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**WHEN SCHOOL SETTING MATTERS: UNDERSTANDING  
THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HOMESCHOOLED  
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Nemuel M. Moreto,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Yazle Sean S. Ligot,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Glenn Floyd B. Seda,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Ryan Jay P. Juliano<sup>1,2,3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Philippine School Doha, Doha, Qatar, P.O. Box 19664<sup>2</sup>Research Development Accreditation and Publication Office, PSD, Doha, Qatar<sup>3</sup>Research Capstone Project, PSD, Doha, Qatar<sup>4</sup>Technological University of the Philippines, Manila Philippines**Abstract**

*Learning from the convenience of a home, then transferring to a regular school setting, is quite crucial to many learners. Their ability to fine-tune in a new environment is significant. It had been noted that homeschooling has a clear effect on the various social environment and the emotional development of homeschooled students. Deliberately, parents eventually send their children to a regular school framework. Employing phenomenology, this research captures the lived experiences of six select students who have been homeschooled for more than a year and have transferred to mainstream learning institutions. Their skill to adapt to these changes is essential as emanated in their useful coping mechanism. Colaizzi's method for qualitative data analysis was administered. The field texts were transcribed and analyzed from a semi-structured interview. The validation of findings was conducted through triangulation. From the verbalizations of respondents, three valuable themes have emerged; connection, amplification, and inspiration. This result shows that these respondents have discovered coping mechanisms to sustain them in the transition stage. Each participant has his or her unique way of cooperating and coping with the struggles, specifically the way of adapting through unavoidable assimilation to the mainstream environment. Utilizing phenomenology in this research validates the experiences, feelings, and insights of the respondents as they reveal their narratives, which are valuable information as far as coping with the changes and adapting to the new learning environment are concerned.*

**Keywords:** *Homeschooling, Amplification, Inspiration, Connection, Mainstream Learning Environment, Phenomenology, Coping Mechanism*

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## 1. Introduction

Change, as many experts say, is inevitable. When one moves out from the environment, he or she used to be in need to embrace changes and blend into the new surroundings is definitely a challenge. Transferees from homeschool program encounter the same when they transitioned to mainstream learning institutions. The demands of the new environment, practices, habits, training, discipline, and people around accelerate the pressure to the students who used to be homeschooled. Every year, here in Qatar, as confirmed by the PSD Records Office, there is an increased number of Filipino students who are being homeschooled due to the unavailability of slots in regular schools - the high tuition fees, and inability of parents to send their children to regular schools due to lack of funds, all of these factors affect the parents' decision to enroll their children to a homeschool program. In a homeschool setting, as an alternative educational practice (Ray, 2015), the students have flexible time and schedule during the day. The parents and students can choose curriculum that works for both the parents and the child.

Evidently, this case is far more different to a regular school setting. Due to lack of interactive activities and collaboration with peers, the students' socialization is not maximized in a homeschool program as parents also investigate whether or not homeschooling addresses the issue of developing students' social skills (Dreyer, 2017). Seemingly, many homeschooled students are isolated thus, their social skills suffer.

Interestingly, there has been existing claims that in spite of being homeschooled, students turn out to be perceptive, conversant, and insightful. In the absence of active interaction and collaboration in a regular classroom set up, the students manage to build self-confidence and self-esteem. Arguably, this paper reveals that individuals possess various coping mechanisms when adapting to changes in the learning environment that uniquely fit for each personality and character.

This phenomenological study focuses on the lived experiences of these select students when they transferred to the mainstream learning environment from a homeschool program. It captures the effective coping mechanisms they utilize to conquer all the struggles and endeavors while in the transitioning stage. The researchers, through this qualitative research, grasp the essential characteristics which are beneficial to students as they adapt to change and integrate themselves in the new learning environment.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

Understanding the Lived Experience of Homeschool Transferees, the researchers used a phenomenological approach in attaining the given responses. According to Smith (2008), it is a study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view wherein it allows the interviewer to view the interviewee's perspective. It studies human experience, and of the way, things present themselves to us in and through such experience as stated by Sokolowski (2000). It makes the barrier of communication lessen between the two sides by having a thorough search on the skills acquired. M. van Manen and CA Adams (2010) claimed that phenomenology is an approach to qualitative inquiry that is grounded in certain traditions of philosophy, humanities, and that aims at reflecting on the pre-reflective human experience. The researchers followed a set of parameters to gain qualitative data utilizing it to form a correlation among the experiences.

### 2.2 Locus and Sample

Sufficient information is needed to conclude. The respondents of this study consisted of six homeschooled students who have been transferred back to the mainstream environment. They were chosen explicitly through qualitative purposive sampling that attains informative cases related to the phenomena of interest (Lawrence

Palinkas, Sarah Horwitz Et al., 2015). The selection of the respondents is based on the following criteria: (a) Was enrolled in a homeschool program; (b) must have at least been in a homeschool program for a year, and (c) is now back in the mainstream environment or regular schooling. All six of the respondents followed the criteria. One of the respondents is now in college. Only a sample was taken from a population instead due to a lack of time, money, and resources. Nonetheless, the number of these respondents can represent the population as a target for this study.

### **2.3 Instrumentation**

To acquire the content of the study, the researchers made use of an instrument that consisted of two parts. First, a robot-foto was administered before the interview to provide background information about the participants. It is a cartographic sketch in Dutch, which was drawn from a description of a suspect in a criminal investigation (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). In research, this refers to personal data sheets of vital personal and professional information about the respondents, including nationality, civil status, age, gender, educational attainment, and duration of former occupation (de Guzman & Tan, 2007).

The second instrument was a twenty-item semi-structured interview, a verbal interchange wherein the interviewer attempts to elicit information from the interviewee through questions. It unfolds in a conversational manner allowing the participant to explore topics that are essential to the problem (Robyn Longhurst, 2003). It also involves open-ended questions that are determined beforehand and is better in terms of subject handling by utilizing an interview guide (Ayres, 2008).

### **2.4 Data Collection and Ethical Consideration**

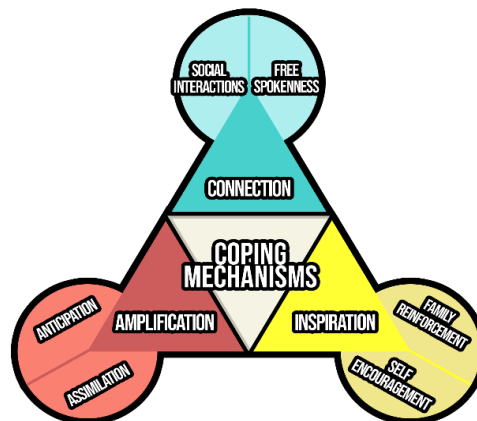
To further elaborate on the phenomenon of this study, the researchers have made use of qualitative (Rubin, Herbert & Rubin, Irene. 1995) and semi-structured interviews (Alison Doyle, 2019) while engaging in the systematic approach of organizing, considering, and assembling the chronology of experiences stated by the respondents.

The following steps were observed by the researchers during course of the study: (1) transcribing the recording in a verbatim manner; (2) reading and re-reading each respondent's responses on the questions; (3) reorganizing the emic to form etic views (Kenneth pike, 1954); (4) attaining essential statements from the respondent's perspective and constructing a compilation of these statements; (5) comprehending for similarities and synthesizing to create thought units; (6) organizing these thought units into a dendrogram (Tim bock, 2011); (7) formulating a simulacrum and representation of the findings; and (8) ensuring the credibility of the emerged themes to ensure validity and quality of the interpretations (Gallup, 2007). The analysis of data was strictly done through an inductive process, writing down ideas and categorizing it after to verify the emerging themes.

### **2.5 Data Analysis**

In phenomenology, data analysis involves processes such as encoding, categorizing, and defining important meanings of the phenomenon. Common themes and essences begin to emerge as the researchers work on the descriptive data (Giorgi, 2011, Lopez & Willis, 2004). Colaizzi's method of phenomenology suggests the following steps: Read all the respondents' sharings and transcribe the data collected from the interviews. Then meanings are formulated from significant statements (cool analysis) and organized into themes (warm analysis). These form into theme clusters and ultimately into theme categories which are presented in a dendrogram. Researchers then write profound descriptions of the lived experiences and then vital structure is formulated.

### 3. Findings



**Figure 1: Coping Mechanism**

Figure 1 shows the alternative coping mechanisms the respondents used as they blend into the mainstream environment. It shows the involvement of three major factors that homeschooled students used as coping mechanism in the mainstream environment; connection, amplification and inspiration.

#### 3.1 Amplification

One of the main coping mechanisms that was found useful by the respondents is amplification. Amplification as defined by Miriam-Webster is "to expand (something, such as a statement) by the use of detail or illustration or by closer analysis". To amplify is to widen and broaden the student experiences using their ability to anticipate and assimilate. The ability of these students to expand their new experiences is vital as they blend and fit themselves into a new learning system. Amplification is a process of merging into the new atmosphere while leaving the comfort zone. This intensifies the experience of the students who were homeschooled and embarks the possibility of expanding the awareness of the learners outside the convenience of home. Assimilation and anticipation are essential factors to adapt the new learning environment. Assimilation is defined as the process of taking in, understanding information or ideas and becoming similar to something. Being homeschooled means being placed in a controlled environment, therefore the need to absorb or understand is kept to a minimum because the individual is left with his/her own devices, apart from the knowledge one is required to learn in homeschool.

*"It is hard especially when you get used to your routine of studying and do everything you want in your house because you will need to adjust socializing with other people. (P2)"*

Obviously, transitioning to a place that is the complete opposite of what a person is used to, despite having experiences, will still require adjustment and conformity. The means of assimilating would greatly depend on one's environment, personality, and of course the personalities of the people surrounding him or her.

*"It's not just the smart ones who are just in one classroom, where we have different mixture of people with different level of intelligence. With that system that PIS is implementing, it affected me in a way that I have to change the way I approach people. (P1)"*

*"I just try to understand their way of thinking and their culture. I made an effort to get to know people and their environment but not letting it change me. (P6)"*

Without a doubt, being relatable is an efficient way to assimilate with someone with ease, *"I adapted by getting interested on who they are and appreciate knowing their likes and dislikes."* (P2) It provides the learner adequate knowledge as he or she becomes one step closer in understanding a certain individual. Likewise, this also applies when people absorb not just the environment but also culture of the people within it.

*"The way I resolve this was for me to go to church and be with a particular crowd of people whom I can be with and perform my church duties with, that's why I was convinced to become a church officer. (P1)"*

*"I didn't adapt by myself, but it was because of the friendly and open environment and it boosted my confidence to come out of my shell. (P3)"*

There are a few numbers of students in PSD who were enrolled in a regular school setting and transferred to a home-school program and eventually transferred back to a regular school environment. In such case, these select students already have concrete perception and first-hand experience of the usual classroom setting, thus the coping mechanism becomes amplifying. These learners utilize this mechanism to increase and expand their involvement in class by doing so, they become more engaged with their new learning environment. Amplification is an increase either in size or effect of a concept, therefore this mechanism is utilized by these learners to expand their experience, deepen the participation and elaborate the acquirments to a new learning system and environment.

Anticipation plays a vital role when moving to a new setting. To anticipate is to eagerly wait for something that is going to happen. When a student learns to have a healthy sense of anticipation, it gives one positive disposition, helps energize one's life and gets through tough times. A healthy amount of anticipation can be a very powerful tool to improve a student's inclination. This mechanism helps the learner to cope with the change as agreed and is strongly verbalized by the respondent

*"Honestly. I've expected that if I'm going to move away from PSD, after homeschooling, I'm expecting everything to still be the same, to grow up with people who are the same standard that I have established in PSD." [P1]*

*"My expectations is that I hoped that it was still the same just as I left it"[P5]*

When a student anticipates, it is for his/her betterment. As it can give on positive outlook on what will happen or a negative one as what he or she anticipates might not come true. This mechanism can help a student cope quickly and rather comfortably to his/her environment.

*"I was worried about making friends because I am not sure if they will accept me or bully me because I am a homeschooler." [P2]*

*"I had an expectation that it will be a very challenging course... I was worried that I wouldn't be able to make friends I wouldn't be able to push myself outside of my comfort zone" [P6]*

*"My expectations when going to a real school is that I would be hanging out with all these people and I would be maintaining my shyness but eventually go out of it and be outspoken to everyone." [P3]*

These respondents have different views on anticipation and how it contributed as their coping mechanism, nevertheless anticipation has an impact. They used anticipation as a coping mechanism to help them be more comfortable and be more sociable.

One respondent remained pragmatic as he/she did not want to expect anything in the fear of disappointing themselves. *"I keep my expectations low, so nobody disappoints me."* This respondent used anticipation as a way for him/her to keep hopes high and expectations low.

*"As a preference I rather not expect something and get disappointed"[P4]*

From the verbalizations of these respondents, anticipations played a role on how they coped back to the mainstream environment. As the use of anticipation is a tool to create a safe haven for these respondents to go to as they confront mainstream environment again. Considering these factors, amplification as coping mechanism augment the adjustment of these students in general.

### 3.2 Connection

Connection, by definition, means the act of connecting, a means of communication, in both public and personal relationships. The essence of connection reverberates the essential factors in revealing oneself to others. In order to connect, one must be willing to open up himself or herself so others would be able to know one's interests, ideas, and insights that would lead to a meaningful understanding and communication. The idea of connection not only implies the verbal but also the emotional and spiritual connection of the students to his or her peers. This kind of connection is unquestionably profound. In accordance to the collected data, it is something that is needed to be adhered as part of coping with a new environment. Most, if not all, the participants of the phenomenological study considered having a connection, through having a free spokenness attribute. This contributes to their coping skills as verbalized by these respondents:

*"Talking to others is still very important because we're interacting with people." (P1)*

*"My expectations when going to a real school is that I would be hanging out with all these people and I would be maintaining my shyness but eventually go out of it and be outspoken to everyone." (P3)*

These responses suggest that having a free spokenness ability not only involves themselves, but also the people that surrounds them in their given environment, as the respondent verbalized,

*"No man is an island", and we can never be completely independent and not rely on anyone. So, whether you are homeschooled or not, it is still important to actually communicate with others because it helps nurture different relationships. It creates and defines our personality and our whole being." (P1)*

Through having a free spokenness personality, they acquire self-encouragement that they would be needing throughout their coping phase. As a result, participants have had certain roadblocks in their path of coping that pertains to free spokenness:

*"I resolved it by opening up and approaching them myself instead of waiting for them to me approach me, so with that I didn't have difficulties on establishing friendships." (P4)*

Transitioning to a new environment has its own set of hardships and struggles. As human beings, having a social life is essential. Connections such as friends are important to the human growth and are needed by individuals, especially if one is transitioning to a new environment, this was quoted by our respondents:

*"I have to manage myself and my sister at the same time while lacking an immediate social crowd to be with." (R1)*

*"We prefer going to the school itself because studying at home has too many distractions and in school, you get to meet more people and interact with them. I would really like to have interacted with these professional teachers rather than passing my activities through my mother, who isn't licensed." (R3)*

*"I was happy that I was back in a regular school I was previously in where all my friends were." (R4)*

Having friends is a great way to socialize and learn how to fit in. During homeschool, the respondents cited that they do not have any friends to socialize and be with, thus making their social aspect unfilled. Furthermore, a respondent cited that *"I felt that my comfort zone was like a little shell, I know I had to interact with other people."*



Regular schools not only mold students academically, but also socially. Group performances, peer collaborations and the likes develop the students' social skills. Missing this aspects, homeschooled students feel anxious as they transition to a regular school. As further tackled by our respondents:

*"Honestly, I'm quite worried with how people will react to me because I grew up differently from most of my peers right now."* (R1)

*"My expectations when going to a real school is that I would be hanging out with all these people and I would be maintaining my shyness but eventually go out of it and be outspoken to everyone."* (R3)

*"I was worried that the changes that homeschooling did to me would lead to me on having shortcomings in a regular school."* (R4)

*"My homeschooling program was terrible so I left my comfort zone with a grateful heart knowing that finally I can grow as a student."* (R6)

In dealing with the new environment, our respondents learned to socialize with others who help them forget their old habits and fit in. With the right friends, the respondents are able to cope with the challenges.

### 3.3 Inspiration

Inspiration becomes one of the most important pieces of adapting to a new environment. These students need motivation and inspiration for them to keep attending classes and not minding the struggles and adjustments they are facing every day. Inspiration may come in various forms. One maybe inspired through meeting a new acquaintance, completing an assigned task, leading a group activity or just simply being surrounded with new friends. The inspiration boosts the drive of the respondents to untiringly keep up with the challenges of moving to a new learning system. The inspiration, once built up becomes a driving force that arouses the student's interests and longings to consistently embrace the changes and emerge as successful as they integrate themselves in the school community.

From the responses of our respondents, it is clearly manifested that home-schooled students are excited and thrilled to move into a regular school. It has been observed that home-schooled students are nervous with the responses or nature of interaction that they receive from their peers. Most of them have fears and are worried that they might be rejected in a regular school. They shared:

*"I was worried about making friends because I am not sure if they will accept me or bully me because I am a homeschooled."*(R2)

*"I had an expectation that it will be a challenging course a very challenging one and my worries I was worried that I would not be able to make friends I wouldn't be able to push myself outside of my comfort zone and talk to actually people because I'm really shy also, I was so worried if I will pass anything in general, my classmates being so ahead."*(R5)

Self-encouragement is integrated, as home-schooled students are framed or left with no choice due to inevitable circumstances that their family was experiencing and eventually resorted to home schooling. The respondents anchored their inspiration and motivation to go to school on their excitement and enthusiasm. The excitement inspires them to keep looking forward to things that they have not experienced yet with students of their age. Self – encouragement strengthens the skills and attitude of these respondents to face all the adjustments and struggles while coping with all these changes. Their excitement boosts their moral to go to school as verbalized by these respondents:

*"Actually, the first day I came to PISQ, I felt very excited and at the same time, feeling quite doubtful or rather uncertain of what's going to happen."*(R1)

*"At first, I was shocked since I was homeschooled for two years, I did not know what to do I was nervous."*(R5)

*"Since I was comfortable with homeschooling, I was excited at the same time nervous but more on excitement as no I actually get to learn something."(R6)*

From these sharings of these students, coping with changes becomes a motivation, an inspiration and a tool to encourage oneself to consistently blend and fit in the mainstream learning set up.

The process of coping with the changes differs as there are various types of learners with distinct perceptions. It may seem light to other students, but may seem too much to others. Thus, the need for family support or reinforcement is important.

Family is one of the strongest coping mechanisms there is. The family gives supports all through out. This support becomes a strong coping mechanism as the relationship is strengthen when these respondents used to be in a home school program. These were verbalized by these respondents:

*"But despite that my family still contributed the most since I spent most of my time with them as I became closer to them personally and could talk to them comfortably". (P4)*

*"My mom since she was my teacher. Our relationship was pretty close" (P5)*

*"Our relationship with one another grew and homeschooling helped to build a quality relationship with my siblings" (P6)*

Their bond and support influence the students to strive harder and aim for higher goals. Family reinforcement promotes drive and vision to the students. The assurance of family support provides the respondents desires to cope with all changes regardless of how difficult it would be knowing that their parents and siblings are there to understand and love them.

And yet there is always these longing feelings with homeschooled students to go out and gain new friends other than just the family members. As parents know the importance of social interaction, the thought of sending their children to regular school was eminent. These parents convinced their kids to transfer to a regular school as they knew that social interaction was a necessity for students to grow.

*My family did not encourage me to stay longer in homeschooling since they wanted me to be in a regular school where I could interact with others and be more active. (P1)*

*My mom convinced me. Since I was already excited it was easy for my mom to convince me. (P5)*

As their relationship was there during homeschooling, no doubt that they will support their children as they go through the adjustment process. Truly, self-encouragement and family reinforcement are powerful tools that inspire the students to keep up with the changes and appreciate the challenges that come with moving to a different learning environment, thus the experience become amplifying.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Amplification**

In terms of adapting to the mainstream system, the degree of the situations in which these respondents require to cope with vary with each individual. The influence and exposure to distinct negative situation could be altered with strategies of coping, amplify the effects positively (Van Den Brande W. et al, 2017). Depending on the activity and nature of these respondents, their experience, either negative or positive, develops their adaptive response in order to integrate well with their new surroundings (Harding, K., 2018).

The amplification of these homeschooled students' ability to cope plays a significant role into stabilizing the set conditions that the mainstream proper is offering and furthermore using various mechanisms of coping in order to transform their facets in accordance with their new surroundings. Through these come amplification, to amplify, to expound, and to expand oneself to the surroundings and the norms that govern them, either



negative or positive. Through the mechanisms of coping, student transferees sustain their mental stability, adapt to the sudden change, and cope with such differences. These selected former homeschooled students who transferred to mainstream environment managed to show a distinct approach in terms of amplifying and incorporating themselves to better bond in their new setting.

### **Assimilation**

The detachment of a person to their place of familiarity and the adjustment they have to handle will be nothing short of difficult. In retrospect, the separation from their place of familiarity, or their home, discards their reliance and overindulgence in their place (Jager et al. 2015). Likewise, in coping with their struggles, they are met with troubles along the way. The unpredictability of what might happen stretches our imagination and anxiety. As anxiety is a normal reaction to stress, an unpleasant emotional reaction evoked by our imagination or real threats (Rappo et al. 2016). In a school setting, traces of this reaction can be followed to what is known as School Anxiety that according to Rappo (2016) is a discomfort that is experienced in school as a response to the tasks or situations that are perceived to be threatening to self-worth.

Successful adaptation to new learning environment requires not only convenient consequences but also an effective strategy to cope with stressful situations (Undheim & Sund 2017). The adaptation to certain changes can help a person cope with their setting. Adapting to academic demands and challenges, changes in life, expectations in the future, psychological, and personal conflicts can aid growth.

In the other end of the spectrum we have the social adaptations of a person in order to assimilate their characteristics to the individuals around them. One must show the values, behaviors, and norms of a group in order for a person to part of said group, likewise, non-acceptance if they cannot fully behave in accordance with the expectation of their friends (Mollenhorst 2014). Furthermore, being accepted is rather dependent on the group itself, for which one must be like the people in the mainstream group or be accepted as the person one really is (Fook 2017).

### **Anticipation**

The coping mechanism becomes amplifying when the respondents use their previous experiences as their basis of their current decision and engagements. The students' ability to anticipate things in their new learning set up affirms the coping mechanism. As they anticipate their transfer, the excitement to meet new people, see old friends, and met new teachers add vigor to attend the regular school (Crossley, 2015). Anticipation may sometimes be coupled with anxiety and first day jitters, however, the enthusiasm and the energy of being introduced with new routines, schedules, and activities exude a satisfying feeling to these respondents (TST, 2014) which lead them to coping satisfactorily with all these changes in their new learning environment.

Some children and youth embrace back-to-school excitement, others need help easing into the school-year routine, says Dr. Jane Garland, Psychiatrist, BC Children's Hospital. Some students tend to expect the best of good events and worse of bad events (Wilson, Wheatley, Meyers, Gilbert, & Axsom, 2000) but they may end up with more moderate memories of what actually transpired. Taking time to expose these students to their new routine in their new learning settings one to two weeks before school starts can help lower their anxiety and help instill excitement.

## **4.2 Connection**

Connection promotes self-disclosure which is beneficial to the student transferees who have the needs for acceptance and belonging (Bin & Campbell, 2012). Connectedness is rooted on self-disclosure or openness that may have greater implications for increasing intimacy and relationships (Jiang, Bazarova, & Hancock, 2011). Students who were homeschooled used to contain themselves in the four corners of home thus, they tend to seclude themselves from the new group of peers. Interestingly, the respondents, realizing this

impediment, embraced the changes of their new learning framework and started opening up to new friends to create a connection. It is by disclosures and opening up to new friends, classmates, and peers that connect people and build relationships. An array of research found that high-quality intimate relationships and connections are critical to well-being and affecting happiness of individuals (e.g., Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001). This is due to cumulative benefits of everyday interactions that allow respondents to have relational partners to demonstrate responsiveness, or acceptance and care for each other's needs. (Reis, 2012). Connection as coping mechanism is beneficial to transferred students from homeschool program as self-disclosure and relational closeness predict growth of intimacy in their relationship with their new peers. The respondent's well-being in a new environment is not only based on the student's social connectedness but also their beliefs on their peer's social connectedness (Jostad, J., 2015, Whillans, A.V., 2017)

### **Free Spokenness**

Transitions can be seen as a normative process since all children must experience them several times throughout their lives (Harper L., J. 2016). As a result, it all depends on how each child cope with these transitions whether they could cope well with others or end up unable to connect to the people in his/her new environment. With the information collected from the insights of the participants, they have shown that they chose to adapt in many ways, such as having connection to peers and others that surrounds them. Speaking is one way to communicate ideas and thoughts orally (Sadiku, 2015; Al-Eiadeh et al, 2016), which the participants have shown through their way of being free-spoken or outspoken.

Previous researches mention that emotional peer support serves as a way to promote the sense of belongingness of students, connection to instructors/teachers boosts interests to study material, and friend support manifests fierce connection bonds. (Ellerbrock et al, 2014; Fedesco et al, 2019; Coyle, S., et al, 2018; Cirik, I., et al 2014; Froneman, K., 2016; Hughes, J. N., 2018; Traylor, 2016). Which explains the general behavior of the coping students, to connect and to adjust to a different learning environment.

### **Social Interaction**

The new pressure being put to homeschooled students add to their hardships as they transition from their previous environment, due to the lack of a social background. Homeschooled students experience hardships as they transition to a regular school environment, they simply haven't had the socialization processes and seem to be a little behind." (Sam et al., 2016). The lack of socialization causes them to seek peers outside of their family, as reinstated by (Ray, 2015). Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. This is where they get their outside feel of being in a society and thus where they get to socialize.

In order to resolve this conflict, homeschooled students need to learn to socialize with other people and connect with one another. Having connection is vital and is important for a student to grow in a new environment. Schools are viewed as complex systems which not only provide students with educational process, but also social interactions and interpersonal relationships that are embedded in the educational process itself (Wentzel, 2015). Through having good connections and a lot of positive social interactions, homeschooled students have the chance to properly cope to their new learning environment.

### **4.3 Inspiration**

Inspiration is a compelling motivational state that carries out actualization (Oleynick, Thrash, LeFew, Moldovan, Kieffaber, 2014). Students from homeschooled program are faced with probation when transferred to a regular school. The transitioning stage is challenging yet when filled with inspiration, students are able to blend and cope with successfully. People, on this case the student transferees, once inspired, are driven with creativity and innovation that allow them to think of new unconventional ways to cope with the challenges and adjustment in their new learning setting (Christensen et. al., 2010). This coping mechanism has a stimulus

that sustains the emotional aspect of the respondents, thus, they gain awareness of new possibilities that transmit, actualize and express their visions and motivation. These respondents when inspired, discover leap through dismantling the foundation of the challenges (Hendrick, 2009). As inspiration leads these students discover their ability to spot their upper limit as human beings, thus enhancing their geniusity. Therefore, inspiration as a coping mechanism is about thriving in sustained abundance, motivation, and creativity.

### **Self - Encouragement**

Challenges and struggles are a part of anyone's life and this does not exclude even those that are excluded from a certain mainstream of things. Thus, self-confidence is usually found within people willing to accept the challenge given to them, evidently being shown when the research participants when acknowledging that they are struggling and they overcome this struggle by having self-encouragement. Self-confidence plays an important role between the relationships of people towards a healthy relationship (Greenacre, L., 2014). Self-confidence also opens an opportunity between people for a proper assessment of the social aspect of his/her surrounding for a complete engagement of interaction to his/her peers (Gorsy, C., 2015) This explains the responses of the participants which leads to them having self-encouragement.

Coping is a delicate construct that makes use of multiple coping strategies, and can be used simultaneously (Saija M. et al. 2014), such examples included is self-encouragement which was transpired through the continuity of the participants to be associated positively to their surrounding peers. These respondents are able to withstand the hardships and challenges in their lives and consider self-encouragement as a key factor in providing them the will to move forward, pose positive attitude, and solutions for problems (Nourian M. et al. 2014). The ability of individuals to cope with expected or unexpected difficulties is the definition of self-encouragement according to Jin B. & Xu W. (2017). Self-encouragement therefore, is a truly a powerful tool that helps these students to harmonize and cope with their new learning environment.

### **Family Reinforcement**

Ongoing research shows that when families are engaged and families and schools work together, students attend school more often, earn higher grades, have better social skills and show improved behavior (TNS, 2015). As students go to the adjustment period of transferring to a new environment family support has the most impact in their lives. Results indicated that both school and family support was positively related to self-determination (Cavendish, 2017). As noted in the call for this special issue, educational policy places a strong emphasis on family support for children's learning at home, but the evidence for relations between parent involvement and academic achievement is actually rather equivocal (Sharp, Keys, & Benefield, 2001).

Moreover, the associations between family support and child outcomes remained significant when child age, gender and pupil premium status were all included in the model, further strengthening the view that variation in family support is an important predictor of children's developmental progress (Hughes, 2015). As these students have their family to support them, they can easily adapt to the mainstream environment. Instead highlight the universality of associations between variation in family support and in children's language and cognition or daily living skills. (White, 2015). Recent studies suggest that high levels of family and peer support are associated with school satisfaction (Hampden-Thompson and Galindo, 2017; Jiang et al. 2013) and suitable school transition (Waters et al. 2014).

## **5. Conclusion**

Employing the phenomenology research design, this qualitative study seizes the lived experiences of former home-schooled students in the hopes of revealing the qualities they possess when adapting into the mainstream settings. This research amplifies the respondents' understanding on the challenges of change in the learning environment and manifests the coping mechanism occurred and observed during the adapting

phase to a mainstream learning framework. Increasing the understanding on the change of learning environment, the learners utilize coping mechanism that perceived to be effective. Connection, amplification, and inspiration are three essential factors that highlight the substantial learning experiences and adjustments of the students as they blend in and integrate themselves in class and in the entire school campus. Capitalizing on the values of social interactions and free spokenness, the respondents embrace their being unique and different as they freely share thoughts and ideas to new acquaintances. Their experiences in life equip them to anticipate and assimilate valued information that they employ in their new learning atmosphere. Family reinforcement and self-encouragement play vital role in the coping stage of the students. The support from loved ones and the understanding of self-encouragement reverberate self-worth and emanate positive aura that strengthen the ability of the students to successfully blend in their new school and cope with the challenges and struggles of moving into a new learning environment.

Going through a coping phase into the mainstream environment may be a success or a failure; being successful on adapting will ease the lived experience of an individual to his/her preferred way of lifestyle, and being a failure to the point of being bullied due to his/her different factor of the enthusiasm. This study inclines more on the successful way of coping mechanism due to the fact that none of the participants experienced any negative development through their style of approach.

The findings highlight the fact that although most participants have similar strategies of coping to a mainstream environment, there will be discrepancies with a few. In addition, one can have multiple ways of coping, however, this would not be the only factor among the plethora of components regarding on whether or not the coping procedure would achieve its desired outcome. Coping is a delicate construct that makes use of strategic methods (Saija M. et al. 2014), that are akin to a person's capabilities, an example of which are skills or talents.

The findings and conclusions of this phenomenological research intensify the abilities of the home-schooled students to adapt advantageously to their new learning environment. Nonetheless, the following are recommendations to further enrich, refine, and heighten the insights and understanding which are unquestionably beneficial to the students both home schooled and mainstream learning environment. Considering the large number of students who are being home schooled now a days here in Qatar, the school should have further studies on the possibility of offering online or home school settings but there should be a minimum teacher – student contact for at least once a week. Additionally, this study recommends that incase the individual is experiencing struggles excessively, one must come to their aid and connect with them emotionally and mentally in order for the person to receive the needed support to ease their struggles.

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