

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YEARS OF HOMESCHOOL AND SELF-ESTEEM OF  
FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
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## ABSTRACT

Since the number of homeschooled students choosing to attend college is increasing, there continues to be a need to identify potential self-esteem issues in homeschooled freshmen college students (Smith, 2013). This study investigated if years of homeschool had a relational effect on self-esteem in homeschooled college freshmen students attending a college campus. In this quantitative study, the sample population was comprised of freshmen college students between the ages of 18 and 22, have been homeschooled for at least one year, and were currently attending a college campus with under thirty hours of college credit. Participants received the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale survey containing demographic questions confirming their eligibility, then engaged in a 10-item questionnaire with five items positively worded and five items negatively worded. Data from a 4-point Likert-type scale were used to conduct linear correlational statistics determining self-esteem in freshmen college students who were homeschooled. The theoretical framework from which this research was examined is the self-determination theory and the theory of dropout. After completion of the analysis and interpretation of the results, the study indicated there is no statistically significant correlation between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students as shown by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Recommendations were then identified to assist instructors and parents on how to support students in completing academic goals ensuring educational success.

*Keywords:* homeschool, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, parental interest, goal commitment, college transition, motivation

### **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to my family for allowing me to spend countless hours toward the completion of this paper. There were many hours I spent working on this educational project that could have been spent with you. I appreciate your support and willingness to allow me to achieve one of my life goals.

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## **Abbreviations**

American College Testing (ACT)

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Grade point Average (GPA)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Theory of Dropout (TOD)

United States (U.S.)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The numbers of homeschoolers choosing to attend college has increased as homeschoolers in the United States have catapulted to over 1,777,000 since 2013 representing 3.4% of the school-age population (Smith, 2013). As homeschool parents are motivated to take an active role in their child's education, parental involvement doesn't stop with grade school, but continues to ensure their students achieve a level of higher education (Ice, 2011). While society continues to imply that homeschooled children lack social involvement and may socially struggle within the college environment, the increased numbers of homeschool college graduates seem to indicate the contrary (Shields, 2015). According to Ray (2004), research indicates the homeschooled college applicant is very likely to succeed in college both academically and socially. Since homeschoolers tend to gain confidence to attend college from parents, siblings, peers, social influences, and personal motivation, their success rate is being noticed by colleges and universities across the nation.

### **Background**

Self-esteem in homeschoolers in attending the first year of college continues to be a topic of concern as researchers seek to investigate intriguing aspects of home education. Since homeschooling has no uniform standardized curriculum, and authorities lack appropriate monitoring strategies, researchers find difficulty in sustainable empirical evidence in homeschool research (Carpenter & Gann, 2016). Many homeschool environments allow students to choose what they want to learn with the parents serving as facilitators rather than the conductors of the students' educational experience, therefore, there is a concern for the lack of self-esteem amongst first year homeschool college students (Riley, 2015). Due to the versatility, efficiency,

and quality of homeschool instruction, research identifies homeschooled students as feeling marginalized, as they do not feel they “fit in” within the college environment (Cohen & Drenovsky, 2012; Murphy, 2014). Research conducted by Shields (2015) indicated the uncertainty of college expectations became evident as homeschool students enrolled in college with limited experience outside homeschool education. While data showed homeschool students come to college with student learning characteristics to self-instruct, quality personal management skills associated with emotional intelligence, and the ability to gain respect from peers because of their morals and values, homeschool students lacked experience in using text books, taking notes, participating in lectures, and maintaining schedules (Shields, 2015). Emotional intelligence is closely linked with self-esteem as Walker (2015) identifies emotional intelligence as, “a set of skills that center on a person's ability to recognize emotions in oneself and others, attach meaning to these emotional states and use this awareness to interact successfully with others” (p. 20). As homeschool students evaluate their own self worth based on their knowledge and skills gained from their homeschool education, self-esteem can effect their pursuit of higher education.

Kay (2014) identifies self-esteem as focusing on the subjective evaluation of one’s own worth, while confidence builds by taking action and going outside of one’s comfort zones. Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003) noted high self-esteem refers to an accurate, justified, balanced appreciation of one’s worth in successes and competencies while low self-esteem is an understanding of one’s shortcomings, sense of insecurity, or inferiority. In light of education, Baumeister et. al. (2003) recognizes, “The self-esteem movement has been especially influential in American schools, and part of the reason for this is the assumption that raising self-esteem will lead to improvements in children’s academic performance” (p.10). Baumeister et al.

(2003) continued to note high self-esteem may foster the confidence to enable students to derive satisfaction from progress and success. While homeschooled college students can perform well academically overall, a question of self-esteem upon initial entry into college needs to be researched.

Contemporary home education has become incorporated from two diverse historical homeschooling movements generally identified as beginning in the 1960's and 1970's (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Murphy (2013) identified two seeds of the homeschool movement uprising from this time period: one identified as "unschoolers" who were associated with liberal and humanistic orientations, and the second connected to the motivation to homeschool due to a religious nature. Murphy (2013) noted although homeschooling remains the fastest growing acceptable form of education in the United States today, just forty years ago, home-based education was illegal in most states, mainstream educators were skeptic, governmental figures were not supportive, and the general public considered homeschoolers to be, "a product of extremism operating under an evil cloud of suspicion" (p. 342). As the homeschool movement took hold, researchers began to identify two distinct groups of parents who chose to adhere to a *school-at-home* methodology where clear educational goals were offered with structured lessons from purchased curricula or self-made lesson plans and the unstructured homeschool parents where structured curricula were rarely or never used (Martin-Chang, 2011).

The initiation of school choice helped the homeschool movement to gain momentum in recent years for reasons such as religion, socio-economic status, family structure and demographic characteristics (Yang & Kayaardi, 2004). According to Carpenter and Gann (2016), current homeschool parents share three similar beliefs: (1) parents should play a role in their child's education, (2) parents feel they have the ability to homeschool their child, and (3)

finances have allowed homeschool to be a viable source of education. Today homeschool has taken on a new model to incorporate the homeschool learner of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Current day homeschool may take on many forms: involvement of the father as the primary educator rather than the mother, a home may school other children in the home, homeschool cooperatives exist that offer weekly courses, children may learn partially from the parents and partially from an online educational source, or students are fully engaged online homeschoolers where all courses and instructors are present via the internet (Murphy, 2013).

In discussing a theoretical overview of self-esteem in college bound homeschool students, the self-determination theory addresses issues of self-regulation, the impact of social environments on motivation, life goals and aspirations, and autonomy of self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Tippett and Silber (1966) explore the autonomy of self-esteem with respect to influence from an authoritative source which supports self-esteem considerations in the homeschool environment. Another theoretical foundation in which to base self-esteem of homeschooled college students rests in the literature on transition to college, the role of involvement, and outside influences in college success (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). Tinto's (1975) theory of dropout suggests individual characteristics which take into account a variety of external forces that may affect a person's decision to stay in college which includes the family as an important force in determining the child's educational performance.

In summary, the homeschooler's self-esteem levels in the first year of college attendance relies heavily on how the parents chose to homeschool and support their child. How the homeschool environment was structured could determine levels of self-esteem in the student. Students may feel marginalized or confident in their quest for higher education. While research has supported that the average home-educated college applicant is very likely to succeed in

college, both academically and socially, self-esteem levels should be studied upon the initial entry into college (Ray, 2004).

### **Problem Statement**

This study initiated the process of addressing the self-esteem levels of homeschool students in their first year at college. Many studies have indicated that homechooled students perform well in K-12 academics as compared to their traditionally schooled counterparts (Snyder, 2013), and the home educated perform well at the college level (Ray, 2004). However, there are few studies conducted regarding the initial personal adjustment homeschoolers must make to succeed in a college environment. Duggan (2010) notes students who are unprepared for college coursework are more likely to drop out of college. Variables impacting persistence in higher education includes discrepancy in attitudes and behaviors, self-esteem, balancing employment with classes, and academic and social integration (Duggan, 2010). Since the curricula parents use to homeschool their children can be as creative as they choose (Hanna, 2012), or if they choose to use any curricula at all, may lead to self-esteem concerns as their child prepares to enter college academia. As the homeschool movement has progressed and continues to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, accessibility to educational curriculum is more available, public school access has opened, and with the addition of computers and internet, updated research should be added to assist homeschool parents in recognizing hindrances associated in helping their child advance into higher education. Previous research gathered by Cohen & Drenovsky (2012), from the state of Pennsylvania, indicated homeschooled students' self-esteem was not significantly lower than that of other college students, although Pennsylvania has the most regulated homeschool laws. On the other hand, Texas has the least regulated homeschool provisions in the nation (Gaither, 2008). This study will research self-



esteem levels in first year college students who have been homeschooled in Texas. Homeschool is growing at a remarkable rate in which scholars have confirmed six to 12 percent of all students will have been educated at home in their K-12 educational career (Murphy, 2014). Due to this phenomenal growth in homeschool education, research must remain current while helping homeschool families and colleges recognize homeschooled students are confident with a high self-esteem prepared to obtain goals in higher education. The problem is homeschooled parents and students need to be aware of self-esteem levels as the student participates in the first year of college.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative linear correlation study was to determine if there was a relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem levels in first year college students. The criterion variable will be defined as self-esteem levels and the predictor variable will be defined as student years of homeschool. The self-esteem measure was a 10-item uni-dimensional 4-point Likert scale which measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self (Rosenberg, 1965). Student years of homeschool were categorized once the survey was collected. This study sought to determine self-esteem of first year college students who have varying years of homeschool education regardless of the curricula structure taught in their homeschool years. Since social myths continue to plague homeschoolers, noting them as social misfits, non-productive citizens, and maintain difficulty in entering college (Carpenter & Gann, 2016), research must continue to determine realistic perspectives of the homeschool educational environment.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of self-esteem in homeschool students begins with parental involvement in the number of years the child was homeschooled, and the educational structure of the homeschooled student, which could affect levels of self-esteem as the student begins their first year of college. Most homeschool research has been focused on achievement levels from standardized college testing and college GPA, but very little research has been directed to student self-worth as homeschooled students move forward into higher education. Since current trends in education, such as the numerous online educational opportunities for homeschool students have surfaced, self-esteem levels in first year college students could give parents and instructors an avenue for improved communication and curriculum adjustment for their students.

Research analysis has affirmed the expanding acceptance and stability of homeschooling by the fact that questions about homeschooling can be found on federal surveys such as the US Census Bureau (Murphy, 2013). Homeschool has been found as a permanent and viable source of education recognized by a growing support in the courthouse, in common core demands, and by expansion in new technologies (Murphy, 2013). Homeschooled children have been reported to have achieved at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile in all subjects on standardized tests, therefore reinforcing the productivity and educational success of home education (Murphy, 2014). The majority of research has focused on pre-college homeschool students. As K-12 homeschooling students has increased from 850,000 students in 1999, 1,508,000 in 2007, and approximately 1,770,000 in 2013 ( (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Smith, 2013), Cox (2003) suggested about 30,000 homeschooled students begin college each year. Cohen and Drenovsky (2012) note “Most faculty members who have taught in higher education during the last fifteen years, whether at a small private college or a large public university, have likely noticed an increase in

the number of homeschooled students in their classrooms” (p. 19). Since parents may choose from a variety of curriculum choices or create their own (Hanna, 2012), college-aged homeschool students may feel inadequately prepared for college. This study engaged first year college students in order to examine their self-esteem as they began their college career. The results of this study will give confidence to homeschool parents in their choice of homeschool curricula, provide homeschool organizations data for encouraging homeschoolers to attend college, promote the viability of homeschool to the general populace, and assist college instructors on how to promote success to this growing trend of students. While an older previous study has indicated homeschool students adjust well to the college environment when testing for self-esteem and depression (Cohen & Drenovsky, 2012), this study brings current data on self-esteem of first year college students.

### **Research Question**

This study on homeschoolers and self-esteem in their first year of college addressed self-esteem levels of first year college students which includes years of homeschool.

**RQ1:** Is there a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem demonstrated in the first year of college?

### **Definitions**

1. *Homeschool*- Homeschool can be defined as the education of school-aged children at home rather than in public or private school settings (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007)
2. *Self-Esteem*- Self-esteem is the value a person sees himself or herself having in the world (Kay, 2014).

3. *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).
4. *Self-Determination theory*- Self-determination theory is a theory which addresses basic issues such as personality development, self-regulation, life goals and aspirations, energy and vitality, the relations of culture to motivation, and the impact of social environments on motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2008).
5. *Theory of dropout*- The theory of dropout relates to the level of expectation and the intensity with which the expectation is held to an individuals' educational goal commitment (Tinto, 1975).
6. *Emotional intelligence*- A set of abilities (verbal and nonverbal) that enable a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own and others' emotions in order to guide thinking and action and successfully cope with environmental demands and pressure (Bertram, et al., 2016).

### **Summary**

As the numbers of college-bound homeschoolers increase in the United States, research shows that while some homeschooled students are certainly capable of adjusting to the college curriculum and lifestyle, others may not be prepared for the life adjustment (Potter, 2012). Although, homeschoolers have been noted to generally score slightly above the national average on both the SAT and ACT entrance exams and may even enter college with more college credit than their public-school peers, research falls short in the area of determining self-esteem concerns of homeschooled freshmen college students (Potter, 2012).

Self-esteem has a great impact on students as they persist in obtaining a college education (Duggan, 2010). Homeschooled students begin college with a variety of grade school curricula

in hopes that their parents have armed them with the necessary knowledge to succeed in their educational endeavors. Homeschool students also enter college with varying years of homeschooling. Some research has indicated self-esteem concern for homeschoolers as they enter college due to the risk of decreased social skills and communication limited to family members (O'Shaughnessy, 2010). As freshmen homeschooled college students learn to transition away from home, meeting others with different values, and dealing with a greater independence, their self-esteem will be challenged (Potter, 2012). This study focused on helping to provide answers to these concerns as homeschooled freshmen college students conducted a survey on self-esteem.

Since homeschool has gained acceptance as a viable source of education in the United States, research should continue to affirm the ability and longevity of students in higher education. Homeschool students and parents need to understand how self-esteem plays a role in education beyond the high school years. In learning how self-esteem may impact freshmen college students, parents and students can begin to make adjustments prior to entering college in preparation for achieving educational success and student goals. As a result of this study, homeschoolers can begin to understand the effects of self-esteem and how it impacts their first year of college.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

The current lenience's in homeschooling does not reflect the hardships posed on families as homeschool began its trek towards the success it sees today.

Dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of mandatory attendance laws, until three quarters of the way through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a crime to keep one's children home from school, and it did not matter in the slightest whether it was religious or some other felt conviction that was at the heart of the decision to do so: parents who did so were criminals, and their kids were truants (West, 2009, p. 8).

West (2009) continues to note the revolution of homeschool over the last 30 years has gone from illegal, "meaning criminal in all fifty states," or heavily regulated when allowed to fully legal and completely unregulated. FindLaw (2019) supported West (2009) by noting all states have compulsory education laws with consequences such as stating that parents who fail to comply with state compulsory education laws may be charged with a misdemeanor which is punishable upon conviction by a fine or even up to 30 days in jail. As states amended their compulsory attendance laws due to massive political pressure from religious parents and their lobbyist (West, 2009), fully legal homeschooling from all fifty state legislatures occurred. Parents began to bring their children home by the thousands determined to seek their rights under the U.S. Constitution, citing the preamble: the intention to "secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity" (Cooper & Sureau, 2007, p. 115).

Although the mid 1980's ushered in homeschooling due primarily for religious reasonings, suburbanization of metropolis areas facilitated segregation and public schooling grew larger and more bureaucratic making homeschooling a viable option (Gaither, 2008).

These changes soon made homeschooling an attractive alternative forcing states to stop fighting homeschooling, thus allowing society to accept homeschooling as a sustainable option for educating students (Gaither, 2008). With such recent legalizations of homeschooling, research is just beginning to surface regarding this source of education.

With the legal ground cleared and the settlement now dense and growing, a bright future for home-based education could begin to flourish (Gaither, 2008). Texas, one of the least regulated states in the country, established its homeschooling grounds in 1994 (Gaither, 2008). In comparison, California waited until 2008 to make homeschooling legal (Gaither, 2008). As the return of domestic homeschooling integrated society, parents now choose to homeschool their children for various reasons. Cooper and Sureau (2007) found that (a) 31.2% of parents decided to homeschool in objection to the school environment, (b) 29.8% of parents reported homeschooling supported their religious and moral concerns for their children, (c) 16.5% of parents were dissatisfied with the education their children were receiving, (d) 7.2% of parents recognized their children had special education needs, and (e) 6.5% of parents choose homeschooling for their children who had physical or mental-emotional problems.

As homeschool students are entering higher education, typically lacking high school diplomas or regionally accredited academic transcripts, college officials are determining how to assess homeschoolers as they are seeking admission (Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Although previous research on transitional experiences of homeschool students to college suggest positive college experiences, many authorities are still concerned about the lack of socialization of homeschool college students (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007). This study utilized the self-determination theory and the theory of dropout to focus on self-esteem on years of homeschool while incorporating in college freshmen students by reviewing parental interest, student

motivation, social involvement, college transition, goal commitment, emotional intelligence, and gender differences. The theoretical framework of the self-determination theory and the theory of dropout will lay a foundation for this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical frameworks of research studies provide a perspective to help formulate a foundation from which to examine a topic. The theoretical frameworks utilized in this research to study the relationship of years of homeschool and self-esteem of freshmen college students is the self-determination theory (SDT) and the theory of dropout (TOD). Both the SDT and the TOD identify self-esteem as potential factors that could affect first-year homeschooled college students. Both theories align with intrinsic motivation as the more autonomy one feels, the more intrinsically motivated one becomes which then motivates individuals to focus on accomplishing educational goals. While the central idea of the dropout theory is predicated on the degree of academic and social integration of higher education students, the SDT focuses on internal motivation which directs behavior and goal accomplishments (Deci & Ryan 2008; Tinto 1975). Both theories unite in recognizing the importance of how autonomy and commitment to higher educational goals provide first-year college students success in academic achievement. Self-esteem in previously homeschooled freshmen college students can be linked to both the SDT and the TOD based on motivation or the lack thereof.

#### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory (SDT), a general theory of human motivation that has been applied to domains such as health, education, work, and sport, is the only theory of motivation that explicitly identifies autonomy as a human need that, when supported, facilitates more autonomous forms of behavioral regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The self-determination theory



addresses issues of autonomy, contingent and true self-esteem, and the motivations which lead to the self worth of the student. The SDT was initially developed by Deci and Ryan (2008) as a macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health to support natural tendencies for effective behavior. The SDT has traditionally focused on long-term goals people use to direct their activities which includes educational goals of students (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Specifically, the SDT theory focuses on the concept of autonomy which identifies the importance for self direction and choice for promoting self-esteem. In the course of identifying autonomy as a source of competent development, intrinsic motivation is closely associated with autonomy as students identify their goals and reasons for their goals. Researchers have noted as homeschool college students develop a sense of ownership that comes with empowerment, they are more likely to engage in the academic, social, and extracurricular activities which foster learning, growth, and academic success associated with long term goal achievement. Researchers continue to utilize the SDT to address social and environmental factors in addressing intrinsic motivation for homeschooled students (Riley, 2016).

The self-determination theory can be depicted from two avenues of self-esteem: contingent self-esteem and true self-esteem. Contingent self-esteem refers to feelings about oneself that results from matching some standard of excellence or living up to some interpersonal expectations while true self-esteem is more stable and securely based on the solid sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 1995). According to Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991), the distinction between true self-esteem and contingent self-esteem is based on the distinction between an integrated or true self and an unintegrated or false self. Contingent self-esteem often lends itself to social comparisons which leads to one measuring up to others, focusing on one's own agenda, using whatever means is available to match standards which are not limited to rationalization,

self-deception, and other defensive processes (Deci & Ryan, 1995). True self esteem is based on goals and aspirations which is accomplished by wholeheartedly devoting personal resources without feelings of worth fluctuating based on accomplishments (Deci & Ryan, 1995). Deci and Ryan (1995) noted, “Too often people in one’s socializing environment make their esteem contingent on living up to some standards, so one may feel forced to give up autonomy and a true sense of self, while taking on a socially implanted self” (p.33). This concern of contingent self esteem can express itself in a homeschool environment as the parent may seek to enhance their self-worth through the child’s accomplishments (Soenens, Wuyts, Vansteenkiste, Mageau, & Brenning, 2015).

Contingent self-esteem and true self-esteem is also evidenced in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as these motivations are prototypes of autonomous behavior. Deci and Ryan (1995) identified intrinsic motivation as behaviors that are performed free from demands, constraints, or homeostatic urgencies whereas extrinsic motivation is prompted by a request or performed instrumentally to attain something of value. Previous research has indicated when parents prioritize extrinsic goals rather than intrinsic goals, children display unfavorable developmental outcomes negating anticipated happiness and success (Soenens et.al., 2015). Results published by Wouters, Duriez, Luyckx, Ccolpin, Bijttebier, and Verschueren (2014) identified parental promotion of intrinsic goals is important as it may increase students’ self-esteem level.

Within the SDT, extrinsic motivation incorporates engaging in a behavior explicitly to attain a reward or to avoid punishment, conducting behavior out of a feeling of guilt, or pursuing a goal that is personally important or valuable with an underlying value of an activity (Deci & Ryan, 1995). Due to the inability of extrinsic goals to provide satisfaction and undermining basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, extrinsic motivational

goals can be detrimental as one would feel pressure to demonstrate personal worth therefore creating frustration resulting in doubting the capacity to achieve the set goals (Soenens et al., 2015). Soenens et al. (2015) pointed out students can feel pressure to demonstrate success in their educational goals as parents exhibit pride when their child is successful while the parents' self-worth plummets when the child fails to meet the parents' standards of excellence, therefore driving the child to extrinsic motivation based on the parents' expectations.

Intrinsic motivation lends itself to a more solid base of self worth promoting vitality, increased global social functioning and productivity, and increasing autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1995). Autonomy support is self-initiating noting active support of a child's capacity and is supported when parents encourage a child to do certain activities fostering self-regulation (Joussemet, Landry, & Koestner, 2008). Joussemet et al. (2008) suggested that autonomy support is compatible with high levels of parental involvement with parental structure utilizing clear communication of expectations and monitoring behavior related to those expectations. Grolnick's (2014) research studied similarity components of structure and autonomy support and found for structure strong and consistent relations among clear and consistent rules and expectations, predictability, rationale, and authority.

### **Theory of Dropout**

Tinto's (1975) theory of dropout (TOD) suggests the individual's integration in the academic and social systems of the college will increase the goal of college completion. Since self-esteem is influenced by what others think of other individuals, society affects how students from various backgrounds are perceived (Rosenberg, 1965) therefore, homeschool college freshmen can be deterred from their goals of college completion if they have a low level of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) recognizes the stratification hypothesis which identifies social

discrepancies amongst religious groups, races, nationality, and social classes in which a person belongs will serve as a primary determiner of self-esteem. The TOD identifies several factors that affect self esteem of college students which include, family background, characteristics of the individual, educational experiences prior to college entry, and expectations concerning future educational attainments (Tinto, 1975).

The analysis of the dropout theory notes the greater the students' commitment to the goal of college completion and the commitment to the institution determines whether a dropout behavior is formed (Tinto, 1975). Therefore, helping a homeschool student choose an appropriate institution in which they feel comfortable will fortify their success in their higher education transition and reduce potential dropout. The dropout theory stresses the importance of the transition process from secondary to tertiary education noting many changes in the student's life which include new financial responsibilities along with social and family issues (Dias & Sa, 2014). The student must also deal with managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose within the confounds of maintaining the self-esteem needed to move forward in an unknown world of new surroundings (Dias & Sa, 2014).

### **Related Literature**

#### **Religion**

**Religion and self-esteem of homeschool students.** "By the mid-1980's homeschooling was becoming increasingly popular among religious conservatives, and thousands of them pulled their children out of Christian day school to enroll in homeschools," (Gaither, 2008). The children in this movement were the current homeschool college students in higher education. Anand and Singh (2015) recognized religion as an important aspect in people with high self-esteem, therefore any investigation of self-esteem should be examined with religious

participation. Research has indicated positive images of God were held by religious students with high self-esteem contributing to the concept that religious youth see God as playing a considerable role in both their success and failures (Anand & Singh, 2015). In an effort to understand the relationship of self-esteem, Anand and Singh (2015) presented the term intrinsic religious orientation which promotes the idea of religion being internalized within a person identified as religious faith. Intrinsic religious orientation best describes people who have a genuine faith and who live their religion embracing faith as a fundamental aspect to their life (Anand & Singh, 2015). Anand and Singh (2015) found a significant positive correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and self-esteem noting religious participation significantly increases self-esteem with a positive relationship to intrinsically committed faith. In support of Anand and Singh (2015), Cheng, Trivitt, and Wolf (2016) noted parents may choose not to homeschool but send their children to a church-based school to learn in a more disciplined environment, with higher academic standards, and increased moral instruction than the parents might be able to provide.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

**Emotional intelligence relationships to TOD and SDT.** Emotional intelligence has been identified as a tool for anticipating academic achievements allowing researchers to recognize students who have greater social skills, long-term commitments, and the ability to cope with conflicts more easily (Rahimi, 2016). Tinto's (1975) predictive TOD postulates that a student's characteristics upon entry in college, and the students' level of commitment to complete the educational goals determined are contributing items of a student's departure from the college. Rahimi (2016) confirmed Tinto's (1975) TOD by noting the level of integration is inversely related to the potential that a student will drop out specifying the more a student

integrates, the less the student is likely to dropout from the institution. According to Rahimi (2016), for college freshmen to be successful in the pursuit of a degree, they must achieve a level of commitment to their academic and career goals and the institution itself. As homeschool students begin to identify their educational goals and the avenue of higher education, they would benefit from increasing social integration in order to maintain goal completion.

At the core of the SDT, emotional intelligence (EI) is linked to autonomy as EI is proven to correlate with concepts of well-being such as life satisfaction, happiness, optimism, self-esteem, and decreased negative effects (Perreault, Mask, Morgan, & Blanchard, 2014). Deci and Ryan (1995) recognized that autonomy support plays an important role in facilitating self-determination and personal satisfaction. Perreault et al. (2014) conducted an autonomy and EI related study to investigate individual variation in EI by examining facets of self-determination. The study was important in determining the efficiency and effectiveness with which people can identify, process, and manage their emotions for their overall health and well-being (Perreault et al., 2014). Research conducted by Perreault et al. (2014) found the more people undertake their daily activities with a sense of volition and autonomy, the more skilled they become using emotion-laden information and can thereby experience greater psychological well-being which is consistent with the traits of emotional intelligence. As students from all backgrounds approach and enter their early college years, EI will be an important consideration for their overall psychological well-being and adjustments into a new educational environment.

Emotional intelligence surfaces in male and female college students in varying degrees with a variety of outcomes based on stress situations in a college environment. A study conducted by Miri, Kermani, Khashbakht, and Moodi (2013) focused on the relationship between EI and education since EI plays a major role in one's ability to solve emotional

problems, the capacity to accept reality, and the ability to regulate reactions of stress and crisis. Miri et al. (2013) identified academic stress as that which is, “generated by the proper demands in an academic context along with an individual recognition about spending sufficient time to achieve that context.” A students’ ability to cope with new social norms and situations within the college environment is related to variables including motivation, self-esteem, and academic self-concept (Miri et al., 2013). Female college students were found to have a higher mean of EI than their male counterparts in regards to self-awareness, self-motivation, social consciousness, and social skills thus indicating female students had an overall increase in stress components.

As first year college students face increasing diversity at college campuses, emotional intelligence (EI) has become an important component. Students must develop mature emotional intelligence skills needed to better understand, empathize, and negotiate with others (Akers & Porter, 2016). Emotional intelligence is increasingly seen as essential to becoming successful in our global society as employers routinely look through the lens of EI in hiring, promoting, and developing new employees (Akers & Porter, 2016; Wurf & Croft-Piggin, 2014). Self-esteem and EI work closely together as high self-esteem portrays qualities similar to EI such as listening and communication skills, personal management, adaptability, interpersonal effectiveness, self-confidence, self-control, and leadership potential (Akers & Porter, 2016). Rosenberg (1975) noted students who may exhibit low self-esteem with egophobic qualities may need help in their early college years to promote leadership qualities for academic success and eliminate potential dropout.

### **Parental Interest**

**SDT in relationship to parenting.** In home schooling, parents are confronted with the fundamental task of teaching children values and regulations necessary to function effectively in

society and to help them pursue their own unique individual interest (Joussemet et al., 2008). Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, and Hoover-Dempsey (2005) noted parental involvement influences student outcomes primarily due to the definition of the range of activities parents construe as important, necessary, and permissible for the engagement of their child's education. Parents use the concept of autonomy to help motivate their children internalize educational tasks which are not perceived well by the children. Autonomy is the core feature of SDT as it relates to experiencing freedom by initiating and endorsing behaviors that are harmonious and integrated within the homeschool environment (Joussemet et al., 2008). Autonomously motivated students who act on interest or underlying personal value produce educational satisfaction and improved work effort (Oostlander, Güntert, Schie, & Wehner, 2014). Grolnick (2014) indicated that SDT aligns with the idea that when parents provide structure, children feel more in control of outcome and less helpless with regard to successes and failures. This feature of SDT could lend evidence to self-esteem in homeschool students as they prepare for various levels of higher education.

Parental interest affects the child's self-conception and attributes to the development of the child's self-esteem. Since the homeschool parent is the primary instructor, parental involvement is at a higher participation level than those where the students attend school outside the home. Parental involvement in a child's education is associated with enhanced student outcomes, academic achievement, and motivation for schoolwork (Walker et al., 2005). As college-aged children move on to the ideas of college, parental beliefs in what the student should and could do helps to promote the self-esteem of the child (Walker et al., 2005). According to the self-efficacy theory, homeschool parents are more likely to make decisions and provide a curriculum based on their goals for their children (Ice, 2011). Most homeschool parents have a



strong sense of self-efficacy in helping their children succeed in school while focusing on future goals for their children; therefore, students' self-esteem increases as they develop the same goals set by their parents (Ice, 2011).

The educational level of the parents contribute to the self-esteem in first year college students as the student can feel confidence in the college environment if one or both parents have previously attended college (Stephans & Brannon, 2015). Stephans and Brannon (2015) noted only 13.3% of students who have only high school educated parents obtain a bachelor's degree whereas nearly 50% of the students obtaining a bachelor's degree have parents with the same level of education. The percentage of students graduating from college increases as the level of parental education increases (Stephans & Brannon, 2015). Because college-educated parents possess the skills and confidence of securing a degree, the child gains confidence in their abilities thus promoting the self-esteem of the student. Stephans and Brannon (2015) noted parents who have not experienced the higher education process may not be efficient in helping their students navigate college as they will have less knowledge of how to access financial assistance, struggle with the admissions process, will be unable to provide specific advice, and know fewer people versed in the college life. When parents understand how to help their college-bound student feel equipped, the student gains the confidence to better pursue their first year of college with high self-esteem.

In a study conducted by Wauters et al. (2014), the researchers indicated findings that perceived parental promotion of intrinsic goals were important as it may increase students' self-esteem level through the positive effect on need satisfaction. Since parental antecedents are important in the development of their child, parental goal promotion is a key antecedent of first-year college students' self-esteem levels as they set the basis for their child's personal growth

(Wauters, et al., 2014). This study contributed to aspects of self-esteem by utilizing perceived parental goal promotion as an antecedent for college students' self esteem.

Since the SDT theory focuses on the concept of autonomy which identifies the importance for self direction and choice for promoting self-esteem, Grolnick (2014) noted parental involvement facilitates competence in children which in turn supports the child's autonomy. Joussemet et al. (2008) recognized parents are confronted with teaching children values and regulations necessary to function effectively in society, therefore, there is a paramount importance for the need of autonomy to help guide children in the ability to independently learn how to follow societal values. The research conclusions conducted by Grolnick (2014) indicated a parallel with the SDT in that when parents provide structure without complete control, children felt more confident in the outcomes of their decisions and less helpless with regards to successes and failures. As parents allow the child to practice guided autonomy, they are able to prepare their child for future success and develop their self-esteem.

**TOD in relationship to parenting.** Tinto's (1975) theory of dropout recognizes the most important factor affecting the child's educational attainment and performance in college as the quality of relationship with the family and the interest and expectations parents have for their child's education. Rosenberg (1965) confirmed that students who report a lack of parental interest have a lower self-esteem as self-esteem is essential to the development of a student's feeling of self-worth.

According to the TOD, students who tend to persist in their college goal attainment typically maintain a quality relationship with their family and are concerned with what their parents' expectations are for them (Tinto, 1975). In a study conducted by Witte and Rogge (2013), student dropout behavior was influenced by parental expectations noting low

expectations for their children's success is more likely to cause drop out while an increase in parental involvement decreases the likelihood of drop out. Witte and Rogge (2013) found parental motivation crucial to the educational success of their child greatly reducing dropout as their study indicated significance at a 1%  $p$ -value. This study correlates with the theory of dropout in that parental expectations influence the child's persistence for staying in college.

Benner, Boyle, and Sadler (2016), noted high school dropout rates are at an all-time low although college enrollment and bachelor's degree attainment are on the rise. The educational mobility of students has been linked with the educational success of their parents and parental involvement. Benner et al. (2016) contributed home-based involvement including school-based learning and educational enrichment activities to the critical role parental involvement plays in the academic lives of youth. Since homeschool is a base for this type of educational source, it would seem that homeschool students could thrive in higher education based on parental involvement. Benner et al. (2016) also noted the cultural reproduction theory which suggests youth benefit most from parental educational involvement as their parents are best equipped to transmit their cultural and social motivations to their children as opposed to the idea of *value stretch* where parents downwardly stretch their thresholds for acceptable levels of educational success in an attempt to reconcile their feelings of efficacy in their children's education. Tinto's (1975) dropout theory sustains the importance of parental support in increasing self-esteem in homeschooled college students.

Association between parental indifference and student self-esteem is not an artifact of associated culture or status; if parents manifest indifference to a child, self-esteem suffers (Rosenberg, 1965). Causey, Livingston, and High (2015) noted self-esteem can be effected by race-related messages communicated to children which ultimately affects student self-esteem.

Since parents are the child's first teacher, they play an integral part in developing the child's orientation toward educational achievement. The research conducted by Causey et al., (2015) confirmed parental involvement contributed significantly positive educational outcomes regardless of race or gender.

**Self-esteem in relationship to parenting.** James (1890) states, "Probably the most important attitudes a person develops is the attitude about oneself. This evaluation of oneself is known as self-esteem." In the early 70's parents were instructed to love, praise, reward, and encourage their children no matter what they did thus causing a generation of selfish, self-centered individuals (Manju 2016). The lack of accountability resulted in a lack of self-esteem needed to develop a sense of ownership (Manju 2016). Self-esteem can be closely linked to family relationships since parental behavior significantly affects a child's behavior (Manju 2016). Donaldson and Kenny (1991) conducted a study on parental attachment and family structure to the social and psychological functioning of first year college students and reported findings that suggest parental attachment when combined with family structure supports individuation thus promoting high self-esteem. Manju (2016) has identified parental relations has a significant impact on their children's self-esteem.

Self-esteem, an individual's sense of value or worth, happiness, and life satisfaction have been reported as being substantially interrelated (Baumeister et al., 2003). A major study conducted on self-esteem and happiness used college students as participants to measure happiness, parental rearing styles, and self-esteem and found that high self-esteem is a very strong predictor of happiness. This strong correlation corresponds to how an individual evaluates him or herself and is crucial in determining one's level of happiness (Anand & Singh 2015). Self-esteem and happiness can be related to parenting styles as Raboteg-Saric and Sakic

(2014) have identified three parenting styles consisting of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting which can have various impacts on self-esteem. Authoritative parenting is associated with students who possess greater life satisfaction, optimism, hope, self-esteem, internal locus of control, and happiness (Anand & Singh 2015). Anand and Singh (2015) have identified students with authoritarian parents as those who usually perform well in academics, but exhibit lower self-esteem, poor social skills, and report higher levels of depression. Permissive parenting is exemplified in students who may perform less well in school, but have a higher self-esteem, better social skills, and report lower levels of depression (Anand & Singh 2015). The research conducted by Anand and Singh (2015) indicated authoritative and permissive parenting are equally beneficial for self-esteem while, happiness is more associated with mothers who are authoritative. Overall perceived parental style has a strong effect on student self-esteem and happiness (Anand & Singh 2015).

Since self-esteem and emotional intelligence are linked closely to happiness, it is important that parents help develop proper emotional skills with active parent-child interaction (Lim, You, & Ha, 2015). Lim et al. (2015) noted human emotional characteristics are formed during early childhood and parents have the greatest influence in the process of raising their children. Rosenberg (1975) suggests the family, whether broken or intact, imposes on a child a characteristic style of life, set of values, and a system of beliefs and ideals which provide a base for self-judgment. According to previous studies, parental emotional support, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence are closely linked to happiness in which happiness is influenced by the interactions between the individuals' psychological traits and the living environment (Lim et al., 2015). A study conducted by Lim et al. (2015) investigated the influence of parental emotion support on self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and happiness on college students. The results

indicated both maternal and paternal emotional support had a positive influence on self-esteem. Lim et al. (2015) constructed an alternative model 2 that supported their data demonstrating parental support promoting a positive influence with a direct path from self-esteem to emotional intelligence. The hypothesized model, which specified both direct and indirect paths from parental emotional support to happiness, and the alternative model 1, which specified a direct path from emotional intelligence to self-esteem, were poor fits for the data analyzed.

### **Motivation of Homeschool College Students**

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be observed in homeschool students as they move into the college environment. While some students are motivated by intrinsically motivated behaviors such as the need to feel competent and self-determined, others are extrinsically motivated by tangible awards, grades, and the need to please others (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-esteem incorporates both aspects of motivation as high self-esteem denotes a feeling of self-worth, self-acceptance, and self-respect in seeking to pursue higher education (Rosenberg, 1965). Tinto's TOD (1975) noted it is the individual's goal of college completion that is most influential in determining college persistence whether it is measured in terms of educational plans, educational expectations, or career expectations.

An intrinsic motivation involved in directing students success in college is career self-efficacy. Komarraju, Swanson, and Nadler (2013) noted increases in career decision self-efficacy is a significant predictor of self-determined motivation as students who felt more confident in focusing on career based courses were more intrinsically motivated. As homeschool students identify their future career goals, a motivation to complete their major course of study area increases. Students able to identify positive outcomes of career decidedness are associated with generalized self-efficacy as well as global self-esteem (Komarraju et al., 2013). In an extrinsic

motivational situation in seeking career fulfillment in order to please others, specifically parents, Vasques-Salgado, Greenfield, and Burgos-Cienfuegos (2014) identified conflicts within college students which caused students to second guess their decision, resulting in grade decline, lower self-esteem, and eventually led to dropping out.

Motivation for learning stems from the will and the skill for learning (Liu, 2014). The will for learning responds to the motivation for the learner and the skill for learning is identified to specific learning strategies (Liu, 2014). In terms of motivation, researchers suggests students who promise themselves extrinsic rewards may achieve higher grades as they indicate increased self-determination and intrinsic motivation as noted in the SDT (Liu, 2014). Homeschool students may have the will to learn in a college environment, but may lack effective techniques if learning strategies were not taught by the parents. Homeschool students can succeed academically if given the proper academic support by their parents. But the parents must seek out resources, provide individual instruction, and create an educational environment in which their children can succeed (Coalition for Responsible Home Education, n.d.). While the nature of choice is linked to intrinsic motivation, many home school learning environments allow students to choose what they want to learn as the parents serve as facilitators (Riley, 2015). The choice to choose a curriculum may benefit some students while others who lack motivation may become undereducated causing a delay or even lack of desire for higher education. While parents may use motivational strategies such as rewards or threats which both undermine autonomy, a decrease in intrinsic motivation, less creativity, and poor problem solving skills will result (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The goal of the SDT in motivating students is to promote autonomy which will increase intrinsic motivation moving the student to an increase in self-satisfaction.

### **Social Involvement of Homeschooled College Students**

Social involvement of college freshmen does not have to include participation in clubs or extracurricular organizations, but rather the casual conversations, small talk, and the easy interchange of ideas (Rosenberg, 1965). A person of low self-esteem portrays defensive reactions in conversations, may shy away from others, tends not to join in conversations, avoids opportunities to communicate in groups, lets others make decisions, is easily led, and lacks self-confidence (Rosenberg, 1965). Students with high self-esteem are usually members of formal organizations, and might even contribute in an elected post, are more likely to share in conversations of public affairs, find group projects an enjoyable process, and tend to participate in study groups (Rosenberg, 1965). Tinto's TOD (1975) notes social integration is directly related to persistence in college while college dropouts perceive themselves as having less social interaction than do college persisters. Tinto (1975) noted excessive social interaction can lead to poor academic performance eventually leading to academic dismissal.

When college students have a sense that other students like them and are able to join others with similar backgrounds and cultures, they are more likely to perform to their potential, with a sense of fit and empowerment (Stephans & Brannon, 2015). Academic success for college freshmen depends on students finding the college environment with the right fit to help them feel at home on a college campus (Stephans & Brannon, 2015). College students who have been homeschooled have found the right fit in many academic institutions as they have been a part of a broad social environment, and as they have joined the ranks in social and civic involvement which prepares them for academic success in the college environment.

Homeschooled students are not isolated, disengaged citizens; rather researchers have found homeschooling families are significantly more likely than public school families to participate in public life through a wide range of activities (Murphy, 2014).



Preparation for college includes social integration to help motivate students and develop a level of self-esteem in adjusting to a new environment. (Cohen & Drenovsky, 2012). Many times, homeschoolers are stereotyped from a sociological perspective and considered marginalized leading to the inhibition of academic success (Cohen & Drenovsky, 2012). Understanding various backgrounds of students will allow faculty and staff to better design interventions to increase student success and persistence despite the type of pre-college learning environment (Duggan, 2010). Academic achievement and social involvement support student success. Colleges want to know if a student can thrive in the social, residential, and extracurricular environment on a college campus, therefore colleges seek to prepare students from diverse educational backgrounds to help them achieve academic success (Layton, 2016).

### **Homeschool Students Transition to College**

As homeschool students transition to the college environment, they experience stressful and emotional feelings as they begin a new season of life (Dias & Sa, 2014). Dias and Sa (2014) also noted college students seek joy in the potential of career decisions but may fear social rejection, react to separation from family, and deal with loneliness. The SDT recognizes these concerns as affecting student autonomy causing an imbalance in one's self worth (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The transition to higher education presents challenges that can be so stressful that some students withdraw when they cannot adjust to the stressors of college life plus the overwhelming experience of autonomy adjustment (Dias & Sa, 2014). Dias and Sa (2014) recognized the first six weeks of transitioning to the higher educational environment as a crucial period in determining retention. Self-esteem plays a foundational role in this time frame for the college student as they begin to develop confidence in their ability to make adjustments and decisions that set their path to college goal completion.

“When transitioning to the classroom (higher education), it is assumed by many that home-educated students may be unaware of the academic and social norms which can be perplexing for educators and overwhelming for the student” (Jones, 2010, p. 1). Jones (2010) noted that previous research indicated homeschool students transitioning to college have had a positive and successful experience, although they were slightly slower in adjusting to the peer social setting. Another study noted a high level of social success in college as a result of the students’ previous participation in a variety of clubs, groups, and organizations. Jones (2010) reported findings that homeschool participants felt confident about their social connection with the campus community and agreed they were involved in university activities and programs.

Young adults transitioning to college is an important time to develop character qualities for becoming self-sufficient, making independent decisions, and beginning to prepare for an independent future away from the parental demands while formulating a self-identity. While the term *novice phase* was once used for young adults from ages 17-33 who experience a considerable amount of change, Arnett (2000) noted a more current term identified as *emerging adults* who are described as a diverse group of young people with a high degree of demographic diversity. Emerging adulthood is a period between adolescence and adulthood in which young people explore their own interest and begin to commit to formulate their future adult goals (Arnett, 2000). Arnett (2000) suggested this period of young adult growth ranges from 18-25 where men and women have not entered a full state of adult responsibilities, and often explore a variety of life directions in relation to determining their future life plans. While these unsettled years are deemed volitional years, Arnett (2000) noted there are strong cultural influences with high demographic variability. In regards to homeschoolers who choose to remain at home to continue in their educational efforts, research on emerging adults has indicated physical

proximity to their parents is inversely related to the quality of relationship, thus promoting a poor psychological adjustment (Arnett, 2000) although Clemente (2016) notes balanced relationships with parents and emerging adults can promote positive individuality enhancing future success.

A qualitative study conducted by Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvihill (2007), found some distinction between the transitional issues experienced by homeschool students and the issues experienced by traditionally educated students. While Tinto's (1975) TOD notes college dropouts perceive themselves as having less social interaction than do college persisters, this is not the case with homeschoolers, as social interaction has not been proven to be a concern in this group of students. Both homeschoolers and traditionally schooled students experienced similar transitional encounters such as loneliness, meeting others with different values, living in residence halls, and greater independence. It is true however that homeschoolers did need to make more significant adjustments to traditional academics and teaching styles (Bolle et al., 2007). Bolle et al. (2007) also noted in their study two homeschool students who were very close to their families found it extremely difficult to leave home initially, but expressed satisfaction with opportunities of independence in their new college environment within a few weeks.

In support of Bolle et al. (2007), Goldberg's article, *The Sinister Side of Homeschooling*, (2013) recognized homeschoolers in most states do have to make significant adjustments to traditional academics as noted, "In 10 states, homeschooling is completely unregulated and in 15 more parents only have to notify their school district that their kids will be learning at home." Goldberg (2013) also noted there are no minimum educational standards for teachers, no curriculum review, no testing or monitoring to make sure that any education is taking place at all. Goldberg (2013) continued to note, in eleven states parents do not have to notify the school

district of their intent to homeschool. Fifteen additional states maintain a low regulation, meaning parents must just be capable of teaching. Huseman (2015) found that no law defines parental capability of teaching and furthermore, officials are not allowed to exercise discretion. Twenty states with moderate regulation suggest parental notification plus test scores and/or professional progress evaluations with periodic assessment, but with no ramifications. Five states mandate a high regulation, which requires annual evaluations (Davis, 2016; Huseman, 2015). The dramatically diverse range of regulations among the states allows parents freedom in their choice to homeschool, how to homeschool, and choose a curriculum that best fits their family. This diversity supports Bolle et al.'s (2007) research in noting homeschool students may take more time to adjust to college life.

In a phenomenological study conducted by Clemente (2016), on the transition to college for homeschool students, a variety of concerns were expressed. Transition to college for homeschooled students contained mixed emotions according to Clemente (2016), as some described their homeschool experience as a thorough preparation for college, while others felt their home schooling simply fulfilled their parents' ideology of religious beliefs. Some students who indicated they were self-taught, or fully engaged in self-directed studies, noted the benefits as it encouraged self-motivation, therefore increasing college preparation. However, others felt neglected and unprepared for college causing frustration and a lack of self-esteem (Clemente, 2016). In an interview with students, Clemente (2016) identified students who struggled with the transition to college, as the students felt they were not academically prepared because their parents were more concerned with protecting their children from negative worldly influences that could cause changes in their worldview. Clemente (2016) also identified students who struggled initially with college due to the emphasis on grades, whereas in a homeschooled

environment, grades were not emphasized. Some homeschoolers felt they were capable of forming positive relationship with their professors as compared to their traditionally schooled counterparts due to their experiences of forming relationships with more adults in their homeschooling years (Clemente, 2016). Research conducted by Clement (2016) continued to indicate varying degrees of college transitional experiences for homeschool students, therefore continued research will promote further insight as homeschooled students continue to move into the college arena.

As homeschool students adjust to college life, self-esteem and emotional intelligence continue to be a concern. Bolle et al. (2007) noted from the perspective of educators who have worked with students, homeschooled students seemed more shy, and take more time to adjust to the social settings of college life. While homeschool students seemed to compare equally or better in academics to their non-homeschooled counterparts, they struggled with adjusting to academic expectations in required writing and research, meeting assignment deadlines, managing time, and getting accustomed to class schedules (Bolle et al., 2007). These struggles are linked emotionally as students strive to perform academically since academic achievement is an indicator of developmental well-being and a predictor of self-esteem (Cheung, Cheung & Hue, 2015). Emotional intelligence has demonstrated its support for one's adaption, well-being, social competence, and self esteem (Cheung et al., 2015). Research conducted by Cheung et al. (2015) has identified emotional intelligence as having a strong positive effect on self-esteem which supports a connection to academic achievement. While research on homeschool students continue to support positive academic achievement, emotional intelligence of the student is affected by the new college campus environments and the reluctance of homeschool students to leave home (Bolle et al., 2007).

## **Goal Commitment**

Goal commitment in association with self esteem in college students can be associated with occupational orientation as the student reflects on the world of work while projecting a vision for the future (Rosenberg, 1965). In a question asking students how important it is to get ahead in life, Rosenberg (1965) noted students with high self-esteem indicated very important, while students with a low self-esteem were more likely to say it is unimportant (Rosenberg, 1965). Choi (2016) recognized that self-esteem can play an important role in goal commitment as individuals deal with significant conflicts over a life span that serve as developmental turning points. As students progress through the college years, Choi (2016) noted self-esteem and goal commitment as a dominant factor affecting interpersonal relationships and learning abilities to be used in future work environments.

Goal commitment related to Tinto's (1975) TOD focuses on the student's level of goals and institutional obligation. Tinto (1975) recognized the expectation of students to decrease in college dropout and withdrawal as the nearness of completion of the college goal commitment nears an end. Liao and Ji (2015) supported the TOD as it relates to self-esteem by noting career indecision among college students creates psychological problems such as anxiety, identity crisis, low self-esteem, and school attrition. Liao and Ji (2015) hypothesized that students' academic goal commitment to a college major established in the freshmen year would increase self-interests, talents, promote a prosperous future, and establish a high level of self esteem. After conducting research involving 375 college students, Liao and Ji (2015) reported significant positive relationships with academic commitment to college majors aligned with personal interest and high expectations for future careers. Goal committed students felt competent to achieve

academic goals, advanced confidently to their academic commitments, achieved personal and career preferences, and indicated a higher self-esteem (Liao & Ji, 2015).

In recognizing goal commitment in the SDT, a mini theory identified within the SDT is goal content theory which differentiates between basic needs for satisfaction and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Guo (2007) noted the SDT presumes that human beings inherently have the natural tendency to explore their potentials and strive for meaningful goals which identifies with autonomous motivation. Since autonomous motivation is associated with higher levels of creativity, cognitive flexibility, persistence, and psychological well being, goal commitment can increase self-esteem (Guo, 2007). Jiang and Gore (2016) concluded that regardless of the goals people may have, the possibility of attaining goals and the effect the goal may have on well-being will not only depend on the content of the goal but also on the motivation for pursuing the goal.

Goals relate differently to individuals in their personal and social functioning (Soenens et al., 2015). Soenens et al. (2015) noted that when students pursue extrinsic goals they can feel pressured to demonstrate their self-worth therefore, this may mean such students more easily doubt their capacity to achieve goals. Extrinsic goals may also cause students to view the world as competitive, create prejudices, and cause frustration leading to a lower self-esteem (Soenens et al., 2015). Research suggests intrinsic goals are related positively to need satisfaction, builds confidence, and promotes long-lasting goal achievement (Kay, 2014).

## **Gender**

In discussing the impact of gender on self-esteem, one might consider subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is an aggregative psychology parameter consisting of life satisfaction, positive effects, and negative effects which reflect on the overall quality of life (Li,

Lan, & Ju, 2015). Li et al., (2015) noted self-esteem as a positive emotional experience gained through social practices consisting of two components: self-efficacy and self-liking. While gender influences subjective well-being, Li et al., (2015) found the relationship between extraversion, those with a higher self-esteem and positive emotions, and subjective well-being tend to be weaker in women than in men. Li et al., (2015) relate this finding to be more apparent in Eastern cultures than in Western cultures.

Identifying factors that contribute to academic achievement among male and female first year college students, whether homeschooled or not, is an important consideration. Rahimi (2016) conducted a study to consider relationship variances between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and academic achievement among male and female college students and found significant gender differences. The results indicated a meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements indicating if a person is emotionally powerful, challenges in life are easier to face (Rahimi, 2016). Rahimi (2016) confirmed a significant difference between male and female students in emotional intelligence, as women scored higher in areas of state of happiness, interpersonal relations, impulse control, responsibility, and empathy. In conclusion of Rahimi's (2016) study, emotional intelligence can be a predictor of academic success, but should not be considered as the only measure of educational achievement.

Both male and female freshmen college students enter higher education with aspirations to complete a college degree. Male and female students learn quickly that adapting to higher education is an ongoing process determined somewhat by their pre-college characteristics and their new academic and social environments (Diniz et al., 2016). In determining potential differences in academic expectations of freshmen college students, Diniz, et al., (2016) suggested



women have higher expectations regarding college and attaining a more quality job than men but, also show more attachment and emotional dependence on family and friends which may negatively impact their autonomy. Male students seem to benefit more from social interaction due to a more positive self-evaluation of leadership (Diniz, et al., 2016). Overall, Diniz, et al., (2016) observed no gender differences in quality of education or social interaction in academic expectations of first year college students. While male and female students may have differences in perspectives, both have proven to be efficient students when focused on academic commitment (Liao & Ji, 2015). Beyer (1998) gave credit to students, whether male or female, based on perception of competence as their academic goals are tied to aspirations, preferences for challenging tasks, curiosity, intrinsic motivation, persistence, and task performance.

As homeschoolers enter the college arena, admissions offices work to assess the students' academic abilities. Gender differences in educational performance in the homeschool environment has indicated a very slight statistically significant difference in the achievement levels of male versus female students where the females outperform males, but once the students enter the college level, there are not significant differences determined (Ray, 2010). Tinto's (1975) theory of dropout suggests gender of the individual plays a role in college persistence with a higher proportion of men finishing college degree programs than women as men perceive educational attainment being directly related to their occupational careers therefore, they feel the need to persist in college as an economic necessity. While women drop out of the college environment, Tinto (1975) recognizes the greater proportion of women who drop out do so as a voluntary withdrawal. Research has also noted female students seem to be more committed to their studies, with initial concerns linked to achievement of their learning outcome while male students criticize the complex bureaucratic system, showing a more external locus of control and

focus on the short term (Dias & Sa, 2014). Overall, gender differences do play a slight role in homeschooled college students, but the research thus far indicates insignificant results (Ray, 2010).

Gender has demonstrated its differences in the homeschool arena as studies have identified women as typically possessing a lower self-esteem than men due to their lack of masculinity characteristics (Mason, Mason, & Mathews, 2016). The masculine characteristics that define a higher self-esteem include being outspoken, acting as a leader, and demonstrating self-confidence (Mason et al., 2016). Since many homeschooled families represent primarily a Christian family background, females are encouraged to develop more feminine characteristics that could lead to a lower self-esteem (Gaither, 2008). Characteristics in women that could promote a low self-esteem include qualities such as devoting themselves to others, expressing tender feelings, dressing modestly, and dissociating with male friends in social circles (Mason et al., 2016). Since these characteristics lack in the masculine higher self-esteem quality traits, research notes a lower self-esteem could be detected in females (Mason et al., 2016). Mason et al. (2016) point out gender differences are formed early in life therefore, expecting to detect gender differences in levels of self-esteem, although their hypothesis was not supported in reporting lower self-esteem in women than in men.

In support of homeschooled female students potentially possessing a different self-perception of themselves based on their family background as opposed to secular female students, lends to influences based on the type of college females attend (Knecht & Ecklund, 2014). Knecht and Ecklund (2014) noted a number of issues separate Christian and secular student bodies where students at Christian colleges are typically more conservative, less materialistic, and more interested in spiritual matters than are their peers at secular colleges.

While Knecht and Ecklund (2014) recognized previous research that college women have higher rates of depression, less self-confidence, and rate their emotional health lower than college men, their research brings to point women made gains by their senior year noting female students became less depressed, more confident, and more altruistic. While female students were unable to close the relative gap with men seen in first-year's results show the root cause of gender differences lies in what happens before students reach college (Knecht & Ecklund, 2014).

### **Summary**

The research shows a need for current information regarding the self-esteem of homeschooled freshmen college students. The 21<sup>st</sup> century brings in a new generation of homeschool college students making adjustments to both residential and online learning. While issues of self-esteem and social concerns are still voiced, the homeschool environment continues to prove itself a worthy competitor to the traditional educational arena. Since the self-determination theory is based on true self-esteem and autonomy, and the theory of dropout deals with an individual's integration in the academic and social systems, when homechooolers are evaluated against these theories, they seem to fair well based on previous research (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tinto, 1975). Parental involvement promoting motivation and social involvement contributes to the self-esteem in first year college students as students focus and commit to goals thus making the college transition process more achievable.

Homeschooling merits the attention of credible research as it is embedded into our nation and conveys a sustainable educational avenue for hundreds of thousands of students across our country (Murphy, 2014). Current educational trends have moved to technology based learning, which has enabled revolutionary internet applications creating educational avenues for every student willing to learn (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). Gaither (2008) noted,

“As homeschoolers have become more computer savvy, it became easier and easier for local groups to create websites, e-lists, and discussion groups,” (p. 209). It is imperative that research maintain a pace with the educational environment allowing educators to make wise decisions regarding the desired academic achievement of students. As society demands higher education for employees, researchers will need to verify the quality and success of academia in the various educational venues to support a constantly changing society.

There is a shortage of quantitative research that examines the development of self-esteem among homeschoolers and follows them into their college years. Although homeschooling has existed for centuries, only over the last 20 years has homeschool been fully legalized in every state in the United States. This has allowed a new era of research to begin in this innovative area of education. With the legal ground cleared, research can begin its trek through the various aspects of home education. Since the complete legalization of homeschool, homeschool students are finding their way through the college campuses across America. While there have been other studies on the transition of homeschooled students to higher education, to date there are no studies indicating research on the self-esteem of homeschooled freshmen college students. Studying self-esteem in homeschool freshmen college students will help move our society to understanding homeschool students as they integrate into our culture.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

In investigating if there is a relationship between the numbers of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in the first year of college study, the researcher used a linear correlation design to determine if there is a predictive relationship between the numbers of years a student is homeschooled and self-esteem levels. A linear correlation design measured the degree of linearity between the variables used in the statistical procedure of a linear correlation analysis. The research design supported the research question as to how accurately can the number of years a student is homeschooled be predicted from self-esteem in the students' first year in college. Studies have shown that the transition into higher education for homeschooled college freshmen can be a stressful experience. In some cases it can cause student withdrawal from college, decreased self-esteem, depression, separation anxiety, and/or a decreased sense of competence (Bolle et al., 2007; Cohen & Drenovsky, 2012; Dias & Sa, 2014; Riley, 2015). The purpose of this quantitative study was to provide current research concerning the predictive relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem in first year homeschool college students. By examining years of homeschool and the relationship of self-esteem in first year college students, parents and educators can gain a better understanding of how to motivate and assist students as they transition into higher education.

### **Design**

The research design selected for this quantitative study was a linear correlation design, as a linear correlation analysis is used to examine one or more independent variables to predict a single dependent variable or relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2015). The linear correlation design was appropriate for this study since the purpose is to measure to what

degree and direction there are between two or more variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Previous similar research conducted by Cohen and Drenovsky (2012) utilized a multiple linear correlation design when predicting self-esteem on homeschooled college students. The purpose of this design was to discover relationships between variables through the use of linear correlation statistics (Gall et al., 2007). The quantitative variables identified in this study is years of homeschool as the predictor variable and self-esteem as the criterion variable. The criterion variable of self-esteem was determined by using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale to determine a relationship with the predictor variable of college students in their first year of higher education.

### **Research Question**

The following research question was proposed to help clarify a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and self-esteem levels.

**RQ1:** Is there a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in the first year of college?

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was submitted regarding a predictive relationship in homeschool and self-esteem in college students. The null hypotheses for this study is:

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students as shown by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

### **Participants and Setting**

#### **Students**

The participants for this study included a convenience sample of homeschooled students in the south-central Texas region. First year college students were approached to participate in a

questionnaire detailing self-esteem. The participants were comprised of both male and female students between the ages of 18-22, attending courses on campus and having under 30 hours of college credit. The survey was sent to first year college students utilizing their college email, homeschool newsletters, homeschool cooperatives, and Facebook request in the south-central Texas region. The students were informed of the goals of the study and asked to participate in the short three minute survey.

The sample in this study was a cross-sectional random survey conducted with a questionnaire distributed to first year college students. Creswell (2015) noted an adequate size for a correlational study should include 30 participants; although, larger sizes contribute to less error variance and better claims of representativeness. Convenience sampling was used, as the study was conducted in the researcher's home state which allowed an ease of obtaining permission due to familiarity of the colleges in the area.

### **Setting**

The sample came from one community college and a homeschool community. While this research is specific to the community college environment, research has indicated students and peer effects have shown to positively influence student perceptions of growth and development in comparison to a four-year college (Akin & Park 2016). Akin and Park (2016) have confirmed from previous studies that individual characteristics of community college students are associated with varying levels of engagement and academic success and resemble college life at a four-year college.

Sampling was also solicited from the Manna publication distributed by the Family Educators Alliance of South Texas (FEAST, 2017), a homeschool non-profit organization designed to promote, assist, and inform the homeschool community in the South Texas region

(FEAST, 2017). The sampling was aimed at both male and female students with no regards to ethnicity, targeting students within the age range of 18-22 years, and attending college as first year college students.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument permitted for use to assess self-esteem is the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965). Rosenberg (1965) considered self-esteem a component of self-concept and defines it as an individual's set of thoughts and feelings about his or her own worth and importance, that is, a global positive or negative attitude toward oneself. The RSES is a unidimensional instrument elaborated from a phenomenological conception of self-esteem that captures subjects' global perception of their own worth by means of a 10-item scale: five positively worded items, and five negatively worded items (Martin-Albo, Nunez, Navarro, & Grijalvo, 2007).

The (RSES) is rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale with items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 positively worded and items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 are negatively worded (Rosenberg, 1965). For items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 strongly agree is worth three points, agree is two points, disagree is one point, and strongly disagree is zero points. The reverse statements which include items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 was scored with strongly agree given zero points, agree was one point, disagree was two points, and strongly disagree was awarded three points (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale ranges from 0-30 points with scores between 15 and 25 identifying normal ranges of self-esteem while scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The survey provides an option to choose amongst the four ranges of strongly agree to strongly disagree beginning from left to right with strongly agree progressing to the final option of strongly disagree. The RSES presented high ratings in reliability with an internal consistency of 0.77, minimum coefficient of reproducibility



of at least 0.90 (Rosenberg, 1965). To further credit the RSES instrument, it has been used in previous studies (Anand & Singh 2015; Choi, 2016; Cone, 2016; Donnellan, Kenny, Trzesniewski, Lucas, & Conger, 2012; Li et al., 2015; Yen, Yang, Wu, & Cheng, 2013). Permission has been granted to use the instrument.

### **Procedures**

The procedures began with the submission of the research to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), then moved to a multi-step process to include (a) entry into the testing institutions and identification of participants, (b) instrumentation, (c) questionnaire administration, and (d) data analysis. The procedures included the distribution of a questionnaire to first year college students using the college student emails and homeschool communication sources. A written request was sent to the college with a description of the research, the purpose for the research, the sampling method, the Likert scale questionnaire, and the length of time to complete the survey. The sampling included first year college students and was administered through the college email system and homeschool sources. The survey was emailed to the students with a two-week time frame to complete the survey. One reminder notice was sent at the end of week one.

Data analysis processes was initiated by collecting the data via a survey instrument then uploaded into SPSS. Individual scores were summed according to the Likert scale ranges of measurement. Descriptive analysis, means, and standard deviations of the instrument scores were completed initially. Data screening, a linear correlation, and then assumption testing were performed to identify if there is a valid statistical significant predictive correlation between years of homeschool on self-esteem in first year college students.

### **Data Analysis**

The relationship between homeschooling and self-esteem upon entrance to college was evaluated using a linear correlation research design. A linear correlation study incorporating a beta weight as a standardized linear correlation coefficient was used to indicate the magnitude of prediction determining presence, strength, and/or directionality of the relationship between the two quantitative variables of years of homeschooling and self-esteem of first year college students (Creswell, 2015). The beta weights are a preferred research tool as they form an absolute scale used in linear correlation techniques yielding a small standard of error for continuous scores (Gall et al., 2007). Cohen's *d* was used to determine the effect size with an alpha level of .05. Data screening was evaluated by setting up a histogram to identify values of skewness and a scatter plot to assess a bivariate normal distribution shape and a linear relation (Warner, 2013). Homogeneity of variance analyses was conducted to assess and ascertain variance in each of the studied variables. Follow-up analyses modeled the relationship to explore skewness and exact patterning of the relationship, if one existed (Warner, 2013).

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

### Overview

The purpose of this quantitative linear correlation study was to determine if there was a predictive relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem levels in first year college students. The criterion variable was defined as self-esteem levels and the predictor variable was defined as student years of homeschool. The self-esteem measure was a 10-item uni-dimensional 4-point Likert scale which measured global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self (Rosenberg, 1965).

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis of this study. Below are the research questions and the null hypotheses sections, followed by the descriptive statistics section. The next section will review the results. This section contains a detailed reporting of the test of statistical assumptions, along with the results of the statistical test used to address each of the null hypotheses.

### Research Questions

The following research question was proposed to help clarify a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and self-esteem levels.

**RQ1:** Is there a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in the first year of college?

### Null Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were submitted regarding a relationship in homeschool and self-esteem in college students. The null hypothesis for this study was:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students as shown by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

There was a total of 13 respondents in this study, 11 females and two males. The average age of all respondents was 18.92 ( $SD = .95$ ). The average number of years homeschooled was 8.62 ( $SD = 4.03$ ). The majority of respondents (61.5%) were homeschooled from K-12, while 38.5% were homeschooled and attended public education. Additional demographic information about the respondents is contained in Table 1. Table 2 contains the mean scores for self-esteem and number of years homeschooled for both males and females.

Table 1

*Respondent Demographics*

	<i>N</i>	%	Mean	Median	Mode	<i>SD</i>
Age	13		18.92	19	18	.95
Gender						
Female	11	84.6%				
Male	2	15.4%				
K-12 Education						
Homeschool	8	61.5%				
Public and Homeschool	5	38.5%				
Number of Years Homeschooled	13		8.62	11	12	4.03
Currently Attending College Courses						
Yes	11	84.6%				
No	2	15.4%				
College Credit Hours Completed						
0-12	8	61.5%				
13-20	1	7.7%				
21-30	3	23.1%				
Previous College Experience						
Yes	8	61.5%				
No	5	38.5%				

Table 2

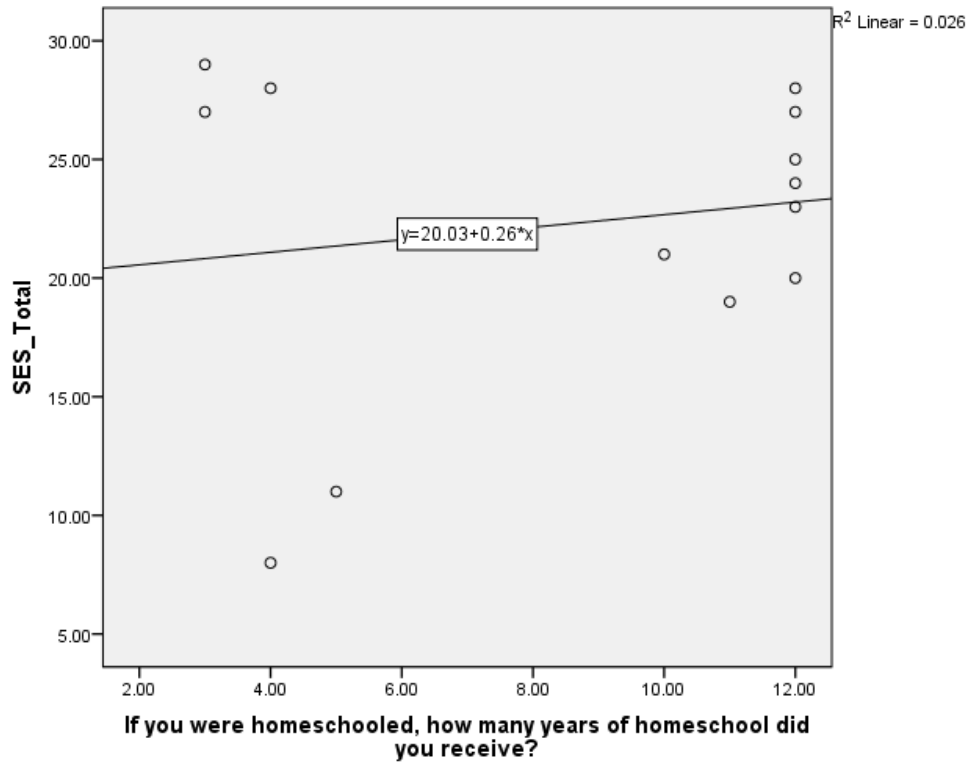
*Mean Scores for Self-esteem and Number of Years Homeschooled*

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	Mode	<i>SD</i>
Self-esteem					
Female	11	22.19	24	28	6.94
Male	2	23.00	23	19	5.66
Total	13	22.31	24	27	6.55
Number of Years Homeschooled					
Female	11	8.09	10.00	12.00	4.18
Male	2	11.50	11.50	11.00	0.71
Total	13	8.62	11.00	12.00	4.03

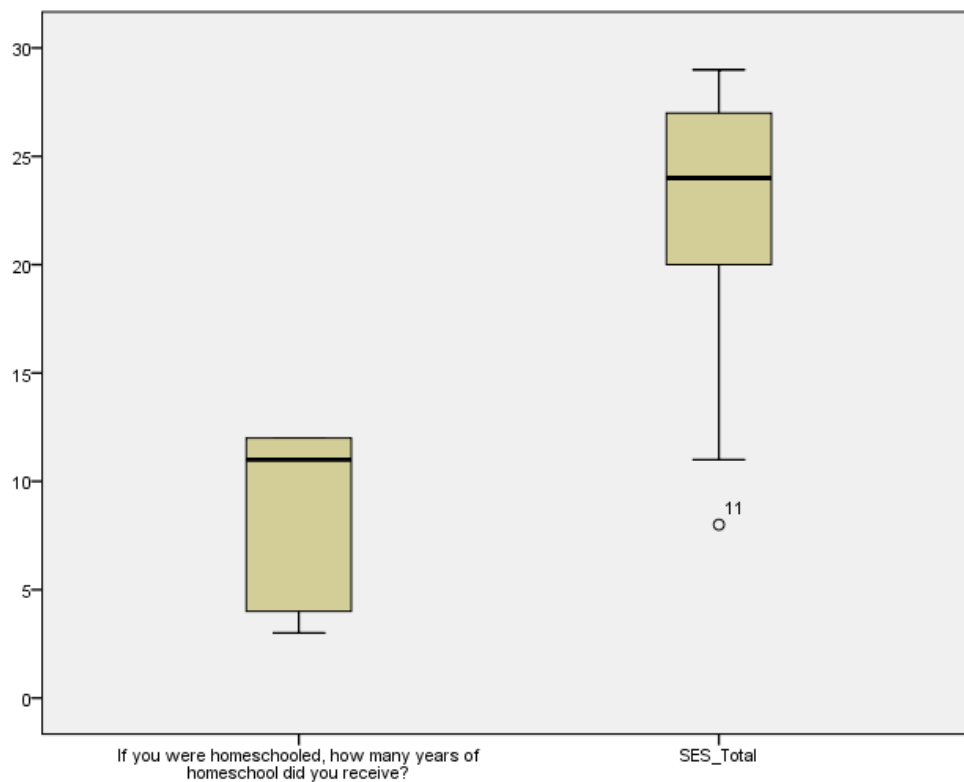
## Results

### Hypothesis 1

The null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant correlation between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students as shown by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Before the linear regression analysis was performed, the test of the assumptions were tested. These assumption tests included scatterplots for linearity, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, and the boxplot to examine extreme outliers. Results of the scatterplot indicated that the relationship between the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and number of years homeschooled was nonlinear, as the plots appeared to form a U-shaped pattern (see Figure 1). The boxplots revealed that there were no extreme outliers, as there were no values that had an interquartile range of 3 from the edge of the box plot (see Figure 2). Finally, the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the the distributions of self-esteem scores and number of years homeschooled were not normal, as the *p* values were less than .05 (see Table 3).



*Figure 1:* The scatterplot shows that the relationship between self-esteem and years of homeschooling is not linear.



*Figure 2:* Boxplot reveal that for all respondents there were no extreme outliers (values that were 3 times the interquartile range).



Table 3

*Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for All Respondents*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
If you were homeschooled, how many years of homeschool did you receive?	.737	13	.001
SES_Total	.860	13	.038

Given that the relationship between the continuous variables were not linear and the distributions were non-normal, Kendall's Tau rank order correlation was performed. Kendall's Tau is used when there are violations in the assumptions and when the sample size is low, typically viewed as below 30 (Field, 2012; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Kendall's Tau was deemed not significant,  $r_t = .015$ ,  $p = .948$  (see Table 4). Based on these results, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4

*Correlation Table of Kendall's Tau Rank Order Correlation – Total Sample*

	Kendall's Tau		<i>p</i> value
	Years of homeschooling	SES Total	
Years of homeschooling SES Total		.015	.948

\* - Denotes significant at the .05 level

One hypotheses was examined in this research to assess the relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in their first year of college. The assumption tests analyzed to support the results included scatterplots for linearity, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, and the boxplot to examine extreme outliers. Due to non-linear results, Kendall's Tau was performed and deemed not significant thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The results of this research study are important to bring attention to self-esteem and homeschool students. The results are also relevant in helping parents and educators to recognize potential in homeschool students. In Chapter Five, the results will be discussed in the context of previous literature along with the implications, limitations and the recommendations for future research

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

This chapter contains four sections. The first section consists of the discussion, where the results of the study are discussed in the context of the previous research from the literature review, and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. The second section reviews the implications of the study. Specifically, this section discusses the meaning of the study in terms of how the findings may effect conditions, lives, and the work environment of others, and how the findings contributes to the existing body of knowledge. The third section reviewed in this chapter are the limitations of the study. Here, any threats to both internal and external validity are discussed, and how these limitations could potentially impact the study. Finally, the chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research on this topic.

### Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative linear correlation study was to determine if there was a predictive relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem levels in first year college students. Since homeschooling has increased and continues to indicate growth (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Smith, 2013), self-esteem in homeschool college students could provide information to parents and educators for higher educational achievement. The RSES was the instrument used to assess self-esteem as it is a unidimensional instrument elaborated from a phenomenological conception of self-esteem that measures a subject's perception of their own worth by means of a 10-item scale.

This study consisted of one research question and three hypotheses:

**RQ1:** Is there a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in the first year of college?

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant correlation between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students as shown by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Since the number of homeschooled students choosing to attend college is increasing, there continues to be a need to identify potential self-esteem issues in homeschooled college students (Smith, 2013). In the social fabric of society, self-esteem is influenced by what others think therefore, peer groups may predominantly influence an individual's self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). Homeschool students are making their way into higher education; therefore, transitional educational experiences are being researched as society receives these students from various backgrounds and educational curriculum. While previous research on transitional experiences of homeschool students to college suggest positive experiences, many educational authorities still suggest the lack of socialization could impact the success of homeschooled students (Bolle et al., 2007).

Recognizing that self-esteem is the value a person sees himself or herself having in the world (Kay, 2014), both the SDT and the TOD could affect homeschool college students as the theories unite in comparing how autonomy and commitment to higher educational goals provide college students success in academic achievement. Emotional intelligence links closely with self-esteem, as it allows researchers to recognize students who have greater societal skills in dealing with a students' entry into college (Rahimi, 2016). Emotional intelligence plays a major role in one's ability to regulate reactions of stress and crisis in which Tinto's (1975), TOD postulates in a student's entry into college, long-term commitment, and the ability of a student to maintain educational goals.

Homeschool parents are faced with the fundamental task of teaching their children and preparing them for effectiveness in society whether that means higher education or pursuing their own interest (Joussemet et. al., 2008). The self-determination theory aligns with the idea that parents provide structure within the homeschool environment which lends evidence to higher self-esteem in the homeschooled student promoting preparedness for higher education. Walker (2005) noted parental involvement with a child's education is associated with stronger student outcomes, academic achievement, and motivation for schoolwork. Contributing to self-esteem in first year college students is the educational level of the parents as students may feel more confident as their parents relay their previous knowledge of college experiences (Stephans & Brannon, 2015). Tinto's (1975) theory of dropout confirms parental support as the child's educational attainment and performance in college promotes quality of relationship and parental interest.

The quantitative linear correlation evaluating the relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in college freshmen students did not yield significance in this study. Although this study lacked a low number of respondents and no significant relationship could be made between the two variables, results from earlier studies did find homeschool students, "experienced college in many of the same ways that other, non-homeschooled students did. In most regards, their undergraduate experiences were unidentifiable from the overall student population: they were normal college students," (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012). In addition, previous research gathered by Cohen & Drenovsky (2012) indicated homeschooled students' self-esteem was not significantly lower than that of other college students.

While gender was noted in Tables 1 and 2, previous research by Rahimi (2016) and Diniz, et al. (2016) noted significant differences between male and female students primarily due to female students having higher expectations, impulse control, and interpersonal relations. On the other hand Diniz, et al. (2016) noted no significant gender difference in quality of education or social interaction of first year college students. Overall, Ray (2010) noted there is no statistically significant differences in regards to gender and educational performance in college homeschool students.

Research confirms the results that there is no significant correlation between the number of years homeschooled and self-esteem levels of first year college students. Homeschool students numbers continue to grow, thus increasing the number of homeschool students entering higher education. While this study received responses from homeschool students with an average of 8.62 years of homeschooling, students with most of their years spent in the homeschool environment continue onto higher education with no significant self-esteem concerns.

### **Implications**

As stated previously, there is a paucity of quantitative studies that examine the self-esteem of homeschooled students. Results indicated that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and number of years homeschooled. Given the findings of this study, despite the methodological challenges (i.e. low sample size), this study adds to the quantitative literature by providing information about how this important study could be done more effectively.

From a homeschooling improvement standpoint, this research may indicate that homeschooling parents may need to do more self-esteem work with their children, as there was

no relationship between number of years homeschooled and self-esteem. Conversely, the results may indicate that homeschooling parents are doing well with their children's self-esteem as there was no relationship between number of years homeschooled and self-esteem. Meaning, the mean self-esteem score for the sample was in the normal range (23.31), so students who have been homeschooled for longer and shorter periods of time both had self-esteem scores in the normal range.

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of the study was the sampling procedures. First, a convenience sampling approach was used, where first year college students between the ages of 18-22 and having under 30 hours of college credit were recruited from one community college and one homeschool institution in Texas. Convenience sampling approach can produce biased samples that are not representative of the population (Creswell, 2018). Second, the number of students who chose to participate in the study was low with thirteen respondents in this study. This low number of respondents also negatively affected both the representativeness and projectability of the study results (Creswell, 2018). Complete Dissertation (2018) noted, "In a linear correlation, the sample size rule of thumb is that the linear correlation analysis requires at least 20 cases per independent variable in the analysis." An additional limitation of the study was that self-report data was used in this study. Some of the challenges with self-report data include that it rarely can be independently verified, can suffer from selective memory, exaggeration or embellishment, and false attribution, where positive events and outcomes are ascribed to one's own agency, but negative events are attributed to external forces. Another limitation correlates with the time the survey was conducted. Since the survey was sent out during the beginning of

the fall term, many students were possibly not prepared for conducting an additional non-mandatory assignment.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The first recommendation for future research is to use a sample aggregator like qualtrics or questionpro, that has millions of people in the data bases. These data aggregators, collect information from their database members that makes is much easier to target potential respondent cost effectively. This approach may alleviate the challenges of finding respondents who meet the sample criteria.

The second recommendation is to include other variables that may effect the relationship between homeschooling and self-esteem such as socio-economic status and whether they are a first generation or non-first generation college students. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds my have higher perceived self-efficacy. Additionally, students whose parents attended college may have a greater number of social and experiential resources from which to draw from their parents and or siblings.

Finally, it ise recommended that the grades where homeschooling took place be also included as a data collection point. If a student was homeschooled during their earlier years of education (i.e. first thru fifth grade), there might be a different effect on self-esteem than if they were home schooled during their high school years. In the current study, it is known how long they were homeschooled, but it is not known for which grades the student was homeschooled.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

## CONSENT FORM

### AN ANALYSIS OF YEARS OF HOMESCHOOL AND SELF-ESTEEM OF FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study that will help to determine if there is a relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem in first year homeschool college students. You were selected as a possible participant because you are between the ages of 18-22, are considered a freshmen student (have 0-30 hours of college credit) and have been homeschooled. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

A doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between the number of years a student is homeschooled and levels of self-esteem in a student's first year of college.

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

Complete an anonymous survey which, will take about three minutes

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

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

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or FEAST. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Sheryl Welfel. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at swelfel@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Wesley Scott, at wlscott@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515.

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

---

Signature of Participant.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
..... Date

---

Signature of Investigator.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
..... Date

**APPENDIX B****Student Recruitment Letter**

Date

College/Institution

Address

City, State

Dear Student:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to determine if there is a relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem in first year homeschool college students and I am writing to invite students to participate in my study.

If you are between the ages of 18-22, are considered a freshmen student (have 0-30 hours of college credit), were homeschooled any number of years, and willing to participate, you will be asked to take a survey. It should take approximately 3 minutes for you to complete the procedure listed. Your name, email, or other identifying information will remain confidential.

To participate, click on the link provided, read the consent document, complete the attached survey, and click "Done" when you are finished.

A consent document is provided as the first page you will see after you click on the survey link attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please click on the survey link at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Sincerely,

Education Doctoral Student  
Liberty University



**APPENDIX C****Permission to Conduct Research Study Letter**

Date

College/Institution

Address

City, State

Dear:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The title of my research project is “An Analysis of Years of Homeschool and Self-Esteem of Freshmen College Students” and the purpose of my research is to determine if there is a relationship between years of homeschool and self-esteem in first year homeschool college students.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at (College/Institution). In order to conduct my research, I would like to request your permission to utilize the student email list to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to click on a link to access an attached self-esteem survey which will take approximately 3 minutes to complete. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email.

Sincerely,

Education Doctoral Student  
Liberty University

**APPENDIX D****Follow-up Recruitment Letter**

September 2018

College/Institution  
Address  
City, St.

Dear Student:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is (Date).

If you are between the ages of 18-22, are considered a freshmen student (have 0-30 hours of college credit), attending courses on campus at (College), and willing to take a short 3-minute survey, I would like to request your participation. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, copy and paste the survey link in your web browser, complete the survey, and click "Done" when you are finished. The survey will then be sent to me for evaluation.

Please click on the survey link at the end of the informed consent document to indicate that you have read it and would like to take part in the survey.

Sincerely,

Education Doctoral Student  
Liberty University

**APPENDIX E****Self-Esteem Scale Questionnaire**

After several demographic questions you will find a list of 10 statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. What is your age?

18

19

20

21

22

2. What is your gender?

Male

Female

3. What was your K-12 education?

Homeschool

Public School

Combination of homeschool and public school

4. If you were homeschooled, how many years of homeschool did you receive?

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

6 years

7 years

8 years

9 years

10 years

11 years

12 Years

5. Are you currently attending college courses on a college campus?

Yes

No

6. How many college credit hours have you completed?

0-12

13-20

21-30

7. Have you had previous college experience either on campus, online, or dual enrollment?

Yes

No

8. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

1-Strongly agree

2- Agree

3- Disagree

4-Strongly disagree

9. I feel that I have a number of good qualities

1-Strongly agree

2- Agree

3- Disagree

4-Strongly disagree

10. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

1-Strongly agree

2- Agree

3- Disagree

4-Strongly disagree

11. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

1-Strongly agree

2- Agree

- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

12. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

13. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

14. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

15. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

16. I certainly feel useless at times.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

17. At times I think I am no good at all.

- 1-Strongly agree
- 2- Agree
- 3- Disagree
- 4-Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX F

### Instrument Permission

“Dr. Florence Rosenberg, Manny's wife, has given permission to use the Self-Esteem Scale for educational and professional research. There is no charge associated with the use of this scale in your professional research. However, please be sure to give credit to Dr. Rosenberg when you use the scale by citing his work in publications, papers and reports. We would also appreciate receiving copies of any published works resulting from your research at the University of Maryland address listed below,” (Rosenburg Scale FAQ).

“You should cite the scale according to the standards of your discipline. The most appropriate citation is: "Rosenberg, Morris. 1989. *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Revised edition. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.”

*Rosenburg Scale FAQ*. (n.d.). Retrieved from University of Maryland: Department of Sociology:  
<https://socy.umd.edu/quick-links/rosenberg-scale-faq-0>

## APPENDIX G

### IRB Approval Letter

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board 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 exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
  - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
  - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

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

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent forms are also attached. These forms 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 documents should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us.

Sincerely,



*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*