

Homeschooling

Homeschooling Does Not Negatively Influence Students' Lives

~~In this paper, I argue that homeschooling does not negatively influence students'~~

~~lives.~~ Homeschooling can be defined as a teaching method in which parents educate their children outside school borders (de Beer et al., 2020). The practice of homeschooling is growing in popularity, as is seen by the increase in the number of homeschooled students in the United States in 2011, which was about five times the number in 1994, from 356,000 to 1.77 million (Ripperger-Suhler, 2016). In addition to the United States, homeschooling is practiced in South Africa, China, Russia, among others. There are around 75,000 Russian homeschooled students that make up 0.5% of the total number of children (de Beer et al., 2020). In Canada, it is estimated that there are around 80,000 homeschooled students (Van Pelt, 2004). In Israel, homeschooling emerged a few years ago, and it appears that nearly 800 students are homeschooled (Neuman, 2019). Despite the increase in the practice of homeschooling, homeschooling is still a controversial topic in many aspects, such as its effect on homeschooled students. In this paper, I argue that homeschooling does not negatively influence students' lives.

I support my position on homeschooling with the following three arguments. First, I argue that homeschooling does not negatively impact children's social development. Indeed, according to Medlin (2013), parents focus on strengthening their homeschooled students' socialization and finds that homeschooled students' social skills surpass the standard level, which is the average of the social skills of 4000 traditionally schooled students. Second, I contend that homeschooling does not reduce students' academic performance. Reviewing 14 peer-reviewed studies on students' academic performance, Ray (2017) found that most studies indicate that homeschooled students' academic performance is similar or better than traditionally schooled students. Finally, I claim that home-educated students are prepared for adulthood. For instance, Ray (2013) concludes that homeschooled students have a good or even better college experience with respect to other students.

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I also consider alternative positions claiming that homeschooling negatively influences students. In one of these arguments, Evans (2003) indicates that homeschooling results in the isolation of children. In the second argument, Reich (2008) discusses that homeschooling parents seem to not focus on nurturing their children's independence. Furthermore, Evans speculates that parents have complete control over their children. The final argument in concern claims that homeschooled students may experience psychological problems (ref.). While these positions have merits, I provide a study conducted by Chatham-Carpenter (1994) illustrating that homeschooled students are not socially isolated. In addition, Van Pelt (2004) acknowledges that homeschooled students' life satisfaction levels are higher than that of public-school students.

This paper is important because there exist several misconceptions about homeschooling. Some of these misconceptions, such as homeschooled students are protected from the outside world and are not qualified to attend college, are discussed in this paper (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012; Romanowski, 2006). It is important to dispel the misbeliefs on homeschooling to ensure that homeschooled students are treated equally to their peers. Consequently, acknowledging the benefits of diverse approaches to life may foster understanding within the community.

Misconceptions About Homeschooling

Homeschooled Students Are in Isolation

Opponents of homeschooling may argue that homeschooled students are isolated from society. For instance, Evans (2003) claims that homeschooling causes isolation. Evans adds that traditional schools offer an environment that develops certain set of skills in a child, such as communication and confidence. Tilak (2012) agrees with Evans and argues that socialization requires peer contact, which is automatically present in schools. Accordingly, Tilak speculates that homeschooling cannot effectively account for peer contact. Overall,

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Evans and Tilak imply that homeschooling results in isolation since students are not exposed to socialization experiences.

In response to the arguments of Evans (2003) and Tilak (2012), Murphy (2014) concludes that almost no study reveals that homeschooled students are in isolation. Indeed, the results of a survey conducted by Chatham-Carpenter (1994) demonstrate that homeschooled students are not in danger of experiencing isolation. Chatham-Carpenter formed this conclusion after finding no significant difference between the number of contacts of homeschooled and public schooled students. The results of the survey found that homeschooled students contact an average of 49 people. By contrast, public schooled students communicate with 56 people. Such findings contrast with Evans, claiming that homeschooled students are isolated from society. Furthermore, Evans' claim is not based on empirical evidence. Therefore, the author's claim could be debatable.

With regard to the subject of isolation of homeschooled students, some people may argue that socialization is not limited to a school environment only. Romanowski (2006) agrees and suggests that there are various extracurricular activities and opportunities outside home for homeschooled students to socialize. As reported by Van Pelt (2004), results of a survey conducted on around 1,600 Canadian homeschooled students reveal that students regularly participate in various extracurricular activities. In addition, after reviewing several studies, Medlin (2000) finds that homeschooled students participate in several activities. Medlin mentions that some of these activities are volunteering opportunities, scouting, and sports clubs. In fact, the author implies that the reason behind the involvement of homeschooled students in a wide range of activities may be because they do not spend much time on television. The author refers to a study conducted by Runder (1999) among 20,760 students. Rudner reports that homeschooled students spend much less time on television compared to other children of the same age. These findings demonstrate that homeschooled students seem to experience socialization outside home, indicating that they are not isolated.

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Furthermore, it appears that homeschooled students participate in activities that could make up for the absence of exposure to socialization in traditional schools.

To reinforce the findings suggesting that homeschooled students are not isolated, Nelson (1998) acknowledges that homeschooled students are exposed to a vast range of people of various backgrounds and ages. The author explains that this ability of interaction with diverse people is because socialization in homeschooling is not confined to peers in classmates. Medlin (1998) and de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) agree with Nelson and report that homeschooled students interact with people of various cultures, backgrounds, and religions. In addition, Chatham-Carpenter (1994) finds that homeschooled students interact with people of different ages. Furthermore, Medlin (2013) affirms that the quality of relationships of homeschooled students are stronger than that of conventional school students. These relationships are with the students' best friends, parents, and adults. By contrast, Chatham-Carpenter reports that students in public schools often interact exclusively with other students of their age. Overall, it seems that the absence of peer contact in homeschooling does not imply that homeschooled students lack socialization.

Homeschooled Students Are Not Independent

Some critics may argue that homeschooled students are not independent. For example, Evans (2003) speculates that homeschooled students are "... the captive of the orthodoxies of [their] parents" (para 4). That is, students do not have the authority to make decisions for themselves. As a consequence, homeschooling may hinder the development of children's independence. Furthermore, Reich (2008) argues that homeschooling parents may not account for reinforcing a child's independence. Reich discusses that minimalist autonomy is one of the significant characteristics students must acquire in their educational journey. According to Reich (2002), minimalist autonomy is defined as one's ability to critically assess daily life situations and one's opinions and to wisely take advantage of the opportunities and choices encountered to succeed in life. Therefore, the claims put forward

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by Evans and Reich suggest that homeschooling hinders the development of students' independence.

The results of the studies conducted by Neuman (2019) and de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) undermine the claims argued by Evans (2003) and Reich (2008). These results demonstrate that homeschooling promotes students' independence. In addition, findings indicate that homeschooled students have the freedom of choice. Furthermore, the studies show that students participate in the decision-making process of devising their program.

Neuman (2019) interviewed 19 homeschooled adolescents in Israel in order to learn students' perspectives about homeschooling. Most of these interviewees report that they were given a choice to study subjects they wanted to study. It has been noted that homeschooled students valued this freedom of choice. Furthermore, the researcher quotes one of the interviewees, "I think it [homeschooling] gave me true independence and maturity at a relatively young age, both in terms of self-awareness and in terms of how I conducted myself in the big world..." (p. 572). In addition, this interviewee reported that independence and self-concept are acquired because homeschooled students are exposed to a wide variety of experiences at an early age.

De Carvalho and Skipper (2019) interviewed three homeschooled girls and their parents to learn about socialization from their point of view. The authors note that parents involve their children in planning their day. For instance, when asked by her mother what she wants to do during the day, an interviewee named Sophie suggested playing on the trampoline. Although Sophie thought that her mother would disapprove of her suggestion, her mother arranged a group of friends to satisfy her daughter's desire. Overall, the homeschooled girls find that the freedom of choice they have is an advantage of homeschooling.

The studies conducted by Neuman (2019) and by de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) suggest that children's independence seems to be nurtured in homeschooling. The results of

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these studies contrast with the argument presented by Reich (2008), which indicates that parents may not encourage their children's independence in homeschooling. The study conducted by Neuman and also the study conducted by de Carvalho and Skipper highlight that homeschooled students have a significant degree of freedom of choice. In addition, in most cases, it seems that parents do not impose complete authority over their children. This finding opposes the claim put forward by Evans (2003) that parents implement control over their children. In fact, parents offer their children the opportunity to choose and involve them in planning their program. Thus, the misconception suggesting that homeschooled students are not independent may be flawed.

Homeschooled Students Experience Psychological Problems

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The Effect of Homeschooling on Students

To support my position, which is homeschooling does not negatively influence students' lives, I discuss several aspects of homeschooled students' lives. These aspects are socialization, academic performance, and adjustment to adulthood. [incomplete]

Socialization of Homeschooled Students

In this section, I argue that homeschooling does not negatively impact socialization. Medlin (2000) acknowledges that the term socialization could have several meanings. Medlin explains that the socialization in the context of homeschooled students could reflect their social activity, social skills, or social exposure. Durkin (1995) defines socialization as the process of acquiring the behaviors and knowledge that enable a person to be an effective member of a community. The socialization of homeschooled students could be assessed through several criteria, such as social skills and self-concept.

The first criterion in evaluating homeschooled students' socialization is social skills. Medlin (2013) conducted a meta-analysis on studies measuring homeschooled students' social skills using the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS). This system assesses students'

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behaviors that allow them to effectively engage with other people. In addition, the SSRS analyses social skills from the parents' and students' perspectives. Parents evaluate students' social skills in cooperation, assertion, responsibility, self-control, and behavioral problems. Students rate their social skills in cooperation, assertion, empathy, and self-control. Medlin finds that social skills of homeschooled students exceed the standard level. The standard level of social skills, which is used as a benchmark in the SSRS, is based on a national average of 4000 traditionally schooled students. However, when the social skills of homeschooled students are directly compared to that of traditionally schooled students, Medlin reports inconsistent results. Overall, while Medlin concludes that homeschooled students' social skills are above the average, the author could not arrive at a reasonable settlement regarding homeschooled students' social skills when directly contrasted with traditionally schooled students. As a result, it appears that homeschooling does not negatively impact the social skills of homeschooled students.

Murphy (2014) corroborates with the conclusions of Medlin (2013) by conducting a meta-analysis of research investigating homeschooled students' social skills. Murphy explores social skills different from the ones evaluated in the SSRS. These characteristics include leadership, communication, social anxiety, and confidence. In all cases, the author indicates positive results in favor of homeschooled students noting that their social skills are similar or higher than that of traditionally schooled students.

The second criterion in assessing homeschooled students' socialization is self-concept. Simons et al. (2012) define self-concept as the impression a person holds on oneself. Witt (2000) affirms that a child's interaction with others develops self-concept. Therefore, self-concept could aid in measuring the socialization of homeschooled students. By conducting a meta-analysis, Medlin (2000) and Murphy (2014) find no significant differences between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students' self-concept. In fact, in some

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cases, Medlin and Murphy point out that the self-concept of homeschooled students is higher than that of traditionally schooled students.

Taking a closer look into one of the studies investigating students' self-concept, Shyers (1992) compared self-concept levels among homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. Shyers used the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale. The researcher notes that this scale has been one of the most effective reflectors of children's self-concept. The demographics of the study participants were controlled in terms of age, race, gender, socioeconomic factors, among others. The author finds that both groups of students scored above the mean self-concept level with no significant differences. Consequently, the researcher concludes that students' self-concept levels are not affected by the form of education received. Therefore, when socialization is evaluated in terms of self-concept, it could be deduced that homeschooling does not negatively affect homeschooled students' socialization.

Academic Performance of Homeschooled Students [incomplete]

Academic performance is one of the aspects considered in this paper to investigate whether homeschooling negatively affects students' lives. Before examining the research studies evaluating homeschooled students' academic performance, some people may be curious about how productive education in homeschooling could be delivered. Wichers (2001) implies that one of the reasons behind effective academic outcome of homeschooling may be the implementation of one-to-one tutoring method between the parent and child. Furthermore, Ripperger-Suhler (2016) suggests that parents have the accessibility to adapt comprehensive curriculums in educating their children. Lubienski et al. (2013) adds that homeschooling enables parents to modify a proposed educational plan based on the child's ability and requirements. These three methods, among others, could contribute to delivering quality education in homeschooling.

To learn what approaches parents usually take, Thomas (2017) administered a survey studying the methods parents chose to deliver quality education in homeschooling. Thomas

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reports that parents rarely follow one curriculum as an educational program. Instead, the author finds that parents tend to devise their own educational plan by using various curriculums as a guide. As seen, the results indicate that parents use both the approaches proposed by Ripper-Suhler (2016) and Lubienski et al. (2013). In addition, Thomas points out that around 64% of the surveyed parents recognize technology as a valuable resource in their academic program. Parents report that technology was used to access various educational games, activities, and platforms. Overall, parents tend to entertain several methods to devise a productive educational plan for their children.

With regard to research-based results on homeschooled students' academic performance, Ray (2017) conducted a meta-analysis to learn about homeschooled students' academic performance. Ray examines 14 peer-reviewed studies that compare homeschooled and traditionally schooled students' scholastic levels in several areas, such as literacy, math, science, social studies, and listening. Out of these 14 studies, the author reports that 11 articles illustrate that homeschooled students' scholastic performance exceed traditionally schooled students. In addition, the author points out that one study indicates similar academic performance between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. Regarding the remaining two studies, Ray observes that these studies report inconsistent results. These inconsistent results are in favor of homeschooled students, in some cases, and against homeschooled students in other. The author notes that these two studies investigated students at or below 10 years of age. Consequently, Ray reports that the researchers recognize that results might differ with time since the participants of the studies were young. It could be concluded that homeschooled students' academic performance is similar or better than that of traditionally schooled students.

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Homeschooled Students' Adjustment to Adulthood

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Conclusion

Although the misconceptions on homeschooling suggest that homeschooled students may be isolated from society, not independent, and subjected to psychological problems, I argue that homeschooling does not negatively influence students' lives. First, research suggests that homeschooled students are not in isolation as they engage in a wide range of activities outside the home and interact with people of diverse backgrounds. Second, homeschooled students may be independent, as students have the freedom of choice and participate in decision-making processes.

In support of my claim, I explore the impact of homeschooling on students' socialization, academic performance, and adjustment to adulthood. Research indicates that homeschooled students do not lack socialization because they acquire social skills and self-concept. In terms of academic performance, several scholars suggest that homeschooling may result in productive scholastic outcomes because it entertains one-to-one tutoring. Homeschooling also enables modifications of educational plans based on students' requirement may result in productive education. Research on academic performance of homeschooled students suggest they perform at the same level of traditionally schooled students or even better. As a result, it seems that homeschooling does not negatively affect students' socialization and academic performance.

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VERY Nicely done! :)
And I think you've read ahead very well too
Very nice! ☺
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