An Analysis of Homeschool Resources used in the Chicagoland Area

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the resources used by a diverse population of homeschoolers. 73 participants in the Chicagoland area provided information on: resources that they used, online programs that they employed, which curriculum packets (if any) that they found useful, how they socialize their students and what they value as homeschooling parents. A review of the literature surrounding homeschoolers, establishes that they are an eclectic undefinable group united simply by their desire to homeschool their children. This study found that the resources homeschoolers use, are as diverse as the population itself. The first research hypothesis stated that the resources used by homeschool students were different from those used by public school students, was accepted using a Chi-Square critical of 7.78 and Chi-Square result of 69.48. The second research hypothesis stating that homeschooling parents do not use online educational programs to educate their homeschool students was accepted when the data analysis found a Chi-Square critical of 12.02 and a Chi-Square result of 248.84. The third research hypothesis stating that homeschooling parents do not use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors was accepted when the researcher found a Chi-Square result of 108.61 when Chi-Square critical of 22.31 was needed. The researcher using a Chi-Square critical of 12.017, found a Chi-Square result of 88.05 indicating that homeschooling parents do not use extracurricular activities to develop social skills in their students. The results for the fifth hypothesis set analysis used a Chi-Square critical of 13.36 and found a Chi-Square results of 307.03, demonstrating that homeschooling parents do value as important: field trips, hands-on activities, grades and test scores, life skills, real world experiences, and having fun while learning. The investigator concluded that the rapid growth of the homeschool population could potentially have an impact on the current public education system in the United States. Given the academic advancements of homeschools (when compared to their public school counterparts), this researcher advocates for continued research on this important topic.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

Homeschooling in the United States is not a new concept, before the public school system was created parents were the teachers in their household (Jones, P. & Gloeckner, G., 2004). Home educating children became illegal in many states as public school attendance laws were enforced (Jones, P. & Gloeckner, G., 2004). In the 1960's, conservative and liberal Americans found common ground in their disdain with the public schools (Gaither, 2008). The efforts of these very unlikely allies set off a wave of legal battles allowing homeschooling to be legal once again (Gaither, 2008). In 1999, homeschooling became legal in all 50 United States (Sommerville, 2001). In 2003, The United States Department of Education estimated that 1.1 million students were homeschooled (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). This was a giant increase from the previous 850,000 estimations in 1999 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). According to the National Home Education Research Institute in 2015, the number of homeschoolers climbed to 2.2 million. As the number of homeschoolers grew, so did their thirst for a college education. By 2004, college recruiters were finding applications from homeschoolers more prevalent (Ray 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The legalization of homeschooling across America has given rise to the number of homeschool families in this country. Homeschooling has transformed from the basic parent and child working on lessons at home to: micro schools, online educational programs or cyber schools, part-time homeschoolers, home based charter school, cooperative education, and many others (Horn, 2015; Ellis, 2008; Yaffe, 2015). This tremendous diversity in homeschooling begs the question: What resources are these multiple factions using?

In 2004, the findings of a study that investigated the motivation for homeschooling were released (Belfield, 2004). Many studies have been done to chart the academic achievement of homeschoolers, yet few studies research the curriculum and resources used to obtain this academic achievement. By surveying homeschool parents about resources available and their likelihood to use them, the investigator can make recommendations about the materials most utilized as perceived by homeschooling parents.

Purpose Statement

This study was designed to catalog the resources and curriculum used by a variety of homeschoolers in the Chicagoland area. To obtain responses from a diverse population of homeschoolers, the third largest metropolitan area in the United States was targeted. Participants of this study were over the age of 18 and the primary educator of their child or children. Participants engaged in an anonymous online survey investigating the use of specific educational resources available for homeschool teaching. Participants would not

be identifiable from any of the information gathered by this survey.

Guiding Questions

The following questions guided this study.

1. Do homeschoolers use resources similar to those used in public schools?

2. Do homeschoolers use online resources?

3. Do homeschoolers purchase curriculum packets from publishing vendors?

4. Do homeschoolers consider extracurricular activities for socialization?

5. Do homeschoolers value: grades and testing, life skills, real world experiences, field trips, hands-on activities, and having fun while learning?

Hypotheses

The following five hypotheses sets guided this study.

First Null Hypothesis: There is no difference in the resources used by public school students and homeschool students.

*First Research Hypothesis***:** The resources used by homeschool students are different from those used by public school students.

Second Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents use online educational programs when educating their homeschool students.

Second Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not use online educational programs when educating their homeschool students.

Third Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors.

Third Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors.

Fourth Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do use a number of extracurricular activities to develop social skills in their students.

Fourth Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not use extracurricular activities to develop social skills in their students.

Fifth Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not value as important: field trips, hands-on activities, grades and test scores, life skills, real world experiences, and having fun while learning.

Fifth Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do value as important: field trips, hands-on activities, grades and test scores, life skills, real world experiences, and having fun while learning.

Definition of Terms

For clarity, the following terms are defined.

- **Cooperative (co-op)**: a group of individuals voluntarily working together for the education of their children.

- **Curriculum Packets:** a collection of materials generally lesson plans, books, articles, and/or worksheets designed to aid in the instruction of a particular subject.

- **Extracurricular activities**: courses, workshops and activities that are not generally offered during a traditional public school day.

- **Homeschooling**: the act of educating a student outside of a traditional institutionalized learning system.

- **Primary Resource:** is any resource used 80% or more of the time.

- **Life Skills:** Skills useful for survival in the adult world (cooking, doing laundry, balancing a checkbook or budgeting)

- **Testing and grades:** An evaluation strategy for determining a student's progress.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the resources utilized by homeschooling parents. The results of this study will provide a clearer understanding of the myriad of materials being utilized by a diverse population of homeschoolers.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Overview

A review of over 20 studies and articles found that there is no set curriculum for homeschoolers. Homeschoolers are a population that is not easily defined or categorized. Their backgrounds are extremely diverse and so are the values and beliefs that have inspired them to homeschool. Due to their eclectic nature, homeschoolers seek out educational resources in a myriad of places. How parents homeschool ranges from using traditional textbooks to online education programs and from holistic programs to deschooling programs. Based solely on the complexity of this group, there should be a resounding call for this research.

Resources used by Homeschoolers

A 2012 study revealed that homeschoolers view "their homeschooling as an endeavor that extends beyond traditional schooling boundaries" (Kunzman, 2012). For example, homeschool parents view "libraries, museums, colleges, parks departments, churches, local businesses and schools" as resources (Lines, 2001). A case study of a holistic homeschoolers found that academic pursuits were not introduced early on. The student spent his time playing with friends, going to the library and doing art (McReynolds, 2007). As the child aged, botanic garden programs, history museum programs and other community resources served as learning tools (McReynolds, 2007).

As stated in 2003, "Museums are important and well respected educational and cultural resources." (Cox- Petersen, Marsh et al.). The study continued to state that museums "serve as learning environments for students who take part in guided museum tours" (Cox- Petersen, marsh et al, 2003).

One could anticipate that the resources used by homeschoolers would vary from those used by public school students. A study argued that the common practice of comparing homeschoolers and public school students was futile as the variables were innumerous (Mezzano, et al., 2004). However, a vast number of variants would not factor into a comparison of resources utilized by public school students and homeschool students.

Nine percent of parents surveyed in 2003, stated that individualized teaching was their most important reason for homeschooling (United States Department of Education). A 2012 study compared homeschooling parents choosing educational courses to a diner choosing from a restaurant menu. It stated that classes do not only come from the cooperatives, but from online courses, video courses, college dual enrollment programs and other people in the community (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012). Some microschools also employed the use of videos and podcasts as a weekly resource (Horn, 2016).

Online Education Programs

One study asserted that some homeschool parents "seemed to be defying logic by schooling their children at home without being home themselves" (Bauman, 2002). It was suggested that these families used technology and internet courses to alleviate the need for direct instruction (Bauman, 2002). "Cyberschooling appears to be an unstoppable trend." (Kunzman, 2012). A variety of resources and a wide range of curricula are instantly available on the internet (Hanna, 2012). "The popularity of cyber school learning will continue to impact home schooling..." (Ellis, 2008).

Microschools are defined as the "one-room schoolhouse meets blended learning and homeschooling meets private schooling" (Horn, 2016). Microschools rely heavily on technology and online learning, so much so that a "great microschool" would host "well-designed software to help adults evaluate where each kid is learning" (Horn, 2016). Horn stated that the technological aspect of the program was considered a key component (2016). Integrated software that handles school learning and network operations is only one model of a microschool (Horn, 2016).

In 2014, Sal Khan unveiled his Khan Academy microschool (Horn, 2016). According to the Khan Academy's website, the non-profit school's mission is: to provide a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere (Khan, 2017). The school offers a online classes and instructional videos. Given the ease of accessibility of this microschool, the question is posed would homeschoolers utilize such a resource?

Curriculum Packets

According to a 2007 article, "no standardized curriculum" exists for the homeschool movement (McReynolds, 2007). While homeschoolers study a wide range of subjects, the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics, and science are emphasized (Ray, 2004)

One study noted that some homeschool parents enroll in a "full-service curriculum". This includes not only textbooks, but: lesson plans, evaluations, counseling and record keeping in all core subjects (Ray, 2009). Blumenfeld (as cited in Martin) noted that parents utilizing the prepared curriculum understand the benefits of parent guides, workbooks and answer sheets (Martin, 1997). In home instruction materials are available from large and small publishing companies from periodicals to curricular packages (Lines, 2001). In the late 1990's, a Farris study stated (as cited in Martin 1997) homeschool parents located curriculum in homeschool magazines, conventions, and through groups, now the internet and online homeschool groups are a source for curriculum. Parents can purchase various educational materials from over 70 publishers (Hanna, 2012).

In a public school setting, curriculum materials are provided by the local school district and paid for with tax dollars. Homeschoolers must pay out of pocket for curriculum guides, books and other educational materials. This expense occurs as households forego the potential income of the stay at home parent (Houston & Toma, 2003). A survey of homeschooled adults found that 25 percent of the 7,306 participants used traditional textbooks and assignments (Ray, 2004). This indicateses that 75% of those surveyed did not use textbooks.

A report in The Journal of College Admissions revealed that homeschool learning programs include not only purchased curriculum materials, but homemade materials designed for individual learners (Ray, 2004). It is common for homeschoolers to make or find their own learning materials (McReynolds, 2007). As stated in a study by Michael Farris president of the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, a majority of homeschoolers custom-design their curriculum and handpick instructional materials (Martin, 1997).

In cooperative settings, parents have options as to which courses their students will pursue, but the cooperatives choose the curriculum. The cooperative would make changes in the curriculum based on input from families (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012).

Socialization and Various Educational Activities

In the conversation of homeschooling, the question of socialization arises often (Horn, 2016; Martin, 1997; Medin 2013; Ray, 2004; Romanowski, 2006). One study defined socialization as working together, sharing, and respecting one another (Martin, 1997). Cooperatives were created by home-schooling families to address the need for socialization (Horn, 2016). A survey of homeschoolers and their parents, confirmed that specific steps are taken to insure interaction with other children including planning trips with other homeschoolers and joining local support groups (Martin, 1997).

One homeschool parent was quoted as saying, "The things that we share in our culture, like art and music, are the things that socialize us" (McReynolds, 2007). Homeschool parents list many sources as social contacts for their students including: homeschool groups, community organizations, sports programs and religious groups

(Medlin, 2013). An investigation of homeschoolers aged 10 - 21 found that socialization

was addressed through involvement in: church youth groups, sports, summer camps,

music lessons and recitals (Ray, 2004). Dance classes, group sports, 4-H and volunteer

work are some activities homeschoolers engage in (Romanowski, 2006). Homeschoolers

are involved in organizations such as Girl Scouts, Little League and churches which also

foster learning experiences (Kunzman, 2012).

Homeschool Values

Several studies have concluded that families value systems and beliefs influenced

the decision to homeschool (Martin, 1997, Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Home

schooling offers autonomy from outside authority allowing parents to teach "what they

felt was important" (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012). In an essay on Myths about

Homeschooling, Romanowski asserts that there are "specific beliefs, values and skills

that" homeschool parents want their students to learn and they are not taught in public

school (2006). In 2001, the homeschool population was diverse and hailed from "all

major ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds and income levels" (Lines, 2001). A

Kunzman study stated: "homeschoolers are a diverse bunch, running the gamut of

culture, ideology and practice" (2012). Given that homeschool families are an eclectic

group, it stands to reason that the values and beliefs that they wish to teach their offspring

will also be diverse.

One investigation posed the question of homeschooling as a means of education

that respects "happiness and individuality" and fosters a "natural love of learning"

(McReynolds, 2007). In a Kunzman study, the term "life as education" was coined

(2012). Having fun while learning seems to lend itself to the practice of shaping students into lifelong learners.

Do homeschoolers today value life skills? "In the 1970's communes, "children learned not only folk art and music, gardening and animal husbandry and food preparation." (Gaither, 2008) Gardening, animal husbandry and food preparation are considered life skills that continue to be studied today.

Grades and Testing

In 2002, the United States mandated an educational testing policy whose results would dictate how educational resources would be allocated. Failure to comply with this policy would result in a loss of government funding and/or legal action. States and local governments no longer controlled who was tested, what was a suitable test, and when testing occurred. The new mandate titled No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was regarded as "controversial" (Poe, 2008). Some homeschool parents employ testing as a means to benchmark progress. However, testing and grades are not the only method of evaluating student progress: papers, projects, and portfolios also demonstrate acquired knowledge (Martin, 1997).

Real World Experiences

Based on the amount of time spent out in the community, 'the world as a classroom' is a common viewpoint held by homeschoolers (McReynolds, 2007). The homeschool schedule allows for participation in many activities including community volunteering, missionary excursions, internships, special studies and events (Ray, 2004).

These activities could be considered hands-on and real world experiences.

Home-based business was listed as a homeschool activity (Martin, 1997). The fact that some homeschoolers operate businesses was affirmed in a 2001 article (Lines, 2001). It can be argued that the real world activity of running a business is a skill valued by some homeschooling parents.

Chapter Summary

A review of the literature surrounding homeschoolers, provided a synopsis of the average homeschooler, but that is not the case. Instead, the literature paints an image of an eclectic undefinable group. The common ground seems limited aside from the idea that other schooling environments did not meet their needs in some way. This chapter demonstrates that homeschoolers are utilizing a variety of resources to meet their academic goals and the socialization needs of their own children.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Participants

Before participants began this survey, they were informed that "All participants will remain anonymous. All results are kept confidential and used solely for educational purposes. The purpose of this study was to determine the various resources used by parents who homeschool". Utilizing an online software survey an identifier question was developed to select participants.

Question 1 asked if the survey taker was over the age of 18 and a homeschool parent in the Chicagoland area. If the participant answered no to question 1, the software shut down and the participant was unable to access the survey again.

A Facebook search of Chicagoland Homeschooling groups was conducted and a list of 13 Facebook groups was created. A search of Meetup groups was conducted and a list of 3 Chicagoland Homeschool Meetup groups was compiled. The survey was made available to the groups on the lists. Participants were solicited via the internet. Flyers announcing the survey and requesting participation were placed in various Chicagoland libraries. Ads requesting participation in the survey were posted online at the following sites:

Meetup.com: Northshore Homeschool
Meetup.com: Chicago Homeschool Meetup Group
Meetup.com: The Whole Child Homeschooling Meetup
Facebook: Kenosha Homeschooling Babysitting Club
Facebook: Charlotte Mason Homeschoolers
Facebook: Chicago Homeschool Discussion Forum
Facebook: Great Lakes Unlimited Enrichment
Facebook: Kenosha Homeschoolers
Facebook: Chicago Waldorf Homeschoolers
Facebook: Homeschooling Teens Chicago South/West Suburbs

Facebook: Holistic Homeschoolers of Lake County IL
Facebook: SEA Homeschoolers High School
Facebook: It's Not That Hard to Homeschool
Facebook: Lake County IL Homeschool Share
Facebook: Chicago Tween/Teen Homeschool Co-op
Facebook: Chicago Jewish Homeschoolers

Participants were not offered any compensation or incentives for their participation. Their actions were completely voluntary. In the month that the survey was posted, 112 participants responded. Of the 112 participants, 8 were immediately disqualified as they did not meet the survey criteria: 18 years old or older, a resident of the Chicagoland area or a homeschooling parent. Of the remaining 104 responses, only 73 participants answered all of the questions. The goal of this investigator was to obtain 50 responses.

Instrumentation

This study was conducted online using software provided by the Survey Monkey Corporation. The survey was composed of 14 questions (see Appendix F). The first question was an identifier question. The remaining 13 questions discussed various resources that are used by homeschooling parents. Each question had an "other box" option for the parent to fill in their own response. The College IRB approved this study since it was completely anonymous.

Procedures

This quantitative study was conducted online using survey software. The survey was released online to the aforementioned groups and meetup pages. Flyers announcing the survey and inviting participants were distributed.

Data Analysis

The Chi-square test was used to analyze of the data due to the nominal scale of the data. Historically, there is not a lot of statistical information available in the literature on homeschoolers and therefore a .10 level of significance was used. As reported by Bauman, homeschoolng "has received less research attention" than other areas of the educational system (Bauman, 2002). Degrees of freedom were calculated for each table and a critical value was assessed for each hypothesis. All of the information was organized and presented in a table format.

Time Schedule

The survey was available online for one month in April of 2017.

Budget

The budget for this study included the cost of online survey software totaling $50.00. An additional cost of $3.00 was used on full color flyers announcing the survey that were distributed to homeschool groups at public libraries. $9.95 was used to create a Facebook ad which directed local homeschool groups to the survey. Finally, $40 in transportation costs were spent to transport flyers to various Chicagoland libraries. The total cost of this survey was $102.95 paid out of pocket by the researcher.

Chapter Summary

The participants in this survey were solicited from various online homeschool groups in the Chicagoland area. An online questionnaire and survey software were used to gather data. A Chi-Square Test was used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Overview

The researcher analyzed the data utilizing the Chi-Square Goodness of Fitness

Test. The significance level used was p-value = .10

Data Analysis Results

In Table 1 (below) are the data analysis results for the 5 sets of hypotheses.

Table 1 displays the Chi-Square critical value, p-value and Chi-Square results for each

hypothesis analyzed.

Table 1 Chi-Square Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Chi-sq. Critical	Chi-sq. Results	p-Value	Decision
1	7.779	69.48	.10	Reject the Null/ Accept Research
2	12.017	248.84	.10	Reject the Null/ Accept Research
3	22.307	108.61	.10	Reject the Null/ Accept Research
4	12.017	88.05	.10	Reject the Null/ Accept Research
5	13.362	307.03	.10	Reject the Null/ Accept Research

See Appendices A to E for Chi-Square Analysis

Findings

Hypothesis Set One

First Null Hypothesis: There is no difference in the resources used by public school

students and homeschool students.

First Research Hypothesis: The first research hypothesis was that the resources used by

homeschool students will be different from those used by public school students.

The researcher found a Chi-Square critical of 7.78 and a Chi-Square result of

69.48 (See Table 1). When analyzing the data for hypothesis set one the researcher

rejected null hypothesis one and accepted research hypothesis one.

Hypothesis Set Two

Second Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents will use online educational programs

when educating their homeschool students.

Second Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents will not use online educational

programs when educating their homeschool students.

The researcher used a Chi-Square critical of 12.02 and found a Chi-Square result

of 248.84 (See Table 1). When analyzing the data for hypothesis set two, the researcher

rejected null hypothesis two and accepted research hypothesis two.

Hypothesis Set Three

Third Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents will use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors.

Third Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents will not use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors.

The researcher used a Chi-Square critical of 22.31 and found a Chi-Square result of 108.61 (See Table 1). When analyzing the results for hypotheses set three, the researcher rejected null hypothesis three and accepted research hypothesis three.

Hypothesis Set Four

Fourth Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do use a number of extracurricular activities to develop social skills in their students.

Fourth Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not use extracurricular activities to develop social skills in their students.

The researcher used a Chi-Square critical of 12.017 and found a Chi-Square result of 88.05 (See Table 1). When analyzing the results for hypothesis set four, the researcher rejected null hypothesis four and accepted research hypothesis four.

Hypothesis Set Five

Fifth Null Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do not value as important: field trips, hands-on activities, grades and test scores, life skills, real world experiences, and having fun while learning.

Fifth Research Hypothesis: Homeschooling parents do value as important: field trips,

hands-on activities, grades and test scores, life skills, real world experiences, and having fun while learning.

The researcher used a Chi-Square critical of 13.36 and found a Chi-Square result of 307.03 (See Table 1). When analyzing the data for hypothesis set five the researcher rejected null hypothesis five and accepted research hypothesis five.

Chapter Summary

The researcher found that the data analyzed in this study supported rejecting all five null hypotheses and accepting their corresponding research hypotheses using a .10 level of significance. These results will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions, Implications

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the resources used by homeschoolers in the Chicagoland area. 73 participants provided information on resources that they used, online programs that they employed, curriculum packets that they found useful, how they socialize their students, and what other resources they value as homeschooling parents.

Discussion

The data analysis made no correlations between race, gender, or income levels of homeschool parents. The data analysis did not subcategorize responses based on the number of individual children in the household being homeschooled.

As found in hypothesis set one of this study, the resources that homeschoolers use differ widely from those in a traditional school setting. This finding aligns with the literature review that illustrated how homeschoolers value learning in various settings including: libraries, museums, botanic gardens, historical centers, park district programs and churches (Kunzman, 2012; Lines, 2001; McReynolds, 2007).

In terms of hypothesis set two, the researcher found that homeschooling parents did not use the same online programs. The literature review indicated that an undisclosed number of homeschoolers had joined cyber schools and utilized online education programs (Ellis,2008; Hanna, 2012; Kunzman, 2012). The use of online education

programs seemed more prevalent from statements implying that homeschoolers were learning on computers without any adult supervision (Bauman, 2002). This study found that 60 of the 72 parents surveyed, employed some form of online program. When asked to list other programs used forty-five online education programs were mentioned.

As found in the literature review, "no standardized curriculum" exists for homeschoolers (McReynolds, 2007). Another article stated that 25 percent of 7,306 homeschooled adults did not use textbooks (Ray, 2004). Which implied that 75 percent of those surveyed did not use textbooks. These related literature findings upholds the results of hypothesis set three that homeschooling parents do not use curriculum packets purchased from publishing vendors. Instead, they gain access to curriculum through a multitude of different venues or make their own (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012; Martin, 1997; McReynolds, 2007).

According to the analysis results of the fourth research hypothesis in this study, overall homeschoolers did not use extracurricular activities to develop socialization skills in their children. This supports the literature review findings in that homeschool groups are such an eclectic mix that their socialization comes from a large list of places (Horn, 2016, Lines, 2001; Martin 1997, Medin 2013; Ray, 2004; Romanowski, 2006). However, there was one common place of socialization- the homeschool co-op. Of the 72 participants surveyed 66 (or 92%) belonged to a co-op or another homeschool organization.

The analysis results of hypothesis set five in this study confirmed that homeschool parents value field trips, hands-on activities, life skills, real world experiences and having fun while learning. The majority of parents surveyed did not value grades and test scores.

This finding was similar to the previously published literature findings. What homeschool families value not only influenced the decision to homeschool, but also played a role in what they taught and how the material was taught (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Martin, 1997; Romanowksi, 2006).

This study revealed several other poignant facts. This survey asked if homeschoolers took advantage of the public school resources available to them, 87.5% of the 72 surveyed said no. One article on homeschoolers stated that, "As a rule, home-educated students have relatively little interaction with state schools or their services. A minority participate in public-school interscholastic activities such as sports and music ensembles and some occasionally take an academic course in local schools" (Ray 2004). While homeschool families are not utilizing the public schools they "continue to pay the tax for public school" (Houston & Toma, 2003).

Implications

As found in one previous study, "Homeschooling has been and continues to be a controversial issue in the United States" (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). The population of homeschoolers continues to grow and this undefinable eclectic group begs to be researched.

If the homeschool population continues to grow at its current rate of growth, it could be considered a threat to public education as we know it. In less populated areas, of the United States this is already an issue. In an article about Alaskan homeschoolers, it was reported that school districts are reaching out to homeschoolers and creating collaboration programs (Yaffe, 2015). There is a financial impact on school districts who

are funded based on the numbers of students that they serve (Yaffe, 2015). Partnerships with homeschools may serve as a quick financial fix, but maybe public schools should investigate a more permanent solution.

In a 2014 study, it was concluded that "in the global internet age", the American education "system is broken and needs a big fix" (Friedman et al, 2014). The study suggested that the education system recognize "that we are all different" (Friedman et al., 2014). Homeschools, cyber schools, and micro-schools are designed to address the individual differences of their students. The increased popularity of these educational models demonstrates an attempt to offer a solution to some void existing in the public school system. In 2011, it was stated that "traditional schools can learn from this home school model" (Anthony & Burroughs, 2011).

Studying a population that is not regulated by state or federal government agencies is challenging. Very few states have laws restricting homeschoolers. Eight states including West Virginia require a GED or high school diploma to school a child through high school (Martin, 1997). As of 1997, forty states had no specific qualifications for homeschooling parents (Dorian & Tyler as cited in Martin, 1997). North Dakota required parents to hold a college degree or pass a teacher's test (Martin, 1997). As of 1996, Twenty-nine states had laws requiring standardized testing or evaluation of homeschoolers and thirteen states allowed for alternatives to testing (Dorian & Tyler as cited in Martin, 1997). In 1991, Kentucky began collecting data on homeschoolers, but not many states have followed this example (Houston & Toma, 2003).

If data can't be collected and analyzed, how do we establish baselines for what works and what doesn't work? One reviewed study proposed that "the state has

educational interests of its own, in particular the development of citizens" reasoning that therefore homeschoolers should be monitored in some fashion (Kunzman, 2012).

Some homeschoolers stated that "they did not wish to" see an increase district monitoring (Hanna, 2012). Some feel that restricting and regulating homeschoolers will curtail their experimental teaching methods and taint their learning environment. To gain the most beneficial evidence about the what works and what doesn't, longitudinal studies of this creative schooling solution should be used. To observe the most diverse teaching techniques, home educators in major metropolitan areas should be surveyed often.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the sample size. Given the estimated number of homeschoolers in the Chicagoland area, there was a paucity of responses to this survey. It may be explained by the one month time constraint of the survey. In future studies, a longer timeframe to have the survey open and distributing the survey at homeschool fairs may boost participation.

Conclusions

Homeschool research traditionally encompasses the topics of motivation for homeschooling, socialization, and academic achievement. This study set out to investigate the resources being utilized by a diverse homeschool population. It found that the resources homeschoolers employ are as diverse as the population itself. Based solely on numbers, the rapid growth of this population has a potentially negative impact on the current education system in the United States. Factor in the diversity and myriad of methods being utilized by this population, and add to this the lack of regulations or accountability, and the profound need for continued research is apparent.

Chapter Summary

The data obtained and analyzed in this study aligns itself completely with previous research as stated in the literature review. Time for data collection and sample size were the limitations of this study. As the population size of homeschoolers continues to grow, the threat to public education in less populated areas of the nation increases. More data should be gathered on the resources and methods used by homeschools on a regularly scheduled basis.

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APPENDIX A

	Used		Never		
	Observation	Expected	Observation	Expected	
Netflix	53	58	20	15	73
Instructional videos	67	58	6	15	73
Documentaries	65	58	8	15	73
Graphic novels	35	58	38	15	73
Museum, Historic Center	70	58	3	15	73
	290	290	75	75	365
Chi-Square = 69.48					

APPENDIX B

	NEVER		USED		
	Observation	Expected	Observation	Expected	
K12	67	56.02	4	14.97	71
IXL	61	56.82	10	14.97	71
Khan Academy	40	54.45	32	15.18	72
Moby Max	64	56.82	5	14.55	69
ABC Mouse	67	56.02	5	15.18	72
Key Stone	68	56.02	3	14.97	71
Connections	70	56.82	1	14.97	71
Other	12	54.45	60	15.18	72
	449	448.9	120	119.97	

Chi-Square =	248.8410603

APPENDIX C

	0-2 years of Homeschooling					3-5 years of Homeschooling					5 years or more				
	USED		NOT USED			Used		Not used			Used		Not Used	
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected		Observed	Expe	Obser	Expected		Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected
Math	8	6	13	15		8	7.75	8	8.25		14	10.5	22	25.5
Reading	8	6	13	15		7	7.75	9	8.25		8	10.5	28	25.5
History	2	6	19	15		8	7.75	8	8.25		11	10.5	25	25.5
Science	6	6	15	15		8	7.75	8	8.25		9	10.5	27	25.5
	24	24	60	60		31	31	33	33		42	42	102	102

Chi-Square = 108.61

APPENDIX D

	NEVER		USED		Participants
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	
Scouts	41	30.63	31	41.38	72
Co-op, Homeschool Organization or playgroup	6	30.63	66	41.38	72
Church Program, religious program or spiritual group	33	30.63	39	41.38	72
Recreational Program	20	30.63	52	41.38	72
Art Program	34	30.63	38	41.38	72
Community Programs	39	30.63	33	41.38	72
Library or museum programs	19	30.63	53	41.38	72
other	53	30.63	19	41.38	72
	245	245.04	331	331.04	576

Chi-Square = 88.05

APPENDIX E

	Very important		Somewhat		Not Important		TTL
	Observation	Expected	Observation	Expected	Observation	Expected	
Field Trips	56	50.67	15	12.83	1	8.5	72
Hands-on activities	62	50.67	10	12.83	0	8.5	72
Grades/Test scores	1	50.67	22	12.83	49	8.5	72
Life Skills	68	50.67	3	12.83	1	8.5	72
Real World Experiences	59	50.67	13	12.83	0	8.5	72
Having fun while learning	58	50.67	14	12.83	0	8.5	72
	304		77		51		432

Chi-square =	16

APPENDIX F

	HOMESCHOOL PARENT SURVEY QUESTIONS				
Are you a homeschool parent in the Chicagoland area above the age of 18?				Yes	No
Do you have other children attending public school, private school or parochial school?				Yes	No
How long have you been homeschooling?		0 - 2 years	3 - 5 Years	5 or more years	
Do you homeschool full time or part time?		Full time (All schooling is done through our home.)	Part time (My child/children attend an outside educational institution at least part time. Does not include a co-op.)		
Do you utilize public school resources (such as band, athletic programs or other)?				Yes	No
How often do you use online educational programs?					
	Answer Options				
	K12	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	IXL	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Khan Academy	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Mobymax	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	ABC Mouse	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Keystone School	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Connections Academy	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
How often are you using a purchased curriculum packet (with lesson plans and teacher notes)?					
	Answer Options				
	for math	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for reading	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for grammar and spelling	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for foreign language	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for history	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for science	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
How often do you use textbooks and workbooks (new or used)?					
	Answer Options				
	for math	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for reading	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for grammar / spelling	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for foreign language	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for history	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for science	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly

How often do you use worksheets (free downloads or purchased)?

	Answer Options				
	for math	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for reading	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for grammar / spelling	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for foreign language	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for history	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for science	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly

How often do you use educational games (digital or board games) or apps?

	Answer Options				
	for math	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for reading	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for grammar/ spelling	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for science	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for history	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	for foreign language	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly

How often do you use any of the following resources?

	Answer Options				
	Netflix	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Instructional videos (on youtube, on television or DVD/VHS)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Documentaries	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Brainpop	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Graphic novels	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Museum, historical center or library programs	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Tutors or private instruction	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Barter/ trade lesson (I'll teach your child Spanish, if you teach my child art.)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly

How do you develop social skills in homeschool child? (Check all that apply)

	Answer Options				
	Scouting	Check box			
	Homeschool organization, playgroup or co-op	Check box			
	Church program, religious program or spiritual group	Check box			
	Recreational program (football, soccer, etc)	Check box			
	Art programs (dance, theater, etc)	Check box			
	Community programs (park clean-up, etc.)	Check box			
	Library or museum programs	Check box			

	Other (please specify)				
In a public school system, would your child qualify for any of the following: (check all that apply)					
	Answer Options				
	IEP (Individualized Education Plan)	Check box			
	Gifted or accelerated program	Check box			
	None of the above	Check box			
	Other (please specify)	Check box			
How important are the following?					
	Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Field trips and educational outings	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Hands-on activities	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Grades and test scores	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Life skills (cooking, laundry, and balancing a checkbook)	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Real world experiences (running a business)	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	
	Having fun while learning	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important	