UNDERSTANDING THEIR JOURNEYS: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NONCREDIT HOMELESS STUDENTS

by

Maureen C. Rubalcaba

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program at a noncredit community college institution. The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students were generally defined as homeless adult learners enrolled in a noncredit community college institution participating in a retention model program. Retention was generally defined as keeping students enrolled each term or term to term. The research examined noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. The theory guiding this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which provided a holistic approach to students' motivation by meeting physiological, emotional, social, and intellectual needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provided a theoretical context for retention model program coordinators to design and implement best practice programs. The central research question was what are the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program? This hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted through interviews, focus groups, and document review of anecdotal writings with 18 noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Qualitative data analysis procedures were used to understand, contextualize, theorize, and synthesize data to interpret the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled of noncredit homeless students. Thematic findings for this study are basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation that describe and interpret the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program.

Keywords: noncredit homeless students, retention model program, hierarchy of needs, barriers to retention, basic needs, safety, social-emotional attributes of motivation

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior for guiding me throughout my journey. To my son, Michael Simon Chavez, my angel in heaven and motivation to complete this work and reach my goals. You are my drive. To my husband, Jose Juan, who believes in me and understands and supports me beyond what any words could ever express. To my children Melissa, Alicia, Isabela, Carlos, and Emiliano, who helped me through this process with their independence, strength, patience, and love. May you continue to be blessed with love and extraordinary joy. And last, to my beautiful, courageous, and smart granddaughter, Marley Ayanna Ramirez, you are my light and inspiration. May my achievements guide your future and clear your pathway. I pray for each of you more than myself, and I love you.

Acknowledgments

I want to, first, give thanks and glory to God. I continue to be thankful for all my blessings and His guidance and light. To my chair, Dr. Veronica Sims, and committee member and methodologist, Dr. Sharon Farrell, for their wisdom, knowledge, support, and guidance throughout this journey, thank you!

I am thankful for my husband, children, and granddaughter, who have continuously supported and inspired me throughout my doctoral program. You are my light and energy. I could not have completed this journey without you. To my fearless grandmothers, your strength empowered me to be so much more than I ever thought I could be. I miss you both more than words can express. Your values and unwavering love remain with every beat of my heart. To my son, my guardian angel, Michael, you made me stronger, better, and more buoyant than I could ever have imagined. I love you and hold you in my heart, spirit, and mind always.

To the participants of this study, your bravery speaks volumes beyond the interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings captured in this research. The resiliency, determination, and commitment to your present and future by tackling fears, barriers, and challenges you face daily to move forward in your pathway of education, career, and self-sufficiency displays extraordinary courage and strength. Not all heroes wear capes, and you are proof. May your journey continue in faith and His glory.

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List of Abbreviations

Adult Continuing Education (ACE)

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Career Technical Education (CTE)

Central Research Question (CRQ)

Child Protective Services (CPS)

City University of New York (CUNY)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

General Education Development (GED)

Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC)

High School Diploma Program (HSDP)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Older Adult (OA)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Sub-Question (SQ)

Veteran Affairs (VA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Homelessness is an invisible reality on community college campuses (Gupton, 2017). The prevalence of homelessness among community college students has exposed the need for institutions to act and figure out new ways to help students stay in school (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Broton, 2020; Broton et al., 2020; Cheatham et al., 2021; Crutchfield et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). In 2013, noncredit students represented over 40% of the enrollment in community colleges demanding higher education to re-imagine support services and programming that meet the priorities and needs of noncredit homeless students (Erwin, 2020; Xu & Ran, 2020). This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Retention model programs struggle to support noncredit homeless students and are designed to increase retention (Burke, 2019; Fagioli et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2019). Chapter One provides the historical, social, and theoretical contexts for understanding the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. Providing program coordinators with data to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students directs and drives the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs. Yet, existing literature indicates that retention model program coordinators do not understand noncredit homeless students' experiences (Bryant, 2021; Havlik et al., 2021). Retention model program coordinators face challenges in providing noncredit homeless students with practical and impactful strategies and best practices to increase retention. The current study identified the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program by interpreting students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. The significance of the study is that it acknowledged the gap in the literature about noncredit homeless students. The research question and sub-questions

directed the investigation. Provided definitions intellectualized the terms that drove the literature review and specified relevant language throughout the study. Chapter One provides the background and framework for the study by examining homelessness among community college students, noncredit education and noncredit homeless students, and retention model programs.

Background

Noncredit homeless students are highly vulnerable to social, economic, and psychological risks in the community college system (Boenigk et al., 2021). Accessing resources on and off campus is more difficult for noncredit homeless students struggling to stay enrolled (Baker-Smith et al., 2020). Understanding the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students inform best practice retention model programs. The current research addressed the knowledge and literature gap in understanding homelessness among noncredit students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Studies have focused on credit homeless students, resulting in a significant gap in the literature about noncredit homeless students. The historical, social, and theoretical contexts provide the problem's history, the state of the problem, and the study's purpose.

Historical Context

Over the past decade, homelessness among community college students has come to the forefront (Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Cutuli et al., 2013; Masten et al., 2014). As a result, there is a demand for more research to understand and expand the knowledge about the barriers these students face in higher education. Marginalized and underrepresented populations like homeless students are not new to the college system (Mishra, 2020). Community colleges are challenged to find ways to meet the needs of homeless students to increase retention (Crutchfield, 2018). In the last five years, studies highlighted valuable research examining community college students; however, studies have only scratched the

surface (Broton et al., 2020; Klitzman, 2018; S. M. Martinez et al., 2021). Multiple studies examined the strengths of marginalized student populations facing barriers and life stressors, but most critically, how they endure their educational journey and stay enrolled (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Bryant, 2021; Hernandez et al., 2022; Mishra, 2020). To explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program, examining the historical context of homeless students and noncredit education is needed.

In 2020 community colleges in the Western United States have higher recorded rates of homeless students compared to national surveys revealing that 14% of 195,000 college students have experienced homelessness within the last five years (Beckett, 2022; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Over the past five years, inequities, inequalities, and overwhelmingly high housing prices have brought homelessness to a high among community college students in the Western United States (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017). For over a century, noncredit has been the gateway to postsecondary education for marginalized homeless student populations in the community college system.

At its conception, noncredit education was designed for nontraditional adult learners in the form of adult education (Erwin, 2020). The history of noncredit education spans over 158 years of contributing to adult education for nontraditional students since 1985 (Erwin, 2020). Post-war periods brought on an increase in vocational training to address recent technologies and workforce needs in plumbing, electricity, and household appliances (Lieu et al., 2006). In 1954, an advisory commission on adult education authorized the expansion of adult education to include English as a Second Language (ESL), supplemental introductory education courses, short-term vocational training, citizenship, and supplemental and cultural classes (Leigh & Gill, 2007). The Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960 separated junior colleges from the K-12

system, changing adult education to noncredit in community colleges (Tierney & Duncheon, 2015). In the 1980s, high demand for ESL and citizenship classes with The Immigration and Reform Act came into play for noncredit (Lieu et al., 2006). Noncredit increased to meet the student demands for these programs. In 1996, the education code was changed to include noncredit education in the mission and planning of the community college system (Leigh & Gill, 2007).

Over the past three decades, community college students have become more diverse. (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Xu & Ran, 2020). Noncredit education continues to meet the needs of adult learners who need to be more educated and more prepared for community college (Xu & Ran, 2020). Noncredit institutions address the increasing skills gap and increase access for marginalized adult learner populations, including homeless students in the community college system. A recent community college system study found that almost one in five students were homeless or had no stable place to live (The Hope Center, 2021). Most studies did not disaggregate community college credit and noncredit homeless students in the literature, increasing the gap in knowledge and research. Several prior research studies did not include the narrative of noncredit homeless students at the community college which resulted in a significant gap in the literature and understanding of their lived experiences and most basic needs (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Eather et al., 2021; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017).

Social Context

Studies revealed that homelessness significantly impacts experiences in higher education and retention rates among community college students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Gupton, 2017; Nix et al., 2021). Community colleges consistently seek innovative and new practices and strategies to increase retention rates of homeless students (Fagioli et al., 2020). Noncredit retention model program coordinators face challenges in designing and

implementing best practice programs to increase retention among noncredit homeless students. Noncredit institutions in the community college system often lack adequate resources to provide homeless student populations with comprehensive programming designed to increase retention by meeting basic needs, breaking down barriers to retention, and understanding motivations to stay enrolled (Xu & Ran, 2020). Increased homelessness among community college students has resulted in community colleges racing to provide retention programming designed to meet the needs of homeless students. Research found that colleges were responsive to homeless students' needs and barriers but struggled to align strategies with homeless students' perceptions (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Broton et al., 2020; Caton, 2019; Fagioli et al., 2020; Gupton et al., 2018). This continues to be a developing issue that demands expeditious responses (Caton, 2019). Retention model programs are seen as first responders to addressing the needs of homeless students on campuses (Caton, 2019; Gupton et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2018, 2019). This research is designed to inform evidence-based practices to address noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled and to advance best practice retention model programs.

Theoretical Context

Student retention and motivation have been widely explored in educational research. Several theoretical frameworks have facilitated examining retention and the motivation to stay enrolled among college students. Tinto's (1975) theoretical framework emphasized that educational and social systems motivate students to stay enrolled and increase retention rates. According to Tinto, fostering student retention by creating an engaging and supportive campus environment was central to student assimilation and reducing students' disconnection and feelings of seclusion (Bean, 2001; Eather et al., 2021; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Nora, 1990; Pompper, 2006; Sloane-Seale, 2011). Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) studied the impact of

academic and social assimilation on the retention of college students. Findings indicated that academic and social integration were significant predictors of student persistence and provided empirical support for Tinto's theoretical framework. Braxton (2008) used Tinto's framework to design and develop a comprehensive model of college student departure. Study results found that pre-enrollment characteristics, social and academic assimilation, and experiences in college play a crucial role in student attrition. The comprehensive model of student departure integrated multiple factors and reflected how they interrelate to increase student retention. The study further provided empirical evidence for Tinto's theoretical framework by emphasizing the significance of social and academic integration in promoting college student retention.

Astin's (1984) theoretical framework of student involvement suggests that opportunities for student engagement must be provided to foster student involvement. Additionally, students require a culture of inclusion and support, access to direct support and resources, and empowerment to engage and build relationships with peers and faculty in and out of the classroom. Like Tinto (1975), Astin implied that college students' motivation and persistence were connected to increased academic and social integration. Stage and Hossler (2020) used Astin's theoretical framework of student involvement to examine whether pre-college variables had a significant unintended effect on student retention. Their research found that experiences on campus directly affected retention and highlighted the significance of pre-enrollment traits and experiences in college that influence student retention. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) studied the college environment and its effects on student success, retention, and personal development using Astin's theoretical framework. Study results provided a specific indication of the college environment and its effects on student success and retention by emphasizing the campus environment and factors influencing relationships.

Existing research found that retention strategies and interventions can narrow the gap between staying motivated and enrollment among college students (Camelo & Elliott, 2019; Coleman et al., 2021; Kantamneni et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2015; K. B. Wilson et al., 2017). Social learning theory provides a theoretical framework grounded in individuals learning from their own experiences and through observing the behavior and experiences of others (Bandura, 1977; Kytle & Bandura, 1978). This theoretical framework has been used to describe how students obtain a sense of self-efficacy and gain self-regulatory skills to accept responsibility for their learning and motivation to stay enrolled (Zimmerman, 2001, 2002). Further research found that social connections provide a behavioral and learning guide for navigating educational pathways and retention and determine relationships between student retention and motivation (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Han et al., 2017; Lent et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; Mana et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2022; Zimmerman, 2001, 2002). Pintrich and De Groot (1990) investigated the role of motivation in education through a social learning theory lens. Their research found that motivation plays a crucial role in education, and intrinsically motivated students were likelier to engage in actions that support learning and retention. Study results also highlighted the significance of providing a campus culture that facilitates intrinsic motivation and encourages self-regulation.

Extant research has formulated context and meaning to examine retention and motivation to stay enrolled among college students using the theoretical frameworks of student integration and involvement and social learning theory. However, insufficient research has focused on the retention and motivation of homeless community college students using a theoretical framework of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides a holistic approach to students' needs regarding retention and motivation based on physical, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Brookman, 1989). The purpose of this study was to address the basic needs,

barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled using the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explore and interpret the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program.

Problem Statement

The problem is that retention model program coordinators do not have an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences. The basis of the problem is that basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled of noncredit homeless students are based on assumptions, leaving retention model program coordinators struggling to design and implement best practice programs (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Boenigk et al., 2021; Burke, 2019; Li et al., 2020). Current literature is centered on credit college students with homelessness, discounting and overlooking the experiences of noncredit homeless students (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Crutchfield et al., 2020; Smith & Knechtel, 2020). Noncredit homeless students remain understudied, which results in a literature and knowledge gap. Additional research is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to inform and implement best practice retention model programs to meet the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students were generally defined as homeless adult learners enrolled in a noncredit community college institution participating in a retention model program. For the purposes of this study retention was defined as keeping students enrolled each term or term to term. The research examined noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs was the

theoretical framework that informed this research. The progression of Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs took on a comprehensive approach to learning and education by addressing the students' physical, emotional, social, and intellectual hierarchies of need. Students without their basic physiological needs met cannot focus or be motivated to learn or meet cognitive needs (McLeod, 2018; Yong, 2016). The current study explored the phenomenon of the community college education experience for noncredit homeless students to identify their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled to design and implement best practice retention model programs.

Significance of the Study

Exploring and interpreting the narratives of noncredit homeless students resulted in an in-depth understanding of the relationship between meeting their needs in a retention model program and staying enrolled. Community college students are statistically more likely to face housing insecurities resulting in varied levels of homelessness, adding to experiences that often lead to socioeconomic struggles and lack of most basic needs (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021). Homeless students often remain camouflaged and do not self-identify, which limits research and the capacity to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences and how to better meet basic needs through intentional support programs and services (Broton, 2020; Gupton, 2017; Klitzman, 2018; Shephard et al., 2021). Because community college institutions want to better understand homelessness among college students, housing insecurities, and basic needs to increase retention, many studies examined reasons contributing to the experiences and needs of credit community college students facing homelessness and the relationship to retention (Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Masten et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015). A significant gap exists in the literature about noncredit homeless students. To address the gap in the literature, targeted and intentional research is needed to gain an in-depth

understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to employ best practice retention model programs.

Theoretical

This hermeneutic phenomenological study has theoretical significance in expanding Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs by giving voice to an understudied and vulnerable homeless student population. Examining noncredit homeless students' lived experiences through a theoretical framework of needs provides educators with informed data to design and implement best practice retention model programs, further expanding the theoretical impact of this study. The theoretical frameworks of student integration and involvement and social learning theory used in prior research did not address the significance of meeting students' basic needs before moving to complex higher-level needs to increase retention or motivation to stay enrolled. Tinto (1975), Astin (1984), and Bandura (1977) failed to examine the inherent and significant relationship between physiological needs, safety, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization and increases in retention and motivation to stay enrolled.

New theoretical approaches applied to identified phenomena increased the research based on the retention and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students. Applying the hierarchy of needs to noncredit homeless students' experiences had not been overtly explored. Community colleges want to understand the needs of homeless students to help serve them better and increase retention (Miller, 2017; Soika, 2020; Spellman, 2007; Weuffen et al., 2021; White, 2018; Yong, 2016). Through the theoretical context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this study pushes retention model programs to employ practices that address basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled to decrease the risks of dropping out and increase retention rates. This study further explored and examined non-cognitive barriers to retention and motivation by using the theoretical framework of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of

needs to expand and address identified gaps in the literature (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Neto, 2015; Ponka et al., 2020; Skobba et al., 2018).

Empirical

Many prior research studies explored the lived experiences of homeless credit college students and meeting their basic needs to increase retention (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Gupton, 2017; Masten et al., 2014). Studies revealed that community colleges have more homeless students than traditional four-year universities, illuminating the struggles of homeless students for retention model program coordinators (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Cheatham et al., 2021). Previous research has provided an understanding and awareness of homeless credit community college students' barriers to retention, such as access to successfully enroll and obtain required course and program textbooks, materials, and technology (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017). Research has framed the motivation among homeless credit students to stay enrolled, resulting in retention strategies for credit community college students (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Ponka et al., 2020). Nevertheless, this research laid the foundation for future studies to expand the knowledge and address the gap in the literature about noncredit homeless students. Understanding noncredit homeless students' experiences revealed perceptions of basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled, driving the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students. Results of this study inform how retention model program coordinators create programs to increase retention of noncredit homeless students.

Practical

This study provided beneficial and relevant information for retention model program

coordinators to design and implement best practices by examining the phenomenon of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. By gaining an in-depth understanding of the basic needs, barriers to retention, and the motivation to stay enrolled of noncredit homeless students, program coordinators can meet students' needs and provide best practice programs to increase retention. The results of this study impact current retention model program practices to better serve and support noncredit homeless students. The results of this research discovered and interpreted the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students in a retention model program. The study results brought forward the narratives and perspectives of noncredit homeless students and added knowledge to the non-existent research.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students to inform and shape retention model programs designed and implemented to increase student retention. The sub-questions explored the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled of noncredit homeless students. This study's central research question and sub-questions were exploratory in design and guided the examination of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program?

Sub-Question One

What are the basic needs of noncredit homeless students?

Sub-Question Two

What are the barriers to retention for noncredit homeless students?

Sub-Question Three

What motivates noncredit students to stay enrolled in community college?

Definitions

1. *Adult learners* - Students aged 18 and older enrolled in a community college noncredit institution (Lieu et al., 2006).
2. *Barriers* - internal and external difficulties and challenges that make enrollment, staying enrolled, and obtaining a certificate or degree incredibly challenging or that results in dropping out (Spellman, 2007).
3. *Basic needs* - Physiological needs of air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction, and safety (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1970).
4. *Credit student* - Students enrolled in credit-bearing courses and programs applicable to a degree or credential at a community college (NCES, 2022).
5. *Food insecurity* - the interference of food consumption or eating patterns due to a lack of resources or money or "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020, para. 7).
6. *Hierarchy of needs* - A motivation theory by Abraham Maslow of varied levels of human needs, from the most basic physiological needs to reaching one's full potential (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1970).
7. *Homeless* - Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence or reside in a shelter, hotel, transitional program, or place not ordinarily used for sleeping accommodations, i.e., couch surfing, tent, streets, cars, movie theaters, and abandoned buildings (H.R.558 - 100th Congress, 1987).
8. *Housing insecurity* - a lack of access to safe, adequate, stable, and affordable housing that may result in frequent moves, multiple-family housing, or temporary and inconsistent

living arrangements with a risk of becoming homeless or experiencing homelessness during the student's educational journey (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

9. *Marginalized students* - students who belong to demographic groups that are often treated as unimportant or on the outlining of conventional society to their social, economic, or political status (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022).
10. *Motivation* - The process of stimulating individuals to make them begin, sustain, and complete tasks by progressing through a hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1970).
11. *Noncredit education* - Community college instruction that is not credit-bearing offering tuition-free high school diploma and basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and vocational and workforce preparation courses and programs that help students reach their personal, academic, and professional goals (Erwin, 2020).
12. *Noncredit institution* - Accredited adult education institution that is part of a community college system or district (Lieu et al., 2006).
13. *Noncredit student* - Students enrolled in not-for-profit or noncredit courses or programs at a community college that are not applicable toward a degree (NCES, 2022).
14. *Nontraditional students* - students who do not fit the traditional profile of a college student by age, life balance of work, family, reentry after a long break from school, vocational training, and part or full-time status (Beam, 2020).
15. *Retention* - The process of keeping students enrolled each term at colleges, community colleges, or other institutions of higher education (Bean, 2001; Soika, 2020).
16. *Retention model program* - Student support program that helps marginalized and at-risk students stay enrolled each term or term to term and progress toward their certificate or degree (Bean, 2001; Soika, 2020).

17. *Underrepresented students* - students who belong to demographic groups that are historically marginalized or have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education (Mishra, 2020)

Summary

Research showed that homelessness disrupts retention and college experiences among postsecondary students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab., 2018; Gupton, 2017; Nix et al., 2021). Homeless students face many barriers to staying enrolled in community college. Homeless community college students may experience increased levels of vulnerability, often encountering barriers to integrating with on-campus programs and support services (Boenigk et al., 2021). For example, homeless students face emotional risk with the uncertainty of exposure of their homelessness to campus communities, which may deter participation in programs, campus activities, and services. When students face barriers they cannot overcome without external support, progression is paused, and retention is harder to achieve (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Gupton, 2017; Silva et al., 2015). Several researchers established the need to address basic needs and barriers to retention faced by homeless students, including the delivery of retention model programs to increase retention (Boenigk et al., 2021; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; S. M. Martinez et al., 2021). Noncredit community college institutions must design and implement best practice retention model programs that recognize and acknowledge the lived experiences of noncredit homeless college students. By examining noncredit homeless students' lived experiences, study findings identified their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. A systematic literature review investigated the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program to understand their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students were generally defined as homeless adult learners enrolled in a noncredit community college institution participating in a retention model program. Retention for this study was defined as keeping students enrolled each term or term to term. This chapter offers a review of the research on this topic. Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs, the theoretical framework relevant to this study, is discussed in the first section followed by a synthesis of the literature on the basic needs and barriers to the retention of homeless students in community colleges. The literature surrounding homeless students' motivation to stay enrolled was examined and synthesized. Lastly, a significant gap in the literature was identified, supporting the need for research focused on the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Community colleges must acknowledge and gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to design and implement best practice retention model programs to increase retention.

Theoretical Framework

To provide context to the complexities of the experiences of noncredit homeless students, a single theoretical framework guided the understanding of this study. This research was grounded in the theory of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs. The theory drove the

framing and interpretation of lived experiences of noncredit homeless students that were essential in formulating context and meaning to design and implement best practices in retention model programs. Maslow's (1943, 1954) theory framed the impact of homelessness among noncredit students and how community colleges can better address basic needs, break down barriers to retention, and understand noncredit homeless students' motivation to stay enrolled. Maslow's hierarchy of needs built a framework of why noncredit homeless students need best practice retention model programs to increase retention in community college.

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs provided a theoretical model of motivation for noncredit homeless students to examine basic needs, institutional barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled to design and implement best practice retention model programs. Maslow theorized that human decision-making results from a psychological needs hierarchy. Maslow's five core needs form the basis for human behavioral motivation dictating their behavior. The needs are physiological, physical, safety, love and sense-of-belonging, social and self-esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943, 1954).

The first of the five core needs are physiological needs: the basic human survival needs of food and water, ample rest, clothing and shelter, complete health, and reproduction. Maslow (1954) concluded that basic physiological needs must be met before individuals progress to safety, the second level of the hierarchy of needs. Safety includes security and protection from theft and violence, emotional well-being and strength, overall protection of health, and fiscal security. The third level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is love and sense of belonging, which includes social interaction with others, relationships and bonds with family, friends, work groups, and peers, and physical and emotional intimacy. The fourth hierarchy and a higher need is self-esteem: ego-driven needs of self-respect and self-esteem,

categorized into respect and acknowledgment from others and esteem based on self-assessment. Independence and self-confidence coincide with the latter type of self-esteem.

The fifth and highest hierarchy of needs is self-actualization: the self-realization of a person's full potential or self-fulfillment. Self-actualization includes but is not limited to education and skill development. Because people conceptually prioritize needs in order of importance (Maslow, 1943, 1954), immediate physiological needs must be met before more imperative cognitive needs can be gratified. Homeless students' behaviors and actions focused on satisfying lower-priority needs before moving to higher-priority needs.

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs placed a theoretical framework for this study into context by examining the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students to understand their needs and meet those needs to promote and facilitate increased student retention. Research has examined the relationship between needs being met and student retention through a physiological and psychosocial lens (Freitas & Leonard, 2011). Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a theoretical framework in prior studies revealed that while students recognize that meeting these needs is essential they cannot always do so (Freitas & Leonard, 2011). Students without physiological needs met cannot focus on staying enrolled in community college (McLeod, 2018). Furthermore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs identified the importance of meeting noncredit homeless students' physiological or physical needs and social-emotional development needs to advance and stay in school (Acevedo, 2018). This adds to the problem of noncredit homeless students facing significant institutional barriers without easy solutions, pushing housing to the most basic need. Maslow's hierarchy of needs placed housing at the forefront of critical physiological needs besides food, water, and others (McLeod, 2018). Homeless students must have their basic needs met in a predictable order of

hierarchy before focusing on higher-order needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Basic physiological needs must be addressed and met to create positive relationships, engagement, and a focus on personal growth and staying enrolled in community college. The way community colleges meet noncredit homeless students' basic to complex needs and the practices employed in retention model programs ultimately impact retention. Relationships provide a behavioral and learning guide for navigating educational pathways and contribute to increased retention (Acevedo, 2018; Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Cheatham et al., 2021; Cutuli et al., 2013; Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Hernandez et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020; Neto, 2015). Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs brought into line the research of determining relationships between the basic needs of noncredit homeless students participating in a retention model program, retention, and motivation factors to stay enrolled in school (Maslow, 1962, 1970).

This study applied the theoretical framework of Maslow (1943, 1954) to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. This theory helped to understand better the phenomenon of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs requires basic physiological needs be met to reach higher levels, allowing students the ability and motivation to stay enrolled. The higher up in the hierarchy a student is the more motivation increases in reaching self-actualization through self-regulation and efficacy. Therefore, students experience more effective learning and retention. The theoretical framework provided a background for the study framing homelessness as a factor influencing and impacting how community colleges design and implement best practices in retention model programs for noncredit homeless students.

Related Literature

Increased examination of the phenomenon of postsecondary students experiencing homelessness has brought heightened awareness among community colleges demanding action to improve and increase retention and the well-being of homeless students (Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Smith & Knechtel, 2020). Homeless students experiencing unstable housing have significant basic needs and barriers to retention. Housing insecurity impacts student retention, health, and overall social outcomes (Broton, 2020; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Gupton, 2017; Trawver & Hedwig, 2020). Relevant research connected themes to homeless students, their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled and provided context to the problem of homelessness among community college students.

Homeless Community College Students

The prevalence of homelessness among community college students illuminates the hardships two-year college students face, from couch surfing or living in cars to needing a place to sleep each night. Sheltered and unsheltered levels of homelessness impacts community college students' retention (Broton, 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Gupton, 2017; Nix et al., 2021). Over 1.5 million students in the United States reported living in a state of homelessness in 2019 (Shepard et al., 2021; Stasha, 2022). In a 2018 survey, over 45% of community college students nationwide face some homelessness (Broton, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021), and in 2020, 19% of community college students in the Western United States report experiencing homelessness, with more than 60% experiencing varied types of housing insecurity (Beckett, 2022). Further research found in 2020 that over half, 46%, of community college students in the Western United States experience some housing insecurities (The Hope Center, 2021). Of those students, nearly one-fifth could not pay rent or

underpaid rent and could not pay utilities at all or in whole (Broton, 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Similarly, studies examining the experiences of community college homeless students, most likely sharing the same experiences of noncredit homeless students, inform policy and practices for addressing housing insecurity, meeting the needs of homeless students, and motivation to stay enrolled in postsecondary education (Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Gupton, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2022; Masten et al., 2014; O'Neill & Bowers, 2020; Shankar et al., 2019). Few studies have focused on understanding the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program that impacts retention rates, identifying a significant gap in the research.

Noncredit Education in Community College

Two-year higher education institutions, community colleges, serve as the principal system for delivering noncredit career technical education and workforce training (Lowe et al., 2021). Noncredit at the community college is not credit-bearing instruction offering tuition-free English as a Second Language (ESL), elementary and secondary basic skills, short-term vocational, and workforce preparation courses and programs (Erwin, 2020). Noncredit education helps students reach personal, academic, and professional goals (NCES, 2016). The ultimate goal of noncredit education is to provide access to quality programs that lead to employment and wage gains and are offered in flexible, adaptive, and innovative modalities to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Lowe et al., 2021). Noncredit in community colleges is designed to meet the workforce demands of the future, requiring a new focus on better serving the needs of adult learners seeking non-degree career pathways (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Ozmun, 2012; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). There is minimal

research on noncredit education in the community college systems to deeply understand its student populations and outcomes (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020).

Role of Noncredit Education

The role of noncredit education in the community college system is to meet regional needs and serve the unique needs of industry and local communities (K. B. Wilson et al., 2017). The primary role of noncredit enrollment is vocational education or Career Technical Education (CTE) to prepare students for the workforce. Noncredit education is tuition-free and serves as an entry point and transition pathway to the credit college and career. Noncredit education is skill-based and does not use formal grading or bear credit units (NCES, 2022). Courses focus on skill attainment, not grades or units. Because noncredit is tuition-free, financial aid is unavailable at noncredit-only institutions (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Noncredit students may incur textbook and material costs for courses and required job training equipment or tools for vocational training programs (Xu & Ran, 2020). Noncredit also delivers adult basic education like high school diploma programs, General Education Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). Community college noncredit education programs show strength in workforce education offerings but have yet to be widely known or acknowledged (Weissman, 2021). A 2020 survey estimated that 3.7 million students are enrolled in noncredit programs nationwide, and over 50% are in job training programs (Jacoby, 2021). Community colleges enroll over 40% of the annual noncredit headcount in 2020 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2021).

Noncredit Students

Noncredit students represented 42% of community college enrollment in 2017 (D'Amico et al., 2020). Noncredit students are typically adult learners from lower socioeconomic

backgrounds and non-native English speakers compared to credit community college students (Xu & Ran, 2020). In 2020, approximately 75% of students enrolled in noncredit education were 25 years and older, compared to 44 % of credit community college students 25 and older (Jacoby, 2021). Despite nontraditional adult learners becoming increasingly drawn to noncredit certificate-bearing programs, data about noncredit programs, the characteristics of noncredit students, and academic success outcomes still need to be included (Xu & Ran, 2020). Research shows that noncredit students intend to earn a workforce training certificate at enrollment, which results in low certificate completion rates (D'Amico et al., 2020; Xu & Ran, 2020). Nevertheless, limited studies examining noncredit students identified enrollment in workforce training programs and courses as most common among adults, with demographics reflecting low income, low academic performance, and traditionally underrepresented and marginalized students of color populations (D'Amico et al., 2020; Xu & Ran, 2020). More recent research indicates that community colleges practice noncredit education to address local workforce needs and align with the institution's mission (D'Amico et al., 2020). Noncredit institutions are positioned to move marginalized and nontraditional student populations, such as homeless students, forward, leading to transitioning to credit college or increased employment opportunities (Ozmun, 2012).

Retention In Noncredit Education

In 2019, retention rates for noncredit students enrolled at a community college ranged from 42% to 57% (Erwin, 2020). Understanding noncredit adult learners is central to increasing retention rates (Sloane-Seale, 2011). Noncredit homeless students often have children, no transportation, little to no food, no access to technology, and do not have stable housing (Duran & Nunez, 2021; Glantsman et al., 2022). Because of barriers, noncredit homeless students may stop or pause their programs due to situational, institutional, or dispositional circumstances

(Spellman, 2007). Noncredit students' retention is impacted by life situations, lack of financial resources, self-esteem, and motivation (Dryden et al., 2021; S. M. Martinez et al., 2021). Understanding noncredit homeless students' campus and learning experiences is critical for retention and retention model program improvements (Weuffen et al., 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). Retention model program coordinators need to understand the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students, social belonging, and concerns regarding basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. To encourage student retention, retention model programs at noncredit community colleges must start by addressing homeless students' basic needs to increase retention.

Basic Needs of Homeless Students

The homelessness of college students has come to the forefront of higher education institutions (Broton et al., 2020; S.M. Martinez et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel, 2020; Trawver & Hedwig, 2020; Watson et al., 2017; Wood & Harris, 2022). Because community college students are statistically more likely to face housing insecurities resulting in varied levels of homelessness, homeless students face substantial socioeconomic struggles and lack of most basic needs (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel., 2020). Various levels of homelessness, struggles, and socioeconomic barriers to accessing basic physiological needs significantly impact homeless students' retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Boenigk et al., 2021; Cheatham et al., 2021; Fagioli et al., 2020; Masten et al., 2014). Homeless students lack the basic needs of food, water, clothing, and housing, often resulting in lower retention rates (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Community colleges are challenged to address students' basic needs, particularly homeless students with a lack of resources available on and off campuses to students

experiencing homelessness (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Systemic change has been a heavy task for community colleges, progressing at a snail-like pace over the past ten years. Still, community colleges are working to provide additional resources to meet homeless students' basic needs (Glantsman et al., 2022; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021; Olfert et al., 2021). Evidence reveals that students' access to basic needs and additional resources is at the institutions' discretion (Broton et al., 2020). A combination of factors from the cost of attending school, prices of food, gas, childcare, and a complete lack of affordable housing has fueled the homelessness crisis among college students impacting basic needs (Fagioli et al., 2020; Petry et al., 2022; Ponka et al., 2020; Shankar et al., 2019; Tausen et al., 2021). Additionally, adverse physical inferences and other disadvantageous outcomes of basic needs insecurity include barriers to retention, such as poor time management and attendance, low grades, and low completion rates (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Patton-López et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015).

Community college students experience basic needs insecurity at higher levels than students at four-year universities (The Hope Center, 2021; Palmer, 2022). Community college students are challenged to pay rent and bills, go without food, and are homeless. The Hope Center (2021) reported in a 2020 nationwide survey of 195,000 students enrolled at one of 202 colleges and universities across 42 states that nearly 40% of community college students experienced food insecurity the month prior, and over 50% of community college students experienced homelessness.

Community colleges are working to provide basic needs and resources, including financial and social resources as available in support of increased retention and an educational pathway to self-sufficiency and overcome housing and basic needs insecurity through identified

practices, programs, and services (Broton et al., 2020; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021). However, little research has been done on the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. As a result, no transparent best practices have been identified to address the specific basic needs among noncredit homeless students through retention model programs. The solution to the absence of effective practices designed to increase retention among noncredit homeless students by understanding their lived experiences addressed the research gap of this population. As adult learners enrolled in high school diploma to career training programs, noncredit homeless students' educational goals and pathways differ from traditional credit college degree-seeking homeless students, resulting in unique needs.

Because people conceptually prioritize needs in order of importance (Maslow, 1943, 1954), immediate and direct physiological needs must be met before more imperative cognitive needs can be gratified (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Brookman, 1989; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017; Lester, 2013). A homeless student's behaviors and actions are focused on satisfying lower-priority needs before moving to higher-priority needs. Homeless students lacking the most basic needs in almost every area of their lives are essentially motivated by physiological needs before others (Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Maslow, 1954; Taormina & Gao, 2013). Students may only move from a deficiency to a growth mindset of motivation when basic needs are met (Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019). Research identifies the importance of meeting noncredit homeless students' physiological, emotional, and socio-emotional needs to advance and stay in school (Acevedo, 2018; Li et al., 2020; McLeod, 2018; Neto, 2015). This adds to the problem of noncredit homeless students facing significant barriers without easy solutions, pushing housing to the most basic need. Homeless students must predictably meet their basic needs before

focusing on higher-level needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Housing is at the forefront of critical physiological conditions besides food, water, and others (Dryden et al., 2021; McLeod, 2018).

Housing Insecurity

A synthesis of national survey data in 2018 revealed over 45% of college students experience varied levels of housing insecurity, resulting in many students facing homelessness (Broton, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Housing insecurity is a lack of access to safe, adequate, stable, and affordable housing that may result in frequent moves, multiple-family housing, or temporary and inconsistent living arrangements with a risk of becoming homeless or experiencing homelessness during the student's journey (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Research finds that low-income, first-generation community college students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds are at significantly higher risk of experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness (Glantsman et al., 2022; Wilking et al., 2022). Housing-insecure students experience negative family and peer relationships, lack of access to technology and education resources, and barriers to financial resources and support (Boenigk et al., 2021; Gupton, 2017; Sample & Ferguson, 2020; Spellman, 2007; Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Housing insecurity and homelessness are a reality on community college campuses. Research is leading to greater awareness of community college students' vulnerabilities to housing insecurity with efforts in motion to identify ways to support homeless students best to stay enrolled (Boenigk et al., 2021; Glantsman et al., 2022; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2018; Hernandez et al., 2022; Smith & Knechtel, 2020).

Meeting the housing needs of noncredit homeless students is grounded in affordability, accessibility, and retention programming in higher education. Food security, housing security, and financial stability are the core of basic needs (Maslow, 1954). Homelessness and housing

insecurity among students are among the most challenging issues for colleges (Broton et al., 2020; Caton, 2019; Nix et al., 2021; Palmer, 2022; Sullivan & Pagano, 2012). Colleges have implemented programs to help homeless students, from housing vouchers to case management through state, federal, and foundation grants and funds (Nix et al., 2021; Palmer, 2022). It is critical for retention model programming to uphold homeless students' safety, dignity, and a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization when implementing homeless student programming (Bryant, 2021; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Eather et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019; Miller, 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2021).

Housing insecurity shows up in unusual ways, from a student's inability to pay rent or utilities, evictions, unsanitary or unsafe living conditions, experiencing inadequate or unpredictable housing, or homelessness (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Crutchfield et al., 2020; Glantsman et al., 2022; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Hallett & Freas, 2018). Too often, students struggle to balance their education costs, like books, technology, and other required expenses for programs and courses, leaving little to no money for housing (Gupton, 2017; Klitzman, 2018; Phillips et al., 2018). Students may also find it challenging to find employment, balance work and the number of hours worked with their school schedule and find and compete for affordable housing near campus. The effect of housing insecurity on community college students is substantial, and systemic inequalities disproportionately affect low-income and marginalized student populations (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Research shows that community college students struggling to find stable housing have trouble focusing on school, staying healthy, and staying connected on and off campus (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Hallett & Freas, 2018; Skobba et al., 2018). This leads to lower retention rates among housing-

insecure and homeless students. The lack of resources and unavailability of financial aid for noncredit homeless students affects housing insecurity and homelessness and increases food insecurity among homeless students.

Food Insecurity

In a 2020 survey, nearly 38% of students at two-year colleges experience food insecurity, with over 16% reporting experiencing low food security, and over 22% of college students experiencing inadequate food security (The Hope Center, 2021). Food insecurity is the interference of food consumption or eating patterns due to a lack of resources or money or "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020, para. 7). Community college students experience hunger, skip meals, and ration or reduce the size and number of meals because of limited resources (The Hope Center, 2021; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020). Food insecurity is affected by many factors like income, employment, education, health, and social support services (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020). Food insecurity among community college students is affected by many factors, like lack of resources, excessive costs of living, access to healthy and affordable food on and off campuses, and a lack of transportation to grocery stores, food pantries, and distributions (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; The Hope Center, 2021). Students at the community college often juggle work, family, and school responsibilities, resulting in limited time to shop for and prepare food. Food insecurity has a significant impact on community college students. Students who cannot meet their basic needs may struggle to focus on their courses or programs and stay enrolled. Community college students facing food insecurity may need additional resources and funds to cover food costs, taking away from other necessary expenses such as rent and utilities (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; The Hope Center, 2021).

Community colleges saw high numbers of food insecurity among college students, with 57% of Black and 56% of Latino students reporting food insecurity compared to 40% of White and 45% of Asian students in 2019 (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). More than 50% of first-time, first-generation students reported food insecurity. Furthermore, 2019 research shows that 63% of parenting students are food insecure, and 56% of food insecure students have low-paying jobs, resulting in higher levels of food insecurity (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). Like insecure housing students, the percentage of food-insecure students in the Western United States community college system exceeds nationwide numbers of food-insecure college students by 19% (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; The Hope Center, 2021).

Too many students must choose between their next meal and other basic needs like rent, utilities, transportation, or additional costs associated with attending college, like fees, supplies, and textbooks, leading to often skipping meals. Homeless students face barriers to retention beyond the classroom and campus, utilizing varied strategies to cope with food insecurity, from rationing food to forgoing basic needs or eating very low-quality food (Beam, 2020; Olfert et al., 2021). The pervasiveness of food insecurity among college students supports the relationship between meeting their basic needs and retention (Phillips et al., 2018). Like housing insecurity, food insecurity seldom occurs in segregation from additional barriers to retention (Wood & Harris, 2022).

Barriers to Retention

Homeless students face a multitude of barriers to retention (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Burke, 2019; Coleman et al., 2021; Eather et al., 2021; McDermott et al., 2019; Olaya et al., 2020). Increased levels of vulnerability among homeless students limit access and assimilation to campus communities and on-campus support services and programs (Boenigk et al., 2021).

Noncredit homeless students experience barriers such as access to enrollment, courses and programs, textbooks, and materials, required job training equipment and tools, testing fees, and technology not easily obtained due to the unavailability of financial aid and other resources at noncredit institutions (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Struggling noncredit homeless students cannot easily overcome barriers to retention without external support. The lack of access to resources often pauses progression and impacts retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Patton-López et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015). Prior researchers established the need to study and address barriers to retention faced by noncredit homeless students to deliver best practice retention model programs (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Crutchfield et al., 2020; Fagioli et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; S. M. Martinez et al., 2021).

Barriers for noncredit homeless students are often unnoticed in the planning and development of retention model programs (Banks & Dohy, 2019). A significant barrier to accessing postsecondary education is a need for more understanding and knowledge of navigating the college enrollment process (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Homeless students have limited access to "information-related social capital" (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022, p. 217) to guide and advise them through the enrollment and higher education system. Recent studies revealed that social capital might be found in social connections, including confirmation and support from social groups (Mishra, 2020). When students come to campus, a lack of information-related social capital may increase barriers, creating difficulties in understanding college norms (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Prior research confirms that students' preemptive worries about belonging in college cause feelings of inferiority to students who seem to navigate college easily and successfully. Marginalized student populations, like noncredit homeless students, often lack

social capital in any form to assist them in preparing for the financial, social, and psychological impacts of accessing and enrolling in postsecondary education (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022).

Noncredit homeless students may also face barriers related to campus culture (Manyanga et al., 2017). There is a sense of culture shock when enrolling and attending college because they do not know the rules of engagement and norms (Jack, 2016). Students bring their social experiences and identities to campus. Compounding the culture shock homeless students may experience on campus, they often experience a lack of access to forming relationships and do not participate in on-campus activities, build social networks, or engage in faculty or peer relationships (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Research shows that social interaction and targeted interventions may provide critical preparation for college and activities on campus, increasing students' sense of belonging (Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017). Homeless students withstand many barriers to retention (Cutuli et al., 2013)

To decrease barriers to retention, students must feel safe physically and emotionally. By creating spaces where homeless students feel included and a part of the community, campuses can build an engaging culture to reduce students' anxiety (Brookman, 1989; Yong, 2016). Campuses must work towards meeting intellectual safety and value students' ideas, encourage participation, and build trust (Yong, 2016). Safety needs are grounded in the physical and intellectual to create optimal learning environments. Students who do not feel safe on campus or trust a safe environment seek safety before meeting higher-level needs (Maslow, 1962, 1970). These security needs are critical for retention. Students must feel safe to feel a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1962, 1970).

Often, noncredit homeless students bring learned behavior and experiences to the classroom and campus resulting in increased barriers to retention (Yong, 2016). Homeless

students want a sense of belonging and to build interpersonal relationships with faculty and peers (Bryant, 2021; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Eather et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019; Miller, 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2021; Yong, 2016). Homeless students must identify with a group of peers off and on campus to break down barriers to retention and stay enrolled in school. (Acevedo, 2018; Lester, 2013; Mana et al., 2022; Pompper, 2006; Sample & Ferguson, 2020). Creating positive relationships, increasing engagement, and focusing on personal growth support students to stay in school but do not eliminate economic barriers to retention.

Homeless students experience increased economic hardship, creating more barriers to retention compared to many low-income, marginalized students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Because financial aid is not available for noncredit students, economic hardships may increase barriers to retention. Noncredit homeless students face barriers to accessing required job training program materials, tools, technology for online and hybrid programs, and industry equipment not provided by the institution besides basic needs such as food, shelter, water, clothing, or transportation (Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021; Erwin, 2020; Lieu et al., 2006; Miller, 2017). Many students must work or find another source of income to attend school. The 2020 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (U.S. Department of Education, 2021) revealed that over 50% of college students work while enrolled. It reports that college would only be affordable with working. Homeless students struggle to cover education and living costs, making it harder to stay enrolled.

Multiple studies show that homelessness significantly places homeless students in a higher risk of dropping out of community college (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Burke, 2019; Coleman et al., 2021; Gupton, 2017). Homeless community college students may experience increased barriers to accessing off-campus programs and services to support retention (Boenigk et al.,

2021). When students facing additional barriers do not access and participate in external support, they cannot overcome barriers to retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Patton-López et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015). Barriers to retention make earning a certificate difficult for noncredit homeless students (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020; Davaasambuu et al., 2019). Too often, homeless students drop out of their noncredit program (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Ozmun, 2012; Sullivan & Pagano, 2012). Studies recommend that central programming to increase retention provides internal and external resources and support to meet physiological and social needs (Bryant, 2021; Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022; Huang et al., 2019; Price, Valentine, & Leader, 2021; White, 2018).

Researchers establish the need to address barriers to retention faced by homeless students in community colleges, including the delivery of retention model programs (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Crutchfield et al., 2020; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017; S.M. Martinez et al., 2021). Limited literature focuses on homeless students' and even less on noncredit homeless students' barriers. Noncredit homeless students remain understudied, leading to the literature gap in examining specific academic success challenges. The gap in the current literature is significant. Extended research is needed to understand the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The expanded analysis was employed to understand the lived experiences and identify barriers faced in community colleges among noncredit homeless students to design and implement best practice retention model programs.

Retention Model Programs

There is a significant need to design and implement retention model programs to increase retention for noncredit homeless students (Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). To engage and meet

the basic needs of noncredit homeless students, community colleges must commit to retention programs by providing resources and services to generate meaningful outcomes and increase retention (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Current retention model programs for noncredit homeless students are limited, with few resources allocated to these services (Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021). There is a gap in providing retention programming for noncredit students as compared to credit students.

Prior studies have synthesized student involvement to increase retention research by examining community college's effects on student retention (Braxton, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017; Stage & Hossler, 2020). Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) used qualitative and quantitative data to analyze the relationships between multiple environmental factors, student demographics, and academic outcomes. Results showed that college environments that provide support services and resources significantly affect student retention. Another study conducted by Stage and Hossler (2020) examined the effects of pre-college traits and college experiences on student retention by analyzing quantitative data to determine relationships between pre-college variables, college experiences, and student retention. The study's pre-college variables focused on student demographics and campus experiences, including interactions with faculty. Findings revealed that pre-college variables have a significant unintended impact on student retention based on college experiences and that college experiences have an intended effect on student retention, with academic integration and campus engagement having the greatest. An additional study developed a comprehensive model of student attrition using a longitudinal design measuring variables that may impact student retention, including pre-college traits, academic and social assimilation, and campus experiences (Braxton, 2008). Study results showed that student attrition is affected by multiple factors that

interact differently. Braxton (2008) identified that pre-college traits indirectly affect student attrition regarding academic and social integration and that academic and social integration are predictors of student retention. More recently, Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al. (2017) evaluated the effectiveness of retention programming in improving retention rates among community college students using a quasi-experimental approach to compare retention outcomes for students participating in support services and programming and nonparticipating students. This study found that students who participated in the retention model program had higher retention rates than non-participating students. The study showed a 13% increase in retention rates for program participants, providing evidence that retention model programs can support increased retention rates for community college students. This research supports retention model program development by suggesting comprehensive programming provides students with direct support services and resources, adding to its effectiveness and for continued program design and implementation of retention model programs at community colleges.

Retention model programs can be effective in increasing retention rates among community college students (Braxton, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Ponka et al., 2020; Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017; Stage & Hossler, 2020; Weuffen et al., 2021; White, 2018). However, the effectiveness of these programs for noncredit students at community colleges, specifically noncredit homeless students, varies based on the program's design, support services and resources, and the demographics and pre-enrollment characteristics of the student population. Noncredit education at community colleges struggles with low retention rates among homeless students but has not developed and implemented many retention model programs to address attrition (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). Studies have not examined noncredit homeless student retention

model programs or the effectiveness and impact of programs on retention rates. Retention model programs can provide the basic needs and resources for noncredit homeless students to persist in their educational journey and stay motivated to stay enrolled.

Increasing homeless students in community colleges and the dire need to respond quickly have pushed colleges to launch more effective retention model programming. Research identifies the necessity and importance of building programs that address the basic needs and barriers to retention for homeless students (Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Lester, 2013; Miller, 2017). The absence of best practice retention model programs only perpetuates higher risks of dropping out for noncredit homeless students. Purposeful action and efforts must be extended for these programs to reach more homeless students (Soika, 2020; Williams & Nourie-Manuele, 2018). Homeless students have basic physiological, socio-economic, and social needs impacting retention by decreasing the capacity to meet time and financial needs, engage in learning, and engage in the campus community (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Neto, 2015; Skobba et al., 2018). Research studies have examined addressing non-cognitive barriers to retention by campus-based programs designed to meet students' most basic social needs (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Fagioli et al., 2020; Noltemeyer et al., 2021).

Retention model programs offered on campus want noncredit homeless students to succeed and learn to the best of their ability (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021; Price, Valentine, & Leader, 2021; Spellman, 2007; Sullivan & Pagano, 2012). How colleges meet noncredit homeless students' complex needs is essential to utilizing best practices and the culture of retention model programs to impact retention. Research has shown that relationships provide a behavioral and learning guide for navigating educational pathways and contributing to increased retention (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; Silver Wolf

(Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017). Studies have determined relationships between meeting the needs of noncredit homeless students participating in a retention model program and staying enrolled (Brookman, 1989; Burke, 2019; Coleman et al., 2021; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Han et al., 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Neto, 2015; Spellman, 2007).

Understanding the relationship between noncredit homeless students and the retention model programs are central to creating safe spaces for nontraditional adult learners to succeed (Pompper, 2006). Many homeless students do not feel safe off campus, and creating a safe campus environment is vital to meeting their needs and motivation to stay enrolled (Maslow, 1954, 1970). Retention model programs must understand the needs of noncredit homeless students to build physical and emotional spaces to meet safety needs at varied levels. Retention model programs addressing the level of safety needs among noncredit homeless students lead them to move to the next level of the hierarchy of needs: love and a sense of belonging. Connecting noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to staying enrolled supported the study in identifying effects on their belief in themselves and their capabilities related to increasing retention. It is central to designing and implementing best practice retention model programs to understand noncredit homeless students and use targeted strategies to increase retention.

Retention Strategies

Retention strategies for homeless students, such as food pantries and subsidized income programs, housing resources, childcare assistance, wellness services, access to technology, and transportation assistance support retention efforts (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021). Food pantries serve as a gateway to meeting noncredit homeless students' physiological basic needs, increasing retention (Gupton et al., 2018). Research suggests

providing food, housing, and overall wellness, including mental health resources, helps homeless students stay in school and increase retention (Gupton et al., 2018). These types of central support systems with internal and external resources and services address multiple basic needs and support increased retention by providing students the tools to break down barriers to retention and empower students to progress and stay enrolled (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021; Gupton et al., 2018; Nora, 1990; Olfert et al., 2021). Retention rates have increased at community colleges, where students connect and interact with support services and resources (Palmer, 2022). Community college retention rates of 55% increased to 69% for students accessing support services and re-enrolled at higher rates as part of the retention strategies implemented on campus over the 21-22 academic year (Palmer, 2022).

Prior research shows that academic and social interaction positively affects targeted student populations' retention (Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022). Interactions on campus and with retention model programs facilitate a sense of belonging among homeless students. Cultivating a sense of belonging furthers students' progression and advances self-esteem. Retention strategies should be a part of the community college mission and a responsibility to students (Gupton et al., 2018). Intentional retention strategies have physiological and motivational impacts (Brookman, 1989; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Dryden et al., 2021; Mishra, 2020; Neto, 2015). Community colleges support and understand that retention model programs play a critical role in student retention (Burke, 2019; Eather et al., 2021; Manyanga et al., 2017; Price, Valentine, & Leader, 2021). This is why it was critical to understand the needs of noncredit homeless students and ensure retention strategies create safe spaces for them to succeed. Retaining noncredit homeless students to complete their academic

program at the noncredit community college institution may also increase motivation and the successful transition to credit college (Thomas et al., 2021).

Transition to Credit College

A review of the literature from 2007 to 2017 reveals transition to credit college continues to be a challenge for noncredit homeless students at nearly 32% declared a goal to transition from noncredit courses and programs to credit classes, and only 21% of those students successfully transitioned (Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Xu & Ran, 2020). In a 2013 study, over 50% of noncredit students leave after their first term, including noncredit students with an intended goal to transition to credit college (Xu & Ran, 2020). Recent studies (Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021) examined the noncredit to credit pathways, and found that more than identified pathways are needed to support retention and transition to college among noncredit students. Noncredit students view supportive educators and engaging programming as central to their success, careers, and enrollment (Lent et al., 2017; Ozmun, 2012). Noncredit students require intentional and targeted retention model programs to increase retention and support the transition to credit college. (Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021). Addressing the barriers to retention and motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students by implementing best practice retention model programs to meet their needs yields higher retention rates and fosters transitions to credit college.

Motivation

Multiple studies ascertain that homeless students are not motivated to and cannot stay enrolled if their basic safety, sense of belonging, or social needs are unmet (Li et al., 2020; Shi & Lin, 2021; Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017). Community colleges have assumed that students' physiological needs are met (Bryant, 2021; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Shankar et

al., 2019). However, an in-depth review of the literature shows that students struggle to fulfill the most basic needs, and homeless students face even more barriers in meeting their physiological, safety, and social needs (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Gupton et al., 2018).

Further studies found that retention strategies and interventions can narrow the gap between basic needs, staying motivated and enrolled among homeless students leads to more successful retention model programs (Burke, 2019; Manyanga et al., 2017; Nix et al., 2021). Several research studies recommended further examination of Maslow's (1943, 1954) theory of the hierarchy of needs to meet the needs of homeless students in retention model programs (Acevedo, 2018; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Neto, 2015). This theory takes a holistic approach to students' motivation regarding the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1962, 1970). Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a theoretical context in which community colleges can design and implement best practice retention model programs to meet basic needs, address barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students.

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs theorizes four foundational levels of demand from a student deficit approach. This hierarchy of needs must be met at each level before higher motivation for students is reached. Once students' basic needs, safety, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization have been met, motivation is heightened by meeting goals and increased retention. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a structure for student motivation (Shi & Lin, 2021). Studies have framed homelessness as influencing and impacting how community colleges design and implement best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students to increase motivation to stay in school (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Boenigk et al., 2021; Sample & Ferguson, 2020; Spellman, 2007; Thiem &

Dasgupta, 2022). Without the lowest levels of the hierarchy met, students cannot progress to the next level (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Each level allows students the ability and motivation to reach their full potential (Maslow, 1962, 1970). Noncredit homeless students need best practice retention model programs designed and implemented to increase retention. Maslow's hierarchy of needs lends a framework to community colleges and retention model program coordinators to explore the motivation of marginalized student populations often facing life stressors and barriers. More critically, how noncredit homeless students endure their educational journey facing barriers to retention must be examined. Research revealed a significant risk for barriers to retention for students who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness (Masten et al., 2014). To help noncredit homeless students navigate community college and stay enrolled, Maslow's hierarchy of needs allows for expanding research of best practice retention model programs grounded in noncredit homeless students' lived experiences. Noncredit retention model programs are positioned to foster increased motivation among noncredit homeless students.

Often, noncredit homeless students bring learned behavior and experiences to the classroom and campus, which causes more barriers to retention. The way community colleges meet homeless students' basic to complex needs and the practices employed impact student retention and motivation. Research shows relationships provide a behavioral and learning guide for navigating educational pathways and retention and support determined relationships between meeting the needs of homeless students in retention model programs, retention, and motivation (Mana et al., 2022). In support of increased retention of noncredit homeless students, efforts must go beyond meeting the basic needs by extending resources to social and financial needs providing a pathway to self-regulation and self-efficacy to maximize students' full potential

through self-actualization (Cumming et al., 2022; Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Maslow, 1962, 1970; Russell et al., 2022).

Self-Regulation

The most critical protective factor of motivation is self-regulation (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Russell et al., 2022). Self-regulation of students is a skill that requires being less reactive and more initiative-taking in learning (Ertmer & Newby, 1996). Self-regulation in community college is critical to meeting the demands of courses and programs without supervision (Zimmerman, 2002). Because noncredit homeless students may enter community college lacking a solid foundation in effective learning and proceed in their educational pathway without self-regulation, their overall mindset may be affected, potentially leading to discouragement and frustration. Encouraging students to develop self-regulation fosters increased learning skills, resulting in higher retention rates among noncredit homeless students (Zimmerman, 2002). In Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy, self-regulation may only emerge after the most basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and security are met (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). Aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the fourth hierarchy transcends students to recognize their achievements and to be recognized by others, building a reputation. By getting recognition from others, students feel confident in their ability to learn, increasing their ability to self-regulate and motivating them to stay enrolled (Maslow, 1962, 1970). Motivation plays a role in self-regulation, allowing students to progress to self-efficacy and the motivation to stay in school.

Self-Efficacy

Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs progressed from behaviors as a response to environments to a more holistic approach to education and learning encompassing the whole person regarding physical, emotional, social, and intellectual. Self-efficacy is the

processing, weighing, and integrating of varied information based on individuals' capabilities, regulating their choice behavior and effort outlay (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is a fundamental internal motivational process that may be affected by "personal and environmental variables" (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021, p. 176), influencing motivational results of choices, effort, persistence, and achievement. Self-efficacy has been shown to affect physical and mental health, learning and achievement, career and job satisfaction, and family relations (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). Noncredit opportunities for homeless students may serve as a benefit and help affect homeless students' educational self-efficacy (Ozmun, 2012). Homeless students engaged in their learning found that self-esteem plays an active part in their education (Brookman, 1989). Retention model programs play a role in students' understanding of their purpose and promote positive self-esteem, which leads students to self-actualization and increased motivation.

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization includes, but is not limited to, education and skill development. The long-term objective of retention model programs must surround the students' overall well-being and meet all the student's needs. Homeless students are strongly influenced by best practice retention model programs delivering support to empower them to reach self-actualization and succeed in their educational journeys. Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs requires that basic physiological needs of the hierarchy be met to reach higher levels of order, allowing students the ability and motivation to stay enrolled. The higher the order a student is, the more motivation increases to reach self-actualization; therefore, students experience more effective learning and stay enrolled (Maslow, 1962, 1970; Taormina & Gao, 2013).

Community College retention model programs use theories of motivation as a framework to design and implement programming to increase student retention. The City University of New York (CUNY) designed its accelerated study in associate programs to help students break down academic and financial barriers to retention (Strumbos et al., 2018). CUNY retention model program provides students with comprehensive support services and resources like financial support, free tuition, course and program textbooks and materials, and transportation. The program has successfully improved retention, yielding higher rates among participating students. By design, the CUNY retention model program addresses barriers to retention by providing comprehensive direct support services and intrusive and intentional advising. The cohort-based program emphasizes social engagement and belonging, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Its foundation in motivation meets the students' most basic and complex needs, encouraging students to stay enrolled and reach their academic goals.

Theories of motivation have been used in many retention model programs for community colleges to help credit students overcome barriers to retention and foster persistence (Brookman, 1989; Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022; Edgar et al., 2019; Fong et al., 2018). These retention model programs are designed to meet student needs and implement retention strategies and interventions to increase retention. Nevertheless, retention model programs for noncredit homeless students are not part of shared practices or the literature. Retention model programs must be rooted in the specific needs of noncredit homeless students to increase retention and motivation (Brookman, 1989; Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022; Edgar et al., 2019; Fong et al., 2018; Maslow, 1954). Motivation factors are essential to retention model program design and implementation. Empowering students to reach self-effectiveness and increased self-esteem by providing support services that meet their basic

needs, break down barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students is central to retention model programming (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Bryant, 2021; Coleman et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Mana et al., 2022; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Russell et al., 2022). Furthermore, creating a campus culture and environment that is inclusive, safe, and where students can meet their needs provides new ways to increase retention and motivation among noncredit homeless students.

Research studies recommend further exploration of student motivation to stay enrolled through the theoretical context of Maslow's (1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs to examine meeting the needs of homeless students in retention model programs (Acevedo, 2018; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Neto, 2015). Exploring the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program through a lens of motivation brought deeper meaning to the research interpretation of the noncredit homeless students' narratives and research. Connecting noncredit homeless students' perceptions of motivation to their experience in educational and social factors supported the research in identifying effects on their belief in themselves and their capabilities.

Summary

In 2019, there were over 1.5 million homeless students in the United States (Shephard et al., 2021; Stasha, 2022) and in 2018 over 45% of community college students were homeless (Broton, 2020). Homeless students often remain silent on campuses and do not self-identify (Gupton, 2017; Shephard et al., 2021). Research is notably limited, and the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of homeless students' experiences and how to meet their needs better was evident (Broton, 2020; Gupton, 2017). Community colleges push for continued investigation

to better understand homelessness among students, their basic needs, and barriers to retention. Research revealed there is a significant risk of barriers for students who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness (Masten et al., 2014; Sample & Ferguson, 2020). To help homeless students navigate higher education and stay enrolled, research on interventions and practices, including retention model programs based on their lived experiences, has expanded. Homeless students endure many barriers to accessing and continuing higher education (Beckett, 2022; Havlik et al., 2021). Many research studies have examined reasons contributing to the experiences and needs of credit community college students facing homelessness and the relationship and correlation to retention (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Han et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2015).

Community colleges want to understand the needs of and better serve homeless students to increase retention. Prior research has investigated reasons contributing to meeting basic needs, eliminating barriers to retention, and fostering motivation to stay enrolled among homeless students (Cheatham et al., 2021; Lohner & Aprea, 2021; Thomas et al., 2021). More recently, several studies have explored retention programs designed to meet the basic needs of credit community college homeless students and increase retention (Boenigk et al., 2021; Fagioli et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2019; Lohner & Aprea, 2021; Thomas et al., 2021). Therefore, a significant gap exists in the extant literature about noncredit homeless students. To address this gap in the literature, targeted and intentional research is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences, basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled to design and implement best practice retention model programs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. For this study, noncredit homeless students are generally defined as homeless adult learners enrolled in a noncredit community college institution participating in a retention model program. Retention for this study is defined as keeping students enrolled each term or term to term. This chapter specifies the research methodology for this hermeneutic phenomenological study and reiterates the research questions. Inclusive of the rationale for using a qualitative research design and interpretative phenomenological analysis, the chapter presents the setting and procedures, researcher positionality, systems, data collection and analysis, and trustworthiness.

Research Design

The study examines noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled by gaining an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Utilizing phenomenological research was appropriate because it is grounded in the participants lived experiences moving beyond quantitative properties (Fuster Guillen, 2019) and captured the complexities of lived experiences to increase consciousness and advance knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon (Apostolescu, 2020). Exploring the lived experiences through the voices of noncredit homeless students allowed for transforming contexts and a deepened understanding of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014, 2016).

A hermeneutic phenomenology research method examined the central research question and the experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. This

hermeneutical phenomenological research was founded on the experiences and structures of the "lived world" (van Manen, 2003, p. 30). The research design studied the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program to bring forward the students' perceptions and reality of life worlds. Hermeneutical phenomenology aims to interpret participants' lived experiences to text, reflecting the significance and connecting to readers' experiences, which brings life to the narrative (van Manen, 2014, 2016). The hermeneutical phenomenological approach allowed for scientific understanding and was cyclical in which presumptions and prejudices were corrected or put aside to objectively internalize and interpret the text (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014, 2016). Phenomenological research determined what experiences mean to participants through their voices, detailed lives leading to stories, and drew meaning from the written text (Moustakas, 1994). The hermeneutic phenomenology research design identified a phenomenon, explored, and examined the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students and identified, reflected on, and interpreted themes (van Manen, 2014, 2016). The phenomenon was characterized and described through text, connected to the pedagogical relation to the phenomenon, and balanced the context of the research by evaluating the parts and whole (van Manen, 2014). A hermeneutic phenomenology research design supported the aims and objectives of this study.

A qualitative study was appropriate to explore and explain the phenomenon because of its approach to research problems through processes and procedures based on the subjective lived experiences of participants and in-depth descriptions of those lived experiences. The hermeneutic phenomenology research design described the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program through text and interpretation of data (Sloan & Bowe, 2013; van Manen, 2014, 2016). Targeted and intentional qualitative research was needed to

understand noncredit homeless students' lived experiences in-depth. Retention model program coordinators do not know enough about noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled to employ best practice retention model programs. A significant gap in the literature was identified, further supporting the need for qualitative research about noncredit homeless students' lived experiences. Noncredit homeless students were not part of the literature; their stories remained untold, their voices unheard and nonexistent, lending to the appropriateness of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research design. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach applies to education research (van Manen, 2014, 2016). Beginning with the identified theoretical framework of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs to inform the exploration of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students and allowing for their perception, it gave voice to the background, providing a more in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The selected methodology, a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology research design, aligned with the central research question and sub-questions to address the problem of noncredit retention model program coordinators not having an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to design and implement best practice retention model programs. Best practice-designed retention model programs meet and address students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Results inform retention model program coordinators on designing and implementing best practice programming. The sub-questions explored the basic needs, barriers to retention, and

motivation to stay enrolled of noncredit homeless students. The central research question and sub-questions were open and exploratory in design.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program?

Sub-Question One

What are the basic needs of noncredit homeless students?

Sub-Question Two

What are the barriers to retention for noncredit homeless students?

Sub-Question Three

What motivates noncredit students to stay enrolled in community college?

Setting and Participants

The study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled by exploring their lived experiences. The selected setting provided an accessible and trustworthy site to conduct the study, adding to the research and advancing noncredit homeless student retention model programs through improved best practices. Noncredit homeless students are no longer silent in the research. Noncredit homeless student participants enrolled in a Western United States noncredit community college institution brought their stories forward and a voice to this study.

Site

The site for this study was located at an independently accredited noncredit institution in a Western United States community college system serving adult learners 18 years and older. The Adult Continuing Education's retention model program as part of its Foundation, a public,

nonprofit organization, was the setting for this study. The Adult Continuing Education (ACE) is one of the largest accredited adult education institutions in the Western United States. As one of the largest providers of noncredit education, ACE's mission is to provide equitable quality education and career training to adult students. Over 100 years ago, ACE was founded on inclusion and social justice principles and welcomed students to meet their educational and career goals. ACE's short-term, free vocational and career education training programs and basic education, including High School Diploma Program (HSDP) and General Educational Development (GED) in English and Spanish, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Older Adult (OA) programs, designed for fifty-five and up, are open to all adult learners. Classes and programs are available at multiple campuses, serving over 342 square miles.

Adult Continuing Education is a public, open access, tuition-free, noncredit institution. The demographic makeup of the institution at the time of this study was 68% female, 31% male, and 1% nonbinary or not reported (Erwin, 2020). The ages of enrolled adult learners at ACE were 9% 18–24-year-olds, 9% 25–29-year-olds, 19% 30–39-year-olds, 14% 40–49-year-olds, and 49% 50 years and older. The ethnic makeup of students was 7% African American, 16% Asian, 3% Filipino or Pacific Islander, 34% Latinx, 2% Multiple Ethnicities, 1% Other, and 34% White (Erwin, 2020). ACE is led by its president and executive cabinet, which consists of the institution's vice presidents. The executive director for ACE's public nonprofit Foundation is part of the executive cabinet. The instructional program and student services deans manage campuses, instructional programs, and student support and services across the campuses. Instructional department and assistant program chairs tend to curriculum, schedule, and provide faculty assignments and guidance. ACE's faculty teach full-time or part-time; classified professionals and foundation-funded personnel are the front-line program, services, and

operations staff. The institution operates on a traditional college 16-week semester schedule yet allows for open enrollment for basic skill education courses and programs like HSDP, GED, and ESL, as well as some of its vocational and career training education programs and classes.

Classes are offered in-person, online, hybrid, and flex, with a student choice of in-person or an online format, modes of instruction. Because of ACE's unique noncredit position within the community college system and its tuition-free, open-enrollment community-based programs and services, ACE was selected as the research site. ACE serves many nontraditional students, including the County's sizable homeless population. The institution, through its public nonprofit, launched Journey, a noncredit homeless student retention model program. Journey provides case management and direct support services to ACE-enrolled homeless students to increase retention. ACE had no prior experience or data to lead the design and implementation of a best practice retention model program for noncredit homeless students. This supported the need to study noncredit homeless students' lived experiences.

Participants

Participants in this study were noncredit homeless students enrolled in the retention model program, Journey at ACE, under the institution's nonprofit Foundation. Saturation was reached for this study with 18 participants. Noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program voluntarily participated. Noncredit homeless student participants were at least 18 years old, enrolled in a retention model program at the site, and enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or for a total of four months nonconsecutively. This was long enough to have been exposed to the systems regarding their noncredit postsecondary education, Journey, and the programs and services at ACE. Participants were at different points of their educational pathway and met a required level of

homelessness or housing insecurity determined at enrollment in the Journey program. Participants were 23–59 years of age with diverse race and ethnic backgrounds, with 62% female, 37% male, and 1% nonbinary. To address potential vulnerability and sensitivity among noncredit homeless participants, I worked closely with Journey coordinators to ensure participants had direct access to mental health counselors and services available at the site throughout the study. Participant selection of the investigation was based on the utilization of information and what the study sought to learn (Patton, 2015). The type of data information sought to focus on, the number of participants, and the rationale and purpose of the survey are important to participation selection (Patton, 2015). Participants selected for this study were noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program at ACE.

Recruitment Plan

The study included 18 participants who volunteered and met the study criteria for noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Volunteer sampling as a purposive/non-random sample was used due to the study's sensitivity. It relied on noncredit homeless students willing to fully participate in interviews and focus groups with permission to read anecdotal writings completed during their Journey intake process. The sample size was appropriate for Liberty University's sample size and figuration. The recruitment of noncredit homeless students and the targeted sample size met the study's purpose of gaining an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences. Participants were enrolled at ACE and in Journey. Participants were enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively and actively participating in the Journey program, confirming exposure to the systems regarding their noncredit postsecondary education and the operations and processes of ACE and the Journey program. Because

convenience sampling was utilized with noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program accessible to participants as volunteers and me, I recruited participants that best informed my study inquiry under examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After IRB approval, participants were recruited via phone, email, text, and in-person to extend an invitation to information sessions planned in virtual and in-person formats at ACE campuses. Because Journey participants were provided a laptop and hotspot for internet access at enrollment, this ensured potential participants could access email and online information sessions as applicable. I collaborated with and included Journey program coordinators to increase opportunities to build relationships and trust with prospective participants. The recruitment period was noticeably short and extended for only ten days until the participant sample size was reached with weekly online and in-person information sessions. Once an appropriate sample size was reached, participants were contacted in person or by phone, text, or email to confirm participation. The interview process and schedule were provided to participants and Journey coordinators to ensure transparency and a clear understanding was reached and agreed upon at confirmation of participation. I met with participants at selected times to review the study, its purpose, and process to ensure pertinent information was provided. Participants were offered informed consent forms and encouraged to ask questions, share concerns, and decline or agree to participate by signing the informed consent. Participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any given time were included and explained in detail. Informed consent forms were maintained and stored securely and confidentially by me in password-protected electronic files only accessible to me as the researcher. Set inclusion criteria were adhered to.

At the selection and informed consent meeting, I collected demographic information via a

confidential electronic form. I scheduled individual interviews and focus group dates with each participant. I confirmed the participant's understanding of the right to withdraw at any point in the study. The proposed schedule was solidified at the time of informed consent with a timeline of a maximum of two months to conclude data collection. The timeline was short due to noncredit programs averaging only four to six months from start to completion. I contacted participants three to five days before the scheduled interviews to ease anxieties, answer questions and concerns, and continue building rapport and trust. Noncredit homeless students participate in the research through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document reviews with opportunities for inquiries, questions, reflective input, and open communication.

Researcher Positionality

Having first-hand experience working with noncredit homeless student populations facing socioeconomic inequities and significant basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled, this hermeneutic phenomenological study was designed through an equity and social justice-minded practitioner lens. I explored social and power relationships through participants to examine the potential for reform and systemic change (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because my researcher positionality was founded in an interpretive framework, I reflected on my motives for conducting this study as a community college practitioner with experience working with and serving noncredit homeless students. I selected to study the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students to gain an in-depth understanding of their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. Results inform and influence best practice retention model programs to increase noncredit homeless student retention. My reason for conducting a hermeneutic phenomenological study was to address the gap in the literature to inform and lead in the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs for noncredit

homeless students. This section articulates my interpretative framework and philosophical assumptions to gain greater insight into my researcher positionality, including ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Interpretive Framework

My interpretative framework was grounded in social constructivism. Social constructivism puts forward multiple realities constructed by our lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data presented by participants was more complex and not minimized based on my own experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). People live in the same world, but their realities differ based on context (Patton, 2002). To create a meaningful pattern in social constructivism, inductive inquiry was utilized and driven by the notion that people construct their realities from their natural settings (Schwandt, 2007). The primary purpose of phenomenological knowledge is to understand meaningful relationships related to individual experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Because I examined the experiences of noncredit homeless students, I gained an understanding of their world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I explored and interpreted the experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. I confirmed noncredit homeless students have similar and differing experiences and perceptions that were equally important to the study. Participants' realities were connected by context and led to understanding the phenomenon. Applying the social constructivism paradigm, a new and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon emerged from active engagement with participants' lived experiences. Further insights through multiple perspectives rejecting objective realities were uncovered, supporting the study results.

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions were the critical premise contributing to the interpretive

framework used in this qualitative research and acknowledged that all researchers bring their beliefs or philosophical assumptions into their study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Philosophical assumptions hold immense importance in qualitative studies by helping researchers determine how they seek information and proceed based on the researcher's level of training or experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Philosophical assumptions were essential to me for conducting research through a lens of my own beliefs. My ontological, epistemological, and axiological philosophical assumptions influenced my qualitative study.

Ontological Assumption

The ontological assumption focuses on the idea that reality is seen through various views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through one universal reality based on my faith, my belief, like reality, is shaped by God's truth and form my ontological position. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, 1 Timothy 2:5) affirm there is only one God, one consciousness, one mind in whom we all move through and with. Jesus Christ is the Father in human form, demonstrating humanity's potential when he is one with God. To better understand my hermeneutic phenomenological research through an interpretative framework, I engaged collaboratively with study participants, exploring their experiences through the lens of a singular reality, acknowledging the "subjective objective" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 35) realities that surfaced. However, through this grounded reality, empathy, understanding, compassion, and respect emerged, acknowledging participants' experiences and differences in their perception of those experiences.

Epistemological Assumption

The epistemological assumption seeks to lessen the distance between me and what is researched, and the study participants' explanation of how reality is known (Creswell & Poth,

2018). My work in community college noncredit programs focused on retention strategies by providing support programs for marginalized students, including noncredit homeless students. Through this fieldwork, my epistemological position was illuminated and grounded in knowledge of retention model programs. My relationship between what I research and myself as a researcher was identified. My claimed wisdom was justified in my placement in the field where noncredit homeless students access retention model programs emphasizing collaboration and interaction with study participants. Because qualitative research is more subjective, understanding the participants' experiences created different paths to knowledge.

Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumption recognizes that research is value-laden and that biases exist by disclosing and identifying the role of values (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My values are grounded in helping others with service, compassion, dignity, empathy and honoring cultural differences and traditions by strengthening my relation to and knowledge of my role in the research. My axiological position allowed the interpreting and shaping of the narrative through an equitable and social justice lens. It supported me in separating experiences from what is being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My axiological position allowed me to understand my experience and knowledge of retention model programs for noncredit homeless students in connection to the study and setting. I refrained from judgment and was conscious of my values and biases. My work in community college noncredit programs focusing on retention strategies, addressing equity and social justice, and providing a retention model program for noncredit homeless students merged the epistemological assumption of managing retention model programs and retention strategies by clearly defining the relationship between what I research and myself as the researcher.

Researcher's Role

I served as the human instrument conducting interviews, a focus group, and document review, playing a significant and active role in the study. Direct interaction with participants through qualitative research supported the hermeneutic phenomenological approach emphasizing individuals' experiences and subjectivity (Moustakas, 1994). In my role as the researcher, subjectivity facilitated authenticity and focused on the participants' experiences to draw meaningful interpretations and knowledge.

I was remarkably familiar with the noncredit homeless student retention model program, Journey, as an administrator at one of the site campuses. I also faced some of the barriers many noncredit homeless students faced, having experienced similar but not identical situations and events. To ensure my biases and experiences did not change the study's themes and findings, I kept an open mind and engaged in epoché or bracketing (van Manen, 1997). Evoking reduction allowed for setting aside non-essential issues the research aimed for, allowing for unbiased interpretation and openness (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997, 2014). I released my experiences and assumptions to focus on the participant's experiences and the analysis of data. Epoché or bracketing was critical to the study, particularly data analysis. I put aside all assumptions and biases to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

Procedures

The procedures for this study are detailed and provide clear directions and steps for how the study was conducted. Each phase of the research is highlighted. Site approval and Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was provided. In addition, the recruitment plan, sample size, and reasoning for sampling are detailed and explained. The data collection plan with data analysis is presented.

I obtained the necessary site approval (see Appendix A) from the public nonprofit of the noncredit community college institution and the consent from its Journey program for openness before to the proposal defense and IRB application submission. After the proposal defense, I collaborated with my chair and committee to submit the necessary IRB application for evaluation in order to obtain IRB approval. Due to the four- to six-month program lengths of noncredit academic programs—which vary depending on the kind of work training or basic education courses required—it is imperative to take note of the short timetable for data collection when requesting permissions and consent. At the approval of the study site, the IRB application was approved by my chair and committee and submitted.

Following IRB approval (see Appendix B), I worked with the site Journey program coordinators to initiate outreach and recruitment of participants through phone (see Appendix E), text (see Appendix F), email (see Appendix C, Appendix D), and in-person information sessions. A recruitment flyer was distributed at the site (see Appendix G) to gain more interest. Potential participants could access email and online information sessions as needed because Journey students were given a laptop and hotspot for internet access at program enrollment. The recruitment period was noticeably short and extended for only ten days until the participant sample size was reached with weekly online and in-person information sessions.

A total of 18 participant volunteers who fit the study criteria of noncredit homeless students enrolled for two months consecutively or four months nonconsecutively at ACE and participating in the Journey program at the site were included in the study. Because of the sensitivity of the investigation, volunteer sampling was used as a purposive/non-random sample. It depended on homeless noncredit students who were willing to fully participate in focus groups, individual interviews, and who gave permission to read anecdotal writings they had

written as part of their Journey admissions process. The sample size was appropriate. The study's goal of obtaining a thorough understanding of the lived experiences of homeless students was achieved through the recruitment of noncredit homeless students. Detailed interview and focus group protocols for this study were followed (see Appendix L).

Participants were contacted in person or via phone, text, or email to confirm participation once a suitable sample size was attained. To guarantee openness and a mutually agreed upon understanding at the time of participation confirmation, the interview procedure and timetable were sent to both participants and Journey coordinators. I had meetings with participants at prearranged times to go over the study's goals and procedures and make sure all relevant material was given. Informed consent forms were distributed to participants, who indicated their agreement to participate by signing the consent form or declining to participate. There was an opportunity for participants to voice any concerns or questions. The freedom of participants to leave the study at any moment was thoroughly explained**.** Participant consent forms were collected during the volunteer participant selection process. Permission through informed consent included details about the study, data collection, participants' roles, confidentiality, and intended research use (see Appendix H).

Data Collection Plan

This study sought to provide an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled by exploring their lived experiences. The research used empirical and reflective data collection and analysis through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document review. A critical facet of the hermeneutic phenomenological study is collecting data about the lived experiences of participants as part of a well-developed data collection plan. Numerous data sources provide evidence that accurately

describe the problem and reveal participants' lived experiences (M. Martinez, 2014). Data collection approaches for this study were individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal open-ended short-answer questions. It was critical to emphasize the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students to avoid casual and abstract interpretations and explanations, descriptions of emotional states such as feelings and moods, describe and interpret specific incidents, events, and situations, and prevent boastful phrasing of narrative from focusing on the phenomenon (van Manen, 2003, 2014, 2016). Data were collected post-IRB approval.

Individual Interviews

Interviews consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions to gain an in-depth scope of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students (van Manen, 2003, 2014, 2016). Interviews give lived meaning to the phenomenon by examining study participants' backgrounds, behaviors, or beliefs (van Manen, 2014, 2016). To understand the how and why of the problem, interviews led to gaining knowledge of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The interviews were subject-centered and explored direct first-hand experiences of noncredit homeless students. Individual interviews were scheduled and conducted with 18 noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program at the study site. Because participants regularly attended campus classes, conducting interviews at the study site was helpful for noncredit homeless students to trust me and research process more than if scheduled off-site. Noncredit homeless students also face additional challenges to transportation for interviews conducted off-site. Individual interviews were scheduled, and accommodations to meet participants off-site were available and arranged per request and based on mutual agreement between participant and researcher.

Interviews were appropriate for this study to capture, describe, and interpret the lived

experiences of the participants to inform the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs (van Manen, 1997, 2003, 2016). As part of empirical research methods, interviews are central to phenomenological research. As a main methodic activity in hermeneutic phenomenology, interviews gather lived experiences, lead to in-depth descriptions and interpretations (van Manen, 2014, 2016), and reveal information that could not be directly observed (Patton, 2015). Interviews build a foundation for participants to share their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon at a deepened level (Patton, 2015). As the researcher, I built rapport with participants to create a neutral and safe space for them by leading with introductions during each interview (Patton, 2015). Open-ended, structured questions were appropriate to collect narrative data to answer the research questions for this study. Questions were reviewed for relevance and appropriateness by the Journey program coordinators, my chair, and the committee. Once reviewed, confirmed, and approved, individual interviews began. The interviews ranged from 90 to 120 minutes. Each interview was recorded.

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. What has been your experience as a homeless student enrolled at ACE? CRQ
2. What has your experience been as a homeless student enrolled in Journey? CRQ
3. Tell me about a specific event or situation you experienced that affected you as a homeless student. CRQ
4. How did this event or situation affect continuing to attend classes in your program? SQ3
5. What helped or could have helped you with this event or situation? SQ1; SQ2
6. In what ways has the Journey program helped you or provided services or resources

to help? Moreover, what support or services could Journey not help you with? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

7. Are you ever without basic needs such as food, water, clothing, and shelter? SQ1
8. If yes, tell me about your experiences and what you need to have your basic needs met. SQ1
9. Do you feel welcome on campus? SQ1; SQ2
10. Do you feel welcome in the Journey program? SQ1; SQ2
11. Do you feel safe on campus? Why or why not? SQ1: SQ2
12. Do you feel safe off campus? Why or why not? SQ1: SQ2
13. Students may need help enrolling, accessing, or completing specific requirements at ACE. Barriers to successful enrollment and staying enrolled may include completing the application, picking your classes, signing up for an orientation, registering, finding your campus and class, and obtaining required class or program textbooks, materials, or technology. What barriers to enrolling and staying enrolled at ACE did you experience? SQ2; SQ3
14. Did you experience any other barriers to enrolling at ACE? SQ2
15. What barriers to enrolling in Journey did you experience? SQ2
16. Did you experience any other barriers to enrolling in Journey? SQ2
17. What type of student support and services will help you more as a homeless student? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
18. What motivates you to stay in school? SQ3
19. Describe any barriers to regularly attending class and staying in school. Do you attend every class? Why or why not? SQ3

20. What types of support services do you need to stay enrolled in your classes? SQ3
21. What could ACE do to support homeless students more? CRQ
22. What could Journey do to support homeless students more? CRQ
23. How can Journey help you stay enrolled and reach your educational goals at ACE? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
24. Is there anything else you want to share about your experience as a homeless student, how Journey can meet your needs, and how you can be supported to stay enrolled and complete classes? CRQ, SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
25. Are there any other questions I should ask that I did not, or do you have any questions? CRQ

Individual interview data collection methods captured the narratives of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students to examine their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. Questions were constructed to address the problem of retention model program coordinators' lack of an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences. The intended result of this study was to use interpreted data to influence and inform the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs serving noncredit homeless students.

Introductory questions one and two were broad and specific to the phenomenon, site, and participants, guiding the interview sub-questions three to eight. Sub-question three probed participants to expand and elaborate on their perceptions and experiences (Patton, 2015) of being a noncredit homeless student by inquiring about specific events or situations. Interview questions four to 21 supported the central research question and address sub-questions. Questions nine to 18 and 24 to 30 aligned with Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs, guiding

participants through identifying basic needs and motivation. Interview questions 19 to 23 targeted gaining insight and understanding of noncredit homeless students' barriers to retention. The closing questions allowed participants to expand on responses and share more about themselves and their experiences as noncredit homeless students enrolled in school and a retention model program. I submitted questions to my chair and committee for review and input, as well as to Journey program coordinators.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program to engage in dialogue and discussion, bringing the participants' experiences forward. Focus group questions were semi-structured, open-ended, and modified based on open conversations and the direction in which participants move the discussion along during the focus group. Focus groups were conducted after individual interviews. Focus groups were hosted in person and on campus. Seeking further narrative, non-numerical data through focus groups was appropriate for this study, allowing to confirm the meaning behind the ideas and concepts of text to reach triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Thoughts and behaviors emerged in focus groups and built a sense of safety and community. Focus groups are lower cost and generated results quickly and easily. First-person lived experiences are obtained from focus groups and composed of a narrative to deliver the best quality data to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students (A. Wilson, 2015). Triangulation in qualitative research uses multiple methods to develop a complete understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Focus groups are an effective data collection strategy to test validity by merging information from diverse sources, resulting in triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Journey coordinators, my dissertation chair, and the committee reviewed focus

group questions. I conducted focus groups after focus group questions were reviewed and approved.

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. Please tell me how long you have been enrolled at ACE. CRQ
2. Please tell me how long you have been enrolled in the Journey program. CRQ
3. What has your experience been as a Journey student? CRQ
4. How did you learn about the Journey program? CRQ
5. Think back to your Journey enrollment process; what worked and did not work for you? CQR
6. Tell me about your first meeting with Journey staff; what were our first impressions? CQR
7. What did you think about the Journey program when you enrolled? CRQ
8. Tell me about a positive experience with the Journey program. CRQ
9. Tell me about your negative or not-so-good experience with the Journey program. CRQ
10. What types of services and support have Journey provided you? SQ2
11. Are these the types of services you need? Why or why not? SQ1
12. What types of services and supports should Journey provide students? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
13. How can Journey improve? What can Journey do better? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
14. What resources and services does Journey provide to help you stay in school? SQ3

15. What resources and services should Journey provide you to stay enrolled in school? SQ3
16. What is Journey doing right, and how? SQ1; SQ2
17. Is there anything else you want us to know or any other questions we should ask? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

Questions one and two set the focus group's tone and pace by reintroducing participants and researcher. I continued to build rapport and an inclusive space for participants to share lived experiences. Participants' voices were acknowledged, and participants were informed that it was their choice to share. Questions one to three provided context to the time participants are enrolled at the site and in the Journey program, allowing for follow-up and expanded questions during focus groups. Questions four to ten provided me with the participants' experiences enrolling in the Journey program and the barriers faced in retention model programs. Questions 11 and 12 inquired about participants' basic needs and direct support to meet those basic needs. Questions 13 to 16 asked participants to share how Journey may improve and how the program can increase its services and resources for homeless students. Focus group questions addressed the study's central research questions and sub-questions and aligned with the theoretical framework of Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs motivational theory. Focus groups were recorded with a recorder and transcribed manually for accuracy. Manual coding was conducted to connect themes and further supporting analysis.

Document Analysis

Asking participants to write about their experiences provides a context for lived experiences and allows the participants and researcher to actively describe, interpret, and reflect on experiences (van Manen, 2003, 2014). Anecdotal writings enabled participants to share

autobiographical experiences and events, providing openness to share comfortably. Anecdotes are commonly used in hermeneutic phenomenology (Fuster Guillen, 2019) and expose "hidden meaning" (van Manen, 2003, p. 132). Anecdotal writings were appropriate and applicable to this study to support a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that may have been missed through other data collection methods. Anecdotes filled knowledge gaps from individual interviews when epistemological silence goes beyond what was said in the interview (van Manen, 2014). Because phenomenology is empathetic to the problems surrounding life experiences, participant anecdotes expanded the research through text focusing on their firsthand experiences and realities expressed in a confidential method (Fuster Guillen, 2019).

Anecdotal writings were completed at the time of intake and enrollment in the Journey program by noncredit homeless students at the study site. Open-ended questions prompted participant anecdotes. I reviewed anecdotal open-ended short-answer questions that were submitted by participants at the time of enrollment in the Journey program at the study site. The anecdotal questions were part of the students' intake process and were not modified for this study. The predetermined anecdotal writing questions were directly connected to the study's central research question and sub-questions.

Table 3

Anecdotal Guided Open-Ended Questions

1. What three words would you use to describe being homeless? CRQ
2. What is your experience as a homeless student? CRQ
3. Describe your current housing situation. CRQ
4. Why do you want to participate in the Journey program? CRQ

5. What is your educational goal? What do you need to meet your educational goal? SQ1
6. What is your career goal? What do you need to meet your career goal? SQ1
7. Describe the resources and services you need to reach your academic and career goals. SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
8. How can Journey help you stay enrolled and finish your program at ACE? SQ2; SQ3

Data Analysis

"The human factor is a great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis – a scientific two-edged sword" (Patton, 2015, p. 276). Research is scrutinized, and analytical processes are fully and accurately reported. Hermeneutic phenomenology data analysis is not a formal process but allows for the context of the phenomenon to prescribe how data are analyzed (Sloan & Bowe, 2013). For this hermeneutic phenomenological study, I reflected and interpreted through informal systematic processes of data analysis by applying analytical principles introduced by van Manen (1997, 2003, 2014, 2016).

The data analysis method used for this study:

- Set aside my biases by describing subjective experiences about the phenomenon to allow for the focus on study participants. I entered data analysis in an open state of mind, evoking reduction to allow for interpretation and openness to put in force the *epoché* or bracketing (van Manen, 1997, 2003, 2014, 2016).
- Organized data by significance, weighed each statement as equal to develop a list of "nonrepetitive, non-overlapping statements" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 201).

- Conducted thematic analysis by coding – created bundles by grouping statements by themes to establish the foundation for interpreting meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2021).
- Narrowed down themes – coded to essential themes and isolated statements.
- Used phenomenological reflection of varying examples and verbatim statements.
- Interpreted text to tell how the phenomenon is experienced from the position of the setting and context (van Manen, 2003).
- Wrote to reflect and interpret (van Manen, 2016).
- Rewrote and rewrote (van Manen, 2014). The composite description told the how and what of the lived experience regarding the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data analysis for individual interviews followed the outlined process. Interviews were recorded using a recorder and manually transcribed to decrease participant and researcher response inaccuracies. Member checking was used to confirm the credibility of interview transcripts and relevant and significant verbatim statements from interviews. I entered data analysis with an open mind by coding inductively (Saldaña, 2021). To theme the data, I used in vivo coding, bringing deeper meanings to the phenomenon. Initial manual coding to organize and identify emerging themes was completed to support and confirm focus group questions and further guide dialogue. Themes emerged utilizing multiple measures to examine the data and information. Reflexivity, a complete analysis, and interpretation resulted in a clear structure of meaning of the lived experience of individual interview data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). MAXQDA, a computer-assisted qualitative software program, aided in data management and analysis. Analysis software was not used as a primary coding source, but as a tool for querying

and comparing manual coding. Data analysis software provided support as a repository for sorting data. Data analysis of focus groups followed the individual interviews analysis plan.

Empirical, hermeneutic interviews and thematic reflection methods were used to analyze focus group transcript data (van Manen, 2014, 2016). I reflected on the lived experiences shared by study participants to interpret, explain, and describe the lived meaning (van Manen, 2014). Examples and a variation of noncredit homeless students' life experiences were explored by the same analysis process detailed for individual interviews to code, group themes and isolate statements, interpret data, and bring meaning to the participants' lived experience of the phenomenon through writing and rewriting. The focus remained on the lived experience and interpretation of the phenomenon. Emerging themes from individual interviews and focus groups provided the context for my document analysis.

Document analysis focuses on interpreting text and further understanding the meaning of lived experiences. I continued data analysis by assessing emerging themes and merging themes from individual interviews and focus groups with anecdotal themes, engaging in reflexivity and interpretation, and drawing meaning from anecdotes about the phenomenon (van Manen, 2003, 2014, 2016). Stories were analyzed using the same processes of interview questions and focus group data.

Analysis of all data followed the initial data analysis process outlined. After conducting individual interviews, focus groups, and document review, extensive and in-depth analysis of transcripts and participant anecdotal writings were completed to develop synced patterns utilizing coding methods to classify themes further (Saldaña, 2021). Pertinent and essential statements from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews of anecdotes led to narrowed themes and deeper meaning of the lived experience related to the phenomenon. To gain an in-

depth understanding of the data and their practical use, a process of reflection and interpretation of identified themes drew meaning to the lived experience and phenomenon of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Synthesized data added to the knowledge and further identified the basic needs of noncredit homeless students, resulting in an understanding of the barriers to retention that homeless students face and identifying what motivates noncredit homeless students to stay enrolled (van Manen, 2014, 2016).

Compiling the interpreted data and composing a written narrative of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program changes and informs the planning, development, and implementation of best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students. Documented and interpreted data brings an in-depth understanding of and meaning to the phenomenon, delivering a practical use (van Manen, 1997) to noncredit homeless student retention model programs. I used synthesized data to describe the phenomenon and interpret noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled. Findings are presented through the lens of study participants to contribute new knowledge to fill the gap in the existing literature.

Trustworthiness

Researchers engage in specific procedures constructing trustworthiness within their study and reporting. The trustworthiness approach is dependent on four universal criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, transferability, confirming dependability, and confirmability are fundamental to establishing standards of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This qualitative research met expectations for trustworthiness, guiding practice, and use of study findings. To reach trustworthiness and reliability, I presented credible and truthful

principles resulting in quality and value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I conducted an audit trail by documenting procedures, data analysis, and reporting of results (see Appendix M) .

Credibility

I established trustworthiness by building confidence in the findings and being truthful, resulting in credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Applicable and appropriate controls were in place to ensure efforts were made to produce credible findings. Peer debriefing was used frequently throughout the research process to confirm credibility in the development of the study, data collection, and data analysis. I achieved credibility in four ways: (a) triangulation, (b) reflexivity, (c) prolonged engagement, and (d) member-checking.

Triangulation

Triangulation was achieved using individual interviews, focus groups, and document review data collection methods. Triangulation involves using diverse sources and data collection methods to confirm data and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation was reached by utilizing varied data collection forms, adding integrity to the study. Multiple methods were employed to maximize opportunities to analyze data collected from participants resulting in triangulation (van Manen, 2003, 2014). In this study, I reached data collection triangulation by conducting individual interviews and focus groups to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. I also extended the data on behaviors and experiences of participants and confirmed details they had provided by examining documents. This effort furthered the narratives of noncredit homeless students (Shenton, 2004).

Reflexivity

To help interpret and add value to the meanings discovered, I reflected and examined

the experiences. Reviewing my beliefs, judgments, and practices during the study, I acknowledged how these have influenced the research and findings. Reflexivity was about what I do with this knowledge as the researcher. I drew attention to myself and analyzed the impact on the research process and results. I was open and accepted myself as part of the study (Finlay, 1998). Through reflexivity, I acknowledged my role in the study with the understanding that my experiences, assumptions, and beliefs influenced the research process.

Prolonged Engagement

Understanding the site's and participants' culture and context is critical to meeting credibility. Prolonged engagement pushed me to gain a clear and in-depth understanding of the culture and context of the site for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I contextualized the data and results by knowing the culture of the study site (van Manen, 2014). Prolonged engagement at the site and with participants allowed me to recognize inaccurate or misinterpreted data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member-checking

Member checking occurs when participants test the data, analysis, and results, serving as the most critical provision to confirm credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My experience with many of the barriers faced by noncredit homeless students provided me with an understanding of the phenomenon to reflect on interpreted and described themes as they surfaced and emerged throughout the study and data analysis (van Manen, 2016). Accuracy checks occurred with immediate reflection, follow-up questions, and requests for clarification during interviews and focus groups. This allowed me to reflect on the interpreted meaning of the participants' stories immediately during interviews and focus groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, participants had access to read their transcripts for accuracy. Data elements were clarified with

participants to ensure accurate interpretation and reflection of their lived experience of the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Transferability reveals that outcomes apply to other contexts and are my responsibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, I confirmed that adequate contextual data about the study site was provided to allow readers to transfer results and conclusions to other situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I built a rich narrative of experiencing homelessness as a noncredit student enrolled in a retention model program from in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document reviews to obtain transferability. Detailed interpretations and descriptions of noncredit homeless students' experiences presented a context that is accessible to apply findings to future research. The use of thick descriptions of not only the setting and participants but also the phenomenon provides readers with details to gain an understanding and the ability to connect findings, opening possibilities of transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Shenton, 2004).

Dependability

To reach dependability, consistent and repeatable results are presented to address and confirm liability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study processes are detailed to allow future researchers to repeat the work and obtain comparable results (Shenton, 2004). This verifies that the study results aligned and were consistent with the collected data. Describing the study's planning and implementation, fieldwork procedures and data collection, and reflecting and evaluating the efficiency of inquiry processes ensured dependability (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

To establish confirmability, I interpreted the data collected unbiasedly to ensure no

researcher bias. I held a degree of neutrality, confirming that the participants, and not researcher bias, shaped the study results, interest, or motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure objectivity, I safeguarded that findings were shaped by the results of participants' lived experiences, not their predilections (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation and reflexivity with clear and detailed procedures and methodology description addressed the reduction of researcher bias and assumptions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations of the study were adhered to and prioritized, acknowledging participants' sensitivity and vulnerability to eliminate unintentional harm to participants. Because my research specifically dealt with human subjects, ethical considerations were paramount and central to its trustworthiness. Participants were noncredit homeless students; therefore, ethical concerns were heightened. IRB site approval, informed consent, and pseudonyms were specific ethical considerations for my study.

Permissions

Formal consent was sought through the institution's public-nonprofit site approval process (see Appendix A). Participant identities remained confidential with pseudonyms as well as the study site. Before the start of the study and data collection, IRB approval was sought following site approval. I initiated recruitment after IRB approval (see Appendix B), including full disclosure to participants detailing the purpose, expectations, and processes included in the consent form (see Appendix H). Throughout the recruitment and the study, participants were provided with and reminded of their right to withdraw at any time.

Other Participant Protections

Central to the ethical considerations of my study was building a relationship of trust by

reaching agreed-upon values and norms with participants. The needs, details, and multiple perspectives of participants were respected and remain the nucleus of my study. Confidentiality and privacy were highly considered for this study, with data collected stored in a password-protected electronic file accessible only by me. Data will be destroyed after the required period of three years (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Considering the highest ethical research practices, participants knew that participation was voluntary and that the study posed no physical harm. However, participants were informed that questions about their lived experiences may trigger adverse experiences and events they may choose to share or not share. It was important to acknowledge that potential trauma triggers may arise during the individual interview and focus group. In considering the ethics of this study, I ensured participants had access to mental health resources and support in partnership with the Journey program coordinators following individual interview or focus group questions affecting participants in a harmful way. The study site made mental health services and support available to all participants.

Summary

This chapter described the hermeneutic phenomenological design of my study to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The detailed setting, participants, procedures, data collection, and analysis were presented. A qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was appropriate to discover credible and rich details and perspectives from participants. The study was influenced and based on van Manen's (1997, 2003, 2014) phenomenological research processes. The procedures, data collection, and data analysis resulted in credible, transferable, and dependable findings confirming the trustworthiness of my study by setting aside my biases and evoking reduction by bracketing to conduct research and report findings with impartiality. Plans to meet

ethical considerations were addressed as presented. The study, data collection, and analysis explored and gained an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of homeless noncredit students enrolled in a retention model program.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. These experiences exposed untold stories of homelessness and silenced barriers of retention and motivation to stay in school that noncredit homeless students face in higher education. Three themes with sub-themes emerged as (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributions of motivation, inducing the interpretation of the lived experiences of 18 noncredit homeless students. Each theme and sub-theme answered the central resource question and sub-questions to serve as a roadmap to understanding the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Saturation was met with all participants agreeing to and participating in individual interviews, a focus group, and a document review of anecdotal writings. Analyzed and summarized detailed research question responses and direct quotes from 18 participants are presented. The chapter includes participant vignettes providing a snapshot of the experiences as a noncredit homeless student. This chapter describes the participants, examines the findings of the research, interprets the data from individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings to themes, subthemes, and outlier findings, and concludes with a summary.

Participants

The participants for this study were 18 noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Participants were 18 years or older, enrolled in the Journey retention model program, and enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or a total of at least four months nonconsecutively at the site. All 18 participants

attended individual interviews and focus groups and agreed to document reviews of anecdotal writings. The ages of participants ranged from 23–59 and reflected diverse ethnicities. Recruitment moved quickly, and 18 of 23 noncredit homeless students interested in participating met the study criteria and consented to participate. The criteria for participation in the study was not changed, and there were minor challenges in scheduling due to the short timeline based on the term start and end date for noncredit semesters. Participants were committed to participating in this study and kept scheduled interview times. The participants' demographics and programs of study are listed in Table 4 and exhibit the diversity of study participants. Research participants reflect the diversity of noncredit students regarding ethnicity, gender, and age. An essential piece to the significance of study results and validity of results is diversity among participants. Table 4 presents participants' demographics and programs of study.

Table 4

Participant Demographics and Programs of Study

Participants	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Program
April	White	Female	41	Business
Bill	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Male	50	Auto Tech
Brian	White	Male	39	Culinary
Carolina	Native American or Alaska Native	Female	32	GED
Esperanza	Black or African American	Female	23	Culinary
Hank	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Male	31	Construction
Heidi	Asian	Female	34	ESL
John	White	Male	53	Office Skills
Leticia	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Female	27	Culinary
Lucy	White	Nonbinary	37	Auto Tech
Martha	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Female	27	Auto Tech
Martina	White	Female	36	GED
Mary	White	Female	53	GED
Ranesha	Black or African American	Female	46	Office Skills
Ricardo	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Male	29	HVAC
Sam	Black or African American	Male	59	HVAC
Tracy	Black or African American; Native American or Alaska Native	Female	38	High School Diploma
Yvonne	Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	Female	53	Culinary

Note. Participant demographic data by ethnicity, gender, age, and noncredit program of study.

Introductory vignettes of study participants provide a snapshot of their experiences as noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program at the study site. Participant anecdotal writings were used to present background information allowing for a more accurate interpretation and description of study participants and their experiences. Vignettes also extend the understanding of the characteristics of participants by using their intake anecdotal writings from Journey, the retention model program participants are enrolled in.

April

April is living in her car. She stays with a friend on some nights but cannot rely on her friend for long-term housing. April never knows how long she can stay. She does not have regular access to a shower or basic needs of food, water, and shelter. April often does not have money for gas and does not feel safe off campus. She dropped classes because she was focused on her basic needs and insecurities; therefore, she could not participate. April is currently enrolled in the accounting program and worries she cannot work immediately after because she is undocumented. April has struggled with enrolling and accessing class codes to register on time and feels disorganized because of her lack of access to safe spaces to study and concentrate on school. April wrote, “I struggle every day with basic things. I don't have a job at that moment because I am an undocumented student. It’s hard to get one. I am waiting for my papers. It will take time to get them.” Her motivation to stay enrolled is her determination not to live in her car and to have the basic needs to survive in life.

Bill

Bill returned to adult school to complete his GED and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) program. He enrolled in the Auto Technology program after completing both programs. Bill is homeless and undocumented, resulting in additional barriers to staying in

school. He constantly struggles with housing and meeting his basic needs. Bill often goes without food, water, clothing, or money for gas. He was a victim of vandalism and theft while he was in temporary housing. Bill expressed in his writing, “I have problems left and right.” Bill attends class regularly and is motivated by his goal to graduate and obtain full-time employment and a safe place to live.

Brian

Brian is living on the streets and has suffered significant trauma from a brutal attack and hospitalization. He is a culinary arts student and has made little progress in his program because of his hospitalization and homelessness. He does not have access to shelter, clean water, food, or clothing. Brian must carry all his belongings everywhere he goes. He has been asked to leave class because of his odor from not showering or having clean clothes. Brian wrote in his intake responses, “I need a place to take a shower and get new clothes because my bag was stolen while homeless. I only have one pair of pants and two shirts." At times, Brian feels hopeless and does not know how he will complete his program. He is motivated by the concept of having a better life and is confident that education is his pathway to self-sufficiency.

Carolina

Carolina is homeless and a recovering addict. She has been homeless for five years and does not have regular access to the Internet, transportation, or a place to shower. Carolina is enrolled in the online GED program to earn a high school equivalency diploma. Her daughter was taken into Child Protective Services (CPS), and she wants to have her back. Carolina finds it hard to stay in school and places her survival first. Lacking the most basic needs, she faces barriers to staying in school every day without housing, food, or safe spaces off campus. She fears being alone on the streets as a female and does not feel safe. Carolina attested in her

anecdotal writing it is important to her to have “Protection and being safe [*sic*]” and “Keeping our stuff safe from being stolen [*sic*].” She rotates between shelters when space is available and finds it difficult to regularly attend class due to the lack of internet. Carolina is motivated by the desire to have her daughter back and no longer under CPS. She wants to provide a safe environment and home for her daughter.

Esperanza

Esperanza lived with her brother and his family and became homeless due to unemployment and the inability to pay the rent. The rent was too high to maintain while not working. Esperanza’s writing responses asserted, “I know the feeling of not having a dwelling place. I recently used to live in an unsafe place that made me depressed [*sic*]. At some point, you are insecure, and sometimes your hope is cut off.” Esperanza enrolled in the culinary program to gain skills to find employment. She constantly worries about where she will stay and fears she will not finish her program because she does not have a regular place to live. Esperanza accesses food pantries and other resources, but often lacks food and basic needs. Her belongings have been stolen multiple times while sleeping on the streets. Esperanza yearns for a way to secure her belongings and a safe place to live where she can keep her things from getting stolen. She is motivated by her educational goals and interest in the community.

Hank

Hank is homeless and lacks the fundamental needs of shelter and food. He worries about where he will be able to shower and stay each night. He must find a bed for the night each day. Hank attends his construction program regularly but faces fears of rejection and acceptance at school. He often feels overwhelmed and hopeless as he navigates homelessness and being a student. Hank’s anecdotal writings expressed, “Growing in determination over time, sometimes

it's a hopeless constant battle." Hank is grateful for the limited resources he can access in Journey and has managed to stay enrolled. He is motivated by his goals for the future and having a unionized construction career.

Heidi

Heidi is an immigrant refugee staying in a temporary shelter with her family. She has two children and a husband. She communicated in writing, "I live with four children and my husband in the same room in a shelter. It is the most difficult time for my family." Heidi is studying English as a Second Language and slowly assimilating to the culture and customs in the United States. She lacks access to regular meals, transportation, and clothing. Heidi is grateful she has a place to stay but is unsure of where she will live when her temporary shelter ends. It is hard for Heidi to keep personal belongings because theft is common in the shelter. She is limited in the classes she can choose from due to the shelter's required check-in and check-out times. This often interferes with her progress. Heidi wants to continue her studies in English and is motivated by improving her life for her children and providing them with a safe home.

John

John is a justice-involved noncredit homeless student. He struggles with addiction and is back in recovery. He currently resides in a transitional half-way home for the formerly incarcerated. He is on parole and faces these barriers to retention daily. John's transitional living ends in the fall, and he is concerned about where he will live. His intake anecdotal responses purported, "I am in transitional housing after serving a life sentence and am a bit insecure about where I will go after the funding for the program is cut." John is enrolled in the office skills program and wants to obtain employment to ensure he can rent a place to live and have food, water, and clothing. He worries he will have to drop out of school if he cannot find housing and

finish his program. John fights his addiction daily and has fears of relapsing. He is motivated by the goal of not returning to prison, completing his training, and getting a job.

Leticia

Leticia is a single mom struggling to provide the basic needs for herself and her children. She often runs out of food and cannot always provide shoes and clothing the children need. Leticia missed class often because it was hard for her to prioritize her studies when she was facing so many barriers. Leticia professed in writing that she often runs out of food. As a single mother of three, she cannot always provide adequate food and the basic needs for her children. Leticia feels heartbroken watching her children suffer because of their homelessness. She wrote, "My oldest son wears torn shoes, and I am just heartbreaking [*sic*] to see this on him. Being a single mom experiencing hardship in charge of three kids could be heartbreaking." Leticia has to place the well-being of her children first and often worries about childcare, food, and shelter. Leticia met her goal of completing her culinary arts certificate and is motivated to self-sufficiency by her love of cooking and desire to be successful.

Lucy

Lucy started her education journey while homeless. She struggled to attend class regularly. Too often, she did not know when or where she would eat next or where she would sleep. In time, Lucy started a job and was back on track. However, she was injured at work and found herself unemployed and unable to pay rent. Struggling through her injury and recovery, Lucy re-enrolled in the automotive technology program and accessed Journey and disability services programs to help her complete her certificate program and get back on her path to self-sufficiency. Lucy recovered over several months and continued her training program. Lucy wrote, "It was rough for a while, but I found out where to get the help I needed, and it got

easier." She soon landed an internship. After completing her internship, Lucy reentered employment and was able to get a place of her own. Lucy does not feel safe in her current location and manages to budget the money she is earning at her job but does fall short of food and water. Lucy was motivated by her instructors, her desire to learn more, and entering a new career.

Martha

Martha is a single parent and tries to manage family, school, and homelessness. Illness, a lack of childcare, and ensuring her family has food, water, and shelter consume her time. She finds it difficult to balance school and the needs of her children and make it to class regularly. Martha and her children are in transitional housing. She tries to leverage the income and resources she does have to make sure the children have food and often puts herself last. She does not have a car, and transportation costs to get herself and her children to school add up. She often finds herself short of money for food and shelter and tries to access resources that often fall short. Martha's anecdotal writings described, "It can be very difficult at times to stay focused on the things needed to be successful when trying to balance and secure stability; our needs become stronger than our wants." Martha is enrolled in the automotive technology program and has completed her general education degree. She is motivated by her goal to complete her certificate and the desire to learn more.

Martina

Martina is a single parent in a temporary shelter. She finds solace in school and has a goal of transitioning to a credit college to complete a cybersecurity degree. Martina is an immigrant student who first studied English as a Second Language (ESL) to be more successful in her GED program. She did have trouble navigating registration for school and missed enrolling earlier.

Martina lacks the most basic needs for her and the children. Her intake writings shared, “I can deal with being homeless, but my kids should live in a place that they can call home, where they can invite friends or have their corner make a mess.” Martina finds it hard to attend school regularly and worries about making ends meet. She takes caution due to her mental health. Martina’s motivation to keep going and stay enrolled is her goal of having a place to live and being able to pay rent. She further wrote, “I’m happy to be a student because I’m not thinking about the housing situation. Besides, it gives me hope that studies will take me to home one day.” Martina plans to study information technology after earning her GED.

Mary

Mary is in a temporary shelter and worries about the continued availability of this option. She struggles with the constant changes of shelters and the possibility of losing her space. Mary often lacks the basic needs of food and clothing. She tries to attend classes regularly but sometimes must prioritize keeping her space at the shelter and meeting daily requirements. Mary had a challenging time enrolling in classes and needed help navigating the complex registration process. She also has faced significant medical issues and feels alone. Mary wrote, “This is another unknown as I’ve had a series of unfortunately [*sic*] medical issues that made it difficult, if not impossible, for me to work at this time and perhaps for a long time.” She is a GED student motivated by her goal of building a future, keeping her brain stimulated and engaged, and connecting with others.

Ranesha

Ranesha is a first-generation student. She has been in and out of various temporary housing and suffered from COVID-19 twice over the pandemic. Ranesha does not attend class regularly due to transitional housing and her health circumstances. She has withdrawn from

several courses during her educational journey. She has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Ranesha sees her mental health as another barrier to staying in school. Ranesha revealed she struggles with PTSD because of her experiences with severe COVID-19. She expressed her challenges to staying enrolled in her anecdotal writing, describing the effect of her experiences, and affirming the "further disruption to my studies and deadlines. I had to drop my classes and wait to find a stable home to get better." Ranesha stays motivated by her determination and goal to transition to the credit college this Fall. She is enrolled in the Office Skills program.

Ricardo

Ricardo is a justice-involved and homeless student living in temporary transitional housing. He has struggled with feeling hopeless and continues to struggle to adjust to reassimilating into society. Ricardo lacks some of the basic needs, and it significantly impacts his class attendance. He faces additional barriers to staying enrolled surrounding safety, scheduling, and access to resources. Ricardo misses class sometimes due to situations based on his past and meeting his parole requirements. He has found support in the Journey program. Ricardo wrote, "It feels good to know there are people to help me and motivate me to continue going to school and build a future for myself." Ricardo is motivated by his values and goal to complete his HVAC program.

Sam

Sam was living in a park and is a Veteran. He is now housed after completing his noncredit program and participating in a retention model program. Sam completed his Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning program in the spring semester. While in school, he found it hard to attend class regularly because he could not access showers or clean clothes. It was a hard

road for Sam to complete his program, obtain employment, and balance his basic needs to stay in school while lacking shelter and food. Sam noted in his intake responses, “I was in need of help with resources and my self-esteem. I was lonely, ashamed, and not wanting anyone to know I was homeless.” He still finds it hard to meet her basic needs regarding food and paying utilities, in addition to rent. Sam fears being homeless again but is motivated by his newfound confidence and belief in himself to keep moving forward. He is also enrolled in the emeritus program for older adults, focusing on life-long learning.

Tracy

Tracy is married with children and homeless. Tracy was enrolled in the high school diploma program and graduated in the spring semester. She and her family live in their car and try to find places to park each night where they will be safe and not harassed by the police. Tracy cannot use safe parking lots because her car registration has expired, and she does not have the money to pay the fees. She struggles to meet her and her family’s needs daily. Tracy worries about providing food, clean water, clothing, and shelter for her two children. Her marriage has been tough, and she carries much of the responsibility to provide for her children and herself. In her writing responses, Tracy shared, “Being a homeless student definitely has many challenges. Finding a quiet place to study, to sleep, or to rest [*sic*].” She is motivated by her children and wants to be more for them.

Yvonne

Yvonne was a culinary arts student. She recently recovered from an accident that put her in a wheelchair for an extended period, pausing her progress in the culinary program and prolonging her completion. Yvonne couch surfs, adding to her struggle to find safe places to stay when she was disabled. Throughout her recovery, Yvonne lacked sufficient medical care and

basic needs and had to adjust her culinary completion date. She continues couch surfing and has limited access to her most basic needs, such as food, water, clothing, and safety. Yvonne finds safety and available resources when on campus. She worked with her instructor to receive an incomplete and stepped right back into her program when she recovered. Yvonne wrote about the effects of her car accident on her homelessness. She declared, "My whole life turned around [*sic*] for me being stuck in a wheelchair and not knowing if I will be still graduating with my class in June and receiving my certificate. Through her challenges, Yvonne remained hopeful and found internal perseverance and strength to finish her culinary program. Yvonne is motivated to continue her dreams and expand in the culinary industry. She loves cooking and is proud she completed school.

Results

The results of this hermeneutic phenomenological study were constructed by the analysis and triangulation of data from individual interviews, focus groups, and document analysis of anecdotal writings. Saturation was met when the participants' lived experiences were not generating new information and data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2016). Participant responses allowed me to acknowledge and understand the phenomenon of the lived experience of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. van Manen's (1997, 2003, 2014, 2016) hermeneutic phenomenological process was employed during data analysis. Data analysis uncovered major themes through manual in vivo coding that interpreted the meaning of the participants' lived experiences and allowed for the significance to focus on the participants' responses (Saldaña, 2021; van Manen, 2003). Sub-themes of the major themes further interpreted this research's theoretical framework and purpose.

Theme development was supported using narratives and data presented by participants in the form of in vivo quotes from individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings. In vivo coding was used to originate codes from the data. In vivo codes use the expressions and language used by the participants. This allows codes to reflect the perspectives and actions of the participants and not codes elicited by me. In vivo coding helps researchers attain an in-depth understanding of the direct stories, ideas and meanings that are expressed by research participants. Themes and subthemes were consistent following multiple rounds of manual in vivo coding and data analysis, resulting in interpretation (Saldaña, 2021; van Manen, 1997, 2003, 2014, 2016).

The codes were clustered, forming sub-themes to develop themes. The major themes describe and interpret the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The major themes are (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation. The theme development process aligned codes, major themes, and sub-themes to the study's central research question and three sub-questions. Themes were developed by aligning codes to major themes and sub-themes. As shown in Table 5, major themes aligned with the study's central research question and sub-questions. Data analysis resulted in a clear relationship between codes and identified major themes and sub-themes. Table 5 aligns codes, major themes, and sub-themes with research questions.

Table 5

Codes, Major Themes, and Sub-Themes by Central Research Question and Sub-Questions

Codes	Major Themes	Subthemes	CRQ	SQ1	SQ2	SQ3
Food, shelter, water, clothing, shoes, utilities, toiletries, showers, transportation, transitional housing, car, parking lot, street, park, clean water, hygiene, blankets, health, housing, snacks, pantry, kitchen, cooking items, hot water, running water, restrooms, bathrooms, staying with friends, couch surfing, computers, Wi-Fi, money, laundry, job, employment, having nothing	Basic needs insecurities	Food insecurity	X	X	X	X
		Housing insecurity	X	X	X	X
		Other basic needs	X	X	X	X
Safe, safety, fear, scared, welcoming, inviting, unsafe, violence, theft, violated, rape, abuse, health, unemployment, financial, CPS, lonely, loneliness, sad, miserable, tired, hard, cold, hurt, disability, drugs, sobriety, danger, rehabilitation, deadly, PTSD, Physical, emotional, money, resources, funds, jobs, career.	Safety	Physical safety	X	X	X	X
		Emotional safety	X		X	X
		Financial safety	X	X	X	X
Confidence, ashamed, brave, poor, self-esteem, survivor, hope, goal/s, disabled, unsupported, struggles, problems, difficult, fragile, wrong, adversity, depressing, judged, helplessness, uncertainty, directionless, insecure, stressful, resiliency, committed, challenging, outcast, resilient, determination, reflective, successful, smart, love, committed, dedicated, problem-solving, passion, social connection, friendship, acceptance, trust, respect, angry, creative, solving problems, friends, community, self-love	Social-emotional Attributes of motivation	Motivation	X	X	X	X
		Sense of belonging	X		X	X
		Self-esteem	X		X	X
		Self-actualization	X		X	X

Note. Codes are organized by major themes and associated sub-themes to show relation to the central research question and sub-questions.

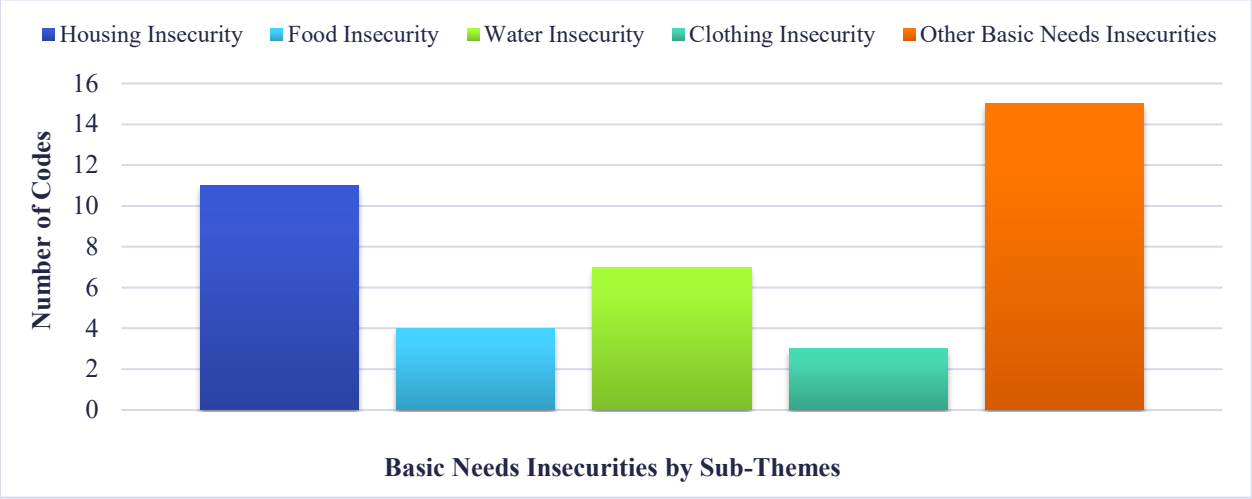
Basic Needs Insecurities

Extant research addresses the magnitude of meeting noncredit homeless students' physiological or basic needs to progress and stay in school (Acevedo, 2018; Li et al., 2020;

McLeod, 2018; Neto, 2015). Physiological or basic needs, the first level in Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs, are the absolute minimum commodities for survival. All 18 participants in this study experienced basic needs insecurities, with housing insecurity at the forefront of their most basic needs. Homeless students must inevitably meet their basic needs before focusing on higher-level needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954). When speaking to Hank about meeting his basic needs during an individual interview, he stated, "It is extremely difficult because I don't know if I'm going even eat that day or have a bed at night." In one of the two focus groups, Leticia shared, "I need support to find somewhere to shower every day, for my kids to shower. We need to know if we will have food and where we will sleep each night." Study results suggest basic needs insecurities, in particular homelessness, increase barriers to retention and decrease motivation to stay enrolled. Noncredit homeless students are experiencing elevated levels of basic needs insecurities like housing, food, water, and clothing, significantly impacting retention and motivation to stay enrolled. Figure 1 shows the number of codes for the major theme basic needs insecurities by sub-themes.

Figure 1

Number of Codes for the Major Theme of Basic Needs Insecurities by Sub-Themes



Note: The number of codes is organized by the basic needs, insecurities, major theme, and associated sub-themes.

Housing Insecurity

Homelessness and housing insecurity among students are among the most challenging basic needs to address and meet for colleges (Broton et al., 2020; Caton, 2019; Nix et al., 2021; Palmer, 2022; Sullivan & Pagano, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education (2021) defines housing insecurity as a lack of access to safe, adequate, stable, and affordable housing that may result in frequent moves, multiple-family housing, or temporary and inconsistent living arrangements with a risk of becoming homeless or experiencing homelessness. Housing insecurity is a reality on community college campuses.

All study participants faced housing insecurity and shared intense experiences of homelessness in individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings. Lucy exposed in her individual interview, “It was hard to be in school and focus on school while being homeless and wondering if and when you’ll be able to find a place.” Housing insecurity shows up in different ways, and participants shared experiences of the inability to pay rent or utilities, evictions, unsanitary or unsafe living conditions, inadequate or unpredictable housing, or homelessness. During an individual interview, John commented, “I was living in a shelter but was kicked out for personal reasons and have been back living on the street for two or three months this time.” He has been a homeless student for over the past year. Ricardo is in temporary transitional housing after incarceration and spoke about not having a permanent place to stay and the worry his housing insecurity plays on his wellness and school. He noted his transitional housing is short-term and is concerned about being back on the streets if he cannot find a place to live. Ricardo shared in a focus group he is worried about not having a roof over his head. He reported:

> I will be where I started before going to jail. I do not want that again. Being without a house gives me anxiety and causes me to focus on that rather than moving forward with my school, training, and getting a job.

April unveiled in her individual interview that she lives in her car as an undocumented student. She cannot legally work and cannot rent without any income coming in. Staying in her car has caused feelings of anger and desperation. She stated:

> I have been trying to finish school to get some type of job or help for a couple of years now. I live in my car, and it's horrible. I do not have a bathroom, I do not have a kitchen, and I have to [*sic*] make do with a little food.

April struggles with the challenges of homelessness. She does not have regular access to the internet and cannot regularly charge her computer. Because April lives in her car, she feels like she is not doing enough to be successful. She voiced, "I am supposed to do better here, but I have nothing and have to stay in my car."

Tracy also lives in her car with her family and faces housing insecurity every day. This has significantly increased her barriers to retention and decreased her motivation to stay in school. In her individual interview, Tracy described in detail experiences of homelessness with her husband and children. They struggle to find parking, they cannot renew their tags, and do not have money or jobs to find permanent housing. She explains "Being homeless and living in your car with a family is too hard. I cannot concentrate on school as much as I need to. I worry about my kids and what they need before homework and my finishing school." Similarly, Carolina shared in her anecdotal writings that she struggles to concentrate on school because of the stress and insupportable pressure of homelessness. Carolina wrote, "I have nothing, I am homeless. I

lost my daughter, I lost me. It is so hard to stay in school. It is so hard to try to find somewhere to stay, get to school every day."

As a single female facing housing insecurity, Mary stays at a shelter and hopes she can find the strength to finish her GED and enroll in job training. Mary wrote, "I need to finish my GED, but it is hard for me to go to school while trying to make sure I have somewhere to sleep. I need help finding a permanent place." Like all participants, Mary's priority is finding housing, temporary and long-term. The shared experiences of noncredit homeless students impact barriers to retention and the motivation to stay in school.

The results of this study indicate that housing insecurity significantly impacts noncredit homeless students' barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school. This study provides an understanding of the significance of housing insecurity among noncredit homeless students. Study results suggest it is important that retention model programs understand the needs of noncredit homeless students to implement high-impact, best practice programming, and services. Data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings resulted in findings showing a relationship between housing insecurity and increased barriers to retention and impacts on motivation to stay in school.

Food Insecurity

Students who experience hunger and a lack of food may struggle to focus on their courses or programs and stay enrolled. Food insecurity has a significant impact on community college students. Community college students facing food insecurity may need additional resources and funds to cover food costs, taking away from other necessary expenses such as rent and utilities (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; The Hope Center, 2021).

All participants in this study experienced food insecurity. Yvonne shared in a focus group, “I need food and a place where I can cook. Maybe some money just in case I will need to pay for something else but can buy food and not worry so much.” Ten of 18 participants revealed experiences of food insecurity affecting their families. Martina struggled to feed her family and attested in her individual interview:

> I may have food problems, and the resources to help to get around that don’t always give us what we need [*sic*]. Sometimes, we don't make enough for enough food and cannot pay for utilities and rent because we need to eat [*sic*].

The results of this study exposed prominent levels of food insecurity among participants. Leticia also articulated in her anecdotal writings, “Being homeless in school is very tough. I have to [*sic*] take care of my kids, and buying food is hard because the costs have gone up so much. It is expensive to buy fresh food or healthier choices.” Noncredit homeless students told their stories of being hungry and the lack of access to affordable food through individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings. Brian disclosed he is hungry most days, attends class, and leaves class hungry in his individual interview. He is tired much of the time and finds it hard to eat regular meals. Brian stated, “I try to eat at the school food store and when the program has snacks. I am able to take a few to have. But it’s not a meal.” He shared he was able to eat while hospitalized but stated, “That’s not where I want to be for food.”

Interpreted data from individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings show that food insecurity has negative impacts on noncredit homeless students’ retention and motivation. All participants experienced some level of food insecurity increasing barriers to retention and decreasing motivation to stay in school. Study results indicate a relationship

between food insecurity to increased barriers to retention and decreased motivation to stay in school.

Water Insecurity

Water insecurity is the lack of a reliable source of quality water to meet people's needs. Water insecurity can result from both a physical lack of water and an economic challenge. Access to clean water is a basic need. Six of 18 participants explicitly shared experiences with water insecurity in their individual interviews. Brian cannot shower regularly and shared, "I have been asked to leave class multiple times because I smelled bad since I didn't have anywhere to take a shower." A lack of water for drinking, washing clothes, and access to bathing leaves noncredit homeless students struggling to maintain their health and hygiene. Tracy is near the end of her program and does not know where she will be able to shower next or wash her clothes, "I don't know how I'm going to finish the last two weeks if I don't find a place to take a shower or having [*sic*] clean clothes to wear." Many noncredit homeless students live in their cars and cannot easily access water. Carolina suffers from headaches because she does not have regular access to drinking water. She uses a cup or reuses a recycled water bottle to refill at the water dispenser on campus. Carolina professed, "On the weekends and when I cannot get to school, if I don't have money for bottled water, I do not drink much of any [*sic*] water most [of] the time."

Analyzed data showed six of 18 participants experienced significant water insecurity. These participants could not regularly access safe drinking water or clean water for practicing basic hygiene. Data analysis of individual interviews resulted in study findings that show a relationship between water insecurity and negative social-emotional attributes of motivation, contributing to low self-esteem and confidence with a decreased sense of belonging.

Clothing Insecurity

Clothing is essential for humans to thrive. The human body is not well-attuned to the varied climates. Keeping warm is a physiological need often overlooked because it is often taken for granted in developed countries. All participants shared experiences with clothing insecurity in individual interviews and focus groups, identifying the lack of clothing and the lack of money to purchase needed clothing. During her individual interview, Yvonne exposed her experiences of rationing her food to buy clothes to keep warm during this past winter. She vocalized:

> I had to save any money I did get for a jacket and some warm clothes. It was raining a lot, and I was always cold. I skipped meals. I only ate once a day or every other day; sometimes, I could save half of that meal for the next day.

Participants explained that having enough clothing and clean clothes is a major challenge. Heidi had difficulty clothing the entire family. She reported in a focus group, her kids need more clothes, and she needs somewhere to wash their clothes regularly. Heidi struggles with her children not having enough clothing and revealed, “I can go without too many clothes, but they should not have to wear the same clothes nearly every day.” April lives in her car and finds it hard to have the right clothes for the different seasons. During her individual interview she divulged that she has limited clothing and finds it hard to stay warm and dry during the winter months or cool during warmer weather. April stated, “My car gets very cold in winter and very hot in summer.”

Study results indicated that the inability to obtain or purchase sufficient clothing or to wash and keep clothing in acceptable condition affected all participants. The interpreted findings of the lived experiences of participants from individual interviews and focus groups show that participants’ barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school were more than just external

factors but effects of basic needs insecurities like clothing insecurity. Study findings underline the need for access to clean and adequate clothing.

Other Basic Needs Insecurities

The basic needs insecurities of noncredit homeless students go beyond housing, food, water, and clothing. Too many students must choose between their next meal and other basic needs like toiletries, transportation, health, or additional costs associated with attending college, like material fees, supplies, and textbooks, leading to increased unmet basic needs. Data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings identified that noncredit homeless students varied in strategies to cope with not meeting their basic needs, from rationing food to forgoing other basic needs such as running water, clothes, medicine or health care, and space to rest or sleep. Ranesha shared in her anecdotal writing her experience of unmet basic needs because of her economic hardships. She needs more than housing, meals, and clothing. She reported her needs in her intake responses as "transportation, financial assistance, assistance with my medical disability application, and everything just to live, to survive."

All participants disclosed a lack of regular access to other basic needs, including healthcare. When discussing other basic needs insecurities in a focus group, Mary brought forward, "The most basic needs of getting sleep, a bus pass, and keeping clean… or not keeping clean because we may not always have soap, deodorant, toothpaste, or a toothbrush changes daily life." April agreed, sharing sentiments of helplessness and the intensity of lacking other basic needs during the focus group. She said, "I have a car that I can stay in [*sic*], but I need to have money for gas. It's even harder when you have the flu. I was sick for a week."

Hank spoke about his lack of access to regular healthcare after a violent attack in his individual interview. He suffered numerous injuries and was hospitalized for several days. Hank

does not make all his doctor appointments because he does not have insurance or money to pay for healthcare. Hank often goes to the emergency room for follow-up visits. The wait is long, and he stated, “It’s hard to get there on public transportation; also, it takes over two hours. When you’re sick or do not feel good, that is a long ride and then a walk to the hospital.”

Transportation is another basic need. Transportation is a need for noncredit homeless students because school, work, and access to affordable food and housing may be too far to walk or safely get to. In a focus group, April expressed her challenges with transportation and not having enough gas to go to school, find a job, or even live. She declared, “I don’t have enough money for gas, so I can’t always get to school sometime [*sic*] or even look for a job that isn’t close to where I can get.” Another participant, Martha, wrote “I don’t have a car, it’s hard to get to school and get my kids anywhere.” In a focus group, Martha also talked about how important a bus pass is for her, but she also needs bus passes for her children.

Based on data results of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings, basic needs insecure noncredit homeless students face increased barriers to retention and impacts to motivation to stay in enrolled other peers may not experience. The findings of this study indicate basic needs insecurities increase barriers to retention and impact motivation to stay in school by shifting the focus to meeting immediate needs before successfully progressing higher on the hierarchy of needs. The success of retention model programs serving noncredit homeless students is contingent on access and high impact best practices that address and decrease the basic needs and insecurities of noncredit homeless students.

Safety

At the second level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is safety needs. Safety includes security and protection from theft and violence, emotional well-being and strength, overall

protection of health, and fiscal security. Analysis of the individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings data resulted in identifying safety as a major theme with sub-themes of physical, emotional, and financial safety. Safety is the second most basic need. Figure 2 shows the number of codes for the major theme of safety by sub-themes.

Figure 2

Number of Codes for Major Theme of Safety by Sub-Themes

Note: The number of codes are organized by the safety major theme and associated sub-themes.

The number of codes for the major theme of safety totaled 50. Figure 2 shows that the coding of data resulted in financial safety at 18, followed by physical safety at 17. Data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings indicated a significant relationship between financial safety and the safety of noncredit homeless students. All participants experienced little to no financial safety, impacting their overall safety.

All 18 participants described facing safe and unsafe environments, experiences, and relationships during individual interviews and focus groups. Esperanza left a physically and emotionally safe environment with her extended family and temporarily couch-surfed with

friends. In her individual interview, Esperanza shared experiences of physical and emotional safety trauma because she had been raped. She wanted to live on her own and not rely on her brother and his family. Esperanza decided to stay on a friend's couch. She divulged:

> One night, she had a party, and a bunch of people over I did not know. A few people stayed over on the floor and with her. I was suddenly woken up and raped by a man there. It was so horrifying for me. I felt helpless; I felt scared. I felt ashamed.

Participants experienced feeling safe from physical and emotional harm to experiencing trauma. Sam lived in the park but was able to access his disability and veteran benefits and find long-term temporary housing and medical care. He was weary of going back to the VA hospital and health system after an unpleasant prior experience. Sam reported in his individual interview he was not treated fairly or respectfully at the VA medical facility. He felt disregarded and ignored. Sam said, "I got very sick [*sic*]. I did not go back to the VA and let my medical lapse."

Throughout individual interviews and focus groups, all participants spoke to physical, emotional, and financial safety. The findings of this study present that physical, emotional, and financial trauma resulting in increased barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school, and positive experiences result in decreased barriers to retention and increased motivation to stay in school. Based on the interpreted lived experiences of participants from individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings, study results indicate a significant relationship between safety and social-emotional attributes of motivation impacting retention among noncredit homeless students.

Physical Safety

Physical safety is part of the second hierarchy of needs and encompasses the health and security of the body, resources, and property. Physical safety implies freedom from danger and a

secure, familiar, and predictable environment. All participant narratives provided insight into theft, physical injury, and unsafe experiences. In his individual interview, John had his belongings stolen and said, "I have had almost everything stolen multiple times while sleeping outside. Housing or some way to secure my property and keep things that are given or donated to me from getting stolen is something I need to be safe." Hank was violently attacked and hospitalized, stating in his individual interview, "I was punched and kicked in the head and had to go to the hospital. I had been homeless for four months after being kicked out of the shelter and was attacked." Ricardo lives in transitional housing and during his individual interview he shared his feeling physically unsafe. He expressed:

> The transitional stay I am in [sic] puts two to four men to a room or assigned space. You don't know who your roommate is or their intent…good or bad. We are all recently released from prison. Not everyone is ready to change and find success. The life is hard to leave. They do not care who they take from. That makes me feel unsafe where I am at.

Fifteen of 18 participants shared experiences of physical safety on campus and with the Journey program. Leticia shared in an individual interview she feels safe when she gets to campus and said, "I feel safe once on campus because people are friendly and welcoming." Another participant, Sam, stated in a focus group, "I always feel safe! I feel welcome! The security and atmosphere are right with Journey."

The ability of noncredit homeless students to provide safe childcare was a priority for parenting noncredit homeless students. Although participants described in focus groups and anecdotal writings the struggle to find childcare, most were able to find some childcare. Participants' concerns centered on ensuring the childcare was a safe environment for their

children and that their children were not exposed to physical threats or abuse. In a focus group, Martina voiced that she was able to find childcare with county assistance. Because she did not know anyone in the area, it was hard for her to leave her children with a stranger. Martina reported, “It took me a long time to find childcare. I want to make sure my kids are not hurt and are always safe when I am not with them.” Martha quickly agreed with Martina during the focus group, expressing how important finding safe childcare is especially “for a single mom like me or single parent. Your kids’ safety is first.” Tracy expressed her challenges in finding reliable and safe childcare in her individual interview. She frequently changed providers over the past two years because of the location or issues with staff. Tracy must use free or low-cost childcare programs based on income and stressed her children “are being taken care of like they are somewhere safe, and they can be kids. I have to have [*sic*] somewhere safe for them to go while I am in school.”

Participants cannot be satisfied with the higher needs of the hierarchy without the confidence that they are physically safe and that their family members are safe (Maslow, 1943, 1954). All participants stated that physical safety is a need to participate in Journey and stay in school in individual interviews and focus groups. Study findings determined a relationship between physical safety and barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school.

Emotional Safety

Emotional safety is a basic need and important in building healthy relationships. Emotional safety is the feeling of being loved and accepted for the person you are and feeling embraced for who you are and what you feel and need. Feeling constantly emotionally unsafe causes intense psychological distress, frequently increasing isolation and difficulty connecting

with others. Feelings of emotional safety increase a sense of belonging and support improved relationships (Cherry, 2022).

Throughout the interviews and focus groups participants reported feelings of emotional safety while enrolled in Journey. Heidi referred to the program as her family in a focus group. She shared that she was never cared about before enrolling in Journey. Heidi found a family in Journey and at ACE. Heidi feels loved and cared for, which contributes to her motivation to stay in school. She articulated, "My parents, husband, and friends from my country don't even bother supporting me [*sic*]." Similarly, Martha shared in a focus group that she feels a sense of emotional safety on campus. She takes the bus and feels a sense of relief and safety when she arrives on campus. Martha feels that the staff and faculty care about her. She avowed, "Teachers support my studies, and staff here are always making sure I am attending class, have something to snack on, and that I am okay for the day."

Participants also shared feelings of shame and fear that derail their emotional safety. In an individual interview, Bill professed:

> There is [*sic*] a lot of times I am scared in certain places I may need to stay at. There are threats of gangs and just violence. I do not feel safe all the time. I have had my things stolen, and that makes it harder to deal with everything going on.

Carolina is homeless and a recovering addict. She shared feelings of shame and loneliness from losing her daughter due to her circumstances. Carolina feels alone in her battle and detailed in her individual interview, "I am ashamed of what I have made happen, and I am completely alone. I am heartbroken and need help with everything: school, getting a home, being safe, getting my little girl back."

In a focus group, Esperanza and Ranesha revealed a lack of emotional safety because of

their prior physical and mental traumas. Esperanza is scared to be in spaces with men and larger groups because of her rape while feeling emotionally and physically drained. She affirmed, “I am always scared and nervous around males and larger groups because of what happened to me. I cannot shake that feeling of being attacked from my mind or heart. It’s always there and will always be there.” Ranesha is still physically and mentally recovering from illness and suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). Ranesha conveyed, “I have a lot of emotional baggage from my illness and PTSD. I suffer because of my emotions, and I really have a hard time being safe anywhere, feeling safe.”

Feelings described by participants as emotionally unsafe are unacceptance, unlovable, ashamed, and when your feelings and needs are unacceptable. Emotional safety brings forward an increased sense of belonging and confidence and fosters relationship building. Interpreted data of individual interviews and focus groups resulted in findings that show participants’ emotional safety impacts and influences their barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school.

Financial Safety

Financial safety is having enough financial assets to cover basic needs, additional expenses, and emergencies without the concern of running out. Maslow (1970) emphasized that stable employment and reliable resources are fundamental worries of people at this level. Employment leads to income, and income leads to the attainment of food and shelter.

All participants reported they do not have a stable income or employment in individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings. The impact of financial safety is central to the participant’s goals. Lucy talked about her 18-month homeless journey and battle with physical injuries and disabilities in an individual interview. Her injuries prevented her from working, and

she could not pay rent. Lucy almost dropped her classes at ACE. The Journey program was able to help Lucy get a paid internship to get back on track. She needed to pay for gas, food, and rent. Lucy also took advantage of Journey's financial literacy classes to create budget plans. Lucy said, "I was really struggling to make ends meet; I needed to be successful as well as get some monetary help [*sic*]." Tracy's anecdotal writings revealed the importance of financial safety emphasizing "we need to make sure we can earn an income to support the kids and get a home." Tracy recognizes the importance of gaining employment and bringing in an income to attain financial security.

Hank is unemployed and struggles to meet most of his basic needs because he has little income. Despite Hank's financial struggles, he enrolled in a construction apprenticeship program. He wanted, needed a full-time job, and professed in a focus group, "But I see the value of finishing the program and know I will be able to get a union job when I complete the apprenticeship. This will help me reach my goal of a job." Similarly, Ricardo focused on the completion of his certificate program to gain employment and financial security in his individual interview. He stated, "I need to get a good job and know finishing my training program will help me."

All participants shared a goal of a stable job and income to change their current situation and experience as a noncredit homeless student. Seventeen out of 18 participants expressed education as a pathway to financial independence and self-sufficiency. Interpreted data from individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings suggest that financial safety may influence retention and motivation to stay in school.

Overall, the safety and security participants experienced on campus and in the Journey program helped meet their basic safety needs, decreased barriers to retention, and fostered

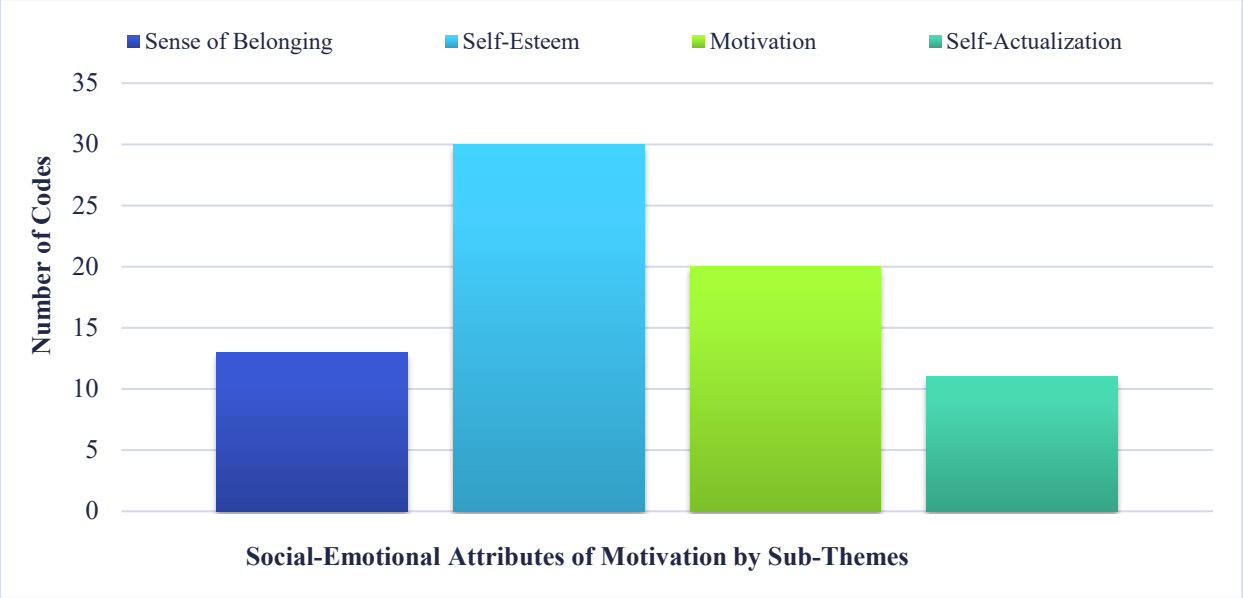
motivation to stay in school. Individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings provided data resulting in interpretations of the participant's experiences of the phenomenon. The results of this study indicate a relationship between physical, emotional, and financial safety and barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school.

Social-Emotional Attributes of Motivation

As noncredit homeless students advance within Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs, a variety of emotions are experienced. Depending on their experiences leading up to and upon achieving any higher levels on the hierarchy, negative or positive social-emotional attributes stemmed from those experiences. All participants expressed social-emotional attributes of motivation that shaped their experiences and drove the results of this study. One participant, Martina, described experiences of loneliness and isolation when navigating the enrollment process at ACE during her individual interview. She shared, "It was so hard for me to understand how to get in school. I did not have anyone to help me, and I felt really alone. I wanted to give up. I finally got in the class and to the Journey program." The number of codes for the major theme of social-emotional attributes totaled 74. As presented in Figure 3, coding of data resulted in self-esteem at 30, followed by motivation at 20. Data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings indicates a significant relationship between self-esteem and motivation and social-emotional attributes of motivation among noncredit homeless students. Figure 3 shows the number of codes for the major theme of social-emotional attributes of motivation by sub-themes.

Figure 3

Number of Codes for Major Theme of Social-Emotional Attributes of Motivation by Sub-Themes



Note. The number of codes are organized by the social-emotional attributes of motivation major theme and associated sub-themes.

All participants experienced negative and positive social-emotional attributes in the face of adversity, hardship, and determination. Study results indicate that social-emotional attributes of motivation significantly impact motivation, sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. At intake for the Journey program, participants were asked to write three words they would use to describe being homeless. Table 6 demonstrates the participants' experiences of social-emotional motivational attributes to being homeless. Participants' written descriptions provided expanded data analysis. Extended data analysis of anecdotal writings of noncredit homeless students' experiences resulted in identified impacts of motivation to stay in school. Table 6 lists the participants' responses.

Table 6

Participant Responses to Description of Being Homeless at Intake

Participants	Description of Being Homeless
April	Helpless, tired, sad
Bill	Insecurity, fragile, deadly.
Brian	Helpless, hopeless, directionless
Carolina	Having nothing, no home, never knowing where you are going to sleep or eat and take a shower.
Esperanza	Alone, fear, strength
Hank	Cold, tiring, effort
Heidi	Helplessness, uncertainty, fear
John	Difficult to navigate
Leticia	No housing, no sustainable household
Lucy	Heart-wrenching, scary, anxiety
Martha	Difficult, scary, frustrating
Martina	Scary, worthless, lonely.
Mary	Frightening, depressing, judged
Ranesha	Unsheltered, miserable, unsafe
Ricardo	Cold, mental illness, lost
Tracy	Stressful, depressing, challenging
Sam	Lost, resources, self-esteem
Yvonne	Anxiety, resilience, strength

Note: Participants written descriptions of their experiences of homelessness at intake for the Journey retention model program.

Motivation

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs theorizes four foundational levels of demand from a student deficit approach. The hierarchy of needs must be met at each level before higher motivation for students is reached. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a structure for student motivation (Shi & Lin, 2021). Without the lowest levels of the hierarchy, students cannot progress to the next level (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Each level allows students the ability and motivation to reach their full potential (Maslow, 1962, 1970). Participants spoke openly about their motivation in individual interviews and focus groups. Ranesha announced in a focus group, "What motivates me to stay in school is the desire to better myself and learn the technical skills I need to get a good-paying job to support my family." Leticia followed declaring she is motivated by her confidence and belief in her future. She said, "I want to continue to achieve my dream and expand in the culinary industry. I love cooking food and never felt more proud [*sic*] of myself than by being in school."

Carolina finds it hard to stay motivated because of her physical environment and social-emotional experiences of substance abuse, an active CPS case, and her homelessness. In an individual interview, Carolina voiced, "Going to school, meeting mandates, and trying to stay sober is hard. I don't always think I can do it. I know I have to, but my motivation is not always there." Carolina continuously worries about failing to meet her responsibilities for school, homework, the court, and getting her daughter back. She is homeless, in school, and recovery. She feels the stress of it all and went on to express, "Where am I going to live, how can I stay in school and be motivated to finish? I need my daughter back, and that pressure is so much. I have a lot of pressure, and it's hard on me." Another participant, Bill, explained in his individual

interview how difficult it is to stay motivated to stay in school. He said, “The stress I have every single day just to live makes it hard to be motivated to do anything else but survive.”

Study results exposed that noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program bring learned behavior and experiences to the institution, classroom, and the program. These experiences resulted in increased barriers to retention and impacted their motivation to stay in school. Study results indicate retention model programs must meet homeless students' basic to complex needs, and the practices employed must be designed to decrease barriers to retention and foster motivation to stay in school. The interpretation of individual interviews and focus groups show a relationship between meeting the needs of noncredit homeless students enrolled in retention model programs and retention and motivation to stay in school.

Sense of Belonging

The third level of Maslow’s (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs is love and sense of belonging, which includes social interaction with others, relationships and bonds with family, friends, work groups, and peers, and physical and emotional intimacy. It centers on gaining acceptance, attention, and support from others. Participants expressed their sense of belonging through the Journey program in focus groups. Heidi shared the support she received from Journey, which encouraged her to try to stay positive. The journey staff made her feel welcome and gave her a sense of worth and belief that she could be successful. Heidi further declared, “When people encourage you, it affects the way you see yourself and your potential. That means a lot, and I know I am where I need to be.”

Maslow (1970) believed that a sense of belonging helped people to experience acceptance and bonds with family, friends, and other relationships. A recent study found a relationship between a sense of belonging, increased happiness, and well-being, including a

reduction in negative mental health outcomes (Moeller et al., 2020). Bill described always feeling out of place before he enrolled at ACE. During an individual interview, he reported, “I was nervous enrolling in school because I was homeless and felt I did not belong. The staff and my teachers accepted me the way I showed up to class.” Lucy discussed similar experiences of gaining a sense of belonging while enrolled in Journey in her individual interview. She emphasized the program’s support and push for her to continue to work hard toward her goals. Lucy always felt welcome and accepted on campus and in the Journey office. She said, “Journey was exceptionally helpful with both helping me get through the struggle of being homeless as well as the struggle of feeling inadequate or that I should not be going to school while homeless.”

A lack of sense of belonging may lead to social-emotional attributes of motivation that hinder a student’s ability to connect to others, constructing a series of experiences that advance a deteriorated sense of belonging. John expressed his feelings of loneliness and alienation associated with feelings of not belonging anywhere in an individual interview. He feels alone and embarrassed because he struggles with addiction and serving time in prison. John is in recovery and fears relapse. He said, “Being a recovering addict and homeless student makes me feel isolated and ashamed.”

Tracy experienced a lack of meaning and purpose, affecting her sense of belonging. She did not feel good about herself and felt she did not belong on campus or anywhere. Tracy felt she did not have anyone to talk to or any devoted friends. She communicated in her individual interview, “I feel like being alone so much leaves me feeling inadequate, and I am not sure what I need to do or my purpose for anything.”

Study results indicate a relationship between the third level of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs of love and sense of belonging to noncredit homeless students' social interaction with others, relationships, and bonds with family, friends, work groups, and peers. Results revealed the impact of a sense of belonging on retention and motivation to stay in school for both negative and positive experiences. Individual interview and focus group data signified that social interaction and targeted interventions provided participants with a sense of belonging by preparing them for campus activities, classes, and participating in Journey.

Self-Esteem

Esteem is the fourth level of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs and is interdependent with the other levels of need of physiological, safety, love and belonging, and self-actualization. Several esteem need factors are involved in attaining a sense of self-esteem, like the acknowledgment of who we are, respecting others, confidence, and achievement. Esteem is an internal quality but is affected by external aspects like validation and peer approval (Interaction Design Foundation - IxDF, 2021). Factors that can impact self-esteem are illness, physical abilities or limitations, socioeconomics, and thought patterns (Cherry, 2022).

Participants expressed success in rebuilding their confidence and belief in their abilities despite their experiences. Esperanza explained in a focus group how she regained her self-esteem after facing extensive physical and emotional trauma. She shared how she pulled herself up off the ground to pursue her dreams. Esperanza worked hard to rebuild her strength and determination. She set new goals and accomplished them. Esperanza divulged, "Success is addicting. I have more confidence and know I can do anything I want to as long as [*sic*] I believe in me."

In a focus group, Ricardo is just as invested in his future and is confident he will complete his HVAC certification. He has fought hard to take charge of his education and future. Ricardo has set priorities to finish his program and gain full-time employment. He feels smart and more prepared to be successful and is determined to finish his program. Ricardo vocalized, "I believe in myself now, and everything is possible. Even my parole officer is happy with my progress. That makes my confidence go up even more."

Nearly half of the participants, nine of 18, shared they did not experience increased self-esteem and found it hard to navigate enrolling in and staying in school while homeless in individual interviews. Social-emotional attributes of hopelessness and depression are presented. Hank struggles to get up every day, and some days, he wishes he did not wake up. He explained, "Somedays, I lose hope in getting out of this hole. It's hard to enroll in school, finish classes, and find a job to try to get out of being homeless." Hank further shared he does start most days with a more cheerful outlook and has hope things will get better. However, by the end of the day, reality sets in, Hank's confidence disappears, and his light of hope darkens. He said, "But the end of the day…I am depressed and back sleeping on a bench or in the park. The confidence and self-esteem I carried in the day disappears with the reality."

Study results suggest noncredit homeless students frame reaching personal and educational goals within the social-emotional attribute of self-esteem. Findings from individual interviews and focus groups indicate noncredit homeless students need encouragement and support to increase self-esteem and progress toward meeting educational goals. The connections participants identified on campus and with Journey program coordinators established a relationship between a sense of belonging and motivation to stay in school.

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is the fifth and final level in Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962) hierarchy of needs. It can be summarized as the realization of one's creative, intellectual, and social potential through internal motivators. Self-actualization includes but is not limited to education and skill development. Because people conceptually prioritize needs in order of importance (Maslow, 1970), immediate physiological needs must be met before more imperative cognitive needs can be gratified.

Eight of 18 participants described experiences of new interpersonal development and skill attainment through their education with determination, self-empowerment, self-esteem, and confidence in individual interviews and focus groups. Ranesha declared, "Resilience, self-empowerment, and determination" empowered her to navigate her circumstances and stay motivated in her individual interview. She is pursuing her dream of higher education and a new career. Ranesha confirmed in a focus group, "My dream to pursue higher learning and hopes to secure a career as an outreach and community services professional for underserved and marginalized people is in my grasp."

Lucy professed in her individual interview, "My values and my intent to reach success is my motivation." Another participant, Bill, is confident he will succeed and start a family. He described his readiness to advance in his pathway to career and self-sufficiency and hope for a new family in an individual interview. Bill expressed, "I have gained knowledge to start a new career, and I enrolled in another program to increase those skills. The prospect of good employment through education is motivating me to be committed, determined, and keep believing in my abilities."

Other participants described similar experiences of their journey to self-actualization. Leticia is motivated by her goals and dreams to be successful. In a focus group, Leticia explained, “What motivates me to stay in school is the desire to learn the technical skills I need to better myself so that I can get a good-paying job to support my family.” Esperanza in her individual interview said, “I am engaged in my learning. My educational goals and my interests drive my success. I have found community in the classroom and feel strong and confident. I have been successful in learning new skills.”

Some participants described their experiences and journeys as difficult. Brian used the terms “helpless, hopeless, directionless” in his anecdotal writing and wrote, “I feel like there is not enough help and support to fix my situation. I need to do a lot more to get to a place where I will be okay, good, and happy.” Mary described her feelings about everything as negative in her individual interview. She said, “The daily pressure and challenges weigh me down. I feel like I just can’t get a break. I get more sad [*sic*], I feel like I cannot achieve anything different than this.”

Positive experiences and assurances among some participants expressed in individual interviews and focus groups resulted in isolated social-emotional attributes of motivation of resiliency and self-actualization, indicating higher levels of motivation to stay in school. Other participants described negative experiences, deepening social-emotional attributes of motivation of insecurity, fear, and hopelessness in individual interviews and anecdotal writings that resulted in low self-esteem and a focus on a lack of ability. The results of this study demonstrate a relationship between self-actualization and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program.

Outlier Data and Findings

Data analyzed from individual interviews, focus groups, and document analysis of anecdotal writings yielded three outlier data and findings for consideration. The outlier data involved justice-involved or impacted relationships, family influences, and access to technology may have implications for further study.

Impact of Justice-Involved

Justice-involved students are at risk of being incarcerated in jail, prisons, or youth correctional facilities or have had a sibling, parent, or extended family member involved in the justice system. Students who have experiences with law enforcement that negatively affect and alter their lives are also involved in justice. Justice-involved students often experience increased levels of basic needs insecurities like housing and food insecurity, financial instability, and difficulty finding employment. Tracy experienced negative interactions with law enforcement that resulted in a barrier to her residing in shelters despite having challenges living in the family car. In her individual interview she described experiences of harassment by local police that have caused her to move the car farther out from her son's school. Tracy and her husband have tried to use safe parking lots, but because the registration expired, she and her family cannot use safe parking lot options. Tracy further announced, "Since my car has expired registration, I have no idea what to do."

Other participants imparted experiences as justice-involved noncredit homeless students. Ricardo was released recently from prison and worries about his next steps because he is living in transitional housing. In his individual interview, he affirmed:

> You only get so many weeks or days in transitional housing. They expect you to find housing within a couple of months of getting out of prison. That's hard when you need to finish job training and get a job.

Similarly, John disclosed in one of the two focus groups, "I am currently experiencing insecurity about my housing. I was paroled from prison and will not have a place to live after September 31st because funding will run out for my transitional living home." The impact of homelessness on justice-involved students is notable and may elicit further research.

Influences of Family

Research shows that informal family support fosters student success for non-traditional college students and students who come from low-income backgrounds (Jabbar et al., 2019; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). Family support may increase motivation for noncredit homeless students to continue with their programs of study. However, a lack of or negative family support may lead to increased feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem. Experiences of noncredit homeless students uncovered increased motivation to stay enrolled in school when participants described the impact of overcoming barriers and staying enrolled in school for their children. Martina expressed the impact that being a single parent has on her motivation to stay enrolled in a focus group. She shared "I am here for my kids, they need me to do more, I expect to do more. That's why school is important." Other participants revealed feelings of anger, anxiety, and depression when recalling experiences with family in individual interviews.

Heidi described her experience of falling behind in her studies and not having her husband's support during her individual interview. She enrolled in ESL and found it hard to balance the demands of school, family, and homelessness. Heidi feels unsupported by her

husband and carries the responsibilities for her family. Heidi avowed, “There are so many things that make life hard. I have no family here, and I cannot depend on my husband one hundred percent; it is hard.” Heidi had to reenroll in her classes the next term. The lack of support from her husband to help with the family significantly impacted her ability to stay in school.

In an individual interview, Martha expressed she does not have support from anyone and is disconnected from her family, which significantly impacts her progress in school. She attested, “I was always criticized for everything I did or did not do. I feel my family doesn’t care about me and never did, even when I am successful. This holds me back from doing a lot.” Research results showed that the influences of family impacted the participants’ adaptability to meet immediate and basic needs, but also the ability to address barriers to retention. Study results demonstrate basic needs and insecurities impacted by familial relationships increase barriers to retention, causing a lack of motivation to stay in school.

Access to Technology

The digital divide continues to shut low-income students out of the opportunity to access, engage with, and participate in classes, programs, and services in a virtual campus environment. The intensity of the digital divide among noncredit homeless students affects students, further exacerbating existing socioeconomic inequities to access education programs.

Participants’ narratives spoke to the digital divide and the lack of access to the digital world in focus groups. Mary is enrolled in the GED program and did not have a laptop or regular access to the internet when she enrolled. Mary described, “I signed up for my GED and did not know it was only available online. I was not sure how I’d be able to get to attend my online classes.” Mary would not have been able to continue her enrollment if the Journey program had not provided a laptop. Mary was able to access the internet on campus to attend her online

classes. Noncredit homeless students also face challenges to regularly charge their laptops, cell phones, and other devices. Sam did not have access to electricity when he was not on campus. He found it difficult to find public places on the weekends to charge his phone. Sam had to complete his school assignments on his phone. He explained, "The battery would go very low [*sic*] and die before I was done. This made it hard to finish my assignments, or I would have to rush to do homework in the mornings at school while I plugged in my phone."

Access to technology such as computers and connectivity among noncredit homeless students was indicated as essential to decreasing barriers to retention for seven of 18 participants. Participants without access to adequate technology experienced missed opportunities to engage in their education. Technology informs students of current trends and increases engagement and participation in online classes. Outlier data and findings validated that access to technology remains a barrier to retention for noncredit homeless students.

Research Question Responses

I sought to explore and interpret the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Using Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs as the theoretical framework, the central research question and three sub-questions guided this study. Data collected from participants' responses from individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews answered the central research question and the sub-questions. The three major themes of basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation emerged with associated sub-themes that supported the research questions and interpretation of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program.

Central Research Question

The central research question for this study was: What are the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program? The participants brought their voices forward by sharing their experiences as noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The articulated lived experiences of participants present a narrative detailing the lack of basic needs, a need for safety, and motivation pathways of social-emotional attributes that bring fear, depression, loneliness, defeat, shame, resiliency, confidence, self-regulation, and hope forward. Participants' stories illuminate the struggles noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program continue to face and the gap in the design and services of programming. Participants specifically voiced their lack of the most basic needs and the effort-to meet physiological needs to stay enrolled and motivated to stay in school.

In an individual interview Carolina publicized:

> I am an addict in recovery and trying to go back to school and trying to be back in my daughter's life. And back on my feet. Homelessness isn't easy. Finding stability has affected me because I couldn't focus on just school anymore. I had to be homeless, and trying to survive comes first. And I want and need to be able to continue online classes, but because of my homelessness, it isn't accessible all the time.

Carolina described increased barriers to retention of instability, not having a place to rest and sleep, and not regularly showering or eating. She finds it difficult to balance school and wellness. Carolina suffers from anxiety and finds it hard to trust others. Carolina further shared, "I already have anxiety, and my safety makes going to school and staying in class even harder."

Participant responses answered the CRQ and varied by the situation of the experience. The lack of basic needs, insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation are the

experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Lucy articulated in her individual interview, “Being homeless is tough, but being a homeless student is harder. I have to try to take care of myself and keep up in school. I am tired, and I need help” and described being homeless as “Heart-wrenching, scary, anxiety” in her anecdotal writings. In a focus group, Bill vocalized, “There are a lot of unsafe places and people out there, and when you are homeless, you are exposed and an easy target.”

Participants expressed communal and distinctive experiences, yet all participants articulated social-emotional attributes associated with basic needs insecurities that increased barriers to retention and affected their motivation to stay in school in individual interviews and focus groups. Based on a broader context, all participants exposed social-emotional attributes tied to juggling the demands of basic needs insecurities, addressing barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school. Participants voiced expressions of helplessness, fear, difficulty, and stress. Sam affirmed his frustration navigating homelessness and school in an individual interview. He enrolled in noncredit post-secondary education to escape homelessness. Sam is a Veteran and wonders how he lacks resources that he has earned because of his prior military service. Sam expressed feelings of loneliness and betrayal. Sam is now in transitional housing but shared, “While I was homeless, I had a lot of self-doubts and was filled with hopelessness and stress. It was hard for me to figure out how to enroll and stay in school.” Sam managed to stay in school but mentioned, “Until I picked up my spirit and self-esteem, I did not go far. Then, I was able to get on track with getting my benefits and getting school done. ” In a focus group he added “I found out I had the strength and gained my self-esteem.”

Social-emotional attributes affected participants’ motivation and belief in self. Participants reentering school and experiencing homelessness conveyed discouragement and

depression but also how they found a sense of belonging, resiliency, confidence, and increased self-esteem once they were on their pathway in school and enrolled in the retention model program. Heidi shared feelings of helplessness and uncertainty in a focus group. She is an immigrant refugee and reflected on her journey to the United States. Heidi emphasized she and her family did not come to the United States to give up but revealed, "I need to get through school, learn better English, and get jobs. I think every day I get more confidence in coming to school and learning." Yvonne spoke about her resiliency and strength in a focus group, "I have built up my confidence from coming to school and being in the Journey program. I feel strong and resilient. I know I can achieve more now."

The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program embodied their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school. All participants experienced a significant lack of basic needs, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation, impacting their progression in Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs. Individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings provided data for interpretation of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. Findings suggest a relationship between basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation to barriers to retention and motivation to stay enrolled. Study results indicate a significant relationship between noncredit homeless students participating in a retention model program and motivation to stay enrolled in school.

Sub-Question One

Sub-question one was: What are the basic needs of noncredit homeless students? The most common theme among all 18 participants was basic needs insecurities. Noncredit homeless students lack the most basic needs of shelter, food, water, clothing, and health. Physiological

needs are considered the most essential because students cannot meet the other needs until physiological ones are fulfilled (Maslow, 1943, 1954). All study participants' narratives from individual interviews included physiological needs and the dysfunction associated with unmet basic needs. Participants described specific experiences of having nowhere to sleep and being unable to shower, living in their car, and being hungry. April revealed, "I live in my car. It is not comfortable, and I do not sleep well most nights. I am tired and do not feel well some days with headaches and body aches from living in my car." April brought to light her experiences of homelessness and living in her car, detailed by increased basic needs insecurities of not only housing but also food, clothing, and water. She spends her time ensuring her family has food, water, and shelter. April pointed out it is hard for her to meet her fundamental basic needs.

Hank lives on the streets and shared his experience of not knowing where his next meal will come from or when he will be able to shower. "Every day, I try to find safe spaces to stay each night, and I never know if I will eat or go hungry. I am lucky if I can shower two to three times a week." Hank is challenged in meeting his basic needs. Noncredit homeless students' behaviors and actions are focused on satisfying lower-priority needs before moving to higher-priority needs. Participants expressed lacking the most basic needs in every area of their lives, resulting in motivation driven by physiological needs before others (Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Maslow, 1954; Taormina & Gao, 2013). Brian responded, "Having nothing, no home, little food, never knowing where your gonna [*sic*] sleep or eat and take a shower sucks."

From individual interviews, interpreted data substantiated basic needs are a priority for noncredit homeless students. Study findings provided insight into the basic needs insecurities of the participants. Furthermore, study results indicate a significant relationship between basic

needs insecurities of noncredit homeless students and barriers to retention and their motivation to stay in school.

Sub-Question Two

Sub-question two was: What are the barriers to retention for noncredit homeless students? All participants described the challenges and successes of navigating postsecondary education, specifically at the noncredit institution in individual interviews and focus groups. One participant, John, described the challenge in accessing technology to reenroll each semester in classes and access his student portal during his individual interview. He announced:

> I had trouble logging on to school with my phone. The app does not work good [*sic*] on my phone. I had to find a computer when campuses were open and try to update my application and register. It was hard to find a working, open computer to see messages from school and register for my classes.

In a focus group Esperanza described the support and engagement she received with the retention model program to stay on task in her program and enroll each semester. She voiced, "I felt supported by Linda (pseudonym for Journey coordinator) and the Journey program. I got help enrolling in my classes and help with the supplies for my training I had to have."

All participants described the benefits and limitations of support from the retention model program during focus groups. Mary explained the direct support provided by Journey was appreciated but was not enough. She noted the program's help with enrolling in her GED program and providing her with a laptop and required school supplies. Mary focused on her bus pass and ensuring she could get to school and stay in school. Mary concentrated on her survival as a priority. She revealed, "I go without eating at school; I have to [*sic*] make sure I have a bus

pass; I need to make sure I have enough clothes and good shoes to walk. I am always thinking of what I need to survive."

Most participants, 15 of 18, shared stories during the interview process of trying to finish classes. They described feelings of shame and regret when they had to drop out because it became too much to try to meet their needs and balance school. John attested to the barriers faced every day to stay enrolled and keep up with his program and avowed it is difficult to be in school and focused as a homeless student. John's thoughts were consumed with finding a home, having enough food, and surviving on little to no income. He exclaimed, "Housing insecurity has made it hard for me to keep up with my school, attend class all the time, and stay in school." Sometimes, John wants to give up because of the intense stress but wants to stay in school and be successful. He commented, "I want to stay and finish my program, but I am not sure how long I can do this without reducing some of the problems of being homeless.

John was not the only participant who struggled to balance school and the hardships of being a noncredit homeless student. Nearly all participants described barriers to retention they face every day. Many participants often go without adequate resources to meet their physiological, safety, and sense of belonging needs. Ranesha divulged her "experience as a homeless student has been very difficult [*sic*], and I constantly struggle with prioritizing my time to make sure I can eat, have somewhere to sleep, and stay connected to school. She feels welcomed in class and on campus. Ranesha has made some friends at school but attested, "No one knows what I go through every day to be in class." Martina has two children and worries about providing for herself and her small children. Her children remain a priority, and she wants to give them a better life. Martina views Journey and ACE as her way to do that. She

broadcasted, “I always fear I will need to stop school and take care of my kids and me, make sure we are safe and have food and a place to sleep.”

The barriers to retention that participants described are not easy to overcome. Participants’ experiences expressed the levels of barriers to retention noncredit homeless students face, such as access to enrollment, reenrolling in courses and programs, getting textbooks and school materials, and access to technology, all not easily obtained due to the unavailability of financial aid and other resources at noncredit institutions (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Mary had difficulties enrolling at ACE. She found it hard to figure out the process to apply and fully matriculate. Mary struggled to learn how to be an online student and pay for a laptop, textbooks and required program software. She articulated in a focus group:

> I needed to buy my laptop, school supplies, and pay for the internet for my GED classes. I could not afford them and had to cut even more of the small amount of money I have. The school said it’s free, but they don’t tell you that you have to [*sic*] pay for a computer, internet, and school supplies.

Diverse levels of homelessness, struggles, and socioeconomic barriers to retention with a lack of access to basic physiological needs significantly impact homeless students’ retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Boenigk et al., 2021; Cheatham et al., 2021; Fagioli et al., 2020; Masten et al., 2014). During a focus group, Ricardo shared, “There are so many more things I need to stay in school and finish the training program that are available for me or that I know about.” Sufficient data was presented from individual interviews and focus groups to interpret the barriers to retention for noncredit homeless students. Study results suggest that noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program experience significant barriers to

retention. Interpreted data resulted in findings that indicate barriers to retention of basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation significantly influence retention and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students.

Sub-Question Three

Sub-question three was: What motivates noncredit students to stay enrolled in community college? The most common response among participants was their self-esteem and their description of the pathway to self-actualization. The self-confidence of participants shined through their stories. Nevertheless, the social-emotional impact was illuminated in the experiences of noncredit homeless students and the detailed descriptions of the challenges and struggles. Yvonne told her story of being homeless for over a year in her individual interview. She struggles with depression, anxiety, and social interactions and situations. Yvonne finds it extremely hard to stay motivated to stay in school. She does not trust others because of prior experiences of her belongings being stolen and experiences of mental and physical abuse. Yvonne blames herself for her situation and continued homelessness. The challenges have affected her motivation to stay in school and increased her barriers to retention. Despite her barriers to retention, Yvonne works to increase her self-esteem and confidence in her ability to stay in school and be successful. Yvonne conveyed that she builds her self-confidence by telling herself she can keep going and succeed. Yvonne struggles to stay in school, regularly attend, and participate in class. She has difficulty completing assignments and faces barriers to access to the internet, healthcare, and managing her attention deficit disorder. Yvonne is determined to move forward and voiced, “I always tell myself I can do it; I build my own self-confidence to keep going. I have to [*sic*], I have to for me.”

Noncredit homeless students may enter community college lacking a solid foundation, potentially affecting their mindset, and leading to discouragement and frustration (Zimmerman, 2002). In her individual interview, participant April experienced "a lot of anxiety and worry in regard to being able to make it to class on time, and I dropped classes because it was too difficult to pay for gas." April's experience is not unique to that of study participants. Another participant, Brian expressed "I feel like an outcast and ashamed of my circumstances. I am alone and do not have many relationships, but I keep going somehow." He went on to reveal in his individual interview, "I am not giving up because I know I can do it. I just need help to be able to have a place to stay, shower, and eat." Brian's esteem and confidence in his ability and motivation are hindered by not meeting his physiological and sense of belonging needs.

In an individual interview, Tracy shared, "There are times I just lose motivation, dealing with mental health depression and hopelessness, worry, anxiety." Tracy expressed her frustration and noted that her motivation to stay in school is to access support from disability services and the Journey program. Growing up Tracy found school difficult and struggled to learn. She never had the help to be successful. Tracy also revealed, "I am learning, and I know I can do this. I have to [*sic*] build my self-esteem back, and my confidence is getting more [*sic*] with each class and being part of Journey." Martha experienced a similar lack of support and help. Martha explained in a focus group how much Journey has helped her build confidence in her own abilities and she is slowly changing how she perceives her own worth. She shared, "I never knew I was worth anything but being a mom. I feel so alone and have struggled. But Journey has helped me become more sure [*sic*] of myself and I know I can do this."

Most participants found motivation to stay in school with the support of Journey but also brought forward fears of failure. Feelings of anxiety and a lack of self-esteem affecting their

motivation to stay in school were identified. Participants related their social-emotional attributes of motivation to their experience in education and identified effects on their beliefs in themselves and their capabilities. Individual interviews and focus groups provided adequate data for interpretation of participants' motivation to stay in school. Study results indicate a relationship between social-emotional attributes of motivation and noncredit homeless students' motivation to stay enrolled.

Summary

Chapter Four introduced the study's participant demographics and responses to the research questions using a hermeneutic phenomenological research design guided by a framework of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs. The voices and narratives of noncredit homeless students were brought forward through detailed interpretations of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon. Identified themes, sub-themes, and the study's research questions framed the results of the study. The three major themes expounded through analysis of data and thematic coding were (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation. The theme of basic needs insecurities is directly associated with the levels of housing, food, water, clothing, and other basic needs the participants experienced and shared in individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings. Participants disclosed sleeping in cars, couch surfing, living on the street, and in short and long-term shelters while often going without food, access to water, clothing, and other fundamental needs like transportation, healthcare, and toiletries to survive. Safety emerged as a major theme, with participants speaking to sub-themes of physical, emotional, and financial safety. Participants presented experiences of feeling safe and unsafe on campus, in the classroom, off-campus, within their family, and in relationships they were building. Physical, emotional, and financial

safety were dominant factors in participants' experiences. Social-emotional attributes of motivation surfaced as a theme throughout the participants' responses during data collection, specifically regarding safety, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem, or lack thereof, because of the barriers faced each day. This study indicates a significant relationship between basic needs insecurities, and social-emotional attributes of motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students. Overall, participants expressed the impact of homelessness is compounded by the lack of food, water, clothing, and other basic needs insecurities, their safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation that create barriers to retention and substantially influence their motivation to stay in school.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The goal of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students to inform and implement best practice retention model programs to meet their basic needs, address barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay in school. Chapter Five provides an interpretation of the results of this study by summarizing three emergent themes and associated sub-themes. Additionally, Chapter Five, interprets findings, indicates implications for policy and practice, considers theoretical and empirical implications, reviews limitations and delimitations, and discusses future research recommendations. This chapter summarizes the study in the conclusion.

Discussion

This hermeneutic phenomenological study resulted in three major themes: (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation and associated sub-themes that emerged while examining the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Summaries of each of the themes are provided. An interpretation of findings aligned with Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs is discussed. This section presents the summary of thematic findings, interpretations of findings, and implications for policy and practice.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Study participants gave voice to the experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program by sharing their narratives. Participants described the phenomenon

and brought an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of noncredit homeless students through three significant themes of (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) barriers to retention, and (c) motivation to stay enrolled. The description and interpretation of the participants' lived experiences exposed three significant themes which were detailed in Chapter Four. Participants expressed significant hardships but also hope and increased opportunities and motivation to meet their basic needs, decrease barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay in school while enrolled in a retention model program.

All participants experienced basic needs insecurities resulting in increased barriers to retention and negative influences on their motivation to stay in school. Homeless students experiencing a lack of fundamental basic needs struggle to focus on their classes or programs. The first of the five levels of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs are physiological needs: the basic human survival needs of shelter, food and water, clothing, and health. Participants described experiences of homelessness and hunger that exacerbated the lack of basic needs like water, transportation, and healthcare. An amalgamation of causes from the cost of attending school, prices of food, gas, childcare, and a complete lack of affordable housing has fueled the homelessness crisis among college students affecting basic needs (Fagioli et al., 2020; Petry et al., 2022; Ponka et al., 2020; Shankar et al., 2019; Tausen et al., 2021). All participants expressed housing insecurity and lack of long-term or permanent housing. Housing insecurity was at the forefront of participants' unmet basic needs.

Most participants experienced choosing between their next meal, rent, and other basic needs such as toiletries, transportation, health, or additional costs associated with attending school, like material fees, supplies, and textbooks, leading to increased unmet basic needs. Noncredit homeless student participants differed in their coping strategies for not meeting their

basic needs, from rationing food to forgoing rent, utilities, clothes, medicine, health care, or other basic needs. Prior research found that students may only move from a deficiency to a growth mindset of motivation when basic needs are met (Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019). Participants shared the impact of experiencing basic needs insecurities on barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school. Participants shared how strenuous it is to lack the most basic needs and concentrate on meeting the demands of education and staying in school. The study participants' descriptions and shared experiences of unmet basic needs framed the theme of basic needs insecurities.

Safety emerged as a recurring theme. Safety needs are the second level of Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs. Safety includes security and protection from theft and violence, emotional well-being and strength, overall protection of health, and fiscal security. All participants voiced negative experiences of physical, emotional, and financial safety, while only a few participants expressed positive experiences that framed safety needs. Participants' narratives were comprised of feelings of safety from physical and emotional harm to experiencing significant trauma. Negative and positive experiences shaped the theme of safety. Participants' environment and relationships placed safety as a major theme, further describing and interpreting the phenomenon.

All participants were distracted by efforts to meet lower-level needs, negating higher needs of the hierarchy because of the lack of confidence that they were physically safe (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1962). Participant narratives provided insight into theft, physical injury, and unsafe experiences along with physical safety on campus and while enrolled in the Journey program. Parenting participants shared concerns about ensuring their childcare provided a safe environment for their children free of physical threats and harm.

Emotional safety is a basic need and was essential to participants in building relationships. Emotional safety encompasses feelings of love and acceptance for who you are and what you need. Participants experienced adverse and positive emotional circumstances, resulting in emotionally safe and unsafe circumstances and conditions. Most participants felt safe on campus and with the Journey program, while some felt judged and discriminated against, resulting in feelings of unwelcomeness and unacceptance. Many participants shared a lack of emotional safety off campus, facing isolation and loneliness due to their housing or lack thereof.

All participants unveiled a struggle with financial safety. Financial safety occurs when one has enough financial assets to cover basic needs and additional expenses (Abdelsayed, 2018). All participants lacked adequate financial and dependable resources. Maslow (1970) emphasized that stable employment and reliable resources are fundamental worries of people at this level. The lack of financial safety is paramount to participants' goals. Most participants see education as a pathway to financial safety and shared training and employment goals. Some participants described employment experiences without sufficient monetary resources that allowed for housing, other basic needs, and self-sufficiency, while other participants had little to no financial resources, significantly impacting financial safety.

Social-emotional attributes of motivation surfaced as a central theme, with sub-themes of a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Participants revealed a variety of social-emotional attributes of motivation when bringing their stories forward. Participants' social-emotional attributes of motivation stemmed from negative and positive experiences. Participants experienced these social-emotional attributes in the face of hardship, danger, hope, and resiliency. Participants divulged their motivation to stay in school through sub-themes of a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Participants found it hard to stay motivated

because of experiences with homelessness, physical environments, and social-emotional experiences of hopelessness, isolation, and fear. Nevertheless, many participants disclosed social-emotional attributes of resiliency, strength, determination, and confidence when describing their motivation to stay in school and to change their future through noncredit education.

Many participants expressed a strong sense of belonging through the Journey program and the classroom. The third level of Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs is love and sense of belonging, which includes social interaction with others, relationships and bonds with family, friends, work groups, and peers, and physical and emotional intimacy. Participants further confirmed Maslow's (1970) belief that a sense of belonging helps people experience acceptance and bonds with family, friends, and other relationships, presenting positive experiences of inclusion and belonging on campus and in the Journey program.

Esteem, the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is inter-reliant with the other physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1962, 1970). Despite experiences of homelessness, struggles to navigate the system, and not having their needs meet, most participants expressed success in rebuilding their confidence and belief in their abilities. Some participants disclosed that they found it hard to navigate enrolling and staying in school while homeless. Participants presented social-emotional attributes of hopelessness and depression and described challenges of self-esteem.

Self-actualization is the fifth level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It centers on the realization of one's creative, intellectual, and social potential through internal motivators. Needs are conceptually prioritized in order of importance (Maslow, 1970), placing immediate physiological needs as a priority to be met before more imperative cognitive needs can be

gratified. Participants in this study expressed the difficulties of their journey and lived experiences. Negative feelings of hopelessness, lack of direction, and perceptions of being lost were presented to describe barriers to retention and a lack of motivation to stay in school by some participants. Nevertheless, many participants described experiences of new interpersonal development and skill attainment through their education with determination, self-empowerment, self-esteem, and confidence. Participants described increased motivation to stay in school with newly founded self-actualization grounded in their increased or new self-esteem.

Interpretation of Findings

All participants in this hermeneutic phenomenological study presented the significance of basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school that impact their lived experiences. Data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings resulted in the emergence of three major themes, (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation and 12 associated sub-themes. The most dominant theme was basic needs insecurities. The lived experiences of participants were that homelessness is unrelenting and significantly impacts retention and motivation to stay in school. The most traumatic experiences, as evidenced by the responses of participants, were characterized by themes and subthemes of housing insecurity, food insecurity, physical safety, and self-confidence. These hindrances led to increased barriers to retention for noncredit homeless students as they struggle to meet their basic needs and stay motivated to stay in school. A construct of synthesized interpretations materialized from themes and sub-themes of meeting noncredit homeless students' basic needs, case management beyond the classroom and campus, and mental health services and programs.

Meeting Noncredit Homeless Students' Basic Needs

All participants presented detailed experiences of basic needs insecurities and identified themselves as homeless. Prior research in 2018 unveiled over 45% of community college students nationwide face some homelessness (Broton, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021), and in 2019, 19% of Western United States community college students report experiencing homelessness, with more than 60% experiencing some type of housing insecurity (Beckett, 2022). The noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program that participated in this study were plagued by homelessness, hunger, and a lack of water, clothing, and financial resources. The pandemic of basic needs insecurities among noncredit homeless student participants was overwhelmingly a dominant force that pushed participants to exert all their energy and focus to meeting the utmost basic needs for survival. Similar to extant research, participants' basic needs and insecurities affected their priority for education and swayed their motivation to stay in school, often leading to social-emotional impacts of stress, fear, and anxiety (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Cheatham et al., 2021; Fagioli et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1962, 1970; Masten et al., 2014; McLeod, 2018; Shi & Lin, 2021). This study adds to the mounting body of research supporting the demand for retention model programs to meet the increasing basic needs insecurities of noncredit homeless students (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; S. M. Martinez et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel, 2020; Trawver & Hedwig, 2020; Watson et al., 2017; Wood & Harris, 2022). Study results corroborated the importance of meeting the basic needs insecurities of noncredit homeless students to decrease barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school. Noncredit institutions must engage with and invest in support services that target decreasing basic needs insecurities among noncredit homeless students.

Research examining the phenomenon of homeless community college students has brought amplified consciousness among postsecondary institutions insisting action to increase retention and improve the wellness of homeless students (Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Smith & Knechtel, 2020). The community college system is failing the most vulnerable students with limited resources and services that do not penetrate the challenge of basic needs insecurities among noncredit homeless student populations. Study participants faced significant basic needs insecurities and experienced increased barriers to retention and impacts to motivation to stay in school. Homelessness impacts community college students' retention (Broton, 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Gupton, 2017; Nix et al., 2021). Study results support the demand to meet noncredit homeless students' basic needs.

Extant research is substantially centered on credit homeless students' experiences and needs (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel., 2020). There is minimal research on noncredit education in the community college systems to deeply understand its student populations and outcomes because community colleges were designed to meet the workforce demands of the future. Now, there is a need for a new focus centered on better serving the needs of adult learners seeking non-degree career pathways (D'Amico et al., 2017, 2020; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Ozmun, 2012; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). Critical discussions about housing, food insecurity, and other basic needs insecurities must become part of the fabric of noncredit post-secondary institutions to bring the impact of basic needs insecurities on homelessness to the forefront. Participants were exposed to limited resources and scarce availability of housing support and referrals, food, access to water, adequate and clean clothing, and other basic needs like toiletries, transportation, and technology. Community colleges are challenged to address

noncredit students' basic needs, particularly homelessness, with a lack of resources available on and off campuses (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Results of this study indicate retention model program coordinators cannot provide services that meet the basic needs and insecurities of noncredit homeless students because of a lack of funding and resources for comprehensive programming. Some participants exhibited adaptableness in tackling basic needs insecurities but did not always have the appropriate knowledge or understanding of available resources. Homeless students lack the basic needs of food, water, clothing, and housing, often resulting in lower retention rates (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Prior research concluded that basic needs insecurities seldom occur in segregation from additional barriers to retention (Wood & Harris, 2022).

Research found community colleges have assumed that students' basic needs are met (Bryant, 2021; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Shankar et al., 2019). The findings of this study divulged noncredit homeless students' basic needs are not met regularly. Research results indicate basic needs insecurities must be met to decrease barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school. Meeting basic needs is critical to break down barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students.

Findings of this study indicated noncredit homeless student participants were left to navigate a complicated system to access internal and external resources to meet their basic needs. Participants revealed their vulnerabilities and risks due to homelessness by sharing lived experiences of unmet immediate and basic needs. Struggling noncredit homeless students do not easily overcome barriers to retention without external support. Furthermore, the lack of access to resources often pauses progression and impacts retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Patton-López et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015). Aforementioned research showed

social relationships provide a behavioral and learning guide for navigating educational pathways and retention and determined relationships between meeting the basic needs insecurities of homeless students in retention model programs and retention and motivation to stay in school (Cumming et al., 2022; Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Mana et al., 2022; Maslow, 1962, 1970; Russell et al., 2022). Similarly, the results of this study substantiated basic needs insecurities experienced by participants significantly increased their barriers to retention and decreased motivation to stay in school. Participants were tormented by the challenges of meeting basic needs, exacerbating the demands of survival, and staying in school. Enrollment in the Journey retention model program allowed participants to access limited basic needs resources such as light snacks, grocery cards as available, and basic toiletries when donated for distribution. Participants shared that program coordinators diligently tried to connect to more internal and external resources and referral agencies to better serve students who often hit a wall because of a lack of resources. Limited funding scourges the retention model program and its capability to meet the basic needs and insecurities of noncredit homeless students. Homeless students must predictably meet their basic needs insecurities before focusing on higher-level needs to decrease their barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1962, 1970).

Case Management Beyond the Classroom and Campus

Existing research indicated community colleges must commit to retention model programs by providing resources and services to generate meaningful outcomes and increase retention (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Case management beyond the classroom and campus will engage students and meet the basic needs of noncredit homeless students. Current retention model programs are limited, with few resources

allocated to these services (Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021). Study results showed noncredit homeless student participants enrolled in a retention model program persisted in their education pathway with determination to break down barriers to retention and increase their motivation to stay in school despite continued hardships of basic needs insecurities, challenges with safety, and experiencing social-emotional attributes of motivation. Nearly all participants felt connected to the campus and the Journey program, despite the daily challenges and struggles of survival. Prior studies synthesized student involvement to increased retention by examining the effects of the campus culture and environment on student retention (Braxton, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Stage & Hossler, 2020; Thomas et al., 2021). In this study most participants found the inclusive and welcoming approach used by the Journey program ignites a sense of belonging and fosters the development of self-confidence to move forward. Some participants struggled more than others in connecting to the campus or program, leading to some mistrust of education systems and a particular cautiousness when navigating their pathway. Understanding homelessness in the context of noncredit education is crucial. Previous studies demonstrated that retention model programs can be effective in increasing retention rates among community college students (Braxton, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Ponka et al., 2020; Soika, 2020; Stage & Hossler, 2020; Weuffen et al., 2021; White, 2018). Participants expressed the influence Journey had in addressing barriers to retention and their motivation to stay in school. Through a case management approach used by the Journey program, noncredit homeless student participants experienced some stability in balancing school and the demands of homelessness.

Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs identified the magnitude of meeting noncredit homeless students' basic needs and social-emotional development needs to progress and stay in school (Acevedo, 2018). Extant research revealed that social interaction

positively affects targeted student populations' retention (Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022). Interactions on campus, like retention model programs, foster a sense of belonging among noncredit homeless students. The findings of this research demonstrated the relevance of retention model programs in helping noncredit homeless students assimilate to campus and immerse themselves in their education. Most participants expressed a sense of belonging on campus and in the classroom but faced the harsh reality of homelessness when off campus.

Study results suggest the need for noncredit homeless student retention model programs to expand beyond the classroom and campus by extending case management to a more comprehensive support system. Participants emphasized the need for more support off campus to address the cruel and daunting struggles of homelessness. Broadened case management to deliver comprehensive wrap-around support services for noncredit homeless students will provide flexibility in programming and better serve students. Prior research showed empowering students to increase self-confidence and progress towards self-actualization by providing support services that meet the basic needs insecurities, break down barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay enrolled among noncredit homeless students is critical to retention model programming (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Bryant, 2021; Coleman et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Mana et al., 2022; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Russell et al., 2022). Study results indicated that increased support services and direct connections are needed to bridge gaps and deliver student-centered experiences that drive systemic change specific to noncredit homeless students. Case managers should design additional programming to include engagement and community building activities, financial literacy, life skills, hard and soft skills, communication, leadership development, and extended

follow-up services. Case managers can offer individualized, comprehensive, and direct support to ease connections between external agencies, ensuring that noncredit homeless students are better armed and primed for meaningful exchanges and interactions.

To fill program gaps, case managers must form meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations to amplify resources and referrals for services not offered through the retention model program. Increased agency partnerships will allow noncredit homeless students to access increased resources like housing programs, food pantries and meals, free bus passes, subsidized childcare, healthcare, no or low-cost internet and computers, resources to help pay utilities, or rental programs that assist with fees like deposits and first and last rental down payments. Intensive and intrusive case management to connect noncredit homeless students to services and support that will help them beyond the campus and classroom is central to long-term success. As evidenced in existing research, comprehensive programming provides students with direct support services and resources, adding to the effectiveness of case management (Coleman et al., 2021; Manyanga et al., 2017; Price, Valentine, & Leader, 2021). The results of this study inform retention model programs of the importance of case managers offering extended and expanded engagement, support services, and programming beyond the classroom and campus. All participants communicated the need for added and enhanced support services beyond their education.

Mental Health Services and Programs

Homelessness is a convoluted issue among noncredit homeless students, and there are numerous barriers and problems to implementing appropriate mental health programming and services. Studies have framed homelessness as influencing and impacting motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Boenigk et al., 2021; Sample

& Ferguson, 2020; Spellman, 2007; Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Findings of this research indicate that students lacking basic physiological and other needs find it difficult to focus on higher-priority needs and social-emotional well-being. Participants found it difficult to stay motivated and struggled to attend classes regularly, complete and submit assignments, and stay on task. They expressed the need to feel emotionally and physically safe in order to progress and reach their full potential.

The results of this study aligned with Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962,1970) hierarchy of needs, indicating that students want to feel valued and respected on and off campus. Homeless students may experience culture shock on campus and often experience a lack of access to form relationships. Homeless students do not participate in on-campus activities, build social networks, or engage in faculty or peer relationships (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). Recognition and acknowledgement from others help students feel confident in their ability to learn, giving them a sense of belonging, increasing their self-confidence, and motivating students to stay in school (Maslow, 1962, 1970). Moeller et al. (2020) found a relationship between a sense of belonging and well-being, including a reduction in negative mental health outcomes . As evidenced in the results of this study, noncredit homeless students want a sense of belonging and to build interpersonal relationships with faculty and peers (Bryant, 2021; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Eather et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019; Miller, 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2021; Yong, 2016).

Participants who entered their program with low self-esteem did not advance in their academic pathway until their self-confidence was boosted. Because noncredit homeless students may enter community college without a foundation in effective learning and low self-confidence, encouraging students to develop self-regulation skills and boost self-esteem facilitates higher retention rates (Zimmerman, 2002). Cultivating a culture of support and inclusive environments

by integrating mental health services and programs will help students meet the demands of courses and programs, decrease noncredit homeless students' barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay in school.

Efforts must go beyond meeting the basic needs by extending resources to social-emotional needs to provide a pathway to self-regulation and self-efficacy to maximize students' full potential through self-actualization (Cumming et al., 2022; Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Maslow, 1962, 1970; Russell et al., 2022). Mental health services and programs will help noncredit homeless students identify and understand their emotions and the root causes of those emotions to facilitate the development of self-regulation and reach self-actualization. This study found that social-emotional attributes like problem-solving, self-regulation, controlling impulses, and resiliency improved self-esteem, created pathways to balancing school and homelessness to decrease barriers to retention, and increased motivation to stay enrolled. The importance of mental health services and programs was signified in the results of this study, indicating that social-emotional attributes of motivation help improve academics, reduce negative social interactions, and create positive campus and classroom climates. The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students revealed that social-emotional attributes of motivation can help or hurt in managing everyday life.

Study results also indicate that participants' motivation to stay in school were grounded in the participants' intent to complete their education and achieve their goals. Most participants' motivation was founded in the goal of self-sufficiency and moving from classroom to career. Research suggests overall wellness, including mental health services, helps homeless students stay in school and increase retention (Gupton et al., 2018; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Price, Sedlak, & Valentine, 2021). The interpretation of the participants' experiences resulted in study

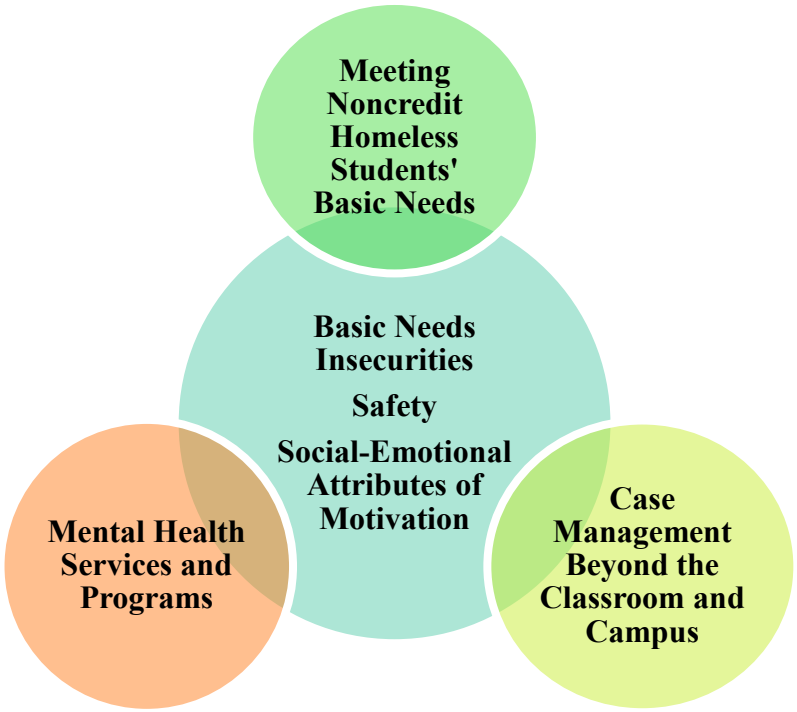
findings that add to the literature and further support the role of mental health and overall wellness in the progress and increased motivation to stay in school. The lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program demonstrated that participants were motivated at the start of their education to begin on the path of change. In the absence of any motivation, a homeless student may never begin the path to reaching any goal. This suggests that noncredit homeless students who experienced lower levels of social-emotional attributes had less motivation to stay in school and increased barriers to retention. In comparison, participants who experienced higher levels of social-emotional attributes of motivation were better equipped to regulate their emotions and manage stress, leading to decreased barriers to retention and increased motivation to stay in school. As a result of this study, a relationship between social-emotional attributes of motivation and mental health was identified.

Participants experiencing homelessness disclosed feelings of distress and significant social-emotional responses to their environments and grueling situations. Noncredit homeless students neglect their mental health and overall well-being. Study participants detailed mental health challenges and shared their struggles to keep up in school and manage homelessness. Mental health services and programs will help noncredit homeless students balance social-emotional attributes and navigate barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school. Post-secondary education can be overwhelming, and even more so for homeless students. Data analysis showed that balancing school, social, and personal responsibilities negatively affected noncredit homeless students. Study results found that noncredit homeless student retention model programs need to create long-term responses to mental health challenges and the impact of homelessness among noncredit students' social-emotional attributes of motivation to decrease barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school.

Interpretations of findings established the relationship between the phenomenon, participants, the setting, the literature, and Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs theory of motivation to generate new knowledge about noncredit homeless students. Interpretations of findings show the relationship between meeting noncredit homeless students' basic needs, case management beyond the classroom and campus, and mental health services and programs to this study's major themes of basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation. Figure 4 represents the relationship of themes to interpretations of findings.

Figure 4

Relationship of Major Themes to Interpretations of Findings



Implications for Policy or Practice

This hermeneutic phenomenological study resulted in implications for policy and practice, placing programs and services for noncredit homeless students as a priority. State and

local policy implications for funding, planning, development, and accountability resulted from this study. All participants agreed that basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation significantly impact their barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school. Implications of practice are strengthening and expanding basic needs centers, extending comprehensive services and resources, and integrating student wellness programming. Implications of policy and practice can significantly influence the relevance of policies and practices to guide noncredit institutions and program coordinators toward best practice retention model programs that meet the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students.

Implications for Policy

The State Department of Education creates policies that provide specific education codes for community colleges (Yeban, 2023). State education codes provide colleges with required mandates and allowable uses of programming and funding. The codes serve as a roadmap for two-year higher education institutions to serve homeless students better and meet standards and state-wide strategic goals. Funding and program policy for community college homeless students are part of the current state education code in the Southwestern United States. However, funding for noncredit homeless students is not earmarked and is dependent on credit colleges reallocating a percentage of awarded funding to noncredit institutions for their homeless students. Noncredit funding formulas are not part of current policy. State policy does not address identified gaps of noncredit homeless students. It is critical that noncredit community college institutions with programs serving homeless students reassess and evaluate resource allocation models and change current policy to realign funding formulas to include noncredit institutions serving homeless students. Particularly important to changing state-wide funding policies is allowing earmarked

resources to support noncredit homeless student populations. Reallocation and noncredit funding formula policies will strengthen retention model programming and services for noncredit homeless students.

State policy allows for local decision-making on how resources are allocated and how programs are implemented. Local decision-making leaves room for misinterpretation of state legislation related to funding for student support programs. Local policy and decision-making do not meet the needs of noncredit students but take a broad-based, one-size-fits-all approach to institutional needs and program models for credit colleges. The delineated and clear local policy must align noncredit homeless retention model programs and services to the needs of students. Local policy has a significant impact on the planning and development of noncredit retention model programs.

In addition, there is a need for policies specific to outcomes and accountability that measure homeless student programs and services. There are no outcomes assessment mandates that measure the effectiveness and efficiency of noncredit homeless student programs and services. Noncredit institutions and programs have little accountability regarding student outcomes data and reporting. Setting policies that require programs to set goals and objectives, inclusive of how they will be achieved and evaluated, will clearly state the intentions of programming and services. The strategies and actions detailing how retention model programs accomplish those intentions can be measured and used to improve best practices.

Study results suggest the needs of noncredit homeless students extend beyond simple basic needs and require more complex programs and services. Policy must be grounded in access to resources and improved retention model programming and services to ensure systemic change and long-term impact among noncredit homeless students.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice encompass designing and implementing best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students to meet basic needs, address barriers to retention, and integrate wellness services and programming to increase motivation to stay in school. Noncredit community college institutions must design and implement best practice retention model programs that recognize and acknowledge the lived experiences of noncredit homeless college students. Retention model programs must meet the lower-level hierarchy needs to encourage and facilitate noncredit homeless students to higher levels of motivation. This hermeneutic phenomenological research study addressed the implications of practice to meet the needs of noncredit homeless students by strengthening and expanding basic needs centers, extending comprehensive services and resources, and integrating student wellness programming.

Strengthen and Expand Basic Needs Centers. Basic needs insecurities are overpoweringly part of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. Research revealed community colleges work to provide basic needs and resources, including financial and social resources as available in support of increased retention and an educational pathway to self-sufficiency to overcome housing and basic needs insecurity through identified practices, programs, and services (Broton et al., 2020; Freitas & Leonard, 2011; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021). Nevertheless, little research has been done on the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. To better address and meet the basic needs of noncredit homeless students, community colleges must employ practices and services that increase access to food, water, clothing, and housing at a minimum. Food pantries and basic needs centers are becoming more available on campuses in the Southwest United States (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Gupton et al., 2018). However, limited hours and food distribution

limitations, along with the availability of nutritional and healthy food options, vary (Trawver & Hedwig, 2020). Most basic needs centers do not meet the needs of homeless students because of the number of hours, amounts, and types of food available, and the limited availability of clothing, toiletries, and other basic needs insecurities like access to clean water. The recommendation to strengthen basic needs services is accomplished by building out centers that provide basic needs beyond limited hours and food options. A more comprehensive model of a basic needs center would extend beyond campus hours and be available every day of the week. Basic needs centers must consider providing homeless students access to a clean restroom and shower, toiletries, refilling stations with reusable water bottles, healthier and fresh food options, toiletries, clothing, charging stations and resting areas, and small appliances to cook or warm food. Center hours must be expanded to include evenings and weekends, and basic needs center services must be expanded to meet the physiological and other needs of homeless students. Noncredit homeless students, similar to credit community college students, experience basic needs insecurities at higher levels than four-year university students (The Hope Center, 2021; Palmer, 2022). Basic needs centers are positioned to serve homeless students better and foster a sense of belonging and self-esteem by meeting basic needs. Strengthening and expanding basic needs centers will help homeless students meet basic needs, decrease barriers to retention, and increase homeless students' motivation to stay in school.

Extension of Comprehensive Services and Resources. Beyond meeting the basic needs of noncredit homeless students, extending comprehensive services and resources is recommended based on data and interpreted findings. Barriers to retention reach beyond the center of basic needs and demand that retention model programs expand support and follow-up services. Noncredit homeless students' retention is impacted by life circumstances and events,

lack of financial resources, self-esteem, and motivation (Dryden et al., 2021; S.M. Martinez et al., 2021). Intensive and intrusive case management strategies, including comprehensive direct supports, services, and resources, necessitate extended program planning and development to deliver best practice retention model programs.

Retention model programs with specialized case managers ensure students' experiences are more easily navigated, and their educational experience does not increase barriers and negative social-emotional impact, particularly for noncredit homeless students. Retention model programs must design and implement best practice comprehensive services and resources for noncredit homeless students to break down barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school by meeting their basic physiological needs and more complex psychological needs. Case managers play an indispensable role in homeless student retention and their motivation to stay in school. Case managers help students identify their academic and personal strengths and purpose. They also support noncredit homeless students during rough and hard-hitting situations. Retention model programs are situated to provide academic and personal support to foster and encourage noncredit homeless students to excel at the best of their abilities and get the most out of their education and future goals.

Case managers identify the needs of students, and it is their responsibility to connect students to internal and external resources and services to help meet unmet needs. Students who participate in comprehensive programming with case management, support services, and increased access to resources have higher retention rates than students that do not participate in retention model programs (Burke, 2019; Miller, 2017; Price, Valentine, & Leader, 2021; Soika, 2020; Thomas et al., 2021). Case managers serve as liaisons and facilitators between resources and agency referrals. Extending access to community resources and increased agency

partnerships will further improve retention model programming and services for noncredit homeless students.

Integration of Student Wellness Programming. Study findings exposed social-emotional attributes of motivation and overwhelmingly indicated the need for wellness programming and services for noncredit homeless students. It is strongly recommended that campuses integrate student wellness programming and provide access to mental and physical health services. Homeless students have basic physiological, socio-economic, and social needs impacting retention because of decreased capacity to meet time and financial needs, lack of engagement in learning, and lack of engagement in the campus community (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Neto, 2015; Skobba et al., 2018). Engaging students in practices promoting mental health and well-being is the responsibility of the entire campus community, and meeting basic healthcare needs is correspondingly critical.

Community colleges must build inclusive and welcoming environments by creating opportunities for connection with peers and the campus communities. As evidenced in research, increased levels of susceptibility among homeless students limit assimilation to campus communities, services, and programs. (Boenigk et al., 2021). Instructors and program administrators must actively listen to students, acknowledge, and accept their perceptions and differences, and adopt curricula, teaching strategies and practices, and policies that decrease stress among students. Research showed that social interaction and targeted interventions may provide critical preparation for college and activities on campus, increasing students' sense of belonging (Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017). Colleges must embrace and foster the development of a sense of belonging, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Recent

studies showed that social capital might be found in social connections, including confirmation and support from faculty, peers, and social groups (Mishra, 2020).

Students must have needs met to move from a deficiency to a growth mindset of motivation (Dryden et al., 2021; Duchatelet & Donche, 2019). Promoting a culture grounded in a growth mindset and belonging to help students understand that mistakes and failure are part of their pathway and that there are healthy ways to work through barriers and challenges creates an environment of belonging. Campuses can build an engaging culture to reduce students' anxiety by creating spaces where homeless students are welcomed and feel a part of the community, (Brookman, 1989; Yong, 2016). Inciting purpose and gratitude as an integral part of the campus and culture to connect courses and programs with students' purpose in life promotes positive experiences and self-esteem. Noncredit homeless students should have access to wellness programming to help them navigate and stay in school.

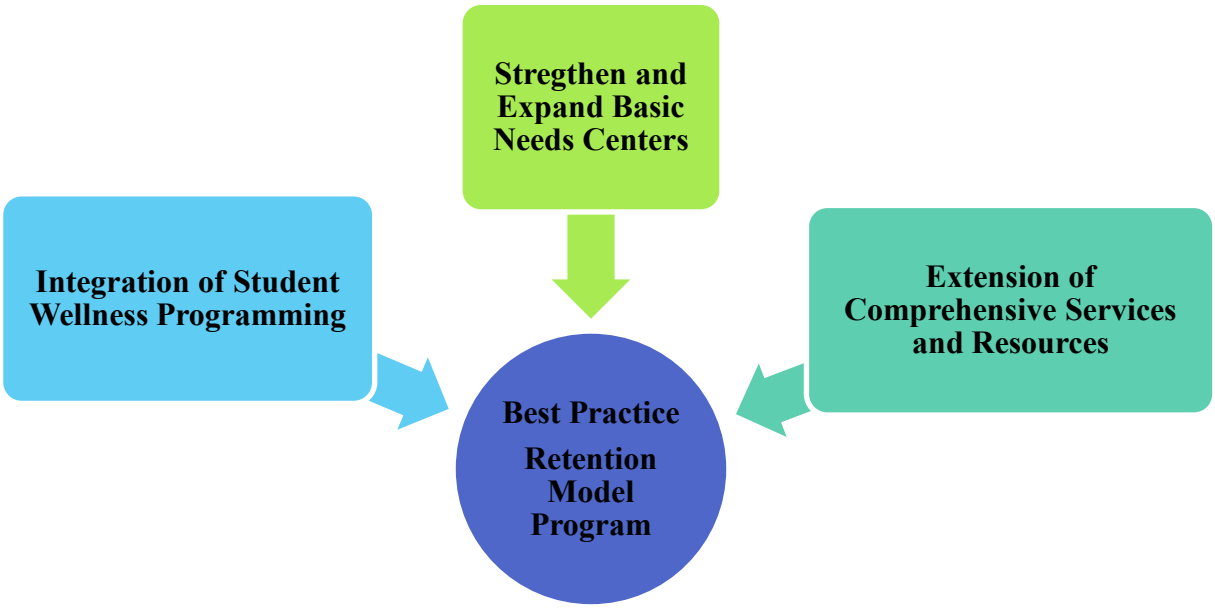
Alongside cultivating mindful spaces and practices on campuses to promote social-emotional wellness, developing health services is also critical. Noncredit community college institutions do not traditionally have access to health centers compared to credit colleges. Homelessness impacts student health (Broton, 2020; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Gupton, 2017; Trawver & Hedwig, 2020). Noncredit homeless students cannot access health care regularly, which compounds the barriers to retention they face. Noncredit students without permanent or long-term housing experience insuperable barriers to accessing healthcare, and colleges can improve the quality of care they can access by increasing their understanding both of best practices in homeless services and noncredit homeless student populations. Increased access to healthcare will support a more equitable, high-quality homeless student healthcare system.

Campus health centers offer students an assortment of services, from health education and mental health services, regular healthcare, and vaccines to treatment of mild and chronic illnesses. Homeless community college students have difficulty staying healthy (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Hallett & Freas, 2018; Skobba et al., 2018). Noncredit homeless students could take advantage of campus health centers if they were made accessible. Noncredit institutions could explore joint use agreements with credit community colleges. Forming partnerships with community college health centers can address the lack of healthcare services for noncredit health and wellness services and programs.

This study provides practical implications rooted in data and aligned with extant research for the study site and other noncredit institutions. Implied practices intend to foster and promote best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students. Noncredit institutions and retention model program coordinators need to understand the basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation among noncredit homeless students to implement best practice programs. The implications for the practice of strengthening and expanding basic needs centers, integration of student wellness programs, and extension of comprehensive services and resources are related to the interpreted data of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Figure 5 shows implied best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students.

Figure 5

Best Practice Retention Model Programs for Noncredit Homeless Students



As shown in Figure 5, there is a relationship between the implications for practice and best practice retention model programs. The presented implications of practices to strengthen and expand basic needs centers, extend comprehensive services and resources, and integrate student wellness programming reflects interpretations of study results. Determined implications of practice support developing and implementing best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

As a result of this hermeneutic phenomenological study, the interpreted lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program have empirical and theoretical implications. Study participants disclosed positive and negative perspectives about their experiences as noncredit homeless students. This section provides the empirical and theoretical implications of the research. Descriptions and details of the empirical implications of

this study align with the literature and theoretical implications based on Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs theory of motivation.

Empirical Implications

Empirically, this study adds to the current literature, enfolding the basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students. This study substantiated prior research on homeless college students and sets the foundation for future studies to expand the knowledge and address the gap in the literature about noncredit homeless students. The barriers to access the most basic needs, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation impacting retention and the motivation to stay in school were construed from the participants' lived experiences. Extant research in basic needs (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Nix et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel, 2020), homelessness among students (Broton et al., 2020; S.M. Martinez et al., 2021; Smith & Knechtel, 2020; Trawver & Hedwig, 2020; Watson et al., 2017; Wood & Harris, 2022), barriers to retention (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Burke, 2019; Coleman et al., 2021; Eather et al., 2021; Olaya et al., 2020), and motivation to stay in school (Li et al., 2020; Shi & Lin, 2021; Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017) aligned with the findings of this study. The main themes of (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation were identified in this study, extending, and adding to the literature.

Basic Needs Insecurities. Previous research found that community college students struggle to fulfill the most basic needs, and homeless students face even more barriers to meet their physiological, safety, and social needs (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Gupton et al., 2018). This study addressed and validated the barriers to retention of noncredit homeless students' experience with basic needs insecurities and the impact on their motivation to

stay in school from the framework of a hierarchy of needs. Prior studies found that varied levels of homelessness and socioeconomic barriers to accessing basic physiological needs significantly impact homeless students' retention (Baker-Smith et al., 2020; Boenigk et al., 2021; Cheatham et al., 2021; Fagioli et al., 2020; Masten et al., 2014). The results of this study suggest basic needs insecurities significantly impact noncredit homeless students' barriers to retention and social-emotional attributes of motivation, resulting in a strong influence on the decision to stop-out or stay in enrolled. Sheltered and unsheltered levels of homelessness impact community college students' retention (Broton, 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Gupton, 2017; Nix et al., 2021). All participants were housing insecure and shared experiences of barriers to retention. Existing research found homeless students lack the basic needs of food, water, clothing, and housing, resulting in lower retention rates (Boenigk et al., 2021; Broton et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Participants focused on housing as a priority. Coping with homelessness and trying to meet basic needs significantly changed how the participants balanced resources and found the motivation to stay in school. Here, the findings align with and expand upon extant research, adding to the literature on the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program and the significant impact of basic needs insecurities, particularly homelessness.

Safety. Previous research reflected similar experiences of credit college homeless students. Masten et al. (2014) revealed a significant increase in risk for barriers to retention in relation to safety for students who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness. Relationships between safety and homelessness came forward in this study's participant narratives, adding to the increasing research on homeless students in higher education. Participants revealed they could not be preoccupied with higher hierarchy needs without the

confidence that they are physically safe (Maslow, 1943, 1954). The shared stories of the participants were brought to life and added knowledge to the nearly non-existent research on noncredit homeless students' experiences in higher education. Campuses must work towards meeting physical and intellectual safety, value students' ideas, encourage participation, and build trust (Yong, 2016). Many homeless students do not feel safe off campus, and creating a safe campus environment is vital to meeting their needs and motivation to stay enrolled (Maslow, 1970).

Similarly, study participants divulged feelings of safety on campus and in the Journey program while exposing regular threats of physical and emotional safety off campus. Participants' experiences resulted in trauma. Preceding research showed that it is critical for retention model programming to uphold homeless students' safety when implementing homeless student programming (Bryant, 2021; Chang & Tsai, 2022; Miller, 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2021). By gaining an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' physical, emotional, and financial safety, program coordinators can meet students' safety needs and provide best practice strategies to increase retention.

Social-Emotional Attributes of Motivation. A major result of this study significantly impacting barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school are social-emotional attributes of motivation among noncredit homeless students. Participants conveyed in-depth experiences disclosing negative and positive social-emotional attributes of motivation. Extant research found marginalized student populations, like noncredit homeless students, often lack social capital in any form to assist them in preparing for the social and psychological impacts of postsecondary education (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022), further correlating study results. Equally, participants described the barriers of navigating enrollment and attending classes regularly and the social-

emotional impact on motivation to stay enrolled. Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs identified the importance of meeting noncredit homeless students' physiological or physical needs and social-emotional development needs to advance and stay in school (Acevedo, 2018). Likewise, participants divulged experiences of depression, fear, and loneliness. Participants' pre-enrollment and enrollment experiences impact social-emotional attributes of motivation. Social capital may be grounded in social connections, including confirmation and support from social groups (Mishra, 2020), further connecting study results, and expanding the current literature. Similarly, participants shared tumultuous family dynamics and difficulties building social networks and relationships. Prior research focused on housing-insecure students noted negative family and peer relationships, lack of access to education resources, and barriers to financial resources and support (Boenigk et al., 2021; Gupton, 2017; Sample & Ferguson, 2020; Spellman, 2007; Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022) synthesizing the results of this study.

Empirical implications link this research of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program to existing literature related to homeless community college students and the social-emotional attributes of motivation they experience (Aronson & Fleming, 2021; Dominguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022; Duran & Nunez, 2021; Edgar et al., 2019; Fong et al., 2018; Maslow, 1962, 1970; Sample & Ferguson, 2020). Noncredit homeless students experienced depression, anxiety, isolation, fear, and frustration but also confidence, determination, and resiliency. Identifying the social-emotional attributes of noncredit homeless students is principal to meeting their needs in retention model programs.

Understanding noncredit homeless students' experiences revealed perceptions and provided an in-depth understanding of basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school. This study deters from a linear progression of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and exposes

the interdependency of each level of need. Participants experienced needs beyond the immediacy of housing, food, and water, uncovering the social-emotional attributes of motivation early in the hierarchy. This extends the hierarchy of needs theory of motivation and lends to future research on the physiological and psychological hierarchy of needs. Implications of this study's results will influence and drive the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students, supporting prior research and extending the literature (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2019; Davaasambuu & Zagari, 2021). Study findings inform how retention model program coordinators must create programs to increase retention of noncredit homeless students.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study have theoretical implications for higher education researchers, the experiences of noncredit homeless students, and retention model programs. Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs, a theory of human motivation, directed this study in its theoretical framework. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provided an inclusive approach to students' needs regarding retention by motivation based on physical, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Brookman, 1989). Data analysis resulted in emerging themes that grounded the understanding of participants' experiences in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was expanded by giving voice to a silenced and susceptible noncredit homeless student population. Examining noncredit homeless students' lived experiences through a theoretical framework of needs provides program coordinators with informed data to design and implement best practice retention model programs, expanding the theoretical implications of this study. The theoretical framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs addressed the significance of meeting students' basic needs before moving to complex higher-level needs to increase

retention or motivation to stay enrolled. All participants conveyed the importance of meeting basic needs before focusing on higher-level priorities, like their motivation to stay in school.

Maslow (1943, 1954) theorized four foundational levels of demand from a student deficit approach. The hierarchy of needs must be met at each level before higher motivation for students is reached. Once students' basic needs, safety, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization have been met, motivation is heightened by meeting goals and increased retention. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a structure for student motivation (Shi & Lin, 2021). Without the lowest levels of the hierarchy, students cannot progress to the next level (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Each level allows students the ability and motivation to reach their full potential (Maslow, 1962, 1970). Participants shared pauses and progression in their educational pathways due to homelessness. Maslow's framework supported prior research that correlated meeting the basic needs of homeless students to retention and motivation to stay in school (Li et al., 2020; Shi & Lin, 2021; Silver Wolf (Adelv unegv Waya) et al., 2017). For this study, the theory supported the phenomenon and an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program lived experience. For many participants, basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school can be addressed through meeting noncredit homeless students' basic needs, experiencing case management beyond the classroom and campus, and mental health services and programs as identified in the interpreted findings. The findings in this study support the theory that students must meet lower priority needs to break down barriers to retention and be motivated to stay in school.

All participants of this study communicated experiences of feeling like their needs were not met regularly, but the Journey program helped with direct support when resources were available. Participants emphasized that help was limited and only occurred at irregular intervals.

In prior research, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provided an integrated approach to students' needs regarding retention and motivation based on physical, safety, social belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Brookman, 1989). The results of this study contribute to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of motivation through the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students.

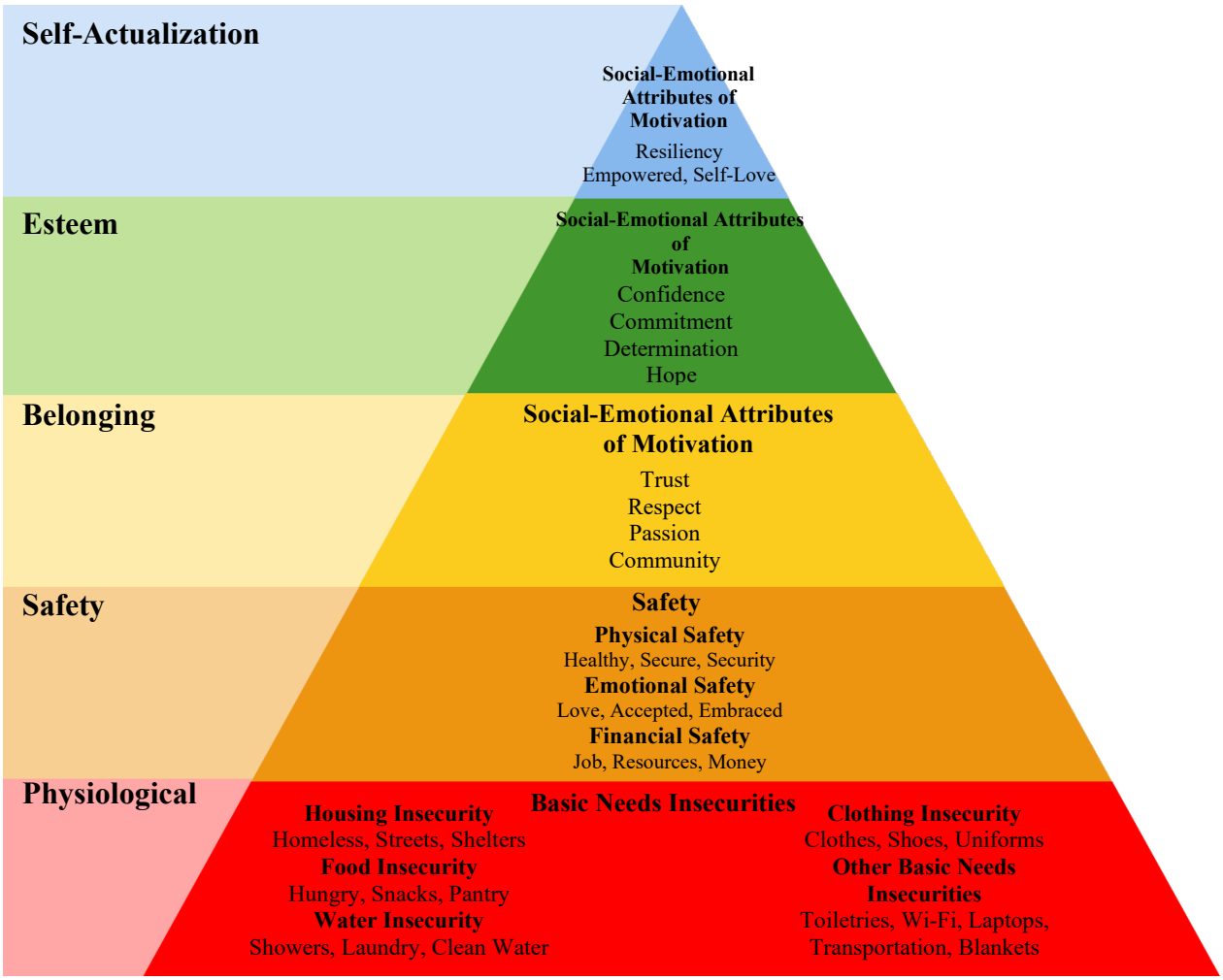
Social-emotional attributes of motivation illuminated participants' experiences. The theoretical framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs was appropriate for this study. Nevertheless, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Garmezy's (1991) work in resiliency theory can further expand the theoretical framework by formulating greater context in future research and determining more relationships between social-emotional attributes of motivation and noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. Bandura's social learning theory underscores the individual and their perception of personal capabilities, and Garmezy's (1991) resiliency theory lends to examining the strengths of marginalized student populations like noncredit homeless students, facing barriers and life stressors, but most critically, how they endure their education.

Collaboratively, the three theoretical frameworks may provide a background for future studies to influence and impact how community colleges design and implement best practice retention model programs and better understand the phenomenon of the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students. Nonetheless, this study's results bring the voices of noncredit homeless students forward by aligning Maslow's hierarchy of needs with the interpretations of the phenomenon. Research findings showed a significant relationship between the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and emergent themes and sub-themes. Figure 6 shows the

relationship between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and study results by major themes and sub-themes.

Figure 6

Relationship of Hierarchy of Needs and Study Results by Major Themes and Sub-Themes



Note: Adapted from *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs,* by S. McLeod, 2018 (https://www.simplypsychology.org/simplypsychology.org-Maslows-Hierarchy-of-Needs.pdf).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study explored and examined the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The qualitative research approach directed data collection methods to capture rich, in-depth participant experiences through open-ended individual

interviews, focus group questions, and anecdotal analysis of participant writings. The following section details the limitations and delimitations of this hermeneutic phenomenological research study.

Limitations

Limitations are a research study's methodology or design factors that may impact or influence the generalizability and interpretation of findings. The limitations of this hermeneutic phenomenological study include the lack of self-identification of participants at the study site, participants' external demands of schedules, involvement in social service and probation or parole programs, and shelter rules and requirements. My brief period for recruitment, the need to complete the research, and access to limited financial resources to support the study are limitations of this study. Additionally, the potential for narrowed objectivity by the participants and me is a limitation.

Participants were noncredit homeless students. Homeless students often remain camouflaged and do not self-identify, which limits recruitment of participants. Noncredit homeless students are struggling to balance school, external obligations, and surviving homelessness. Limitations with the participants' availability to complete the individual interview and participate in one of the two focus groups were part of the study. Participants staying in transitional, short, and long-term housing or shelter must adhere to the check-in and out-time rules. Often, shelters require residents to check out by 8 am and check in by 6 pm. Homeless parents have limited childcare and are bound to tighter regulations and strict times for drop off and pick up of the children. Participants meeting parole requirements and enrolled in recovery and social programs like rehabilitation must commit to program hours before obligating time to school, extracurriculars, and other activities like interviews and focus groups. Participants may

experience additional barriers to participation, like transportation and access to technology. These limitations influenced and impacted scheduling to meet the needs of noncredit homeless students and the external demands.

The availability of financial resources to support my research was a limitation of this study. Participation was voluntary. I submitted in-kind requests to the site for the use of space and computer software. Requests to use space at the site and Microsoft Office and recording software were approved, saving me additional costs. I scheduled interviews and focus groups outside of assigned administrative duties for the institution to avoid conflicts of interest.

As part of this study, it is critical to acknowledge the potential limitation of objectivity by participants and me as the researcher. Participants were noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program, Journey. Participants may have felt the need to protect the program by only speaking positively about Journey and its services, pushing forward a false narrative. To reduce the potential of an artificial experience, I engaged in intentional open-ended questions and follow-up questions to dive deeper into the participants' responses. Acknowledging my familiarity with noncredit education, the site, and the noncredit homeless student retention model program, Journey, demanded engaging in bracketing and evoking reduction to set aside non-essential issues to secure open, unbiased interpretations. Assumptions and biases were put aside to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

Delimitations

Delimitations are elements of the study excluded from the research. Delimitations of this hermeneutic phenomenological study include the retention model program site at a noncredit institution as part of a community college system. This provided a purposive/non-random sample of 18 participants. Because the recruitment period was short, the site location allowed

recruitment to move forward efficiently and effectively. The confidentiality of the research was a delimitation of this study with informed consent, including the availability of mental health services and follow-up with case managers as needed and applicable for each participant. Individual interviews and focus groups placed participants in a position to discuss experiences of trauma. Access to mental health services and case managers provided an on-demand support system for participants. This study offers valuable insights into the complexity and richness of experiences of noncredit homeless students.

Recommendations for Future Research

This hermeneutic phenomenological study contributes to the literature by examining the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. It sought to gain an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school. Findings have provided a profound and extensive understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to inform, design, and implement best practice retention model programs to meet their basic needs, break down barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay enrolled. Future research may build upon these findings by further examining the impact of basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation to stay in school on retention and extend to the impact on successful completion.

All participants of this study experienced basic needs insecurities. Further research may expand the extended impact of basic needs insecurities beyond physiological needs like safety, transportation, childcare, and access to technology. Access to expanded resources and services, including computers and connectivity among noncredit homeless students, is essential to decreasing barriers to retention. Future research to extend the knowledge and address gaps in the

literature on the basic needs and insecurities among noncredit homeless students may help guide improved and increased quality retention model programs and services.

To address the impact of social-emotional needs among noncredit homeless students uncovered in this study, further research regarding social, emotional, and health wellness may extend the knowledge and capacity of retention model programs to allow for the implementation of high-impact mental health services and best practices. Mental health and wellness were identified in this study as a barrier to retention and a factor of motivation to stay enrolled in school. Future research may extend the literature and bring forward a more in-depth understanding of the importance and impact of mental health and wellness on barriers to retention and homeless students' motivation to stay in school. Future research to correlate social-emotional attributes of noncredit homeless students to completion is recommended. This study provides the foundation for future research to broaden knowledge of the impacts of successful completion among noncredit homeless students.

In addition, there is an opportunity for further research at the intersection of noncredit homeless students not enrolled in a retention model program and self-identification on college campuses. Future research can expand on themes identified and interpreted in this study that resulted in the framing of meeting noncredit homeless students' basic needs insecurities, case management beyond the classroom and campus, and mental health services and programs. Future research can continue to add to the understanding of noncredit homeless students to improve further and change the type of support and best practices that will meet their basic needs, address barriers to retention, and foster motivation to stay in school. Extending research focused on retention model program coordinators and their experiences and impact on the implementation and outcomes of programming may add to the literature and knowledge. This future research

may improve retention model programs for noncredit homeless students by providing an understanding of case management practices from the programs' perspectives and experiences.

Recommendations for future research extend to employing different or a collaboration of other theoretical frameworks like Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to dive deeper into noncredit students' self-efficacy and learning or Garmezy's (1991) resiliency theory to examine noncredit homeless student social-emotional attributes from a growth mindset. Future research may also be extended by utilizing Tinto's (1975) theoretical framework to emphasize the impact of educational and social systems to motivate noncredit homeless students to stay enrolled and increase retention rates or Astin's (1984) student involvement theory to focus on opportunities for student engagement to foster student involvement.

Lastly, the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students may be further examined to extend and expand the description and interpretation of this phenomenon by investigating other metrics like quantitative systems of measurement. Quantitative metrics may be applied to research to measure the correlation between retention and motivation of noncredit homeless students to the basic needs, barriers to retention, and factors of motivation to stay in school. Surveys measuring community college students' basic needs insecurity like food, housing, homelessness, and additional student needs and experiences like mental health, family, technology, and transportation may be surveyed to provide the correlation between the use of retention model programs and barriers to retention and motivation to stay in school among noncredit homeless students (The Hope Center, 2021).

Conclusion

This hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted to describe and interpret the lived experiences of 18 noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program.

Volunteer sampling as a purposive/non-random sample was used with set criteria for participants to be noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program and enrolled in a noncredit academic program for two months consecutively or a total of at least four months nonconsecutively. The research was grounded in Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962, 1970) hierarchy of needs framework to understand the unique experiences of noncredit homeless students and their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay in school. Data collection methods of individual interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal writings captured participants' lived experiences. Data analysis resulted in three major themes, (a) basic needs insecurities, (b) safety, and (c) social-emotional attributes of motivation, as well as identified sub-themes. These major themes and sub-themes shaped the implications of findings to support the design and implementation of best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students that meet their basic needs, address barriers to retention, and foster motivation to stay in school.

The focus of retention model programs for noncredit homeless students must shift to a solid foundation of physiological health, safety, sense of belonging, and esteem, all of which need to be met prior to self-actualization when students visualize and engage in their full potential and success. If noncredit homeless students are unable to meet lower to higher-level needs, as proposed by Maslow, their ability to stay in school is compromised. The essence of the shared lived experiences is that retention model programs must engage in program planning and development that delivers direct comprehensive support services and resources to address immediate needs of basic needs insecurities, safety, and social-emotional attributes of motivation to decrease barriers to retention and increase motivation to stay in school. This study is a conduit to predict the future of best practice retention model programs for noncredit homeless students in postsecondary education.

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Appendix A

Site Approval

[redacted]

April 19, 2023

Dear Ms. Maureen C. Rubalcaba,

Your request to conduct research titled ***Understanding Their Journeys: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study on The Lived Experiences of Noncredit Homeless Students Enrolled in a Retention Model Program*** at [redacted] and its retention model program is approved with the following conditions:

1. The researcher must comply with all conditions set forth in District Board Policy 0400, Research Involving District Students
2. All data and records will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose set forth in your study.
3. [redacted], its programs, employees, and associated sites will only be identified with written consent.
4. A copy of your final dissertation will be provided to the [redacted]

As the approved site, I understand that Ms. Rubalcaba's study at Liberty University is empirical research and will culminate in designing and implementing a best practice retention model program to increase retention for noncredit homeless students.

[redacted]

Appendix B

Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 31, 2023

Maureen Rubalcaba
Veronica Sims

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1596 Understanding Their Journeys: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study on The Lived Experiences of Noncredit Homeless Students

Dear Maureen Rubalcaba, Veronica Sims,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) 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(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Subject line: Opportunity to Participate in a Research Study

Hi (STUDENT'S NAME)

My name is Maureen C. Rubalcaba. I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University. I am conducting a study as part of the requirement for a doctoral degree to better understand the needs of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The purpose of my research is to gain a deeper understanding of noncredit homeless students' needs and motivation to stay enrolled in school.

As a [redacted] student, you are eligible for this study if you are 18 years or older and have been enrolled for at least two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively. Participants will be scheduled for an audio- and video-recorded individual interview and an audio- and video-recorded focus group and agree to share their [redacted] intake forms. The total time to participate in this study is three to four hours.

This study is voluntary and there are no known risks involved in this study. The study is confidential, and your personal information will never be shared. Participant identities will not be disclosed. Participants will be provided with the required consent document to review and sign at our initial meeting or you may access the form now here. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Participants must sign and return the consent form to me no later than the scheduled individual interview.

Please reach out to me at [redacted] or mrubalcaba@liberty.edu if you are interested in participating or learning more about this study. Ready to participate? Submit your interest form here by June 7, 2023.

This is an opportunity to share your story, to have a voice, and build stronger and better programs and services to help noncredit homeless students. I look forward to hearing your story!

Best,
Maureen C. Rubalcaba
Liberty University

Appendix D

Follow-up Recruitment Email

Dear ([redacted] student),

As a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand the needs of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program. The purpose of my research is to gain a deeper understanding of noncredit homeless students' needs and motivation to stay enrolled in school. Last week I sent an email and text message inviting you to participate in this study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to submit an interest form here if you want more information or are ready to participate. The deadline to submit your interest form is June 7, 2023.

Participants must be enrolled in [redacted], 18 years of age or older, and have been enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively. Participants will be asked to take part in an audio- and video-recorded (if online) individual interview and an audio- and video-recorded (if online) focus group and agree to share their [redacted] intake forms.

It should take three to four hours to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed. Personal information will be kept confidential.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it before or at the scheduled individual interview at [redacted] program office. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please find the required consent document here.

I hope to hear from you soon! Remember to submit your interest form here by June 7, 2023.

Sincerely,
Maureen C. Rubalcaba

Appendix E

Telephone Script

Hello, my name is Maureen Rubalcaba. I am calling as a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University about a research study I am conducting. Am I speaking to ([redacted] *student name).*

If "no," I will wait for the person to pick up or ask for a time to call back. I will only share the research topic with the potential participant.

If "yes:" Do you have time to talk? I expect this phone call will take about 5 minutes. I will arrange to call at another time, if necessary.

I am conducting research about noncredit homeless students ***UNDERSTANDING THEIR JOURNEY: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NONCREDIT HOMELESS STUDENTS.*** The purpose of this research study is to gain a deeper understanding of noncredit homeless students' needs and motivation to stay enrolled in school.

I want to invite you to participate in my study. As a student enrolled in [redacted], you are eligible to participate if you are 18 years old or older and have been enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively. Participants will be scheduled for an audio- and video- recorded, if online, individual interview and an audio- and video-recorded, if online, focus group, and agree to share their [redacted] intake forms. The total expected participation time is three to four hours.

If you want to participate, I will schedule a time to meet with you to review the study, go over the informed consent form and confidentiality statement, and schedule an individual interview and focus group dates and times. The study is confidential, and your personal information will never be shared. Participant identities will not be disclosed. The study is voluntary and has no known risks. Participants will be provided with the informed consent form at our initial meeting, or I can email or mail it to you. You may also pick it up at the [redacted] office.

Schedule meetings, send consent document, schedule interview, and focus group if the student is ready. Answer the interest form questions.

A consent document will be sent to you via Google Docs. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign and return the consent form to me prior to the interview.

If the student is unsure: If you want to think about participating or have more questions about the study, you can call me at [redacted] or email me at mrubalcaba@liberty.edu. If you are interested in participating, I can schedule an information meeting now. To review the informed consent form prior to meeting, I can send the information by email, mail, or you may pick-up the consent form at the [redacted].

Appendix F

Recruitment Text

[redacted] students and enrolled in a noncredit academic program for two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively and 18 and older, share your story and help noncredit homeless students' voices be heard. Contact Maureen Rubalcaba, doctoral student at the School of Education at Liberty University at [redacted] or mrubalcaba@liberty.edu to learn more about volunteering to participate in a study about your experiences to improve programs and services for homeless students. You must agree to participate in an audio- and video-recorded individual interview and an audio- and video-recorded focus group and share your [redacted] intake form. Ready to participate? Submit an interest form at https://forms.office.com/r/u9AaGdJKjj. A consent document will be sent to you via Google Docs.

Appendix G

Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

UNDERSTANDING THEIR JOURNEY: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NONCREDIT HOMELESS STUDENTS

Are you enrolled in [redacted] Program?
Are you 18 years or older?
Have you been enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively?
Or a total of four months nonconsecutively?

If you answered yes, you are eligible to participate in a research study to gain a deeper understanding of noncredit homeless students' needs and motivation to stay enrolled in school.

Participants will be asked to participate in an audio- and video-recorded (if online) individual interview and an audio- and video-recorded (if online) focus group and agree to share their [redacted] intake forms.

Benefits include the opportunity for participants to tell their stories and bring a voice forward for noncredit homeless students by sharing life experiences.

Ready to participate? Sign-up here and we will contact you to schedule a time to meet! A consent document is required to be signed and must be submitted at the time of the scheduled individual interview. Please find the consent document here.

If you want to learn more about participating in this new study at [redacted] and its [redacted] program, please contact Maureen C. Rubalcaba at [redacted] or mrubalcaba@liberty.edu.

Maureen C Rubalcaba, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Maureen at [redacted] or at mrubalacba@liberty.edu for more information.

Appendix H

Informed Consent Form

Title of the Project: Understanding Their Journeys: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of The Lived Experiences of Noncredit Homeless Students Enrolled in a Retention Model Program.
Principal Investigator: Maureen C. Rubalcaba, MA Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Doctoral Student at Liberty University's School of Education

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 or older and enrolled in [redacted] retention model program [redacted]. You must have been enrolled for at least two months consecutively or four months nonconsecutively. Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program to identify their basic needs, barriers to retention, and motivation to stay enrolled.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Participate in one approximately 60-90 minute-long, audio and video-recorded, if online, interview. You will select an in-person interview or a Zoom online interview. Interviews will be transcribed.
2. Participate in one focus group, approximately 60-90 minutes, audio and video-recorded, if online, with 6-8 participants. You may select from the in-person focus group or the Zoom online focus group. Focus groups will be transcribed.
3. Agree for the researcher to review and conduct an analysis of your [redacted] intake forms. The researcher will request forms from the retention program coordinator.
4. Review the interview and focus group transcripts for accuracy.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Benefits to higher education include sharing your voice and gaining an in-depth understanding of noncredit homeless students' lived experiences to inform and implement best practice retention model programs that meet the basic needs, break down barriers to retention, and increase motivation to stay enrolled.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The risks involved in this study include the possibility of psychological stress from being asked to recall and discuss prior trauma. To reduce risk, I will monitor participants, discontinue the interview if needed, and provide direct referrals to no-cost counseling services provided at the site and available for all participants. All services remain confidential and are not part of the study.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept confidential and private. Participants' names are collected, but identifying information is not disclosed. Published reports 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. Data from you may be shared in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- In-person interviews will be conducted in a private space or where others will not easily overhear the conversation at the study site and recorded. Online interviews in Zoom will be conducted with the researcher in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation and record it.
- Participant data will be stored on a password-locked computer file, and hard-copy documents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet. The data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be permanently deleted, and all physical records will be shredded.
- Interviews and focus group sessions will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer file for three years and then permanently erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with people outside the group. The researcher and presentation and reporting processes will maintain confidentiality.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with [redacted] Program, and Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide 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.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Maureen C. Rubalcaba, and you may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at mrubalcaba@liberty.edu or [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Veronica Sims, at vsims@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

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, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that research on human subjects research will be conducted ethically as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered, and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

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- and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

☐ I electronically signed this form and confirm my permission and signature.

Appendix I

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. What has been your experience as a homeless student enrolled at ACE? CRQ
2. What has your experience been as a homeless student enrolled in Journey? CRQ
3. Tell me about a specific event or situation you experienced that affected you as a homeless student. CRQ
4. How did this event or situation affect continuing to attend classes in your program? SQ3
5. What helped or could have helped you with this event or situation? SQ1; SQ2
6. In what ways has the Journey program helped you or provided services or resources to help? Moreover, what support or services could Journey not help you with? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
7. Are you ever without basic needs such as food, water, clothing, and shelter? SQ1
8. If yes, tell me about your experiences and what you need to have your basic needs met. SQ1
9. Do you feel welcome on campus? SQ1; SQ2
10. Do you feel welcome in the Journey program? SQ1; SQ2
11. Do you feel safe on campus? Why or why not? SQ1: SQ2
12. Do you feel safe off campus? Why or why not? SQ1: SQ2
13. Students may need help enrolling, accessing, or completing specific requirements at ACE. Barriers to successful enrollment and staying enrolled may include completing the application, picking your classes, signing up for an orientation, registering, finding your campus and class, and obtaining required class or program textbooks, materials, or technology. What barriers to enrolling and staying enrolled at ACE did you experience? SQ2; SQ3

14. Did you experience any other barriers to enrolling at CCE? SQ2
15. What barriers to enrolling in Journey did you experience? SQ2
16. Did you experience any other barriers to enrolling in Journey? SQ2
17. What type of student support and services will help you more as a homeless student? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
18. What motivates you to stay in school? SQ3
19. Describe any barriers to regularly attending class and staying in school. Do you attend every class? Why or why not? SQ3
20. What types of support services do you need to stay enrolled in your classes? SQ3
21. What could ACE do to support homeless students more? CRQ
22. What could Journey do to support homeless students more? CRQ
23. How can Journey help you stay enrolled and reach your educational goals at ACE? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
24. Is there anything else you want to share about your experience as a homeless student, how Journey can meet your needs, and how you can be supported to stay enrolled and complete classes? CRQ, SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
25. Are there any other questions I should ask that I did not, or do you have any questions? CRQ

Appendix J

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. Please tell me how long you have been enrolled at ACE. CRQ
2. Please tell me how long you have been enrolled in the Journey program. CRQ
3. What has your experience been as a Journey student? CRQ
4. How did you learn about the Journey program? CRQ
5. Think back to your Journey enrollment process; what worked and did not work for you? CQR
6. Tell me about your first meeting with Journey staff; what were our first impressions? CQR
7. What did you think about the Journey program when you enrolled? CRQ
8. Tell me about a positive experience with the Journey program. CRQ
9. Tell me about your negative or not-so-good experience with the Journey program. CRQ
10. What types of services and support have Journey provided you? SQ2
11. Are these the types of services you need? Why or why not? SQ1
12. What types of services and supports should Journey provide students? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
13. How can Journey improve? What can Journey do better? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
14. What resources and services does Journey provide to help you stay in school? SQ3
15. What resources and services should Journey provide you to stay enrolled in school? SQ3
16. What is Journey doing right, and how? SQ1; SQ2
17. Is there anything else you want us to know or any other questions we should ask? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

Appendix K

Table 3

Anecdotal Guided Open-Ended Questions

1. What three words would you use to describe being homeless? CRQ
2. What is your experience as a homeless student? CRQ
3. Describe your current housing situation. CRQ
4. Why do you want to participate in the Journey program? CRQ
5. What is your educational goal? What do you need to meet your educational goal? SQ1
6. What is your career goal? What do you need to meet your career goal? SQ1
7. Describe the resources and services you need to reach your academic and career goals. SQ1; SQ2; SQ3
8. How can Journey help you stay enrolled and finish your program at ACE? SQ2; SQ3

Appendix L

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

Protocol for Individual Interviews and Focus Groups

1. Participants must have met the criteria of being at least 18 years old, enrolled in a retention model program at the site, and enrolled in a noncredit academic program for at least two months consecutively or a total of four months nonconsecutively.
2. Participants meeting the criteria and interested in participating were contacted by phone, email, or text to confirm participation.
3. Upon confirmation of participation, consent forms were provided to and reviewed with each participant for signature. Participants were provided with a copy of the signed consent form.
4. Individual interviews and focus groups were scheduled with participants at the time of consent. Interviews and focus groups were scheduled in person at the site in a confidential office. Online Zoom accommodations were made available at the participant's request.
5. Consent forms were scanned and added to the secure password-protected electronic file, and hard copies were filed in a locked file drawer in the researcher's office.
6. Demographic information was collected via an MS365-protected electronic form at https://forms.office.com/r/i26wGVt9CC
7. Individual interviews and focus group appointment reminders were sent via text and email.
8. Individual interviews and focus groups consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions.
9. A scripted introduction was used to open the individual interview:

   Good afternoon (or morning). My name is Maureen. I am researching the experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program [redacted], at [redacted]. And today, I would like to include you in answering some questions about your

experiences as a noncredit homeless student. Today's interview will be recorded and transcribed. Your identity is kept confidential. Is that okay?

10. A script was used to open the focus groups:

    Hi, everyone. I am so happy to have you all here with me today. I am Maureen. I am researching the experiences of noncredit homeless students enrolled in a retention model program [redacted], at [redacted]. Today, we are having a focus group to learn more about your experiences as a noncredit homeless student enrolled in a retention model program. Is that okay? Please be respectful of others and allow each other to respond freely and free of judgment. Please keep everything said confidential and do not share any experiences from today's focus group. This focus group will be recorded and transcribed. All identities will remain confidential. At any time, if you no longer want to participate, you may leave. If at any time you have any questions for me or need me to clarify any questions, please let me know. Does this sound acceptable? Are we all in agreement?

11. Follow-up interviews and focus group questions were asked to expand on responses or request clarification from participants as applicable.

12. A scripted closing was used to close the interview:

    I just wanted to thank you (participant's name) for sharing your experiences and meeting with me today. This ends our interview. I will be sending you a copy of the transcripts, which is the written format of this interview. Please read the transcript and let me know if there are any inaccuracies in the transcription. I want to make sure your words are exact, and there are no errors. I will send the transcript to you by next week,

and if you could send me any corrections to me by the week of (day) of July, that would be great. Sound good?

13. A scripted closing was used to close the focus groups:

    I just want to thank you all for sharing your experiences and meeting with me today. This ends our focus group. I will be sending you a copy of your transcript from the focus group, which is the written format for the questions and your responses. Please read the transcript and let me know if there are any inaccuracies that need to be corrected. I want to make sure your words are exact, and there are no errors. I will send the transcript to you by next week, and if you could send me any corrections to me by the week of (day) of July that would be great. Sound good to everyone?

Appendix M

Audit Trail

May 31, 2023	Institutional Review Board approval
June 1, 2023	Flyers and recruitment sent to Journey students and posted in program office
June 2, 2023	Recruitment text sent to Journey students
June 5, 2023	Called Journey students that responded to emails or texts and scheduled consent meeting
June 6, 2023	Completed eight consent meetings, scheduled individual interview, and focus group for each participant, and requested anecdotal writing for confirmed participants from Journey program
June 7, 2023	Called Journey students that responded to emails or texts and scheduled consent meetings
June 8, 2023	Completed ten consent meetings, scheduled individual interview, and focus group for each participant, and requested anecdotal writing for confirmed participants from Journey program
June 8, 2023	Sent demographic form https://forms.office.com/r/i26wGVt9CC
June 9, 2023	Received anecdotal writings for 18 participants from Journey program
June 12, 2023	Received all participant demographic forms
June 12, 2023	Individual interview with participant April
June 12, 2023	Individual interview with participant Martha
June 12, 2023	Individual interview with participant Lucy
June 13, 2023	Individual interview with participant Ricardo
June 13, 2023	Individual interview with participant Martina
June 13, 2023	Individual interview with participant Bill
June 14, 2023	Individual interview with participant Hank
June 14, 2023	Individual interview with participant Ranesha
June 14, 2023	Individual interview with participant Mary
June 15, 2023	Individual interview with participant John
June 15, 2023	Individual interview with participant Leticia
June 15, 2023	Individual interview with participant Yvonne
June 16, 2023	Individual interview with participant Esperanza
June 16, 2023	Individual interview with participant Heidi
June 16, 2023	Individual interview with participant Brian
June 16, 2023	Individual interview with participant Carolina
June 20, 2023	Individual interview with participant Tracy
June 20, 2023	Individual interview with participant Sam
June 27, 2023	Focus group with eight participants
June 28, 2023	Focus group with ten participants.
July 16, 2023	Transcripts reviewed by participants, edited as applicable
July – September, 2023	Data analysis - coding, major themes, sub-themes
October – March, 2024	Completed Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 and final edits