

**A Study Done on if Homeschooling Prepares Students with the Social, Emotional, and
Academic Knowledge Needed to Enter a Public-School Setting**

By: Anna Backus

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of

Education

School of Social Sciences and Education

Milligan University, Tennessee

Fall 2022

Major Professor:

Dr. Mark Dula

Table of Contents

Abstract -----	3
Milligan IRB Exemption -----	4
Chapter 1- Introduction -----	5
Problem Statement -----	6
Purpose Statement-----	7-
Significance-----	8-
Limitations-----	8-
Definitions-----	9-
Overview-----	9-
Chapter 2 -----	9
Chapter 3 -----	22
Chapter 4 -----	26
Chapter 5 -----	32
References -----	36

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine if homeschooling prepares students with the tools they need to enter a public-school setting. The participants of this study consisted of 8 college students from Milligan University in Johnson City, TN. Data was collected through the use of in person interviews. Participants will be asked a series of questions that will be recorded for transcription and data analysis later. Each participant will be kept confidential in the final analysis and will be given the chance to audit any of their information or answers after they are on a transcript. The results indicated that homeschool students, who enter into a public-school setting, can be prepared socially, emotionally and academically.

Keywords: Homeschool, Public-Education, Higher-Education, Emotional, Social, Academic

Institutional Review Board Exemption



Date: May 5, 2022

Principal Investigator: **Anna Backus**, Graduate Student, Milligan University
From: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Milligan University
Project: *Does homeschooling prepare students with the social, emotional, and academic knowledge needed to enter a public school setting?*
IRB Tracking Number: **2022-20**
IRB Approval Number: **Exe2205051611**
Subject: **Declaration of Exemption**

The Milligan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your research application and has determined that your proposed research is exempt from further review based on federal guidelines provided in 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2)(i) in that you have demonstrated your research to be:

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) and The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot be readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject.

You are expected to conduct your research in accordance with the research plan that was presented for review. Substantive modifications to your research plan will require another formalized review of your plan by our office. Please remember that while we are not specifically reviewing your informed consent, all researchers should provide potential participants with an informed consent statement that includes all pertinent information.

Best wishes as you conduct your research! Please feel free to contact the IRB office by email should you have any questions; IRB@milligan.edu

On behalf of the IRB Committee,

Trini Rangel, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Milligan University



Chapter 1

Introduction

America provides the freedom to parents and guardians to choose how their child will be educated (Turner, Smith, Craddock, 2020). There is a plethora of choices ranging from public, private, charter, or even homeschooling. Most of the American population have to work in order to provide for their families. For this reason, the majority of children attend private or public school. According to an article done by Education Weekly, “There are over 49.9 million students attending public school in the U.S.” (Kositsky, para 13). Parents do not have enough time or capability financially to stay home with their kids to homeschool. However, research done in 2020 by Roesminingsih, COVID-19 has increased the number of children homeschooled due to school closures, outbreaks, and parents working remotely. Based on a study from Education Weekly, “5.4 percent of all students in the U.S. were home-schooled in 2021” (Kositsky, para 15). According to a study conducted in 2022, “Homeschooling and Public Schools have their pros and cons” (Schillinger, Ray, Knapp, and Newman). Even though homeschooling, relies on delivered instruction, it does not always ensure a child is being taught by a licensed professional. Class sizes in a public school depend on the enrollment for the year, where homeschooling is based on the kids in your family. All students, whether in the school system or homeschooled, are required to take standardized tests each year to show their progress. Homeschool parents then turn their scores into the state to prove the legitimacy of their schooling. Even so, homeschooling is still a controversial topic.

Parents may choose to homeschool their children for a variety of reasons. They may believe that homeschooling their children will protect them from violence, religious influence, racial tensions, and not being academically challenged. Some parents worry their child’s

academic needs won't be met in the school setting with the demands other students require from their teachers. According to a survey conducted in Kentucky (1998), "Parents showed that they chose homeschooling because of religion, social factors, and a desire for high achievement." (Grubb, pg. 3). However, some believe it does not prepare students for the real world. In *The Harms of Homeschooling* by Robin West, she discusses how homeschooling does not provide students the opportunity to experience different teachers, different groups of friends, or even sports teams and clubs that ultimately shape their being into the person they become (2009). "Homeschooling shelters children from society, but public schools ensure that children will grow up to be complete people through the teaching of key social skills" (Medlin, pg. 108). Even though homeschooling may not offer these social skills, parents can provide this support at home through being involved. Parental involvement ensures students are receiving the support and challenges they need to be successful outside the homeschooling bubble.

Statement of the Problem

Homeschooling opens the door for parents to choose how their child is going to be educated. Parents or guardians, who do choose to homeschool, have to be present in their child's life in order for it to be beneficial schooling and to help their child be prepared to enter the workforce later on. The issue in homeschooling comes in when a parent or guardian is no longer able to school the child due to medical, financial, family issues, or the lack of involvement from the parent or guardian. These students then have to be transitioned into a public or private school to continue their education. Once a child is placed into school, how do they cope socially, emotionally, and academically? Are these students at the same level as a child who has been in the educational system their whole life? Parents and guardians have to be up to date on the standards and curriculum students need to be learning in order to academically be up to pace

with the school system. Socially and emotionally, these students need to be in the real world speaking with others, playing sports, and being emotionally fed in order to be less overwhelmed in the transition. Without these interactions and support, can a homeschooled student really be prepared for a public-school environment or life outside the home? The early years in a child's life are the most crucial in developing their cognitive ability. According to Vygotsky's research on children's cognitive development, "Cognitive development stems from social interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal development as children and their partner's co-construct knowledge" (McLeod, section 2, 2020). Based on this theory, it is concluded that children will be influenced by the environment in which they are growing up in. Without a solid foundation for students to stand on, they will struggle emotionally, physically, educationally, and socially. By conducting this research, I am going to examine if students coming from a homeschool background have the firm foundation needed to succeed in a public-school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to see if homeschooling students are prepared to integrate into a public school at any point and succeed. Through interviews from college students, who were homeschooled, I will be able to understand see how these students felt they were able to deal with social, emotional, and academic pressures in a public school. Students will be asked if they felt prepared for the challenges they face at school each day. For those that feel prepared, data will be collected on the tools taught to them to help navigate a public-school environment. The students, who did not feel prepared for this environment, will be asked to share what areas they were not prepared for and how they could have been better prepared to handle the transition. The goal is for these students to share their history in homeschooling in order to better help teachers and families be prepared to assist or send students in a public or private school. Through

this research and questioning, I will be able to assess where students are succeeding and failing due to their homeschooling experience in order to help future students succeed in all circumstances.

Significance of the Study

Homeschool families and public/private school teachers can take this information and use it to improve the way they bridge the gap for these students' social, emotional, and cognitive learning needs. A study conducted by Barwegen and Messano in 2004, found no real significance between the grade performance of students homeschooled to those in a public or private school. However, these homeschooled students may lack some of the crucial characteristics needed to thrive in a regular classroom setting. If a homeschooler has to be moved into a school with minimal warning, due to an issue with their parent or caregiver, the child needs to be adequately prepared emotionally, physically, socially, and educationally to thrive in their new classroom environment.

Limitations

1. This study is comprised of college students' opinions on their homeschooling career before college.
2. This study does not contain any data from an elementary school setting.
3. This study is based on personal feeling and reflection on their time being homeschooled.
4. This is the views of students who have all attended higher education. With this being said, all of these samples of interviews are from students that are academically proficient in higher education.

Definitions

1. Homeschooling- For the purpose of this study, homeschooling refers to the education of children at home by their parents or guardians. This entails students learning all educational studies from their home rather than attending a private or public school.
2. Public-School- For this study, a public-school refers to a school supported by public funds. Students in a public-school attend classes in each school subject in addition to related arts classes.
3. Qualitative Research- For this study, this research was conducted in a qualitative manner where the Information that cannot be counted, measured, or easily expressed using numbers.

Overview

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter one is comprised of the introduction of the study, provides the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, provides the study's limitations, and important definitions to understand the study. Chapter two provides a review of the literature related to the study of this thesis. Chapter three explains the methodology and procedures that took place in this study to find the results found. Chapter four presents the data that was found from the interviews with the 8 college students. Chapter five provides and analysis of the findings from the study. This chapter also provides a conclusion for the study and the implications the study has.

Chapter 2

Related Literature Review

Homeschooling allows for parents, all over the country, to educate their children at home. Parents choose to homeschool based on their interests, academic learning pace, and learning profile. According to a study done on homeschooling in 2015, "Homeschooling - that is, parent-

led home-based education - is an age-old traditional educational practice that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and alternative, but is now bordering on mainstream in the United States” (Ray, 2015, p.1). With homeschooling becoming a more relevant way of schooling, parents are considering how effective home education is compared to public and private schooling. Throughout this literature review and research, I will be discussing parents’ choice of education, the cost, parent involvement, the social, emotional, and mental health, differences in curriculum, and the effects of the pandemic on homeschool students versus public and private school students. Education should be based on the idea that “Parents, schools, and the community need to work together to educate all children” (Romanowski, 2006, p. 129). By using all resources available, students should theoretically be able to be homeschooled or be enrolled in a public or private school with little to minimal gap in learning and social skills.

Parents choose to homeschool their children for many different reasons. “Around ten thousand children were homeschooled in the early eighties; today, over two million children are being educated at home” (Tiller, 2003, p.10). Even before the pandemic, homeschooling was becoming more regular for parents to choose from rather than sending their child to a public or private school. Some parents found issues with the way a public school educated, so by keeping their children at home, parents could control the environment students were in. According to *Why American Parents Choose Homeschooling*, “Some parents wish to customize a curriculum and learning atmosphere for their child in a way that schools cannot; others are choosing to homeschool due to concerns about the school climate” (Romanowski, 2006, 126). Educating a child at home means the parent can choose what the child learns, how they will learn it, and create a structured social environment around the specific values the family holds. Even though this situation is ideal for homeschooling families, circumstances may change, which may cause a

child to attend a public or private school instead of homeschooling. According to Kristen J. Goode in her dissertation from 2009,

Serious illness, change in family make-up via divorce or new addition, and family dysfunction are a few examples. These situations would include parents with mental health issues, extreme poverty, and parents who admittedly dislike their children and need time away from them during the day (p. 12).

When situations like these occur, a parent may not be able to adequately school the child at home any longer. This results in the child being enrolled in a school whether they are prepared or not. By parents being allowed the choice to school at home, parents need to have a backup plan for if a situation was to happen. Parents and students, who are not prepared, will have a hard time acclimating to the circumstances. This then takes a toll on the child, and the child suffers drastically in the school system. According to a review on children and divorce, “Living through each of these situations and experiences may have short-term or enduring consequences. Each has the potential to interfere with the child’s development, just as each represents an opportunity for growth for the child” (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 468). Any life-changing event can alter a student’s academic development in the present and in the future. When parents and teachers are aware of the challenge’s students are facing, a teacher can better understand their behavior and academic displays at school. Being transitioned into a new school may not seem as much of a big deal as being involved in a divorce, but any disruption to what students know can be detrimental to the child. Even though a parent does have the ability to choose how their students will be educated, all factors should be considered before making this decision.

Until our country began to face a worldwide pandemic, homeschooling was not as popular. As schools began to continue to close, and parents started to work from home, more

children were being educated at home. “Worldwide school closures as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic have transferred children’s scholastic activities to the home” (Schmidt, 2020, p.29). With this change, parents had to increase their parental involvement in their children’s lives along with trying to navigate through a global pandemic. Parents were not prepared with the proper materials and insight into how to properly handle this change in education. “Considering children’s dependence on parents when completing school tasks, we found that higher parental involvement in children’s homeschooling activity was linked to more negative outcomes” (Schmidt, 2020, p.23). The stressors on parents during the pandemic were extensive; this stress was relying on students and their success. Students were beginning to decline in their quality of work or even avoided doing the work to avoid the stress it brought to their family dynamic.

According to the Article *Homeschooling and Affective Well-Being of Parents and Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, “On days when children were working on school tasks, parents reported more negative parent-child interactions as well as lower parental and child positive affect and higher child negative affect, but not higher parental negative affect” (Schmidt, 2020, p.3). With this in mind, students may not have been properly prepared to return to the elementary public-school setting when doors reopened. Before the pandemic, homeschooling had a negative connotation around how parents taught their children. Some parents were involved, while others were laid back and not interested in being a teacher. A study from a group of concerned Norwegian parents said, “If extensive homeschooling will take place in the future, teachers should consider how to maintain the practice of supportive relationships, clear expectations and feedback, and oral feedback in particular” (Mælan, 2021, p.14). Students and parents are looking to the teachers now more than ever for guidance in how to keep their kids learning in a safe environment. With the pandemic slowly coming to an end, parents are gradually getting back

into the routine of sending their students back to school. However, those students, who did not present quality work at home, will face difficulties coming back into the classroom. Some parents may choose to keep their students at home for this reason and continue to school their students. This may not work for a long period of time, so it is important for parents to have the tools and materials to properly serve these students at home rather than in a classroom.

There have been multiple studies conducted about the support and involvement of parents and their parenting styles, and how these factors reflect a child's academic achievement. In a public school or at home, students deserve to have parents that care about them and their schooling career. Too many parents are not involved and do not care if their child is doing well in school. There are different types of parenting styles, but kids will follow these patterns set by their parents, whether they are good or bad. As stated, in a journal of student engagement (2003), parents who are uninvolved:

This often reflects the parents' emotional detachment from the children as they are often seen responding only to their children's needs out of annoyance rather than compassion, and would otherwise be completely unresponsive. Due to the lack of care and discipline for the child, as the name of the style suggests, parents are usually uninvolved in the child's life in general (Tiller, Garrison & Block, p. 10).

In 2003, 43% of parents on average throughout the country were found to never participate in school activities (Steinberg, 2003, p. 40). This percentage has left a deficient number of students stranded with no support. Higher achieving students are normally more likely to have parents that are involved in their school and provide direction for them daily. If a child is homeschooled, an uninvolved parent or full-time working parent is not going to be able to properly school their child. In an article on the *Harms of Homeschooling* (2009), Robin West explains:

Passionately involved and loving parents, whether religious or not, can often better educate their children in small tutorials at home, than can cash- strapped, under-motivated, inadequately supported, and overwhelmed public-school teachers with too many students in their classrooms (p.9).

When it comes to parent involvement at a homeschooling level, it requires parents to be even more involved. There is no teacher telling their child what to do each minute of every day or lunch ladies to serve them food. The parent is the teacher, and often this is a misconception parents face in the homeschooling community. Can parents really work full time or be uninvolved in the schooling environment at home, or does it really take every person in the home to properly educate the child? Many homeschool in order to stick to their strict beliefs of values, religious purposed, having the control over content, and being able to know what material a child is being taught. With this type of control, comes responsibility from the parent to provide the education while also providing the core values the parent is wanting to protect their child from. “The process of child rearing deals with a give-and- take system, whereby parents need to frequently decide on what is best for the child at a given point or circumstance – strictness or freedom” (Baumrind, 2005, p.37). Homeschooling allows for a parent to make the decision to school their child for the better well-being of that child. Without this thought staying at the center of schooling, children will not gain the proper academic, social, emotional, and mental growth they need to sustain like their peers in public school.

Homeschooling has the stigma of not being capable of adequately providing students with the proper and necessary social skills needed to navigate in the world. A study done in 2017 found, “Contrary to the general assumption that homeschooled children turn out to be antisocial, several studies have found that such children exhibit good behavior that is socially acceptable in

society” (Guterman & Neuman, 2017, section 3). The guiding practice of homeschooling should focus on not only the educational aspect, but the social skills students need to mature and deal with potential social challenges later in life.

In 2022, a qualitative approach was studied to look at how parents’ and students’ overall outlook on homeschooling. There were six children involved in the study ranging in ages from 13-15 years old. The results showed that four of the children agreed that homeschooling was a better alternative to public or private school. Homeschooling and their parents had set them up with being able to embrace good morals and academics. However, the other two students thought, “These two students shared that in as much as homeschooling had made them acquire exemplary morals and values, they could not deal with social challenges that present themselves when interacting with their neighbor peers” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5). These students were not provided with the social skills needed to navigate the difficult situations they were facing outside the home environment. This case shows one example of students who are equipped with the social and emotional skills needed while others were lacking from the same environment.

Parents can homeschool their children and focus all their time on growing their knowledge of topics and skills, but if the parent fails to provide the social and emotional piece to that child the parent has not adequately done their job. Overall numbers from this study on a larger scale showed that 33% of students had negative attitudes toward social skills while 67% showed they were prepared. Even though these numbers are not as the stigma suggests, students are still not being supported by their parents at home in the way they need compared to their peers. “The most important thing is that parents who decide to homeschool their children put deliberate efforts to enhance the social life of such children to ensure the holistic growth of a child both intellectually and socially” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5.2). Parents who are more

focused on keeping their child academically growing are not wrong, however, there does need to be a push towards growing the social skills in addition. According to the article *Social Skills for Homeschooling Students*, “The acquisition of social skills in homeschooling is dependent on the individual parent’s approach towards homeschooling and their main objectives for adopting this method of child education” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5.3). As seen from these studies, education is more than just academics. Students need guidance in social, emotional, and mental stability in order to succeed academically and in the future.

Socialization outside of the home is a big concern for many parents when thinking about educating their child at home. According to the article *Revisiting the Common Myths about Homeschooling*, “For some, the term centers on social activity where children are given time to interact and play with friends and participate in extracurricular activities like sports or theater. Others are concerned with social influence, where children learn to conform to cultural norms” (Romanowski, 2022, p. 126). Having students active around their peers and learning from one another is super important for children. Students, who are involved in outside community, are emotionally and mentally healthier than kids that are not involved. Being a homeschooler, parents may not know how to get involved, but public and private school and the community are normally very welcoming to these students. As seen from a study done with homeschooling parents in 2015, “Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members” (Ray, p. 2). Parents can have their students engaged in outside community away from the home. For example, “They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, and community volunteer work” (Ray, 2015, p. 2). Having students involved, helps them to see the world outside the home and be involved in some of the

same activities private and public-school students are. Students seem to enjoy the opportunity to socialize and be a part of something larger and get to know their peers. It is important to involve students in order to keep them from becoming socially awkward and afraid of being in large groups of people, who are not in their own family. If a child was to be integrated into the classroom later in their schooling career, having a base with their peers and being socialized will help the transition not be so drastic. Students would not feel as intimidated by the situation and become acclimated quicker.

With homeschooling becoming even more popular, it is important to know the cost demands. Parents are trying to decide if it is worth paying to school their children at home rather than sending their child to a free public school. Private schools can cost up to two or three times that of homeschooling for one year. Private schools normally require more fees for uniforms and school trips in addition to the yearly cost. According to the 2008 North Dakota Home School Association (NDHSA) packet, “While the average cost is about \$500 a year per child, this goes down a bit in families with more children, since resources can be shared, membership costs are not multiplied, and you can borrow or rent books from other homeschooling families in your community” (Bentley, p. 17). Starting out, parents may see a steep price in buying books, resources, computers, whiteboards, and other materials. However, resources can be used from year to year, allowing for the price to become cheaper year after year. This pricing will change depending on what type of curriculum you decide to use, but most will be around this pricing for a year.

The district of each school determines what curriculum the teachers will educate from that specific year. Districts are basing their choice from, “Curriculum is chosen based on what will provide rigor to ensure their children were being appropriately challenged” (Hanna, L. G.

2012, p. 611). Sometimes, a curriculum is taught for 5 plus years and sometimes it is only used for 1 year. Teachers are required to teach from the curriculum and prepare students for the state testing at the end of the year based on the standards. Among the homeschooling community, “Parents have a strong belief that public-school curriculum is not providing the right knowledge and skills for children” (Calvert, 2017, para. 7). Parents, who homeschool, have rights to choose the curriculum that works best for their child. However, homeschooling parent has to do their own research of what curriculum they will use to educate their students from. Homeschool parents also have to find a school or place to have their kids tested at the end of every year to collect data for the state. Just like in the school system, changes are made to the curriculum based on a trial and error period. Parents see what is working for their child and what is not, and then adjust. Both the district and parents want their students to be challenged, learning styles achieved, and abilities pushed.

There are many different ways a child can learn from home. The first being a “Direct Instruction-Based” learning (Hanna L. G., 2012, p.1). Direct instruction requires a parent to directly be the teacher and present material to a child. This type of instruction works better for younger students, who are just starting to learn and need more guidance staying on task. The second method is “Self-Study (Hanna L. G., 2012, p.1). This type of learning is better for older children. Children have to be motivated and be able to keep themselves on track in order to self-study. When a parent is trying to juggle teaching multiple kids at once, this type of self-study is a great way to solve the issue schooling more than one at one time. Through both of these different approaches, “Parents can use textbooks, computer-based programs, workbooks, and worksheets” (Clements, 2002, p.2). Public schools use a variety of different methods to try and approach all different learning needs and styles in a classroom. Computer based is where all subjects are

taught through an online software. The parent is hands off with the teaching and doesn't require keeping child on task. In a study done in 2002 on different teaching styles for homeschoolers, different families were asked to explain the curriculum or method they used to teach from. One mother commented on her usage of only computer-based material saying:

“The mother whose children use video school indicated that she preferred this because 1) it kept her from having to police her oldest child to keep him on task moving through his schoolwork, and 2) concepts were represented year after year, which she found difficult to do because it seemed redundant to her” (Clements, 2002, p.5).

As this mother learned very quickly, the educator has to pick the curriculum that works best for your students and family. In public school, the districts are choosing the curriculum that will attempt to fit a majority of students and produce the best test scores from their students. As stated by the NDHSA, “There is no such thing as The One, Perfect Curriculum, but some approaches and materials will be a better fit for your child than others” (2017, P.13). By examining the best practice for a child, the parent or teacher will be better equipped to teach the student to the best of their abilities with the goal of seeing improvement from year to year.

Test Scores

Every school-aged child is required to have testing done each year to monitor their progress. Homeschools students are no exception to this rule. Parents are required to either test their child with a state-approved test or send their child into a school to test with other children in their current grade. In an article on the *Harms of Homeschooling (2009)*, Robin West explains Mandatory testing gives the states, and the parents, a way to ensure that the students are performing at a level consistent with their own abilities, and consistent with the abilities and performance of their public and private schooled peers (West, 2009, 12). The goal of testing to

determine if the parent is educating the child to the same level to their peers in a public or private school. For a typical year for a homeschooler, “Standardized tests cost about \$25–\$45 per student. A private evaluation can cost from \$50 into the hundreds, depending on your evaluator. You may also choose to have your child tested in the local public-school system if the school is testing at your child’s grade level” (Bentley, 2008, p.15). Whether students are tested in the home or at a school facility, scores have to be sent to the state. The state then evaluates the child’s progress and keeps a record from year to year. When scores are evaluated of homeschool students versus those of public schools, “The home-educated typically score 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests” (Ray, 2015, p.1). With the fear of homeschooling not being the best educational path for all students, their scores do show that is if the child is being taught at home they are academically performing higher than public or private school students.

Some wanted to investigate how and why homeschool students were testing higher than public and private school students. A study done in 2009, evaluated whether the scores would change depending on how long a child was homeschooled for. Resulted showed, “The study found very little difference between the achievement scores of students who had been homeschooled for their entire academic lives and those who had not. (This variable explains less than .5% of the variance in scores” (Ray, 2009, p. 3). If students are averaging out better than students in a public school, these students should be able to academically perform in a public-school setting. However, teachers are concerned for these students and the outside pressures that are placed on these students that they do not have at home during learning. The study from 2009 continued to look at the outside components of success on test scores as affected by family backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, or the different style of homeschooling. The results found,

“Homeschoolers are still achieving well beyond their public-school counterparts—no matter what their family background, socioeconomic level, or style of homeschooling” (Ray, 2009, p.3). If these types of outside stressors were not affecting the scores of students’ test scores, then it had to of been a difference in students being taught by a parent with different levels of education. This same study from 2009 researched and drew data from different students with parents from different levels of education and found:

83% of homeschool students with neither parent having a college degree

86% of homeschool has one parent with a college degree

90% of homeschool students have both parents with a college degree (Ray, 2009, 4).

Ultimately, these studies showed how there was not a large correlation to the educational status of students’ parents to their test scores. As mentioned previously, parents being involved and helping their children learn doesn’t require them to have a college education. Students need support academically and emotionally in order to succeed in school.

As seen from various studies, there seems to be a very slim difference in academic intelligence between a homeschooler child and one in public school. According to *Revisiting the Common Myths About Homeschooling*, “Our main concern should be that education, whatever form it takes, maximizes the potential of all children” (Romanowski, 2022, p. 129). Public, private, and home-based education should work in conjunction with one another to help students build their educational ability. “We should look at how each can learn from one another and then use this information to improve the learning experiences of all children no matter what form of education takes place” (Romanowski, 2022, p. 129). When all three of these groups are working together, there can be a seamless transition from one of these three to another. Homeschooling students, through having an involved and committed parent, can easily step into a classroom by

being taught everything their peers are learning in the classroom. In reverse, students in public or private schools should be learning and utilizing all skills from their teachers to succeed in life beyond the school walls.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if homeschooling prepares students with the tools they need to enter a public-school setting. This chapter is designed to focus on who the participants of this study were, how this study was conducted, and the research questions participants were asked during interviews. This chapter is broken into subparts following the pattern of a) sample b) data collection and materials c) procedure d) Research Questions- Qualitative Questions.

Sample

The participants of this study consist of eight students, who are currently enrolled at Milligan University. There is a mixture of sophomore, junior, and seniors participating in the study. Before contacting my subjects, approval was obtained and granted from Milligan University's Institutional Review Board. All of the participants either attended a public or private school before attending higher education. On the other hand, some participants transitioned from a career of homeschooling straight into higher education. To ensure all participants were still comfortable with sharing their answers for analytical purposes, a member check was initiated after the researcher had time to review the answers. If participants saw areas of their questions they wanted to remove, they were allowed to audit the information. After participants gave their final approval, the researcher collected all data, analyzed and coded the information, and

collected data for future study. To ensure the researcher was accurate in their analysis of data, a second coder was enlisted to review the questions and answers. This coder then discussed their findings with the researcher to ensure the common themes and sub themes were the same across both reviews.

Data Collection Materials

The data collected in this study will be qualitative. The data will be collected through participants of higher education students being asked a series of questions about homeschooling through a questionnaire. The researcher will be able to collect data about the social, emotional, and academic experiences each student had while in a homeschool environment. The questions participants will be asked are designed to ultimately show, in the analysis, if these students were ready to be in a public-school and higher education setting.

Data Collection Procedure

Each participant will be contacted with all information regarding the study. The participant will be asked if they would like to participate through answering questions in a questionnaire. Once participants have agreed, they will be contacted via an email link. On the link, participants will be provided with a copy of the research questions that will be recorded for transcription and data analysis later. Each participant will be kept confidential in the final analysis and will be given the chance to audit any of their information or answers after they are complete with their answers and the researcher has analyzed their questions with any follow-up questions. After students have given their final approval to use their information from the questionnaire, their data will be compared to other participants and analyzed to find conclusions and to answer the research goal.

Research Questions and Related Hypothesis

General Questions:

1. How long were you homeschooled before making the transition into a public or higher education environment?
2. What did the transition from homeschooling to higher education look like?
3. What were some barriers, difficulties, or advantages you had?
4. What are the major differences you noticed between being homeschooled then transitioning into public school or to higher education?

Socially:

1. Explain how your social life was like as a homeschooler, and then as you moved into a public-school setting?
2. What did your friend group look like? Did it change as you transitioned?
3. How did your friend group change as you transitioned?
4. Did you feel like you were prepared to socialize, make friends, and attend school events in a public-school environment?
5. 5. On a scale of one to five, one being least and 5 being most, how socially prepared did you feel transitioning into a public-school environment?

Emotionally:

1. How did you feel mentally being in a public-school environment?
2. If not, do you know how you could have better mentally prepared for this transition?
3. Do you feel like you were prepared enough during your homeschool days to cope with the emotions in public-school? (Emotions being stress, anger, happiness, frustration).
4. How have you been able to adapt to gain the emotions needed to thrive in a public-school environment?

5. On a scale of one to five, one being least and 5 being most, how emotionally prepared did you feel transitioning into a public-school environment?

Academically:

1. Were you academically prepared at home to step right into the rigor of the public-school classroom?
2. If not, why do you feel you were not prepared?
3. What could have helped you be better prepared?
4. If you did feel prepared, what methods were you taught to help you navigate social, emotional, and academic challenges?
5. On a scale of one to five, one being least and 5 being most, how academically prepared did you feel transitioning into a public-school environment?

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if homeschooling adequately prepares students with the tools needed to enter a public-school setting. Through the use of conducted interviews with students in higher education, the researcher was able to draw conclusions to answer the overarching question of this thesis. It was found in the analysis of the research that there are many differences among each category of responses. However, all responses did point to a similar conclusion, even if the leading moments did not have the same conclusion. This chapter is designed to focus on the data analysis collected from this study. This chapter is divided into four different sections including: a) introduction, b) collection of data, c) research questions and related hypotheses, and d) results based on analysis.

Collection of Data

The participants of this study were all higher education students from Milligan University. Ten participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, but only eight were willing to complete the interview. The participants of this study were asked a series of questions, while being recorded and notes taken on their responses. Participants were then able to see edited notes of their responses for a chance to review their answer and strike through any information they did not want to be shared in the study. Out of the eight participants, five had not transitioned into a public-school before moving into a higher education public school setting.

Research Questions Analysis

General Analysis:

The purpose of the general section of questions was to gain a better understanding of the participants' background and basic feelings toward their homeschooling experience. To begin, about half of the participants were never transitioned into a public-school environment before higher education. When participants were asked how their transition was from homeschooling to higher education, participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 all noted they took dual enrollment classes at a community college during their high school years. As participant 2 noted, "This experience provided me with the ability to be challenged academically and socially in a way that I was not at home. I was able to gain a small glimpse into what my higher education experience was going to look like through the rigor these classes offered me." These participants were able to experience the rigor and situational transition into high education classes before being fully transitioned after their senior year. Participants 5 and 6 both were involved in cyber school before their transition into higher education. This type of schooling allowed for them to stay at home and complete their work through a schooling platform online. Participant 5 characterized her learning by saying,

“Cyber school is one of the best things that happened to me in terms of education and socialization, as it allowed me to see what the outside world was like, even if it was only through a chat screen. It helped prepare me for learning as well as gain a few socialization skills that I extremely lacked.” As an individual who was not challenged exceedingly at home, did their own pace on work, and tried to do the bare minimum, cyber school was a key factor in their success in a public and higher education school. It is important to note that all participants were able to acclimate to public school, after significant time learning from others around them, finding a routine, and being involved in the social world.

Socialization Analysis:

Section Research Question: Does homeschooling prepare students with the socialization tools needed for success in a public-school setting?

The analysis from this section brought many differences among participants. The majority of participants reported to feel as though they were socially prepared to enter a public-school setting. The participants were involved in sports, support groups, church, dual enrollment classes, or had many friends during their homeschool years. On the other hand, participants that rated their socialization on the lower end of the scale explained their social life as being nonexistent. Participant 7 stated, “I am a rather quiet person, so on a communication and socialization level, I never really had a motivation or want to be around other groups of people often.” Based on this response, those who described themselves as being introverted and quiet were more likely to not feel prepared socially for a move into a public-school setting.

Friend groups change as people move away, time moves forward, and students change schools. For participants 2, 5, and 6, their friend groups stayed similar to their homeschooling group as they transitioned into public-school. The friends these participants had come from those

they were in contact with every day at church, sports, or being neighbors. However, when these participants moved into public school, their friend group stayed the same based on the surroundings and interactions they still had with those from their homeschooling days. By saying this, participant 2 noted, “my friends were still my friends, even though I moved to a different school. I saw them less, but was still very involved in their lives through social media and the use of technology.” As seen from these participants, even though they moved into a different schooling system, they still maintained the social aspect of their homeschool group but just gained more friends from their new interactions at school. For the participants whose friend groups changed when transitioning into a different school, their friend group came from the sports they played in college. Additionally, friends were gained by those they lived with in the dorm, and those who were in their classes. Participant 5 commented, “The biggest change in my friend group was probably when a bunch of my friends switched from homeschooling to public school. I did not see them as much and most of them simply matured faster than I had because of it.”

**The interview questions for this section can be found in in chapter 2.*



Note. This chart is showing the scale of participants answers to whether they felt socially prepared to enter a public-school setting or not.

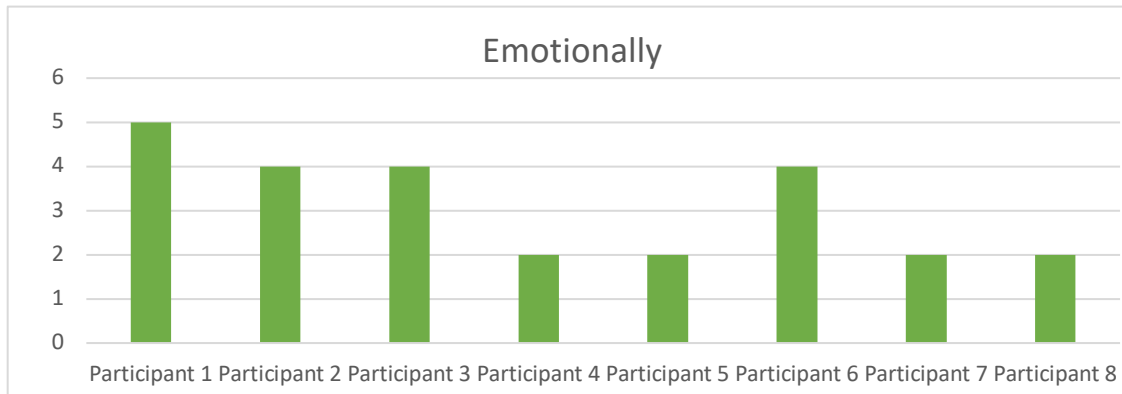
Emotional Analysis:

Section Research Question: Does homeschooling prepare students with the emotional tools needed for them to succeed in a public-school setting?

In this study, this sections results showed the most split responses between participants. On one hand, participants felt like they were emotionally ready to enter a public-school, whereas the other side of participants gave a minimum score to show their lack of readiness in regards to emotions. For those participants, who stated they were ready, they suggested emotional success being related to social experiences. Participant 6 stated, “You are not going to have the emotional intelligence if you do not have the social experience.” In comparing the emotional scores to the social scores, the participants, who scored high on emotional readiness, also scored high on social readiness. As participant 6 stated, “There is a connectedness between the two categories, which work alongside each other.” The students who were invested in activities, sports, and social experiences felt as though they were ready to emotionally deal with the stressors of public-school.

As mentioned in previous discussion, the typical homeschool experience and stigma did not appear to show that students were emotionally prepared for any schooling beyond homeschooling. However, as Participant 1 stated, “I really do not think the emotional aspect of homeschooling and public-school are that different, at least from my experience. I was never that isolated, so I cannot speak to those usual, “homeschool” feelings.” For the participants, who did not feel prepared, there was a sense of adaptability to emotional situations that allowed for these students to eventually find success. Participant 4 stated, “I was able to adapt mostly, because I became more comfortable with the people around me. I’m better at understanding certain situations and whether I should get involved or not.” Adaptability had to be obtained from all participants, as they moved into a new environment with new expectations and peers.

**The interview questions for this section can be found in in chapter 2.*



Note. This chart is showing the scale of participants answers to whether they felt emotionally prepared to enter a public-school setting or not.

Academic Questions:

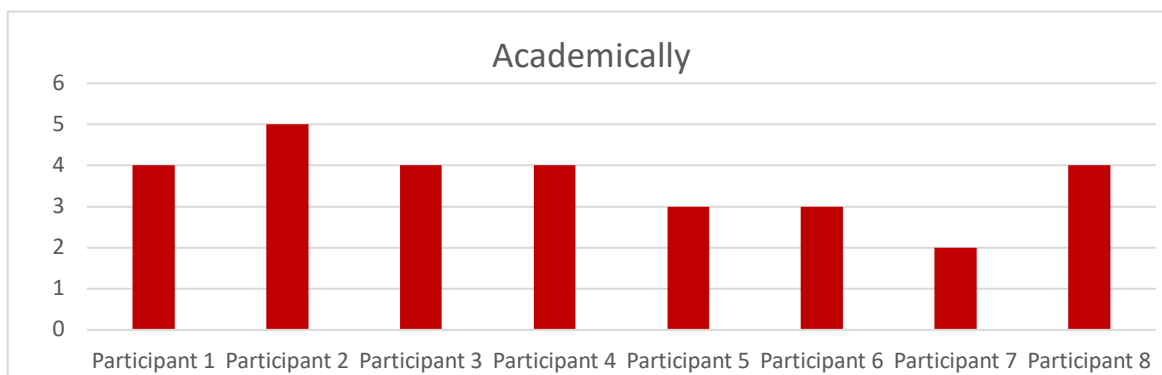
Section Research Question: Does homeschooling prepare students with the academic tools needed for them to succeed in a public-school setting?

Of the three categories being considered in this study, academics were the section that had the most consistency in the analysis. A majority of the members in this study stated they were over prepared for the difficulty of academics in a public-school setting. As participant 2 noted, “Being a homeschooler allowed for me to learn through different modes, settings, and paces that suited me as a learner. For this reason, I felt like I had a better understanding and knowledge of my school work compared to public-school settings.” The idea of being able to learn in the way that makes most sense to the student, was one of the most common themes students reported in their answers. Participants did note how they had to adapt to not being able to choose how they learned in a public-school setting, but still felt like they had more knowledge in academics than their peers.

In relation to the intensity and challenge of work done in a homeschool setting to a public-school setting, participants reported their homeschooling curriculum to be more

challenging and rigorous than in public-school. In order to succeed in a homeschool environment, the students had to learn how to be self-motivated and to work hard. As participants 2, 4, 5, and 8 all mentioned in their responses, homeschooling is a lot like higher education. The similarities lie from the amount of work that the student is required to complete on their own and the rigor of the material being taught.

**The interview questions for this section can be found in chapter 2.*



Note. This chart is showing the scale of participants answers to whether they felt academically prepared to enter a public-school setting or not.

Results based on Analysis

Based on the findings from this study, half of these homeschool participants were prepared academically and emotionally to enter a public-school setting. On the contrary, from the mixed amount of responses and scores of below a 3 in the socialization, more than fifty percent of the participants were not ready to enter a public-school setting. These participants seemed to lack the practical social experiences that the other fifty percent of participants had in order to prepare them for the rigors and challenges faced daily. In conclusion, homeschool students can be prepared socially, emotionally, and academically, to enter a public school, if the right tools and situations are provided for the person to be exposed. It is imperative that each student becomes aware of these challenges they will face in a public school setting prior to the

actual change in order to prepare and develop the skills they currently lack. With proper development, education, and consistency the students can be properly prepared to excel in their transition.

Chapter 5

Introduction

This chapter focuses on providing a summary of findings, discussion of the findings, conclusion to the study, recommendations for further research, and recommendations for practice. This chapter is divided into six different sections including: a) introduction, b) summary of findings, c) discussion of findings, d) conclusion of study, e) recommendations for further research, and f) recommendations for practice.

Summary of Findings

The goal of this study was to determine if homeschooling prepares students with the tools needed to enter a public-school setting. Research question one focuses on the participants' background information on their homeschooling career and their perception towards their preparedness. The second research question focuses on the difference between the social strains one needs to succeed in a homeschool environment versus a public-school environment. Participants were able to share their insights into their preparedness and give examples of ways they could have been better prepared. The third research section focuses on the emotional aspect of transitioning from a homeschool setting to a public school, and what participants felt they needed in order to emotionally adjust to the different settings. The fourth research section focuses on academic ability, as well as whether homeschool students felt they brought adequate knowledge to a public-school setting, and if there were any differences in the challenges they faced daily in a classroom setting.

Discussion of Findings

In response to research question 1: The analysis of this study was supported by the statistic showing that 33% of students had negative attitudes toward their social skills, while 67% showed they were prepared for a public-school setting” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5.2). The participants who showed higher social skills and success, shared their parents pushing them to interact and be involved in sports or other social outlets were a main reason for their success. “The most important thing is that parents who decide to homeschool their children put deliberate efforts to enhance the social life of such children to ensure the holistic growth of a child both intellectually and socially” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5.2). This quote adequately matches the results found within this study and emphasizes the importance of additional interactions with others outside the homeschool environment. However, for those who did not feel prepared, their parents or adults in their lives never pushed them to be social or interactive with others. This idea is supported from a study discussed in chapter 2 on parent involvement and socialization in the homeschooling communities. The author found that the two students in the study had acquired morals and values from their parents, but were not able to deal with the social challenges presented in a public-school environment (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5). It can be inferred from this information, that in order for a student to succeed in public-school socially, they have to be involved in an extracurricular activity, club, community group, church group, or some other outlet where they are involved with other peers.

In response to research question 2: It can be inferred from the analysis in chapter 4, “The acquisition of social skills in homeschooling is dependent on the individual parent’s approach towards homeschooling and their main objectives for adopting this method of child education” (Abuzandah, 2020, section 5.3). As seen from the results, education is more than just academics.

Students need guidance in social, emotional, and mental stability in order to succeed in all aspects of life. This study showed how inconsistent emotional preparedness can be for students. As some were given guidance and preparation, others were given no support or learning as to how to deal with everyday issues. The students, who were not given support, struggled to gain this understanding and emotional awareness as time went forward and they had to adapt to new situations and circumstances without any prior experience.

In response to research question 3: It can be inferred from the analysis in chapter 4, homeschool students can be academically prepared and positioned in order to succeed in a public-school environment. Through self-motivation and some self-taught skills, the participants in this study felt as though they may have been better educated than their peers in many subjects. They felt as though there was more time for them to learn in an environment and in a way that made the most sense to them, resulting in higher academic performance. They had learned the importance of time management, and had already developed skills that would allow them to think critically in many different ways. This conclusion parallels with the idea Robin West expanded on homeschooling, “Passionately involved and loving parents, whether religious or not, can often better educate their children in small tutorials at home, than can cash-strapped, under-motivated, inadequately supported, and overwhelmed public-school teachers with too many students in their classrooms” (p.9). With this in mind, the participants of this study were able to feel prepared due to their efforts at home.

Conclusion of Study

It can be inferred, from the data and analysis provided in chapter 4, homeschool students can be prepared with the necessary tools needed to enter a public-school setting. This study concludes that homeschool students can be emotionally, socially, and academically prepared if

they are given proper guidance and support and are exposed to the right background experiences at home. As seen from all participants in the study, parental/teacher support and guidance is necessary for success to be followed from a transition into the public-school setting.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Future research can be conducted with a larger population of students. Using a larger population, with individuals that are not only in higher education, would be a better representation of the homeschool population.
2. Future research can be conducted in a more formal setting with more distinct representations of different populations.
3. An additional layer of research can be conducted from gaining some insight on students' grades, and how their grades were affected in higher education settings from homeschool settings.

Recommendations for Practice

1. To further study how homeschool students can be better equipped to emotionally and socially be prepared for a public-school environment.
2. How parents can be better involved in their students homeschooling experiences
3. How students can be exposed to social environments and settings on a regular basis to promote a public-school socialization setting.
4. To continue to erase the stigma around homeschoolers being in a "bubble."

References

- Abuzandah, S. (2020). Social Skills for Homeschooling Students. *Creative Education, 11*(7), 1064-1072.
- Barwegen, L. M., Falciani, N. K., Putnam, S. J., Reamer, M. B., & Stair, E. E. (2004). Academic Achievement of Homeschool and Public-School Students and Student Perception of Parent Involvement. *School Community Journal, 14*(1), 39-58.
- Baumrind, D. (2005). 'Patterns of parental authority and adolescent autonomy'. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2005* (108), 61–69.
- Bentley, V. (2008). What does it cost to homeschool? *North Dakota Home School Packet*. <https://www.homeschoollife.com/nd/ndhsa/publications/HS%20pkt%20revised%202017.pdf#page=17>
- Calvert. (2017, November 3). *Top 5 reasons why parents homeschool their kids*. Calvert Education. Retrieved February 21, 2022, from <https://www.calverteducation.com/should-i-homeschool/top-5-reasons-parents-homeschool-kids>
- Clements, A. D. (2002). Variety of Teaching Methodologies Used by Homeschoolers: Case Studies of Three Homeschooling Families.
- Ellen Nettet Mælan, Ann Margareth Gustavsen, Espen Stranger-Johannessen & Thomas Nordahl (2021) Norwegian students' experiences of homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic, *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 36*:1, 5-19, DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2021.1872843
- Goode, Kristen J. (2009), *Transitioning home-school children into the public-school classroom*. Diss. Northcentral

University, <https://search.proquest.com/openview/dc32258e50d34e6e303d4c2bb3d4e65c/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>

Hanna, L. G. (2012). Homeschooling education: Longitudinal study of methods, materials, and curricula. *Education and Urban Society*, 44(5), 609-

631. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0013124511404886>

Tiller, A. E., Garrison, M. B., Block, E. B., Cramer, K., & Tiller, V. (2003). The influence of parenting styles on children's cognitive development.

Mælan, E. N., Gustavsen, A. M., Stranger-Johannessen, E., & Nordahl, T. (2021). Norwegian students' experiences of homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 36(1), 5-19.

Ray, B. D. (2009). Homeschool Progress Report 2009: Academic Achievement and Demographics. *HSLDA*.

Romanowski, M. H. (2006). Revisiting the common myths about homeschooling. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 79(3), 125-129.

Schmidt, A., Kramer, A. C., Brose, A., Schmiedek, F., & Neubauer, A. B. (2020).

Homeschooling and affective well-being of parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic: A daily diary study. *Psyarxiv Preprints*.

Steinberg, L., Lamborn, S.D., Dornbusch, S.M. & Darling, N. (1992). 'Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed'. *Child Development*, 63 (5), 1266–1281.

Tiller, A.E., Garrison, M.E.A. & Block, E.B. (2003). 'The influence of parenting styles on children's cognitive development'. *Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences*, 2 (1), 1–20.

Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1979). Children and divorce: A review. *Social Work, 24*(6), 468-475.

West, R. L. (2009). The harms of homeschooling. *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly, 29*(3/4), 7-12.