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Where Will I Sleep Tonight? A Qualitative Case Study of Homeless and Displaced College Students

Andria Lynn Coleman

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WHERE WILL I SLEEP TONIGHT? A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF HOMELESS
AND DISPLACED COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Dissertation Approval

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the needs of undergraduate students who are homeless or displaced, as well as examine the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University, a public four-year university, that may support or hinder students' retention and progression. This study will be driven by the following research question: How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University during their first two years? Using Resiliency Theory and Hope Theory as the theoretical frameworks, this qualitative multiple case study seeks to identify the issues of these homeless or displaced college students to see whether their needs are being met by the policies, procedures, and systems that are in place at Mountain University. In addition, Complementary Analysis Research Matrix Application (CARMA) will be used as a data analytical guide to examine these policies, procedures, and systems to see if they are working for the students, what changes may need to be made, and if changes are made, to assess those changes for the good of students who are homeless or displaced.

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I must acknowledge the six students who were bold enough to meet with me; in hearing your stories and writing this dissertation, I found out a lot about myself. I learned how to adapt and overcome some of the worst times of my life and to re-route my pathway to not only continue but to finish this to tell your stories. It is important your voices be heard.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, LeRoy Knowles, my brother, Kevin, my daughter, Riley Roggenbeck, and my grandchildren, Ivy and Dash Dineen. My father taught me I could do anything I wanted to in life, and I should not let anyone stop me. Thank you for your love and support throughout this journey. My thanks go out to my aunts, Mary Jo, who told me when I graduated with my master's that I needed to get my doctorate and Sheryl and Lynette, thank you for listening to me when I doubted myself and giving me much needed encouragement. My best friend Jeff Simons, was there for every phone call when I thought I should quit, encouraging me throughout this process. You mean the world to me. I cannot forget my dogs, Quill and Wiggles who were at my feet while I wrote, listening to me babble, but never judged.

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Chapter 1

Overview

Introduction

For most high school students, the thrill of waiting for the large envelopes in the mailbox from colleges they applied to and the possibility of receiving financial aid in the form of scholarships, grants, or both to attend school is one of many highlights of senior year. But for some students, it may produce several more hurdles in an ever-growing list of obstacles that they have or will encounter. For those students the first hurdle may be having to find a place to stay, hopefully somewhere safe, every night. Or it could be worrying whether they have to move from one friend's couch to another friend's couch. The weight of a student being homeless or displaced looms for students starting their first year or continuing their education. Other hurdles may include having the funds to apply to the colleges of their choice as colleges usually have an application fee that must be paid when applying, filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) where they are required to have parental information unless they are emancipated or having access to a computer. But the student may not get as far as applying for college because they do not have the one major necessity: a real mailing address, which could be the very first obstacle a homeless student may encounter. The homeless or displaced college student may face many more obstacles or hurdles as well. More research is needed to understand what homeless or displaced students need not only to get into college, but also to retain their academic status so they can progress through their program, all to possibly to break the cycle of homelessness or displacement. The purpose of this research is to conduct a qualitative multiple case study to identify the needs of these particular students as they navigate the policies, procedures, and systems in place at Mountain University.

Importance of Study

The topic is important to study because in order to have a productive society, we must have an educated society. For students to thrive through such adversity as being homeless, not just wondering where they are going to sleep at night, but also whether they will be safe and where their next meal is going to come from is astounding. These same students, the word student is purposefully used, not teenagers or young adults, know that they must find an area to finish their homework and attend class, receive good grades because they have a scholarship, a grant, or both and progress higher in the institute to break the cycle of homelessness. To help the students break this cycle, we as a collective, must understand what experiences they have during their retention, progression and completion when working toward their degree. According to Crutchfield, et al., (2019) in addition to the academic issues that homeless or displaced students may encounter, other experiences that could influence their success in school may include strained peer relationships, family trauma, barriers to financial aid, and lack of access to technology.

Homeless and Displaced – Ages 18-24

For homeless college students, the research should start with young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. The reason for the age is that most young adults start college right after high school. There are numerous definitions and types of homelessness and displacement, but sheltered and unsheltered are the overarching terms that are used in this study and in the literature review.

A discrepancy exists in the numbers associated with homeless and displaced young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. One study states that there are 3.48 million homeless young

adults or 12.5% of that age's population (Morton, 2017). Another study, provided by Project Home, states 10% of the population is homeless but their number totals 53,438 in 2018 (ProjectHome, 2018). The National Alliance to End Homelessness in 2018 provided the count of 36 thousand (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2018).

The difference in numbers may be attributed by several factors. One factor is that the young adult may not consider living double-up or couch-surfing as being homeless. The second factor may be that young adults may not want to identify as homeless because of the stigma attached to it. The third factor may be because the counts could have been a Point-In-Time (PIT), which is a random time that groups choose to count homeless people. The PIT count is conducted and then the statistics are broken down by age and gender. The timing and area may not have been conducive in counting homeless people between the ages of 18 and 24.

Definitions

The following terms and their corresponding definitions will help in understanding the different aspects of this study:

Sheltered – living in a building that is meant for human habitation.

- *Homeless shelter* – run by county, city or non-profit. May only be used at night, therefore all belongings must be taken out during the day (NCHE, 2021).
- *Living with non-parental units* – living with family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins in a home or apartment (NCHE, 2021).
- *Couch-surfing* – spending short amounts of time at different relatives or friends. The person couch-surfing does not have a permanent bedroom in the house (Curry, et al., 2017).

- *Living doubled-up* – at least two separate families living in the same space. In some instances, not all family members have their own bedrooms or have bedrooms (NCHE, 2021)
- *Transitional housing* – Students exiting the foster care system enter transitional housing, but it is temporary and certain conditions have to be met in order for the student to stay there (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019).
- *Short-term motels/hotels* – These motels/hotels do not have leases or contracts, therefore making them non-permanent for residents, (NCHE, 2021).

Unsheltered – living in an area or building that is not meant for human habitation. Living unsheltered poses dangers for students such as losing the ability to use the space or dangers from others living there.

- *Abandoned building* – a building that is no longer viable for human habitation as it may have been at one time, but the building may now be falling apart, have no electricity, and/or no running water (Batko, et al., 2020).
- *Warehouse/garages/storage units* – areas where no running water and/or electricity is available (Batko, et al., 2020).
- *Cars* – a student may live in their car, sleeping in it at night or during the day with no running water or electricity (MAEC, 2018).
- *Public transportation* – using public transportation for sleeping on for safety at night (NCHE, 2021).

Displaced – someone who lacks a home as through political exile, destruction of their previous shelter or lack of financial resources (Dictionary.com, 2020). Google Dictionary also states that

displaced can also mean leaving their home due to persecution, this could include LGBT students who have had to leave home (Google dictionary, 2020).

Research Problem

For many young adults, ages 18-25, this is a time to attend a college or university. The young adults who attend a college or university who are homeless or displaced may have experiences while in school which translates into the possibility of interrupting their retention, progression, and completion. Although these students receive scholarships, grants, or both to attend school, the funds may only pay for specific areas, such as classes and fees. This would leave little to no monies for books, housing, or food. If a student must worry about a safe place to sleep at night, somewhere to keep their belongings, along with how they are going to shower or have clean clothes, this may take precedence over learning in the classroom. After leaving class or campus for the day, the homeless or displaced student may have to worry about where they will access the internet to complete homework or take an online class. In light of 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, college classes went from mostly classroom attendance to meetings online through WebEx or Zoom. At the Mountain University all the libraries were closed, which not only restricted access to books, printers, and study rooms, it also suspended access for homeless or displaced students from the two items they may have needed most to keep up with classes: the internet and computers. This may have had a profound effect on the student who is homeless or displaced.

In conducting this research, the benefit will hopefully be two-fold. First, the student who is homeless or displaced will be able to access all necessary services to help them retain their status in college, progress through their program with eventual graduation. The other benefit will

be to the university to ensure that the policies, procedures, and systems the university has are beneficial to the homeless and displaced students. The final goal for both the student and the university is an increase in graduation rates and decreasing drop-out rates.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced and whether those needs are met by the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University. I was looking to distinguish how the student navigates procedures, policies, and systems of the university to persist to graduation. For this study, students will have received a scholarship, grant, or both to attend school. I was seeking to understand students' experiences that may be associated with being homeless or displaced the students have from the time they applied for admission to a university through their first two years of school.

My intention was to understand their living situation, whether sheltered, unsheltered, or a combination of both, or if the student is displaced such that they are living doubled-up with other family members or couch-surfing with friends. Their living situation is just part of understanding if the best practices of the university meet the needs of the students in this situation. Along with understanding student's living status, other areas included how students navigate the admission process, understand the parameters of FAFSA, seek out advice from academic advisors, select and attend classes and complete their homework to name a few. The goal was to understand how students manage their college life and what policies, procedures, and systems the university has in place to help the homeless or displaced student be successful.

Research Question

This study was driven by the following research question: How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of Mountain University to attend the first two years?

Summary

Chapter one introduces the study of homeless and displaced college students and the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced compared to the policies, procedures, and systems that Mountain University has in place, possibly unveiling areas that need improvement to help this vulnerable population. Included in this chapter are the definitions most associated with homelessness and displacement, along with the research problem and purpose statement.

Chapter two will highlight the dates of the literature review which includes the terms used in the gathering of data. The definitions of homeless and homelessness, based on the US Code are generic, whereas the authors used terms such as housing affordability and housing insecurity. Chapter two also discusses the age of the homeless population and the amount of people in the 18–24-year-old age range, which is the usual age for college students. In the research there appears to be a discrepancy in the numbers. Along with the numbers, there are several different types of homeless population in college; each of those is discussed in chapter two. Homeless student issues, from monetary to educationally are examined in the chapter. For the conclusion to the chapter, the theoretical framework of resiliency and hope theories is introduced.

Chapter 2

Review of literature

Introduction

While conducting a review of the research on college students' homelessness and issues they often face during their time in college, I found that most studies discuss the reasons for poverty, what constitutes homelessness, and the number of students included in the lowest socioeconomic status who are less likely to graduate. The research also discusses Grade Point Averages (GPAs) and how LGBTQ students handle homelessness while attending a higher education institution. Several studies also discuss whether a student is housing or food insecure but did not consider the student receiving a scholarship or other financial aid. Little or no studies addressed the difficulties with financial aid that both the students and administrators face as well as the barriers both sides faced for the homeless students. At this time, there does not appear to be a qualitative study that investigates the experiences of homeless students, whether they were awarded a scholarship or not, but are either homeless or face being homeless and attending a public four-year university or college.

For undergraduate students who receive scholarships, grants, or both to attend a university may find the funds are only allocated to cover the tuition and fees, not the day-to-day living expenses. Room and board may not be part of their financial aid package. Although the students are entering the arena where they have an opportunity to break the cycle of homelessness, they are still in need of some type of support. These students may find themselves housing insecure. Gupton (2017) enounces that factors such as poverty, violence, foster care (where students age out of the system), and broken families can be tied to homelessness.

Students may find themselves couch surfing with friends or relatives because their parental units are not able to provide the basic necessities (Gupton, 2017).

Perhaps Hallett (2010) said it best “the law lags behind the needs of the students and institutions can voluntarily take steps to increase education access for homeless and other highly mobile students” (Hallett, 2010). Note a “highly mobile student” is a student who changes schools more than two times in a year; this term and definition are mostly associated with K-12 students.

Therefore, the intent of my study is to identify the needs of college students that are homeless or are facing homelessness who were awarded scholarships, grants, or both in comparison with the policies, procedures, and systems of the Mountain University. In this chapter, the review of the literature, I will introduce the different types of homelessness, which include sheltered and unsheltered. The topic of basic homelessness within a specific age group 18-24 years old and then move on to homeless and displaced college students, which will include LGBTQ, emerging adults, and foster youth. Also included in this chapter are policies that may have an effect on homeless and displaced college students. Finally, I will present the overview and elements of the proposed theoretical framework: resiliency and hope along with one conceptual framework: Complementary Action Research Matrix Application (CARMA) and discuss how these frameworks help us understand homeless college students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced and whether those needs are met by the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University. I was looking to distinguish how the students navigate

procedures, policies, and systems of the university to persist to graduation. For this study, students will have received a scholarship, grant, or both to attend school. I was seeking to understand students' experiences that may be associated with being homeless or displaced the students have from the time they applied for admission to a university through their first two years of school. My intention was to understand their living situation, whether sheltered, unsheltered, or a combination of both, or if the student is displaced such that they are living doubled-up with other family members or couch-surfing with friends.

Research Question

This study was driven by the following research question: How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of Mountain University to attend their first two years?

Dates of Literature Review

Research materials on the topic of homelessness, homeless or displaced college students were located through numerous database searches using the Mountain University Main Library website. The primary databases used were EBSCO, ILLIAD, and Eric. Other sights, such as government and non-profit agencies were also used to collect data. Various search terms were used in the gathering of data. Terms included college student(s), homelessness, homeless, housing insecure, sheltered, unsheltered, college, university, community college, student, and young adult. Although a specific date range was used, a 10-year span from 2010 to 2020 was primarily made. The most notable classic exceptions were the 1989 book, *Homeless Students* (Crosson-Tower, 1989) and the journal article, *The Prevalence of Homelessness Among*

Adolescents in the United States (Ringwalt, et al., 1998) published in 1998. The two resources alert us that homelessness and adolescents are not new topics. The unfortunate part is even after decades of research and knowledge of homeless students, whether they are K-12 or college, we still have not found a solution to the problem of homelessness.

Definition of Homelessness

The most comprehensive definition of homeless or homelessness can be found in the US statute codes. According to the US Code §11302 the definition of the terms “homeless”, “homeless individual” and “homeless person” is as follows: an individual or family that lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or their primary nighttime residence is either a public or private place that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, which can include a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground. The definition also includes an individual or family that lives in a public or private owned shelter that provides temporary living arrangements. This includes hotels or motels that are paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing. Also, any individual that resides in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided. The statute includes if the individual or family will lose their housing, including housing that they currently own, rent or live in without paying rent, sharing with others, or living in a hotel or motel not being paid for by the aforementioned agencies and face imminent eviction (Cornell Law, US Code, 2004).

In researching homeless students, the authors discussed different definitions of what being homeless means. In the study conducted by Miller (2011), homeless definitions range from

a student living in their car, the bus or train station, or if their residence for nighttime is not regularly used as a place to sleep. Broton (2019) defines homelessness as housing insecurity and that there are numerous ways to define and measure. She further states that housing insecurity is on a spectrum with the most extreme being a lack of an adequate nighttime residence. Bowers and O'Neill (2019) join Broton as to how homeless students must constantly make choices on where they are going to stay at night. However, the Bowers and O'Neill study included comments from students stating that if they did not have to focus on this most basic need, academically they may have done better. Using the definition from the McKinley-Vento Act, Broton extends the definition with the same as stated above but includes there are no other alternative accommodations. Although the US Code touches on money in the form of rent or living without paying rent along with only discussing homeless persons in a general sense, Broton states higher education literature includes housing affordability and stability. She goes on to say secure housing is limited for higher education students (Broton, 2019).

Smith and Knechtel (2019) weigh-in with their definition of homeless and homelessness by stating in defining housing insecurity and what they term as “the more devastating ‘homelessness’ is tricky business. They follow up with that there are no nationally recognized criteria to determine housing insecure. Smith and Knechtel cite Goldrick-Rab’s (2016) study when Goldrick-Rab and her colleagues collected data for a study in 2008, only 2 questions were asked of students to determine if a student was housing insecure: 1) Was there ever a time in the past 12 months when you were unable to pay your rent or mortgage on time? 2) Were you able to pay your gas, oil, or electric bill on time? Broton follows up ten years later, there are now nine questions students are asked (Broton, 2019). One must wonder if nine questions is enough to

determine if a student in higher education is housing insecure or as Broton discussed, “the more devastating ‘homelessness’” (p. 2).

For this study, the terms homeless and displaced will be used as they are overarching terms. In the next section, the term “displaced” is defined.

Homeless Population Ages 18-24

In the study conducted by Morton, et al., (2018), homelessness for young adults, ages 18-24 years old in the United States has skyrocketed to an estimated 3.48 million or 12.5% of this ages’ population. There are several factors that result in only an estimation of the number of young adults that are homeless. One factor is the different definitions that are used in studies that are conducted. Some of the studies only use sheltered or unsheltered while others separate the definitions further by whether the student is living with relatives or living in an abandoned building. The second factor is that young adults may not want to disclose their homeless status as they try to blend in with their peers and will choose not to use services available to them; this will be discussed later (Narendorf, et al., 2018). Crutchfield, et al., (2016) echoes the sentiment about the number of college students as being an estimate. Whatever the number is at the time of any study should be considered a low estimate and the actual number would be much higher. The article reiterates students may not want the stigma attached to them of being homeless, therefore will not share that information willingly (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).

There is a discrepancy in the numbers between the Morton, et al., (2017) study and Project Home’s information. Project Home’s 2018 report to Congress showed on one single night in January 2018, there were 552,830 people that were homeless in the United States. Project Home claims that 65% were sheltered and 35% were unsheltered. Project Home shows

that two of three people experiencing homelessness were adults (over the age of 24) with no children. Only 9% (53,438) of the total homeless population that night in January were young adults, ages 18-24, Project Home reports. The report to Congress follows those numbers with the notation that on a single night in 2018, about 36,000 unaccompanied youth (under 25) were experiencing homelessness; 89% were between 18 and 24, with 51% of them unsheltered (Projecthome.org, 2018). Another organization that completes counts of homeless population stated that in 2019 just over 35,000 unaccompanied youths were homeless (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019). There may be several reasons why these counts are so different from the Morton, et al., (2018) study. The first may be because of the aforementioned reason of not wanting to disclose their homeless status, and wanting to fit in. The second may be when the homeless population is counted, it is conducted as a Point-In-Time (PIT), which is a random time that groups choose to count the amount of homeless people in a specific area then break down the statistics by age and gender. A third reason could be that although Morton, et al., (2018) does not state the depth of the study, this study could be based on national numbers whereas the other studies may be based on a specific area, for example, Washington, D. C. Consequently, because one study may be on the national level and the others may be on local levels, the numbers are different.

As an example, in Las Vegas, Nevada, Project 150 helps the homeless, displaced and disadvantaged high school students with school, hygiene, clothing, and food supplies so the students can continue to attend high school and graduate, thus, changing their trajectory in life. Project 150 states that in 2018, 3,100 students register as homeless, displaced, or disadvantaged within the Clark County School District but there are another 3,400 students that are non-registered but still need help in meeting their needs while attending school (Project150.org,

2018). Project 150 does not ask for any identification other than a Clark County School District identification card for students to access the needed items. Therefore, it is not possible to know how many of the students that utilize their services are in each of the categories – homeless, displaced or disadvantaged. While homeless or homelessness has a definition, the categories of displaced or disadvantaged do not have concrete ones. For this research, disadvantaged will not be used but rather I will use displaced. Displaced will be considered the same as homeless or homelessness as the individual may be living sheltered either in a doubled-up situation, living with relatives that are not their parental units or couch surfing.

Emerging Adulthood

In discussing homeless youth, Wenzel, et al., (2012) examines the ages of 18 to 24 through a different lens of emerging adulthood. The study indicates this age group is the most marginalized set of individuals in the United States. The study chose the term “emerging adulthood” because they are neither adolescence nor adult. The population experiences life changes, such as leaving their stable support, living in their parents’ home and emerging into a life on their own by obtaining employment and intimate partnerships (Wenzel, et al., 2012). A Point-In-Time (PIT) random sample was conducted with 349 homeless youth to investigate their social networks. Wenzel, et al., (2012) found that people in this age group relied mostly on their social network and identified the same as themselves for survival. Most of the young people in the study did not have sufficient resources to maneuver life challenges because of poverty, being residentially challenged and disassociated from family. The emerging adults’ social network influence their actions, whether positively or negatively.

The results of this study showed that emerging youth were more likely to meet and identify with like people on the street than to relate to relatives. When emerging adults interacted

with others from the streets, they engaged in risky behavior because they were influenced by others risky behavior. When the emerging adults were engaged with relatives, they engaged with a healthier behavior, although they were still homeless (Wenzel, et al., 2012). The study did not state whether the emerging adult identified closer to family ties and/or the family engaged in healthier behavior. This study may be useful in an academic setting because the group engaged with others that had a positive or healthier behavior influenced them more than the group with risky behavior. If homeless or displaced college students were to have this type of support group or social network with other homeless or displaced students where they could discuss or share their experiences, they may be more open to identifying themselves as homeless or displaced and to utilize services available institutional services (Wenzel, et al., 2012).

Displaced Population

Earlier in this review, I described displaced as someone who lacks a home through political exile, destruction of their previous shelter or lack of financial resources (Dictionary.com, 2020). Curry, et al., (2017) study on youth homelessness and vulnerability discusses couch surfing and how it fits into homelessness. The study states that couch surfing is common with age groups 13-17 years of age (4%) and 18-25 years of age (20.5%). They also state that couch surfing lies at the center of ambiguity because there is a lack of consistency of what constitutes homelessness. The definition given in the study is “young people without support from parental homes who frequently ‘move from one temporary living arrangement to another, without a secure place to be” (p. 17). They also refer to the term “doubled-up”, but the consensus is this population has nowhere else to stay due to economic or social issues (Curry, et al., 2017).

Prior to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2007 (HEARTH), the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) did not consider unaccompanied youth that couch surfed or doubled-up as being homeless. Since HUD did not recognize this way of living as homeless, those in this situation were not afforded any federal monies or services. Unfortunately, as with all federal, state, and local programs there are qualifications that need to be met by the youth. To qualify for federal programs the youth would have to (a) be considered homeless by another federal legislation such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) and (b) additional criteria such as not having a lease or occupancy agreement and there is a strong possibility the youth will remain homeless due to other circumstances, such as having an addiction issue, mental health issue or employment issue. Curry, et al., (2017) state this is a set of complex conditions for youth to adhere to. One other agency that does help homeless youth is the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (Curry, et al., 2017). Hallett (2012) states that doubled-up individuals are the least studied of all the subgroups of homelessness, but they are the largest group in numbers that is covered by the McKinney-Vento Act (Hallett, 2012).

In addition, financial issues come with youth that couch surf or live doubled-up. While Curry, et al., (2017) do not discuss it in their journal article, Hallett (2012) does state that although friends and family are willing to help for a short time, it is not a permanent situation. The support from family and friends may break down due to financial issues or overcrowded conditions of the living areas. A person or family living doubled-up or is couch surfing is more likely to end up back on the street or in a homeless shelter than to find permanent housing. Hallett (2012) also mentions that there are more studies on families living doubled-up than youth or students (Hallett, 2012).

To complicate matters more, Curry, et al., (2017) discusses what other journal authors have stated, an annual Point-In-Time (PIT) captures only a portion of the “literally homeless youth” and echoes the count of 36,000. Although the study does discuss homeless youth living sheltered and those living unsheltered, it brings the counting of youth back to the concept of couch surfing and doubled-up stating that the PIT does not include or cannot accurately include youth that are identifying as couch surfers or doubled-up because the method of tallying the youth is not conducive to this style of counting (Curry, et al., 2017).

Only one study discussed students, and policy makers citing complications may occur for students and youth who couch surf is while this population lacks the stability of a place to sleep on a consistent basis, policy makers and practitioners try to make an argument that this should not be considered homelessness because “students may be doing this for adventure or carefree lifestyle. The policy makers and practitioners claim the homeless student may be doing this because they equate it to traveling around Europe and living in hostels” (Hallett, et al., 2019).

LGBTQ Homeless Youth

LGBTQ youth may be less able to utilize the benefits of federal programs that would assist them in their educational goals as described in the article written by Tierney and Ward (2017). They state that LGBTQ students at all levels of schooling have difficulties because of bullying that come from every area including family members, peers, teachers, and administration, just to name a few. To tie their school experiences to homelessness, Tierney and Ward (2017) suggest take these students (or youth) come from the same economic backgrounds as their heterosexual counterparts. The study echoes the ideals of what constitutes homelessness as stated earlier by the US Code and studies conducted by Curry (2017), Goldrick-Rab (2017), as well as Broton (2016) regarding living sheltered in emergency and long-term shelters or

unsheltered as living in a car or abandoned buildings and continuing with the use of couch surfing and doubling-up. Tierney and Ward (2017) also confirm the reasons for homelessness, such as parental abuse, strained relationships, and lack of economic resources. Goldrick-Rab's 2018 article also notes that LGBTQ and non-binary gender students as well as foster youth are at greater risk for needs insecurity (Goldrick-Rab, 2019).

As with prior journal articles, Tierney and Ward (2017) review the numbers of homeless youth. Tierney and Ward go on to say there are an estimated 320,000 to 400,000 LGBTQ youth every year that face homelessness. One of the major reasons for LGBT youth end up homeless is they are forced out of their homes by family members because of their identity. Another reason is LGBTQ youth may run away because of rejection by family and friends (Tierney & Ward, 2017).

The Homeless Student

Who is the homeless student and what does the individual look like? Gupton (2017) states the homeless youth population is a very diverse population. They differ in race/ethnicity, gender, past experiences, education, the support system they have or do not have, and their family structure. Gupton also identifies other factors for homelessness that deal with economic resources and this population risks losing their place of residence because of disrupted income. The disrupted income can include loss of a job, illness, or accident, and once the student or family falls into homelessness, it is very difficult to get out of it (Gupton, 2017). This may force the student or family to be homeless, on a couch or live with relatives. Although Gupton's work focuses mostly on high school students, he does dive into homeless students attending college, parting with the knowledge of little research has been completed on the subject.

Miller's (2011) study on homeless students identifies the reasons for homelessness, which may have foreshadowed Gupton's 2017 definitions such as broken family issues, foster care, sexual orientation, gender identity, and culture. Miller also discusses the difference between lower socioeconomic status and students that had a permanent home as well as those who had home insecurity. The students with home insecurity had lower grade point averages and did poorer on tests than their counterparts. The demographics for the study are with high school students. In contrast to the study, there are areas where the student, even going through periods of homelessness will still triumph, as in the case of students that receive scholarships through Project 150 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Miller does touch on the funding through the McKinney-Vento Act, which is the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) grants. The grants are formulated from Title I, Part A funds and are available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The unfortunate part is the grants appear to be for preschoolers through high school students, not for college students (U. S. Department of Education, 2018).

Hallett's (2010) study is a combination of two different, but complementary studies focused on homeless college students who "are highly mobile". Hallett discussed one student in particular, Tenisha, who received a scholarship to attend a private four-year university which included her room and board. It is a wonderful coup for a student to receive a full scholarship that includes housing, but unfortunately there is a downside. The downside is when there is a break from classes and the residence halls close, Tenisha has to move out and needs to find shelter for the weeks she will be out of school. According to Hallett's study, Tenisha would need to live in a family shelter on Skid Row if she cannot successfully find an alternative shelter.

Hallett discusses a coordinated effort between the university and the student must occur, so the student does not need to find alternative shelter during breaks. He repeats the sentiment

that students do not want to identify as homeless, as do other authors in this literature review. He also considers students who are highly mobile to aspire and attend college, but who could not navigate through the application process as well as other obstacles proved too great for the students. Hallett does not specifically mention the FAFSA process, but one could construe it is a possibility. It is interesting that Hallett's study is the first to discuss a student's attention to not only their academics is challenged when they are in homes, but also their social engagement. This could be because of the need to hide their status from other students (Hallett, 2010).

Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017) stated in their study, practitioners at college campuses have worked with students "whose lives are marked by precarity – a condition of existence without security or predictability of basic material or psychological welfare". The past president of Miami Dade College-Wolfson campus Madeline Pumariega, stated there is a connection between precarity and academic success for students:

When a student is hungry, he does not feel safe, and it is hard to help him synthesize class material. We have to meet students' basic needs in order for them to fully concentrate on assimilating the information in a class in a way they can apply it, learn, and take it forward (Miami-Dade College, 2020).

The quote reflects what Hallett concluded in his study; students have specific needs which have to be met to succeed. This is discussed throughout the literature within community colleges and 4-year universities, but they did not discuss housing. Hallett discusses the possibility of a 4-year university setting aside some of its residential housing for those that are homeless. But he does not state whether it should be free or at a reduced rate. One item Hallett stated in his study is what is needed is a safe space where students who are residentially challenged can go to

discuss their issues. However, several articles have stated that students do not always want to disclose their homeless status (Hallett, 2010).

Homeless College Students

Most of the population information is about people that are between the ages of 18-24, not specifically college students. Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017) stated that in the 2012-2013 academic school year, there were more than 58,000 college students were homeless per the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In just three short years, the numbers had increased by nearly 11 thousand, through the same measure. But it seems students again, are not utilizing FAFSA to identify themselves as homeless since nearly 100,000 students (42% of students) for the City University of New York stated that they were housing insecure. Of the 42% of students stating they were housing insecure, 29% of them stated they did not have enough money to pay their rent. Another college revealed that some of their student population had issues with homelessness: University of Massachusetts-Boston stated that 5% of their student population were homeless in 2017 (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). Please see the section below for more in-depth information on homeless college students.

Ringer (2015) states similar numbers as Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017) with 58,000 students identified as homeless on the FAFSA. She notes it is difficult to identify all that are homeless and students because of the stigma attached with being homeless. What differs in her study versus other articles is Ringer discusses homelessness as a “crisis within a crisis of higher education”, meaning students that are already in the lower socio-economic status (SES) as well as middle SES are already disadvantaged, but they could fall further into economic strife by the cost of higher education. Although her statement sounds if the student attends school, they will fall further in debt (which could happen), they are more likely to be less competitive in the job

market without a college degree, and they will not make as much money as their peers who earned a degree. Statistically, a person with a degree has a better chance of getting a job as 63% of jobs now require a college degree, even associate degree. A college degree does provide some protection against unemployment (Ringer, 2015). Broton (2019) findings shows 8.8% of US undergraduates reported they are homeless or self-supporting and at risk of becoming homeless. The article further states there is no evidence rates vary between public and private institutions (Broton, 2019).

The California Association for Post-Secondary Education and Disability (CA-PED) (2020) conducted a survey of over 85,000 college students in Fall of 2018 showed 18% of two-year colleges students and 14% of 4-year college students identified as homeless. The study noted that 60% at the two-year college and 48% at the 4-year college were at risk of becoming homeless because they struggle to pay rent. This higher education issue is now front and center of social issues according to CA-PED (2020). Although the rest of the article deals mostly with food insecurity issues, CA-PED states that institutions of higher education are addressing the issues by having food pantries, childcare, health insurance, and allowing students who live in their cars to park them on campus at night. They go on to say institutions should advocate for homeless students as part of the student success initiative (CA-PED, 2020). Baker-Smith, et al., (2020) echoes CA-PED numbers through their #RealCollege survey from 2019 through the Hope Center (Baker-Smith, et al., 2020). Hope Center started conducting surveys regarding homelessness, food insecurity and housing insecurity in 2015. Each year they conduct a new survey that includes 247 public two-year institutions, 138 public four-year institutions and 23 private not-for profit four-year institutions. For profit institutions could have participated in the

survey but declined, therefore numbers from for-profit institutions are not available (Baker-Smith, et al., 2020)

When researching college students and homelessness there were contradictions. One study stated that college student homelessness was a hidden epidemic and another study stated that there was a steep increase in attention to insecurity among college students (Rahman, et al., 2015). The 2015 journal article written by Rahman, et al., fits in between the studies by stating “youth homelessness is a growing concern in the U.S. (p. 688) (Rahman, et al., 2015). The study conducted by Klitzman, (2019) discussed the usual conditions of homelessness, the definitions of homeless, the McKinney-Vento Act, support for academics and personal for the student along with recommendations for how to slow down the epidemic of student homelessness but the article does not state how it is a hidden epidemic. The article by Haskett, et al., (2020) states there is an increase and more attention given to student homelessness but concludes there was a lack of research on food insecurity as well as housing insecurity (Haskett, et al., 2020). Perhaps since the first article focused mainly on one person and her experiences, as well as recommendations on homeless college students and the second article was a quantitative study that focused more on food insecurity but tied both food and housing insecurity as issues for homeless college students may have been behind the differences.

LGBTQ College Students

An area that has not been fully discussed yet in the review are LGBTQ students and their experience with homelessness and college. Schmitz and Tyler’s (2018) study focused on full-time college students that experience homelessness due to their families rejecting them. Their family’s rejection and subsequent eviction from the home had students looking for shelter and food while continuing their education. Schmitz and Tyler (2018) stated that support from the

college was necessary for the students to maintain their status at school. Although the study encompasses homelessness and college students, specifically LGBTQ students, the content focused more on family relations between the LGBTQ students and their parents and/or siblings. The study did discuss homelessness and how it affected people in the LGBTQ community, but some that were interviewed were not homeless, they were college students discussing their experiences with family and campus LGBTQ-friendly resources (Schmitz and Tyler, 2016).

Tierney and Ward (2017) suggest in their research highlighting LGBT students, many of these students have issues enrolling in college and applying for financial aid along with securing housing when school is not in session. Although these are sentiments that other articles have touched on, Tierney and Ward do not expand on what the actual issues are except to state “LGBT homeless students, like other homeless students... they are at higher risk for not having an advocate for their rights” (p. 499) and that LGBT students will not disclose their status as homeless. But the article continues to say while heterosexual students have to deal with the stigma of being homeless, LGBT students must cope with other stresses because of their LGBTQ status. Other stresses include inhospitable environments created by other students as well as staff and teachers who often bully or harass them. This type of stress contributes to lower academic achievement and higher psychological distress according to Tierney and Ward (2017).

Foster Youth

Another area of research on homelessness and college students is of foster youth. Huang, et al. (2018) completed a study on foster youth and homeless college students. Students that are in foster care age-out of the system just at the time college starts, which puts the student at a disadvantage for support. The study discussed the use of mentors and coaches for these students.

The study also discussed legislative financial support foster students who age out of the system by providing grants and scholarships for post-secondary education.

Florida is one such state that provides tuition and fees exemption for students that were either in the Department of Children and Families custody at the age of separation (age 18), in custody for 6 months and then placed in a guardianship, in custody of a relative or non-relative at age of separation, or adopted from the Department after May 5, 1997 (Huang, et al., 2018). The program provides funding to the college student up to age 28 but the stipend is only \$1256 per month or \$11,304 over a nine-month period. The study did not state how many months during the academic year the stipend was paid out and the calculations are based on the school year from September through May. The stipend money is in addition to the tuition and fees that are paid for by the state, thereby giving the student money to pay rent or room and board. It is unknown currently if any other state does this for former foster students. This is a great program for students that age out of foster care but does not help the homeless college students with their expenses. Huang, et al., (2018) did state in their study that universities are establishing service programs to help the homeless college student population. While this is a step in the right direction for homeless college students, the programs that were reported in this study did not track the use of the services by the college students or whether they were useful to students or not (Huang, et al., 2018).

Emerging Adult

Bowers and O'Neill (2019) also used the term "emerging adults" for the transition time between adolescence and adulthood for the ages between 18 and 24 as Curry, et al., (2017) mentioned earlier. Their study is a qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis to understand the lived experiences of college students that are homeless. Bowers and O'Neill (2019) echo the sentiment

that very few studies were conducted on college students and their lived experiences in being homeless. They note most studies have been quantitative which does not give the story of the students, just numbers. Their study was broken down by themes, which included trauma, priority hierarchy, homeless (situational) identity, and resilience. A student in the study thought they would have less to worry about if they were in a university, but living in a shelter, the student may have to worry more about a place to study, food, and the ever-present need of a place to stay. For the priority hierarchy, one student stated, “Over breaks, I would live in my car. Nobody knew, which was awesome. I went to truck stops for showers” (p. 122). Others discussed how difficult it was to stay focused on school with various priorities, the lack of friends (peers), and how students are staying in school because it is a way to prove to others that they are worthy. All four areas gave a voice to the homeless college student. Their study concluded that the term “homeless” posed a challenge and that there is a need for a standardized definition for college students that are homeless (Bowers & O’Neill, 2019).

Mental health issues, stress and the living conditions of shelter life can give way to trauma as stated in the article written Goodman, et al., (1991). The loss of one’s home, including the persons who lived in the home can throw a person into psychological trauma, without their safe place to live and familiar people also echo Bowers and O’Neill (2019) article (Goodman, et al., 2019).

Helpful Policies

There are two federal acts in effect which help homeless college students. First is the McKinney-Vento Act and the second is the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. Each act helps homeless and displaced college students in different ways.

McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act provides definitions as to what homelessness is for a child or youth, the act also mandates that all children and youth have the right to be educated for free, providing more for the K-12 student than for the college student. But this is especially helpful for students that want to attend college. If the child or youth is not allowed access to an early education, college can be a big obstacle.

There is assistance for the potential and current college student through the McKinney-Vento Act. This Act provides a liaison at the high school level to help with the verification process for students who need to show their independence. The liaison is one of the four authorities that can sign off on the paperwork to provide proof of independence. In an article written by Miller (2013), unfortunately, District Homeless Liaison's duties are not just to help the homeless students but also have a multitude of other duties. Some of their other duties include handling student transportation, collection of data for the school or school district, but this depends on how many are assigned to the school district. Liaisons also work with community development, communicating to parents and the community at large regarding various initiatives. They complete grant applications, work with student enrollment and identification of homeless or in-need student population and professional development of staff. All these extra duties influence their actual duty – to help the homeless student secure help within the school or beyond. Miller notes the liaisons also have more than one title. Other titles, or jobs they may hold are Title I coordinator, special education coordinator and/or transportation director (Miller, 2013). With all of the different responsibilities they have, there appears to be little time to actually perform their main task, helping homeless students.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact Miller (2013) points out is many of the liaisons did not know they were designated as homeless liaisons for students and a significant amount did not have knowledge of the McKinley-Vento Act (Miller, 2013). If the liaisons are so busy with other duties, how do they help students who have to provide proof they are homeless on a yearly basis. For a basis of information, the Clark County School District in Nevada, which is the fifth largest in the United States has HOPE (Homeless Outreach Program for Education) and only two liaisons listed. Hopefully, these two people are the support for the others that are in each of the schools in Clark County, but I could not find information about liaisons for individual schools (aarsi.ccsd.net, 2020).

One question that looms largely is how a student demonstrates or provides documentation to any of the aforementioned liaisons if they are homeless and are unsheltered. If the student is living in a homeless shelter or in transitional housing, the shelter or transitional housing would provide proof that the student is homeless. I am not sure how a student who is living unsheltered, for example, in an abandoned building or in their car, would provide proof they are homeless.

College Cost Reduction and Access Act

The second act is the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (2007). The CCRAA helps improve access to college for potential and current college students by deeming them as “independent students”. The legislation also reauthorized the Higher Education Act which in its inception in 1965 was to strengthen the educational resources of colleges and universities and provide financial assistance for students in higher education (Pellinstitute.org, 2003). With the enactment of the CCRAA, the definition of independent student now includes youth who (a) are unaccompanied and homeless or (b) unaccompanied, self-supporting and are at-risk of homelessness. The CCRAA uses the McKinley-Vento Act’s definitions of homeless youth that

includes not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. At-risk homelessness that education defined as a student whose housing may no longer be fixed, regular or adequate (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, there are still roadblocks for the students even with all that both the CCRAA and the McKinley-Vento Acts provide. K-12 education is provided for students free of charge and the CCRAA allows independent students, but a verification process is needed to show the independence. The law states that a youth can be considered independent if they are verified through an application process. The process requires one of four authorities to sign off on the application after the student has been independent during the school year. The first authority is the McKinley-Vento Act liaison from the school district (high school); the second is the director or someone under their command from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development homeless assistance program. The third authority is the director or someone under their command from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and lastly, the financial aid administrator at the college or university the student attends. There are several issues with this process with the first being that the student must go through this process every year. Other issues include having to provide documentation and demonstrating they are homeless or are at-risk for being homeless (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).

Crutchfield, et al., (2016) stated that research on homeless youth in higher education was limited since most of the research on homeless youth was precollege. Furthermore, they stated that very little research had been conducted on college students and homelessness went beyond the admission process of college. Hallett and Freas (2018) echo Crutchfield, et al. (2016) stating that although practitioners were aware of student homelessness, policymakers and leaders in education were just starting to recognize the issue at hand. In reference to the CCRAA, they

found only a few studies discussed any benefits to the act and any barriers that both the student and the administration had in financial aid (Crutchfield, et al., 2016). There is a potential downside to the CCRAA, one of which is discussed in the paper by Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017), who noted that barriers for a student may be the ability to pay for college because of the high price tag. The cost of college grew largely in part “because of the purchasing power on need-based financial aid declined” (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017).

Although CCRAA helps the financial aspects with additional Pell Grant aid, the most important aspect of this act is in the repayment plans that are available. Once a student completes their degree or if they leave school without completing after six months, repayment of the aid starts, with a 10-year payment plan. With the CCRAA there is an Income-Based Repayment (IBR) plan, whereas you pay your financial aid off based on a percentage of your income. Since the payments will be lower than if the student pays the regular amount, it will take longer than ten years, but if the student pays on time for 25 years, the balance is forgiven. Another way for a student to pay off their financial aid debt is through the Public Service Employees program. If the student works in public service and pays the 120 payments the balance is forgiven (Duke School of Law, 2020).

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step in helping with the high cost of tuition and fees for college, most students will fill out the FAFSA. This is very beneficial for potential and current college students that are homeless because the students may qualify for federal or state aid, or both. Originally the FAFSA required that students provide financial information about their parents or guardians; the financial information of the parents/guardians were used to determine how much aid the student could qualify to receive. But

without the parents or guardian's information, this could be an overwhelming experience for a homeless student as a signature is required of the parents or guardian. When students could not access this type of information, advocacy groups pushed for Congress to act, and the result was the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA). The CCRAA may give potential and current college students access to more financial aid. When a student is termed as independent, they are not required to have their parents' or guardians' income when filling out the FAFSA (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).

Although students can gain financial aid from filling out the FAFSA forms online, Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017) suggest that the form is "notoriously difficult to complete" and that students have to meet a very narrow eligibility criterium. This supports Crutchfield, et al., (2017), where the students have to offer proof of homelessness because it slows down the progress in receiving financial aid (Crutchfield, et al., 2016). Gupton's (2017) complaint about the FAFSA and universities is while FAFSA provides information of the number of homeless students, colleges and universities do not have a policy or procedure to keep track of those students (Gupton, 2017). Therefore, the college or university may not know how many homeless students are currently attending their institution. The population may be much larger than the institution realizes, and the institution may not have the resources to help those students.

Although the CCRAA and the McKinney-Vento Acts help students with education and financial aid, one hurdle the student must still maneuver over is the stigma of being homeless or needing help. Crutchfield, et al., (2017) echo these sentiments regarding the amount of homeless college students being an estimate, and that whatever number is available at the time of any given study should be considered a low estimate as the actual number would be much higher. The student may not want the stigma attached to them of being homeless. Therefore, they may

often not share information willingly. The qualitative study was conducted using 20 homeless community college students who were recruited from different venues such as a homeless shelter and a homeless outreach facility. The questions that were asked mostly focused on student perception of themselves, their knowledge of college services, how they used the financial aid office, and the student focus on the barriers they experienced. This study interviewed college students and administrator in the financial aid department. While the college students were asked what they perceived as barriers, the administrators were asked how they experienced their work, specifically their experiences with homeless students. Questions also pertained to what support did the department need to provide service to these students. The second and third questions, the ones that pertained to the financial aid department and their administrators appeared to be vague as they do not specifically state administrators, or the department based their answers on only helping homeless students (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).

Homeless Student Issues

Homeless students face many different issues when entering the higher education system. They may struggle monetarily, psychologically, and educationally to name a few. Hallett (2010) states residential security shapes the educational experience, especially for a homeless student. Continuing with the same article, Hallett focuses on federal financial aid that covers the cost of tuition, books, and housing, but does not cover all of the personal and educational expenses (Hallett, 2010). This is the first article that includes housing in the financial aid, as other articles do not address what financial aid covers. Hallett does not expound on what are the personal or education expenses. He continues with the point that low-income students have expenses, but homeless students have additional expenses and those warrant other considerations. Hallett

contends that students should receive counseling to understand financial aid and expenditures during the school year along with explaining how to create and maintain a budget.

For many students, the availability of housing is a huge consideration; if the college or university does not have on-campus housing, the homeless student may reconsider attending that school. A student may not choose that particular school because the student may not have the resources to rent an apartment, pay for utility bills and other household expenses. Even if the student can rent an apartment, there is furniture to consider along with household supplies. Another item to consider, this may be the first actual dwelling a student lives in since they were young and household tasks may be new to them.

A report completed by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) (2018), is one of the few resources that uses the word “barriers”. While contemplating the design of this study, the words “barriers” and “obstacles” were thought of, but barriers and obstacles have a negative connotation. This study will identify the needs of homeless or displaced college students’ and the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University and how they compare with each other. Reflecting on the NCHE report, it starts out that homeless youth face many barriers to their academic success, starting with the traumatic effects on the student’s physical, mental, financial, and how well they do academically prior to college. Living conditions, adequate food availability and access to healthcare might be barriers as well. Perhaps most important, there is no connection with someone who has higher education experience that can extend support and knowledge about applying to college, financial aid, and finally what to do when they arrive at the university. NCHE talks about students who often feel out of place, may have imposter syndrome and doubting whether they can be successful in school. NCHE echoes Hallett’s (2010) study about scholarship-awarded college student Tenisha, whose room

and board were covered by her scholarship, but she was not sure what she would do when school was out of session with the same idea of where the student will go over breaks from classes. Another concern is if the student will have enough money from their financial aid to pay for living expenses they incur day-to-day (NCHE, 2018). While NCHE highlights college students that have room and board, they also discuss students that are still homeless and are dealing with not only financial survival and finding a safe place to stay at night, but the student is also dealing with this as well as the demands of attending classes and completing homework (NCHE, 2018).

Theoretical Frameworks

For this study, Resiliency Theory and Hope Theory will be used as the theoretical frameworks. Despite being homeless or displaced, college students who receive scholarships, grants, or both are able to maneuver through the higher education process, through their program to graduation.

Resiliency Theory

Resiliency Theory was originally defined as doing well despite adversity or risk (Masten, 2011). Masten's continued research suggests that resilience or resiliency focused more on the process, which lent her to define the theory as "the capacity, processes or outcomes of successful adaptation in the context of significant threats to function or development" (Masten, 2011). Social science researchers define resiliency as the individual's ability to recover from negative life experiences and become stronger from them (Ledesma, 2014). Stressful experiences may have an adverse effect on a person and Ledesma (2014), states that the concept of thriving is a person's ability to go beyond their level of functioning and to grow from it.

For the homeless student, there may not be a more stressful situation than to worry about where you are going to sleep at night and if you will be safe, but then add to their experiences of college classes, homework, and project deadlines. Ledesma (2014) continues there are variables for students that are positive, promote good self-esteem, and have excellent coping skills or social resources. Throughout the literature, there are notable ties between resiliency theory and what students are experiencing. In Hallett's (2010) study which included a student known as Tenisha, shows although homeless, she was awarded a full scholarship to a private university (Hallett, 2010). Other studies, such as Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2017) stated students still attend school but live in a world of precarity – no security of basic materials (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). For students that age out of foster care, although they receive a stipend for room and board this only is deemed for the school year; these students need to look for a place to live when school is not in session (Huang, et al., 2018).

Gupton's 2017 study on homeless students at a community college uses resiliency theory as part of his theoretical framework. Gupton quoted Zimmerman (2013) stating resiliency theory is a "positive psychology or strengths-based approach to understanding human development (p. 194). Gupton continues with the concept refers to an individual's ability to adapt to experiences that are negative, such that they also could find alternative solutions. In this case it means that they may be able to find their way out of homelessness (Gupton, 2017). One could surmise that a student who is homeless and is able not only to graduate from high school, but also is awarded a scholarship, grant, or both is using their adaptability to secure a better future.

According to Gupton (2017), three components work together in resiliency theory: (a) individual characteristics, (b) close personal relationships, (c) institutional forms of social

support (Gupton, 2017). In the literature review, several articles discussed how students did not want to disclose their status of being homeless, which could tie to the individual's characteristics. These students, in keeping with Gupton's article, of resilience as a personal trait, they have a high intelligence and understand what is and what is not beyond their control along with having the ability to use a coping strategy (Gupton, 2017).

Whereas Gupton cites close personal relationships, the literature review did not discuss students' personal relationships except Wenzel, et al., (2012) study on emerging adults. Emerging adults are in the 18–24-year-old age bracket where they are described as neither adolescent or adult but are leaving their stable support; meaning they are leaving their parents' home and emerging into life on their own. The article also highlighted that people in this age group relied mostly on their social network and identified the same as themselves for survival. Most of the young people in this study did not have sufficient resources to maneuver life challenges because of poverty, being residentially challenged and disassociated from family. The emerging adults' social network influences their actions, positively or negatively (Wenzel, et al., 2012). This ties in with Gupton's second component. For the third component, institutional forms of social support, Gupton ties afterschool programs and extracurricular activities as a way for students to escape the chaos or trauma in their lives. Gupton projects that universities equip students with positive relationships with faculty and staff, along with other members of academia (Gupton, 2017).

Hope Theory

According to C. R. Snyder, in 1987, while on sabbatical, he began his search for hope. He looked for hope where he felt most comfortable, in the library but found that hope is not in a

book but within people. After talking with others, questioning them about hope and observing them, Hope Theory – an empowering way of thinking, was born (Snyder, 1994).

“It is natural for men to indulge in the illusion of hope” – Patrick Henry, Speech at Virginia Convention (1775).

“He that lives upon hope will die fasting.” – Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard’s Almanac (Republished in 1758).

Snyder pondered, quotes about hope can be dangerous. Snyder continued, “hope has an enormous power to seduce us but is a harmful illusion”. The last line of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem, *Work without Hope*, “Hope without an object cannot live”; Snyder considered this to be a simple idea, to attach a realistic/definitive goal which has a starting point in hope (Snyder, 1994). Snyder later elaborates goals should have “magnitude” or “importance” when having hope. One should not use hope in the form of, “I hope I get dressed today” as this is ridiculous (Snyder, 1994). Goals that you have little to no chance of ever achieving or goals you have one hundred percent of achieving are not the type of goals Snyder discusses in hope theory.

High hope

There are three sections of hope theory, high hope, willpower, and waypower . The first section describes the person who creates the attainable goal. Snyder is very exact in the type of personality a high-hope person possesses. He compares a high-hope person to a Type A personality. A type A person is always busy, does not possess patience, and demands excessive amounts of hours towards their goal, but never really accomplishes the goal. Snyder contends the type A person, although wants to complete a goal, has very negative thoughts about either the goal or themselves (Snyder, 1994). A high-hope person, Snyder felt, was not hostile as the type A persons were. High-hope people had excellent social skills and could laugh at themselves. He observed high-hope people “did not feel stuck when they are up against a stiff obstacle” and they “felt satisfied with themselves” (Snyder, 1994, 2002).

Willpower

Snyder's second section of hope theory is willpower. "Willpower is the driving force of hopeful thinking" (Snyder, 1994). Snyder defines willpower as "the pond for determination and commitment." He claims willpower erupts faster when a person has a clear goal set and understands the how to set a way to get to the goal. Ambiguous goals do not motivate people to work towards the end goal. Snyder declares with willpower comes action, or at least the potential for it. A person needs to activate their mind to set a goal and then a way on how to achieve it. A person who has already achieved a goal prior to a new goal will most likely have the willpower to achieve the next one (Snyder, 1994). For the students who are homeless or displaced, the desire is to show they have the willpower to achieve their goal of continuing their education since they have already completed high school and were accepted into college based on Snyder's Hope Theory.

Waypower

"Waypower reflects the mental plans or roadmap that guide hopeful thought, getting from point A to B" (Snyder, 1994). The final section of hope theory, Snyder states waypower is the mental capacity we use to find the most effective ways to achieve our goal. Waypower can be considered the planning phase of Hope Theory. As with willpower, people must have a compelling goal in mind to set a way to reach that goal. In using waypower, Snyder contends a person uses their previous history where they have successfully planned one or more ways to achieve a goal. Snyder completes his theory with this quote, "Where there is a will, there is a way", but he continues with the idea that if a person does not have willpower or lacks waypower, a goal cannot be achieved; a person must have both to have high hope (Snyder, 1994). One aspect

of this study is to determine if the participants used way power to achieve their goals of graduating from high school and attending the university.

Agency and Pathway Thinking

Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) expanded the hope theory definition with the addition of agency and pathways. Agency refers to goal-directed energy, and pathway thinking uses planning for meeting those goals (Snyder, 2002). According to Snyder, agency is not just about grasping the idea of meeting the goal or thinking that once you have a goal in mind, a person will not let anything stop them from reaching the goal. Agentic thinking is put into play when a person runs into a roadblock and re-routes the needed motivation towards the commitment of reaching said goal.

Pathways are the plans a high-hope person puts into place to achieve their goal. Snyder states that with pathway thinking people can use one probable route with accompanying confidence in that route to achieve their goal (Snyder, 2002). Snyder, Rand and Sigmon (2005), state there is a progression in hopeful thinking, a succession of pathway thinking which adds to agency thinking, and then flows back to pathway thinking.

In using resiliency theory along with hope theory in this qualitative multiple case study of homeless or displaced students, I endeavored to reveal in their interviews a commonality among the students. Being homeless or displaced and attending college already shows a level of resiliency to strive in such adverse conditions. The interview questions relate to their experiences with FAFSA, working with academic advisors, faculty, how they handle completing assignments, and what programs the university has, or lacks, as well as sharing their pathways and agency in applying for college, along with their continuation of their education. These

questions are targeting toward finding commonalities among their experiences while also providing insight as to what they may need to succeed.

Summary

Chapter two showcases the literature reviewed for this study. The literature review shows there is no one definition of homeless or displaced in regard to college students. In the research, it became apparent that universities and colleges have just recently discovered that homeless students exist on their campuses. As such, a campus review of the policies is needed to better understand the needs of the students and how best to help them as no qualitative study on homeless or displaced college students who received a scholarship, grant or both was found. A qualitative multiple case study design is best to determine the students' needs and what is not helpful on campus at this time, as this type of study will give voice to the students being interviewed.

Chapter three explains the methodology chosen for this study as a qualitative multiple case study design. The chapter also contains the sample site, history of the university, and the sample criteria, to include the number of participants, how participants were solicited and the age/year in school. Interview questions and data collection procedures are also included in chapter three. CARMA is presented as the data analysis tool which was used to analyze the interview data.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The literature review in chapter 2 revealed a portion of college students are homeless or displaced while attending a higher education institution. Researchers have conducted numerous quantitative and qualitative studies of homeless young adults including college students. However, a gap in the research exists because scholarships, grants or both were not included as part of the criteria. Most of the research provides the number of college students who are homeless, where they live, and discuss GPAs. Another area studied was the different demographics of students, specifically, aged-out foster, LGBTQ, and others who have transitioned from being homeless in high school to homeless in college. Little or no studies so far have researched the experiences of the college student from the admission process, to working with faculty and staff and what happens both inside and out of the classroom.

Chapter 3 consists of the methodological approach used in the study, an examination of the research design, the case site, and criteria for selection of participants. The chapter also presents the research question. Interview questions were based on previous relevant literature and the theoretical frameworks of Resiliency Theory and Hope Theory. In addition, Complementary Analysis Research Matrix Application (CARMA) was used as a data analytical guide.

For this study I used a qualitative multiple case study approach to identify if the needs of homeless or displaced students are met by the policies, procedures, and systems of the Mountain University. First and second-year undergraduates who are homeless or displaced and who have received a scholarship, grant, or both were the participants in this study. This study sought to

understand the living situation of these students. The literature suggested that students' living situations are often the primary barrier to examine as that may determine whether students retain their status in school, progress through their chosen program and graduate with a degree which, in turn, may help them break the homeless/displaced cycle.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the needs of the students who are homeless or displaced at Mountain University. This entailed understanding policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University that related to their situation, as well as understanding how students' navigated procedures, policies, and systems of the university. For this study, students will have received a scholarship, grant, or both to attend school. Furthermore, this study sought to understand students' experiences associated with being homeless or displaced from the time they applied for admission to a university through their first two years of school.

This qualitative multiple case study further sought understanding of the living situations of these participants, whether they are living sheltered, unsheltered, or a combination of both, or if the students are displaced, meaning they are living doubled-up with other family members or couch-surfing with friends. Their living situation was an important part of understanding whether the best practices of the university are meeting the needs of the students in this situation. Along with understanding student's living status, other areas included how students navigated the admission process, understood the parameters of FAFSA, sought out advice from academic advisors, selected and attended classes and completed their homework to name a few. The goal was to understand how students managed their college life and what policies, procedures, and systems the university had in place to help the homeless or displaced student be successful.

Research Design

Yin (2018) defines a case study as an “empirical method which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-world context”. He continues “the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident”. These boundaries may benefit from multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) states all types of empirical research has implicit, and perhaps explicit research design. The design has a rational sequence which connects the empirical data to the researcher’s questions; the sequence is a series of steps the researcher must take to conclude. Yin (2018) represents this sequence as “a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as a set of questions to be addressed, and there is some sort of conclusion about these questions” (p. 26). Yin continues that between here and there, several other steps occur, most notably, collection of data and the analysis of it (Yin, 2018). This qualitative multiple case study sought to identify the issues of the homeless or displaced college students’ needs are met by the policies, procedures, and systems that are in place at Mountain University.

Origins

The origins of qualitative multiple case study are based in the social sciences, psychology, medicine, law, and political science. Several authors, Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin state they traced the origin of modern social sciences through anthropology and sociology, utilizing several different studies. One study was Malinowski’s study of the Trobriand Islands (anthropology), and another is LePlay’s study of families (sociology). Creswell and Poth continue with Merriam and Tisdell, who employ a basic approach to qualitative case studies within the field of education (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Features

Creswell and Poth (2018), after reviewing numerous qualitative case studies, noted several defining features or characteristics. The first is in identifying the specific case which can be described and analyzed. After identification, the study must be bounded, it can be described or defined within certain parameters. Stake (1995) identifies two distinct types of cases: *intrinsic* – a unique case that has unusual interest and *instrumental* – a specific issue or problem.

Additionally, Yin (2018) identifies other types of cases such as critical, extreme, or unique, typical, or representative, revelatory, and longitudinal (Putney, 2010). The next step is to begin an in-depth understanding of the case; collect different types of data in the form of interviews, observations, or documents. The researcher then needs to choose how they will approach the case, whether multiple units or as a single unit. An example of a multiple unit case study is this study of several students' needs and the university's policies, procedures, and systems.

The two final objectives of a case study are to identify the case themes and then to form the conclusion of the study, commonly called assertions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2018) identifies five components to case study research. Using case study questions, to form the question is the clue to what type of research method should be used. An exploratory study may not have propositions but should still have a purpose. Yin (2018) echoes Creswell and Poth (2018) in the two-step process of defining the case and then bounding it. Yin suggests that after bounding the case, develop your case and be aware of your choices. Whereas Creswell and Poth discuss assertions and identifying case themes, Yin discusses interpreting the findings; identify and address competing differences. Through this identification, the researcher will be able to understand if their findings are strong (Yin, 2018).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe case studies as “intensive, holistic description, and analysis of a single, bounded unit” (p. 232). Interviews, field observations and documents are the over-arching description of data that is used to conduct the study. The over-arching descriptions can be broken down into interview logs/transcripts, field notes, and reflective notes by the researcher to name a few. All these pieces of the case study need to be brought together in an organized manner. Merriam and Tisdell quote Patton (2015), “the case record includes all the major information that will be used in doing the case analysis and case study” (p. 232).

Case Study

Creswell and Poth (2018) state that case study research involves the study of a case that is “part of a real-life, contemporary context or setting”. The entity may be an individual, a small group, an organization, or a partnership (p. 96). Yin (2018) concludes a case study is an empirical method that investigates the phenomenon, or the “case” in depth in real world surroundings when the line between phenomenon and the context are not clear. Yin follows up that a researcher wants to complete a case study because they want to understand a real-world situation with the assumption that with the understanding the case will evolve into important contextual conditions that are pertinent to the study (Yin, 2018).

Creswell and Poth (2018) define qualitative research as situated activity which locates the observer in the subject’s world. The research also consists of interpretive, material practices to make the world visible. Qualitative research starts with assumptions but then uses theoretical frameworks to understand what the research issue is while tying the framework to individuals or groups who share the same phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This approach may help to understand if the policies, procedures, and systems at Mountain University will help meet the needs of homeless or displaced college students. The

study sought to uncover potential barriers, if any, where students and the university may not align; that is to show what programs or policies the university may need to have in place to benefit students so they may retain their status as a student and progress through their chosen degree path to graduation. The study focused on the best practices the university has in place to help students who are homeless or displaced to retain their status at the university and progress through their chosen program.

Multiple Case Study

For this qualitative multiple case study, the issue chosen was to investigate how homeless or displaced students who earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigated the policies, procedures and systems of the university they are attending. Yin (2018) discusses in a multiple case study, replication is needed, the case study must be comparable in certain respects, to make things clearer (Yin, 2018). The questions the students answered followed Yin's design of a multiple case study by being bounded by the issues they experienced and the policies, procedures, and systems within Mountain University.

Case Site

This study sought to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced, attending a public four-year university and receive financial aid in the form of scholarships, grants, or both versus the policies, procedures, and systems at Mountain University. This research involved illustrating the day-to-day intricacies of attending classes, completing homework, and dealing with homelessness or displacement.

This study was completed at a four-year institution of higher education, identified in the study as Mountain University. Homeless or displaced college students are not exclusive to public

four-year universities as the literature review revealed but due to the population size at a four-year university, there is a possibility of a larger homeless or displaced group of students.

Moreover, the Mountain University, a public university, became eligible to receive Title III and Title V awards because the university was identified as a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI). In 2015 Mountain University was awarded Nevada's first Title III grant which includes Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). Along with the AANAPISI designation, Mountain University was also identified as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Approximately 63 percent of students attending Mountain University identify as a racial or ethnic minority. In addition to the university's MSI status, Mountain University is also a top tier research university (Mountain University, 2020).

Research Question

This study was driven by the following research question: How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of Mountain University to attend their first two years?

Case Selection Criteria

Creswell and Poth (2018) state in collecting data, multiple activities are involved. For this qualitative multiple case study, interviews were used to explore and identify what homeless and displaced college students experience versus the policies, procedures, and systems that are in place at Mountain University (Creswell & Poth, 2018). One of the most important steps in the data collection process is to choose the right subjects for the study and to establish a rapport with them. To utilize the best resources for this study, I used purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth,

2018). This is an intentional sample of a group of people who will most likely give an in-depth account as to what a homeless or displaced college student experiences day-to-day and what potential admission barriers they encounter or what support systems helped them to navigate the process.

For my study, specific criteria were used in choosing subjects. My criteria were specific as the students must have been (a) full-time first year and second-year students (freshmen and sophomores) attending classes at Mountain University (their age must have been between 18 and 20 years old); (b) be homeless or displaced; and (c) have received a scholarship(s), grant(s), or both to attend school. The financial aid package must NOT include housing. The participation consisted of 6 to 10 students from diverse (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and LGBTQ) backgrounds who were experiencing the phenomena of homelessness or displacement while attending a 4-year public university with a scholarship, grant, or both. Six (6) students in all were interviewed for the study.

Data Analysis

Data Collection Procedures

Case Study methodology depends upon multiple sources of data to conduct the study. The use of interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts helps create an in-depth view of the final project (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data collection included the interviews with the students along with examining documents from the university of the policies, procedures and systems that are in place to help students who are homeless or displaced, but received a scholarship, grant, or both.

Policies, Procedures, and Systems Review

To understand how the university possibly helps homeless and displaced students, the university's website was utilized along with talking with the employees of the pantry, financial aid department, and the library.

Resources

In order to understand what was available at the university, I researched the university's website using the term, *help for homeless students*. The first link was for Student Support. The student support link furnished a list of resources the university provides to all students. Some of the resources were specific to students experiencing homelessness or displacement, others are available to all students.

I spoke with employees of the pantry to understand who is allowed to utilize the pantry, hours of operation, what products are available, and information about classes they teach there. Financial Aid was also contacted in reference to the verification process for homeless students. I also spoke with a library employee about the availability of textbooks for students to use while in the library.

Atlas.ti (Version 22.2, 2022)

Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software program, was used to analyze the interview transcriptions of the participants. Interview questions and the students' responses aided in the Atlas.ti coding process. Some interview questions were based on specific departments at the university, others were regarding personal insights, advice they would share to incoming students in the same situation, what drives the students to continue their education, along with what the students feel what services the university does not currently have but what would be helpful to students who are homeless or displaced. After applying the different codes, those codes were

broken down between negative and positive experiences the students had with the different departments. Memos were also written with the use of *Atlas.ti*. *Atlas.ti* was a valuable tool in deciphering the positive and negative experiences the participants spoke about.

Participants in the Study

Interviews

This study used purposeful sampling to be sure the students fit the criteria of experiencing homelessness or displacement and earned a scholarship, grant, or both. An email was sent out to students who fit the basic criteria asking if they would like to participate in the study. Attached to the email was a link to a Qualtrics questionnaire asking them basic questions about their living situation, the year in which they are enrolled in college, and their financial aid status (scholarships, grants, or both). Freshmen or first year students consisted of students who are members of the cohort which started in the 2021-2022 academic year. Sophomores or second year students consisted of students who among the cohort which started in the 2020-2021 academic year. The freshman or sophomore status was not based on credit hours earned.

The students who matched the criteria of the Qualtrics questionnaire (see Appendix B), were contacted for interviews. Four of the interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings. Students that chose this type of meeting did so based on their scheduling. Two of the students chose to meet in person; we met in the main library. A consent form was signed by each student prior to the start of the interview. Students were instructed the interviews would be audio recorded and transcribed through a service. For the interview, students were asked the same questions in the same order, and if they felt uncomfortable at any time during the interview, no more questions would be asked. During the interviews, notes were taken by the interviewer.

Time of data collection

For this study, I felt the best time to collect data from students would be while they were attending classes and not during holiday or spring break time. The reason for the timing, some of the questions were based on their experiences in the classroom with completing homework, attending classes, along with their interaction with faculty, staff and their peers. Even though the students may have been able to provide data for the specific questions even if they were on a break, they could have had a recent experience to share. Several questions were based on their experiences with different departments on campus, along with other questions based on their personal insights.

Participant solicitation

To recruit students for this study, a flyer was created (see page 113). The flyer contains the link to the Qualtrics survey for the students to take. Originally the flyer was sent through Rocks Announcements Via E-mail (RAVE). Specific demographics to whom the email is sent to could be chosen when using RAVE. For this study, the flyer was sent to freshman and sophomore students who attend the different colleges at the university. RAVE is sent out on Saturdays to the students. Unfortunately, since numerous announcements sent at the same time, it proved difficult to get students to participate in the study. Another downside to using RAVE is that you must be either faculty or staff to gain access. For a Ph.D. student, you would have to ask someone at the university to get the announcement sent for you.

Along with RAVE, the flyers were printed and placed in the Student Union, libraries, The Intersection, and at the advising centers around campus. Contact was made with the HOPE Scholars program, Foster Students program and the off-campus, non-profit Project 150. Project 150 helps high school students who are homeless, displaced, and disadvantaged to stay in school

by providing school supplies, food, and clothing and has provided over \$160,000 in scholarships each year for graduating high school seniors. At the College of Education, during the first and second-year seminar instructors meeting a presentation of the project was conducted. The instructors received a paper copy of the flyer as well as an email to use in Webcampus. Contact was made with the Academic Success Center for their COLA 100E program to distribute flyers and emails to their instructors.

Although flyers were placed around campus, first and second-year seminar classes were informed, and weekly emails were sent out through RAVE; a monetary incentive was needed to recruit students.

Number of participants

Participants were found through the RAVE emails, second-year seminar classes, and the flyer left at The Intersection in the Student Union. Six students in all responded and agreed to the interview. Creswell and Poth (2018) state researchers should interview 5 to 25 individuals who have similar experiences to achieve *data saturation*. Data saturation is the point in the researcher's process in which further analysis will not net any new results (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). With the six students, data saturation was achieved.

Complementary Analysis Research Matrix Application (CARMA)

CARMA (Putney, et al., 2006) was originally an instrument used for assessing situations in classrooms. In using CARMA, teachers were able to use data from observations in their classrooms and tying those observations to the sociocultural context of their students and their classroom culture. Each one of us has cultural experiences, no matter your ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or religion, but everyone does not have the exact same experience. CARMA most

notably employs ethnography, to examine the local culture of a group, and thus is appropriate for understanding the experiences of homeless and displaced college students. CARMA is based on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) in relation to the sociocultural context and the lived experiences of participants, combined with Paulo Freire's (1921-1997) work of informed action and dedicated practice.

In more recent uses, CARMA (Putney, 2013), originally termed as Critical Action Research Matrix Application has been realigned and renamed as Complementary Analysis Research Matrix Application to move beyond action research so as to be used for numerous types of studies to include evaluation research situations in which the researcher examines what is intended in a program or process compared to what is actually accomplished by the participants. In this study, I applied the concept of comparing what is needed by students versus what is offered to students through university policies and procedures, based on the findings from interviewing the homeless and displaced college students.

The procedures for using CARMA, begins with NoteTaking that is used in two ways. The first is to record what was expected to take place and the second is to record what actually did take place. Once completed, the researcher interprets the findings and then give explanations of the findings. In a second stage of analysis, the researcher makes NoteMaking/convergent or divergent interpretations. In the third stage of analysis, the researcher does NoteRe-making/recommendations based on the data collected and knowledge of best practices. For the NoteMaking/convergent or divergent, the observer compares/contrasts what was expected versus what evidence was observed. The subsequent NoteRe-making/recommendations brings to the forefront decisions of whether to change activities, or in the case of this study, changes to programs or policies.

For this study, I began with university's website best practices (policies, procedures, and systems) for homeless and displaced students and based on those practices, I delineated what is expected the students receive from those best practices. Through interviews, I recorded what actually happened between the best practices and the student. The comparison allowed for generating possible solutions for transformation of practice related to the policies if any were needed. After a potential solution is found, the person, persons, and/or departments within the university assumes the responsibility for any changes (Merriam, n.d.). In this style of analysis, the homeless or displaced students may be able to participate in designing a solution if one proves necessary.

Validity and Reliability: Trustworthiness

Creswell and Poth (2018) characterize validity "as an evolving construct means that a broad understanding of both traditional and contemporary perspectives is essential for informing the work of qualitative researchers and readers of qualitative research" (p. 254). They continue with validation being an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings in a study that the researcher or researchers have reported (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For reliability, it can be increased by the researcher procuring detailed field notes with recording devices and transcribing those files. Creswell and Poth (2018) also state reliability focus is also on an "intercoder agreement", where the use of multiple codes is utilized to analyze the transcribed data (p. 264).

Lincoln & Guba (1985), discuss terms for proving validity of a study and state the terms are normally addressed in quantitative studies. Lincoln & Guba provide the quantitative terms of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, then matching them with the qualitative terms of credibility and transferability equal to internal and external validity, along

with dependability and confirmability relating to reliability and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Yin (2018) echoes Lincoln & Guba in the idea of four tests applicable to research using case study, although Yin's tests consisted of construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2018). For this study, I utilized Yin's perspective.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is defined by Yin (2018) as "identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied" (p. 42). One strategy used in case studies is to utilize multiple sources of evidence. Another strategy is allowing the participants in the study to go over their interviews for any discrepancies. (Yin, 2018). For this study, interviews were conducted with students from diverse backgrounds, the students were allowed to scrutinize the final transcriptions for accuracy. I also examined the different policies, procedures, and systems in Mountain University to confirm how they might have helped or hindered the homeless or displaced student.

Internal Validity

Internal validity is described as "seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships" (Yin, 2018, p. 42). There are two concerns with internal validity. The first is when the researcher tries to explain how one event leads to the second event. Yin (2018) states if the researcher incorrectly assumes a causal relationship between the first and second event, and not knowing there is a third event, the research design may fail (Yin, 2018). For case study research, Yin (2018) discusses a larger issue, inferences. A researcher may "infer" an event because it cannot be observed (Yin, 2018). For this study, I looked for possible rival explanations, and pattern matching (Yin, 2018).

External Validity

External validity is expressed as “showing whether and how a case study’s findings can be generalized” (Yin, 2018, p. 42). The concept is to know whether or not the findings could be generalized beyond the immediate study. Yin (2018) continues with the insight in the form of questions could help or hinder the case study. If the questions, “how” for descriptive case studies, or “why” for explanatory case studies are not strong, the researcher will not achieve “analytic generalization”. Analytic generalization is “either (a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study” (Yin, 2018, p. 38). The interview questions the participants were asked would tie into the resiliency theory, hope theory, and the literature review to corroborate the multiple case study design.

Reliability

Yin concludes the four tests of validity with *Reliability* as “demonstrating that the operations of a study – such as its data collection procedures – can be repeated (p. 42). Reliability is not just about replicating the study and getting the same results but also to minimize the errors and biases in the next study (Yin, 2018). Yin concludes that in conducting a case study research project the researcher should follow a case study protocol and develop a case study database. For the case study protocol, four sections include objectives, data collection procedures, protocol questions and an outline for the final report. The case study database consists of data or evidence and then the final report (Yin, 2018).

Summary

Chapter three explained the purpose of my qualitative multiple case study of homeless and displaced college students who have received a scholarship, grant, or both to attend college. This study sought to identify the issues of the students who are homeless or displaced versus the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University in terms of how they contrast and compare to each other.

The chapter also includes the research question and purpose statement. The criteria for soliciting students for the study and how the interviews were conducted is also included. This chapter included an explanation of the use of CARMA as an analytic tool to gain insight as to whether the policies, procedures, and systems in place at Mountain University help the students navigate their college experience to retain and progress through their degree then to tie the experiences and comments to resiliency and hope theories. This chapter concludes with explaining how the researcher maintained validity and reliability. For example, the researcher utilized multiple sources of evidence and established a relationship among the data points, but not infer events because they cannot be observed. The last two areas of validity and reliability were achieved by utilizing good how or why questions to achieve analytic generalization to advance the theories used in the study along with reliability in using a case study protocol and case study database.

Chapter four reveals the results of the study through interviews with six students who are either experiencing homelessness or displacement or have experienced it at the time of application to Mountain University. Students discussed their experiences with different departments within the university along with what drove them to continue their education.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced as well as to compare the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University with students' needs. The specific research question was:

- How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of Mountain University to attend the first two years?

A qualitative multiple case study approach was used with resiliency and hope theories as guiding frameworks. Six full-time students at Mountain University, who were able to attend the four-year public university because of earning a scholarship, grant, or both were interviewed for this study. All students had experienced or are experiencing homelessness or displacement at school. Some interview questions were specific to different departments within the university, others were about experiences in the classroom along with insights as to their drive to continue their education. Interview questions began with the application process to Mountain University, whether the students paid the application fee or not, continuing through financial aid, advising, library services, dining services and the bookstore. Students shared whether these departments were helpful or if they encountered barriers when accessing said departments. The students also shared what obstacles they experienced.

The questions continued with experiences in the classroom, classmates and whether the professors were helpful if they had issues with completing homework or missing class. The students were asked if they had any advice to share with incoming students who have or are

experiencing homelessness or displacement and are considering attendance to a four-year public university. In conjunction with resiliency and hope theories, the students were asked to share personal insights which gave them the drive to apply and then to continue their education. See Table 1 for a list of students along with the date of their interview. Table 2 shows the connections between resiliency and hope theories and the students’ responses.

Table 1: Homeless and Displaced Participants.

Participants	Interview Date
Lily	April 6, 2022
David	April 7, 2022
Sim	April 8, 2022
Cecil	April 19, 2022
Sonia	June 8, 2022
Chris	June 12, 2022

Participants

Lily – couch-surfed after having to leave the dorms because of the COVID restriction. Lily credits two advisors for helping her procure a grant from Clark County for housing. Lily had to file an appeal with financial aid, causing issues with other scholarships because of the length of time it took to resolve.

David – was part of the TRIO program in high school, his admission to the university was completed after he received an email stating it was his last day to apply. David is earning his

degree so when he graduates and find a good job, he can take care of his mother. David stated people should apply and accept all scholarships and grants awarded to them, he first believed others may have needed them more, but you have to look at your own needs too.

Sim – applied to numerous universities, paying their fees. Sim changed from a psychology major to a film major. Sim is a resident advisor (RA) who applied for a summer RA job but if they are not chosen for the position will be homeless. Sim had a positive experience with Financial Aid.

Cecil – is a Hope Scholar. Cecil’s high school social worker helped guide them in applying for college and scholarships. Cecil has two other siblings who did not graduate college, but they want to help their siblings out of their living situations also.

Sonia – is a non-traditional student with a young child. Sonia is a victim of domestic violence and was left homeless. Sonia has had issues with Financial Aid, mainly small charges that were deducted from her scholarships and grants. Financial Aid was not helpful in disclosing what the charges were for.

Chris – worked two jobs during his first year at the university because he could not get enough in scholarships and grants. Chris did not meet with his academic advisor his first semester but now does as he understands the benefit of meeting with them.

Table 2: Resiliency Theory, Hope Theory, & Student Responses.

Theory – Details	Student Responses
Resiliency – Ability to recover from negative life experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students interviewed have or are experiencing homelessness or displacement. • Sonia – domestic violence survivor. • Lily – Had to leave the dorms during COVID without a place to go and very limited funds.
Resiliency – Ability to find alternate solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris – lack of funding for his first year left him to find a second job to afford college.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia – Textbooks were an issue, but she came up with a book sharing plan.
<p>Resiliency – 3 components working together</p> <p>a) Individual characteristics</p> <p>b) Close personal relationships- family/friends</p> <p>c) Institutional forms of social support- after school programs, positive relationships with faculty and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David – Trio program. • Lily – CAEO program-helped with admission payment. • Cecil – Social worker from high school helped with college admission and payment. • Sim – Worked with professors on project deadlines to pace their work. • Lily – Advisors from Honors College and Business College helped her find a grant for housing. • Chris – Worked with professors for extensions on assignments. • Sim – Relied on their mother for communications with different departments.
<p>Resiliency – Understands what is and is not beyond their control; coping abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David – Financial Aid-had to admit he was homeless to get his appeal through. • Lily – Financial Aid-same experience as David. She had to come out and state she was homeless so she would not be dropped from classes and put her other grants in jeopardy. • Students were given a short notice to move out of their dorms when the university had to shut down due to COVID. Most students did not have money or a place to go to.
<p>Hope – Creates attainable goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris – Goal is to become a history professor. His attainable goal – choosing the correct classes that work best with his work schedule. • Cecil – to graduate, to eliminate poverty from their life and to help the other two siblings. • All other students had the same basic goals, to complete college and find a good job to make sure they are not homeless anymore.
<p>Hope – Sets a way to achieve the goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris – Worked two jobs, searched for new scholarships after his freshman year. • All of the students stated they chose classes to get the most out of their degree plan.

Interview questions/responses

Question 1 – Applying to colleges and universities

Most colleges charge a fee to apply to their school. Mountain University charges \$60 for domestic students and \$95 for international students. There were no international student participants in this study. In speaking with the students, two of them did not pay the \$60 fee to apply, two did have to pay the fee and two did not directly answer the question.

David and Lily did not have to pay the application fee because it was waived through specific programs. David stated that he did not have to pay for Mountain University's application fee because he was part of the Trio program in high school. The Trio program assists low-income, first-generation students in completing high school and then prepare the students for college. The heart of the Trio program is to help the students develop the skills necessary for success in college, as well as providing mentors. The Trio website also states they provide a chance for students to experience college firsthand, although the website does not provide detail how (Mountain University, 2022). David did state, "I got an email from the university that said, 'today's the last day to apply for the fall 2021 semester'. So, I said, okay, I didn't even fill out any complete application." David stated that it was his understanding that they already had his transcript and "stuff" because he was part of the Trio Upward Bound program. Lily was not part of the Trio program, but the Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach (CAEO), which is in the Student Services building on campus, provided a fee waiver for her.

Cecil, who is a first-generation student and uses the pronouns "they and them", did not expressly answer the question about fees, but did state the only reason why they were able to attend college is because of a "very patient and very active social worker at my high school". Cecil attributes the communication they conveyed about attending a higher education institute

and how this could be a path to getting out of their living situation. The social worker was the one who guided Cecil through the process of applying for college.

Sonia is a non-traditional student as she is older than the average college student and a parent, therefore did not have the same advantage of the Trio program as David. During her interview, Sonia stated she did not have any guidance and “basically zero information beside the fact that in the Hispanic community, we think it’s impossible or very expensive for us to go to college”. She continued, a lot of people in the Hispanic community are afraid to get student loans or they may not qualify for them. She stated information provided to the community does not attract Hispanics but scares them into not applying.

Sim had to pay for the application fees to attend Mountain University. Sim applied to several schools, they believed six in all and had to pay application fees for all of them. Sim stated that, “I just wanted a place to, like, get away from my family and stuff like that (be)‘cause I just- I just needed a break. And so, I didn’t care who accepted me just as long as someone did”.

Chris’ experience in applying to Mountain University was very different from the others, although he had to pay the fee like Sim and Sonia, he did try to get information on waivers through the financial aid department. Chris stated he called financial aid several times to ask advice and their response was, “apply to a different school anywhere else”. He told me he felt their response was because he conveyed, he was worried about being homeless at the time he was applying. He continued, “they said, ‘just go to a different school if that’s a concern’”. He concluded the question about applying by stating he could not get any other scholarships or grants anywhere else, so he just stuck it out. He was also told by financial aid to figure it out on his own.

Question 2 & 3 – Positive and Negative Experiences: Support Services

Financial Aid

Only one student interviewed had a positive experience with financial aid. Sim stated financial aid was very helpful because, “I had never filled out a FAFSA before, my mom didn’t remember how”, and Sim’s other relatives did not attend college. Sim disclosed financial aid made sure they remembered to accept their awards, so they did not risk losing them. Another positive note for financial aid, the department, not the people who work there, David stated the website indicates which scholarships and grants you are automatically considered for. Therefore, you do not have to apply for them.

David, along with the other four interviewees stated financial aid was not very helpful. David and Cecil used Google to find the website for financial aid. Cecil stated they asked other college people “what to do or how to proceed”. They (Cecil) continued in which financial aid did the bare minimum. Lily’s experience with financial aid echoes David’s and Cecil’s, with the exception of using the website. Lily stated she would go to financial aid a couple of times a month because “there would be a misunderstanding with a grant or scholarship”. At one point she had to do an appeal, which is a long, drawn-out process and according to Lily, “very sensitive” because she had to declare herself an unaccompanied youth. With the appeal waiting, Lily risked being dropped from classes. If Lily was dropped from a class or classes, she could have risked losing other grants or scholarships. At one point, she waited two months for her Pell grant to come in. Lily felt she had to be her own advocate. Lily’s final point about financial aid is that this department is “not prepared at all to deal with homeless students” as they acted like she was the only one they had ever encountered.

Lily's encounter with financial aid was not unique with the students who were interviewed. David also had an issue which could have caused him to lose grants and scholarship money. David had a family issue that caused his "performance to tank", his GPA was very low, so he was placed on academic probation. The probation had a rippling effect on his financial aid; some of the aid was withheld. David had to submit an appeal. Since David is homeless, he asked financial aid about a grant or scholarship so he could stay in the dorms over break; after the clerk spoke to a supervisor, the rest of his financial aid money was disbursed. David felt, "I had to tell you that I was homeless for you to just take off to- give me the reward, the financial aid assistance, even though any other circumstance, they wouldn't have given it to me because of being on academic probation, but I have to be homeless for you". Please note that David had not shared with financial aid that he was homeless except through his FAFSA. David's final comment for financial aid was, "you have to be put in this subhuman condition that no one should be in".

Chris endured numerous encounters with financial aid when applying for admission, but after acceptance, he stated he worked two jobs to pay for school until he was past his freshman year. After freshman year, he received several scholarships and grants to pay for school, therefore, he did not have to work so much. For Sonia, financial aid was also a stressful situation. At first, Sonia stated they were very helpful, until she started paying attention to the charges. After confronting financial aid about some small charges on her account (up to forty charges ranging from 50 cents to \$1.20), she stated she started missing grants which were awarded, and grants and scholarships were disbursed up to a month late. For the first summer session this year, Sonia stated her financial aid was late, so she had to drop her class. Since she dropped the class late, she now has late charges on her account. Sonia claims it happens every semester. Sonia

completed answering the question about financial aid by stating, “denied timely financial aid, they denied equal access to education”.

Academic Advising

The students’ comments for academic advising were varied, from being nearly invisible to the advisors to not receiving helpful information, with only one student giving a positive statement. Cecil’s comment was they felt like “just another student to get through the process with”. David knew what he wanted to major in, therefore the advising process was easy. He did state that his advisor did not know his living situation and he did not share the information.

COVID created a different set of issues for both advisors and students. While campus was shut down, advisors would send out emails to connect with students through Zoom or WebEx meetings. For Lily, this was very difficult as she was given a very short window to move out of the dorms and was changing places to live a lot during this time. But she did have one advisor from the Honors College and one in the Business College who understood the demands of being homeless and helped Lily find a grant through Clark County for housing.

Sim did not have issues with advising, as advising kept them on track for graduation. While campus was closed for COVID, Sim was able to contact the advisors with no problems, but now everyone is back to campus it is a little more difficult to get an appointment; at the time of our interview, the site for choosing an appointment was not working and although Sim sent emails, they felt the response time was longer than usual. Sim’s concern is to figure out what classes to take next.

Chris did not realize there was such a department as academic advising as he stated he had already chosen his classes prior to starting his first semester. Later in the semester he did contact someone in advising to get some help with time management. Chris worked two jobs and

was attending school full-time; he stated the advisor did help him. Chris would not elaborate on the subject further. When asked about academic advising, Sonia had two words to say, “really bad”. Sonia states she was not informed of the Rebel Graduate Advantage program. She informed her advisor she wants to attend law school, in which the Graduate Advantage program would be an enormous help. Not only would this program help with preparing any student that is looking to continue their education, but each participant receives a \$600 scholarship (Mountain University, 2022).

Library

Five out of the six students chimed in about the library on campus. Although Mountain University has numerous libraries on campus, the only library the students discussed was the main library. David and Cecil stated it was great for resources. Cecil liked that you could check out a laptop or a camera if you needed it for a class. Sonia stated, although great for resources and books for papers that as a student she had to write, it was not a place to get textbooks on loan. While I was a part-time instructor, the books for classes were available in the library. I explained the library loaned them out for 2 hours to students to use in the library, but they were not allowed to leave with the books. Sonia replied that none of her textbooks were available. Sim answered the question that it was “too quiet” in the library for them to study. They liked it noisier for concentration. Chris’ only issue with the library is the closing time. The library closes at midnight during the week and at 10 pm, he believes, on the weekends. He uses it mostly for homework or research but like the recreation center, uses it to be “a normal student”.

Bookstore

Cost of books at the bookstore was the first item each student discussed during the interviews. The consensus is books are too expensive at the bookstore. Cecil and Lily purchased

books elsewhere, using sites online or more specifically, Facebook groups. Another area Lily utilized was friends who had taken the class a semester prior and either purchasing their textbook or borrowing it. Sim also used online options, but stated they waited until the semester started before making any purchases based on the professor and if the class was going to use the book during the semester. Sim continued they recently found out about selling books back to the bookstore at the end of the semester. Chris stated he could not afford textbooks, he also used online sites to procure textbooks.

David applied for a job at the bookstore but did not receive a call back from them, but he said it was very easy to purchase the books he needed, to sell them back but the prices were high. Sonia repeated all the other students' sentiment of the bookstore being very expensive. She attempted to create a borrowing system for students, naming it "Bank Book". Sonia presented her proposal for Bank Book to the Intersection. The Intersection is a multi-cultural center for the university's diverse student body (Mountain University, 2022). According to Sonia, The Intersection was not interested in her proposal, then continued with Sonia has financial aid, this should help pay for the books. Sonia shared with me, unfortunately, she has some personal issues she had to use her financial aid money on. Information from the library about available textbooks showed the only ones available are when the professor has the library put them on course reserve. Unfortunately, not all books used for courses are available for the students to use (Mountain University, 2022).

Dining

Throughout the interview process, all the students were asked about food and dining options on campus. All the students stated the Dining Commons offers affordable food, for the most part the food was good, but one student wanted more meal swipes and less dining dollars

on their plan. Lily's dining was prepaid with her grants, Sim thought it was good, but wished they did not give people food poisoning and was also concerned about the dining dollars. Meal plans have specific amounts of swipes (similar to a buffet style where you can eat as much as you want with one swipe), along with dining dollars, which can be used at the Student Union for Starbucks, Subway, or any of the other eateries available. A student can also use dining dollars at the Dining Commons once they have used all their swipes (Mountain University, 2022). David claimed their schedule was too rigid, not opening on the weekends until 10 am. The Dining Commons is open during the week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner but on the weekends, only brunch and dinner are available.

Sonia also loved the Dining Commons because of the affordability but also touched on the pantry that is available to all students. The issue she had with the pantry is it is not actually on campus; it is located on University Center Drive and East Naples Drive just outside of the Thomas & Mack parking lot. The pantry, a part of the School of Integrated Health Sciences, provides year-round assistance to students and employees of the university. The pantry provides classes on nutrition also (Mountain University, 2022).

Recreation

The recreation center offers more than just pick-up basketball games, they also have a swimming pool with swim classes along with personal and fitness training. The recreation center also houses the Student Wellness Center (Mountain University, 2022). All six of the students used either the wellness center, recreation center, or both.

Cecil used the wellness center when they needed it. Sim stated they used the wellness center to receive medication and the condom bar, along with using the recreation center to stay fit and the massage chairs. Lily used the gym also to stay fit. Chris stated he used it not only to

stay fit, but for the showers. He also liked to “hang out on the second floor because no one ever asked any questions”. Sonia used the gym to work out and took classes there. The only negative response to the question was David’s. He did not really use the gym as he was not into pick-up basketball. He did add he was disappointed the game room at the student union had closed because of COVID. Through research, I found out the game room has reopened at the recreation center (Mountain University, 2022).

Question 4 & 5 – Positive and Negative Experiences: Instructors, homework, and classmates

Positive

David had very positive experiences with his instructors. He stated instructors were very receptive when he emailed them with questions or if he needed to talk with them after class. Instructors also allowed him to make up work if he missed an assignment. David stated, “I appreciate that because, it shows that they care that I care about their class”. During the interview David stated he was not very social with his peers, but in discussing the positive and negative experiences with classmates, he said he had opened up and was starting to meet with classmates to work on assignments together. For the homework, David used the tutoring on the second floor of the library for his physics class. The Academic Success Center introduced him to the tutoring area.

Instructors were quick to give extensions to Cecil. One of the reasons, they felt is because Cecil has two internships within their major, it is 11.25 hours per week for the two classes during the semester. Cecil pointed out that they appreciated when the instructors used their name and pronouns; they considered it “a plus”. Cecil did not discuss any positive nor negative experiences with classmates, but they did share it was difficult to talk much with classmates because of

classes and internship workload. Cecil did stress they would like to interact with classmates or go to club meetings. However, school, internships, along with having to work to pay bills “can severely hamper any kind of relationship you could form”. In discussing homework, the subject of group work arose. Cecil considers group work to “be very difficult when you’re (all) full-grown adults with different life situations, with different living situation, working situations”. It can be difficult if everyone else can meet on a specific day and you work on that day.

Like David, who had a family issue which caused a hiccup with his financial aid, Lily had an issue during one of her semesters causing her to miss a speech in class. Lily contacted the instructor, explaining the situation. The instructor allowed Lily to present her speech two weeks later; she earned an A in the class. She expressed gratitude she had for the individuals who cared about her because, “quite honestly, the system, it just wasn’t really there for me”.

Stress appears to play a large role for the students. Sim explained they were under a lot of stress because they had applied for a summer position. If Sim receives the position, they will be able to stay in the dorms. If not, Sim will be homeless again. Regarding classes, Sim ended up auditing a class because they could not keep up with the work. Another instructor was helpful, creating “a whole new midterm just for me-for me to do on my own time”. Other instructors have cut down the size of projects for Sim. Sim can work at their own pace because of the communication they have with instructors. Sim does credit classmates with helping by taking notes or recording classes they are unable to attend. Sim has not received clearance from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to have a note-taker in class with them. But they do state it is very difficult to complete group projects, as they like to work alone.

Chris, same as Sim and Cecil, does not like working in groups for homework. As with Cecil, working makes it difficult for him to meet up to work on a group project. He stated he

usually works on his part of the project when he can, which is in the middle of the night, and sends it to the other members via email. Chris also credits communication with instructors for receiving extensions on assignments. He suggested, “they’re perfectly understanding because I told them (instructors) the entire thing. I was like, ‘this is why I’m struggling. I’m sorry this is affecting our instructor-student relationship, but this is what’s going on. If you could please give me some leeway, I would appreciate it’”. According to Chris, the instructors always did, mostly because he was a decent student. Chris did progress past the extension and working with time management he did not need as many extensions.

Sonia had similar experiences with instructors as the other students had. Sonia suggested the instructors “allowed you to practice what you have been learning in the classroom”. She states that because of COVID and having online classes, it is difficult to get the interaction with other students.

Negative

When David started college, he had to take a specific science course, he checked out the instructor on Ratemyprofessor.com (ratemyprofessor.com, 2022). Ratemyprofessor.com is an online rating site where students who attend class leave reviews about the instructor. David found one of the instructors on there for the class he had to take, and the rating stated the lectures did not help for the class. After taking the class, David stated he would have muted the lectures because “they did not help” and figured the homework out on his own; he felt the class was overly simplified. The only negative David had about homework was he procrastinates too much and states he is lazy. He did conclude, he is working on it and getting better about homework.

Lily’s negative comments about instructors is they “are clearly not trained with how to work with homeless youth, they’re just like-and-kind of with the attitude of, ‘well, everybody

else did it', well I'm not like everybody else". She continued that professors and professionals at Mountain University exuded the feeling of, "ok, that's sad, but everybody has the same chance". But Lily has experienced a lack of resources compared to other students and it may hinder her ability to complete assignments or keep up with the class. Also, some instructors would reply when asked for extensions, if they gave her one, everyone else would have to receive one, they would not make any type of distinction between her situation and others. The other students did not have negative comments about instructors, homework, or classmates.

Question 6 – Services the university is lacking which would be helpful

Lily's response to this question was the university has a department called HOPE scholars, but was disappointed in them, as she called every day for two weeks straight leaving messages but never received a call back. Lily contacted her counselor (she did not explain whether this was a high school counselor or her academic advisor at the university), was informed HOPE has a quota and the quota was filled. Currently, HOPE has 10 scholars in their program at Mountain University, across all four class levels. Financial aid for Lily seemed to be a huge disappointment; she felt they are understaffed and not able to handle or deal with homeless students. She commented she did not understand why Mountain University did not have an office for homeless students with at least one person to help. Another issue for Lily was when the university closed due to COVID, Lily was given a short notice to move out of her dorm room. Those who had to leave the dorms were given their money back, but Lily had nowhere to go and the funds, which were very limited, did not come right away.

David had the same experience with HOPE, except he went to the office on the third floor of the student union. He was informed by the office staff that the director was working remotely and to email her. David did not contact the director because he would need a referral

from his Title I high school. David contacted Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY); at the time of the interview, he was waiting for a call back from NPHY. David discussed with me the school needs to be more connected with registered student organizations and update their websites. He did echo the literature review by stating homeless students do not want to admit or tell people they are homeless.

Sim wishes the food pantry was closer to campus, as did Sonia. Sim added, “if you do not have a car or anything, you have to walk all the way back with all of that and especially once it gets hotter...” Sim’s idea is it would be better if the pantry was at the SWRC (Rec center), maybe in the dining commons, or the student union in the area which housed the game room.

Besides the pantry and its placement, Sonia believes that housing could be better, especially for non-traditional students. She stated she is going through a domestic violence issue and to live somewhere safe is paramount for her and her child. Currently, Mountain University does not have on-campus housing for non-traditional students. Off-campus housing is available for students, but all off-campus housing is either 2- or 4-bedroom units. For Sonia, it may be cost prohibitive for her and her daughter to live there but it may not be feasible for her to have a roommate.

For Cecil, the cost to attend college was what needed to change for the university. Cecil felt the services were adequate, but the cost of attending was too high for most people. Chris’ only request is to have a 24 hour a day operation somewhere on campus. Specifically, he would like the library to be 24 hours. Several years ago, prior to COVID, the library would be open 24 hours a day during study week and finals week.

Question 7 – Personal insights which guided the student from the application process to attending school

For Lily, it was pure ambition that guided her through the process of applying for school to attending. She felt if she could get into college, get a degree, everything would be great; she would have a place to live and a job. But then she entered Mountain University, “where every system is challenging me, questioning me, making me do twice the work, just to get the resource or the necessity that the kid next to me has”. The hoops Lily had to jump through weakened her confidence and embarrassed her; she felt like a burden to the school. Lily even tried to use the wellness center for mental health service. Students can receive 10 free sessions, but she was only given one appointment by the specialist and was told to seek other free help. Lily was given a referral by the specialist to another mental health specialist.

David compared his entrance into Mountain University to someone waving a magic wand. He filled out a few spaces on an email and he was admitted into school. He continued with, using search engines to find out information on tuition and academic resources that he needed to set up for classes and living arrangements.

Sim attributes their mother helping with entrance into college. Sim has “a hard time talking to people I don’t know, especially when setting things up for myself”. Sim also discussed their advisor helping especially when they wanted to change their major. At first Sim was a psychology major but changed to film. Unfortunately, the transition to fine arts was not smooth, especially when choosing classes. Sim’s worry was they would do something that was dumb or not worth their time. Sim also wishes choosing your classes was simpler just in case you have a difficult time getting in to see your advisor.

Cecil's social worker from school was the major force behind them getting into school. Cecil, like David, stated they used search engines a lot to find out information they needed about the campus. Cecil is also a HOPE scholar, so Cecil receives extra assistance from them.

Mountain University bookstore used to carry a catalogue, or book which had every undergraduate and graduate degree listed as well as what classes a student would need to take. Sonia stated she read the catalogue to figure out how to apply and what to do after being admitted into the university. Sonia stated her advisor was more like a "one-size-fits-all". She informed me she asked for a different advisor because the one she originally had did not understand her situation being a non-traditional student.

Chris holds communication in high regard, to be able to communicate to people exactly what you need. His number two is patience. You must have patience when "explaining your homeless situation, because most people will not understand". In hindsight, Chris said he would have met with his academic advisor before starting classes and to put his classes on one day so he would not have had to travel back and forth every day.

Question 8 – What drives the student to continue their education

A dream career is what drives Chris to continue his education. He is working towards becoming a history professor. Chris is looking far into the future, 10-12 years down the road. It is what drives him to continue taking classes in history. Since he attended a magnet school, he knew his path was to attend college, he attributes his motivation because of the environment he was raised in. But he also has a lot of friends that attend Mountain University and he said, "just being surrounded by them really helped".

For Sonia, her drive is very simple, "if I am all right, my family is all right".

Cecil is the only one of three siblings who attends college. Cecil wants not only for themselves to get out of poverty, but they also want to help the siblings too. Cecil also understands without college, jobs are at a minimum. But with a degree there are more jobs to choose from.

The first person in the family to graduate college is Sim's motivation for continuing their education. Since Sim is now majoring in film, contacts are highly regarded. The classes they (Sim) are enrolled in at Mountain University, these could possibly be stepping-stones to furthering their career. Sim states, "I want to achieve my goals and stuff, so I push myself and keep pushing through and doing the work even though I am tired, and I don't want to, but I keep going".

David's drive to continue his education is family-based, unlike Cecil or Sim, it is not about being the first to graduate college. It is about taking care of his mother. He talked about his mother wanting to retire at 65. David did not believe she would be able to, but with a degree he could make enough to take care of her. He does not want to live paycheck to paycheck. He wants to live comfortably and to help his mother out.

Question 9 – Advice to students in similar situation contemplating higher education

"Go to school because it is good for you", Lily stated, but she knows that it is not that easy. She continues, seek out people who want to help you, it may be a professor or an advisor, someone to act as a mentor. Lily's final comment was to "have hope and keep trying to make connections".

David answered the last question with what he feels is the best advice, "absolutely abuse the financial aid they are willing to give you or scholarships". He went on to say to look for scholarships based on ethnicity, race, first-generation and not to feel uncomfortable about

applying for the scholarships. David said he wondered if maybe someone needed it more than he did and felt uncomfortable receiving money because of his skin color, so he did not take those, but “if you’re in a desperate enough or like, destitute position, absolutely go ahead and do that”. Community college was another suggestion from David when starting college, mostly because of the cost; the student could always transfer later to a four-year university. His last comment for the interview is to “not feel ashamed”.

“Keep their head up and stay focused”, is Sim’s advice to students who are in a similar situation. Sim continues with, “yes, things can get stressful and like you can sometimes feel like quitting, but you don’t want to ever live with regrets”.

With the connection Cecil had with their social worker from high school, they said to keep in touch with the social worker and to seek out other adults that you trust to help you. Students should look at programs like Gear Up while still in high school. Gear Up is similar to the Trio program. These programs help with the application process and what scholarships are available. But the most important piece of advice was to find what drives you.

For Sonia, her advice to incoming students, was to find as much information as they can about different resources available. Do research to find out what is available on campus, the rec center, the women’s resource center, and the pantry. These places can help with the non-financial areas of college.

Chris extended his thoughts from question 8, people will not understand your homeless or displaced situation but keep pushing for the help and keep pushing for the resources that you as the student needs to be successful. He also added, “you’re going to have to work for it and prove that you deserve all these opportunities that you’re getting”.

After the nine questions, I asked each of the students if they had anything else to add not discussed earlier. Sonia had issues with the student organizations. She felt discriminated against because of her age. She went to a student organization to inquire about a possible job. The organization would not talk with her about any type of employment. Sonia was looking for some type of quality interaction.

For Cecil, it all comes down to accessibility of the “cost of existence”, especially for higher education. Sim would like the university to have dog stations since they have a service animal. Mountain University is an open campus, therefore anyone in the neighborhood can walk onto campus with their own dog. This is a concern for Sim, since not all people leash their dogs, and they can become unruly when around another animal. Housing is also a concern for Sim because of the service animal. Sim would rather have a room with no roommate or a larger room, so the animal has its own space. Sim also reiterated about the dining swipes that meal plans would be better if they had an option for just swipes.

Chris, David, and Lily want advocates for homeless and displaced students. Compassion was the major topic from all the students.

Complementary Action Research Matrix Application (CARMA)

Using CARMA as an evaluation tool in conjunction with the students’ answers to the interview questions, I examined the policies, procedures, and systems in place at Mountain University to assist homeless or displaced students by researching the university’s website under the topic of *help for homeless students*. CARMA is a three-step application which begins with NoteTaking, researching what is expected and then identify what is actual. In step two, NoteMaking, the researcher compares what is convergent and what is divergent, comparing the

policies, procedures, and systems, against the actual experiences of the students. For step three, NoteRe-making, the researcher provides recommendations based on the data collected and the researcher's interpretation of the data (Putney, et al., 2006).

CARMA – Part I – NoteTaking

CARMA uses NoteTaking to research what is expected, then identify what is actual. For the initial step, the process was to use NoteTaking by recording what resources were expected to be available for homeless or displaced students at Mountain University. Mountain University is in a large metropolitan city in the southwest United States. The city has over 6000 high school students that are homeless, displaced, or disadvantaged (Project150.org). When students fill out the FAFSA, they have the ability to identify as homeless/displaced.

In researching the different policies, procedures, and systems various resources through the university's website were evidently available to students. Emergency loans, numerous scholarships supported by the student government, the HOPE scholars' program, Fostering Scholars Program, food pantry, Student Support Spot for nonperishable foods and toiletry items are available. Mountain University also offers bus passes at a discount price, psychological services along with a wellness center and a women's center that helps with students who are victims of sexual assault or relationship abuse. All the resources are available for all students whether or not they are homeless/displaced.

Website Review Results

The Student Support link provided a list of resources the university provides to students, only a couple of links are geared toward homeless and displaced students. The first link was the HOPE Scholars program. The tagline on their website stated the "HOPE scholars program is designed to help secure housing, academic, material, and financial support for students

experiencing homelessness” (Mountain University, 2022). In connection with HOPE Scholars is HOPE Resources. This website provides links to other resources, mostly on-campus, but two of the resources are off campus. Most of the links help with health and welfare of the students. The two off campus resources are the Department of Welfare and Supportive Services and the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. Another department within the university which helps a specific population is the Fostering Scholars program. This program is designed for students who “have a history in the foster care system” (Mountain University, 2022)

Other links in the student support website include the food pantry, discounted bus passes, reduced cost for internet service, and childcare. The link for the pantry states they dispense non-perishable items, but while researching the pantry, I found they have expanded to fresh food and dairy. The pantry also provides instruction on food preparation and dietary needs, and is open to all students, faculty, and staff. Since the university is considered a commuter school, meaning the majority of students do not live on campus, students can purchase a bus pass at a 68% discount.

Technology may be out of reach for some students who are homeless or displaced; the library has a limited number of laptops, desktops and webcams available to use each semester. The main library also boasts nearly 400 computers which can be used by students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In helping with affordable technology, a reduced cost internet service is accessible through a program with the federal government. Childcare is also available for students, faculty and staff at a reduced rate, but space is limited and only for ages 6 weeks to 5 years of age (Mountain University, 2022).

The remaining areas of the website provide links to scholarships/financial aid, student counseling services, student emergency funding, student health centers, and the newest area, the Student Support Spot. The Student Support Spot, through the Grad College, offers nonperishable

food packages, toiletry items, along with in-person help for both undergraduate and graduate students experiencing housing and food insecurities. They also help with mental health. Several of the websites overlap their information, especially with regard to mental and physical health.

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CARMA – Part II – NoteMaking

Through research on the university's website and meeting with the director at the pantry, Mountain University has an abundance of resources for students. The second element of CARMA is NoteMaking in which the researcher compares what was expected to what was evidently taking place to determine convergent or divergent from the expectations. The results will be displayed as expectations, then convergent or divergent as noted from the interviews. From the interviews, there appears to be a disconnect in communication and in services to the neediest of the student body. After interviewing the students, many of their experiences were the same with specific departments. Per discussions with the students, it was found financial aid was the worst department to work with. The students stated that it was difficult to find information for resources needed, most of the students utilized Google or they relied on the university's website to find what was needed. Some of the students stated their drive to continue and

complete their education was to get out of their current situation. The students felt if they could finish school, have a career, they would not have to worry about being homeless or displaced.

Financial Aid – Expectation

The university is in a city that has a substantial homeless, displaced, and disadvantaged high school population. There is a non-profit, Project 150, who awards scholarships to students to attend college within the state. With this type of population, the expectation is that the local university would have the resources to help these students succeed, especially in financial aid, along with knowledge of how many attend the university.

Financial aid comes in several forms at the university. Most notable is the financial aid students accept before they begin their first semester. Most students who are seeking to attend a college or university fill out the FAFSA and based on their answers, the school will send financial aid offers. It is up to the student to accept or decline the offers (FAFSA, 2022). The expectation with the financial aid department is students should be able to ask questions about how to fill out the FAFSA, how to accept or decline offers, and any other questions students may not have had the resources in high school to understand about financial aid. There are other types of financial aid and scholarships available. Emergency funds are available for undergraduate and graduate students, but the monetary amounts are limited and only specific colleges within the university have them, the students should be apprised to these options as well.

Financial Aid – Convergent

Only one of the six students had a positive experience with financial aid. The student stated that the department would contact them about accepting their awards. The student also stated the department was helpful with the FAFSA application also.

Financial Aid – Divergent

Two of the students interviewed had to return to financial aid several times to get misunderstandings straightened out. The students complained that appeals are a long, drawn-out process which could have resulted in being dropped from classes or losing other financial aid. One student had to drop her summer class because her financial aid was not disbursed in time. She also found dozens of small charges against her scholarships; the student had to personally research what the charges were for because financial aid would not tell her. Except for the one student, all of the other interviewees felt they were brushed off by the people who work at financial aid, and that the website was far more helpful than the people who work in the department.

FAFSA has a section students can check when they are homeless and the university is alerted to all students who checked the box, but the university is only required to verify a percentage of those who check the box. Since they only must verify a percentage, the university may not have an accurate count of how many homeless students are on campus.

Academic Advising – Expectation

The university encompasses several different colleges, such as, Liberal Arts, Sciences, Education, Hospitality, and Urban Affairs. Each of the colleges has their own advising center. The participants' expectation of advisors is to have some type of connection with students who are personally assigned to them. Also, advisors should have knowledge of degree plans and understand how best to steer the student with classes they should enroll in, so the student does not waste time, money or overwhelm the student with classes for their semesters. The website states the student should meet with the advisor every semester (Mountain University, 2022).

Academic Advising – Convergent

All advising center websites provide hours of operation, some discuss the ability to take phone calls for academic appointments, but the time is limited. The centers also state what to expect when you meet with the advisor; they will provide registration advice, help the student put together a schedule each semester that is a balance of academic and personal obligations. The website states all new students must meet with an academic advisor, all freshmen meet their first-year advisor at new student orientation, and any transfer students must make an appointment with their academic advising center (Mountain University, 2022). One talked about their advisor and stated the advisor was instrumental in helping them stay on track for graduation.

Academic Advising – Divergent

Through no fault of any advising centers, COVID changed how advisors meet with students. Since students were not allowed on campus for an extended period of time, all meetings were conducted online. This created a hardship for some of the students interviewed, especially one because she was constantly moving around after having to vacate the dorms. The other four students interviewed stated most of the time when meeting an advisor, they felt invisible and communication from certain centers was lacking. Although the lead website had information about students meeting with their advisors, along with links to specific advising centers, not all students understand or know they are supposed to meet with an advisor before starting their first semester. One student did not meet with an advisor prior to starting their first semester, this could have created a situation where the student took a class they did not need to, wasting money and time. Another student was not informed of a program that helps students who want to continue their education into graduate school. This program helps prepare the student for grad school and provides a \$600 scholarship.

Library – Expectation

The expectation for a university library should have at least the basics for student of any background. Basics would include computers, printers, access to up-to-date reference books, journals, along with quiet study areas. Given that Mountain University is a Tier I research school, undergraduate and graduate students may assume librarians would be available to help with research design. The website should link to journal databases to retrieve peer-reviewed articles. Lastly, the library should have extended accessible hours for students who work outside of campus.

Library – Convergent

Mountain University boasts numerous libraries on the main campus, the main library, Teacher Resource library, Music library, and Architecture library. For the purpose of this study, the main library was used as the source of information. The library has a large selection of study rooms with computer monitors, nearly 400 desktop computers are available for not only students but alumni as well; regular printers and 3D printers are also available.

Since Mountain University is a Tier I research school, librarians are available with an appointment for research consultation, the librarians cover a variety of topics. Other resources include an extensive database for peer-reviewed articles, and interlibrary loan program which several of the students discussed. Students appreciated the fact they could check out a laptop for the full semester. During the semesters the library has extensive hours during the week and shorter hours on the weekends.

Library – Divergent

The hours are extensive during the semester, one student interviewed would have liked the library to be open 24 hours. The only time the library is open for longer than their regular

hours is during study week, the week prior to finals. Tutoring is available in the library, but the subjects are limited as another student pointed out during the interviews. Textbooks were not available to use in the library. While I was a part-time instructor, I was informed textbooks were available in the library but could not be checked out. The library was contacted regarding textbooks, and it was stated only if the professor wanted the textbook available in the library, then it was (Mountain University, 2022).

Bookstore – Expectation

Besides the basics of school supplies, tee shirts, and graduation attire, the bookstore is where students will purchase their textbooks. The expectation is for the bookstore to have affordable textbooks, whether it is an abundance of used books, books available for rental, or new textbooks that are well priced.

Bookstore – Convergent

Books were easy to purchase, according to one student interviewed. The bookstore did have an assortment of school attire, supplies and graduation cap and gown packages. A student can rent books for the semester at a lower rate than purchasing new. Used books are the cheapest to purchase. Another student stated they waited until after the first class to be sure what book(s) the instructor was going to use.

Bookstore – Divergent

Most of the students interviewed stated the books were very expensive whether new, rented, or used. Some of the students searched the internet to purchase books or checked in with friends to borrow or purchase those books.

Dining – Expectation

For students that either live on campus or align their schedules so they spend all day on campus a couple of days a week, a place to eat affordably is a big deal. Dining at a major university should not only be affordable but should have enough options for students to eat healthy and the food, edible. For students who are homeless or displaced, affordable and healthy is key. Hours of operations, especially for students who live on campus are important.

Dining – Convergent

Mountain University has several options in dining for students. The dining commons has multiple stations for students to choose from. There is a salad bar, sandwiches, pizza, yogurt bar, freshly made burgers, and pastas. In the mornings, eggs cooked to order, cereals, and fruit are just a few items offered. At the Student Union, students can choose between sushi burritos, salads, Subway sandwiches, burgers and shakes and Panda Express. Starbucks is also available at the Student Union as well as the science building on the north side of campus. There are two Einstein bagel shops on campus also.

Students have the availability to choose a dining plan for the semester. There are a variety of plans, depending on needs and price. The price ranges from \$2165 up to \$2756 per semester. The cheapest rate is for 150 meals per semester with \$450 in dining dollars per semester. The \$2756 is for all dining dollars and is the semester price. Except for the most expensive plan, the others have meals at the dining commons and dining dollars, this means you can eat at the dining commons, but once you have used all your swipes, then you have dining dollars left to use at the Student Union restaurants or the other areas of campus which have restaurants (Mountain University, 2022). Though not a dining option per se, the pantry helps with food items for students. They now carry perishables and dairy along with cooking suggestions.

Dining – Divergent

The dining commons could be compared to a buffet; you go through and choose what you would like to have and then if you are still hungry, you choose more food. This is where the students chimed in about the dining dollars. They wished the meal plans had more swipes and less dollars because you either used the dollars at the Student Union or paid a higher price at the dining commons for a meal.

Another issue of divergent is the hours the dining commons is open. During the week food is served continuously from 7 am until 9 pm (Monday-Thursday) and 8 pm (Friday). For the weekends brunch is served 10 am until 2 pm, then dinner is served 5 pm until 8 pm. Some of the restaurants in the Student Union are not open during the weekends or later than 9 pm. The only food area open later is the P.O.D. (Provisions On Demand) which is comparable to a local 7-Eleven. P.O.D. is open until 1 am every day school is in session. P.O.D. is located next to the dining commons, therefore it is easily accessible for students who live on campus (Mountain University, 2022).

Even though the pantry provides food and education, the students commented that it is too far off campus to really be helpful. The opinions they voiced were during the hot weather, it is too far to walk, and food would be spoiled before you would get back to the dorms. They would like the pantry to be on campus.

Recreation – Expectation

A recreation center with basketball and volleyball courts along with workout equipment and a weight room which can be utilized by all the student body would be a plus for any university. The availability of fitness classes for students and staff, with showers being accessible for after. The health and well-being of the student body is important to a university.

Recreation – Convergent

The recreation center at Mountain University boasts work out classes, basketball and volleyball, intermural sports, a swimming pool with swim classes and outdoor camping trips. The recreation center also has a Student Wellness Center. The Wellness Center provides physical health care as well as mental health care. A pharmacy is also on campus so any prescriptions the Wellness Center writes can be filled there instead of having to leave campus. A couple of the students chimed in they used the Wellness Center to get medications they needed and the used the condom bar.

Five of the six students interviewed stated they used the recreation center for a variety of reasons. Most used the center to take fitness classes or played basketball. The massage chairs were a hit with one of the students. One student used the showers available while he was homeless and hung out there to study because no one ever bothered him.

Recreation – Divergent

Only one student had a negative comment, but it was not specifically towards the recreation center, but the Student Union as they took out the game room during COVID. The game room was moved to the recreation center.

Experiences in the Classroom – Expectation

In the classroom, students should be treated equally. Students should have positive experiences with not only the instructors, but their peers as well. But exceptions may have to be made for a student who is dealing with issues that are preventing them from keeping up with the class.

Experiences in the Classroom – Convergent

Instructors are receptive to discussing issues with students according to the students interviewed. Several of the students explained they spoke with their instructor about problems with homework or the due dates for assignments and the instructors worked with them.

The students did not discuss positive interaction with peers.

Experiences in the Classroom – Divergent

It is difficult for a homeless/displaced student to voice their situation with instructors or peers. There is a stigma involved for them. Some instructors did not appear to be trained on how to work with students that are homeless or displaced, this is according to one of the students interviewed. Perhaps the instructor felt that if they made an exception for one person, they had to make the same exception for everyone. The instructor may feel this is the only way to treat everyone equally.

In relation with peers, the students who weighed in on the question based their answers on the ability to complete group work. It is difficult to complete group work when you are working, have an internship, and attending school.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the needs of students who are homeless or displaced as well as compare the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University. Six full-time undergraduate students at Mountain University, who identified as homeless or displaced participated in this study. Students were interviewed and using resiliency and hope theory as the theoretical framework to analyze their experiences with the different areas within the university's departments. CARMA's second stage of analysis,

using NoteMaking/convergent or divergent to compare the university's systems with the results from the interviews was included in this chapter.

In chapter 5, I will discuss the full results of the study. The final stage of CARMA is NoteRe-making/recommendation which will include whether the university needs to change their policies or continue with the same ones. This will also include recommendations on how the university can change to help this demographic of students.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introduction

This qualitative multiple case study identifies the needs of homeless or displaced students who earned a scholarship, grant, or both to attend Mountain University. This chapter will discuss an overview of the study and how the students' answers to the interview questions answer the research question. This chapter will also examine resiliency and hope theories, limitations of the study, and possible future research. The chapter will also include the final section of CARMA, which is NoteRe-making/recommendations, whether the university needs to institute changes, what possible changes the university could make or maintain the status quo.

Overview of Study

Based on the literature review, there is a shortage of qualitative research of homeless or displaced college students, most notably, college students that attend a university after earning a scholarship, grant, or both. The literature review also suggested this is not a new issue for students. In using a qualitative multiple case study lens, this may lend a point of view of how these students thrive through such adversity as being homeless or displaced and attending college full-time. Crutchfield, et al., (2019) stated, in addition to academic issues they may face, students may also encounter other experiences that could influence their success, such as strained peer relationships, family issues, barriers to financial aid and lack of access to technology (Crutchfield, et al., 2019). The purpose of this qualitative multiple was to identify the needs of these students and distinguish how the students navigate through their first two years.

Research Question

This study was driven by the following research question: How do students who are homeless or displaced, but earned a scholarship, grant, or both navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of Mountain University to attend the first two years?

Participants in the Study

Six full-time undergraduate students at the university who identified as homeless or displaced, and earned either a scholarship, grant, or both participated in this study. Resiliency and Hope theories were used as the theoretical frameworks for this study. For resiliency theory, there were several overarching themes from the interviews: obstacles they faced with applying for admission to dealing with homework, internships, and working off campus but still completed the work necessary to maintain their scholarships and grants. Hope theory centers around willpower, waypower, and agency. For the students who participated in this study, they showed their willpower by having the clear goal of attending college, the waypower of planning the roadmap on how they will achieve this goal in continuing their education, and agency on how the student will re-route their thinking when faced with an obstacle.

Resiliency and Hope Theoretical Perspectives

Recurring themes emerged as the interviews were conducted, which tied to the theories researched for this study. A. S. Masten's (2011) Resiliency Theory and C. R. Snyder's (1987) Hope Theory encompasses what the participants have experienced as students who attend a four-year public university full-time who are either homeless or displaced and have earned a scholarship, grant, or both.

Masten's Resiliency Theory

Masten's original definition of resiliency theory was "doing well despite adversity or risk" (Masten, 2011). With continued research, the focus was on the process of resiliency, now defined as "the capacity, process, or outcomes of successful adaptation in the context of significant threats to function or development" (2011). Another researcher define resiliency as the ability to recover from negative life experiences (Ledesma, 2014).

This study shows how the students used their resiliency to maintain their college goals even while experiencing adversity. The participants used their ability to recover from negative experiences first by applying and entering the university. All participants were homeless or displaced at the time of this study. They were able to find alternate solutions to their problems. Each of the participants had components (people) who worked with them to help them succeed. Finally, the participants understood not everything is within their capabilities to control. They use coping abilities to get through those situations.

C. R. Snyder's Hope Theory

C. R. Snyder (1994) quoted Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Work Without Hope*, "Hope without an objective cannot live". Realistic or definitive goals must have a starting point in hope. This is not to say the goal should be simplistic, such as, 'I hope I get dressed today', but should have "magnitude" or "importance", contends Snyder (Snyder, 1994).

According to Snyder (1994; 2002) hope consists of three elements of willpower, waypower, and agency. A high-hope person has excellent social skills and can laugh at themselves, but they also set goals with positive thought (Snyder, 1994; 2002). Each participant interviewed had very specific goals, and from the short amount of time spent with them, each exhibited a high-hope personality. In interviewing Cecil, they stated, "I am one of three children,

my siblings did not graduate college and I want to graduate so I can help them.” The first element of hope theory is willpower. Snyder asserts willpower is the “driving force of hopeful thinking”. Willpower erupts when a person has a clear goal set and understands how to set a way to achieve that goal (Snyder, 1994). Chris plans to become a history professor, even with being homeless, working a couple of jobs, his goal is clear. The participants interviewed all had a goal to complete college and specific reasons for why they want to. Waypower is the second element of hope theory. Having waypower means you have created a roadmap which will guide your hopeful thought (Snyder, 1994). Sim was a psychology major but changed their degree plan to film. Sim spoke with their advisors to make the change and continues to see their Fine Arts advisor to stay on track for graduation.

The third element of hope is agency (Snyder, et al., 1991). Agency or agentic thinking is used when the person with high hope, who has created a goal hits a roadblock and how they are re-route their motivation, or how the motivation changes towards their goal (Snyder, et al., 1991, Snyder 2002). COVID created roadblocks for some of the participants, while personal experiences threatened to veer them from their path, the participants re-routed their thinking and motivation to continue their schooling. For Lily, having to move out of the dorms when COVID restrictions forced her to, she still continued her studies even with couch-surfing until she secured a grant from Clark County for housing.

Pathways are the plans the high-hope person puts into place to achieve their goal. Snyder, Rand, and Sigmon (2005) created a roadway to show the progression in hopeful thinking, a succession of pathway thinking which adds to agency thinking, and flows back to pathway thinking (Snyder, et al., 2005). The participants utilized this type of roadway to redirect their plans to achieve their goals when roadblocks were placed in front of them. For David, his GPA

was dropped during one semester due to the loss of a family member but, he re-routed his path and brought his grades up.

Connections to Literature

In review of research for this study, many of the journal articles stated homeless students may not want to disclose their status to their peers, their instructors, or departments of a university. Numerous authors discussed in their research homeless students try to blend in with their peers but will also choose not to use services at the university which are available to them (Crutchfield, et al., 2016; Morton, et al., 2018; Narendorf, et al., 2018; Ringer, 2015). While conducting the interviews, it was clearly stated by most of the participants they utilized general websites along with the university's website to gather information they needed. Two participants, (David and Lily) stated in dealing with financial aid, they had to expose their homeless status to receive help. Both students had issues with their financial aid and were going through the appeal process. David and Lily were in jeopardy of being dropped from classes because the appeal was taking so long. It was not until they disclosed their homeless status their financial aid was released. Lily's appeal took a long time because every homeless youth has to qualify. For the homeless or displaced student entering college the qualifications to declare being homeless usually start at the high school level, such as it was with Cecil and them working with the social worker at school. But with Lily, she had to go back to her high school to have the liaison fill out paperwork to show she was homeless. Lily was put in the position twice of having to disclose her status. Curry, et al., (2017) there are a set of complex conditions for youth to adhere to (Curry, et al., 2017). One participant, Cecil, is a Hope Scholar, therefore, their status as homeless is known by the program.

Miller (2011) and Gupton (2017) explained the homeless youth population is very diverse: different in race/ethnicity, gender, past experiences, education, support system they have or do not have, and their family structure (Gupton, 2017; Miller, 2011). The participants included African American, Hispanic and Caucasian race/ethnicities. Male, female, and those that do not identify as either participated. Five of the six participants were traditional students, meaning they started college right after high school, one was non-traditional, starting college later in life. Some of the participants discussed their support system, especially Cecil, who gave tribute to their social worker from high school who helped them with their admission into college. Lily credits two of her advisors with providing information about a housing grant through the county (not the school). Lily lost her dorm room when COVID regulations made her move out with limited choices of places to live and very little money as the CARES and HEERF grants were not yet available. Unfortunately, it took time to receive the housing grant money from the county, Lily had to move from place to place, or couch surf. Several studies discussed couch surfing for students and youth (Bowers & O'Neill, 2019; Curry, et al., 2017; Hallett, et al., 2019). Only Hallett, et al., (2019) states policy makers and practitioners try to make the argument that this practice should not be considered homelessness because "students may be doing this for adventure or carefree lifestyle. The policy makers and practitioners claim the homeless student may be doing this because they equate it to traveling around Europe and living in hostels" (Hallett, et al., 2019). I do not believe Lily would consider having to move from place to place an adventure or carefree lifestyle.

Some of the students discussed their family structure with Cecil stating they have two other siblings who started college but did not finish. David talked about his mom; he wants to graduate with a degree so he can take care of her. Sonia, who is a parent, stated she wants her

family to be, “okay”, because “if they are okay, then I am okay.” Wenzel, et al., (2012) stated the homeless students relied on their social network for survival (Wenzel, et al., 2012).

Several articles discussed housing for students, especially when there is a break from classes (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Hallett, 2010; Miami-Dade College, 2020). Hallett continued there must be a coordinated effort between the school and homeless students because of the need for alternate housing (Hallett, 2010). In the same study Hallett discussed a student who would have to live on Skid Row during the winter and summer break (Hallett, 2010). During the interviews, David stated he will be homeless over the winter break and during the summer if he could not secure housing. Sim, who is a resident advisor (RA) has applied for an RA position for the summer, but if Sim is not chosen for the position, they will be homeless also.

Ringer (2015) contends student homelessness is a “crisis within a crisis of higher education”. The meaning behind the quote is students in the lower socio-economic status (SES) as well as middle SES, they are already disadvantaged, but could fall further into economic strife by the cost of higher education. Cecil stated during the interview about “the cost of existence”, meaning how much college cost overall, but they need the degree they are striving for to procure a good job. David, Chris, and Lily chimed in with a college degree, they can get better jobs and take care of themselves and their family.

While conducting the research, a majority of the articles discussed the number of homeless youth and homeless college students. While this study is not about the numbers, it was alarming the difference between the research articles. Some of the articles talked about the precarity of the students’ situations being homeless and attending school, but there was not a lot of research conducted by talking with the students. The articles talk about meeting the student’s needs, but they did not discuss what the needs were in specific terms, only general ones.

After evaluating the answers from the participants, numerous recommendations evolved for the different departments from the questions asked. It was surprising through the literature review, there was no recommendations on how to help the students beyond the universities and colleges need to look into their situation more. There was a sharp contrast when discussing homeless college students, one study stated there was a “a steep increase in attention to insecurity among college students (Klitzman, 2019), another stated it is a “hidden epidemic” (Rahman, et al., 2015). After hearing the participants answers to the interview questions and their stories, I must side with the hidden epidemic.

Table 3 shows the relationship between the interview questions, literature and the theories used in this study.

Table 3: Interview Questions, Literature Connections, Resiliency and Hope Theory Connections.

Question	Literature Connection	Resiliency Theory	Hope Theory
What was your experience in applying to colleges and universities?	Hallett (2010); Miller (2012); Tierney & Ward (2017)		Hope Theory Snyder, (1994). (p. 212).
How helpful were the following departments, such as Financial Aid, Academic Advising, the bookstore, or services at Mountain University?	Crutchfield (2016); NCHE (2018)		
What obstacles, if any, did you encounter in utilizing these departments?	Crutchfield (2016)		Hope Theory Snyder, et al. (2005). (p. 263).
Would you please share any positive experiences your encountered in the classroom with any of the following: instructors, homework, classmates?			Hope Theory Snyder, et al. (2005). (p. 258).
Would you share any challenging experiences your encountered in the classroom	Miami-Dade College (2020);		Hope Theory Snyder, et al. (2005). (p. 263)

with any of the following: instructors, homework, classmates?	Bowers & O’Neill (2019)		
Are there any services, that the university does not currently have, that would be helpful to you as a homeless or displaced student?	Miami-Dade College (2020); Schmitz & Tyler (2018)		
Could you please share any personal insights that helped guide you through the process of applying, meeting with an advisor, and selecting classes?		Resiliency Theory Masten, (2011).	Hope Theory Snyder, (1994). (p. 213).
Could you please share any personal insights that gave you the drive to continue with classes?		Resiliency Theory Ledesma, (2014).	Hope Theory Snyder, et al. (2005). (p. 260).
What advice would you give to a student who is in a similar situation contemplating attending a higher education institution?		Resiliency Theory Masten, (2011).	

Complementary Action Research Matrix Application (CARMA)

In Chapter 4, CARMA Part I revealed the expectations for the policies, procedures, and systems of Mountain University. Due to the volume of homeless, displaced and disadvantaged high school students in the area of the university, I expected Mountain University to have an abundance of resources available for students. CARMA Part II disclosed some of the disconnects between the homeless and displaced students and the university. Some students stated it was difficult to find information for resources they needed and certain departments were difficult to work with. Other resources were very helpful for homeless and displaced students.

CARMA – PART III – NoteRe-making

The final section of CARMA is NoteRe-making/recommendations. Part III will suggest recommendations for possible solutions based on the results from the interview answers in this

study. The goal here is to provide the university with recommendations to potentially improve policy and practice.

Financial Aid

While there are substantial avenues for financial aid at Mountain University, the department itself is an issue. Except for one student, the other five had problems with the department. Issues ranged from financial aid being held back until appeals were completed to small charges against a student's aid the department would not tell the student why. The student had to conduct her own research and fight to get the money returned to her account. Two of the students had to personally reveal they were homeless to have their financial aid returned to their accounts. Other students stated they felt like they were "brushed off" by the department. David felt "like you have to be put in this sub-human condition that no one should be in" when he was dealing with Financial Aid and his appeal. Once he explained he was a homeless student, the financial aid was dispensed immediately. This was the first time David disclosed to anyone at the university he was homeless.

When filling out the FAFSA, homeless students can check a box stating they are homeless. I contacted the financial aid department to ask if they use the FAFSA to understand how many homeless students are on campus. The employee stated, "Yes, we do, but we only have to complete the verification process with a certain amount of them." The employee did not inform me what the amount is. I also asked if the university has any idea of how many students they have who are homeless, the employee stated they did not have full knowledge of how many are homeless on campus (Mountain University, 2023).

In a perfect world, the university would know the number of homeless students on campus. The amount may be overwhelming, but a recommendation would be to have a small

team of people who specifically handle homeless students. Another recommendation, which was suggested by one of the participants, is for the employees in the financial aid department enroll in a type of sensitivity training to help them understand what homeless students are going through and the best way to help them. For Lily, “when you’re already fighting for everything else, like simple things like a meal in your life, you don’t wanna have to over explain yourself to—you know, let’s say financial aid or UNLV department and have to continuously fight for something.”

Though the student government at the university is not associated with the financial aid department, research shows they award scholarships. Outside of the basic scholarships students are awarded, the student government also awards 15 scholarships every year. The student government has very distinct criteria for their scholarships. Students who apply must meet the following requirements: all the scholarships have a particular grade point average (GPA) the student must maintain, a completed form and an essay. All 15 of the scholarships are type specific, i.e.: International Student, Justice for Black Lives, Able and Advancing (for students with disabilities), and Leadership Empowerment. Unfortunately, none of the scholarships are homeless or displaced specific, this may be an avenue the student government could investigate.

Academic Advising

The university is split up into different colleges with each college having their own advising department. This allows advisors to become efficient at degree programs specific to their colleges, meaning an advisor who is at the College of Sciences would not be expected to know what the degree program is for a history major. Each advisor understands the classes a student will enroll in for their degree program and how to set up each semester for the best outcome for the student.

As with financial aid, a type of sensitivity training program may be useful to the advisors to help them understand what the homeless student copes with daily. Communication was another area the students talked about in the interviews; one student missed out on an opportunity to enroll in a program which would have helped her in transitioning to grad school after she completes her undergraduate degree along with her missing out on a \$600 scholarship. Sonia expressed she had to, “find it on my own and now I had just one semester to make the whole program. That’s not right. That’s not fair.” This is why Sonia would like to have more communication between advisors and students.

Although each of the colleges’ websites inform students they must meet with their advisor not only prior to starting their first semester but to continue to meet every semester after until graduation, one of the students did not meet with his advisor in a timely manner. The other participants felt they were invisible to the advisors. Cecil stated, “before COVID was like, oh, these are the classes you need to take and stuff, but I’ve never had like a really close relationship with any of my advisors. I’ve been more or less just another student to get through the process.” It is somewhat understandable it may be a hardship for each advisor to contact the number of students they are assigned, but perhaps the advisors could design a plan to send out emails and follow up from there.

Library

The university main library can boast they have a multitude of computers to use, allow students to use a laptop for a full semester, 3-D printers, librarians that help with research topics, and an extensive database for peer-reviewed articles.

There were only two issues the participants discussed in the interviews, tutoring and library hours. Sonia stated for her major, “no tutoring is available in the library, all of the

tutoring is for science classes.” Most of the tutoring offered is in the science realm, biology, physics, chemistry, along with many others. It would be helpful, according to Sonia to have other classes. Her suggestion was towards the non-science side, for example, liberal arts types of classes. The library has started to provide tutoring for COM 101, PHIL 102, and PSY 101, but the classes are not on the library tutoring schedule. Students wanting help in these classes must contact the tutoring center in the library to inquire if there is a tutor on duty (Mountain University, 2022).

Chris brought up another issue, the availability of longer hours for the library. Only during study week does the library have extended hours. As the library is accessible to students, faculty, staff, and alumni, they have created a time frame every evening where only students are allowed in the library. This is not what Chris was discussing in the interview; it appeared he was looking for a safe place to stay.

Bookstore

The bookstore carries all necessary new textbooks, but the prices can be out of reach for homeless or displaced students. “Sometimes it—I could find them cheaper elsewhere, so I would pursue that” Cecil stated. Rental and used books are available which is an alternative but still may be too expensive. Sim was surprised that, “could sell back your books.” They thought it was a great idea, they would not have to store textbooks they no longer used.

Most of the participants stated they used either the internet to purchase books or checked in with friends about borrowing or purchasing their textbooks. It is difficult to recommend the bookstore try to lower their prices as those are set by the publisher. Perhaps in conjunction with the library, the bookstore could provide a copy or two of each textbook used. Currently, the library does have some class textbooks the students can use while in the library, but not all

textbooks are available. The instructor must request the book be available in the library.

Coordination between the instructor, bookstore, and the library to make all textbooks available would not only help the homeless or displaced students, but all who attend the university. An avenue instructors and the bookstore may explore is contacting the publisher for a donation of textbooks for the library.

Dining

The dining services at the university are varied. The participants agreed the dining commons was good and basically affordable. But they had issues with the dining plans. Most wanted less dining dollars and more swipes for the dining commons. The participants thought the hours of the dining commons on the weekends were not long enough. Even though the pantry is not part of the dining services, several of the students did state they wished it were closer to campus; at this time the pantry is on University Drive and Naples Drive, west of the Thomas & Mack. Sim's remark about moving the pantry was, "if you get a lot of food and you don't have a car or anything, you have to walk back with all of that" and continues with "once it gets hotter and stuff like that, it's like 'oh my gosh'". Sim's suggestion was to place it in the Student Union where the game room was or somewhere actually on campus.

All dining plans with the exception of one has swipes and dining dollars. The one plan is all dining dollars. Since there is one plan for all dining dollars, the recommendation is for a plan of all swipes. This benefits the students who only want to eat at the dining commons. Regarding the pantry, not only can students, but faculty, and staff can pick up items there also. Classes are held at the pantry as it is part of the School of Integrated Health Sciences, therefore the recommendation would be to move the pantry onto campus.

Recreation

The recreation center has available to the students, basketball and volleyball courts, a swimming pool, workout equipment, and classes, all typical for a university. In addition to recreation, Mountain University also has a wellness center inside the recreation center. The wellness center offers students health checks, lab work, counseling, and a pharmacy, which is a bonus because the students do not have to leave campus.

The recreation center offers a variety of services for students to use and with the addition of the wellness center, it appears all their physical and psychological needs are met. As with the financial aid department some of the people who work at the wellness center may need to attend a sensitivity training session to understand what homeless students experience and may need help with. One participant, Lily, requested counseling but was told by the counselor it was beyond their ability to help within the number of free sessions the student would receive. According to Lily, after explaining to the trauma specialist what was happening in her life, Lily stated, “the specialist told me, ‘We can’t help you here, I’m sorry’, and she walked me to the door.” Lily was given a referral for an off-campus counselor by the trauma specialist. Even though the sessions were free at the off-campus counselor, the participant did not feel she was helped at the wellness center.

Classroom

Instructors are given policies for teaching at Mountain University. The policies cover from Public Health to Classroom Procedures to Disability Resource Accommodations. There is a section about missed classwork where it states a student could make up work if they missed class for religious holidays, but the student must inform the instructor within 14 calendar days from the start of the semester. Students who represent Mountain University in an extracurricular

manner may also make up work. This policy is also to “offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students” but the policy does not apply if it “would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or University that could be reasonable avoided” (Mountain University, 2022). In regard to this study, some of the participants were allowed to have assignments changed, due dates extended, but others were not so fortunate, as instructors informed the students the due dates could not be changed because if the instructor changed the date for one student, they would have to change the date for all.

The instructor usually has autonomy in their classroom to decide if a due date for an assignment can be changed. The student may not have access to a computer or internet to complete an assignment in a timely manner; perhaps, this could be a reason for the library to stay open later. COVID is a prime example of students not having access to computers or internet because the closure of the university’s library and dorms. The recommendation for instructors would be for them to listen to their students, from the interviews and the literature review, it is very difficult for homeless and displaced students to admit this is their situation. “More training and compassion, empathy, and awareness for homeless students”, was Lily’s suggestion. She continued with, “I wasn’t able to turn in an essay. I wasn’t able to do what most others—my classmates were able to do most like likely without obstacles because I have so many obstacles in my life.” It was very difficult for her to be honest with the professor. For Sim, many of their instructors are actively working in the industry in the degree Sim is working towards. Sim stated, “when it comes to the film industry, connections do matter,” and this is why it is important to have communication between the instructors and the students. The policy is very straight-forward, but the university also offers a “drop one” option for some courses, although the policy

does not state which courses offer it (Mountain University, 2022). Perhaps all courses could offer a “drop one” for a low graded or missed assignment.

Conclusion of Recommendations

For most of the participants, they are looking for an advocate, someone who empathizes with them. In addition to the advocate, the students also asked for a safe place for them to meet with the advocate and others who are in the same situation as they are. This would be a good place for the students to share their experiences, their resources they have found, whether inside or outside of campus, and or to just decompress.

Most of the recommendations will need policy changes, especially with the creation of a training program for faculty and staff. The recommendations will not only help the homeless and displaced students but all students on campus.

Implications

Theory

Resiliency Theory simply stated is “doing well despite adversity or risk” along with the more complex version, “the capacity, process, or outcomes of successful adaptation in the context of significant threats to function or development” (Masten, 2011). The participants of this study exemplify what homeless and displaced students face when applying for and attending a four-year university. They spoke about fighting for their financial aid, having to disclose their status to multiple people within the university, all the while attending classes, completing homework, some having a job on or off campus, and some having to worry about where they will live when the semester is over. With all of the participants attending the university because of earning a scholarship, grant, or both, GPAs must be maintained at a specific level for the

financial aid. Resiliency Theory embodies this study, as it positively shows how these participants are doing well “despite adversity” and “can process adaptations to function” (Masten, 2011.)

Through the lens of the second theory, Hope, the participants illustrated how they created a definitive goal and stuck with it even though there were roadblocks along the way. All participants displayed the ability to use agentic thinking and pathways to re-route their motivation (Snyder, et al., 1991, Snyder, 2002). Lily had to re-route her pathway when COVID regulations moved her out of the dorms, and she had no place to go at that time and Sonia dealt with domestic violence while being displaced and having to find a new home. Chris had to work two jobs, attend school, complete homework, and figure out where he was going to stay during his freshman year; he re-routed his thinking to work on getting more scholarships and grants for his second year at school.

Practice

At this time, I am not working at a university or college, but I was a part-time instructor teaching up to 50 students per semester, a student outreach specialist where I worked with over 300 at risk students on campus, and my internship was with an advising center. I believe these professional experiences provided me a unique perspective of what these students are experiencing. As stated in the CARMA Part III section, the participants repeatedly stated faculty and staff on campus should go through some type of sensitivity training to help them understand what homeless and displaced college student experience every day and with different departments on campus. Faculty should be open to the policy of “drop one” or work with the student who needs extra time.

Hope Scholars program and the Foster Student programs were lightly touched on in this study, the university should look at expanding both, especially the Hope Scholars program. Currently the program helps 10 students on campus. Of the 6 participants, only Cecil is a Hope Scholar. Cecil credits their social worker from high school for researching the program and providing information about the program. None of the participants were from the Foster Student program, but in speaking with the administrator of the program, she stated there are 80 students in her program. There appears to be an imbalance all around.

Policies

Universities utilize email to relay messages to students, faculty rely on paper syllabi or WebCampus to explain policies or procedures to students. Perhaps more needs to be done to explain to students they must meet with their advisor each semester, what resources are available for all students, but highlight those for homeless and displaced. One item several of the participants asked for when asked what the university was lacking – an advocate and a place to meet for these students to talk, to exchange resources, and to feel safe.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the time frame the participants are enrolled in the university. The participants were second-year students, or sophomores, therefore the participants have only attended the university for 2 years. One of the years was during the COVID pandemic. The pandemic may have altered the experiences the students would have had or could have presented opportunities for the university to learn about the needs of homeless or displaced students. Also, because of the time frame of the study, no research will be conducted on their remaining years at the university.

Another limitation is the number of students who participated. As the literature suggested, homeless students are not always comfortable with admitting their homeless status. Although saturation was achieved with six participants, I wonder if there are other areas where the university exceeds or falls short for these students.

Future Research

With the limitations of this study, future research could be the following 2 years of the six participants. Other future research could be on Hope Scholars and the Foster Program. One of the participants, Lily, stated she was “surprised Hope Scholars had a quota.” At this time, Hope Scholars has 10 students in their program. Notwithstanding FAFSA has announced a change to the FAFSA Simplification Act for the 2023-2024 academic year. Homeless or foster youths will not have to answer questions about their status every year and FAFSA has broadened the authorities authorized to make determinations for the homeless youth. For financial aid departments, documents the students possess will be accepted unless it has conflicting information and if the youth have no documentation, then financial aid must handle it on a case-by-case situation (SchoolHouse Connection, 2022). In a couple of years, research to see if this policy is still in effect and how it affects the financial aid department.

Housing options at Mountain University was not a focus of the study. University housing requires payment for the academic year. Two of the six participants live in the dorms, one is a resident advisor and the other took out a loan for his housing. The resident advisor is partially compensated with housing. The non-traditional student has a young child, so living in a dorm room would not work for her but the housing options available were not applicable to her situation.

Summary

The themes that emerged while using resiliency and hope theories were discussed as well as connections of the findings to the literature. CARMA Part III was examined for results and recommendations which could potentially help the students this study encompasses. Most of the recommendations will need policy changes through the university processes, but these suggestions will help the students to feel safe and not looked down on by faculty, staff, and peers. Implications to theory, practice, and policy were also included, along with limitations, and future research.

This university boasts about how diverse the campus is, their Tier I status, being an HSI and an AANAPISI institution, but they are located in a city which has an alarming amount of homeless and displaced high school students. Students who are homeless or displaced can check a box on the FAFSA form online when filling the form out which identifies them as homeless. But the financial aid department does not verify all of the students listed as homeless through the FAFSA form, the university does not have a solid number as to how many are on campus. It was difficult for the students in this study to talk about being homeless, to feel safe while we talked, they need to feel the same safety with faculty and staff. While other demographics and profile groups on campus have an advocate and a safe place, this group does not have one. Perhaps a classroom or space at the Women's Center or the student health center would be a good place for the students to meet with an advocate or to talk with each other.

Appendix A

Interview questions

1. What was your experience in applying to colleges and universities?
2. How helpful were the following departments, of Financial Aid, Academic Advising, the bookstore, or services (dining, library, and recreation) at Mountain University?
3. What obstacles, if any, did you encounter in utilizing these departments?
4. Would you please share any positive experiences you encountered in the classroom with any of the following: instructors, homework, classmates?
5. Would you please share any challenging experiences you encountered in the classroom with any of the following: instructors, homework, classmates?
6. Are there any services that the university does not currently have, that would be helpful to you as a homeless or displaced student?
7. Could you please share any personal insights that helped guide you through the process of applying, meeting with an advisor, and selecting classes?
8. Could you please share any personal insights that gave you the drive to continue with classes?
9. What advice would you give to a student who is in a similar situation contemplating attending a higher education institution?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed about your experiences while attending Mountain University?

Appendix B

Qualtrics survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. This is an academic research study of first and second year, full-time undergraduate students who are experiencing homelessness or displacement while attending Mountain University. As the researcher, I am seeking to understand the students' experiences and how they navigate the procedures, policies, and systems of MU to attend up to the first two years of college.

Are you a full-time student at Mountain University?

- Yes
- No

Are you considered homeless (no permanent address, living in an area not designed for human habitation)?

- Yes
- No

Are you considered displaced (living with friends or relatives, but not on the lease/rental agreement; do not live with parental units)?

- Yes
- No

Are you 18 years of age or older?

- No
- Yes

Are you a first-year or second-year student?

- First-Year (Cohort 2021-2022 academic year)
- Second-Year (Cohort 2020-2021 academic year)

Are you willing to discuss the following: navigation of the admission process, working with academic advisors, attending classes/completing homework, working with peers/staff/faculty, services that MU does not have that would be helpful to you as a homeless/displaced student, and personal insights that drive you to continue your education?

- Yes
- No

Would you be available to spend 2 hours maximum for an interview? Note: the interview may be done in person, over the phone or as a Zoom meeting; the interview will be audio recorded.

- Yes
- No

Would you be available to spend 1 hour maximum for follow-up questions or to view the transcribed interview for approval?

- Yes
- No

Please provide your contact information - Name and email address.

ATTENTION

Looking for homeless or displaced first or second year students to participate in a research academic study. Audio recorded interviews will be conducted, maximum amount of time commitment - 3 hours (2 hours for interview and 1 hour for follow-up). You will be compensated \$30 for your time.

Let your voice be heard.

To see if you qualify for this study, please go to the following website:

https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bvbH7P89Y6kstDg?Q_CHL=qr



If you qualify, please contact
Andria Coleman, Ph.D Candidate at

Principal Investigator: Dr. Victoria Rosser

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Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.).
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Curriculum Vitae

Andria Coleman
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EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) – Las Vegas, NV

Doctor of Philosophy, Higher Education, Expected date of graduation Spring 2023
Research Emphases: Homeless and Displaced College Students

Grand Canyon University – Phoenix, AZ

Master of Arts, Secondary Education, June 2015
High School United States History

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) – Las Vegas, NV

Bachelor of Arts, History, May 2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Nevada Las Vegas

Part-time Instructor – 08/2016-12/2019

- Currently teaching one section of College of Liberal Arts (COLA) 100E – First-Year Seminar
- Taught two sections of College of Education Second-Year Seminar 2016-2018
 - Responsible for lesson planning including deciding on ways to present topics to students, grading, meeting with students, along with upholding the policies and procedures of the university.

University of Nevada Las Vegas

Student Outreach Specialist – 08/2018-06/2019

- Contacted first year, at-risk students to inform them of services that are available to them on campus. Specialist has same students throughout the student's first year at UNLV. Workload was 300 plus students each semester.
- Contact through phone calls and follow-up emails the several times throughout the semester; Introduction, follow-ups, Early Alert stage, Mid-semester, Final Exam, and End of Semester.

Railroad Pass Casino, Henderson, NV

Surveillance Lead – 09/2021-Present

- Knowledge of gaming industry, including Policies and Procedures
- CCTV knowledge

Station Casinos, Palace Station, Las Vegas, NV

Surveillance Supervisor – 11/2018-09/2021

Surveillance Audit Specialist – 09/2008-11/2018

Surveillance Agent – 09/2005-09/2008

- Knowledge of gaming industry, including Policies and Procedures
- CCTV knowledge

UNIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT

Consolidated Students University of Nevada (CSUN) – 2012-2013

- College of Liberal Arts Senator
- Ways and Means Committee – Assistant Chairperson
- Scholarship Committee

ASSOCIATIONS

Advisory Board Member – September 2016-Present

Project 150, North Las Vegas, NV

- Helps homeless, displaced, and disadvantaged high school students complete their education.

PRESENTATION AND RESEARCH

- **Doctoral Dissertation: Where Will I Sleep Tonight? A Qualitative Case Study of Homeless and Displaced College Students**
University of Nevada, Las Vegas – College of Education