Homeless Students' Lived Experiences in Postsecondary Institutions and Academe: A Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

This study of homeless students' existential experiences was focused on urban community colleges and postsecondary vocational schools and universities. Homeless students encounter unique existential challenges, yet homeless students have proven abilities to access resources essential for their academic pursuits. The study results showed homeless students are attracted to institutions with open-door polices that facilitate access to financial resources and are staffed by accommodating faculty. Among this study's findings are that homeless students camouflaged ubiquitous signs of their homelessness by concealing their indigent status. Yet, homeless students sought and desired to socialize and maintain relationships with their peers. All the participants in this study were pursuing their studies with ambitions and aspirations to graduate and start businesses to emancipate themselves from homelessness and re-enter the macro-society. This data driven study contributes new insight to the phenomenon of homeless students and new knowledge on homeless students' life worlds and their existential experiences in higher education institutions. The study's findings, applications, and usefulness target natural audiences made of educators, academic administrators, and private and political stakeholders. Additionally, this study may be used to advocate for the welfare of homeless students to private and public agencies as well as organizations that promote social policies for indigent populations, including development projects of residential hostelry for homeless students.

Keywords: homeless students; urban public community colleges; postsecondary vocational institutions; social marginalization; poverty; residential hostelry

Homelessness in the United States

According to Hombs (2011), a homeless person is "an individual or family who lacks a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence" (p. 182). There are 39.7 million persons living in poverty in the United States; amongst them are the homeless (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, 2018) reported that 552,830 individuals were homeless at some point in 2018. Homelessness is not a new phenomenon by any means, as this has been a social reality affecting individuals and families for generations (Eisenberg, A. (2018). The definition of a homeless person is as follows:

> an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, [and sleeps in public or private places not designated] for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping

accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, a bus or train station, airport, or camping ground. (Hombs, 2011, p. 182; Donley, A. M., Crisafi, D., Mullins, A., & Wright, J. D., 2017).

Both HUD (2010) and Hombs (2011) discussed and defined what a home is, or what it should be, as follows: "Homes, at the very least, should be shelters from cold and protection from predation. But for the least among us, home is a heating grate or a tarp in the park" (Sze-intuch,2017; Hombs, 2011, p. 58).

Study Background

Our first exposure to homeless students was in 2010 and again in 2013 through an encounter with a homeless army veteran and student who had served in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm, and had benefited from the GI Bill (enacted in 1944), to further his education. The encounter ignited our curiosity and interest in the student homelessness phenomenon that led to this study, on the campuses of Alfa College in Miami, Beta College in Broward, and other postsecondary public vocational institutions (PSPVIs) in Florida.

Homelessness in Current Landscape in Higher Education

Currently, there is no comparable written legislation similar to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (PL 100-77), enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1987, and reauthorized in 1997, as a legislative response to mitigate homelessness (Helvie, 1999; Szeintuch, 2017). Admittedly, there is no legislation like the McKinney-Vento Act that champions and supports homeless individuals seeking postsecondary education. Additionally, there is a shortage of studies specific to the life-worlds of this segment of homeless students in the postsecondary and higher education institutions (Apple, 2005; Field, 2015; Hallett, 2010). The growth of homeless students in public school grades K-12 and in higher education is undeniable and growing (Field, 2015; Hallett, 2010; Hombs, 2011; Landsman, 2006).

Literature Review

There is literature on the homeless and homelessness in general (Amster, 2008; Hall, 2007; Hombs, 2011; Knowlton, 2006; Murphy & Tobin, 2008), and literature focused on cases of homeless families and children, youths, and veterans (Jozefowicz-Simbeni & Israel, 2006; Levinson & Ross, 2007; Swick, 2005). Studies focused on homeless students in public higher education institutions were limited, journalistic, and not data-driven inquiries. Consequently, the literature reviewed lacked substantive existential accounts and data of matriculated homeless students (Hallet, 2010; Hippensteele Mobley & Tanabe, 2011; Juchniewicz, 2012; Toro, 2006). The societal approach to students' homelessness in institutions of higher education was subordinated and not discussed, but subdued as a subject matter heard occasionally in private rumor mills (Broadbent, 2008; Hallett, 2010; Hippensteele Mobley & Tanabe, 2011; Juchniewicz, 2012; Shaw & Goldrick-Rab, 2006).

Homeless and Homelessness in the Modern Era

The image of the homeless individual has evolved significantly and changed as shown in books written about "hobos" in the 1920s and 1930s, who were drifters and/or individuals "riding the rails." In the 1980s and as recently as 2019, the image of a homeless individual is that of a marginal individual (Hombs, 2011; Lawton, 2010; Levinson & Ross, 2007; Metraux, Clegg, Daigh, Culhane, & Kane, 2013; Murphy & Tobin, 2011; Ramey, 2008; Rogers & Marshall, 2012; Snow, Soule, & Cress, 2005; Toro, 2006). Homelessness as a social phenomenon has greatly increased due to servicemen and women returning from foreign conflicts, and the shortage of affordable rental houses or scarcity of single room occupancy (SRO) in urban areas (Elbogen, Sullivan, Wolfe, Wagner, & Beckham, 2013; Hopper & Hamberg, 1984; Tsai, Kasprow & Rosenheck, 2013). As a result, homelessness was no longer romanticized, but became prevalent due to poverty and ostracism of the homeless due to their recognizable marginalized lifestyles, and poverty-stricken living conditions (Levinson & Ross, 2007; Murphy & Tobin, 2011). As Skid Row's homeless in California began to attract media coverage, studies investigating this social phenomenon began to emerge and be published (de Bradley, 2008; Ropers, 1988; Toro, 2006). Homelessness was now being addressed as a social issue that required in-depth studies in order to formulate possible solutions (Amster, 2008; Toro, 2006; Tsai et al., 2013). Hence, solutions began to be designed and implemented by private and public initiatives to provide shelters and to cater to the physical and nutritional needs of the homeless in the urban areas (Dworsky, 2010; Hersberger, 2005; Hombs, 2011; McNaughton, 2008).

The historical drivers and causes of mass homelessness were attributed to environmental and ecological catastrophes, such as the Dust Bowl and the economic depression of the 1930s. These historical occurrences generated large numbers of unemployed and underemployed ex-military personnel returning to the United States from foreign wars of the 1940s (WWII), Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Elbogen et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2013; van den Berk-Clark & McGuire, 2013; Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Nowadays, homelessness is attributed to complex identifiable and stratified factors such as societal, personal, relational with the breakdown of family life, domestic violence, economic and structural policies, poverty, and politics that negatively impact the life-worlds of homeless students in PSPVIs and the urban public community colleges (UPCC) (Adair, 2005; Algert, Reitel & Renvall, 2006; Dill, 2010; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; McBride; 2012; Ramey, 2008; Shaw & Goldrick-Rab, 2006; Swick, 2005).

Theoretical Framework Supporting the Study

This study's theoretical framework was based on van Manen's (1990) theory as he wrote, "human science was aimed at explicating the meaning of human phenomena" (p. 4). Additionally, van Manen argued that "an appropriate topic for phenomenological inquiry was determined by the questioning of the essential nature of a lived experience: a certain way of being in the world" (p. 39). Van Manen's framing of his theory intersects and connects into Maslow's (1971) with focus on the theoretical framework on poverty, and basic needs of livelihood and dignity. Maslow's stratified hierarchy of needs encompassing a 5-level matrix of motivational and intrinsic factors was considered in this study as a requirement in support of a constructivist perspective meshed with textual and hermeneutical analysis used to interpret and apply the theoretical frameworks to gain insight into the life-worlds and existential experiences of homeless students in postsecondary public vocational institutions (PSPVIs) and urban public community colleges (PCCS), (see Figure 1).

Achieving Life-Purpose:
Academic, Professional, Lifetime Goal
Recognition:
Respect, Appreciated, Contributor in Society
Socialization:
Peers, Friends, Family, Faculty, Neighbors
Safety Requirements:
Security, Stability, Job, Free from Bonds of Fear
Bio-Physiological Needs:
Food/Beverages, Shelter, Privacy, Home

Figure 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is adaptable to homeless students' motivational needs.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to carry out a hermeneutic-phenomenological investigation on homeless student participants' perceptions of constructed realities, in the context of their life-worlds and existential experiences in higher education environments (Hallett, 2010; Heppner & Heppner, 2004). This study design is naturally suited to the tradition of a qualitative hermeneutic-phenomenological approach using survey-questionnaires, and expected responses and data collected in written narratives. The study participants ($N = 10$) were literally and officially homeless students in the targeted UPCCs and/or PSPVIs located in Miami Dade and Broward counties, in South Florida. The 10 participants included, both male and female homeless students enrolled in UPCCs and/or PSPVIs. Data collected were secured, processed, and analyzed using conventional methods, and the computer-assisted tool NVivo 10 qualitative analytical software. "In other words, phenomenological research consisted of reflectively bringing into nearness that which tended to be obscure, that which tended to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).

Results

Participant Demographics Data

The participants referenced in the table were homeless students matriculated and active with their studies, in their respective urban vocational and higher educational institutions. Obviously, homelessness of students, as a sociological phenomenon affect both male and female learners, in urban core, in South Florida.

Table 1

Demographics Data for All Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Yrs. as homeless	College pseudonym	Degree	Grad yr.	County
P1	Male	38	Hispanic	4	Alfa	AA	2017	Miami-Dade
P2	Male	45	Hispanic	3.3	Alfa	AS	2017	Miami-Dade
P3	Male	45	Hispanic	3	Alfa	AS	2017	Miami-Dade
P4	Male	28	Hispanic	1.6	Alfa	AS	2017	Miami-Dade

P5	Male	25	Black Ind	4	Tech Col-lege		AS	2017	Broward
P6	Male	30	Black American	1	Beta		AA	2015	Broward
P7	Male	19	Black	1.1	Alfa		AS	2018	Miami-Dade
P8*	Female	29	Latina	13	Alfa		AS	2015	Miami-Dade
P9*	Female	52	Caucasian	32	Alfa		AS	2018	Miami-Dade
P10*	Female	21	Latina	1	Alfa		AS	2015	Miami-Dade

Note. Respondents' full names were coded (P1 Alfa, P2 Beta, P3 Delta, etc.); subsequently, the participants' numeric codes were compressed without their acronyms (P1, P2, P3, etc.), as designated in respondents' names on survey questionnaires. Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

All the participants recruited and retained during the data collection phase in the 2015 Spring term attended their respective educational institutions. The final count of seven male and three female homeless students were retained as participants in this study. Among the 10 homeless students recruited, eight students came from Alfa College, a UPCC in Miami-Dade County; one male student was from Beta College, and one other male student from a PSPVI in Broward county.

Questionnaires

Participants were given individual packages containing the questionnaire and required to answer all the questions and return their responses sealed in envelopes provided to preserve the documents from damage and the rain. Some participants were dropped for not filling in the questionnaires fully as prescribed, thus disqualifying them from participating in the study. Participants were given token gift cards as an incentive for their participation and a list of essential addresses of organizations serving the homeless.

Data Analysis

The researchers created Microsoft Word document (MWD) files that contained demographic data and other textual contents that were transformed and reduced to chunks, by using cut-and-paste manual and computer-processed methods, and then saved in the folders. The MWD files held combined respondents' thematic word concepts (TWCs) generated after original texts were read, reread, analyzed, and subjected to further analytical searches for emergent textual patterns to obtain data transformations and their results. The process included MWD files, in which the aggregated thematic phrases, words, and paragraphs from the survey responses were highlighted, coded, recoded in thematic phrases, and repeatedly and iteratively analyzed to generate data outputs and results using NVivo 10.

Structured Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

The data analysis and results are presented in a structured order for readers to understand the methodological approach and the assumptions that underpinned this study. Data reported in tables are aligned to the study questions, and the respondents' thematic phrases and word concepts written side-by-side in parallel to results from NVivo 10 analytic data outputs. The instructional goal to display data results from the survey questionnaires are valid, clear, logical, and meaningful to understand the phenomenon studied. The data results presented in the following sections are in descending order, as in the survey questionnaires: Question A was first on the survey questions,

followed by Question B, then by Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for a total of seven questions. Tables and figures serve to highlight summative results of textual and word concepts data.
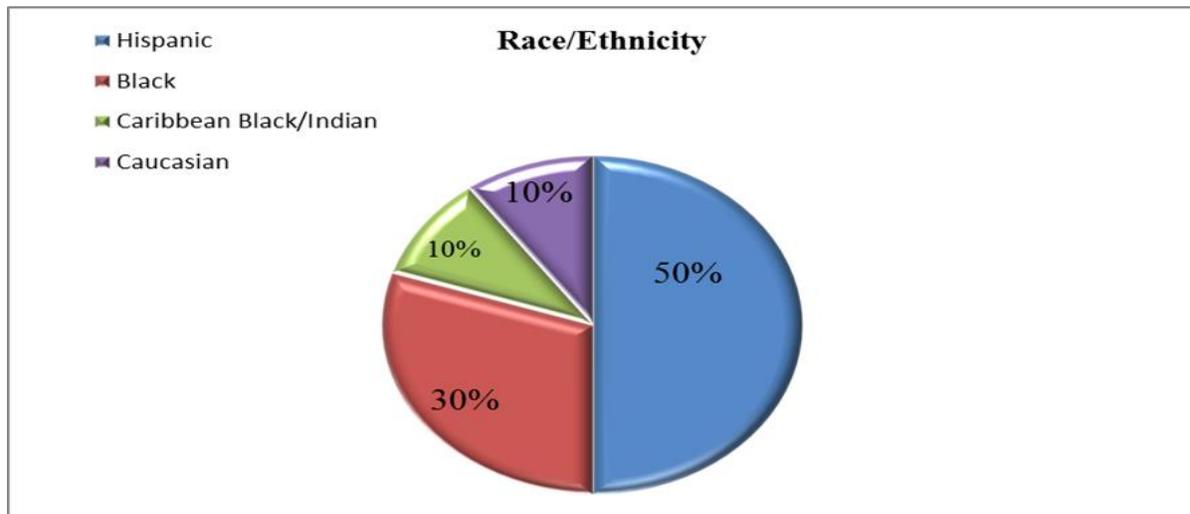

Figure 2. Demographic chart of race and ethnicity. The pie sections coded in blue represents the Hispanic ethnic group as the largest cohort of the population, and the section color coded red represents the Blacks ethnic cohort, green represents the Caribbean Black/Indian, and purple represents the cohort of ethnic Caucasian.

Table 2

Results of Survey Question A Data Analysis and Outputs File

A. What were the reasons or causes that led the participants to become homeless?		
Partici-pant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"I lost my job in 2012; I was wrongfully terminated."	"Loss of job and dismissal." (R11)
P2	"One day I arrived home and found I have been locked out; my possessions were discarded in the garbage."	"Evicted by the landlord, personal possession thrown out." (R30)
P3	"My parent stopped enabling me and asked me to leave their home... Priority to party & use of substances."	"Parent decision and intervention." (R25) "Use of illicit substances." (R21)
P4	"Crossed illegally, where my odyssey started."	"Result of resource starved illegal emigration." (R36)
P5	"Lack of support."	"Lack of support from family." (R32)
P6	"I decided to turn to life of crime." "I decided to stick to drug dealing."	"Consequence of being a convict or felon" (R40) "Result of post-incarceration policies." (R38)

P7	"I did not have key like in the other houses."	"Resources starved legal emigration." (R37)
P8*	"Kicked out from friends' houses."	"Consequence of dysfunctional family." (R33)
P9*	"I've been an addict for 32 years."	"Drug addiction." (R22)
P10*	"Family situations I had to endure."	"Consequence of dysfunctional family." (R33)

Note. R11, R30, R21, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question A

The analytical coverage of 10 homeless student participants' responses to Survey Question A was 0.66%. Survey Question A was focused on what causations participants felt had led them to homelessness. Key analytical results reported and summed up as causations were the "Consequence of dysfunctional family" (R33); "Consequences of external economic factors" (R7); "[The] loss of job, dismissal, termination and lack of employment and poverty" (R11); and lastly, the issue of affordability as the participants were "Out priced for rental" (R12).

Table 3

Results of Survey Question B Data Analysis and Outputs File

B. What were participants' reasons for choosing the vocational or community college they are attending now?

Partici-pant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"I choose Alfa College because of its reputation and its proximity... I wanted to learn graphic design and get a degree."	"Good location accessibility." (R7) "Students achieved their dreams and career goals." (R13)
P2	"Super awesome great school to come and learn."	"Great school with resources affordable." (R16)
P3	"A friend of mine told me I needed to mature and return to college."	"Based on friend recommendation." (R11)
P4	"Alfa College has a program for homeless students."	"Open to underprivileged student and the homeless." (R5)
P5	"I could make monthly payment for school... Affordable ways to pay for school."	"Availability of financial aid and low tuition." (R22) "Affordable fees, offers scholarships and loans." (R26)
P6	"Financial aid from Beta College."	"Availability of financial aid low tuition and affordable."(R 23)

P7	"Was easy to enroll myself, and easy to get ride."	"Open door and access policies." (R2)
P8*	"I was able to attend college for free."	"Offer of scholarships, grants and loans." (R26)
P9*	"I wanted to get a degree in addiction studies... They help me to succeed in doing this."	"Instructors are accommodating." (R35)
		"Instructors are willing to help students." (R31)
P10*	"College offered me financial aid and scholarship."	"Scholarships and grants." (R26)

Note. R7, R13, R16, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question B

The analytical coverage of 10 homeless student participants on Survey Question B was 0.73%. Survey Question B was focused on what the participants' reasons were for choosing their respective UPCCs and/or PSPVIs. Emergent analysis and data results included the following: "[The] instructors were willing to help students, and were accommodating and treated students equally the same" (R33); "Affordable fees, offer of scholarships, grants and loans" (R26); and accessibility "For students with little resources, [there was] availability of financial aid, and [to pay] low tuition, resources" (R22).

Table 4

Results of Survey Question 1 Data Inputs and Analysis File

1. How do homeless students access academic resources and services for their specific needs?

Participant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"I joined various programs that helped the poor and low income... I donated blood and plasma twice a week to earn about $250 monthly."	"Miami Rescue Mission and Wal-Mart." (R32)
		"Monthly selling blood and plasma." (R38)
P2	"I received financial aid from Camillus House... . of course, from some student collaboration and friendship."	"From local organization, Camillus House." (R24)
		"Borrowing money from classmates." (R46)
P3	"By applying for grants and scholarships"	"Financial aid specifically provided to homeless." (R16)
P4	"By working here and there."	"Income from part-time work." (R44)
P5	"To pay for school I did lots of small jobs... Loan from school for books."	"Aid for tuition and books." (R14)

P6	"Financial aid from Beta College... Panhandling, and part-time work, or door-to-door selling."	"Availability of financial aid low tuition and affordable." (R 23)
		"Panhandling in highways' arteries and help from peers." (R54)
P7	"Because of financial aid... Sometimes a friend helped me out, my father or sister."	"Parental and family assistance." (R52)
P8*	"I was able to attend college for free; my financial aid covered all cost... "Some books, the rest I obtained from work."	"Financial aid for tuition and books." (R14)
P9*	"As disable they helped me. They helped me to fill out the paperwork needed to attend college."	"Resources for disable students." (R37)
P10*	"College offered me financial aid and scholarship. The library has most of the books, and computers that I can use."	"Scholarships and grants." (R26) Resources from the libraries." (R26)

Note. R32, R38, R24, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question 1

The analytical coverage of 10 homeless student participants' responses to Survey Question 1 of this study was 0.87%. The core results from the analysis indicated firstly, "[From] house and other faith-based organizations, Miami Rescue Mission, Camillus House, and Wal-Mart" (R30); "Availability of students' loan assistance" (R19); and institutional resources available and assistance for homeless students, such as accessibility to computer "[For] search for scholarship, and the grants and collateral resources" (R49).

Table 5

Results of Survey Question 2 Data Inputs and Analysis

2. What experiences were unique for being a homeless student in your educational institution?

Participant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"I have been harassed by Miami Police Department... Threatened by thugs and crackheads... Life was different from my peers I was always in survival mode."	"Harassed by law enforcement [and] seen as criminals." (R23)
P2	"It was a terrible shock and grievous and new reality moment for me... The main impediment obvious, lack money, resources, and daily life provision."	"Homeless were adaptable to circumstances." (R20)
		"Homeless embraces spirituality." (R21)
P3	"Opportunity to move forward and be independent."	"Homeless perceive themselves as independent." (R18)

P4	"It was a nightmare in the streets… It was embarrassing so that's right to keep it very confidential."	"Homeless are looked as though they are diseased or contaminant." (R12) "Fear of public exposure of one's homeless status." (R39)
P5	"I would go to a facility…for a shower and slept wherever I could…. We are all under the same routine every day."	"When and where to take a shower and where to wash." (R45)
P6	"It seemed like you are separated from everybody… You have to eat a lot of pride to still go to school while homeless."	"Not respected, source of threats in educational sites." (R30)
P7	"I couldn't go too early where I stay… I can provide nobody the address where I live, I didn't really have one."	"I have no home address; I have no keys." (R50) "I cannot invite anyone." (R52)
P8*	"It was difficult… Worries about safety when sleeping in the car… I worry if I will get kicked out from friends' houses."	"Fear sleeping in the car, and eviction." (R35)
P9*	"I didn't have time to think about my surrounding."	"To new realities, priority maintaining one's wellbeing." (R59)
P10*	"It was difficult and stressful… I try to hide it as much as possible."	"Concealing my status." (R54)

Note. R12, R39, R45, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question 2

Key data identified from 10 participants' responses and their textual thematic phrases and TWC results emerged from Survey Question 2. Total coverage by 10 homeless student participants' responses to Survey Question 2 was 0.68%. The results of the analysis indicated the following answers: "Homelessness was a nightmare and embarrassing" (R9); "Sources of threats in the educational sites [and] from other homeless" (R30); the homeless were "Harassed by the law-enforcement [and] seen as [outlaws]" (R23); and "Collateral sources of worries, educational trials and hardships when and where to do assignments" (R43/44).

Table 6

Results of Survey Question 3 Data Analysis and Outputs

3. How do homeless students perceive their social interactions with their domiciled peers and classmates?

Participant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"My peers and classmates did not know I was homeless... Homeless would rather say they are not because of shame."	"I concealed my homelessness to my peers." (R35) "Maintains some relations and contact." (R10)

P2	"Not different... Really many don't have to know... Time spent with my classmates reduced somewhat."	"Few contacts, I concealed my homeless status to my peers." (R34)
P3	"It sometimes became very overwhelming, and also rewarding."	"Other times it was rewarding, and normal." (R42)
P4	"Contacts were casual and informative... Nobody in my class was aware that I'm homeless."	"I concealed my homeless status to my peers no one." (R35)
P5	"We treated each other like family... We spent time together outside of school every day."	"We went out together." (R17)
P6	"I tried to spend as little time as possible with them... I just didn't like to let them know how I'm living."	"To my peers no one knows where I lived." (R36)
		"I share only my aspirations and dreams." (R15)
P7	"I would say very poor... Because of no phone or internet, I couldn't meet them nowhere."	"Homeless socialization is very poor." (R32)
		"No collective social activities." (R25)
P8*	"Many knew my situation and did not judge me."	"We went out together." (R17)
P9*	"I had no problems with the students... Students were curious how I got to that situation."	"All the contacts were normal." (R38)
P10*	"I tried to make friends... Enjoyed socializing with my peers."	"It was normal and tried to make friends." (R44)

Note. R35, R10, R34, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question 3

Key data identified from 10 participants' responses and their textual thematic phrases and TWC results emerged from Survey Question 3. Total coverage of 10 homeless student respondents to Survey Question 3 of the study was 0.82%. The respondents' key perceptions and emergent results were as follows: "[The] quality of socialization was normal" (R40); "With addicts and other homeless socialization was very poor" (R30); most of the respondents "Dreamt to go out together, [and had] inspirational and good informative relationship" (R17); "[they had] no collective social activities and entertainment, we could not meet" (R25).

Table 7

Results of Survey Question 4 Data Inputs and Analysis

    4.   How do homeless students perceive their relationships with instructors in the classrooms?

Participant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"I was treated well by instructors and programs directors... Only in private have I told my professors and instructors about my situation."	"Good relationship with understanding." (R10) "I did confide to some instructors" (R20)
P2	"Excellent ... they tried to give they love [sic], support and financial assistance... Respected and valued me."	"Treat with respect like any other student." (R8) "Shocked to learn about my status." (R22)
P3	"I wanted to be treated as everyone else... "I wasn't used to get any special treatment."	"Without favoritism, treated equally with respect like my peers." (R13)
P4	"My relationship with my instructors was very good... My relationship with the teachers was "warm and friendly."	"With respect like my peers, friendly and warm contacts." (R15)
P5	"My instructors didn't treat me any different than any other student."	"Treated equally with respect like any other student." (R11)
P6	"Overall, the instructors treated me with respect... Instructors they really did not know my situation."	"Yet I conceal my homelessness." (R24) "Treat equally with respect like my peers." (R13)
P7	"We had a good relationship in class and it was supposed to be between teacher and student."	"Cordial understanding and kind." (R9)
P8*	"Majority of my instructors were understanding when I did explain the situation to them."	"I did confide to some instructors." (R20) "Some were accommodating." (R5)
P9*	"My instructors knew my situation and my story and they love it."	"Did confide to some instructors." (R17)
P10*	"My instructors liked me... I tried to participate in class and get good grades on test."	"Friendly and warm contacts in." (R14)

Note. R10, R20, R8, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question 4

      Key data from 10 homeless student participants emerged from responses to Survey Question 4. Total coverage of 10 homeless student participants' responses to Survey Question 4, was

0.93%. The respondents expressed perceptions of qualities of relations as follows: "[With] my homeless status, some [instructors] were accommodating and treated [me] with respect like any other student" (R7); "Good relationship with understanding, and good interactions without favoritism and treated equally with [respect]" (R10/11); "Yet, in class, I concealed my homelessness" (R 24); "I did confide to some instructors, and some were shocked to learn [I was homeless]" (R 20); and "Warm contacts in some cases" (R 17).

Table 8

Results of Survey Question 5 Data Inputs and Analysis

5. What are the participants' post-graduation aspirations and dreams?

Partici-pant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"Plan to become stable and established... I would like to help the homeless... I wanted a normal life."	"Get a stable life." (R19) "Work with the homeless." (R28)
P2	"I was not really sure." "Work."	"I did not know what to do." (R46)
P3	"I would like to open my own business" "A dual-diagnose center."	"Own and operate my business." (R11) "Open a dual diagnostic center." (R 16)
P4	"I would further my studies, get a medical doctorate, bring my family and own medical practice."	"Further my studies to HBCU for Master and PhD." (R6) "Bring in my family." (R28)
P5	"Start with a job, build my resume, get a masters and a PhD, and own a business."	"PhD to be certified and transfer to four-year universities." (R7)
P6	"My dream is to own multibillion-dollar company."	"Own and operate my business." (R9)
P7	"I wanted to find a good job, in hospital... Have economic stability and go back to my country."	"Experience economic stability and start a family." (R21)
P8*	"Help the homeless students and homeless community."	"Work with the homeless in higher education." (R30)
P9*	"Open a three-quarter way house for recovering addicts."	"Operate a house for recovering addicts." (R34)
P10*	"To become a family and marriage therapist."	"Become family and marriage therapist." (R35)

Note. R19, R28, R46, etc. are NVivo numeric references (see results). Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary: Survey Question 5

The 10 homeless student participants responded to Survey Question 5. The total coverage level of analytic results on Survey Question 5 was 0.96%; however, of the textual and numeric data outputs, as referenced written results, only a limited number of key thematic phrases and TWCs are included in Table 8. The results included the following: "[To] pursue higher degrees" (R5); "Get a stable life, experience economic stability and get married" (R19); "Own a medical practice, an investment company, start a three quarter way house" (R13); "Bring my family" (R28); and "Operate a house for recovering addicts" (R31/32).

Deviant X-Factor Data from Participants' Responses

Divergent X-Factor Data from Participants' Responses Identification of deviant textualthematic phrases (DTTP) and TWCs was made after reading, reflecting, and engaging the texts indialogic and iterative questioning of respondents P1, P2, P6, and P7's survey responses on Survey Questions 2 and 5. Subsequently, data themes that emerged as divergent were highlighted and coded from the texts using a combination of both computer and cut-and paste manual methods. Next, the Microsoft Word document (MWD) files that contained the divergent X-factor data were reprocessed, coded, and auto-recoded and analyze through the NVivo query wizard for authentication of their unique nature as data results. The summary of data outputs of deviant cases are shown below. Divergent (X) Factor Data Select numbers of the responses by P1, P2, P6, and P7 were categorized as unusual data, or deviant for being out of range of conformity and appropriateness in relation to the study questions. According toShenton and Hay-Gibson (2009), divergent data "do not conform to the prevailing patterns that have been identified" (p. 30). Therefore, divergent X-factor data were peculiar results from textual thematic phrases that emerged from data analysis and the data outputs from four participants' textual handwritten survey responses. These divergent cases were from the participants' responses to Questions 1 and 5, as displayed in Table 9.

Divergent (X) Factor Data

Select numbers of the responses by P1, P2, P6, and P7 were categorized as unusual data, or deviant for being out of range of conformity and appropriateness in relation to the study questions. According to Shenton and Hay-Gibson (2009), deviant data "do not conform to the prevailing patterns that have been identified" (p. 30). Therefore, deviant X-factor data were peculiar results from textual thematic phrases that emerged from data analysis and the data outputs from four participants' textual handwritten survey responses. These deviant cases were from the participants' responses to Questions 1 and 5, as displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

X-Factors from Participants' Responses to Questions 2 and 5

Participant	Textual phrases or TWCs	NVivo 10 participants' results
P1	"Since my BA in languages has not helped me find a career." (Q2)	"Believed previous humanities' degree conferred no transferable skills." (R61)
P2	"I did not know what to do about the future after graduation." (Q5)	"I didn't know what to do." (R46)
P3	None identified	Not applicable
P4	None identified	Not applicable
P5	None identified	Not applicable
P6	"Would be able to speak foreign language or have a translator with." (Q5)	"I want to speak foreign languages." (R48)
P7	"I wanted to go back to my country to help and change some things that didn't go well." (Q 5)	"Return home to help the people." (R44)
P8*	None identified	Not applicable
P9*	None identified	Not applicable
P10*	None identified	Not applicable

Note. Q2: What experiences were unique for being a homeless student in your educational institution? Q5: What are the participants' post-graduation aspirations and dreams?
*Respondents with asterisks following their code names were females.

Key Data Summary

The divergent factors were from data labeled as X factors. Data with unseemly patterns and labeled as divergent X factors were noteworthy answers to Questions 2 and 5 as follows: "[He longed to] return home to help the people" (R 60); "I did not know what to do" (R43); "I wanted to speak foreign languages" (R48); and "my BA in languages has not helped me find a [job] career" (R60).

Reflection

Admittedly, conducting and completing this study on homeless students was not an easy proposition. Homelessness of students as a sociological phenomenon was counterintuitive intel-

lectually. The sociological, physical, emotional and material challenges encountered daily, as experiential realities while pursuing education in urban higher education institutions, while being student and homeless was a wrenching discovery. Primarily, because it was counter intuitive to be homeless, and yet, a student in higher education institution. Furthermore, socially it was shocking to trigger a string of questions, as to why, in the State of Florida, and the United States of America the richest nation in the world, how come students in urban higher education institutions were homeless? Rationally, it was expected that students enrolled in urban higher education institutions were domiciled with official houses, apartments, or rooms to sleep, and receive their mails, and freely go in and out at will, and cook their meals when off school. Unfortunately, homeless students lived experiences were different, and characterized by uncertainties, and basically for lacking known official homes compared to, and taken for granted by their peers such as, where to sleep, take a shower, cook and eat a hot meal, and be safe while doing academic work, in their homes. The homeless students are obviously virtual to the general public, for matter of facts that homeless students have crafted and learnt strategically to conceal their social status and conditions. In addition, the seamless ways homeless students enter and navigate between the different worlds around them, precisely into the macro-society world, and the world of academia, with its culture and expectations, and finally, going to reside and sleep rough in unstable sub-world of the poor and the nameless (Sean, Kidd, et al, 2016).

Hence, the researchers' discovery and access to the world of urban homeless students was an epiphany, that compelled us to admit that we were ignorant about the homeless and homelessness phenomena. Studies on homeless students' existential experiences in the UPCCs and the PSPVIs were scarce and/or limited in the academic literature reviewed. Therefore, this study provides new knowledge and insights about the uniqueness of this segment of learners enrolled but invisible in higher education institutions. Consequently, this study has provided new perspectives and understanding of homeless students' worldviews and lived experiences as marginalized and underprivileged learners in the UPCCs and/or the PSPVIs (Hallett, 2010; Stronge & Reed-Victor, 2000). This study's usefulness and applicability are sociological, instructional, and data-driven for actionable policies. To summarize, this study provides new insights and data for use by academics, operators of shelters, policy makers, and a host of stakeholders in political and social organizations caring for and seeking to improve the existential and educational conditions of homeless students in higher education institutions.

Conclusion

Homeless students' life-worlds and experiences in this study showed that homelessness of students in urban vocational and higher educational institutions are undeniable. The existential and experiential lives of the participants were unique compared to the general population of domiciled and economically challenged Floridians. The participants experienced social isolation, hardships, marginalization, and disinvestment in relationships, in addition to relegation into anonymity (Algert et al., 2006; Field, 2015; Hallet & Crutchfield, 2017; McBride, 2012; O'Sullivan Oliveira & Burke, 2009). The participants' daily lives differed from that of many of their peers and housed classmates. Undeniably, homelessness had consigned these student participants into the lower fringes of the society and close to obscurity, where most individuals lost their humanness, freedom, and respect. They also lost the privilege to enjoy activities of life taken for granted by the general population and their peers such as strolling in commercial districts, loitering in public venues, or entering the malls, libraries, and other public buildings without being subjected to inquisitive looks, and probable interventions of the law enforcement and security guards. Nevertheless, this

cohort of homeless students demonstrated their foresight, willingness, and courage to change their fortunes. Thus, the 10 participants made choices to strive and come out of their social isolation and marginalized lives by enrolling into the UPCCs and/or the PSPVIs. These student participants understood that education was the right pathway that could lead to personal emancipation, life transformation, and social reintegration into the mainstream society (McPherson, R., 2018; Adair, 2005; Gagné, 2010; Giroux, 2006; Jones, 2012; Menacker & Kudota, 1971; Milburn et al., 2009; Roxas, 2008).

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