hawthorne, an SLA board member fell into this category and stated the he believed classical Christian education is "a solid education for anyone… it's a process of cultivating virtue and wisdom. It is really deeper than just, you know, trying to pass a few exams and show some good scores. . ." (personal interview, April 28, 2019).

Some of the code segments indicated that participants were ignorant of the classical Christian philosophy, but aware that the classical Christian philosophy is different than the philosophies of the prior schools in which they were involved. In fact, some participants admitted their ignorance, using key words like: knew nothing (of the classical Christian education philosophy), unfamiliar with it, don't understand it, and still learning about it. Mrs. Cuthbert, a teacher stated, "To be honest, I knew nothing about classical Christian. Nothing. Nothing" (personal interview, May 1, 2019). Other participants indicated their awareness of the difference in philosophies, but without understanding the specific differences. One of the parents, Mrs. Carroll stated, "this is fairly new to me because I've only been here for three years; but what I see is, it's just making them deeper thinkers, leaders, stronger and based on God's word" (personal interview, May 22, 2019). Much of the documentation from SLA indicated that the administration has a higher level of understanding about classical Christian education. In a document titled, "Upper School Scope and Sequence" a rational for teaching Latin at SLA included the following: "For centuries, teaching Latin was an integral part of any good academic training. It was considered necessary to a fundamental understanding of English, other Latin-based languages, and the history and writings of Western Civilization" (Anonymous Documentation, 2019).

The third theme I identified from the data was, “Motivation to be Involved in Classical Christian Education”. Sub-themes were identified from the following key words and code segments: Builds foundation, develops leaders, deeper education, and ability to draw conclusions. Code segments revealed the following sub-themes: Participants were either consciously aware of their motivation or passively aware of their motivation to become involved with classical Christian education. The data matrix segment for this theme is shown below:

Table 4.3 Data matrix for theme 3

Codes Segments	Sub Themes	Themes
Builds foundation Develops leaders Deeper education Ability to draw conclusions Spirit led us here	Consciously aware of motivation Passively aware of motivation	Motivation to be Involved in Classical Christian Education

The stakeholder group that was most aware of their motivation to become involved in a classical Christian education were the board members. Mr. Hawthorne explained, “the most significant reason [for becoming involved in classical Christian education] was our want, you know our desire for our children to have that kind of education” (personal interview, April 16, 2019). When asked about his motivation, another board member, Mr. Finch stated, “The love and the beauty of what the classical Christian education is. It’s looking at truth goodness, beauty, and really highlighting that and thinking through that in your education” (personal interview, April 28, 2019). Some of the teachers were also very much aware of their desire to teach in a classical Christian school. One teacher, Mr. Crane stated,

> I think that classical education is at its core about educating a person, as a whole person as an individual. So, I don't care as much about teaching you math as I care about teaching you how to be able to learn how to deal with the world in ways that use mathematical thought. (Personal interview, May 15, 2019)

Mrs. Montgomery also revealed that she is consciously aware of her motivation for enrolling her children by stating it was because SLA, “is going to help us fulfill the mission to instill character, truth, and wisdom to help students prepare them for life of service to God, community, family, and country” (personal interview, May 22, 2019).

Some of the participants were only passively aware of their motivation to be involved with classical Christian education and these participants created the second sub-theme. One of the code segments that frequently came from this category was the notion that stakeholders felt they were led by the Holy Spirit to become involved with SLA. Mrs. Cuthbert demonstrated this notion when she stated, “For the most part, you know we're here because we're honoring the Lord and He totally just plunked us down here” (personal interview, May 1, 2019). Not to diminish the power of the Third Person of the Trinity, the sub-theme of participants who were passively aware of their motivation emerged from a noncommittal attitude in their reason for becoming involved in classical Christian education, with regard to the philosophy, specifically. When asked why she chose to enroll her children at SLA, Mrs. Carroll stated, “I felt like the Lord led us here” and later in the interview added, “we came here and I actually felt the Holy Spirit say, ‘This is your home’” (personal interview, May 22, 2019).

Research Question Responses

Research Question One

What is the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education?

During the interviews, participants from each of the stakeholder groups in this study were asked about the reason why they chose to become involved in classical Christian education. Many of the participants talked about how they did not agree with some of the things that were happening at the school where they were, prior to coming to SLA. This is reflected in the theme: Disapproval of mainstream educational philosophy. Mrs. Ingles expressed her frustrations with her former school when she stated:

> I have found it freeing to come here the past couple of years after being somewhere else that was really bringing in more progressive [philosophy]. I was just frustrated. I was ready to give up teaching because I just couldn't do it anymore. It was so frustrating being told to do things a certain way and being asked to do things in a way that I didn't feel like [I] was reaching my students. My students weren't able to learn and participate as well because I wasn't allowed to teach them in a way that I believed was best, which is pretty much this way [the classical Christian way]. (personal interview, April 29, 2019)

Instead of avoiding a different philosophy of education, another teacher, Ms. Fisher explained that her motivation to start teaching at SLA was specifically because of the classical Christian philosophy:

> I chose to work at a Christian classical school when I obviously didn't have to. At that job fair, we had umpteen non-Christian classical choices. [I chose classical Christian] because I am also trying to teach the truth, and goodness, and beauty. . . Teaching at a

> Christian school gives me a vocabulary that aids in that, that I wouldn't have in [other] schools." (personal interview, May 15, 2019)

The board members I interviewed, who were all founding board members of SLA, were motivated to start the school because they opposed the mainstream educational philosophies of the schools where their children previously attended. Prior to founding the school, most of the board members visited a classical Christian school that was over 100 miles from their homes. After their visit, they chose to start SLA with a classical Christian philosophy. One of the board members, Mr. Hawthorne described that experience:

> We committed to help starting a school based on [the classical Christian school] and their model. We wanted our children to have this type of education. We didn't even really know what it was, but of course today we know it was the classical Christian education that we were looking at, and that's what we wanted to do for our kids. (personal interview, April 16, 2019)

The board members continue in their original mission to this day because they are still motivated by the classical Christian philosophy. Mr. Finch described that even though his reasons have changed, his motivation regarding the mission has remained consistent:

> Obviously early on, the primary motivation was my kid's education. But as it's grown, now I would say my motivation is a love for what this process, what this education does for students. . . The love and the beauty of what the classical Christian education is. It's looking at truth, goodness, beauty, and really highlighting that and thinking through that in your education. (personal interview, April 28, 2019)

Parent participants shared similarities to the board members for their motivation to send their children to SLA in that both sets of stakeholders desired to keep their children away from

the mainstream educational philosophy, and were also motivated to be involved in classical Christian education. Mrs. Oleson wanted to move her children out of the mainstream public school because she felt that they were bored and were not being challenged enough. She also reported that last year, two teachers in her local school had been arrested and stated that, "In our local public schools [there is] quite a bit of junk going on" (personal interview, May 7, 2019). Mrs. Oleson was also motivated to send her children to a school that subscribed to a classical Christian philosophy and stated:

> As parents, we are the ones responsible for childrens' Christian education. The church comes along beside us, but I also love that we're seeing the same thing at school. Even the things that our boys are struggling with, the teachers, in a very biblical manor are coming alongside of us, and helping. (personal interview, May 7, 2019)

Another parent, Mr. London expressed similar thoughts about his opposition to the mainstream educational philosophy. His church meets at a local public school and he can literally see the writing on the wall when he walks down the hallways. Based on the posters on the walls, he said he can tell what is valued at the school and that much of what he sees "is just teaching people's feelings, there's no truth to that. Nothing's grounded." He added, "And at the end of the day, at least for me, your feelings are an opinion and it's not a fact. Facts matter" (personal interview, March 11, 2019). Mr. London also stated that he specifically wanted to enroll his children in a school with a classical Christian philosophy so that he would, "be able to see them defend a position… so you learn the content, research the content, defend the content" (personal interview, March 11, 2019).

Research Question Two

What beliefs do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

The data revealed a variety of beliefs that stakeholders had about classical Christian education. The beliefs that participants held about the classical Christian philosophy fell into a range consistent with the literature. The data also revealed an unexpected sub-theme that some of the participants had little-to-no knowledge of the classical Christian philosophy prior to becoming involved in SLA. Mrs. Cuthbert, who admitted that she knew nothing of the classical Christian philosophy before teaching at SLA told me that she is learning more about the philosophy and has implemented elements of it in her teaching. Ms. Ingles explained that since starting at SLA, "it has made me thirst for more knowledge of, of things like, things like the trivium and quadrivium. Where my background is weak, I am doing more reading to better understand" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). Mrs. Montgomery admitted her lack of knowledge of classical Christian education by explaining her thoughts when she first heard about SLA: "I wouldn't have said, Oh, there's a classical Christian school opening up, because I didn't know what a classical Christian school was, never even heard of the term, until, you know, SLA's website went up" (personal interview, May 22, 2019).

Many of the participants indicated that they had a working knowledge of classical Christian philosophy when they shared their beliefs about it. However, some participants had a lower level of understanding of their beliefs. When asked of her beliefs about classical Christian education, Ms. Dickens reflected this sub-theme when she stated, "Personally, I like the philosophy. It's straightforward… integrity. I like books over iPads. I like the focus on educating the person to walk with integrity and live a life of service to God, community, and country"

(personal interview, May 15, 2019). Another statement from Mrs. Montgomery represented a lower level of understanding of the classical Christian philosophy when she said, "I really saw the integrated learning process, you know, integrating that learning among all disciplines. And viewing everything through the lens of scripture, without having bible classes" (personal interview, May 1, 2019). While listening to participants' responses to the belief question, I was surprised at the vagueness of some of the answers. Mr. Clemons displayed this vagueness when he stated,

> First it instructs children on how to be critical thinkers. Then, it provides, it gives the kids a balanced, and a well-rounded education. . . it challenges them to achieve beyond their, even their own expectations. And, along the way of that, you know, it builds self-confidence, it um naturally puts that into the kids as they work through things. Oh, and another thing, um it prepares them to uh function in and live in actually a fallen world and to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves. . . We have set up the school as an environment that supports a Christian worldview. . . and then [it] put God first in all that we, that we do. (personal interview, April 13, 2019)

Other stakeholders had a higher level of understanding of their beliefs about classical Christian education. Ms. Fisher said that she believes classical Christian education is, "performing at the soul, towards a fully human life by requiring a virtue, and instilling a love of what is good, true, and beautiful. And that being a Christian school, you get to incorporate things, and that good, true, and beautiful, He exists" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). When I asked Mr. Crane what he believed to be true about classical Christian education, he stated, "Wrestling with transcendentals. I value letting my kids know truth, beauty, and goodness, they exist" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). One of the teachers, Ms. Melville said that she is still

learning about the classical Christian philosophy. However, she demonstrated a higher level of understanding when she stated that classical Christian education is:

> Taking the subjects and finding the virtue and the beauty and the truth, which are going to come from God, and then leading the students to that, to see that. And then helping them learn how to glean that from what they're learning, that leads back to, to God. The parts of the trivium lead us ultimately, to worshiping God. (personal interview, April 29, 2019)

As a parent, Mrs. Oleson also showed a higher level of understanding and stated that classical Christian education is when:

> God is weaved into every subject matter… The classical part, I believe, is getting, I hate to say it, but back to the basics. Some of it, whether it's math being taught like the way you and I learned math the way it's been taught for ages. Or studying the Greeks and the Romans, and that classical literature. Learning Latin, which our students are doing. And just in the way it is taught. I like how my husband said it, it's not necessarily curriculum, it's the manner in which it's taught. (personal interview, May 7, 2019)

Research Question Three

What expectations do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Each of the stakeholder groups had certain expectations when they came to SLA. One of the main themes that ran throughout the data was the expectation that SLA would be different than the previous school from where the participants came. The expectations for classical Christian education shared code segments that were related to participants expressing their disapproval of the mainstream educational philosophy. Mrs. Montgomery stated that "Here at

SLA, they were really not just focused on teaching to the test" and instead SLA was "focusing also on the character, you know their character development, their relationship with the Lord." (personal interview, May 1, 2019). Mr. London explained his apprehension that came with Christian schools when he stated, "Even Christian schools, my wife and I went to a Christian school. And. . . you're told or taught, if you will, of a belief, but I feel like both of us struggled a little bit to necessarily defend that." He added that at SLA, "I just want my children to be able to know why they believe something. And to defend it." (personal interview, March 11, 2019).

Participants who were already familiar with the classical Christian philosophy when they came to SLA had expectations of their own. Mr. London spoke of instruction as well as decorum with regard to the classical Christian philosophy. Mr. London stated "I expect my eight-year old to be, not all times, but in terms of an eight-year old, respectable to his peers, authority, and his brothers" (personal interview, March 11, 2019). One of the reasons Ms. Fisher chose to teach at a classical Christian school was because she would not have to limit her instruction to only secular statements. She stated, "I just think that I have a vastly more freeing vocabulary to use" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). Mr. Crane expected that the classical Christian philosophy would allow him to reach his students in much deeper ways. He explained this expectation with a statement about the stance he takes when students challenge him about their future in math:

> They keep saying, 'I'm never gonna use math.' You're right, that's why I'm not here primarily to teach you about math. And that's why just to answer a question is the most important thing for me about classical Christian education. I was given permission to go in there and make them different people. (Personal interview, May 15, 2019)

One of the board members echoed Mr. Crane with regard to the expectation of the depth of learning the classical Christian philosophy can provide. Mr. Hawthorne stated, "It's really

deeper than just, you know, trying to pass a few exams and show some good scores and get into college or go start a job somewhere. It's much deeper than that" (personal interview, April 28, 2019).

Research Question Four

What are the parents', teachers', and school board members' perceptions of the value of their investment in classical Christian education?

Research question four was designed to help provide the final piece of data for the theoretical framework for this study; expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Participants' beliefs toward classical Christian education were assessed through the second research question and their expectations were assessed through the third research question. Finally, the "evaluative aspect of those beliefs" can be assessed through this final research question (Fishbein, 1963, p. 233).

The data analysis revealed that different groups of stakeholders made a variety of investments when they became involved in classical Christian education. Since SLA is a tuition-based school, obviously parents invested monetarily for their children to attend. Some teachers also mentioned a monetary investment in the form of a lower rate of pay because private Christian schools pay less than most public schools. While referring to the comparison in pay, Ms. Alcott stated, "I mean, obviously I know that it is a sacrifice as far as a pay scale goes" (personal interview, April 24, 2019). While board members invested a great deal of time during the planning stages of the school, they also noted a monetary investment. One of the documents provided to me was unofficial board meeting minutes from one of the first SLA planning meetings. Within the minutes, I found mention of a recommended donation from board members to help seed the school.

There were other, less obvious investments that participants made to become involved in the classical Christian school. I conducted a focus group during school hours one day and noticed many parents helping in the classroom. I verified that this is common practice, demonstrating an investment of parents' time helping at the school. Many of the teacher participants told me they invest a great deal of time learning about the classical Christian philosophy. Ms. Melville provided an example of this type of investment when she said, "I've never read Augustine before… I said, 'we are going to read Augustine.' So, we did" (personal interview, April 29, 2019). Board members also invested their abilities and talents while founding the school. For instance, one board member was an accountant and another was in human resources. Board members, investing their talents, helped to save money on vendors while beginning the fledgling school.

A further analysis of the data revealed participants' perception of the aforementioned investments that they made. While analyzing the sub-themes from participants' beliefs about classical Christian education, I found that stakeholders who were in the categories of knowing little-to-nothing and those who had a lower level of understanding about their beliefs still provided value statements for their motivation to remain involved in Classical Christian education. When I asked participants to tell me what brought them to the classical Christian school and they said that they were not familiar with the classical Christian philosophy, I followed up by asking why they chose to stay at SLA. Their answers showed the value that the participants placed on the school. Mrs. Ingles noted that she still does not completely understand the classical Christian philosophy but she completely embraces it. She said that she values the methodology behind the classical Christian philosophy, but most of all, she values the

philosophy itself. Ms. Ingles also explained her gratitude toward classical Christian education when she stated:

> I am a firm believer in it… my children know I was getting very frustrated where I was before. And I'm very glad to be back and it's very good to see that they appreciate the classical education that they got when they were younger and, and how that has carried over through their lives. (personal interview, April 29, 2019)

Mr. Hawthorne values that SLA exposes children to a Christian worldview and do it while developing virtue and wisdom. Mr. Hawthorne further explained the value he places in the classical Christian philosophy when he stated, "I think as you get deeper into it, you understand the value of the meaning so much more beyond just yourself and your family" (personal interview, April 28, 2019). Mr. Finch expressed how much he valued the classical Christian philosophy when he said,

> There's a passion that I have for it of being, I guess you would say, being evangelical with it. Where I gotta, I gotta stop myself sometimes because I've got a lot of friends and their kids are Christians in public school and, you know, I don't want to over sell how much, you know how much better this education is. (personal interview, April 28, 2019)

One of the parent participants, Mrs. Montgomery said that the elements of the classical Christian philosophy she values the most is that everything is viewed through the lense of scripture and stated that her childrens' teachers are, "focused on their spiritual growth, their emotional state, and whether or not they were building character" (personal interview, May 1, 2019). Mrs. Cuthbert values SLA's pillars of character, truth, and wisdom as it relates to the classical Christian philosophy. Ms. Dickens said that one of the differences that she appreciates about SLA as opposed to her former school is that she is able to discuss fundamental truths while she

teaches. Ms. Dickens dives deep into the material with her students and encourages conversations that, "foster what is true" (personal interview, April 29, 2019). Mr. Clemons stated that what he values most about SLA is, "putting God first in all that we do" (personal interview, April 13, 2019).

Participants who had a higher level of understanding about classical Christian education also noted the value that they found at SLA. Ms. Melville stated that,

> We teach our students to think. We place value on them thinking and not just doing, but being. They have to be able to think if you are going to be their own person and that is discouraged in other settings. And, I think the children think here. (personal interview, April 29, 2019)

One of the elements that Mrs. Alcott values about the classical Christian philosophy is the trivium and stated, "it goes with the child's natural development stages" (personal interview, April 24, 2019). As a lower school teacher, she especially appreciates the grammar stage and feels that building knowledge through memorization is extremely valuable. She also appreciates SLA's pillars of character, truth, and wisdom and the Christ-centered nature of the school's philosophy. What Mr. Crane values about classical Christian education the most is that it focuses on educating the whole person. He also appreciates the conversations that he encourages with his students while, "wrestling with trancendentals" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). Ms. Melville said she appreciates the organization of the classical Christian philosphy and especially likes how the Christian thread runs throughout the curriculum. She continues to learn more about the classical Christian philosophy, like the trivium and stated that, "The parts of the trivium leads us ultimately to worshiping God" (personal interview, April 29, 2019). Finally, Mrs. Oleson said that her expectations are being met, for the most part and she stated that she and her husband are

"ninety percent satisfied" (personal interview, May 7, 2019). Mrs. Oleson also stated that, "the benefits far outweigh those few negatives" (personal interview, May 7, 2019).

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the participants from each of the stakeholder groups: Parents, teachers, and school board members. Themes and sub-themes that were identified from key words and code segments were also presented. Each of the four research questions were answered with evidence from the data analysis. The data analysis helped to explain the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education in a K-12 American school.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education in a K-12 American school. This chapter will describe the conclusions of my study by first reviewing the answers to the research questions within the summary of the findings. Next will be a discussion of the theoretical literature of expectancy value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) that informed the study. The empirical literature will also be discussed, in light of the results of the study. Next, the implications of the study will be described. The discussion of the implications will be broken down into theoretical, empirical, and practical implication sections. To complete this chapter, the limitations and delimitations of the study will be addressed. Finally, recommendations for future research will be made.

Summary of Findings

The following research questions provide a summary of the findings of this qualitative study.

Research Question One

What is the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education?

The data revealed that participants who were motivated to became involved in SLA did so because of strong reasons. However, the data did not reveal any indication that participants employed an exhaustive search for options while looking for a school in which to become involved. This is consistent with Prichard and Swezey (2016) when they found that, “Christian

parents did not use a comprehensive decision-making process where all school choice options were considered and information was gathered from a number of sources" (p. 12).

Data revealed that most of the participants in each of the stakeholder groups were motivated by a dissatisfaction with the school in which they were involved, prior to coming to SLA. Participants cited various reasons for their dissatisfaction. For instance, some parents whose children attended their neighborhood public school did not like the messages that their children were receiving from the curriculum, teachers, and/or other students. Some of the teachers and board members were concerned that the philosophies of their former schools were leaning toward a more progressive approach. Teachers and board members who were involved with private Christian schools prior coming to SLA were troubled that their school's administrators desired to seek funding from governmental source, limiting the schools' ability to maintain a Christian doctrine. The data revealed these participants, who fell into the theme of disapproving of main-stream educational philosophy, indicated that their concerns were remedied when they came to SLA.

Data revealed that even participants with little-to-no knowledge of the classical Christian philosophy were motivated to come to, and remain at SLA, in part, because they recognized something different going on at SLA, even if they could not identify that "something" as the classical Christian philosophy. Other participants, who were familiar with classical Christian education, were motivated to become involved with SLA because of the school's philosophy. The data revealed that participants who came to SLA knowledgeable of classical Christian education were also more consciously aware of their motivation to become involved with a school that subscribed to the classical Christian philosophy. Participants in this category were

motivated enough to research and seek out a school that subscribed specifically to a classical Christian philosophy because of their strong beliefs in the efficacy of the philosophy.

Research Question Two

What beliefs do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Data from research question two revealed three different levels of understanding from participants' beliefs about classical Cristian education. One level, were those participants who knew little-to nothing about classical Christian education. Some participants in this category admitted their ignorance of the classical Christian philosophy when they first came to SLA. However, after being at SLA for a few years, still limited in their knowledge of the philosophy, participants shared their beliefs nonetheless. Data revealed that participants in this category held strong beliefs, even though they were based on rudimentary knowledge of the classical Christian philosophy. Participants who knew little-to-nothing about the classical Christian philosophy shared that they believe it is a solid education and that the philosophy produces deeper thinkers and virtuous people, with a focus on building character.

The next level were those participants who displayed a lower level of understanding of classical Christian education. Data revealed that participants in this category had a familiarity with the classical Christian philosophy, but had limited knowledge and experience in the philosophy. When asked, "What do you believe to be true about classical Christian education?", participants in this category used words such as "character", "truth", "wisdom", "virtue", and "Christian worldview". The participants in this category lacked the sophisticated understanding of participants at the next level. Nonetheless, the data revealed these participants displayed a confidence in their beliefs, regardless of their level of understanding.

The third level were participants who had a higher level of understanding about the classical Christian philosophy. Participants in this category displayed a more advanced understanding by stating that they believed classical Christian education taught concepts like absolute truth. These participants referred to more specific aspects of the classical Christian philosophy such as, the levels of the trivium: Grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Participants who possessed a higher level of understanding about classical Christian education also believed it contains concepts like working through transcendentals and the use of classical languages such as Latin and Greek.

Research Question Three

What expectations do parents, teachers, and school board members have of classical Christian education?

Research question three was closely tied to participants' motivation to become involved with classical Christian education. Participants who had a negative experience with their former schools expected SLA's philosophy to be different than the mainstream educational philosophy to which their former school subscribed. Alternatively, participants who were familiar with the classical Christian philosophy expected that SLA would utilize the philosophy at a proficient level.

Many of the participants who helped to start SLA, or who came to the school shortly after its founding expressed dissatisfaction with the former school in which they were involved. They expected SLA to be different in specific ways. Data revealed that participants desired to be involved with a school that did not subscribe to a progressive philosophy. Data also revealed that participants did not want to be involved with a school that would be constrained by mandates that come with government funding.

Data revealed that participants who were familiar with the classical Christian philosophy came to SLA with the expectation that the beliefs they held regarding classical Christian education would be adhered to, with fidelity. Participants in this category expected that certain tenants of the classical Christian philosophy would be implemented at SLA, including: The trivium, truth, goodness, beauty, classical language, and educating the whole child, all accomplished through a Christian worldview. The data indicated that participants in this category were very much aware of their expectations because they had invested and/or sacrificed in order to be at SLA, largely due to their various expectations.

Research Question Four

What are the parents', teachers', and school board members' perceptions of the value of their investment in classical Christian education?

To answer research question four, data were analyzed to find out how participants evaluated their expectations about their beliefs of the classical Christian philosophy. The data revealed that participants at all levels of understanding about classical Christian education (e.g., little-to-no knowledge, lower level of understanding, and higher level of understanding) had expectations when they came to SLA. Most participants across all stakeholder groups found that their expectations were being met.

Parent participants who came to SLA held certain expectations about how they wanted their children to be taught. Parents held academic and behavioral expectations, as well as expectations for how they wanted their children to turn out as adults, with a Christian worldview. Some parent participants had their children enrolled for the entire eight years of SLA's existence and others had only been at SLA for one year. Data revealed that all parent participants held the

value of their investment in classical Christian education at a high level and were enthusiastic about their experiences.

Teachers who work at SLA had a wide range of expectations. Teachers who were unfamiliar with the classical Christian philosophy expected that SLA would be different than the schools at which they worked previously. Many teachers in this category did not know the exact differences they were looking for, but recognized in SLA, that the philosophy was different. The teachers who had little-to-no knowledge of classical Christian education also held the philosophy in high value, even if they had only worked at SLA for a short time. Other teachers, who were familiar with the classical Christian philosophy expected SLA to operate with little-to-no elements of a progressive educational philosophy. The teachers in this category also expected certain elements of the classical Christian philosophy to be implemented. These elements included: building a foundation of knowledge and providing a well-rounded education by educating the whole child. The teachers in this category found a high level of value in their investment in classical Christian education as well. There were some teachers at SLA, mostly those who attended a classical liberal arts college, who knew a great deal about the classical Christian philosophy. Teachers in this category expected that the classical Christian philosophy would be adhered to with fidelity at SLA. They expected that their classical Christian school would hold the same standards that their classical liberal arts college held and that the education would look similar to what they had experienced while attending their college. The teachers in this category placed a great deal of value in their investment in preparing to teach at a classical Christian school.

SLA board members also placed a great deal of value on their investment in the school. Board members invested their time, effort, and money to start the school and maintain its

existence. At least one board member (Mr. Finch) sacrificed elements of his career by agreeing to become the headmaster of SLA, originally planned for a short time, but lasted about four years (personal interview, April 28, 2019). During interview and focus group discussions, board members maintained their enthusiasm for SLA and truly believe that the mission of opening a classical Christian school continues to make a difference for current and prospective families.

Discussion

Expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) was the theoretical framework and was the basis for the purpose of this study. In order to understand the motivation of stakeholders to become involved in classical Christian education, I reflected on other aspects of the empirical framework. The empirical framework included the nuances of school choice, along with aspects of classical and classical Christian philosophies and how those philosophies compare with progressive education.

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical framework for this study was based on expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). While analyzing the data, I was able to find out participants' beliefs about classical Christian education. I then determined three different levels of understanding that participants displayed regarding their beliefs about the classical Christian philosophy: Little-to-no knowledge of the classical Christian philosophy, a lower level of understanding, and a higher level of understanding. Next, data were analyzed to find out the expectations that participants had of classical Christian education as they came to SLA. Finally, I gained an understanding of the value that participants placed on their expectations of classical Christian education. By analyzing the data in this manner, I was able to determine the motivation for parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in SLA.

Expectancy-value theory posits that people are motivated, based on their beliefs about an object and the evaluation of those beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) and that expectancies and values are positively related (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). I found that even though participants across all groups of stakeholders had various levels of understanding about the classical Christian philosophy, those levels of understanding had very little effect on any of the participants' expectations or the value that they placed on those expectations. Data revealed an overwhelming response that participants placed a high value on classical Christian education. Mrs. Montgomery exemplified this attitude when she stated:

> We know we're never going to find one hundred percent satisfaction in anything this side of heaven. But you know, as soon as we were in the door, we were sold out… there was (sic) no more decisions, except to help the administration and the teachers and the students here, kind of achieve the goal. (personal interview, May 22, 2019)

Mr. London displayed a similar attitude when he stated of his satisfaction in SLA, "In terms of my value and my expectation at this age, at this grade level, one hundred percent" (personal interview, March 11, 2019).

Empirical Literature

Most of the participants from each of the stakeholder groups exercised the concept of school choice and had been involved in private parochial schools prior to coming to SLA. Others were involved in charter schools, local public schools, or homeschooling. Participants used the concept of school choice as an escape route from their neighborhood public schools (Teasley, 2017) however, there was a cost associated with this choice. Board members invested their time, effort, and money while starting SLA. Teachers sacrificed higher pay, as well as effort as most teachers had to be trained in the classical Christian philosophy in order to teach at SLA. The

parents in this study chose to pay for the private education at SLA instead of opting for other, less expensive or free choices. This is consistent with Cohen-Zada and Sander (2008) when they stated that even high-income families are less likely to move to high income areas (with a perception of better public schools) because, "there is less of a reason to pay higher taxes and higher housing prices for higher quality public schools" (p. 99).

Elements of school choice from the literature such as market-based reform like, school vouchers and Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs) are not currently legal in Michigan (Egalite & Wolf, 2016; Lubienski & Brewer, 2016). Instead, charter schools are one of the only non-tuition alternatives to the neighborhood public school. One parent, Mr. London, told me that his children had previously been enrolled in a charter school. Mr. London chose the charter school because of its classical philosophy however, he said he is more satisfied with the classical Christian approach at SLA (personal interview, March 11, 2019).

A concern that school choice could foster discrimination was mentioned in the literature. Most participants in this study did not talk about discrimination or mention diversity in any way, with one exception. Ms. Alcott, one of the teachers at SLA was introduced to the classical Christian philosophy in the southeastern United States, while searching for a school for her biracial, adopted daughter. Ms. Alcott was especially happy with how the classical Christian school addressed minorities and served underprivileged populations. She attributed the positive effects that the school had on her daughter to the classical Christian philosophy (personal interview, April 24, 2019). While parents of disadvantaged students may not be able to afford a private education (Darby and Saatcioglu, 2015), my study found that a classical Christian school could help underprivileged students in positive ways.

The religious component of SLA was one of the factors that participants mentioned for choosing to become involved with the school. Parents choosing to send their children to a school based on the religious aspect of the school is consistent with the literature (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). Another factor that contributed to participants' choices was their own experiences in school (Bell, 2009; Prichard & Swezey, 2016). Mr. London said that his wife and he attended Christian schools while growing up, but were not taught in a classical way, to specifically defend Christian beliefs (personal interview, March 11, 2019). Mrs. Cuthbert said that she was taught in a very traditional way and cited that experience as one that she appreciated about the classical Christian philosophy (personal interview, May 1, 2019). Most of the participants, and especially the parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with their choice to come to SLA. This was inconsistent with the notion of "satisficing" that Prichard and Swezey (2016) found in their study where most parents conduct a search for a school and conclude that search once they find a school that meets their minimum requirements (Prichard & Swezey, 2016, p. 16). At SLA, parents indicated that they were enthusiastic about their children being part of the school and they couldn't imagine being anywhere else.

Many of the participants in this study, across all stakeholder groups, mentioned elements of both the classical and classical Christian philosophy. Remaining consistent with Wilson (2003), one of the teachers at SLA, Ms. Fisher, stated her desire was to lead her students "through the great works of the Western Heritage" (personal interview, May 15, 2019). In accordance with Graves (1910), participants spoke of teaching and learning absolute truth and how much they appreciated a biblical/Christian thread running through the curriculum. The trivium was talked about by most of the teachers and one parent. However, there was no need to examine the trivium in light of the classical Christian philosophy because none of the

participants made any distinction between the classical philosophy and the classical Christian philosophy when it came to the trivium. In fact, one teacher, Mr. Cooper made it clear that he believed it was redundant to add "Christian" to classical education (personal interview, May 15, 2019). The fact that the participants in my study thought there was no need to clarify any difference between classical education and classical Christian education was an interesting finding because both Booth (1997) and Wilson (2003) placed importance on the difference.

Participants mentioned various aspects of the history of classical education while discussing their attitudes toward the classical Christian philosophy. Graves (1910) and Wilson (2003) wrote that throughout the ages, classical education focused on the Christian faith as the foundation for learning. Participants agreed and spoke of a Christian thread running through the curriculum, instead of daily chapel or bible classes. Lewis (2013), Sayers (1979), and Wilson (2003) wrote about how the classical Christian philosophy historically focused on educating the whole child (e.g., the intellectual as well as the emotional). Participants in my study were well aware of the concept of educating the whole child, and parents and teachers discussed it as commonplace. DeMille (2006) wrote that many of the Founding Fathers were trained through a classical philosophy. The documentation, as well as the participants in my study, mentioned that the classical Christian philosophy is focused on developing leadership skills.

Many participants spoke about the elements of classical education that were mentioned in the literature. During interviews and focus groups, participants discussed some of the traditional aims and methods indicative of the classical philosophy such as, discipline and virtue (Moore, 2014). While observing the physical layout of the classrooms at SLA, I noticed a teacher-centered approach with desks in rows, facing forward, implying that the teacher was the authority on the subject (Taş & Coşkun, 2014, and Zohrabi et al., 2012). Teacher and parent

participants spoke of their apprehension for students working in groups, implying an appreciation for explicit instruction as well. This is in support of the literature where Taş and Coşkun (2014) found, “explicit teaching seems to be effective in the acquisition of explicit knowledge” (p. 34). Alfieri, et al. (2011) also found that explicit instruction was more effective than other forms of instructional delivery. The Socratic method is another element of the classical philosophy that participants, especially teachers in the upper school mentioned, while describing how they helped their students become aware of their thinking (Zare, 2015). Upper school teachers spoke of how they were more excited to discuss real-life issues with which their students were struggling, instead of teaching them the daily subject material. They mentioned that the discussions often devolved into a Socratic discussion where there were more questions than answers.

Two more elements of classical education, from the literature, that the participants in this study talked about were; building background knowledge and basic skills mastery. The building of background knowledge was mentioned by some of the upper school teachers who expressed frustration with students who came to SLA without having a classical background. These students lacked the foundational knowledge to participate effectively in daily classroom conversations and were in need of, “a broad base of common knowledge” (Liu, 2015, p. 57). Lower school teachers at SLA understood the importance of mastering basic skills in order to progress through the trivium. Ms. Ingles exemplified this when she stated, “rote learning is good for kids at this age because they are able to memorize these facts and you're able to build a foundation” (personal interview, April 24, 2019).

Many of the participants discussed differences between the progressive and classical Christian philosophies. Participants talked about the consistency of the classical Christian

philosophy as opposed to the ever-changing methods of the progressive approach. They also discussed a direct approach to instruction represented in classical Christian education, instead of a preponderance of group work found in the progressive philosophy that encourages socializing over book learning (Dewey, 1897). Participants specifically cited the progressive philosophy's destruction of Christian principals as a detriment to education, consistent with what Lewis (2013) found. Many of the participants spoke of the importance of learning the truths of scripture throughout the school day. Participants in this study also discussed the importance of rote learning, memorizing facts, and building a knowledge base. This is in direct opposition to the progressive philosophy of experiential and observational learning (Koops, 2012).

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Expectancy-value theory constituted the theoretical framework for this study (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). To start the process of evaluating one's expectations, those expectations need to be ascertained. To do that, the beliefs about the subject being valued need to be learned. This study found that the beliefs that participants held about the classical Christian philosophy had little effect on the value that participants placed on classical Christian education at SLA. My study found that no matter what participants believed about classical Christian education, they placed a great deal of value on their expectations about the philosophy, and those expectations were being met, with few exceptions. The only exception came from a group of teachers who attended a classical liberal arts college, and had a higher level of understanding about their beliefs of the classical Christian philosophy. These teachers had high expectations and valued their expectations at a high level, however they stated those expectations were not met at SLA.

Empirical Implications

There are different philosophies and schools of thought when it comes to classical education. Classical Christian education also appears to have different nuances, as evidenced by various levels of involvement (membership or accreditation) in the ACCS (Association for Classical Christian Schools, 2012). When choosing a classical Christian school for where to invest one's efforts, stakeholders would do well to weigh their options against the various classical Christian philosophical systems. It is unclear from the literature and data collection that there are standard criteria for classical or classical Christian education and it does not appear that individuals that subscribe to either philosophy can agree on criteria. It can be very confusing for stakeholders who want to become involved with a classical Christian school to decide what truly constitutes a classical Christian education.

Practical Implications

Stakeholders who desire a choice for a school are limited in Michigan. The only tuition-free alternatives to the neighborhood public school is homeschooling or a charter school. There are currently only two classical charter schools in Michigan. Because charter schools are government funded, they cannot subscribe to a Christian philosophy. Therefore, stakeholders who value classical Christian education, either need to pay tuition for a classical Christian school or homeschool utilizing a classical Christian curriculum.

Delimitations and Limitations

For this study, the participants were adults (over the age of 18) and consisted of parents, teachers, and school board members at a classical Christian school. I chose each of the participant groups because they all had some sort of investment in the school such as, time, effort, and/or money. The founders of the school chose not to pursue accreditation by the

Association for Classical Christian Schools (ACCS), although the school remains a member of ACCS (Association for Classical Christian Schools, 2012).

The geographical location for this study was limited to the Midwest region, specifically Michigan. Because my study was conducted in a classical Christian school, the transferability of my findings is limited to other classical Christian schools and not to all classical schools, neither public nor private. The small number of participants, a total of fifteen, could limit the transferability of the findings from this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

After considering the findings, limitations, and the delimitations of this study, the following are my recommendations for future research. I would recommend a qualitative case study, extending this study that includes students as a stakeholder group. I would especially recommend students who went to a school that subscribed to a philosophy other than a classical Christian philosophy, prior to coming to a classical Christian school. A study of this nature would involve data from a very important group of student stakeholders that is absent from this study. Another recommendation for future research is a qualitative study of participants who were previously involved in specifically a classical school and then moved to a classical Christian school. It would be interesting to see the value that stakeholders, from a study of this type, would place on their expectations.

Summary

My study sought to discover the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education at SLA. The theoretical framework for this study was the expectancy-value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Expectancy-value is the attitude that one holds about an object (Fishbein, 1963).

That attitude is a function of (1) his beliefs about that object. . . and (2) the evaluative aspect of those beliefs" (Fishbein, 1963, p. 238). Individuals in Michigan who want to become involved in classical Christian education can do so only through homeschooling or through a tuition-based school. School vouchers and Educational Savings Accounts are not allowable under current legislation in Michigan. Therefore, parents who choose to send their children to a classical Christian school must pay tuition. Participants in all three stakeholder groups discussed the challenges that come with being involved in a private school. Even with these challenges, along with their investments of time, effort and money, and the sacrifices that some have to make, participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with their decision to become involved in SLA, with few exceptions.

Parents, teachers, and school board members are motivated to become involved in a classical Christian school by a variety of factors including, a disapproval of the mainstream educational philosophy (i.e. progressive philosophy) and a strong desire to experience the core elements of the classical Christian philosophy. A common theme found among participants was that they felt spirit-led to become part of the school. Board members felt that because of the nature of how the school came together, and in such a short time, it was meant to be. Teachers who had negative experiences at their former schools expressed that they felt at peace by being at SLA. Parents spoke of praying about their decision to send their children to SLA, and were very confident that God had given them the answer. Perhaps this is why participants felt so strongly in their decision to become involved with the classical Christian philosophy at SLA.

One of the unexpected findings that revealed itself during my study was the attitude that many of the advocates of classical Christian education hold. Advocates include a range of individuals; from those who know very little about classical Christian education, to those who

are considered experts in the philosophy. These advocates, who hold a strong belief in classical Christian education (even if they are not certain of exactly what classical Christian education is), seem to suggest that others' attitudes toward the philosophy are somehow flawed. Instead of finding commonalities to influence others toward the philosophy for greater change, advocates tend to disagree about the nuances of the philosophy, resulting in stagnated growth. If classical Christian education is to become prominent in America again, the advocates of the philosophy need to come together and find some common ground upon which to meet.

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APPENDIX A: Permission to Conduct Research

[redacted]

May 7, 2018 Re: PhD Research

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to state that [redacted] is willing to participate in the research conducted by Mr. Corey Merante in his PhD dissertation on classical Christian education.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.
Sincerely,

[redacted], Dean of Academic Affairs

APPENDIX B: Permission to Conduct Research

February 19, 2019

Cory Merante
Doctoral
Candidate
Liberty
University

To Whom It May Concern:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled, A Case Study of Stakeholders' Motivation to Invest in Classical Christian Education, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study with any willing schools which are members of the Association of Classical & Christian Schools.

Check the following boxes, as applicable or delete at your

discretion: I'd be interested to hear what you learn from your

research.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Director of Member Services

[redacted]

[redacted]

An Older Way, A Christian Way, A Better Way

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval

IRB Approval 3672.022119: A Case Study of Stakeholders' Motivation to Invest in Classical Christian Education

IRB, IRB
Thu 2/21/2019 4:24 PM

To: Merante, Cory <cmerante@liberty.edu>
Cc: Wimberley, Alan D (Doctor of Education) <adwimberley@liberty.edu>; IRB, IRB <IRB@liberty.edu>

4 attachments (466 KB)
Merante_3672StampedConsent.docx.pdf; Annual Review Form_Template.docx; Change in Protocol_Template.docx; Merante_3672Approval_02_19.pdf;

Dear Cory Merante,

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 are attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

> 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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APPENDIX D: Recruitment Letter – Interviews and Focus Groups

January 21, 2019

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to find out the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to become involved in a classical Christian education, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, the parent of a student(s) attending, a teacher at, or a school board member of [redacted], and you are willing to participate, you will be asked to schedule an interview and/or participate in a focus group. It should take approximately one hour to complete an interview and two hours to complete a focus group. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, complete and return the consent document to the researcher and contact me to schedule an interview: Email: corymerante@liberty.edu, Phone: 734-883-[redacted].

A consent document is attached to this email and will be given to you at the time of the interview and/or focus group. The consent document contains additional information about my research, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview and/or focus group.

If you choose to participate, you will be entered in one of three raffles to receive a gift card. One $25 Visa card will be raffled off for teacher participants. One $25 Visa gift card will be raffled off for parent participants. One $25 Visa gift card will be raffled off for board member participants.

Sincerely,

Cory Merante
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

APPENDIX E: Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/21/2019 to 2/20/2020
Protocol # 3672.022119

CONSENT FORM

A Case Study of Stakeholders' Motivation to Invest in a Classical Christian Education

Cory J. Merante
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members who are involved in or invest their resources and/or efforts in classical Christian education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are the parent of a student(s) attending, a teacher at, or a school board member for a classical Christian school. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Cory Merante, 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 motivation of parents, teachers, and school board members to invest their efforts in classical Christian education.

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

1. Participate in an interview that will last about 1 hour and/or
2. Participate in a focus group session that will take approximately 2 hours to complete. Please be aware that interview and focus group sessions will be audio recorded.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include information that the study will provide regarding the motivation of stakeholders to invest their efforts in a classical Christian education.

Compensation: Participants will be entered into one of three raffles for a gift card. One $25 Visa gift card will be raffled off for teacher participants. One $25 Visa gift card will be raffled off for parent participants. One $25 Visa gift card will be raffled off for board member participants.

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. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- In order to protect their privacy, participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

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- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- With regard to the limits of confidentiality, I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

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

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Cory Merante. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 734-883[redacted] or cmerante@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Alan Wimberley, at adwimberley@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., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information 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.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX F: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
- Please walk me through how you came to the decision to get involved in classical Christian education.
- Of the reasons for your decisions you identified in previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
- What made them significant?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your decisions that you haven't already?
- What do you believe to be true about a classical Christian education?
- Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
- What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward classical Christian education?

APPENDIX G: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

Teachers

- Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
- Please tell me why you chose to teach in a classical Christian school.
- Of the reasons for your decisions you identified in previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
- What made them significant?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your decisions that you haven't already?
- What do you believe to be true about teaching in a classical Christian school?
- Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
- What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward teaching in a classical Christian school?

Board members

- Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
- Please walk me through how you came to the decision to get involved in classical Christian education.
- Of the reasons for your decisions you identified in previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
- What made them significant?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your decisions that you haven't already?

- What do you believe to be true about a classical Christian education?
- Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
- What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward classical Christian education?

Parents

- Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
- Please tell me why you chose to enroll your child(ren) in a classical Christian school.
- Of the reasons for your decisions you identified in previous answer, which would you say were the most significant?
- What made them significant?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your decisions that you haven't already?
- What do you believe to be true about having your child(ren) attend a classical Christian school?
- Of the beliefs you just mentioned, which of those do you value the most?
- What else do you think would be important for me to know about your attitude toward having your child(ren) attend a classical Christian School?

APPENDIX H: Data Matrix

Codes Segments	Sub Themes	Themes
Opposite of classical philosophy No consistency No truth Constantly changing Common Core State Standards Non-Christian/Non-Biblical Indoctrination No foundation of knowledge Frustrating It was broken	Against progressive philosophy Against mainstream but unknown about what, specifically	Disapproval of Mainstream Educational Philosophy
Consistent process Truth, goodness, beauty Rigor with joy Trivium Latin & French Virtue and wisdom Recitation Judeo-Christian/Greco-Roman Well-rounded education Building foundation Defend your learning Educate the whole child New to the philosophy Knew nothing	Higher level of understanding Lower level of understanding Ignorant of classical Christian philosophy, but aware that it is different	Beliefs about Classical Christian Education
Builds foundation Develops leaders Deeper education Ability to draw conclusions Spirit led us here	Consciously aware of motivation Passively aware of motivation	Motivation to be Involved in Classical Christian Education