

# **Homeschooling Does Not Negatively Influence Students' Lives**

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ENG 204: Advanced Academic Writing

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May 23, 2021

### **Abstract**

Homeschooling is a form of education where parents are responsible for educating their children. With the increase in the rate of homeschooling, there exist several misconceptions about this topic, especially about its influence on homeschooled students. In this paper, I argue that homeschooling does not have a negative impact on students' lives. I support my argument by assessing homeschooled students' socialization, examining their academic performance, and investigating their adjustment to adulthood. I also consider alternative arguments that homeschooled students experience social isolation, lack independence, are susceptible to psychological issues, and are subjected to child abuse. Overall, in comparison to traditionally schooled students, homeschooled students are not at a disadvantage in the aspects investigated. I conclude by acknowledging the importance of dispelling the misconceptions about homeschooled students and by providing solutions that may ensure the wellbeing of homeschooled students and increase the effectiveness of homeschooling.

*Keywords:* Homeschooling, socialization, academic performance, adjustment to adulthood, psychological problems

### **Homeschooling Does Not Negatively Influence Students' Lives**

Homeschooling can be defined as an alternative method of education where parents teach their children in a non-school context (Neuman & Guterman, 2017). 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). Homeschooling is also present in other countries as the estimated number of homeschooled students is 75,000 in Russia, 80,000 in Canada, and 800 in Israel (de Beer et al., 2020; Neuman, 2019; Van Pelt, 2004). Despite the increase in the practice of homeschooling, it 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 the lives of students. 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, Medlin (2013) finds that 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) reports that most studies indicate that homeschooled students' academic performance is similar or better than traditionally schooled students. Finally, I argue that home-educated students can adjust to adulthood life. With regard to students' college journey, Ray (2013) concludes that homeschooled students have a good or even better college experience compared to other students.

I also consider alternative positions claiming that homeschooling negatively influences students. First, critics may argue that homeschooling results in the isolation of children from society (Evans, 2003). Second, homeschooling adversaries may suggest that parents do not work on nurturing their children's independence (Reich, 2008). Third, some people may

postulate that homeschooled students experience psychological problems (Lebeda, 2007). Finally, opponents may argue that homeschooling could conceal child abuse (Bartholet, 2020). While these positions have merit, I provide research-based evidence and scholarly points of view that potentially undermine these arguments. For example, the results of a study conducted by Chatham-Carpenter (1994) show that homeschooled students may not be socially isolated. Indeed, homeschooled students engage in various non-home-based activities and interact with people of diverse ages and backgrounds (de Carvalho & Skipper, 2019; Medlin, 1998; Medlin, 2000; Van Pelt, 2004).

This paper is important because there exist several misconceptions about homeschooled students. Some of these misconceptions are discussed in this paper, such as homeschooled students are sheltered from the outside world and are isolated from society (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012; Romanowski, 2006). It is important to dispel these misbeliefs to ensure that homeschooled students are treated equally to their peers. Consequently, acknowledging the benefits of diverse approaches to life may foster understanding within a community.

### **Brief History of Homeschooling**

Homeschooling is not a new practice. Instead, in the United States, this practice existed in the colonial era, where parents would pass on their knowledge to their children (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012; Gloeckner & Jones; 2013). During the twentieth century, institutional schooling evolved and spread as evidenced by the increase in the number of school days in an academic year from 144 to 178 (Gaither, 2008). Alongside the expansion of institutional schooling, homeschooling was prohibited in around half of the states of America (Moran, 2011).

In the 1950s, the practice of homeschooling was revived. The reintroduction of homeschooling was a result of the disapproval of parents towards institutional schooling. During the 1980s, the homeschooling movement rose in popularity as exhibited by the efforts of homeschooling advocates that aim at legalizing this practice (Moran, 2011). One of the

prominent actions is the establishment of Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which is an organization that supports homeschooling advocates in legalizing the practice of homeschooling. In addition, in Florida, proponents of homeschooling formed an organization managed by the election of a chairperson and 12 regional representatives. These efforts that were put forward to legitimize the practice of homeschooling were successful as homeschooling is now legal in all 50 states of America (Isenberg, 2007).

Today, homeschooling is practiced in many countries. These countries include United States, South Africa, China, Russia, and Canada (de Beer et al. 2020; Van Pelt, 2004). In the United States, the number of homeschooled students is increasing rapidly. This rapid increase is illustrated by the rise in the estimated figures of homeschooling, which are 10,000 in 1980, 850,000 in 1999, and 1.8 million in 2012 (Heuer & Donovan, 2017). The remarkable growth rate in the 1990s could be a result of the advancement of technologies and the development of the Internet, which has greatly facilitated the practice of homeschooling (Isenberg, 2007).

### **Misconceptions About Homeschooled Students**

In this section, I address four misconceptions held about homeschooled students. First, some people may assume that homeschooled students are isolated from society. That is, they are confined to their homes with little interaction with the outside world. This assumption may be based on the belief that homeschooled students do not encounter many opportunities for socializing. Second, opponents of homeschooling may argue that homeschooled students are not independent. This misbelief may be the result of speculating that parents control their children. More specifically, homeschooling adversaries may postulate that homeschooled students do not make decisions for themselves, but they presume that students blindly abide by their parents' doctrines. Third, some critics may suggest that homeschooled students are prone to experience psychological problems. Psychological problems could occur because of overprotective parents that shelter their children from the outside world. These problems could also arise because of the limited interaction of homeschooled students with other people. Finally, homeschooling adversaries may postulate that homeschooling increases the

risk of child abuse. The reason behind their claim may be that homeschooling covers up child maltreatment cases. In other words, child abuse cases in the context of homeschooling are not likely to be reported because of the lack of interaction with people. Although the discussed claims may be worthy of consideration, there exists research studies and scholarly views that may challenge these claims.

### **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 while traditional schools provide an environment that offers opportunities to socialize. As such, the author suggests that homeschooled students lack interaction with people because they are not traditionally schooled. In agreement with Evans, Tilak (2012) argues that socialization requires peer contact, which is automatically present in schools. As a result, Tilak speculates that homeschooling cannot effectively account for peer contact. Overall, both studies suggest that homeschooling results in isolation since students are not exposed to socialization experiences that are spontaneously present in schools.

In response to the argument that homeschooling leads to social isolation, research indicates that homeschooled students are not isolated. For instance, 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 survey finds that homeschooled students contact an average of 49 people. By contrast, public schooled students communicate with 56 people. Such findings illustrate that homeschooled students are not in isolation.

In contrast with the notion that socialization requires elements found in institutional education, it could be argued that socialization is not limited to a school environment. For instance, Romanowski (2006) suggests that there are various extracurricular activities and

opportunities outside the home for students to socialize. Van Pelt (2004) corroborates with Romanowski through a survey conducted on around 1,600 Canadian homeschooled students, which reveals that these students regularly participate in various extracurricular activities. In agreement with Romanowski and Van Pelt, Medlin (2000) finds that homeschooled students participate in activities, such as volunteering opportunities, scouting, and sports clubs. In fact, the author explains that the reason behind the involvement of homeschooled students in a wide range of activities may be because they do not spend much time watching television. The author refers to a study conducted by Runder (1999) comparing the number of hours consumed by homeschooled and traditionally schooled students on television. Rudner reports that homeschooled students spend much less time on television compared to other children of the same age. Overall, it appears that homeschooled students participate in activities, which can make up for the absence of exposure to socialization in traditional schools. As such, these findings demonstrate that homeschooled students interact with people outside the home, indicating that they are not isolated.

Regarding the notion that peer contact is an essential element in socialization, Nelsen (1998) suggests that peer contact could limit the number of relationships a child may have. Nelsen acknowledges that homeschooled students are exposed to a vast range of people of various backgrounds and ages because socialization in homeschooling is not confined to peers in classmates. Medlin (1998) agrees with Nelsen and reports that homeschooled students interact with people of various cultures, backgrounds, and religions. De Carvalho and Skipper (2019) corroborate with Medlin and Nelsen as they report that homeschooled students have a diverse social network. De Carvalho and Skipper observe that students interact with a diverse range of people because of the nature of homeschooling. That is, homeschooling does not limit social interactions to people in a particular community, such as a school. In addition, Chatham-Carpenter (1994) finds that homeschooled students interact with people of different ages. By contrast, Chatham-Carpenter reports that students in public schools often interact exclusively with other students of their age. Overall, homeschooled

students have a diverse social network denoting that the absence of peer contact in homeschooling does not entail that students lack socialization.

By considering the findings suggesting that homeschooled students are not isolated from society, the claims put forward by Evans (2003) and Tilak (2012) may be debatable. Evans' and Tilak's claims raise concern because their arguments are based on personal opinions rather than empirical evidence. Furthermore, the findings discussed earlier suggesting that homeschooled students are not socially isolated challenge Evans' and Tilak's positions. As such, the authors may have formulated these claims as a result of insufficient knowledge about the experiences of homeschooled students. Consequently, this lack of awareness might have been one of the reasons behind the misconceptions formed about homeschooled students. Therefore, it is important to alert people that students are not disadvantaged because they are homeschooled.

### **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 minimalist autonomy, which is a fundamental characteristic each student must acquire. According to Reich (2002), minimalist autonomy is defined as one's ability to critically assess daily life situations and opinions and to wisely take advantage of the opportunities and choices encountered to succeed in life. All in all, the claims put forward by Evans and Reich suggest that homeschooling impedes the development of students' independence.

The results of the studies conducted by Neuman (2019) and de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) may possibly undermine the claims suggesting that homeschooled students are not independent. The results from the studies conducted by Neuman and by de Carvalho and

Skipper demonstrate that homeschooling accounts for the development of students' independence. In addition, findings show that homeschooled students have the freedom of choice and participate in the decision-making process of devising their program.

Neuman (2019) interviewed 19 homeschooled adolescents in order to learn about students' perspectives about homeschooling. Most of these interviewees report that they were given a choice to study subjects they liked. 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). This interviewee also reported that independence and self-concept are acquired because homeschooled students are exposed to a wide variety of experiences at an early age. As such, the independence of homeschooled students appears to be encouraged in homeschooling.

Meanwhile, de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) interviewed three homeschooled girls and their parents to learn about socialization from their point of view. One of the significant findings of the study conducted by de Carvalho and Skipper is 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 studies find that the independence of homeschooled students may result from various experiences they undergo that help them learn more about life and themselves. Furthermore, the studies highlight that homeschooled students have a significant degree of freedom of choice. They find that parents offer their children the opportunity to choose and involve them in planning

their program. These results illustrate that parents do not impose authority over their children, but rather they encourage their independence.

### **Homeschooled Students Experience Psychological Problems**

Some people may claim that homeschooled students are susceptible to psychological problems (e.g., Lebeda, 2007). More specifically, some critics argue that homeschooling hinders the development of emotional stability and psychological health of students (Duke, 2016). These psychological issues could be caused by the fact that the practice of homeschooling isolates children from the outside world and limits their interaction with other people. In fact, a student, who had a negative homeschooling experience, pointed out that parental control and isolation from society resulted in depression and suicidal tendencies (Berlatsky, 2010). As such, opponents of homeschooling claim that homeschooled students are likely to experience psychological and behavioral problems because of the nature of homeschooling.

Although some may argue that homeschooling may increase the risk for psychological problems, research does not confirm this claim. For instance, the results of a study conducted by Guterman and Neuman (2017) indicate that homeschooled students exhibit lower depression levels than traditionally schooled students. Furthermore, Guterman and Neuman compare the rate of externalizing and internalizing problems between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. The authors explain that while externalizing problems could be considered as violent attitudes, juvenile crimes, and disobedience of rules, examples of internalizing problems could be anxiety and reticence. Guterman and Neuman find no significant difference in the rate of internalizing problems between both groups. By contrast, they observe that externalizing problems are more common among traditionally schooled students than homeschooled students. Such results suggest that homeschooled students generally exhibit similar or fewer psychological problems than traditionally schooled students.

In agreement with Guterman and Neuman (2017), Medlin (2013) finds that the psychological development of homeschooled students is similar or superior to that of traditionally schooled students. By conducting a meta-analysis, Medlin reports that homeschooled students tend to have fewer behavioral problems and experience less social distress than traditionally schooled students. Additionally, the author finds no significant differences in the feeling of loneliness of both groups of students. Furthermore, the author observes that homeschooled students positively reflect on their homeschooling experience. Van Pelt (2004) corroborates with Medlin and reports that homeschooled students in Canada are more satisfied with their lives than public school students. These findings indicate that homeschooled students experience the same or even fewer psychological issues than traditionally schooled students.

There could be several reasons behind the findings that favor homeschooled students in terms of their psychological development. For instance, although Reavis and Zakriski (2005) have found that homeschooled and traditionally schooled students are exposed to similar levels of negative peer interaction, homeschooled students are less influenced by this peer pressure. The relatively high intensity of peer pressure experienced by traditionally schooled students could lead to anxiety and depression. The authors justify these findings by suggesting that most homeschooled students do not find themselves comparing their social status because they are not regularly exposed to social comparisons as traditionally schooled students. In addition, Janosz et al. (2008) find that exposure to violent experiences, such as bullying, is associated with externalizing and internalizing problems. In fact, it has been found that a global estimate of around 1 in 3 students between the age of 13 and 15 are exposed to bullying (“Peer Violence-UNICEF,” 2018). As such, bullying is common in schools and may possibly be the reason behind the detection of higher levels of externalizing problems in traditionally schooled students compared to homeschooled students. Overall, the exposure to negative peer pressure and violent experiences in traditional schools may potentially justify the positive results in favor of homeschooled students.

### **Homeschooled Students Are Subjected to Child Abuse**

Critics may argue that homeschooling could increase the chances of students experiencing child abuse. More specifically, Bartholet (2020) claims that homeschooled students are subjected to abuse because parents can easily inflict harm on their children and avoid Child Protective Services (CPS) intervention. Bartholet supports her position by reporting that most child abuse cases are identified by school employees, suggesting that maltreatment of homeschooled children is not likely to be reported to CPS. In addition, Knox et al. (2014) reveal that 13 out of 28 child abuse cases under study were removed from school by using parents' right to homeschool. That is, the authors agree with Bartholet and suggest that homeschooling is used as a method to cover up the mistreatment of a child. Concerning the number of homeschooled students that experience maltreatment, Homeschool Alumni Reaching Out (HARO) (2014) reports that 42% of the 3700 surveyed students were abused. Therefore, critics may view homeschooling as a potential danger for students.

The notion that homeschooling promotes child abuse may be true to a certain degree. However, the high proportion of homeschooled students experiencing abuse, 42% of 3700 students, reported by HARO (2014) is doubtful. The high percentage of child maltreatment detected in the sample of homeschooled students could be the result of several reasons. For instance, the survey was conducted on a platform called SurveyMonkey, which is easily accessible to the public. As such, the researchers may have inadequate control over the demographics of the surveyors, decreasing the accuracy of the results. Additionally, researchers of HARO report that one of the significant limitations of this survey is that it is initially publicized through the homeschool abuse community. The researchers affirm that this limitation may be the main reason behind the high percentage of child abuse cases associated with homeschooling. Furthermore, although the participants were required to report that they were homeschooled, there are no restrictions that could prevent non-homeschooled students from taking the survey. This lack of restraint may weaken the results of the study. In addition, Bartholet (2020) affirms that the proportion of homeschooled

students abused may not be determined because of the lack of data to obtain a reliable estimate of the total number of homeschooled students. These reasons suggest that the high proportion of homeschooled students reported by HARO may have some degree of uncertainty.

Considering the argument that homeschooled students experience child maltreatment, it is possible that homeschooling may provide a cover for child abuse. That is, some parents may have the freedom to mistreat their children without worrying about the intervention of the Child Protective Services (CPS). However, Goodpasture et al. (2013) argue that the practice of homeschooling is not the primary factor behind the lack of detection of child abuse cases. Instead, the authors suggest that these mistreatments may occur as a result of shortcomings in the services provided by the CPS responsible for ensuring children's well-being. The authors point out that, in North Carolina, current meetings between the CPS and homeschooling families are not required to be in the families' homes. As such, they propose improvements on the existing system, specifically in North Carolina, to ensure children's health and safety by visiting homeschooling families in their homes. Furthermore, Hamilton (2020) suggests that homeschooled students should undergo regular health checkups to ensure their well-being. Such solutions could increase the supervision of homeschooled students and address the issue of child maltreatment in homeschooling.

### **The Effect of Homeschooling on Students**

To support my position that homeschooling does not negatively influence students' lives, I investigate the socialization, academic performance, and adjustment to adulthood of homeschooled students. First, the socialization of homeschooled students is evaluated on the basis of the students' social skills and self-concept levels. Second, the academic performance of homeschooled students is discussed by learning about the methods of delivery education in homeschooling and research-based results of the academic achievements of those students. Finally, the adjustment to adulthood of homeschooled students is examined by assessing the students' college performance and civic involvement in society.

### **Assessing the Socialization of Homeschooled Students**

The first aspect examined to evaluate the effect of homeschooling on students is 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. As such, 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' behaviors that allow them to effectively engage with other people. In addition, the SSRS analyses social skills from the parents' and students' perspectives. While 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. After examining the studies, Medlin finds that the 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 those of traditionally schooled 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 than the ones examined by Medlin, and they include leadership, communication, social anxiety, and confidence. Based on the results analyzed, the

author finds positive results in favor of homeschooled students noting that their social skills are similar or higher than those of traditionally schooled students. Based on the level of social skills of homeschooled students, it could be deduced that homeschooling does not have a negative influence on students' socialization.

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. As such, 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 cases, Medlin and Murphy point out that the self-concept levels of homeschooled students are higher than those 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 uses the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale and notes that this scale has been one of the most effective reflectors of children's self-concept. The author finds that both groups of students scored above the mean self-concept level and reports no significant differences between those groups. 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**

Academic performance is one of the aspects considered in this paper to investigate whether homeschooling negatively affects students' lives. Before examining the research studies that evaluate homeschooled students' academic performance, some may be curious about the delivery of productive education in homeschooling. For example, Wichers (2001) implies that one of the reasons behind the effective academic outcomes of homeschooling

may be the implementation of the 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) add 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 follow in their educational plan, Thomas (2017) administered a survey studying the methods parents chose to deliver quality education in homeschooling. Thomas reports that parents rarely follow one curriculum as an educational program, but rather parents tend to devise their academic plan by using various curriculums as a guide. As seen, the results demonstrate that parents use both 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. Indeed, 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 academic 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, mathematics, science, social studies, and listening. Out of these 14 studies, the author reports that 11 articles illustrate that homeschooled students' academic performance levels exceed traditionally schooled students. In addition, the author finds that one study indicates similar academic performance between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. Regarding the remaining two studies, Ray observes that they report inconsistent results. Some of these inconsistent results are in favor of homeschooled students, while others are against homeschooled students. The author notes that these two studies examined students at or

below 10 years of age. Consequently, Ray reports that the researchers recognize that results may alter with time since the participants of the studies were young. Therefore, it could be deduced that homeschooled students' academic performance is similar or better than that of traditionally schooled students.

Taking a closer investigation of the academic performance of homeschooled, Ray (2010) conducted a study on homeschooled students in the United States. Ray used the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Test (ITBS) and the California Achievement Test (CAT) to assess the scholastic levels of homeschooled students. In particular, ITBS evaluates the fundamental skills vital to the academic development of a student, such as reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The results of the study show that homeschooled students scored at least 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on the tests, which is considered above the score attained by public school students. As such, it seems that homeschooling does not impede the academic development of homeschooled students.

### **Homeschooled Students' Adjustment to Adulthood**

The final aspect examined in this paper to support my position on homeschooling is the adjustment to adulthood of homeschooled students. Adulthood is a broad term that incorporates numerous experiences and various challenges a person encounters. In this paper, the adulthood of homeschooled students is assessed by their college performance and civic involvement.

The college performance of homeschooled students is one of the criteria used in discussing the students' adjustment to adulthood. Murphy (2014) and Ray (2017) conducted meta-analyses that assess the college performance of homeschooled students. The assessment measures in these meta-analyses include grade point average (GPA), scores in entry exams, anxiety levels, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Murphy concludes that the college performance levels of homeschooled students are similar and, in some cases, better than those of traditionally schooled students. Meanwhile, Ray found that the results of 11 out of 16 scholarly research studies report that homeschooled students are performing better in

college than traditionally schooled students. In addition, Drenovsky and Cohen (2012) report that homeschooled students tend to positively reflect on their college experience. Drenovsky and Cohen also find no significant differences in the confidence levels in college between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students. Furthermore, Duggan (2009) reports that a larger number of homeschooled students compared to traditionally schooled students tend to rate themselves above the national average and expect to achieve top ranks in academic ability, mathematics, and reading comprehension. These research findings show that the college performance of homeschooled students is at least similar, or even better in some cases, than that of traditionally schooled students. Therefore, it could be concluded that homeschooling does not have a negative effect on the college performance of students.

The second criterion used in examining the adulthood of homeschooled students is civic involvement. Based on a meta-analysis, Murphy (2014) concludes that home-educated adults participate in community-related responsibilities more than the remaining population. Indeed, Ray (2004) finds that 71% of home-educated adults are involved in community services, while only 37% of the general public participate in these activities. These services include voting, signing petitions, and participating in protests. Ray also reports that home-educated adults are up to date with recent events and accept diverse opinions of others, suggesting that they appear to have an open mind. Furthermore, Medlin (2013) concludes that homeschooled students successfully adapt to adulthood and cope with various experiences. Overall, these findings illustrate that homeschooled students are highly involved in community activities and perform well in real life.

### **Conclusion**

Many controversies exist as to whether homeschooling has a negative influence on the lives of students. These controversies may be merely based on misconceptions and lack of insight about homeschooled students' life experiences. As such, it is important to know what research demonstrates about homeschooled students in order to assess these misconceptions. In this paper, I argued that homeschooling does not negatively affect the students' lives.

In support of my claim, I explored three aspects of the lives of homeschooled students, which are socialization, academic performance, and adjustment to adulthood. Research suggests that the socialization of homeschooled students is not substandard as they acquire relevant social skills. Furthermore, findings demonstrate that homeschooled students have similar self-concept levels to those of traditionally schooled students. In terms of students' academic performance, studies show that homeschooling could result in productive scholastic outcomes. As a consequence, the academic performance of homeschooled students tends to be similar, and in some cases superior to that of traditionally schooled students. With regard to homeschooled students' adult lives, they appear to have successful college experiences. Additionally, studies show that homeschooled students effectively engage in community responsibilities.

Opponents may argue that homeschooling has adverse effects on students' lives as it may lead to social isolation, lack of independence, psychological problems, and child maltreatment. However, research shows that homeschooled students participate in many extracurricular activities and interact with a diverse range of people indicating that they are not socially isolated. Considering the argument on students' independence, parents work on nurturing their homeschooled children's independence by giving them the freedom to choose and involve them in the decision-making process of daily-life situations. Although homeschooled students may experience psychological problems, research suggests that homeschooled students seem to exhibit similar or even fewer psychological issues compared to traditionally schooled students. Despite the increased risk of child maltreatment associated with homeschooling, research scholars have proposed various solutions that may diminish these risks.

In spite of the existence of several noteworthy positions against homeschooling, it appears that homeschooling does not have a negative influence on the lives of students. To further ensure the well-being of students, homeschooling could be regulated to a certain degree where the physical and psychological health of students, along with their academic

performance, could be monitored regularly. By dispelling the stereotypes that underestimate the potential of homeschooled students, those students could be recognized as effective members of a community like any other individual. As a result, experiences could be shared between individuals in a society, and unity could be strengthened in the community.

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