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An Analysis of the Construction of Parent Identity in Higher Education: A Mixed Methods Study

Abstract

This mixed methods study examined the construction of parental identity and interactions at a midsize four-year western private university. Survey responses were collected from 163 undergraduate students and 448 parents, who completed qualitative measures examining student and parent descriptions of parental interactions in higher education and quantitative measures examining frequency of parental intervention, levels of relational closeness, and use of mediated communication. Qualitative findings indicated that the student and parent participants were constructing parental identity at a private university through six emergent themes that describe parents as Financial Supporters, Academic Consultants, Emotional Cheerleaders, Housing Advisors, Advocates for Healthcare, and Advocates for Independence. Quantitative findings among the private university participants indicated parental intervention is positively associated with relational closeness among both fathers and mothers; in addition parental intervention among mothers is positively associated with email and video teleconference; and among fathers, parental intervention is positively associated with phone, text messaging, email, social networking service, and video teleconference. Ideally these findings can assist students, parents, and university personnel to effectively and successfully navigate the modern college experience.

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the Faculty of Social Sciences

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Daniel W. Johnson

August 2017

Advisor: Elizabeth A. Suter, PhD

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ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study examined the construction of parental identity and interactions at a midsize four-year western private university. Survey responses were collected from 163 undergraduate students and 448 parents, who completed qualitative measures examining student and parent descriptions of parental interactions in higher education and quantitative measures examining frequency of parental intervention, levels of relational closeness, and use of mediated communication. Qualitative findings indicated that the student and parent participants were constructing parental identity at a private university through six emergent themes that describe parents as Financial Supporters, Academic Consultants, Emotional Cheerleaders, Housing Advisors, Advocates for Healthcare, and Advocates for Independence. Quantitative findings among the private university participants indicated parental intervention is positively associated with relational closeness among both fathers and mothers; in addition parental intervention among mothers is positively associated with email and video teleconference; and among fathers, parental intervention is positively associated with phone, text messaging, email, social networking service, and video teleconference. Ideally these findings can assist students, parents, and university personnel to effectively and successfully navigate the modern college experience.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Since the year 2000, a new classification of students defined as the “millennial generation,” children born after 1982, have emerged on college campuses across the United States, many of whom have also been accompanied by a generation of new parents, who have made obvious and concerted efforts to be actively involved in their children’s elementary and secondary education (Damast, 2007). In addition, this active parental involvement has not stopped upon a millennial child’s graduation from high school and attainment of the legally independent age of eighteen. Many of these parents are continuing to maintain regular communication and intervene on their child’s behalf during the traditionally more autonomous college years as well (Gottlieb, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Marano, 2011; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005). Specifically, these parents have been labeled by both popular media and educators across elementary, secondary, and higher education as “helicopter parents” (HPs), a phrase Newsweek first highlighted on a list of 1991 educational buzzwords cited by teachers when describing the hovering presence of parents over elementary and secondary classrooms (Zeman, 1991), and which has gained further momentum over the past two decades from family scholar and counselor Jim Fay’s (1994) use of the term within his popular family parenting program focused on Love and Logic, in which he describes how “some parents hover over their children like

helicopters, constantly rescuing them and constantly protecting them from their teachers, other kids, and the rest of the cruel world out there” (p. 9).

In recent years, counselors and educators have shared numerous stories in popular media about challenging interactions with HPs, which portray these parents as being too nosy, offering unwanted help, and being overly protective (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005). Specifically, at institutions of higher education, admission counselors, administrators, faculty, and career counselors have referenced stories about HPs being actively involved during the admission process, course registration, term paper editing, career fairs and job interviews, and even making campus wake up calls to ensure timely arrival to scheduled classes (Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Sanoff, 2006; Wills, 2005). Some colleges have even begun to utilize “parent bouncers” during new student orientation to politely redirect parents away from unnecessary and unwanted attendance at specific orientation sessions designed solely for student participation, such as sessions involving the pertinent student related topics concerning academic advising, alcohol, and sex (Wills, 2005).

In addition, the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, which surveyed 313,000 first and senior year students at 610 institutions of higher education across the United States and Canada, found that nearly 40% of first-year students have had a parent or guardian assist with the resolution a problematic issue at college; furthermore, 13% of the first-year students surveyed stated that parental intervention was happening on a frequent basis (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007). As a result, similar to the private university chosen for this study, more and more universities are beginning to hire

full time parent coordinators, who can be a primary resource for HPs to contact when questions or concerns arise, in addition to being a key figure in the organization of parent newsletters, websites, hotlines, and parent weekends (Lum, 2006). Clearly, administrators, faculty, and staff across institutions of higher education have begun to acknowledge, experience, and respond to the hovering presence of HPs over their campuses. As a result, interaction and communication between parents, students, and university personnel is becoming more common in higher education.

With 24/7 accessibility to mobile phones, text messages, email, and the internet, students can contact a parent at a moments notice to seek out college advice or assistance from his or her parents. In addition, mothers and fathers can overcome geographic barriers, whether it is the other side of town or across the country. Parents have the capability to check-up and communicate with their sons and daughters at any moment of the day. Furthermore, HPs have prominent college expectations for their children. HPs want to ensure their children are getting the best college education possible via superior instruction and exceptional facilities; in addition, with access to university websites, online email directories, and mobile communication devices, HPs expect rapid personnel responses to pertinent questions and concerns (Coburn, 2006) often times viewing higher education as a product or service and themselves as paying customers who are footing the tuition bill for their college students (Montgomery, 2010; Anctil, 2008; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1995). As a result, university personnel are now facing a potential increase in the number of parental interactions with the emergence of millennial students on college campuses. Hence, the HP presence in higher education is a relatively new

communicative and organizational phenomenon that needs greater scholarly examination across a variety of higher educational settings and institutions.

Theoretical Framework

An Application of Social Constructionism and the Study of Narratives.

Every day at higher educational institutions, numerous conversations fill the airways throughout the university buildings and grounds. The conversational topics within these campus settings varies greatly, however, as revealed in the growing number of anecdotes beginning to be referenced in popular press (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005), there is little doubt that HPs are an emerging focus among these daily interactions and conversations. As a result, the growing number of HP narratives on college campuses are creating socially discursive contexts across university communities from which parent identities are being shaped and constructed. As stated by Carbaugh (1996), “identities are not just inside a self but enacted in scenes” (p. xiv) that are “being scripted, cast, and acted” (p. 26). In other words, social interaction is a vital factor in the creation of identity, which makes social constructionism a practical theoretical lens through which to view the formation of parental identity in higher educational settings.

Social constructionism operates from the perspective that individuals comprehend their reality through language and conversation, and thus human interaction and communication determine subjective meaning and understanding of the world around us (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1985). In particular, as the founding scholars of social constructionism, Berger and Luckman (1966) stated, an individual “cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others” (p. 23). In

other words, social interaction is vital for our existence and understanding of life and reality. Specifically, through social interaction and conversation we can construct, maintain, repair, and change meaning (Carey, 1989), which includes the construction and evolution of identities (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009). As stated by Berger and Luckmann (1966), “identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society” (p. 174). Thus, identity evolves from the language and conversation utilized during social and communicative interactions. Furthermore, past family research has highlighted the connection between social constructionism and identity. Specifically, in the study of American families with adopted children from China, Suter (2008) found that social interactions entailing comments and questions from others challenged adoptive family identities, and that language in the form of discursive strategies acted as a pertinent resource from which adoptive parents could validate their family identity. In addition, Hill and Thomas (2000) linked the development of racial identity to the communicative discussions and interactions between an individual and his or her social environment. Hence, as revealed through these past communication studies, social constructionism can be used as a viable theoretical lens when studying the formation of identity.

Furthermore, by using this theoretical framework, this dissertation hopes to answer the call for a greater number of studies that link social constructionism with the study of narratives (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). Specifically, narratives about parent involvement in higher education, as told by students and parents are being shared and repeated both on and off college campuses in a variety of settings, and thus shaping the construction of parent identity. As a result, these stories can provide insights into values,

norms, and beliefs, in addition to embodying social manifestations from which meanings can emerge (Keyton, 2005; Martin, 2002). Thus, through social and discursive conversation, narratives can be used as relevant ways to remember, argue, persuade, engage, entertain, or potentially mislead an audience (Riessman, 2008). As a result, groups and individuals can construct identity through storytelling by using anecdotal language to describe the uniqueness of themselves or others (Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, stories can provide a rationale for an individual's actions and be used by storytellers to socially construct desired goals, meanings, and behaviors (Fisher, 1985). As Kenyon and Randall (1997) stated, individuals can "become the stories that we tell ourselves" (p. 29). In other words, the sharing of a story has the power to socially construct the identity of ourselves and others. Therefore, it is the intent of this dissertation to use social constructionism and a practical connection to the study of narratives to examine the current evolution of parent identity in higher education.

Furthermore, there is a practical need for new scholarly investigations focused on how parental involvement in higher education is currently being discussed and shaped within the evolving dyadic relationship between millennial students and their parents. Numerous questions surround the millennial student and parent relationship on contemporary university settings. Specifically, are millennial college students encouraging or discouraging parental involvement in their education? Do current college students seek parental advice and assistance, or do they value personal autonomy and view their parents as hovering HPs? Additionally, how do parents view themselves? Do they describe themselves as overprotective HPs, or do they descriptively frame their parental college role in a more positive way, such as an advocate or protector? Parents

may even view themselves as paying customers, reflecting the consumerization of higher education where many universities are taking a more business-like approach by viewing education as a product, students as consumers, and parents as paying customers (Montgomery, 2010; Anctil, 2008; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1995). As a result, current university personnel have the potential to become as Gottfried (2002) described, "purveyors of customer service" (p. 53) to not only the student, but to the parent as well. Universities are now providing more resources for parents and staff to access when parents have issues or concerns, such as telephone hotlines, full time parent coordinators, and online parental resources available via university websites.

However, regardless of these expanding parental resources, university personnel are in a precarious situation where they are attempting to meet the growing demands from student and parental consumers, while simultaneously being bound by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to legally protect educational records for students who have attained the legal age of 18. Clearly, new research on the HP phenomenon in higher education could significantly benefit the college students, parents, and educators by offering new communicative and organizational insights on how parent identity is being described and socially constructed at institutions of higher education. As a result, this dissertation seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship among millennial students and parents in higher education. Specifically, through a theoretical application of social constructionism and the study of narratives, this dissertation uses both a quantitative and qualitative method to gather insightful data from millennial students and parents for a clearer understanding of parent identity and interactions within a university setting. Ultimately, as we study and learn more about the

emerging parental identity and interactions in higher education, the greater the opportunity for college students, parents, and university personnel to successfully and effectively navigate the modern millennial college experience.

Dissertation Structure

This introduction has offered the background and rationale for this dissertation, as well as a general overview of the theoretical framework. The next chapter takes a closer look at the history of scholarly studies that have examined the presence and impact of HPs in university settings. The second chapter also expands upon the theoretical assumptions embedded in both social constructionism and the study of personal narratives that intersect in the formation of identity. Additionally, the second chapter presents the research questions examined in this study. The third chapter will describe the research design and methodology for this study. Results for this dissertation are detailed in the fourth chapter. In conclusion, the fifth chapter presents the discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings, in addition to study implications, limitations, recommendations for future research, and concluding thoughts on the overall study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As referenced earlier, millennial students often enter their college years with helicopter parents (HPs) hovering over their child's campus experiences and wanting to ensure their children get the best college education possible. Furthermore, with the consumerization of higher education and the increasing price of a college education, parents may also expect a healthy and promising return on their financial investment (Montgomery, 2010; Anctil, 2008). As a result, the presence of HPs in higher education has sparked contemporary conversation and narratives among students, parents, and university personnel that is impacting and shaping parental participation in higher education. However, in lieu of the fact that the first wave of millennial students did not start college until the year 2000, a limited number of academic research projects have explicitly examined the presence and impact of HPs in university settings. Therefore, this literature review provides an overview of the scholarly discussion of the current literature and research on helicopter parenting, theoretical assumptions embedded in both social constructionism and the study of personal narratives that intersect in the formation of parent identity in higher education, an overview of the consumerization of higher education, the negative and positive outcomes of parental interactions in higher education, and the advancement of the research questions examined in this dissertation.

Helicopter Parenting

The term helicopter parenting was first introduced in Cline and Fay's (1990) book describing parenting techniques which made an initial reference to hovering parents who were constantly rescuing their children from failures and mistakes. The term took on greater significance in 1991 when the phrase was included in list of academic buzzwords cited by Newsweek to describe the hovering presence of parents over elementary and secondary school settings (Zeman, 1991). The term has attained even greater contemporary attention as it has been connected to anecdotal references in popular press describing how helicopter parenting has been impacting students, parents, and university personnel as parents continue to hover over higher education during a student's emerging adult years, ages 18 to 25 (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005). Specifically, mainstream media has shared numerous stories about the challenges facing millennial students and university personnel as they deal with parents who are overly involved in the course selection process, attending classes, editing academic papers, calling professors about grades, making wake up calls, and intervening in roommate issues (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005). In addition to the large number of anecdotes in popular media, scholarly research has also begun to explore the HP phenomenon emerging on college campuses.

Past research has found helicopter parenting to be a distinct form of parental control that has been found significantly related to parental involvement, parental autonomy granting, student depression, student coping skills, adult child entitlement,

student dependency on others, and student psychological well-being (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Schiffrin, Liss, Miles-McLean, Geary, Erchull, & Tashner, 2014; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012; LeMoyné & Buchanan, 2011). Additional research has also found conflicting student desires, where college age emerging adults who received frequent and intense support on a weekly basis from their parents viewed it as too much support, while at the same time many of those same emerging adults who received the intense support reported better life satisfaction than the grown children who did not receive intense support (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselman, Zarit, Furstenberg, & Birditt, 2012). Previous research has also linked the impact of HPs to relational closeness, social support, relational satisfaction, and mediated communication (Kelly, Duran, & Miller-Ott, 2017; Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt, 2010; Miller-Ott, Kelly, & Duran, 2014). Collectively, these studies and the large number of HP stories circulating in the popular media indicate that the HP phenomenon is gathering more attention in both public and academic forums.

However, what is missing from this important and growing collection of academic research is a specific study that looks to explore the anecdotal descriptions of parental interactions in higher education that are being referenced not only in popular media, but more importantly being shared and repeated among the actual millennial students and parents interacting on college campuses. As a result, the study put forth in this dissertation looks to fill this gap by examining the student and parent narratives that are describing both their own parental interactions in college, in addition to the college interactions of other parents. A closer examination of these stories can help scholars gain

a more accurate understanding of how millennial students and parents are perceiving parental interactions in higher education. Furthermore, as initially described in the first chapter, this study looks to use social constructionism and a practical connection to the study of narratives as a theoretical framework to examine these insightful stories describing parental interactions and shaping parental identity in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

Communication scholars have utilized numerous theoretical perspectives as founding principles in their scholarly pursuits. In particular, in a study of 1,254 family research articles, Stamp (2004) found 28 different theories being used across the numerous family communication studies. However, only .08 percent of the articles, 10 out of the 1,254 articles, focused on a social constructive theoretical approach; in addition only 1.1 percent of the articles, 14 out of 1,254 articles, utilized a narrative theoretical approach (Stamp, 2004). These startling statistics seem surprising, in lieu of the fact that both social constructionism and the study of personal narratives are such compelling and practical theoretical perspectives easily accessible and understood by people working both inside and outside academia. As a result, a scholarly challenge was put forth for an increase in the number of studies employing both a narrative and social constructive theoretical framework (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). In recent years, family research has begun to answer this challenge by making a connection between narrative discourse and social constructionism when examining evotypical families who are being defined and constructed through interactions with others (Braithwaite, Foster, & Bergen, in press). In particular, adoptive family research has connected the use of adoption stories as strategies to construct and normalize the adoptive family identity (Baxter, Norwood, Asbury, &

Scharp, 2014; Harrigan, 2010). Therefore, it is the intent of this dissertation to continue to answer this scholarly challenge by using social constructionism and a practical connection to the study of narratives to examine parent identity in higher education. Thus, the following section of this literature review will discuss the important theoretical assumptions embedded in both social constructionism and the study of personal narratives, followed by an overview on how these two theoretical approaches can be productively combined in the study of parental identity development in higher education.

Social Constructionism. As a formal theoretical approach, social constructionism gained momentum from Berger and Luckmann's (1966) text titled, *The Social Construction of Reality*. Since its publication, numerous scholars in the social sciences, including communication researchers, have reiterated the importance of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) initial assumption that social constructionism operates from the perspective that individuals comprehend the world and reality around them through language and conversation (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). In regards to language, Berger and Luckmann (1966) stated that language "is the most important sign system of human society" (p. 37), hence, the words we string together in our interactions carry interpretive meaning, which shape and define our reality; or as Berger and Luckmann (1966) state further:

Language is pliantly expansive so as to allow me to objectify a great variety of experiences coming my way in the course of my life. Language also typifies experiences, allowing me to subsume them under broad categories in terms of which they have meaning not only to myself but also my fellowmen. As it typifies, it also anonymizes experiences, for the typified experience can, in principle, be duplicated by anyone falling into the category in question. For instance, I have a quarrel with my mother-in-law. This concrete and subjectively unique experience is typified linguistically under the category of "mother-in-law

trouble.” In this typification it makes sense to myself, others, and presumably, my mother-in-law (p. 39).

Hence, as implied in the previous statement, language is flexible and a viable way to define personal experience, in addition to being social in nature, in that it can be understood and generate common meaning, such as how the previously mentioned phrase “mother-in-law trouble” can be subjectively applied to differing in-law situations, while at the same time projecting a typical definition involving emotional frustration, which is commonly felt and understood by a myriad of individuals using it in various *conversations*, which is the second and perhaps most indispensable component in the social construction of reality put forth by Berger and Luckmann (1966). Specifically, the two scholars stated, “The most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation” (p. 152). As a result, social construction becomes a collective rather than individual production of meaning, where reality is socially constructed through our interaction and communication with those around us (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). Specifically, Berger and Luckmann (1966) state that an individual “cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others” (p. 23). Thus, a key component to both our existence and construction of reality is the need for shared communicative interaction with others.

In addition, Berger and Luckmann (1966) viewed conversation as an “apparatus that ongoingly maintains, modifies, and reconstructs subjective reality” (p. 152). In other words, the communicative interactions between two or more people can define, reproduce, or revise our sense of reality. Carey (1989) reiterated this assumption by specifically discussing four evolving conversational elements of social constructionism:

(a) construction, where communicative interaction will generate new meanings; (b) maintenance, where conversation will reinforce meaning; (c) repair, where communicative interaction will help restore meaning that may have got lost over time; and (d) change, where conversation will work to modify outdated meanings. Thus, in social constructionism meaning evolves through interaction and conversation where we collectively construct a social reality through joint action and communication (Castro, 2005; Shotter, 1993). Furthermore, Shotter and Gergen (1997) commented on the importance of conversational context in relationship to how meaning “both originates and is judged as worthy or not of further attention” through “the activities occurring between people” (p. 4). Specifically, these two scholars identified the following three “instructive statements” regarding the communicative aspects to social constructionism:

1. Accounts of “reality” originate in the contingent, indeterminate, and historical flow of continuous communicative activity between human beings (p. 14).
2. An utterance has no meaning in itself but only as a constituent of the ongoing dialogue: its meaning is generated by its use within dialogue (p. 16).
3. Responsive utterances work both to create meaning and to constrain further meaning in the continuously developing context of conversation (p. 17).

Clearly, an obvious and important aspect to each these previous statements is that the construction of “reality” mandates a contextual communicative interaction between individuals, where meaning is constructed through conversation. In other words, through dialogue two individuals generate meaning through ongoing discussion where both parties are privileged to speak and share statements of agreement or discord which can construct, maintain, repair, or change meanings. Thus, as Gergen (1985) states, “social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the process by which

people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live” (p. 266). Furthermore, stories that connect events within the world we live are often a significant factor in the dialogue between two people from which meaning can be constructed (Riessman, 2008). As a result, the sharing of stories within a conversation between individuals can be a vital component in the social construction of meaning. For example, with the study put forth in this dissertation, the stories shared among students and parents help describe and explain the positive and negative outcomes of parental interactions in higher education. Thus, a practical connection between social constructionism and the study of narratives was used as a viable theoretical framework for this study.

The Study of Narratives. A very simple definition of narrative, as put forth by Riessman (2008), is synonymous with the concept of *storytelling*, in which “a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story” (p. 3). Thus, narrative construction entails designing a meaningful sequence of events and ideas (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 1993). In addition, two criteria are often used to validate the quality of a narrative, coherence and fidelity. Coherence is the degree to which a narrative makes sense and evokes meaning; whereas fidelity is the truthfulness or reliability of the narrative (Littlejohn, 1999). Thus, a well told story will *hang together* and *ring true* for both the narrator and audience. Overall, researchers across the social sciences have applied narratives in a variety of ways; which has resulted in the lack of a consistent single narrative approach (Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 1993). Scholars, including those in the communication field, have implemented a narrative approach from both a

theoretical lens and a methodological focus (Bergen, 2010; Riessman, 2008; Riessman 1993) to study the stories that people construct. From a theoretical perspective, as Hecht and Miller-Day (2007) referenced, a narrative theory focuses on how “human experience is organized, stored, and communicated in narrative form” (p. 345); thus, stories become a prominent and valuable interpretive lens to help individuals make sense of their lives. Through storytelling, individuals recall important and vital moments in their lives, and in turn generate and share scripted narratives to help make sense of these significant experiences (Fisher, 1987). As a result, the study of narratives can provide a theoretical perspective for comprehending the meaning of prominent human experience and interactions (Hecht & Miller-Day, 2007).

From a methodological approach, researchers become storytellers themselves and develop *stories about stories* from an interpretive analysis of the individual narratives embedded in interview transcripts, fieldwork observation notes, or open ended survey questions (Riessman, 2008). Narrative analysis will often focus on a certain types of narratives, such as personal narratives, which focus on expressing the unique life experiences and dynamic characteristics of a particular individual (Smythe & Murray, 2000); group narratives, which often seek to use stories as a means to mobilize others toward action or generate a sense of belonging (Riessman, 2008), or master narratives, which Nelson (2001) describes as “stories drawn from the cultural store that circulate widely within a society and embody its shared understanding” (p. 152), such as the master narrative of marriage that primarily describes marriage as “togetherness” where couples live together (Bergen, 2010). Furthermore, Smythe and Murray (2000) state, “Methodologically, narrative research is an essentially interpretive enterprise in that the

researcher is engaged actively in formulating meanings for participants' narrative expressions" (p. 6), which involves the emergence of a fourth type of narrative, typical narratives, which attempt to subsume the individual stories from study participants within a broader story that has emerged from an analysis of the narrative data (Smythe and Murray, 2000). As Riessman (2008) notes, in searching for larger interpretive meaning, narrative analysts will attempt to answer the following six questions when reviewing individual stories:

1. For whom was this story constructed, and for what purpose?
2. Why is the succession of events configured that way?
3. What cultural resources does the story draw on, or take for granted?
4. What storehouse of plots does it call up?
5. What does the story accomplish?
6. Are there gaps and inconsistencies that might suggest preferred, alternative, or counter-narratives? (p. 11)

By answering these questions, narrative analysts will attempt to comprehend the interactive and contextual elements impacting the interpretive meaning of narratives, such as story participants, plot structure, cultural influences, or even historical implications. Thus, stories are told for relational purposes, not merely delivering information or offering entertainment, and as such are produced through talk and conversation and thus are jointly produced between individuals (Tracy, 2002). In other words, sense-making evolves from the communicative interaction and the sharing of stories. Thus, another key component to the study of narratives is their capacity to

socially construct meaning and thus making lived experience understandable and meaningful (Bochner & Ellis, 1992).

In this study, sense-making moments were generated through the lived experiences of students and parents who were sharing narratives about the unique aspects of parental interactions in higher education. In other words, stories were being used by millennial students and parents to describe and socially construct parental identity. As a result, for this study storytelling was making the distinctive characteristics of parental identity in higher education understandable and meaningful for both the students and parents. Further explanation of this narrative connection to social construction will be addressed in the following section discussing how social constructionism and the study of personal narratives intersect in the formation of identity.

The Formation of Identity. Identity is often described as an internal aspect of the ‘self’, located within one’s inner being (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009). In particular, Carbaugh (1996) comments on the internal nature of identity through his statement that “the individual has a ‘self’ or something inside of himself or herself that is special, unique” (p. 28). The important and pending question now is how does this inner self or identity generate its meaning? For Carbaugh (1996), “identities are not just inside a self but enacted in scenes” (p. xiv) that are “being scripted, cast, and acted” (p. 26). In other words, social interaction is key component in the formation of identity. Every interactive scene has participants, scripts, and rules – a contextual design that shapes our identities. For example, specific participants or contextual components, such as formal or informal rules, may either allow or silence an individual’s voice to address others, thus shaping one’s identity. If an individual is allowed to speak, then perhaps he or she begins to

formulate a more confident and outspoken identity, where as if he or she is silenced, then perhaps he or she begins to develop a quiet and more complacent identity. Hence, with this assumption that identities of the self and others are constructed through communicative interaction, social constructionism offers a very compelling theoretical lens through which to view the formation of identity.

As referenced earlier, social constructionism is primarily concerned with the human interaction and conversational process by which individuals come to describe and explain subjective meaning (Gergen, 1985), including the construction of identity (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009). As stated by Berger and Luckmann (1966), “identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society” (p. 174). Hence, identity emerges from the conversational episodes and tensions that may occur during social interaction between individuals and other members of a society. Past family research has specifically revealed the link between social constructionism and identity. For example, in their family research on racial identity, Hill and Thomas (2000) found “racial identity as a developmental process contingent on environmental factors, individual attributes, and personal life experiences” (p. 194). In other words, the two scholars linked identity development to the conversational interplay between an individual and his or her social environment (Hill & Thomas, 2000). In addition, Suter (2008) specifically used social constructionism as theoretical perspective informing her study on the social interactions that challenge the notion of family identity among American families with adopted children from China. The study found that comments and questions from others predominantly challenged adoptive family identities. As a

result, language in the form of discursive strategies served as a viable resource used by adoptive parents to validate their family identities (Suter, 2008).

In addition, other scholars have also highlighted the strategic use of narratives during interactive moments where identity is challenged (Christinsen & Cheney, 1997). For example, in regards to a collective group identity, many organizations are well aware of the benefit of presenting colorful and dramatic narratives of the men and women who founded these organizations, in addition to the success stories about company conquests over adversity (Christinsen & Cheney, 1997). These triumphant company stories help define organizational identity for both new and current employees. In other words, the sharing of stories, especially narratives about success in difficult times, can create emotion, order, and meaning, in addition to a connection to a collective group identity and sense of belonging (Riessman, 2008). As a result, according to Keyton (2005) workplace narratives can communicatively serve as “artifacts to provide information about an organization’s values, norms, and beliefs” (p. 88). Stories represent social and cultural manifestations from which meanings emerge (Martin, 2002). As a result, the telling and listening to narratives is a popular way for individuals to make sense of his or her organizational experiences (Keyton, 2005; Boje, 1991; Brown, 1990). Through social interaction, individuals will use stories to remember, argue, persuade, engage, entertain, or potentially mislead an audience (Riessman, 2008). Hence, groups and individuals develop identity through storytelling, in which the narratives provide a discursive means to tell one another about who they are, or who they are not (Riessman, 2008). Hence, the sharing of stories can help individuals gain a better or specific

understanding of his or her identity, and in some cases perhaps even influence what that identity should entail.

In his scholarly quest to theoretically frame the importance of narratives as a communicative tool of persuasion, Fisher (1985) stated, “A significant feature of compelling stories is that they provide a rationale for decision and action. As such, they not only constrain behavior, they may also determine it” (p. 364). In other words, narratives can be used by individuals as ways to socially construct desired meanings and behaviors. Stories reveal symbolic acts shaped by storytellers and actors focused on emerging goals (Fisher, 1985). For example, stories can “create a general principle about how employees should behave, and in turn, can control employee behavior” (Keyton, 2005, p. 91). In particular, stories can be used as administrative tools to reflect control and power and ultimately construct individual and organizational identity (Coopman & Meidlinger, 2000; Mumby, 1987). In addition, narratives can reify organizational culture; if multiple members of an organization share the same narrative, then the story can elicit legitimacy and be seen as reiterating organizational norms (Keyton, 2005; Meyer, 1995). As Kenyon and Randall (1997) stated, we “become the stories that we tell ourselves” (p. 29). In other words, multiple renditions of the same story have the potential to socially construct shared understanding and identity, which nicely summarizes how both social constructionism and the study of personal narratives offer a compelling theoretical lens for which to analyze the formation of parent identity in higher education.

For this study, sense-making can emerge from the descriptive stories being shared among student and parents that are describing parental interactions in higher education.

Storytelling can provide a rationale for students and parents to explain the reasoning for parental involvement in the college affairs of their emerging adult children. Additionally, these shared narratives about the lived college experiences of millennial students and parents can emphasize the unique aspects of parental interactions. The exchange of these stories provide a descriptive means for students to tell others what makes parents unique during their interactions in higher education. Students can tell a story about individual moments in college where parents become more involved. Students can highlight negative and positive outcomes of parental interaction. For parents, these personal narratives give parents the opportunity to tell others about who they are, and who they are not (Riessman, 2008). Parents can explain in narrative detail why they took the action they did. Hence, the sharing of these stories through conversation about their unique lived experiences that are occurring both on and off college campuses and between parents, students, university personnel, friends, and coworkers are generating moments of narrative exchange where students and parents are socially constructing parent identity. As a result, through a theoretical application of social constructionism and the study of narratives, the following research question is advanced to examine the construction of parental identity in higher education.

RQ1: How are millennial students and parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education?

Consumerization of Higher Education. Over the last forty years, an interpretive shift of how administrators, faculty, students, and parents view higher education has occurred from seeing universities as social institutions promoting academic enlightenment and learning to viewing a university as more of a commercialized

institution focused on a consumer driven marketing approach to generate and promote a favorable school image (Anctil, 2008; McMillan & Cheney, 1996). Universities and colleges are moving beyond the historical and classical approach where education focused on preparing a student for citizenship, to a modern viewpoint aimed at student training for future employment (McMillan & Cheney, 1996). As Jacoby (1991) stated, “Administrators, faculty, and students have become market enthusiasts; university presidents look like bankers, professors like loan officers; course offerings resemble managerial training programs” (p. 286-287). Higher educational institutions are promoting and taking a business-like approach to offering products and services to a student consumer base. In particular, the perspective and action of many contemporary college presidents and university chancellors are mirroring those of corporate CEO’s whose focus is on the effective development and management of a customer focused organization (Anctil, 2008; McMillan & Cheney, 1996).

Historically, a variety of factors over the past four decades have led to the consumerization of higher education. During the cold war and race for space in the 1950’s and 1960’s, a large influx of congressional and federal funding was awarded to numerous universities and colleges to advance technological research and scientific discoveries aimed at benefiting governmental initiatives (Bok, 2003). In particular, the cold war brought in millions of federal dollars to research institutions, such as MIT, Cal Berkley, and Stanford for science and engineering research (Miscamble, 2006). In addition, the GI Bill provided substantial revenue to colleges and universities after World War II (Miscamble, 2006). However, during the 1970’s federal funding significantly decreased due to a national energy crisis and an expensive U.S. military conflict in

Vietnam; furthermore, during the 1980's and 1990's state budgets were also beginning to be restructured with an emphasis on healthcare initiatives and welfare programs, thus reducing available state funding for higher education (Bok, 2003; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). As a result of this 30-year decline in federal and state funding, universities and colleges began to rework their view of higher education. In particular, higher educational institutions began to reinvest in more traditionally economic ways to generate an increase in revenues, such as more sophisticated fund raising methods seeking out continued support through financial gifts from wealthy alumni who may want to reinvest in a university that helped train and facilitate their professional and financial success (Miscamble, 2006). In addition, universities found another way to generate revenue in 1980 when Congress passed the Bayh-Dole Act that made it possible for universities to own and license patents emerging from public funded research, which in turn generated for universities new research related revenue (Bok, 2003). Thus, the ownership and licensure of patents created the opportunity for universities to make profits off scholarly research. As a result, universities began to take on a-for-profit business like persona, regardless of their not-for-profit status. In other words, as Posner (2002) stated, in spite of the formal classification, "What 'not-for-profit' means in the university world is simply that a university's surplus of revenue over expenses does not go to shareholders but is instead added to endowment or invested in new projects" (p. 21). Hence, the profits generated from the patent producing research was and can be reinvested in the university to ultimately help attract more students.

Furthermore, the "student as a consumer" metaphor emerged in the 1980's having evolved from the economic concept of "the market," as a business location where

individuals can buy or sell goods and services (McMillan & Cheney, 1996). In lieu of decreased governmental funding, and a new research for profit revenue focus, universities also began and continue to view the student as a consumer. Furthermore, from a consumer driven market based approach, commercialized universities have also realized they are in competition with the myriad of other institutions of higher education seeking enrollment from the same pool of student consumers. In particular, beginning in the 1980's and 1990's through today's competitive online academic landscape, increased competition from for-profit institutions such as DeVry University and the University of Phoenix, which is the largest online higher education provider enrolling nearly 130,000 students, have aided in the consumerization of the traditional not-for-profit universities, forcing them to become more resourceful and competitive (Anctil, 2008). These for-profit institutions are attracting more and more student consumers because of their specialized training focused on advanced degrees and certifications which can be obtained through flexible course options that adapt to a student's complex personal, family, and employer schedules, thus coursework can be completed online, in the evenings, or on the weekends. Furthermore, for many students and employers, they are not concerned so much with the pedigree of the institution as with the degree itself (Anctil, 2008).

As a result, institutions across higher education, both for-profit and not-for-profit, are in competition with one another and focused on a market driven approach in the recruitment and education of student consumers, in addition to parental customers, who have modern tendencies to help finance tuition costs in college while also hovering over their son or daughter's higher educational experiences. A study sponsored by College

Parents of America found that nearly 45% of the 510 parents surveyed in their study reported contributing more than 75% of the financial support for their student's education (College Parents of America, 2016). Thus, parents have become a noticeable and influential customer present on many modern day university settings. As a result, similar to the private university selected for this study, more colleges are beginning to employ parent coordinators, university employees who are uniquely dedicated to the parental consumer and responsible for producing parent newsletters, organizing parent weekends, and staffing hotlines designed to help answer the growing number of parent questions ranging from financial and academic advising to homesickness (Lum, 2006). Furthermore, these parent coordinators are commonly associated with university parent programs focused on a common theme to provide assistance to families during the initial transition to college, in addition to offering on-campus parental resources and organizing special events to provide opportunities for parents to become involved and experience student life on campus (Kiyama, Harper, Ramos, Aguayo, Page, & Riester, 2015).

Collectively, personnel across institutions of higher education have begun to acknowledge, experience, and react to the presence of parental consumers hovering over their campuses. Furthermore, HPs have been classified as well-educated and dual-income parents who have the time and monetary resources that allow them to continue to hover over their college aged children (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006). As a result, from this perception that parents are paying customers who have the time and money to hover over higher education, combined with this study's interest in examining the student and parent narratives describing parental interactions at a private university with higher tuition costs, it becomes relevant to consider whether or not parents are specifically viewing higher

education as a product and service and thus describing themselves as paying customers. Furthermore, previous literature has also indicated that in addition to labeling parents as paying customers and helicopter parents, other phrases such as drill sergeants, consultants, hovercrafts, hummingbirds, stealth fighters, and black hawks have been used to describe parental interactions (LeMoyné & Buchanan, 2011; Fay, 1994). Clearly multiple terms are being referenced, the question remains as to what type of phrasing are parents specifically using to describe their interactions. As a result, the following research question is advanced to examine the terminology parents are using to describe their participation in higher education.

RQ2: Are parents describing themselves as helicopter parents, or are they using different terminology?

Negative Outcomes of Parent Interactions in Higher Education. Parents themselves can become victims of their own incessant hovering over higher education. Specifically, over-involved parents, who measure their self-worth on the accomplishments of their children, have reported more sadness and crying, feeling bad about themselves, in addition to experiencing less enjoyment and life satisfaction (Eaton & Pomerantz, 2005). Furthermore, even if their son or daughter does well in college, these extreme parents are showing no improvement in their mental health (Eaton & Pomerantz, 2005). Hence, too much parental involvement can induce serious health consequences for some overly involved parents. Student health can also be affected by hovering parents. Specifically, adult children attending college who experience too much closeness and involvement with their mothers and fathers can experience increased levels of personal depression, decreased levels of life satisfaction, and lower levels of

psychological well-being as they transition into their college years (Schiffrin et al., 2014; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Renk, Klein, & Rojas-Vilches, 2005). Over involved parenting has also been significantly associated with millennial students' ineffective coping skills and dependency on others (Odenweller et al., 2014). Furthermore, other research has also indicated parental control and overparenting were significantly related to adult child entitlement (Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Segrin et al., 2012). In addition, college students who perceive themselves coming from a very rigid and controlling family environment harbor greater amounts of unresolved resentment and conflict toward their parents, which in turn can have a negative impact on the college student's social adaptation to the demands of college (Orrego & Rodriguez, 2001). In other words, overbearing parents can have a negative impact on a college student's ability to happily and successfully navigate relational experiences on college campuses.

Topic avoidance can also be a negative consequence of the relational challenges facing parent–adult child relationships. Studies have found that relational satisfaction between parents and college students fluctuates as students exert autonomy and seek to avoid certain topics (Caughlin & Afifi, 2004). In particular, students' finances are a common topic that students are less open about with their parents (Edwards, Allen, & Hayhoe, 2007), which could lead to parent-student conflict during certain interactions that involve the discussion of money. The impact of parental finances on student transition to college has also been topic investigated by scholars. In some cases, parental involvement may be influenced by socio-economic status. Middle class parents have been found more likely to take on active HP roles as advisors and advocates in their child's transition to college, while working class parents with less financial means were

likely to play much more passive parental roles in their child's transition to college by leaving the responsibility for post-secondary academic endeavors in the hands of educators and their children, whom the working class parents viewed as autonomous adults (Lareau, 2006). Now, granted, student autonomy could be seen as positive consequence of working class parents limiting their involvement, however, the initial transition into college can also be very intimidating for new students, and a lack of parental involvement may enhance first-year student anxiety. Additional research has found that emerging adults in college, who received frequent and intense support on a weekly basis from their parents, viewed it as too much support, while at the same time the grown children who received intense support reported better life satisfaction than the grown children who did not receive intense support (Fingerman et al., 2012). These findings indicate that some students may benefit and appreciate parental support in college, while at the same others may want to minimize parental involvement and strive for student independence from parents. As a result, the following research question is advanced to examine if millennial college students are encouraging or limiting parental participation in higher education.

RQ3: Are millennial students encouraging parental participation or striving for autonomy?

Positive Outcomes of Parental Interactions in Higher Education. According to the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, HPs may actually be helping their sons and daughters thrive on college campuses. Specifically, the study found students, whose hovering parents purposively intervened on their son or daughter's behalf, had higher levels of active engagement and greater involvement in deep learning activities,

such as post-class conversations with professors and independent research initiatives (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007). Additional research has also indicated the importance of social support and continuous optimism that may benefit emerging adults who are facing difficult life transitions (Murphy et al., 2010). Furthermore, recent literature has also highlighted how parent involvement and family support in higher education has been positively linked to successful college choice, transition to college, and student development (Kiyama et al., 2015).

In regards to personal health, college students who receive social support from their parents have an easier time accepting illnesses and thus are more likely to seek out health care and feel less stressed later in the semester (Miczo, Miczo, & Johnson, 2006). From a distance, doctor mom or dad can still offer crucial support on how to physically and emotionally overcome a cold. Furthermore, studies also suggest that at least 10% of first-year college students enter their higher education careers while taking medication to help negotiate depression, anxiety, or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders (Williams, 2005). Furthermore, similar to earlier childhood experiences, parents may continue to act as an advocate on their son's or daughter's behalf and try to ensure their son or daughter is continuing to get the appropriate medicine and care they need for their disorder (Williams, 2005).

Mediated communication may also be a key reason why some parents and college students are maintaining positive and strong relationships. Specifically, mediated communication is any form of communication that is not face-to-face, such as the growing accessibility of mobile phones with text messaging and access to the growing online services connecting people to email, video conferencing, and social networking

services. A study of 510 parents sponsored by College Parents of America found that one out of three parents is communicating with their child at least once a day; and that 40% of the parents reported that their college student lives more than four hours away (College Parents of America, 2016). These particular findings suggest that parents may be using mediated communication more often due to geographical separation from their college student. In addition, as indicated in a study of nearly 53,000 households sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the United States is becoming a nation online with 75% of the population in 2015, ages 3 and older, using the Internet from any location (Morris, 2015). As a result, the growing popularity and accessibility of technology make it a practical and mobile tool to help parent and college students overcome geographic separation and can be used as a valuable tool to help individuals maintain family relationships (Rabby & Walther, 2003).

Some scholars also suggest that mobile phones provide a private and immediate channel between parents and children (Srivastava, 2005). Specifically, college students have described mobile phones as “a must” for them in order to maintain family responsibilities and roles, share life experiences, and receive emotional support from their parents (Chen & Katz, 2009). Cell phones have also even been described as electronic umbilical cords, in other words a necessary life line between college students and their parents (Chen & Katz, 2009). Past research sponsored by the National Survey of Student Engagement explicitly surveyed a subgroup of 9000 students about their personal support systems at 24 institutions of higher education; 86% of first-year students participating in the study indicated frequent electronic communication with their mother, while 71% reported frequent electronic contact with their father (National Survey of Student

Engagement, 2007). Additional research has also indicated that mothers are maintaining on-going family connections with their emerging adult children (Kins, Soenens, & Beyers, 2011) and are also using mediated communication more than fathers when communicating with their children in college (Lee, Meszaros, & Colvin, 2009). Furthermore, among college students, cell phone use has been found to be positively linked to relational closeness with mothers (Miller-Ott et al., 2014). Other research has also found cell phone contact between college students and parents to be related to both helicopter parenting and relational closeness (Kelly et al., 2017). As a result, the following research question is advanced to examine the use of mediated communication, relational closeness, and parental participation in higher education.

RQ4: How does relational closeness and frequency of use of mediated communication relate to the frequency of parental intervention in their child's college experiences?

Overall, by answering this fourth research question, in addition to three previously highlighted research questions, the study put forth in this dissertation seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship among millennial students and parents in higher education. Specifically, through a theoretical application of social constructionism and the study of narratives, this dissertation uses both a quantitative and qualitative method, which will be presented in the following third chapter, to gather insightful data from millennial students and parents for a clearer understanding of parent identity and interactions within a university setting. Ultimately, as we study and learn more about the HP phenomenon and parental interactions in higher education, the greater

the opportunity for college students, parents, and university personnel to successfully and effectively navigate the modern millennial college experience.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In order to successfully answer the four research questions put forth in this dissertation, a mixed methodology that blends both a quantitative and qualitative research approach was chosen for implementation. Overall, by using a mixed methodology to examine the designated research questions, this study hopes to reaffirm Benoit and Holbert's (2008) adamant belief that "a combination of qualitative-quantitative insights can lead to a richer understanding of a given phenomenon because each method provides unique insights that cannot be obtained by the other" (p. 622). The following discussion will now provide a clear description of the specific participants, procedures, and data analysis.

Participants

The target populations for this dissertation were the millennial students and parents interacting at a midsize four-year western private university.

Student Participants. The millennial student population was a sample of 163 undergraduate college students recruited from various level communication courses to complete an in-class questionnaire. Among the student participants, 116 (71.2%) were female and 47 (28.8%) were male. The average student age was 20.68 years ($SD = 1.86$, range: 18 to 34 years). In regards to year in college, 35 (21.5%) were first year students, 42 (25.8%) were sophomores, 44 (27.0%) were juniors, and 41 (25.2%) were seniors. Furthermore, one graduate student (0.6%), who was 25 years old and taking a senior level

undergraduate communication course, also participated in the study. With regard to the student's residence during the school year, the largest proportion of students indicated they lived independently from parents in off-campus housing (50.9%, $n = 83$), with smaller proportions of students specifying they lived in on-campus housing (41.7%, $n = 68$) or lived at home with parents (2.5%, $n = 4$). In regards to ethnicity, a majority of the students identified themselves as Caucasian (78.5%, $n = 128$), with smaller proportions of participants describing themselves as Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin (5.5% $n = 9$), African American (3.7% $n = 6$), Asian/Pacific Islander (1.2% $n = 2$), coming from another racial/ethnic background (6.1% $n = 10$), or choosing not to disclose a racial/ethnic background (4.9%, $n = 8$).

In terms of the student's family relationship, the average age of the student's mother/parent1 was 52.09 ($SD = 5.28$, range: 39 to 72 years). The average age of the student's father/parent2 was 54.59 ($SD = 6.14$, range: 39 to 75 years). The average number of children in the student's family was 2.69 ($SD = 2.69$, range: 1 to 9). The average birth order for student participants was 1.92 ($SD = 0.95$, range: 1 to 5). In regards to family income, the largest proportion of student participants indicated a yearly family income above \$100,000 (46.6%, $n = 76$), with smaller proportions of student participants indicating a yearly family income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 (25.7%, $n = 42$), a yearly family income less than \$49,999 (13.4%, $n = 22$), or choosing not to disclose family income (14.1%, $n = 23$).

Parent Participants. The parent population was a sample of 448 parents of undergraduate students recruited to complete an online survey via an invitational email generated from a database of approximately 5200 parental email addresses compiled and

provided by the university's parent coordinator. Among the parent participants, 317 (70.8%) were female and 129 (28.8%) were male, and two participants chose not to disclose gender. The average parent age was 53.76 years ($SD = 4.91$, range: 35 to 72 years). In regards to the year in college for the participant's child, 166 (37.1%) were parents of first year students, 112 (25.0%) were parents of sophomores, 109 (24.3%) were parents of juniors, and 58 (12.9%) were parents of seniors. Furthermore, two parents indicated their children were graduate students (0.4%) with an average graduate student age of 22 years. With regard to the student's residence during the school year, the largest proportion of parents indicated their child lived in on-campus housing (56.0%, $n = 251$), with smaller proportions of parents specifying their child lived independently in off-campus housing (27.7%, $n = 124$) or lived at home with the parents (3.6%, $n = 16$). In addition, a small portion of parents specified other living arrangements involving a sorority/fraternity (2.7%, $n = 12$). In regards to ethnicity, a majority of the parents identified themselves as Caucasian (82.6%, $n = 370$), with smaller proportions of participants describing themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander (2.0%, $n = 9$), African American (1.6%, $n = 7$), Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin (1.1% $n = 5$), American Indian (0.2%, $n = 1$), coming from another racial/ethnic background (2.5%, $n = 11$), or choosing not to disclose a racial/ethnic background (10.0%, $n = 45$).

In terms of the family relationship, the average age of the child was 20.13 ($SD = 1.17$, range: 18 to 25 years). The average number of children in the family was 2.41 ($SD = 1.06$, range: 1 to 9). The average birth order for student participants was 1.92 ($SD = 0.95$, range: 1 to 8). In regards to family income, the largest proportion of parents indicated a yearly family income above \$100,000 (65.1%, $n = 292$), with smaller

proportions of participants indicating a yearly family income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 (14.6%, $n = 65$), a yearly family income less than \$49,999 (3.3%, $n = 15$), or choosing not to disclose family income (17.0%, $n = 76$).

Procedures

Upon receiving IRB approval from the chosen institution, the researcher implemented the following two procedures to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the target populations of millennial students and parents.

Student Procedures. The researcher recruited students from upper and lower level communication courses to complete an in-class questionnaire (See Appendix A). Informed consent was obtained from all students prior to participation (See Appendix B). Completion of the questionnaire was at the beginning of class and took between 15 and 20 minutes. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain information via quantitative, qualitative, and demographic measures.

Quantitative Measures. Students answered a series of questions to address RQ4 and provide a deeper understanding of relational closeness, frequency of use of mediated communication, and frequency of parental intervention in the student's college experiences.

Relational Closeness. Respondent perception of relational closeness with their parent was assessed with Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch's (1991) Relational Closeness Scale. Respondents were asked to answer 20 items, 10 items regarding the relationship with their mother/parent1, followed by the same 10 items focused on the relationship with their father/parent2 (e.g., "How openly do you talk with your mother?" and "How close do you feel to your mother?"), while using a Likert-type response scale

ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Very Much*) with higher scores representing higher levels of relational closeness to their parent. Scale scores were calculated by taking the sum of scores on the individual items, resulting in a possible range of 10 to 50. The straightforward simplicity of these questions prompts strong face validity that these 20 items are both applicable and representative of measuring closeness among parent-millennial child relationships. Furthermore, the two identical scales used to examine relational closeness were proven reliable for both the mother/parent1 scale ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 43.63$, $SD = 6.86$) and the father/parent2 scale ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 40.50$, $SD = 8.19$). Similar scales have also been proven reliable in past research with Cronbach's α scores ranging from .78 (McManus & Donovan, 2012) to .94 (Buchanan, et al., 1991).

Mediated and Face-to-Face Communication. Mediated and face-to-face communication were measured by 14 items created for this study. Respondents were asked to report how many times per week they communicate with their mother/parent1 via text messaging ($M = 11.78$, $SD = 18.92$), voice-to-voice by phone ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 9.01$), social networking service ($M = 1.46$, $SD = 7.95$), video teleconference ($M = 0.49$, $SD = 1.07$), email ($M = 1.43$, $SD = 3.30$), face-to-face ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 4.72$) in the same physical location, and regular mail ($M = 0.27$, $SD = 0.67$) through letters, cards, or packages. Respondents were also asked to report how many times per week they communicate with their father/parent2 via text messaging ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 13.11$), voice-to-voice by phone ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 3.34$), social networking service ($M = 0.84$, $SD = 7.97$), video teleconference ($M = 0.34$, $SD = 0.80$), email ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 3.45$), face-to-face ($M = 1.03$, $SD = 3.11$) in the same physical location, and regular mail ($M = 0.13$, $SD = 0.50$) through letters, cards, or packages. These items have both strong face and

external validity as they represent the most common, efficient, and technologically advanced methods available to the millennial college students and parents, who are often maintaining busy and geographically separated lives.

Parental Intervention. Parental intervention was measured by four items created for this study. Respondents were asked, “How often does your mother/parent1 gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?” and “How often does your father/parent2 gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?” Respondents were also asked the following two questions about student-initiated parental intervention, “How often do you ask your mother/parent1 to gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?” and “How often do you ask your father/parent2 to gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?” A Likert-type response scale was used with responses ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Frequently). Scale scores were calculated by taking the sum of scores on the individual items, resulting in a possible range of 2 to 10. The straight forward simplicity of these questions prompts strong face validity that these items are both applicable and representative of measuring parental intervention in their child’s college experiences. Furthermore, the two items focused on parental intervention of the mother/parent1 were summed together to form a “parental intervention” composite score ($M = 5.31, SD = 2.57$). This composite variable was also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .83$). In addition, the two items focused on parental intervention of the father/parent2 were also summed together to form an additional “parental intervention” composite score ($M = 4.53, SD = 2.29$). This composite variable was also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .86$).

Qualitative Measures. Students answered a series of open ended qualitative questions specifically designed for this study (e.g., “How would you describe your parents’ involvement in your higher educational experiences?”, “Tell me a story about a personal experience when your mother or father gathered information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you were having at college.”, “Tell me a story that you heard about someone else’s parents gathering information on their child’s behalf to try and solve a problem their child was having at college.”) For qualitative purposes, these open-ended inquiries were used to address RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 and probe for student thoughts, experiences, and descriptions about parental involvement and interventions in the student’s college experiences.

Demographic Measures. Students answered a series of 10 pertinent demographic questions presented at both the beginning and end of the survey. The demographic questions were designed to help the participant define their unique millennial student-parent relationship by responding to pertinent questions regarding sex, age, family size, birth order, year in college, ethnic background, family income, and whether the student lives on or off campus.

Parent Procedures. An online data collection format was implemented to provide an efficient and convenient procedure to gather data from busy and geographically distant parents. Approximately, 5200 undergraduate parent email addresses, which were compiled and provided by the chosen university’s parent coordinator, were contacted via an email message and asked to complete an online questionnaire (See Appendix C) using the online website, SurveyMonkey. In addition, for enhanced privacy and security purposes the parents were invited to participate via an

email sent directly from the university's parent coordinator. The researcher for this dissertation never had direct access to the parental database of emails. Furthermore, at the request of the university's parent coordinator for reasons of parental privacy and not wanting to bombard parents with excessive research related emails, an invitational email was sent to the entire database asking for participation (See Appendix D). A link to the online questionnaire was embedded into the invitational email. Informed consent was then obtained from all parent participants at the beginning of the online survey (See Appendix E) and who then proceeded forward to complete the online questionnaire. The online survey was accessible for parents to complete over a four-week period and was designed to ascertain information via quantitative, qualitative, and demographic measures.

Quantitative Measures. Parents answered a series of questions to address RQ4 and provide a deeper understanding of relational closeness, frequency of use of mediated communication, and frequency of parental intervention in the student's college experiences.

Relational Closeness. Respondent perception of closeness with their son or daughter was assessed with Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch's (1991) Relational Closeness Scale. Respondents were asked to answer 10 items regarding the relationship with their millennial child (e.g., "How openly do you talk with your son or daughter?" and "How close do you feel to your son or daughter?"), while using a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Very Much*) with higher scores representing higher levels of relational closeness to their child. Scale scores were calculated by taking the sum of scores on the individual items, resulting in a possible

range of 10 to 50. The straight forward simplicity of these questions prompts strong face validity that these 10 items are both applicable and representative of measuring closeness among parent-millennial child relationships. Furthermore, the scale was proven reliable ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 41.43$, $SD = 5.06$). Similar scales have also been proven reliable in past research with Cronbach's α scores ranging from .78 (McManus & Donovan, 2012) to .94 (Buchanan, et al., 1991).

Mediated and Face-to-Face Communication. Mediated and face-to-face communication was measured by 7 items created for this study. Respondents were asked to report how many times per week they communicate with their son or daughter via text messaging ($M = 7.63$, $SD = 10.29$), voice-to-voice by phone ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 7.30$), social networking service ($M = 0.91$, $SD = 3.07$), video teleconference ($M = 0.39$, $SD = 1.31$), email ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 3.25$), face-to-face ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 7.2$) in the same physical location, and regular mail ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 1.12$) through letters, cards, or packages. These items have both strong face and external validity as they represent the most common, efficient, and technologically advanced methods available to millennial students and parents, who are often maintaining busy and geographically separated lives.

Parental Intervention. Parental intervention was measured by two items created for this study. Respondents were asked, "How often do you gather information on your son or daughter's behalf to try and solve problems he or she is having at college?" Respondents were also asked the following question about student initiated parental intervention, "How often does your son or daughter ask you to gather information on his or her behalf to try and solve a problem he or she is having at college?" A Likert-type response scale was used with responses ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Frequently).

Scale scores were calculated by taking the sum of scores on the individual items, resulting in a possible range of 2 to 10. The straight forward simplicity of these questions prompts strong face validity that these items are both applicable and representative of measuring parental intervention in their adult child's college education. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the two items focused on parental intervention were summed together to form a "parental intervention" composite score ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 3.92$). This composite variable was also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .85$).

Qualitative Measures. Parents answered a series of open ended qualitative questions specifically designed for this study (e.g., "How would you describe your role in your son or daughter's higher educational experiences?", "Tell me a story about a personal experience you had gathering information on your son or daughter's behalf to try and solve a problem he or she was having at college.", "Tell me a story that you heard about another parent gathering information on his or her child's behalf to try and solve a problem his or her child was having at college.") For qualitative purposes, these open-ended inquiries were used to address RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 and probe for student thoughts, experiences, and descriptions about parental involvement and interventions in the student's college experiences.

Demographic Measures. Parents answered a series of 9 pertinent demographic questions presented at both the beginning and end of the survey. The demographic questions were designed to help the participant define their unique millennial student-parent relationship by responding to pertinent questions regarding sex, age, family size, birth order, year in college, ethnic background, family income, and whether the student lives on or off campus.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis. For both the student and parent datasets, in addition to standard descriptive statistics that analyzed the frequencies, means, standard deviation, and range of participant's responses, the primary analytical statistical test that was used for analysis of the quantitative data collected for this study was the use of Pearson's product-moment correlation statistical analysis to analyze the relationships between the dependent continuous variable of parental intervention and the independent continuous variables of relational closeness and frequency of use of mediated communication as put forth in RQ4. Pearson's product-moment correlation results are presented in the fourth chapter and indicate whether parental intervention is positively or negatively related to relational closeness and frequency of use of mediated communication and whether those relationships are significant. Additionally, paired sample *t*-tests were used on the student dataset to explore the difference between the frequency of parental intervention of the student's mother/parent1 as compared to the frequency of parental intervention of the student's father/parent2. Also, independent sample *t*-tests were used on the parent dataset to explore the difference between the frequency of parental intervention of the mother participants as compared to the frequency of parental intervention of the father participants. These *t*-test results are presented in the fourth chapter and indicate whether parental intervention is significantly different between mothers and fathers.

Qualitative Data Analysis. This dissertation examined three research questions that were related to qualitative responses from millennial students and parents:

RQ1: How are millennial students and parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education?

RQ2: Are parents describing themselves as HPs, or are they using different terminology?

RQ3: Are millennial students encouraging parental participation or striving for autonomy?

To answer these questions, the researcher used Owen's (1984) thematic analysis, which requires the analyst to review the open-ended student responses multiple times, and then code the data into emerging categories based upon recurrence (same thread of meaning) and repetition (same word or phrase). Owen's (1984) thematic analysis is also based upon the forcefulness (emphasis and paralanguage) of transcribed oral discourse. This study's methodology did not include any transcribed interviews or focus groups, and therefore the researcher did not incorporate forcefulness as part of the thematic analysis. Owen's first thematic standard of recurrence was achieved when excerpts from the data had the same thread of meaning. For example, parents' references to phrasing such as "the bank", "cash machine", and "funding source" revealed evidence for the emergent theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter. The second standard of repetition was attained when excerpts repeated the same phrase or word. For example, the term "cheerleader" was referenced numerous times by parents which revealed evidence for the emergent theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

For assistance in identifying the emerging themes, the researcher used NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software package (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013) to help code the open-ended responses from the participant questionnaires. Study participation involved 163 students, who generated a total of 415 open-ended survey responses; in addition to 448 parents, who generated a total of 1281 open-ended survey responses. For analysis, the

student and parent data was compiled into Excel files and imported into NVIVO as separate datasets. Prior to coding, the dataset was auto-coded by case (participant) and by survey question to allow the analyst to “automate some routine code-related tasks, giving more time to concentrate on less mechanical, more interpretive work” (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 108). Auto-coding by case generated a node, a folder or bin of information, for each participant that contained only his or her responses. Auto-coding by question generated a unique node for each survey question. As a result, auto-coding can be viewed as “more of an administrative process than an interpretive process” (Jackson, 2012, p. 29), which for this study allows the analyst to review the data more efficiently by participant and/or survey question.

Upon completion of the auto-coding process on the participant data, the interpretive process of open-coding in NVIVO was utilized by the analyst to identify “the meaning of a specific portion of text” (Jackson, 2012, p. 29) and then copy the content, which NVIVO labels as a reference, into a pertinent node (Jackson, 2012). During the open-coding process in NVIVO, the researcher used Owen’s (1984) thematic analysis to search for recurrence and repetition among the open-ended responses and ultimately group similar threads of meaning and repetitive text into pertinent nodes and emerging themes. The following sections will now highlight the specific coding processes for both the student and parent participants.

Coding Process for Millennial Students. A word frequency query was performed to help identify repetitive wording occurring within the 415 open-ended survey responses. The word frequency query results are highlighted in Table 1, and

Table 1

Word Frequency Query Results of the 30 Most Commonly Used Words in Student Responses

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
Parents	254	2.61	parent, parental, parents, parents'
Help	250	2.57	help, helped, helpful, helping, helps
Involvement	178	1.83	involve, involved, involvement
Mom	162	1.66	Mom
Supportive	148	1.52	support, supported, supporting, supportive
Financial	128	1.31	financial, financially
Called	124	1.27	call, called, calling, calls
School	118	1.21	school, schooling, schools
Friend	108	1.11	friend, friends
Ask	100	1.03	ask, asked, asking, asks
Need	100	1.03	need, needed, needing, needs
Knows	98	1.01	know, knows
College	96	0.99	college
Get	96	0.99	get, gets, getting
Mother	96	0.99	mother
Phone	96	0.99	phone
Aid	80	0.82	Aid
Dad	78	0.80	Dad
Problems	76	0.78	problem, problems
Classes	72	0.74	class, classes
Talk	72	0.74	talk, talked, talking
Trying	70	0.72	tried, try, trying
Always	68	0.70	always
Informed	66	0.68	inform, information, informed
Time	66	0.68	time, times
Educational	64	0.66	educated, educating, education, educational
Father	64	0.66	father
Year	64	0.66	year, years
Pay	56	0.57	pay, paying
Student	56	0.57	student, students

five repetitive word stems related to the particular actions of helping, involving, and supporting. Specifically, the word stems related to “help” were identified 250 times, the word stems for “involvement” were referenced 178 times, and the word stems for “supportive” were detected 148 times. The high frequency of these top three repeated words were used by the researcher as a starting point to generate an initial overview of the dataset by examining the surrounding phrases and potential threads of meaning connected to these repeated terms within the student dataset. Specifically, 251 (60.5%) of the open-ended responses in the student dataset referenced terminology connecting to the words “help”, “involvement”, and “supportive”. As a result, these student responses were closely reviewed for emerging trends linked to parental identity and interactions in higher education as pertinent to RQ1 and RQ3. Applicable nodes were generated in NVIVO to cluster similar and impactful content together. Additional rounds of coding were then completed on the entire dataset of 415 open-ended responses, from which similar or new recurring threads of meaning were clustered into previous or newly identified nodes. Ultimately, a total of 385 references were identified and coded into 21 different nodes of recurring threads of meaning. These 21 nodes were then reviewed multiple times, which fueled a deeper review of the dataset and helped identify recurring and repetitive thematic meaning, from which five unique themes emerged. These themes will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Coding Process for Parents. A word frequency query was performed to help identify repetitive wording occurring within the open-ended survey responses. The word frequency query results are highlighted in Table 2, and represent a word query for the top

Table 2

Word Frequency Query Results of the 30 Most Commonly Used Words in Parent Responses

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
Sons	234	1.47	son, sons, sons'
Helping	226	1.42	help, helped, helpful, helpfully, helping, helps
Support	192	1.20	support, supported, supporter, supporting, supportive
Daughter	184	1.15	daughter, daughters
Parents	168	1.05	parent, parental, parenting, parents, parents'
Needs	167	1.05	need, needed, needing, needs
Get	158	0.99	get, gets, getting
Phone	155	0.97	phone, phoned
School	153	0.96	school, schools
Asked	150	0.94	ask, asked, asking, asks
College	147	0.92	college, colleges
Problems	145	0.91	problem, problems
Classes	137	0.86	class, classes
Calls	131	0.82	call, called, calling, calls
Involving	125	0.78	involve, involved, involvement, involving
Student	118	0.74	student, students, students'
Friend	103	0.65	friend, friendly, friends
Talk	100	0.63	talk, talked, talking, talks
Financial	99	0.62	financial, financially
Trying	99	0.62	tried, tries, try, trying
Discussed	96	0.60	discuss, discussed, discusses, discussing, discussion
Times	91	0.57	time, timely, times
Making	91	0.57	make, makes, making
Year	89	0.56	year, years
Told	88	0.55	told
Taking	86	0.54	take, takes, taking
One	85	0.53	one, ones
Email	84	0.53	email, emailed, emailing, emails
Working	78	0.49	work, worked, working, works
Child	78	0.49	child

30 most commonly used words in parent responses, which include similar word stems. The word frequency query presented a basic description of the repeated terminology within the parent data to help foster a deeper examination of the data. For example, not surprisingly for a study focused on defining parental identity and interaction in higher education, two of the top four most popular words repeated across the parent responses referenced the student's relationship to the parent as a son or daughter. The terms *son*, *sons*, and *sons'* were repeated 234 times, and the terms *daughter* and *daughters* were repeated 184 times.

Figure 2 represents a word cloud of the top 50 most commonly used words in the parent open-ended responses. The size of each word characterizes how many times it was repeated in the dataset. The larger word sizes represent the terms that were referenced more frequently, which provide a visual perspective on some of the more prominent and repeated words mentioned by the parent participants.



Figure 2. Top 50 Words Used by Parents in Survey Responses.

Upon further review of the top five most frequently mentioned words highlighted in Table 2 and Figure 2, it was of particular interest to the researcher that two of the top five repetitive word stems related to the particular actions of helping and supporting. Specifically, the word stems related to “help” were identified 226 times, the word stems for “support” were detected 192 times. The high frequency of these top two repeated words were used by the researcher as a starting point to generate an initial overview of the dataset by examining the surrounding phrases and potential threads of meaning connected to these repeated terms within the student dataset. As a result, these parent responses were closely reviewed for emerging trends linked to parental identity and interactions in higher education as pertinent to RQ1 and RQ2. Applicable nodes were generated in NVIVO to cluster similar and impactful content together. Additional rounds of coding were then completed on the entire dataset of open-ended responses, from which similar or new recurring threads of meaning were clustered into previous or newly identified nodes. Ultimately, a total of 922 references were identified and coded into 24 different nodes of recurring threads of meaning. These 24 nodes were then reviewed multiple times, which fueled a deeper review of the dataset and helped identify recurring and repetitive thematic meaning, from which six unique themes emerged. These themes will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Validity. The researcher utilized the qualitative validity processes of exemplars and an audit trail. As evidence of the interpretive connection between the participant data and the emergent themes, the researcher provided exemplars from the student and parent open-ended responses. The presentation of these exemplars in the results chapter allows other researchers to review these key statements from the qualitative data to determine

the adequacy of proof that the coding procedures and emergent themes characterize the data (Mishler, 1990). Furthermore, the researcher maintained an audit trail that reinforces the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis by detailing the conscientious and responsible data collection and analysis procedures (Bowen, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The following chapter will now provide a clear description of both the qualitative and quantitative results as they relate to the four research questions examined in this dissertation.

Qualitative Results – Student Themes

The five themes that emerged from the thematic coding process were as follows: Financial Supporter, Academic Consultant, Emotional Cheerleader, Housing Advisor, and Advocate for Independence. As sought out in RQ1 and RQ3, each of these five themes paint a meaningful picture of parental identity and interactions in higher education from the students' perspective. Table 3 offers an overview of the specific themes by providing the name of each theme, a brief description, and an exemplar quote that provides a prominent example from the student responses describing parent identity and interactions.

Theme 1 – Financial Supporter

The first theme answers the student portion of RQ1: How are millennial students describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 122 references were clustered together under 4 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter. Each of the individual nodes

Table 3

Description of Qualitative Themes from Student Responses

Theme	Description	Exemplar Quote
Financial Supporter	Provides assistance with financial aid procedures, monetary advice, and bill payments.	“During the winter quarter, there was an issue with my financial aid where it looked like I wasn’t going to be able to pay for spring quarter. I called my mom asking for help/advice and she suggested I call the financial aid office and see what they could do.”
Academic Consultant	Assists with course scheduling, class assignments, grade monitoring, credit transfers, and school applications.	“I was having trouble getting into certain classes for my major and my advisor was not being helpful, so my mother gathered info by herself and contacted the professor by email, trying to get a response as to why I couldn’t get into these required classes.”
Emotional Cheerleader	Expresses interest, pride, and concern about student well-being and happiness.	“My parents are very involved in my higher educational experiences in terms of my emotions and feelings. Although they aren’t actively involved within the college, they’re always concerned with my well-being and happiness. They just want me to get through school and be happy.”
Housing Advisor	Provides support for roommate issues, housing needs, and moving procedures.	“Last year, I was having problems with a roommate and I would talk to my parents about it over the phone and face-to-face when I saw them. They always gave me good advice.”
Advocate for Independence	Acknowledges and supports the development of an independent and responsible student.	“I love that my parents let me handle my schooling. They support me but I have grown in my independence and confidence to handle myself because of the way they have left it to me.”

represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the first theme were Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation, Providing Financial Advice/Support, Paying Tuition/Bills, and Contacting Bursar, Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel. Table 4 displays the sub-theme bundling for the first theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation. A total of 40 references included the concept of *helping with financial aid procedures and documentation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed a variety ways that parents assist students with the college financial aid process, including the completion of loan paperwork and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly referenced as FAFSA. One student stated, “They support me and help me fill out FAFSA and find loans.” Another student stated, “Whenever I need help with financial aid documents and forms (ex: FAFSA, student loans, etc.) my dad helps me find all the information I need and explains things if I have questions.” An additional student specified, “My mom was involved in the financial aid process each year when I was selected for the verification process after filling out FAFSA.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and

Table 4

Sub-Theme Bundling for the Emergent Student Themes

Sub-Themes	Theme
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation (40) 2. Providing Financial Advice/Support (36) 3. Paying Tuition/Bills (29) 4. Contacting Bursar/Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel (17) 	Financial Supporter
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contacting Academic Faculty/Staff (21) 2. Expressing Interest in Classes (20) 3. Helping with Coursework (19) 4. Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation (18) 5. Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers (13) 6. Assisting with College/Job Applications (8) 7. Counseling for Cheating Allegation/Suspension (5) 	Academic Consultant
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willing to Help in Any Situation (29) 2. Showing Concern for Emotional Well-Being (26) 3. Caring and Encouraging (18) 4. Showing Pride/Support for Achievement (14) 5. Helping with Romantic Relationships (3) 	Emotional Cheerleader
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helping with Roommate Issues (10) 2. Contacting Housing Administration/Maintenance Provider (9) 3. Assisting with Residential Moving Process (8) 	Housing Advisor
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent is Advocating for Independence (23) 2. Student is Advocating for Independence (19) 	Advocate for Independence

Note. The number of references for each sub-theme is located in parentheses.

sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “I have a friend whose mom searches for scholarships for her and will fill out the generic sections of the applications.” Another student also commented, “A friend of mine told me about her mom helping her with issues with the financial aid office.”

Overall, the 40 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with financial aid procedures and documentation*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Providing Financial Advice/Support. A total of 36 references included the concept of *providing financial advice and support*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed general and specific ways in which parents advise and intervene on financial issues. One student stated, “They help with financial burdens and offer lots of advice.” Another student replied, “They only intervene in financial matters.” An additional student simply specified, “My parents support me financially.” Other students cited very specific financial matters where parents intervened. One student indicated, “I am currently looking to buy a car. Since I have never bought one before, my dad wanted to look up some info for me since we are splitting the costs.” Another student commented, “There was a fraud occurrence when someone was using cable vendor under my name. I never dealt with fraud so my mom spoke on my behalf.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My roommate told me about how she had a hold on her registration account because a part of her tuition wasn’t paid. She called her mom to figure out the problem.” Another

student stated, “Friend’s parents often ask them about finding a job/making money because it’s a main concern of theirs.” An additional student commented, “My roommate always calls her dad for help when she has car trouble.”

Overall, the 36 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *providing financial advice and support*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Paying Tuition/Bills. A total of 29 references included the concept of *paying tuition and bills*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. These student references discussed how parents paid for student bills associated with college life. Paying for tuition and education were common references. One student stated, “They have fully paid for my education.” Another student added, “My father and I talked face-to-face about tuition and payments.” An additional student simply stated, “They pay for my tuition only.” Students also mentioned other specific bill payments. One student indicated, “Gives me money for rent and extra groceries if needed.” Another student made the general comment, “They pay the bills and want to know my grades.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “It was my roommate and she disclosed that her parents paid for/ figured everything out.” Another student added,

“Other people’s parents have also helped them pay rent or give them money for food.” An additional student commented, “I know many students have help with paying bills, laundry.”

Overall, the 29 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *paying tuition and bills*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Contacting Bursar/Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel. A total of 17 references included the concept of *contacting the bursar, financial aid office, or loan personnel*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways that parents directly contacted university personnel. One student replied, “My mother reached out to bursar’s office in order to figure out how to pay for school and waive late fees.” Another student commented, “My father called the financial aid office on behalf of me to get more info on loans/scholarships.” An additional student specified, “Whenever problems arise with tuition/financial aid, my mother would always take care of it, by email or phone, talking to the department.” Another student added, “My mom was trying to sort out why I did not have financial aid for the summer by calling the registrar.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental

interactions. A student stated, “A friend of mine works in the financial aid office and often regales us with stories of parents calling on their children’s behalf – which you can’t do.” Another student stated, “My roommate has her parents solve medical/financial and graduating problems frequently for her, having them contact administration for her. I have noticed these things over the years and she would talk about the university being at fault.” One student also commented, “My cousin’s mom, my aunty, has been very on top of things, calling the administration office to deal with my cousin’s financial aid and admission.”

Overall, the 17 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *contacting the bursar, financial aid office, or loan personnel*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Theme 2 – Academic Consultant

The second theme answers the student portion of RQ1: How are millennial students describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 104 references were clustered together under 7 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the second theme were Contacting Academic

Faculty/Staff, Expressing Interest in Classes, Helping with Coursework, Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation, Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers, Assisting with College/Job Applications, and Counseling for Cheating Allegation/Suspension. Table 4 displays the sub-theme bundling for the second theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Contacting Academic Faculty/Staff. A total of 21 references included the concept of *contacting academic faculty and staff*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents directly communicated with university personnel about academic issues. One student stated, “My mom will sometimes get overly involved and call faculty at school to gather information that I would of gotten myself.” Another student stated, “I was having trouble getting into certain classes for my major and my advisor was not being helpful, so my mother gathered info by herself and contacted the professor by email, trying to get a response as to why I couldn’t get into these required classes.” An additional student commented, “My mom called a professor to find our more information about a study abroad program and learn more information.” A student also replied, “When I was given the last registration time for the 3rd time this year, my dad called the registrar’s office to figure it out and give me a better registration time.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental

interactions. A student stated, “My friend’s mom met with the head of her department to try and get a grade changed. I thought it was stupid.” Another student stated, “My friend received a bad grade and her parents personally called the teacher to demand a better grade.” An additional student indicated, “A student felt as though a teacher didn’t treat him fairly. The parent came to the school and had a conversation with the professor and filed a complaint.” A student also stated, “I have heard of professors talk about parents trying to influence grades.” Other students shared their workplace stories about parental interactions while working in their office jobs on campus. One student stated, “Working in admission I have noticed a lot of parents take care of the entire process. When it comes time for the student to do things I notice the parent gets upset.” A student also added,

I work in the study abroad office and I got a phone call from a mom trying to do everything – figure out flights/housing – for her daughter that we tell the students they need to do on their own and the mom got very frustrated that I kept saying her daughter needs to do it.

Overall, the 21 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *contacting academic faculty and staff*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Expressing Interest in Classes. A total of 20 references included the concept of *expressing interest in classes*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by

using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents want to learn more about classroom experiences. One student stated, “My mom is extremely supportive of my higher education! She is always interested to know what my classes are like, what assignments I have.” Another student replied, “They are always asking how my classes are and how I’m doing in them.” An additional student commented, “They have gotten me here, and are involved. I tell them about classroom experiences.” Another student stated, “They are kept up to date on what classes I take and my progress in my majors.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My roommates hate it when their parents give advice on things such as class, ends in everyone being mad.”

Overall, the 20 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *expressing interest in classes*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Helping with Coursework. A total of 19 references included the concept of *helping with coursework*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents assisted students on course assignments, such as editing papers and researching topics. One student stated, “Every

time I'm writing a paper, I call my mom and she explains the topic and/or information I need in a better way so I can understand. She often reads articles I send her that are involved in the paper." Another student replied, "I was not going to finish a paper on time so my mom put together some topics and websites to use for research." An additional student commented, "They also provide helpful insights and ideas for my papers and projects." Another student stated, "My mom helped me find good articles for a paper." Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, "I had a friend who sent his father every essay he had to write for college. His dad edited every single one and sent it back to his son in time for it to be turned in on time." Another student stated, "I hear stories all the time about students having their parent do very personal school work for them. For example, correcting assignments." An additional student commented, "One of my friends was not very good at researching for papers, so he would ask his mother to help him find information on his topics. She wouldn't write the paper, just compile notes and take notes for him." A student also commented, "My friend has told me, while we were just having coffee together, that her mom edits her college essays."

Overall, the 19 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with coursework* provided answers to RQ1

and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation. A total of 18 references included the concept of *monitoring grades, grade point average (GPA), and graduation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents inquired about student grades, overall GPA, and graduation progress. One student stated, “My father regularly checks my grades to make sure they are ‘acceptable.’” Another student replied, “They care about my grades and reward me for good grades.” An additional student commented, “They focus on my grades. If I have good grades, they are happy.” Another student simply stated, “They ask about my grades/GPA.” A student also added, “Keeping a close eye but not telling me what to do besides get good grades/graduate on time.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My friend was failing two classes and asked her parents for help.” Another student stated, “I am always appalled when parents are overly nosy about students’ grades and homework.”

Overall, the 18 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *monitoring grades, GPA, and graduation*.

Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers. A total of 13 references included the concept of *helping with course selection, registration, and credit transfers*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents assisted with the selection process for classes and majors, along with credit transfer procedures. One student stated, “I frequently call my parents when I need advice about whether my class load seems to be heavy.” Another student commented, “I had the last registration time and had to take a political science course. I was really struggling and talked to my mom. We came to the conclusion I should drop the class.” A student also replied, “They helped me transfer schools.” Another student simply stated, “Helping me decide a major.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “I hear stories all the time about students having their parents do very personal school work for them. For example, correcting assignments, signing them up for classes.” A student also commented, “Another student I know was having trouble scheduling classes, so their mom helped them.”

Overall, the 13 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and

narratives related to the concept of *helping with course selection, registration, and credit transfers*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Assisting with College/Job Applications. A total of 8 references included the concept of *assisting with college and job applications*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents helped with the application procedures for going to college or finding a job. One student stated, “For college admissions, I went on visits, took the tours, and signed the form for my decision. Mother did the rest.” Another student replied, “I needed help applying into business school and how to write a resume/cover letter. I talked and emailed my dad until I got it perfect and got into the business school.” An additional student commented,

Study abroad applications – this winter quarter when deciding where to go I consulted my parents about the decision over phone, text, and email several times and they did their own research and asked around to gather information and we talked about pros and cons.

Another student stated, “My father, a Physician’s Assistant, gathered information on what classes I would have to take to get into P.A. school because I didn’t know where to look.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My friend’s mother completed vet school applications for him because she thought he was unprepared and lazy. However, he just wasn’t sure what he wanted to do.” Another student commented,

“I have heard friends talk about how their parents researched everything for them and where to go, what the experience is like.”

Overall, the 8 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *assisting with college and job applications*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Counseling for Cheating Allegation/Suspension. A total of 5 references included the concept of *counseling for cheating allegation and suspension*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents provided assistance for accusations of cheating and suspension from school. One student stated, “I was once accused of cheating on an exam – I did not tell my parents at first, but when I did, they came to the student conduct meeting with me – my dad came, not my mom – to try and help me figure things out.” Another student replied, “I got suspended in the winter quarter and they did everything they could to help.” An additional student commented, “When I got suspended, we had the talk face to face.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. One student stated, “A buddy of mine was suspended and his mom actually flew out to help.”

Overall, the 5 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *counseling for cheating allegation and suspension*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Theme 3 – Emotional Cheerleader

The third theme answers the student portion of RQ1: How are millennial students describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 90 references were clustered together under 5 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the third theme were Willing to Help in Any Situation, Showing Concern for Emotional Well-Being, Caring and Encouraging, Showing Pride/Support for Achievement, and Helping with Romantic Relationships. Table 4 displays the sub-theme bundling for the third theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Willing to Help in Any Situation. A total of 29 references included the concept of *willing to help in any situation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher

education. Student references discussed ways in which parents were always available to offer help. One student stated, “They are very supportive and check-in regularly to see how everything is going and what I have been doing. I know I can always call them if I am having a problem or simply need advice.” Another student commented, “They are extremely involved and supportive. I have a great close relationship with both of them. I know if I ever needed anything they would be more than willing to help me.” An additional student indicated, “I do know that if I need anything at all, they would be here in a heartbeat.” A student also stated, “They would bend over backwards to help me in any situation.” Another student added, “They are always there for me no matter what.” A student also commented, “Both parents are interested and dedicated to helping me.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “Friends mother came to surprise her when she was struggling.”

Overall, the 29 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *willing to help in any situation*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and helped shape the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Showing Concern for Emotional Well-Being. A total of 26 references included the concept of *showing concern for emotional well-being*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and

interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents provided emotional support. One student stated,

My parents are very involved in my higher educational experiences in terms of my emotions and feelings. Although they aren't actually involved with college, they're always concerned with my well-being and happiness. They just want me to get through school and be happy.

Another student stated, "They are my emotional cheerleaders. They want to see me succeed and graduate." An additional student commented, "My parents are my mentors, my cheerleaders, and best friends. My parents only really help me if I sound distressed or I am in need of it." A student also stated, "My mom checks in with me every day and more frequently asks about my happiness and mental health." Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, "I have heard a story of someone calling their parents for support when they are overwhelmed with their work load and needing a push from her dad to tell her he knew she would make it to med school."

Overall, the 26 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *showing concern for emotional well-being*.

Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Caring and Encouraging. A total of 18 references included the concept of *caring and encouraging*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents expressed care and encouragement. One student simply stated, “They do care a lot.” Another student added, “Hands on and very caring about my life.” An additional student commented, “Very involved, care about how I am doing.” A student also stated, “They are very supportive and encouraging.” Another student indicated, “They never doubt me, they just always encourage me.” A student also added, “Encourage me to be a high achiever.”

Overall, the 18 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *caring and encouraging*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Showing Pride/Support for Achievement. A total of 14 references included the concept of *showing pride and support for achievement*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents expressed pride and support for student success and achievement. One student stated, “They reaffirm me by telling me they are proud of me and admire my hard work.” Another student indicated, “They are both happy and proud of me for pursuing a college education.” An additional student commented, “They are proud and like to work in understanding my experiences.” A student also added, “They want me to do well, so they

try to challenge me and they support me a lot.” Another student simply stated, “They care for my success.” An additional student specified, “They both have been supportive, but I would say my mother has been a large part of my success.” Another also indicated, “They are very involved and want me to succeed.”

Overall, the 14 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *showing pride and support for achievement*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Helping with Romantic Relationships. A total of 3 references included the concept of *helping with romantic relationships*. These references answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My friend was having boy problems and her mother/father got her in contact with a counselor.” Another student indicated, “My friend had a hard break up with her boyfriend. Her mom flew out right when it happened.” An additional student commented, “Friend’s mom tried to solve a relationship problem with girlfriend.”

Overall, the 3 references highlighted previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these narratives related to the concept of *helping with romantic relationships*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Theme 4 – Housing Advisor

The fourth theme answers the student portion of RQ1: How are millennial students describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 27 references were clustered together under 3 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the fourth theme were Helping with Roommate Issues, Contacting Housing Administration/Maintenance Provider, and Assisting with Residential Moving Process. Table 4 displays the sub-theme bundling for the fourth theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Helping with Roommate Issues. A total of 10 references included the concept of *helping with roommate issues*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents assisted students with roommate concerns. One student stated, “My roommate bailed on me last minute, so I didn’t have roommate or a place to live. Both my mom and dad helped me find a place to live.” Another student commented, “I was having problems with a roommate in college and my mom took it upon herself to search for alternative housing for me.” An additional student indicated, “My roommate went psychotic and my mother talked me

through it.” A student also replied, “My roommate’s cat bit me. We have had to deal with medical bills and insurance. My father has helped me figure out the best options and get all the info I need.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My friend was having roommate issues and her parents helped her move out and find a new place to live.” Another student added, “When my friend was having problems with her freshman roommate here at campus, her father called the housing department and got her a new room assignment.” In addition, a student also specified, “Another parent I know, another student as a source, intervened on a situation with a student and their bothersome roommate. The story was told last March in the residence halls.” An additional student replied, “My roommate’s father yelled at me and the third roommate over trivial matters. It was extremely inappropriate.”

Overall, the 10 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with roommate issues*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Contacting Housing Administration/Maintenance Provider. A total of 9 references included the concept of *contacting housing administration and maintenance provider*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student

references discussed ways in which parents contacted personnel to resolve housing issues. One student stated, “Both my mother and father have tried to help me with problems I’ve had in college, with dealing with a housing situation. The interaction took place over the phone between my father and mother and the housing office.” Another student commented, “I had issues with my floor in the dorms freshman year and my mom called the school to see what changes could be made.” An additional student indicated, “They called the dorms when my package was missing for over a week.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. One student replied, “My friend told me she was having difficulty with our apartment complex so she had her mom call and resolve it.” Another student shared a workplace story about parental interactions while working as a Residential Assistant (R.A.). The student stated, “As an R.A., parents have sent me emails, or contacted me to try and see how their student is doing.” Other students offered stories about parental assistance with maintenance issues. A student commented, “My friend’s mom called housing once to find out if they had certain living supplies needed for her daughter. She complained and got what she felt her daughter needed. Daughter didn’t really care.” An additional student added, “An acquaintance’s room was dirty, he got written up for it. He called his mom, his mom called a cleaning service. He told me about it when I went over to his place.”

Overall, the 9 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives

related to the concept of *contacting housing administration and maintenance provider*. Collectively, these exemplars presented answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Assisting with Residential Moving Process. A total of 8 references included the concept of *assisting with residential moving process*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents helped students through residential moving procedures. One student stated, “Needed to find an apartment. Mom looked online and called a realtor. She sent me a list of apartments via email and I looked at them.” Another student indicated, “They helped me find a home to live in when I transferred here.” A student also commented, “I was looking to move and my mother helped with the process.” An additional student stated, “I was having trouble finding housing after study abroad and so my mom arranged it for me.” Another student added, “This past week I have started to move out and my mom has helped me over the phone to find movers/storage units.” Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. A student stated, “My friend told me about how his dad found him a place to live as a real estate agent.” Another student commented, “Moving my friends out. They [the friend’s parents] looked up storage places and when and how to move out.”

Overall, the 8 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives

related to the concept of *assisting with residential moving process*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Theme 5 – Advocate for Independence

The fifth theme answers RQ3: Are millennial students encouraging parental participation or striving for autonomy? During the thematic coding process, a total of 42 references were clustered together under 2 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing both the parent and student as an Advocate for Independence. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of student autonomy. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the fifth theme were Parent is Advocating for Independence and Student is Advocating for Independence. Table 4 displays the sub-theme bundling for the fifth theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Parent is Advocating for Independence. A total of 23 references included the concept of *parent is advocating for independence*. These references answered RQ3 by using descriptive phrases that addressed the topic of student autonomy in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which parents promoted student independence. One student stated, “I love that my parents let me handle my schooling. They support me but I have grown in my independence and confidence to handle myself because of the way they have left it to me.” Another student commented, “Since I turned 18, my parents made it very clear that I was to make my own life decisions.” An

additional student stated, “My parents were never the hovering type – they just expected me to fulfill my responsibilities. However, they always supported me by showing up to events. Also, they never pressured me into doing anything.” A student also added, “My mother is available when needed, but she likes me to work through my own problems.” Another student replied, “Very supportive, respect my opinions and give me a lot of freedom to make decisions.” An additional student indicated, “He understands I’m an adult now and doesn’t pry.” Another student commented, “They give me my space because they know it is key to my success.” A student also added, “They allow me to handle my own higher educational experience and only step in if I need help.”

Overall, the 23 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *parent is advocating for independence*. Collectively, these exemplars presented answers to RQ3 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Independence.

Student is Advocating for Independence. A total of 19 references included the concept of *student is advocating for independence*. These references answered RQ3 by using descriptive phrases that addressed the topic of student autonomy in higher education. Student references discussed ways in which students promoted their independence. One student stated,

My parents have a unique involvement. I would say they are extremely supportive, however they aren’t involved. It’s largely due to me. I am very independent and I take pride in doing things myself. I feel my parents have done

enough for me, therefore, it's my job to decipher and solve my own issues. They shouldn't have to face that burden.

Another student commented, "We are grown adults and we need to let go of our parents' hands and not depend on them to walk us through everything because parents aren't forever and we will all need to realize it." An additional student mentioned,

I am proud to say that I am completely self-sufficient and economically independent. I do not have a relationship with my father. My mother is only involved with the things I tell her, but she is a very close friend. Neither has contributed money to my education and I am my own advocate.

A student also added, "I try to keep their involvement in my college life to a minimum. Living with them is fairly isolating from the traditional college experience, so I try to maintain independence as much as possible." Another student stated, "I try to remain as independent as possible when it comes to the prospect of receiving help from my mom in relation to my higher education." An additional student replied, "I would say they are involved and it is annoying because I would like independence." A student also indicated, "I'm very independent and they are not very much involved." Another student added, "My parents are as involved in my college experience as I let them be. I know they are always there to help me if I'm having a problem, but I don't always ask for help."

Overall, the 19 references highlighted student descriptions about the interactions of their own parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *student is advocating for independence* presented answers to RQ3 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a student as an Advocate for Independence.

Qualitative Results – Parent Themes

The six themes that emerged from the thematic coding process are as follows: Academic Consultant, Emotional Cheerleader, Financial Supporter, Advocate for Independence, Housing Advisor, and Advocate for Healthcare. As sought out in RQ1 and RQ2, each of these six themes paint a meaningful picture of parental identity and interactions in higher education from the parents' perspective. Table 5 offers an overview of the specific themes by providing the name of each theme, a brief description, and an exemplar quote that provides a prominent example from the parent responses describing parent identity and interaction.

Theme 1 – Academic Consultant

The first theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 240 references were clustered together under 7 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the first theme were Contacting Academic Faculty/Staff, Expressing Interest in Classes, Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers, Conveying Advice/Interest in Classes, Helping Search for Colleges/Internships/Jobs, Assisting with Coursework, Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation, and Providing

Table 5

Description of Qualitative Themes from Parent Responses

Theme	Description	Exemplar Quote
Academic Consultant	Assists with course scheduling, class assignments, grade monitoring, credit transfers, school and job applications.	“I help to make sure he is taking the required classes for his degree to graduate on time. I check with him verbally on a weekly basis to ask about his grades and upcoming projects.”
Emotional Cheerleader	Expresses interest, pride, and concern about student well-being and happiness.	“To listen and provide support and encouragement and recognition of accomplishments. Basically, I'm his cheerleader!”
Financial Supporter	Provides assistance with financial aid procedures, monetary advice, and bill payments.	“I would be the financial planner, searching for the lowest interest rate on private loans; completing FAFSA.”
Advocate for Independence	Acknowledges and supports the development of an independent and responsible student.	“I feel very strongly that college is the time for kids to figure out their own life, i.e.: organizing their own schedule, making sure they have a place to live, doing their laundry, etc. As a parent, I am only too happy to go over the problem, make suggestions, etc., but my child needs to do the legwork and take responsibility for the outcome.”
Housing Advisor	Provides support for roommate issues, housing needs, and moving procedures.	“He had trouble with his roommate freshman year. We talked on the phone while he was at school, in person during his winter break, and again on the phone after he returned to school. I encouraged him to talk to his roommate and the RA. He did both of these things and they were able to resolve their issues.”
Advocate for Healthcare	Provides support for healthcare issues.	“The only times I have assisted her in solving problems at college have not been within the academic arena but rather lifestyle issues such as health care advocacy - like finding specialists when she's been ill/injured and managing insurance and medical billing.”

Technology Support. Table 6 displays the bundling for the first sub-theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Table 6

Sub-Theme Bundling for the Emergent Parent Themes

Sub-Themes	Theme
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contacting Academic Faculty/Staff (60) 2. Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers (54) 3. Conveying Advice/Interest in Classes (44) 4. Helping to Search for Colleges/Internships/Jobs (26) 5. Assisting with Coursework (24) 6. Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation (23) 7. Providing Technology Support (9) 	Academic Consultant
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being a Cheerleader/Encourager (61) 2. Providing Emotional Support (57) 3. Being a Sounding Board/Listener (48) 4. Willing to Help in Any Situation (37) 	Emotional Cheerleader
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing Financial Advice/Support (80) 2. Paying Tuition/Bills (41) 3. Contacting Bursar/Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel (36) 4. Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation (20) 	Financial Supporter
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing Student to Solve Problems/Make Decisions (86) 2. Supporting Independence/Adult Self-Reliance (48) 3. Being Hands Off/Minimizing Involvement (26) 	Advocate for Independence
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helping with Roommate Issues (35) 2. Contacting Housing Administration/Landlord/Food Services (34) 3. Assisting with Residential Moving Process (19) 	Housing Advisor
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing Support for Health Concerns/Prescription Issues (41) 2. Helping with Sport Related Injuries (7) 3. Assisting with Medical Leave Process (6) 	Advocate for Healthcare

Note. The number of references for each sub-theme is located in parentheses.

Contacting Academic Faculty/Staff. A total of 60 references included the concept of *contacting academic faculty and staff*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents directly communicated with university personnel about academic issues. Course scheduling was indicated as reason for parental contact with university faculty and staff. One parent stated,

Our child was having a really difficult time signing up for classes she needed for her major and was really at the breaking point. I tried to point him toward his counselor's to help, but he felt they weren't being helpful so I called the Academic advising office because my child was frustrated and didn't want to seek help from them.

Another parent commented, "First semester freshman year, she had trouble getting into her top three or four choices for all of her classes. We intervened via emails and phone calls to administration in order to help her." An additional parent indicated, "I had to help out during the registration process. We contacted her advisor, the department she is majoring in, student life, and it took a lot of work to get this issue resolved."

Parents also initiated contact with university staff due to student anxiety about grades and coursework. One parent stated,

Our student was struggling with emotional and grade success in classes for the first time in their academic history. I talked to the learning resource center, the school counselor, found a private pay psychologist to test for learning differences

and set up the first appointment. I also talked to the school to identify resources available and paid for a private tutor which the student found on their own.

Another parent commented,

My son got confused and missed the final exam of his summer school class. He called me from work very upset and asked what I thought he should do. After a brief discussion, I called the office and asked for the phone number to the classroom which I relayed to my son. Luckily he was able to reschedule and take the exam.

Parents also made contact with university personnel when students were applying for internships or study abroad programs. One parent stated, “He needed to do an internship for his major so I researched the online resources, emailed his advisor, got forms completed by his employer and spoke with him and his advisor.” An additional parent commented, “When he was getting ready to start study abroad, I followed up with people at the program with a variety of questions by phone and email.” Another parent added,

I did get involved this summer because my son was going abroad. I didn't feel he had asked enough questions about what he needed to bring, travel plans, reimbursement for visa, etc. In general, I was uncomfortable with his research before he left and I called the program liaison and the specific program director. They were helpful and eased my worries!

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about

other parents contacting faculty and staff to discuss grades and coursework. One parent stated, "I had a professor at another school tell me that a student showed up at her office with her parents to discuss her grade." Another parent mentioned, "I have heard stories in the news about parents trying to talk to the professor of a class their child was failing as if it were a high school parent/teacher conference." Another parent commented, "A parent we know had a meeting with his child's professor to discuss and try to get a test grade changed when the child was upset that there was material on the test that was not in the study guide." An additional parent indicated, "My girl friend told me her daughter received horrible grades without warning. She tried to contact the school and her guidance counselor with very poor communication from the school." Another parent added, "Coworker went with son to ask professor to reconsider a grade. Coworker was the source for this story." A parent also stated, "My son told me that friends' parents have been able to successfully intervene on their children's behalf to get grades changed, arrange for work to be made up after it was due and extend time in the study abroad program."

Parents also referenced contact stories about parental frustration over students missing quizzes or receiving poor instruction in class. One parent stated, "Have heard through a friend of a mother who panicked when her son didn't answer his phone on the morning of a quiz so she contacted the RA and the Dean of students but turned out he had only turned his phone off because he was taking the quiz." Another parent commented,

A parent I know made an appointment with a dean after sitting in on a poorly taught math class his daughter was taking. He told us about the dean's response

while we were out to dinner. The dean said he would relay the info to the head of the math department, no one ever contacted him.

Overall, the 60 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *contacting academic faculty and staff*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Helping with Course Selection/Registration/Credit Transfers. A total of 54 references included the concept of *helping with course selection, registration, and credit transfers*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted with the selection process for classes and majors, along with credit transfer procedures. Assisting students with course selection was mentioned by parents. One parent simply stated, “Help with class selection.” Another parent commented, “Assist with course selection to make course load manageable.” An additional parent indicated, “Collaborative discussions around course choices, exploring vocational and academic options.” Another parent added, “We had a face to face conversation about her being overloaded and decided to drop a class. First time ever for a very high achiever.”

Helping students with course registration was also mentioned by parents. One parent stated,

I searched through the class schedules looking for possible classes, downloaded the details to a spreadsheet and send to her by email. I also did some research on the professors. We then discussed the listing over the phone and - over a period of a few days - she decided on a possible schedule, with some alternate classes. Most of the interaction between us was by email or text. Because she was busy when registration opened up, she asked me to go online and actually sign up for her classes, which I did successfully - she ultimately changed it slightly.

Another parent commented,

When she had to register for freshman classes I would be on the computer while she was registering because many of the classes that she wished to take were full. When she would find a class that she could take I would look up the professor I rate my professor and let her know what was said about the professor.

Assisting students with the selection of majors was also indicated by parents. One parent stated, “She is having trouble choosing a major. We have talked about different questions she might ask of people at college. I purchased some books for her. I took her to visit folks I know in different occupations.” An additional parent specified,

He was contemplating changing majors from marketing to real estate and construction management. I went online to the college’s website and researched the curriculum to better help him understand what that major would be like: possible pitfalls and shortcomings.

A parent also stated, “He was questioning his choice of major and what he was going to do in his life. I told him that he had 1 year to go. That he was moving in a forward direction and not to question the big ‘life’ picture so much.”

Assisting students with the selection of study abroad coursework was also mentioned by parents. One parent stated,

Deciding on a study abroad program - involved were my husband, daughter and myself - the interactions were through phone calls, emails and texts. Together we went to websites and discussed what the positives and negatives were about different programs and locations. We shared a spreadsheet with options, discussed goals she wanted to achieve and other various considerations.

Another parent commented,

He was trying to decide to which study abroad locations he wanted to apply. He called me on the phone and told me his options and all of the pros and cons about each location. After we got off the phone, I talked via phone with some of my friends who had been to the various locations. I also searched information on the internet. He again called and I gave him the information I had gathered and we talked about the options and his thoughts and desires again. He made the final decision after our phone call on his own. He asked for my opinion and thoughts in his phone calls, he didn't specifically ask for my help.

Assisting students with credit transfer was also mentioned by parents. One parent indicated, "I contacted the International Baccalaureate Organization to send a copy of the diploma to the college so that IB credit could be applied." Another parent stated,

My child was supposed to receive collage credit for classes taken in the summer of junior year at another University - for Summer College. Sending and receiving transcripts were being shuffled around to the wrong department or area. We

helped find the appropriate person/area to get the information to the proper area so our child would get the credit.

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents assisting students with course registration, class selection, decisions on majors, and credit transfer. One parent stated,

When my friend and her daughter arrived for registration the college didn't have her records in order and hadn't accounted for her high school AP scores so they put her in entry level freshman classes that should have been waived based on her AP scores, and they assigned her the wrong major. The college rep wasn't very helpful and my friend - the mom - went about the business of taking care of the entire situation and resolving all the problems without allowing her daughter to learn how to do it herself. I understand why she did that, but her daughter didn't have the opportunity to learn how to speak up for her own interests and resolve the problem on her own.

Another parent mentioned, "I have heard of another parent trying to help out during the registration process." An additional parent stated, "I work in registration and every day parents try to solve their son or daughter's dilemma by trying to schedule classes." A parent also mentioned a story about a "child asking for help in picking the right course of action towards major."

Overall, the 54 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college

interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with course selection, registration, and credit transfers*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Conveying Advice/Interest in Classes. A total of 44 references included the concept of *conveying advice and interest in classes*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed how parents provide academic advice and want to learn more about classroom experiences. In regards to giving advice, one parent referenced their academic involvement by stating, “I would describe it as a consultant on both an academic and personal level.” Another parent stated, “Our son asks for advice in his educational planning.” A parent also commented, “She had issues with her professor and I advised she talk with the professor.” An additional parent indicated, “Over a period of a few weeks, my wife and I provided guidance/insight to our son regarding possible avenues of support to assist our son in a course that he was having certain challenges with.” A parent also added, “She was challenged by her inability to understand what a professor was expecting of her in a class. We discussed the class, curriculum and how she could both determine the expectation correctly, as well as how she could best try and meet that expectation.” Another parent stated,

Our daughter was worried about whether or not to drop a class where her performance was not to her standards by midterm. We advised her to go have a face-to-face conversation with her professor and seek his guidance. He advised

her to stick it out and offered her some study tips, etc. In the end, she ended up doing just fine in this very difficult class.

Another parent stated,

Our son was struggling in a class, and got behind in his homework. We asked him numerous questions, and suggested that he make an appointment to talk with the teacher. He was reluctant to do so, feeling that the instructor would not be receptive. We tried to help him understand that the faculty generally do want their students to succeed, and suggested that he look up office hours and just drop by. Our son found it very difficult to go to his professor, but eventually he did drop by office hours. He felt much better after talking with the faculty member, and was able to come up with a plan for successfully completing his course.

In regards to parental interest in classes, one parent simply stated, “I’m interested in her studies.” Another parent commented about “showing interest in his class choices and activities.” An additional parent indicated they “actively discuss her experiences and classes.” A parent also added, “I ask about how his classes are going- which ones he likes.” Another parent stated, “I ask how she is doing in her classes, and which ones she like/dislikes.” A parent also indicated, “We talk weekly through the school term about how classes are going.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. One parent referenced the following narrative about other parents’ regular input on academics, “I have heard of

parents who are regularly involved with their students' lives through daily communication and regular help with academics.”

Overall, the 44 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *conveying advice and interest in classes*.

Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Helping to Search for Colleges/Internships/Jobs. A total of 26 references included the concept of *helping to search for colleges, internships, and jobs*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted in the search for colleges, internships, and employment. In regards to the search for colleges, one parent stated, “I helped in his college application and preparation process.” Another parent commented, “Accompanied her on college visits; gave feedback on how to assess programs and rankings.” An additional parent indicated, “We helped her visit colleges and helped her with her decision.”

In regards to the search for internships, one parent mentioned, “My daughter was considering a career in accounting but had no exposure. I arranged a mini internship with my CPA to help in making a career choice.” Another parent added,

She had a summer job that also had potential to be counted as an internship. I encouraged her 3-4 times via phone before school ended to get in touch with her advisor to learn the criteria for an internship. She finally did and we reviewed the

criteria mid-summer face-to-face since she was home. By that time, the opportunity to fulfill all the criteria had passed, but at least she now knows what it will take in the future.

In regards to the job search process, one parent simply stated, “Offer advice on what it will take to get a job.” Another parent commented, “He needed his resume and couldn't find it. We found an old copy and sent it to him.” An additional parent indicated, “Helping him network for career choices.” A parent also stated, “My daughter was struggling with how to approach the job market. She and I discussed her aspirations and interests. Our communication was mostly by phone. I helped her to find her initial career path.” Another parent added, “I do not gather information for them but I do help him process job possibilities for after graduation.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping students find internships. One parent commented, “A friend of ours tries to manage all aspects of her son's life. Most recently, she spearheaded his summer internship search.” Another parent stated, “I have heard about a time when a parent submitted online applications for an internship because her son was too busy.” A parent also referenced a story about another parent who “arranges interviews for internships.”

Parents also referenced stories about other parents assisting in the job search process. One parent stated,

At a gathering of parents with college aged students an acquaintance of mine said that her daughter was looking for a job during the school year and this mother

looked for jobs on her daughter's behalf, placed a few ads in the local paper on behalf of her daughter - for babysitting and teaching guitar. The discussion came up when I told her my daughter was having a tough time finding a summer job.

This mom suggested I help her find one because the kids don't really know where to look or what to do. She proudly said she had found her daughter a job!

Another parent commented, "I interview potential job candidates for my corporation. I have heard of one parent showing up at a job interview with the graduate student - they were not considered for the job." An additional parent mentioned,

A friend's son couldn't find a job after graduation on the common job boards - the parent kept referring him to the school career web site which should list companies interested in recent grads - after months of rejecting the advice, he did and found a terrific entry level job in finance.

Overall, the 26 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping to search for colleges, internships, and jobs*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Assisting with Coursework. A total of 24 references included the concept of *assisting with coursework*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted students on course assignments, such as editing papers and researching topics. One parent stated, "She

consults with me when she needs help with school work if it is something I can help her with.” Another parent mentioned, “Occasionally 1-2 times a term proofread a paper.” An additional parent commented, “As a freshman, she would ask for assistance with coursework occasionally, such as editing a paper.” A parent also indicated, “Helped gather information, and edited essay written for a class.” Another parent stated, “My son asked me to help him come up with a theme for an assigned paper. I asked a few friends and brainstormed with him until we came up with a theme he felt comfortable with. This was done by phone and text.” An additional parent commented, “We often discuss the topics that she wants to choose for her college essays and I point her to information sources that I am aware of.” A parent also indicated, “Helped child come up with creative ideas for a marketing class.” Another parent added, “I tutored him in computer science since that is my career.” An additional parent specified,

My daughter calls me with a problem she is working on where she is not sure she is using the correct approach. We talk about the problem, the variables, what methods she has learned in class and I give her my assessment of the approach she is using. I may ask about the steps she is taking to see if she made an error. In some cases she has mailed me spreadsheets and I have found her errors or taught her some techniques for working with the data.

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents monitoring homework, completing assignments, and editing papers. One parent stated, “I have friends who proof their college child's papers.” Another parent

commented, “I have heard of parents who check to be sure assignments are done and turned in. I saw a TV interview where one mom was actively managing every aspect of her two sons' college experience.” An additional parent indicated,

My best friend in another state has a son who is a freshman, living at home and attending a community college. She told me stories about helping him with homework and actually completing online assignments for him. She even pays her other child to help him write his papers. I find this shocking and disappointing. She told me over the phone. We were talking about how her son was not ready for an out-of-state college experience.

Another parent added, “My son told me stories about parents that are overly involved in their students course work - going so far as to write papers for their courses.” A parent also mentioned,

Father has passwords to son's accounts--including academic class site. Son is in honors program and syllabus for semester is posted including assignments. Father does intensive research on papers that are to be written in future. Then compiles it with writing suggestions and emails it to Son. Father also requests rough drafts to be sent to him; although, that doesn't always happen. Son does not need nor request this help. Mother/wife told me this story in conversation discussing how our sons - who were good friends in high school - were adjusting to their first year of college.

Overall, the 24 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and

narratives related to the concept of *assisting with coursework*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Monitoring Grades/GPA/Graduation. A total of 23 references included the concept of *monitoring grades, grade point average (GPA), and graduation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents inquired about student grades, overall GPA, and graduation progress. In regards to grades and GPA, one parent stated, “I check with him verbally on a weekly basis to ask about his grades and upcoming projects.” Another parent commented, “We keep track of grades.” An additional parent mentioned, “Sharing information on grades.” A parent also added, “Occasional reminders of importance of grades.” Another parent indicated, “As a freshman son was concerned about calculus grade – I suggested tutor and looked online for one - and sent him link to call and arrange, he did, I paid, they studied, he got an A.” A parent also stated,

His grades were not up to par during one quarter so we put into place our clear expectations for minimum GPA to be able to stay. We also required that he make 3+ appointments with academic counselors in the area of time management and study skills the following quarter. I did some research online to find out what was available and how to access services. We presented this info in writing in a face-

to-face interaction. He read it and nodded when we asked if he thought it was fair and reasonable. We all signed the agreement.

Another parent mentioned,

My son was in danger of failing a couple of classes and he is not a good self-advocate. He got notices from a couple of professors, quite late when he was already failing and he delayed contacting them. I did not know who to contact to help him. After he had to drop one class and failed another, I got access to blackboard and went over his performance to determine what had happened. The discussion took place via email and, after the fact, face-to-face.

An additional parent indicated, “I have also started monitoring his progress on blackboard after he had some academic problems last quarter.”

In regards to monitoring graduation, one parent stated, “I help to make sure he is taking the required classes for his degree to graduate on time.” Another parent added, “Asking enough questions to ensure the plan to graduation is established.” An additional parent commented, “Regularly communicate with him regarding classes, degree plan to make sure he's on track.”

Overall, the 23 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *monitoring grades, GPA, and graduation*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Providing Technology Support. A total of 9 references included the concept of *providing technology support*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by

using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents provided technology support regarding software and hardware issues impacting academic coursework. One parent simply stated, “Tech support - setting up devices and helping with problems that pop up.” Another parent commented, “He wanted us to pay for a better grammar and spelling checker software. I researched more cost effective alternatives and pointed him it that direction.” An additional parent indicated,

His computer had become unstable during the final days of a term, and he contacted me to discuss options. Started with a text seeking a time we could talk, then phone from there on. Not a huge crisis, but there were files that could have been lost and timelines were critical, so coming up with a solution that removed some stress from the situation to allow him to focus on completion of work was the goal.

Another parent added,

He had a problem with his iMac computer. It was not the right type for his business major. We talked over the phone a 2-3 times to problem solve his options. He explained why his computer wasn't right. I asked him to work with the help desk team. He came back with options. We ultimately agree that he should go buy a second, inexpensive PC for school.

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. One parent referenced a story about another parent gathering information about campus computers. The parent stated,

“Neighbor was gathering info about use of computers on campus for her incoming freshman. She told me the story.” Overall, the 9 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *providing technology support*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Academic Consultant.

Theme 2 – Emotional Cheerleader

The second theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 203 references were clustered together under 4 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the second theme were Being a Cheerleader/Encourager, Providing Emotional Support, Being a Sounding Board/Listener, and Willing to Help in Any Situation. Table 6 displays the sub-theme bundling for the second theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Being a Cheerleader/Encourager. A total of 61 references included the concept of *being a cheerleader and encourager*. These references answered the first portion of

RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents expressed cheerfulness and encouragement. One parent stated, “Provide support and encouragement and recognition of accomplishments. Basically, I’m his cheerleader!” Another parent commented, “I am the biggest cheerleader. There are many pitfalls and new experiences out there and my job is to encourage support and help build confidence when the road gets bumpy.” An additional parent stated, “His encourager and cheerleader.” A parent also mentioned, “He tells me about his hiking, camping, skiing, friends and dates and problems. I am his cheerleader and share in his successes and joys and offer comfort or laughter when he experiences disappointments.” Another parent added, “I’m basically just the cheering section at this point.” A parent also indicated, “Offer much encouragement to continue to persevere and try her best.” An additional parent stated, “My job is to offer encouragement.” Another parent provided, “Emotional encouragement.” A parent also commented, “Supportive, encouraging, affirming.” A parent also mentioned, “Encouraging her to explore and learn new things.” Another parent added, “Encouraging her to explore and live her life.”

Overall, the 61 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *being a cheerleader and encourager*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Providing Emotional Support. A total of 57 references included the concept of *providing emotional support*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by

using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents provided emotional support. One parent stated, “Her needs from me are focused on emotional support.” Another parent mentioned, “Emotional support when it is tough.” An additional parent commented, “Keeping in touch emotionally.” A parent also specified, “Support emotionally, mentally.” Another parent indicated, “Emotional support system when needed.” An additional parent stated, “I also monitor if he is comfortable, happy.” A parent also commented, “I am part of his loving foundation.” Parents also referenced interactions that helped students overcome anxiety. One parent indicated, “He did have a couple of meltdowns during his four years in school, and we received a couple of panicked phone calls at that time. Talked him through it.” Another parent added, “My daughter was overwhelmed the first quarter, taking too many difficult classes while trying to adjust to university life. I talked with her and had her regularly report back to me on her feelings.”

Overall, the 57 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *providing emotional support*. Collectively, these exemplars offered answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Being a Sounding Board/Listener. A total of 48 references included the concept of *being a sounding board and listener*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents served as a listener and

resource to bounce off emotional issues and challenges. In regards to being a sounding board, one parent stated, “I am available as a sounding board, to process with, to be accountable to, for hugs and claps.” Another parent indicated, “My husband and I believe our role is to provide support, guidance, and to be a sounding board for when she is frustrated and overwhelmed.” An additional parent mentioned, “Sounding board when things are difficult.” A parent also added, “We're here as a sounding board and support team.” Another parent commented, “I'm a resource to bounce questions/ideas off of.”

In regards to being a listener, one parent stated, “I acted as listening ear.” Another parent mentioned, “Someone to listen.” An additional parent indicated, “My role is to listen and empathize and to let her know I support her.” A parent also referenced, “Sympathetic listener.” An additional parent stated, “I listen if she's having problems.” Another parent added, “I listen to all of his experiences, concerns, rants, and problems.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. One parent referenced a story about another parent not understanding the difference between solving and listening. The parent stated, “My friend’s college son calls with problems and she tries to solve them for him when all he is really asking for is someone to listen to him.”

Overall, the 48 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *being a sounding board and listener*. Collectively,

these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Willing to Help in Any Situation. A total of 37 references included the concept of *willing to help in any situation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents were always available to offer help. One parent stated, “We are always willing to assist and offer help whenever and however it is needed.” Another parent commented, “I am supportive and will do whatever I can to help.” An additional parent indicated, “If help with supporting decisions are needed, we are there for him.” A parent also simply stated, “Always there to help.” Another parent added, “I am here to support him in any way possible.” An additional parent mentioned, “I am here if he needs me.” A parent also specified, “We are there when she needs us.” Another parent commented, “Always available if needed.” A parent also stated, “If he needs anything we are always available.”

Overall, the 37 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *willing to help in any situation*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and helped shape the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Emotional Cheerleader.

Theme 3 – Financial Supporter

The third theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 177 references were clustered together under 4

unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the third theme were Providing Financial Advice/Support, Paying Tuition/Bills, Contacting Bursar, Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel, and Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation. Table 6 displays the sub-theme bundling for the first theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Providing Financial Advice/Support. A total of 80 references included the concept of *providing financial advice and support*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed general and specific ways in which parents advise and intervene on financial issues. One parent stated, “I give advice and help with the finances.” Another parent commented, “My role is to provide financial support.” A parent also mentioned, “Sending her money when needed.” Another parent added, “We feel when it comes to money we are much more involved!” A parent also specified, “Obtained a credit card for her in her name that originally she was refused and then we had to get a joint card to help her start building her credit.” An additional parent simply described their parental involvement as “All about the Money!” Other parents also used simple phrases to describe their financial involvement, such as “The \$bank”, “Banker”, “Cash machine”, and “Funding source.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents providing support and sending money when needed. One parent referenced the financial involvement of other parents by stating, “Most do provide financial support as needed.” Another parent stated, “Neighbor's daughter called her needing money for a trip over spring break. She deposited money in her daughter's account.”

Overall, the 80 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *providing financial advice and support*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Paying Tuition/Bills. A total of 41 references included the concept of *paying tuition and bills*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. These parent references discussed how parents paid for student expenses associated with college life. Paying for college, school, education, or tuition were common references. One parent stated, “My role is to pay for college.” Another parent commented, “I will pay for his school related costs.” An additional parent indicated, “I pay for my son's education.” A parent also simply stated, “I am paying for it.” Another parent specified, “We are fully funding the tuition.” An additional parent commented, “Pay for tuition, fees and housing.” A parent also mentioned, “I pay a portion of tuition and books.” Parents also

referenced making bill payments. One parent simply stated, “I pay the bills!” An additional parent specified, “Bill payer.” Another parent added, “My role in my son's higher education was to pay the bills.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents covering student expenses. One parent mentioned how another parent “pays their (the student’s) credit card bills.” Another parent referenced stories about other parents that focused on “discussions about paying for college.”

Overall, the 41 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *paying tuition and bills*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Contacting Bursar/Financial Aid Office/Loan Personnel. A total of 36 references included the concept of *contacting the bursar, financial aid office, or loan personnel*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways that parents directly contacted university personnel. One parent stated, “This school year my son got lower financial aid and I showed up in person to talk to a lady in the Bursar's office.” Another parent mentioned, “Trying to resolve my son's loans and tuition bill. Several emails were sent and also time was spent on the

phone to several departments at the university.” An additional parent specified, “A billing issue got confused so his father and I stepped in via email to the college to resolve it.” A parent also stated,

Recently contacted the financial aid office regarding supporting documents required for loan applications. My son had received emails to that effect and asked me to follow up. These were tax related documents and parent financial records being requested. My interaction with the school was via one phone call and one email from the school.

Another parent added, “I called the financial aid office to find out when she was going to receive a disbursement check so we could make sure she had money.” An additional parent mentioned, “Phone call to bursar's office during winter quarter asking about the delay of private scholarship being posted to account.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents contacting financial personnel. One parent stated, “The only such stories I can relate come from my son's work in the Financial Aid office -- parents who don't understand forms, deadlines, scholarships, etc.” Another parent referenced, “Co-worker, at work, working with an unresponsive financial aid dept.” An additional parent commented about other parents who “argue with financial aid.”

Overall, the 36 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and

narratives related to the concept of *contacting the bursar, financial aid office, or loan personnel*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Helping with Financial Aid Procedures/Documentation. A total of 20 references included the concept of *helping with financial aid procedures and documentation*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed a variety ways that parents assist students with the college financial aid process, including the completion of loan paperwork and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly referenced as FAFSA. One parent stated, “I would be the financial planner, searching for the lowest interest rate on private loans; completing FAFSA.” Another parent indicated, “She has had trouble on a couple of occasions getting through the financial aid online paperwork and has gotten stuck at a step and asked me to look at it, and I have figured it out for her.” An additional parent commented,

When applying for financial aid for extenuating circumstances, my daughter and I would talk every day. I would share with her what I needed her to do at the financial aid office, and who she was to talk to, and what forms she needed to fill out. Then I would fill out my forms and email them to her and she would load them into the webpage or take them to the financial aid office.

Another parent added, “She asked for assistance with the Financial Aid department - she works odd hours and needed to know what she would owe for the coming year to determine if she could afford to take a summer abroad class.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping with financial aid procedures. One parent indicated, “A boy's parents were working with him to gather information necessary to apply for his loan. This is my daughter's boyfriend. The story was relayed as we were discussing the massive financial output required of us this fall.” An additional parent commented about other parents who “handle all financial aid issues.”

Overall, the 20 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with financial aid procedures and documentation*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Financial Supporter.

Theme 4 – Advocate for Independence

The fourth theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 160 references were clustered together under 3 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Independence. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the fourth theme were Allowing Student to Solve

Problems/Make Decisions, Supporting Student Independence/Adult Self-Reliance, and Being Hands Off/Minimizing Involvement. Table 6 displays the sub-theme bundling for the fourth theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Allowing Student to Solve Problems/Make Decisions. A total of 86 references included the concept of *allowing student to solve problems and make decisions*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents allowed students to become problem solvers and decision makers. In regards to allowing student to solve problems, one parent stated, “I believe that college is about learning, setting out on your own. I believe that our grown children in college learn that they have the ability to solve their problems, they don't need mom to do it.” Another parent commented, “I believe part of the college experience and education is for my child to resolve her own problems.” An additional parent mentioned, “Any issues, question, problems, scheduling, etc. are handled solely by him.” A parent also stated, “My daughter solves her own problems at college. She shares them with me and I provide support but she is figuring things out for herself.” Another parent added, “My son gathers his own info and solves his own on-campus problems.” A parent also indicated, “We are very supportive, but feel he needs to do the problem solving.” An additional parent specified, “We allow him to problem solve.”

In regards to allowing students to make decisions, one parent stated, “I think it is important he learns to make his own decisions - to gather data, think about it, and learn to

listen to and trust his intuition.” Another parent commented, “I am more of a facilitator, but expect her to "drive the bus" on her education and make her own decisions.” An additional parent mentioned, “I allow her to make the decisions/choices since it is her life and future.” A parent also stated, “I have allowed my child to make his own choices and bear the consequences.” Another parent indicated, “My role is to support her in challenging herself and in making her own choices. I expect her to take responsibility for consequences, good and bad.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents letting students handle their own problems. One parent stated, “I think most parents, at least the ones I know let their college age children solve problems on their own.” Another parent indicated, “Most of my friends try to let their children handle their own situations at college.”

Overall, the 86 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *allowing student to solve problems and make decisions*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Independence.

Supporting Student Independence/Adult Self-Reliance. A total of 48 references included the concept of *supporting student independence and adult self-reliance*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive

phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents promote student independence and adult self-reliance. In regards to supporting student independence, one parent stated, “I encourage independence and she has become increasingly independent over her 4 years in college.” Another parent mentioned, “Allow him the independence he wants.” An additional parent specified, “Fostering independence.” A parent also commented, “Keeping her moving to independence.” Another parent added, “My son is quite capable and independent.” An additional parent stated, “She is very independent and capable and we trust her and her choices thus far.” A parent also indicated, “His college experience is about him and discovering who he wants to be in the world separate from the family.”

In regards to supporting adult self-reliance, one parent stated, “We trust our child and sent him out of state to a college to become an independent adult.” Another parent commented, “He is an intelligent, confident, pro-active adult living his own life now. I stopped solving his problems in grade school. I’m very proud of him.” An additional parent mentioned, “These kids are adults and need to start learning to be an adult, and not have their mommy fix things.” Another parent specified, “Young adults still need input/help but we need to let them struggle some and assist not jump in and rescue.” A parent also indicated, “She is an adult and is responsible for her education.” Another parent added, “He's an adult and has to self-advocate as much as possible.”

Overall, the 48 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *supporting student independence and adult self-reliance*.

Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Independence.

Being Hands Off/Minimizing Involvement. A total of 26 references included the concept of *being hands off and minimizing involvement*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents were hands off and less involved in the students' college experiences. One parent stated, "Hands off unless our son asks for guidance/advice or help." Another parent commented, "Hands off, I might give advice but it is rare." An additional parent mentioned, "Hands off unless my child asks for help or my opinion." A parent also indicated, "Hands off unless ill or asked." Another parent added, "Hands off. It is up to her to succeed or fail." An additional parent specified, "A hands off approach." A parent also stated, "We let our child have space."

In regards to minimizing involvement, one parent commented, "We are proud of her and support her, but tend to stay out of her education." Another parent indicated, "I am available to my child but do not insert myself into my child's educational experience." An additional parent mentioned, "Try not to be overly involved." A parent also stated, "Always available, but not overbearing." Another parent added, "I am available for advice. I do not push advice."

Overall, the 26 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions related to the concept of *being hands off and minimizing involvement*. Collectively, these

exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Independence.

Theme 5 – Housing Advisor

The fifth theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 88 references were clustered together under 3 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as sub-themes of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the fifth theme were Helping with Roommate Issues, Contacting Housing Administration/Landlord/Food Services, and Assisting with Residential Moving Process. Table 6 displays the sub-theme bundling for the fifth theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Helping with Roommate Issues. A total of 35 references included the concept of *helping with roommate issues*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted students with roommate challenges. One parent stated,

He had trouble with his roommate freshman year. We talked on the phone while he was at school, in person during his winter break, and again on the phone after

he returned to school. I encouraged him to talk to his roommate and the RA. He did both of these things and they were able to resolve their issues.

Another parent commented, “Problems with roommates - discussing ways to diffuse the situation.” An additional parent indicated, “Needed advice dealing with new roommate.” A parent also mentioned, “She was having issues with the suite mates doing their fair share of the chores required. I suggest she set up a schedule. Discussion took place over the phone.” Another parent added,

Her roommate left during winter break without communication so my daughter moved in with a friend. When she spoke to RA, she felt she got a harsh response about protocol. Daughter called us looking for sympathy and worried that the new arrangement would not be honored but it was.

A parent also commented, “She had issues with her roommates, again I advised a discussion. Some brought good results and some didn't. Part of growing up is learning to accept that not every relationship is easy or perfect but rather have ups and downs.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping students with roommate issues. One parent replied, “We heard stories about roommate issues that were not handled as well as they might have been across the board.” An additional parent stated,

Another parent told me about her trying to help her son with some roommate problems. She was on the phone with him several times per day and trying to

guide him to do certain things. She ended up driving down to his college 4 hours away to meet with him and give him moral support.

Another parent indicated,

Parent told me a story of trying to help her daughter get a new roommate because her current roommate was a big drinker and would come back to dorm room drunk. This was a co-worker and it was regarding a different college than where my daughter is. Story was told at work.

A parent also mentioned,

Another parent's daughter was having trouble with her roommate coming back to the dorm intoxicated and vomiting all over the room. This child goes to school an hour from home. Her mom and I were discussing freshman dorm living over lunch. The other mom was wondering if this was typical dorm living and wanted to go down to the school to help her child but ended up letting the child handle it with the RA and housing at the college.

Another parent added, "Our son told us that one of his roommates' mother came to the dorm room every Saturday - it was a dorm suite with separate bedrooms and a common area. She would bring food, tea, clean his room and wash his clothes!"

Overall, the 35 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with roommate issues*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Contacting Housing Administration/Landlord/Food Services. A total of 34 references included the concept of *contacting housing administration, landlord, and food services*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents contacted personnel to resolve housing issues. In regards to contacting housing administration at the college, one parent stated, “We were involved with some housing issues that had to be advanced to meetings with the administration.” Another parent commented, “My daughter was having a difficult time trying to convince the housing people to let her move into an apartment her sophomore year. I made some calls to the housing office and financial aid office to help her move the process forward.” An additional parent mentioned,

After returning from study abroad, I learned that my student was having trouble finding off campus housing with a classmate who was also returning from studying abroad. This was confusing to me since I understood the study abroad program guaranteed on-campus housing for returning students. I stopped at the campus housing office to inquire on the situation, only to learn that my student had declined their on-campus assignment because she wanted to live off campus.

A parent also mentioned, “Rental of campus apartment. Contacted appropriate staff to learn if he remained on campus, would receive scholarship. Helped make the decision to remain in on-campus housing.” In regards to contacting off-campus apartment managers and landlords, one parent stated, “Working with apartment manager for her subleasing of an apartment.” Another parent indicated, “Difficulty situation with landlord where I helped her get out of the lease and communicated with the landlord.”

Parents also contacted food service personnel regarding the meal service options commonly associated with student housing accommodations. One parent commented, “Needed to change food plan. Texted, talked, I sent email to food service.” Another parent mentioned, “His desire to change his meal plan, which had us calling the food department to make it happen.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents contacting housing personnel. One parent replied, “Neighbor's son is going to college and she wanted to know all about his housing. She called the housing office to get dimensions of his room, proximity of bathroom and laundry.” Another parent stated,

The parent consulted the school to ask permission to have her daughter transferred from a dorm into a sorority house because she was unhappy in the dorm although the school's policy was to have all freshmen live in the dorm. She asked them to change the rules for her daughter.

A parent also mentioned, “A friend's daughter was put into a single room in a loud, raucous dorm despite a detailed request for a shared room in a quiet dorm. My friend immediately called the dean of students.” An additional parent stated,

A friend's daughter was very unhappy with her housing situation and was calling in tears several days in a row. The mother went to the college. She and her daughter met with administration who were responsive to the situation. The girl was transferred to another dorm. The situation quickly resolved itself.

Another parent added, “I have heard from a few parents that they have investigated issues about housing by calling a rental agency that was apparently acting poorly in resolving a problem with a rental house.”

Overall, the 34 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *contacting housing administration, landlord, and food services*. Collectively, these exemplars presented answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Assisting with Residential Moving Process. A total of 19 references included the concept of *assisting with residential moving process*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents helped students through residential moving procedures. One parent stated, “We drove up 6 hours to move him in and out of on campus housing.” Another parent mentioned,

When our daughter was moving off campus. She had to decide where to live. She was trying to do it with very little input from us and now admits it was a huge mistake. So for her senior year we came out early to help her make the decision on where to live.

An additional parent specified,

Housing for the coming year. My son asked me to look at various links to different houses and apartments that the group he was a part of was looking at renting. We discussed location, amenities - dishwasher, washer/dryer, yard,

garage, etc. - and compared many factors. The interactions were primarily over the phone and via email and we did have one face to face when he came home for a visit.

A parent also indicated,

He is having trouble with housing for the fall. He was planning to sub-let a house from Sept - December from student who are abroad. I am helping him look for other options. We prefer to be near campus in a furnished apartment, but that may not be possible at this late date. He is actively looking for alternatives, and I am helping in the process.

Another parent stated, "Daughter called me about needing assistance in applying for an apartment over the summer. She sent me the paperwork via an email attachment and I filled out and attached the necessary documents and mailed it back to her." A parent also mentioned, "Help arrange storage for the summer." Another parent added, "Giving her storage info for her things freshman year."

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents assisting with the student moving process. One parent stated, "My friend, the mother of a college son, calls and organizes apartments, storage units, landlords for her graduating senior. Our kids have always done all of this." Another parent mentioned,

After the student had made arrangements for off-campus housing, the Mom, being concerned about the location be safe, investigated an alternative, communicated to

all parties involved – roommates and parents, and made arrangements for canceling the old rental and securing the new one.

Another parent simply commented about other parents who were “helping kids find apartments.”

Overall, the 19 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *assisting with residential moving process*.

Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as a Housing Advisor.

Theme 6 – Advocate for Healthcare

The sixth theme answers the parent portion of RQ1: How are parents describing and socially constructing parental identity and interactions in higher education? During the thematic coding process, a total of 54 references were clustered together under 3 unique nodes, or sub-themes, that shaped the emergence of a thematic theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Healthcare. Each of the individual nodes represented recurring slices of meaning and repetitive statements that were organized as a sub-theme of parent identity and interactions in higher education. The nodes, or sub-themes, which shaped the emergence of the sixth theme were Providing Support for Health Concerns/Prescription Issues, Helping with Sport Related Injuries, and Assisting with Medical Leave Process. Table 6 displays the sub-theme bundling for the sixth theme and includes the total number of references clustered into each sub-theme. These sub-themes

will now be discussed; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is reviewed first.

Providing Support for Health Concerns/Prescription Issues. A total of 41 references included the concept of *providing support for health concerns and prescription issues*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted students with health needs and prescription challenges. One parent stated, “The only times I have assisted her in solving problems at college have not been within the academic arena but rather lifestyle issues such as health care advocacy - like finding specialists when she's been ill/injured and managing insurance and medical billing.” Another parent commented, “He needed to see a doctor and I helped him figure out the process.” A parent also mentioned, “We worked to locate a physician on our insurance plan and make arrangements for payment and care.” An additional parent indicated, “The only time I get involved is with her health care issues. Trying to find a medical provider close by campus that takes our insurance. I found the information but let her choose to make the appointment.” A parent also specified, “When she had strep throat I coached her to email her profs and let them know the situation, use student health to diagnosis.” Another parent added, “The only problem she had was related to recurrent strep infections so I found a doctor in the area who was better than the university clinic.” An additional parent mentioned, “I helped him by calling the pharmacy and doctor's office to fix a mix-up in his prescription.” Another parent commented,

Daughter was ill and college health service has called in a prescription to a pharmacy however when my daughter went to pick it up they didn't have it. The college clinic was closed by then. I located the emergency number on the college website and called on my daughter's behalf and then asked the doctor on call to call my daughter to ensure that the prescription got called in so that my daughter could pick it up. Interaction was over the phone and through texting.

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping students with health care challenges. One parent commented, "The only time I've heard of parents becoming involved are instances that involved the health of their children." An additional parent stated, "Another parent told me of when her daughter was sick and she was trying to find out what care she could get her daughter." Another parent mentioned, "A parent flew in to take care of her daughter who fainted. She called the doctor and decided she should fly from California. When she got there, not surprisingly, she didn't need to be there - there wasn't any real problem."

Overall, the 41 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *providing support for health concerns and prescription issues*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Healthcare.

Helping with Sport Related Injuries. A total of 7 references included the concept of *helping with sport related injuries*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted students with sports related injuries. One parent indicated, “She's an athlete on scholarship with some health issues, so that is what most of our interaction has been about in terms of solving problems at college.” Another parent commented,

My daughter was experiencing painful hip issues and her legs were going numb during practice which affected her performance. There were questions as to whether or not athletics felt they needed to pursue the issue, or whether we had to do it through private insurance. There were numerous phone calls and emails with the coaching and training staff.

A parent also stated, “My daughter had a health problem and I needed to talk with her coaches and trainer to resolve the issue as well as the University Physicians.” An additional parent mentioned, “He hurt himself playing soccer and had questions on how our insurance worked, who to contact, and how to treat his injury.”

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping students with sports related injuries. One parent commented,

When I was talking to a co-worker about our college students she told me that when her child was an injured athlete in the first year of college she needed to reach out directly to the coaching staff because her child wasn't sure about their

future with the team and school. It turns out that the school was quite helpful in the recovery from the injury including working with the student and physical therapy to rebuild strength.

Another parent mentioned,

My friend's daughter is a soccer goalie at a D1 college. She injured herself badly. Couldn't play soccer after injury. The college athletic department handled all medical problems for them and advised them where to seek medical help. Story was told on the golf course by the mother of the athlete.

Overall, the 7 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *helping with sport related injuries*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Healthcare.

Assisting with Medical Leave Process. A total of 6 references included the concept of *assisting with medical leave process*. These references answered the first portion of RQ1 by using descriptive phrases to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. Parent references discussed ways in which parents assisted students with medical leave procedures. One parent stated,

The only involvement I have had with helping my daughter was assisting her in withdrawing for a quarter when she was having some medical issues and needed

to not go abroad and not be in school for a period of time; otherwise any issues she has had at school she has solved on her own.

Another parent indicated,

Son needed medical help. I had to go to help facilitate a medical leave. We researched info via websites with difficulty. Had son go to various departments to process info. In most cases I had to intervene as many departments are rude to students, dismissive and lacking in good business processes.

An additional parent commented, "She was in a car accident and needed health care.

Discussed her options in missing school." Another parent added, "Deciding if he should take a medical leave."

Specific references also answered the second portion of RQ1 and provided insights into how parental identity is being socially constructed through the exchange and sharing of personal stories about parental interactions. Parents referenced stories about other parents helping students with the medical leave process. One parent commented,

One of my friend's sons had a mental breakdown his sophomore year of college. She spent a lot of time working with the school he attends to not only find him help, but make sure that if/when he took a semester off, that he'd be able to come back in good standing.

Another parent mentioned,

A few years ago a coworker talked to me about his daughter because I asked him how his daughter was doing at college. We were walking to work and meet in a parking lot. His daughter fell ill and through phone calls had to help his daughter stay in school and catch-up. The counsellor was suggesting to withdraw for the

semester. He found the long distance communication difficult trying to help his daughter figure out what to do.

Overall, the 6 references highlighted parent descriptions about their own interactions in higher education, in addition to previously shared stories about the college interactions of other parents. Furthermore, the shared meaning of these descriptions and narratives related to the concept of *assisting with medical leave process*. Collectively, these exemplars provided answers to RQ1 and shaped the emergence of a unique theme describing a parent as an Advocate for Healthcare.

Parent References to Helicopter Parents

During the coding process the researcher also generated a node to collect any parental reference to *helicopter parents (HPs)*. A total of 13 references mentioned the hovering presence of parents in higher education. These references helped to answer RQ2: Are parents describing themselves as HPs, or are they using different terminology? Parent references focused on personal descriptions of themselves as HPs, in addition to descriptions of other parents as HPs. In regards to personal descriptions of themselves, one parent stated,

When I called the dean for my daughter, a friend called me a helicopter mother. I was shocked. I believe our culture has discouraged parental involvement to an extreme. College students are still young enough that they can benefit from parental wisdom.

Another parent replied, “Not helicopter parenting by any means.” An additional parent commented, “Supportive but not helicopter.” A parent also mentioned, “I don't want to

be a helicopter parent!” Another parent indicated, “Involved but not hovering.” Another parent added, “I am not a hovering mother.”

In regards to descriptions of other parents as HPs, one parent stated, “Parents of a friend fly in monthly to monitor their now senior student, a lot of discussion amongst our daughter and her friends about these helicopter parents.” Another parent indicated, “We are sensitive to hover parents and try to lead from the background.” An additional parent mentioned,

I have a friend who is a complete helicopter parent, and does everything for her two sons - discusses class schedule conflicts with their advisors, finds them apartments, arranges interviews for internships, pays their credit card bills. I don't think this is the best way to parent a college aged child, but they sure seem to be successful! I have heard many anecdotes over the past few years straight from her mouth.

Another parent commented,

One of my very good friends from where I used to live was telling me about her helping her son try and figure out where he wanted to go to school. She was doing the helicopter thing and asking everyone for info, doing research, paying a consultant to match her son with the "perfect" school, etc., all without seeming to get very much input from her son. He didn't seem to have a vested interest and after 1 semester at the "perfect" match school, he dropped out.

A parent also specified,

I work with someone who is also a part time professor. We were talking about “helicopter parents”. He told me that he actually gets phone calls from his

students' parents, asking about assignments and complaining about grades. I could not believe that parents were that involved at the college level.

An additional parent stated,

I work for a university administration. I had a meeting recently with our undergraduate admission office and they said they no longer refer to the "helicopter parent", today many are referred to as the "stealth parent!" This indicates the level of parental involvement.

Another parent added, "Universities should do everything they can to discourage helicopter parents. They can start by treating the students as young adults and eliminating or cutting back on events like family orientation, mother/grandmother weekends, etc."

Overall, the small number of HP references provided an answer to RQ2 and indicated that among the parent participants in this study the HP concept was not a prominent phrase used to describe parental identity and interactions in higher education. The prominent terminology related to the six emergent themes previously highlighted. However, upon review of these 13 references, many of these HP descriptions indicated a negative connotation about HPs hovering over higher education. Further discussion of this negative connotation about HPs will transpire in the upcoming fifth chapter.

Quantitative Results

As discussed in Chapter 3, this dissertation utilized quantitative measures to examine the fourth research question: *How does relational closeness and frequency of use of mediated communication relate to the frequency of parental intervention in their child's college experiences?* To answer this research question, Pearson's product-

moment correlation tests were run on both the millennial student and parent quantitative datasets.

Student Quantitative Results. Pearson's product-moment correlation tests were run on the student data to explore the relationship between parental intervention and relational closeness. In regards to the student data focused on parental interventions of the mother/parent1, results were significant, ($r = .21, p < .01, n = 162$). A weak positive relationship was found between the frequency of parental intervention of the mother/parent1 and the level of relational closeness. In regards to the student data focused on the parental interventions of the father/parent2, results were significant, ($r = .38, p < .01, n = 153$) and indicated a weak positive relationship between the frequency of parental intervention of the father/parent2 and the level of relational closeness.

Pearson's product-moment correlation tests were also run on the student data to explore the relationship between parental intervention and the use of mediated and face-to-face communication, which included text messages, voice-to-voice by phone, social networking service, video teleconference, email, face-to-face in the same physical location, and regular mail through letters, cards, or packages. In regards to the student data focused on the parental intervention of the mother/parent1, results were significant with one form of communication: video teleconference, ($r = .24, p < .01, n = 162$), which supported a weak positive relationship between the frequency of parental intervention and the frequency of use of video teleconference. In regards to the student data focused on the parental intervention of the father/parent2, results were significant for three forms of communication: text messaging, ($r = .17, p < .05, n = 162$); social networking service, ($r = .16, p < .05, n = 162$); and video teleconference, ($r = .18, p <$

.05, $n = 162$), which supported weak positive relationships between the frequency of parental intervention and the frequency of use of text messaging, social networking service, and video teleconference.

A paired sample t -test was also run to explore the difference between the frequency of parental intervention of the mother/parent1 as compared to the frequency of parental intervention of the father/parent2. Results indicated that there is a significant difference ($t [157] = 3.95, p < .01$) between frequency of parental intervention of the mother/parent1 ($M = 5.27, SD = 2.59$) as compared to the frequency of parental intervention of the father/parent2 ($M = 4.53, SD = 2.29$). This finding suggests that the millennial students' mothers/parents1 intervened significantly more often than the millennial students' fathers/parents2 intervened.

A paired sample t -test was also run on select cases to explore the difference between the frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the mother/parent1 as compared to the frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the father/parent2. Results indicated that there is a significant difference ($t [157] = 3.76, p < .01$) between frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the mother/parent1 ($M = 2.44, SD = 1.31$) as compared to the frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the father/parent2 ($M = 2.07, SD = 1.11$). This finding suggests that the student participants request parental intervention significantly more often from their mother/parent1 than from their father/parent2.

Parent Quantitative Results. Pearson's product-moment correlation tests were run on the entire parent dataset to explore the relationship between parental intervention and relational closeness. No significant results were found. Pearson's product-moment

correlation tests were also run on select cases based upon whether the respondents were identified as a mother or father. No significant results were found among mother nor fathers.

Pearson's product-moment correlation tests were also run on the entire parent dataset to explore the relationship between parental intervention and the use of mediated and face-to-face communication, which included text messages, voice-to-voice by phone, social networking service, video teleconference, email, face-to-face in the same physical location, and regular mail through letters, cards, or packages. Results were significant with one form of communication: email, ($r = .16, p < .01, n = 162$), which supported a weak positive relationship between the frequency of parental intervention and the frequency of email usage. Pearson's product-moment correlation tests were also run on select cases based upon whether the respondents were identified as a mother or father. Among mothers, results were significant with one form of communication: email, ($r = .13, p < .05, n = 310$), which supported a weak positive relationship between the frequency of parental intervention of mothers and the frequency of email usage. Among fathers, results were significant with two forms of communication: phone ($r = .27, p < .01, n = 127$) and email, ($r = .19, p < .05, n = 126$), which supported weak positive relationships between the frequency of parental intervention of fathers and the frequency of phone and email usage.

An independent sample *t*-test was also run to explore the difference between the frequency of parental intervention of the mother participants ($M = 4.69, SD = 1.99$) as compared to the frequency of parental intervention of the father participants ($M = 4.84, SD = 1.99$). No significant results were found.

An independent sample *t*-test was also run on select cases to explore the difference between the frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the mother participants ($M = 2.21, SD = 1.03$) as compared to the frequency of student initiated parental intervention of the father participants ($M = 2.32, SD = 1.06$). No significant results were found.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The study put forth in this dissertation sought to gain a deeper understanding of parental identity and interactions in higher education from the perspectives of millennial student and parents. Through a qualitative and quantitative methodology four research questions were examined to provide greater insights into how millennial students and parents were describing their interactions and communications at a four-year private university. Using these research questions and the relevant literature as a guide, along with the theoretical framework of social constructionism and a practical connection to the study of narratives, this chapter will begin with a discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings. The remaining sections of this chapter will focus on study implications, limitations, future research, and concluding thoughts related to the overall study.

Furthermore, as this discussion begins, it is important to initially situate the educational context from which the results of this study emerged. The students were enrolled at a private institution of higher education, with an annual cost of attendance that matched the 2015-2016 national average of nearly \$59,000 per year at a private four-year university (Onink, 2015). The average cost of attendance included tuition, housing, and meals for a college student who was living independently from his or her parents. As indicated in the demographic measures in the third chapter, among the student participants, nearly 93% lived separately from their parents in either on-campus or off-

campus housing; and among parent participants, nearly 87% of parents also indicated their college student lived separately in either on-campus or off-campus residences. Therefore, as seen in these demographic measures, a high percentage of these private university students were living separately from their parents and incurring the high cost of a private college education. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize that nearly 47% of the student participants and 65% of the parent participants indicated a family income over \$100,000. As a result, it is clear that a large portion of the parents who were analyzed in this study may have the financial resources to afford an expensive private university education. Previous literature has indicated that helicopter parents (HPs) have been classified as well-educated and dual-income parents who have the time and monetary resources that allow them to continue to hover over their college aged children (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006). In regards to this study, parent education and dual income measures were not implemented, however, as previously stated, a large percentage of the participants have a family income over \$100,000. Therefore, it is quite possible the parents analyzed in this study had monetary resources that allowed them to hover more closely over their adult children in a private university setting, which made the private university sample of students and parents selected for this study a unique and relevant sample of participants. As this discussion moves forward, the fact that the student and parent participants interact at a private university will be noted throughout the discussion and addressed in greater detail at pertinent moments.

Qualitative Findings Discussion

Research Question 1. The first research question explored how millennial students and parents are describing parental interactions and socially constructing parent

identity. Among the qualitative responses collected from the participants in this study, similar to previous literature, it was very evident from the emergent themes that both positive and negative outcomes of parental interactions were occurring at the selected private university setting. Furthermore, within the emergent themes there were also moments when parental interactions referenced parents as paying customers and thus reinforcing previous literature describing the consumerization of higher education. In addition, the sharing of stories among student and parent participants about the college interactions of other parents revealed a practical connection to the theoretical framework used in this dissertation that linked both social constructionism and the study of narratives to the formation of parent identity. For further discussion, this section will now discuss in greater detail these themes, negative and positive outcomes, and connections to the consumerization of higher education and the theoretical framework.

Overview of Themes. Specifically, from both the student and parent participants, five similar themes emerged that described the parental identity of parents in a private university setting as a Financial Supporter, Academic Consultant, Emotional Cheerleader, Housing Advisor, and Advocate for Independence. Additionally, among the parent responses a sixth theme also emerged where parents intervened as an Advocate for Healthcare. These themes echoed previous literature that highlighted the actions of overly involved parents in higher education (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Williams, 2005; Wills, 2005). In this study, as a Financial Supporter, students and parents described moments where parents assisted with tuition and college-related bills, financial aid documentation; and directly contacted financial personnel to resolve

problems for their students with tuition payments, scholarships, loans, and financial aid. As an Academic Consultant, students and parents depicted moments where parents assisted with course registration, transferring credits, selection of majors, finding internships, searching for employment after graduation, researching and editing papers, monitoring grades and graduation requirements, and directly contacting faculty and staff to resolve concerns associated with grades, change of majors, and study abroad requirements. As an Emotional Cheerleader, students and parents illustrated moments where parents acted as an emotional sounding board, encourager, listener, and romantic counselor. As a Housing Advisor, students and parents described moments where parents assisted with roommate issues, moving procedures, and directly contacted housing personnel and landlords to resolve residential problems for their students. As an Advocate for Healthcare, parent participants depicted moments where they assisted their child with illnesses, prescriptions, sports-related injuries, and medical leave procedures. As an Advocate for Independence, students and parents highlighted moments where parents were intentionally hands off and allowing millennial students to be their own problem solvers and make their own decisions at college.

Collectively, the four themes related to finance, academics, housing, and healthcare in relationship to sports injuries revealed how parents are actively involved, and perhaps hovering too closely and casting a negative shadow over the college lives of their millennial students in a private college setting. However, the three themes related to emotional support, advocacy of healthcare in relationship to personal illness, and advocacy of student independence revealed how parental interaction at a private

university can also benefit students as well. These qualitative findings related to negative and positive outcomes will now be discussed.

Negative Outcomes of Parental Interactions at a Private University. As revealed in the results section, many parents were trying to resolve student issues by directly contacting university personnel. Many exemplars in the results section revealed moments when private school parents contacted academic faculty to discuss grades, spoke with residential assistants and housing personnel about roommate issues, reached out to financial personnel to discuss tuition issues and financial aid procedures, and contacted college coaches with concerns about athletic injuries. These parental interactions revealed that the private school parents analyzed in this study were actively trying to intervene in college to solve a problem for their adult child, and as a result not always allowing the emerging adult to solve his or her own issues at the private college. These themes reinforced previous literature that highlighted the negative aspects that come from HPs who become overly involved with the admission process, course registration, paper editing, job interviews, and healthcare issues (Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Sanoff, 2006; Williams, 2005; Wills, 2005).

Positive Outcomes of Parental Interactions at a Private University. In regards to the three themes related to emotional support, advocacy for healthcare in relationship to illnesses, and advocacy for student independence, many parents casted a positive light over parental involvement in higher education at a private institution. As revealed in the results section, many student and parent participants described parents as being an Emotional Cheerleader, who was an emotional supporter, sounding board, listener, and encourager who was willing to help in any situation. This thematic finding adds to

previous research indicating the importance of family support and continuous optimism for emerging adults facing difficult college related decisions (Murphy et al., 2010).

Additionally, the study's participants also positively described parents as an Advocate for Healthcare. The parent participants in this study highlighted several moments when they advocated for help from local health professionals to treat illnesses and fill prescriptions. These findings reinforce past research which has indicated that college students who receive social support from their parents have an easier time accepting illnesses and thus are more likely to seek out health care and feel less stressed (Miczo et al., 2006). The private school parents in this study offered crucial and positive support to their student on how to physically and emotionally overcome illnesses.

Other positive outcomes were reflected in the emergent theme describing private school parents as an Advocate for Independence, where the parent was intentionally hands off. Specifically, these parent advocates in a private university setting were supporting student independence and self-reliance and allowing millennial students to be their own problem solvers and make their own decisions at college. Both the millennial student and parent participants referenced numerous moments when the parent acknowledged or directly encouraged the personal autonomy of the student. Overall, this is a very important qualitative finding to this study because it contradicts the concept of helicopter parenting. Clearly, among the student and parent participants in this study, many of them supported the notion that students need to experience independence, and become the main decision maker and problem solver in their college lives. Some of the parent participants indicated they wanted college to be the time for students to figure out their own lives and learn from their own experiences when it comes to success and

failures. This advocacy for student independence counters a HP desire to always want to rescue a student from pending failures. Further discussion of this important finding will take place in the upcoming section on study implications.

Connections to the Consumerization of Higher Education. Within the parent qualitative responses, there were also moments where some parent participants described themselves as paying customers of a private university, who were looking for a return on their monetary investment in their student's education. Participants in this study needed to finance a very expensive tuition bill in addition to significant room and board fees, similar to the 2015-2016 national average of \$59,000 per year for a four-year private university (Onink, 2015). As indicated in their responses, due to this high cost of attendance, some of these parents expected their millennial child would receive the best instruction and student resources. In addition, when a problem arose, parents also brought a consumer driven attitude into contact with university personnel. They expected that faculty and staff would readily share information to quickly resolve a paying customer's related issue, only to be surprised when university personnel did not rapidly respond to the parent's request, often due privacy laws and FERPA requirements. These consumer driven references by parent participants reinforce a contemporary trend that is viewing the university as a commercialized institution where education is a product or service and the students and their tuition paying parents are the consumers (Montgomery, 2010; Anctil, 2008; McMillan & Cheney, 1996).

It should also be noted that these consumer driven parental perspectives may also be partially shaped by parent and consumer friendly initiatives of the selected private university for this study. In particular, similar to many university websites, the chosen

university provides a parent portal on their website that links parents to a variety of online university resources to help inform and answer parent questions and concerns. Furthermore, the university website encourages parents to stay involved in their child's college experiences through a designed parents program that functions as an important communication resource for parents to stay updated and involved in their child's college experience. As a result, through the university's website and the creation of a parents program, the parent participants in this study have direct access points designed by the university to help resolve the questions and concerns of parents, many of whom as revealed in this study may view themselves as paying customers. Thus, the results of this study point toward the dual reinforcement of the consumerization of higher education by both the selected university for this study and the parent participants.

Theoretical Connection to the Formation of Parental Identity

The first research question in this study also looked to explore the social construction of parent identity in higher education. As referenced earlier, social constructionism is primarily concerned with the human interaction and the conversational process by which individuals come to describe and explain subjective meaning (Gergen, 1985), including the construction of identity, one's inner self (Bergen & Braithwaite, 2009; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In addition, as previously discussed, the use of narratives can help individuals gain a better or specific understanding of his or her identity (Christinsen & Cheney, 1997), through the process of sharing stories where an individual's identity can reflect the stories they tell to others and themselves (Kenyon & Randall, 1997). In this study, numerous stories were told by the student and parent participants that described the interactions of the parents of other millennial students.

Specifically, as described in the results section in connection with the six emerging themes, students and parents referenced numerous stories that had been heard about the college interactions of other parents where parents assisted with bill payments, completed financial aid procedures, helped register for classes, edited papers, contacted faculty about grades, reached out to housing personnel to resolve roommate issues. These stories were unfolding during conversations that the student and parent participants from a private university were having with other people, such as friends, coworkers, family members, college faculty and staff. These conversations took place over the phone and in face-to-face settings such as the workplace, parking lots, on the golf course, by the pool, on-campus, or during social and family gatherings. As a result, stories about the interactions of other parents were clearly being exchanged among the parent and student participants in this study, and revealed how parental identity in higher education is not simply being shaped by the sole experience of the parent and student participants, but instead parental identity is also being socially constructed through the conversational exchange of narratives describing the college interactions of other parents.

Overall, the findings of this study, when answering the first research question, indicated that millennial students and parent participants in this study are describing private university parents as a Financial Supporter, Academic Consultant, Emotional Cheerleader, Housing Advisor, Advocate for Healthcare, and Advocate for Independence. Additionally, it was very evident from the emergent themes that both positive and negative outcomes of parental interactions were occurring at the selected private university setting. Within the emergent themes there were also moments when parental interactions at the private university referenced the consumerization of higher

education. Finally, the sharing of stories among student and parent participants about the college interactions of other parents indicated a practical link to the theoretical framework used in this study that connected both social constructionism and the study of narratives to the formation of parent identity.

Research Question 2. The second research question asked whether parent participants are describing themselves as helicopter parents (HPs) or are using different terminology. As indicated in the results chapter, there were several distinct parent references using HP phrasing. For further discussion, this section will now discuss in greater detail the parent responses regarding HP references.

Helicopter Parenting References. The primary terminology being used by parents to describe their interactions were revealed through the six emerging themes that were recently discussed in this chapter where participants described parents as a Financial Supporter, Academic Consultant, Emotional Cheerleader, Housing Advisor, Advocate for Healthcare, and Advocate for Independence. However, as indicated in the exemplars highlighted in the results chapter, several direct parental references were made about HPs. The private university parent references focused on personal descriptions of themselves as HPs, in addition to descriptions of other parents as HPs. In regards to the HP description of themselves, parents were adamant they would never consider themselves to be HPs. One parent indicated complete shock when another parent told them they were a HP. Other parents steadfastly stated they were absolutely *not* HPs. Clearly, to these parents being labeled as a HP had a negative connotation.

In regards to the descriptions of other parents as HPs, the parent references were primarily HP stories about the college interactions of other parents and the negative

aspects of those HP interactions. Parent participants shared negative opinions about overly involved parents who tried to match their child to the perfect university only to see that child drop out after one semester; who never let their emerging adult child make college decisions and instead did everything for their student in regards to course registration, finding housing, arranging internships, and paying credit card bills; and who were calling professors asking about course assignments and complaining about grades. Similar to past literature, these HP stories were reiterating the negative narratives often found in popular media that can be associated with HP interactions in higher education (Gottlieb, 2011; Marano, 2011; Gabriel, 2010; Damast, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Sanoff, 2006; Schweitzer, 2005; Wills, 2005). An additional benefit of these HP references, is that this study has provided a scholarly connection to qualitative findings about private university HP anecdotes.

Furthermore, these HP stories referenced by the parent participants evolved from conversations these parents had with others, such as friends and coworkers. As a result, similar to the qualitative findings for the first research question, the sharing of these HP stories between parent participants and others reveal how a negative connotation of HP identity in higher education was being socially constructed through the conversational exchange of these HP narratives. Once again, stories about the interactions of other parents were clearly being exchanged among the parent participants in this study, and revealed how HP identity in higher education is not simply being shaped by the sole experience of the parent, but instead HP identity is also being socially constructed through the conversational exchange of narratives describing the HP interactions of other parents.

Overall, the qualitative HP findings associated with second research question clearly revealed a scholarly connection to HP interactions in higher education. Specifically, when parent participants described HP references about themselves and HP anecdotes about other parents in higher education, a negative HP connotation emerged from the parent references. In addition, these HP references provided another link to the theoretical framework connecting social constructionism and the study of narratives to the formation of parent identity.

Research Question 3. The third research question asked whether millennial students were encouraging parental involvement or striving for independence. The qualitative findings that answer this question were associated with the fifth emergent theme focused on advocacy for student independence. For further discussion, this section will now discuss in greater detail the student responses regarding their own advocacy for independence, in addition to specific questionnaire frequencies and percentages related to student-initiated requests for parental intervention.

Student Advocacy for Independence. The emergence of the fifth theme among student participants revealed that students at the selected private university are trying to establish their independence from their parents. As revealed in the exemplars presented in the results chapter, there were instances where students referenced their independence. Students indicated that they were viewing themselves as independent adults, who took pride in making their own decisions, being self-sufficient, and not always asking their parents for help. Student participants also referenced that they were letting go of their parents' hands and trying to minimize parental involvement in their private university education. This is another important finding because it also counters the natural

tendencies of helicopter parenting. Similar to the earlier discussion about parents acting as advocates for independence, many of the student participants also supported the notion that students need to experience independence in a private university setting. Once again, this advocacy for student independence challenges an HP desire to always want to rescue a student from pending failures.

Student-Initiated Parental Intervention. As revealed in the survey question that asked student participants whether or not they asked their parents for help when describing their personal story about their own parents' interactions in college, 64% stated "Yes". In addition, when parent participants were asked the same question when describing their own story about their interactions in college, 54% also stated "Yes", indicating that their child did ask for help during that particular interaction. Clearly, these affirmative answers by both the student and parent participants indicate millennial students are asking their parents to intervene and help solve problems that the students are having in college. In addition, as revealed in the results section, for the survey question that directly asked participants how often the students initiated parent intervention, the mean score for students asking their mothers for help was $M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.31$; the mean score for students asking their fathers for help was $M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.11$; the mean score for mother participants being asked by the students for help was $M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.03$; and the mean score for father participants being asked by the student for help was $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.06$. All of these mean scores were above 2.0 indicating that students were sometimes asking for help.

Furthermore, these contradictory findings, among the students analyzed in this study, indicated both a desire for independence and a craving for parental intervention.

These findings also added to previous research about college age children and parents, who did experience opposing contradictions, also known as dialectics (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996), regarding the desire for the student to be both connected to the parent while at the same time wanting to be independent and make his or her own decisions (Kelly et al., 2017); in addition to research about the negative impact of over-controlling parents on students' need for relatedness and autonomy (Schiffirin et al., 2014). Thus, the findings of this study when answering the third research question, indicated that millennial students are both encouraging parent participation in higher education, while at the same time striving for autonomy.

Quantitative Findings Discussion

Research Question 4. The fourth research question inquired about the relationship between the dependent variable of parental intervention in higher education and the independent variables of relational closeness and the frequency of use of mediated communication. For further discussion, this section will now discuss in greater detail the quantitative findings associated with these three variables.

Parental Intervention and Relational Closeness. As indicated in the results section, the frequency of parental intervention among the mother/parent1 of the student participants in this study was found to be significantly related to the level of relational closeness. In addition, the frequency of parental intervention among the father/parent2 of the student participants in this study was found to be significantly related to the level of relational closeness. Now granted these correlations were only weakly positive, and therefore warrant the need to further investigate this relationship in additional studies. However, they did still reveal a significant correlation between parental intervention and

relational closeness. In others words, among the student participants, higher frequencies of parental intervention were associated with higher levels of relational closeness, whereas lower frequencies of parental intervention were associated with lower levels of relational closeness. These findings suggest the possibility that private university mothers and fathers, who have close relationships with their millennial children during college, may also intervene more frequently. Furthermore, these findings offer new insights and add to past research connecting relational closeness to emerging adulthood. In particular, these findings bolster previous research where college students reported frequent contact and very close relationships with their parents (Harrigan & Miller-Ott, 2013; Miller-Ott et al., 2014). Thus, these quantitative findings have added depth to the scholarly conversation connecting parental intervention to relational closeness.

Parental Intervention and Mediated Communication. In regards to the relationship between mediated communication and parental intervention, as indicated in the results section, the frequency of parental intervention of the mother/parent 1 of the student participants was found to be significantly related to the frequency of use of video teleconference. Additionally, the frequency of parental intervention among the father/parent 2 of student participants was found to be significantly related to the frequency of use of text messaging, social networking service, and video teleconference. Furthermore, the parental intervention of all parent participants was found to be significantly related to use of email. Also, when identifying parent participants as mothers and fathers, the frequency of parental intervention of mothers was significantly related to the use of email. In addition, the frequency of parental intervention of fathers was significantly related to use of phone and email. Once again, these correlations were

only weakly positive, and therefore warrant the need to further investigate these relationships in additional studies. However, they also still revealed a significant correlation between parental intervention and five different forms of mediated communication. In others words, among the student and parent participants, higher frequencies of parental intervention of mothers were associated with higher frequencies of email and video teleconference, whereas lower frequencies of parental intervention of mothers were associated with lower frequencies of email and video teleconference. In regards to the paternal parent, higher frequencies of parental intervention of fathers were associated with higher frequencies of phone, text messaging, email, video teleconference, and social networking service; whereas lower frequencies of parental intervention of fathers were associated with lower frequencies of phone, text messaging, email, video teleconference, and social networking service.

These findings suggest, that private university mothers who use email and video teleconference more often with their millennial children during college, also intervene more frequently. Additionally, these findings suggest that private university fathers who use phone, text messaging, email, video teleconference, and social networking service more often with their millennial children during college, also intervene more frequently. Specifically, these findings offered new insights and added to past literature connecting mediated communication to the emerging adulthood of college students. The findings support Somers and Settle's (2010) contention that a rise in helicopter parents is due to the availability and expansion of technology. As discussed at the beginning of this discussion chapter, it is important to note that the student and parent participants in this study come from a private four-year institution and a large percentage of the participants

coming from wealthier families. Thus, due to family wealth, some of the parents and students in this study may have access to the most modern and efficient communication equipment and software that allow students and parents to reach out to one another at any moment of the day, and in turn receive a swift response moments after communication has been initiated by phone, text messaging, email, video teleconference, and social networking service. These specific forms of mediated communication provide rapid access and quick response for both student and parents at private institutions to potentially discuss student challenges in college and thus provide a practical forum to initiate parental intervention to help solve a problem that the student is having in college.

Furthermore, the findings that indicated significant relationships between parental intervention of private university fathers and the use of phone, text messaging, email, social networking service, and video conferencing may be partially due to the fact that past research has shown fathers use mediated communication to contact their college age children less than mothers (Chen & Katz, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Miller-Ott et al., 2014). Thus, with those previous findings in mind, it is possible that among the private university fathers examined in this study, when and if they decided to use those five forms of mediated communication then the topic of conversation may have had a more specific purpose, such as possibly resolving a particular problem the student was having in college rather than just talking about college life in general, which in turn could have influenced the significant association between parental intervention of fathers and those five forms of mediated communication. In other words, it possible the private university fathers in this study used these five forms of mediated communication more often for the specific purpose of parental intervention.

In contrast, among the private university mothers examined in this study, findings only indicated significant relationships between parental intervention of mothers and the use of video conferencing and email, which may be partially due to the fact that past research has indicated mothers attempt to maintain an on-going family connection with their emerging adult children during their college years (Kins et al., 2011) and use more mediated communication with their college aged children than fathers (Chen & Katz, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Miller-Ott et al., 2014). Thus, with those previous findings in mind, it is possible that among the private university mothers examined in this study, the regular use of mediated communication to stay connected with their children, with the exception of video conferencing and email, was not significantly associated with the parental intervention of mothers because mediated communication is used more often by mothers than fathers to communicate with their college aged children regardless of whether or not the topic of conversation is specifically focused on parental intervention to help solve a college problem or simply talk about college life in general. In other words, it possible the private university mothers analyzed in this study are using the phone, text messaging, and social networking services on an ongoing basis to communicate with their children in college, regardless of whether or not they are choosing to intervene and solve a problem their child is having in college.

However, in regards to the significant finding between parental intervention of mothers and the use of email and video teleconference, these findings, along with the similar significant email finding among all parents, may have been influenced by the unique characteristics of these two forms of mediated communication. An email message can easily be used by private university parents to intervene and assist on student

problems in college with parents being able to script and send a more private and detailed email message with possible file attachments, as compared to the limitation of some of the other forms of mediated communication, such as the limited typing space available for text messages, or the public nature of social networking services. Additionally, video teleconferencing may have yielded a significant correlation with parental intervention of private university mothers due to similar reasoning that video teleconferencing presents a visual and audio forum where parents, who are often geographically separated from the student, can intervene and have a more detailed and personal conversation with the student about an issue he or she is having in college. In other words, the private university parents analyzed in this study may have an easier time using email and video teleconference for more detailed and personal discussions when choosing to intervene and help resolve student challenges in college.

As indicated in the results section, findings also revealed that private university mothers of millennial student participants intervened significantly more often than private university fathers. These findings add to previous research that indicated mothers attempt to maintain an on-going family connection during the college years (Kins et al., 2011) and contact their college aged children more often than fathers (Chen & Katz, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Miller-Ott et al., 2014). In addition, these findings also extend previous research that suggests fathers foster more independence in their children than mothers (Shulman & Sieffge-Crank, 1997), which may be a reason why the private university fathers of the student participants intervened significantly less than the mothers. In other words, as compared to the mothers of the student participants, it is

possible the fathers favored student autonomy over parental intervention, which may have partially influenced this significant finding.

Overall, the findings indicated parental intervention is positively associated with relational closeness among both fathers and mothers; in addition parental intervention among mothers is positively associated with email and video teleconference; and among fathers parental intervention is positively associated with phone, text messaging, email, social networking service, and video teleconference. These findings add to the scholarly conversation about the connections between parental intervention, relational closeness, and mediated communication, by offering new insights about mothers and fathers' relationships with their emerging adult student, their mediated communication choices, and their level of involvement at a private institution of higher education.

Implications

Through a qualitative and quantitative methodology, this dissertation sought to analyze and gain a deeper understanding of parental identity and interactions at a four-year private institution of higher education. In particular, three implications stand out. First, the qualitative methodology for this study helped fill a gap in scholarly research for more academic studies that explore the anecdotal descriptions of parental interactions in higher education, which currently have been mainly limited to general references in popular media. As a result, the qualitative findings put forth in this dissertation examined the private university student and parent narratives that were describing both their own parental interactions, in addition to the college interactions of other parents. The six emergent themes from the data analysis has helped further define what parent identity looks like at a four-year private institution of higher education. In particular, these

themes have added to previous literature by reinforcing both the positive and negative outcomes of parental interactions in a private university setting.

The second implication, involved an important finding regarding the emergent theme associated with the advocacy of independence. This was an important finding to this study because it contradicts the concept of helicopter parenting. The notion that students need to experience independence, and become their own decision maker and problem solver, challenges the HP notion to always want to rescue college students and protect them from pending failures. Many of the private university parent participants in this study indicated they wanted their millennial children to be independent, to solve their own issues, and to learn from their own success and failures. This parent advocacy for independence was also echoed in the student responses that described similar parental desires for students to be more self-reliant. However, the student participants also referenced moments where the student was an Advocate for Independence. Student participants discussed how they wanted to let go of their parents' hands and minimize parental involvement in their private university education. Collectively, these findings pair students and parents under the same label as Advocates for Independence and add to the scholarly HP discussion by bringing a new qualitative finding that counters some of the common negative HP anecdotes put forth in popular media.

A third important implication of this study is that the qualitative methodology also answered a scholarly challenge put forth for more studies that employ both a narrative and social constructive theoretical framework (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). Specifically, the qualitative findings of this study used social constructionism and a connection to the study of narratives as a practical theoretical framework to examine insightful stories that

were shaping parent identity in a private university setting. As referenced earlier in this discussion, numerous stories were told by the student and parent participants that described the interactions of other parents in higher education. These stories were unfolding during conversations that the student and parent participants were having with other people, such as friends, coworkers, family members, college faculty and staff. These conversations took place over the phone and in face-to-face settings such as the workplace, parking lots, on the golf course, by the pool, on-campus, or during social and family gatherings. The exchange of these narratives through conversation, revealed how parental identity in higher education is not simply being shaped by the sole experience of the parent and student participants, but instead parental identity is also being socially constructed through the conversational exchange of narratives describing the college interactions of other parents.

Limitations and Future Research

A primary limitation to this study was the sample of participants. All student and parent participants came from a private four-year institution. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this sample was a practical choice for this study. A large portion of the private university parents, who were analyzed in this study, had financial resources that could reinforce the hovering tendencies of helicopter parenting. Previous literature has classified HPs as well-educated and dual-income parents who have the time and monetary resources that allow them to continue to hover over their college aged children (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006). In regards to this study, it is quite possible the private university parents, who were analyzed, have the monetary resources that allows them to hover more closely over their adult children in a private university setting, which

made the private university students and parents selected for this study a unique and relevant sample of participants, while at the same time was a limitation to this study.

In regards to monetary resources, it is feasible to consider the family wealth associated with the private university student and parent participants, which indicated a large percentage of the participants have an annual family income over \$100,000, may have given these millennial students and parents greater electronic and physical access to one another, which may have impacted the findings for this study. For example, parents in this study may have had the financial and disposable income to overcome geographic separation from campus and afford more opportunities to physically visit the college campus. Most likely they had access to a vehicle and could afford the cost of gas and easily have driven the necessary miles to visit the college campus. Additionally, if the miles to campus were too great in number, family wealth could have provided these parents the opportunity to have purchased a plane ticket and rented a vehicle for traveling to and from campus. Due to a higher family income, these affordable car and plane trips could have been taken whenever the parent or student felt it is necessary, whether that was for a social visit with a student during a week day, or for a parent's weekend that was organized by the university, or perhaps for a face-to-face meeting with a faculty advisor to try and resolve a problem the student was having in college. In addition, the family wealth of these private university participants may have also allowed access to the most advance and efficient phones, tablets, and computers, in addition to the larger data plans that would have allowed this study's parents and students to use mobile technology more often or whenever necessary to communicate with each other in a private university setting. As a result, the affordability of visiting a campus and the immediate and efficient

access to mobile phones, which offered unlimited access to text messaging, email, video teleconference, and social networking services, could have been factors that influenced the student and parent interactions in this study, and thus impacted their qualitative and quantitative responses.

Thus it would be of great value for future studies to examine participant responses at other campus settings, such as four-year public universities, in addition to two-year community college settings. The student and parents interacting in these settings have the potential to bring different family perspectives to future findings. For example, when compared to the price of a private university, a four-year public university is traditionally less expensive, with an annual cost of attendance that was projected to be nearly \$29,000 for the 2015-2016 academic year (Onink, 2015) which is still a significant price, however it also \$30,000 cheaper than the projected annual cost of a private institution. Therefore, the public university students and parents may have chosen the lower priced public setting due to a lower level of family wealth when compared to the family income levels of the private university participants in this study. This could also be stated for community college students and parents, as well. Future participants with a lower family income may have limited financial means which may hinder convenient or frequent transportation to college campuses. Recent literature has indicated that travel and hotel costs can hinder campus visits by parents with limited family wealth (Kiyama et al., 2015). In addition, limited finances could also impact mediated communication due to less efficient phones, tablets, and computers, with smaller data plans. As result, the hovering tendencies of public university and community college parents may be lower due a lack of monetary resources as compared to the private university participants in this

study. Furthermore, previous literature has indicated that a wider range of research focused on parents in differing economic classes can reveal greater insights into how parents are integrating themselves into higher education (Kiyama et al., 2015). Thus, in future research, participants with lower levels of family wealth from public university and community college settings may provide alternate findings due to different family norms and expectations when it comes to finances, mediated communication, and parental interactions in higher education.

An additional limitation of the sample used in this study was that the participants were predominantly homogenous with the majority of participants identifying themselves as caucasian. In addition, a vast number of participants were female. As a result, parental expectations, interactions, and perspectives may differ from a more diverse sample of students and parents, who are experiencing different cultural and gender perspectives. In particular, previous literature examining overly involved parents in higher education has indicated that parenting may be viewed differently based upon race, gender, educational history, first-generation status, and differing cultures (Kiyama et al., 2015, Odenweller et al., 2014; Padilla-Walker et al., 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). In future research, compared to the predominantly caucasian and female perspectives found in this study, a more diverse sample of student and parents from institutions of higher education in different geographic settings could bring differing perspectives on the concepts of poverty, racism, segregation, and family structures. Parental interactions and use of mediated communication could be very different at a small community college campus in a rural southeast community, as compared to a large public university setting in a highly populated urban city in the northeast. The economic, racial, gender, and

family norms and values impacting parental involvement on those campuses could be significantly different when compared to a private mid-size western university. Thus, future studies examining parental interaction in higher education should strive to include a more diverse and balanced sample of participants from public universities and community college settings from around the country.

Conclusion

The findings of this mixed method study can help students, parents, and university personnel to successfully navigate the college years. Students, parents, faculty and staff can benefit from the qualitative findings that revealed six emergent themes by recognizing that the parents interacting in the private university setting for this study were commonly involved, and sometimes hovering too closely over college issues related to finance, academics, housing, and sports related healthcare. Additionally, the thematic findings in this study can benefit important members of the college community by recognizing that the private university parents in this study were also a positive resource for both emotional support, healthcare advocacy in regards to illness, and acknowledging the need for students to be independent and strive for autonomy in higher education. Furthermore, the qualitative findings in this study indicated that the private university students can experience contradictory tensions involving competing desires to obtain both parental participation and personal independence during their college years. Ideally, these qualitative findings situated in this study can help students, parents, and university personnel to become more informed and better prepared to achieve a successful college experience.

In addition, the quantitative significant findings in this study regarding the relationship between parental intervention and the use of phone, text messaging, email, social networking services, and video teleconference, can assist parents and students by recognizing which modes of communication may influence the frequency of parental intervention in a private university setting. Among the participants in this study, when communicating with mothers, the significant finding between parental intervention and email and video teleconference may indicate that these forms of mediated communication are the most detailed and personal electronic forums used between the mothers and students in this study when communicating about a problem in college. Additionally, when communicating with fathers, the significant findings between parental intervention and phone, text messaging, email, social networking service, and video teleconference may indicate that fathers in this study used these five forms of mediated communication more often for the specific purpose of parental intervention. Furthermore, mothers may benefit from acknowledging the quantitative finding in this study that private university mothers intervened significantly more often than fathers.

Overall, the collective findings in this study, can help university personnel at private universities to design and implement more effective websites, parent programs, and new student and parent orientation seminars. Ultimately, millennial students, parents, and university personnel can use the discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings from this study to gain a richer and deeper understanding of parental identity and interactions at a four-year private university, and successfully and effectively navigate their own modern college experience.

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Appendix A

PARENT-ADULT CHILD RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. This brief survey examines the degree of closeness, use of computer mediated communication (such as text messaging, email, video teleconference, etc.), and parental involvement in parent-adult child relationships.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please follow the directions highlighted in bold. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential.

The following questions will help us define your parent-adult child relationship. Please indicate your response by circling the appropriate answer or entering the desired information.

1.	Your sex.	Male	Female								
2.	Your age.	_____ Years Old									
3.	Your Mother's/Parent1's age.	_____ Years Old									
4.	Your Father's/Parent2's age	_____ Years Old									
5.	Total number of children in your family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
		Other _____									
6.	Your birth order.	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	
		Other _____									
7.	Your year in college.	First Year Student			Sophomore			Junior		Senior	
		Graduate									
		Student									

Parents and adult children often have varying degrees of closeness with one another, therefore please answer the following questions about your level of closeness with your mother/parent1 and father/parent2 by circling the appropriate number on a 1-to-5 scale.

		Not at All		Somewhat		Very Much
8.	How openly do you talk with your Mother/Parent1?	1	2	3	4	5
9.	How careful do you feel you have to be about what you say to your Mother/Parent1?	1	2	3	4	5
10.	How comfortable do you feel admitting doubts and fears to your Mother/Parent1?	1	2	3	4	5
11.	How interested is your Mother/Parent1 in talking to you when you want to talk?	1	2	3	4	5

		Not at All		Somewhat		Very Much
12.	How often does your Mother/Parent1 express affection or liking for you?	1	2	3	4	5
13.	How well does your Mother/Parent1 know what you are really like?	1	2	3	4	5
14.	How close do you feel to your Mother/Parent1?	1	2	3	4	5
15.	How confident are you that your Mother/Parent1 would help you if you had a problem?	1	2	3	4	5
16.	If you needed money, how comfortable would you be asking your Mother/Parent1 for it?	1	2	3	4	5
17.	How interested is your Mother/Parent1 in the things you do?	1	2	3	4	5
18.	How openly do you talk with your Father/Parent2?	1	2	3	4	5
19.	How careful do you feel you have to be about what you say to your Father/Parent2?	1	2	3	4	5
20.	How comfortable do you feel admitting doubts and fears to your Father/Parent2?	1	2	3	4	5
21.	How interested is your Father/Parent2 in talking to you when you want to talk?	1	2	3	4	5
22.	How often does your Father/Parent2 express affection or liking for you?	1	2	3	4	5
23.	How well does your Father/Parent2 know what you are really like?	1	2	3	4	5
24.	How close do you feel to your Father/Parent2?	1	2	3	4	5
25.	How confident are you that your Father/Parent2 would help you if you had a problem?	1	2	3	4	5
26.	If you needed money, how comfortable would you be asking your Father/Parent2 for it?	1	2	3	4	5
27.	How interested is your Father/Parent2 in the things you do?	1	2	3	4	5

The following statements concern the ways parents and adult children communicate in their relationship. Please report how often you communicate with your mother/parent 1 or father/parent2 via the following means.

28.	How many times per week do you communicate by text messaging with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
29.	How many times per week do you communicate by phone (voice-to-voice) with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
30.	How many times per week do you communicate by social networking service (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
31.	How many times per week do you communicate by video teleconference (such as Skype, Face Time, etc.) with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>

32.	How many times per week do you communicate by email with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
33.	How many times per week do you communicate face-to-face (in the same physical location) with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
34.	How many times per week do you communicate by regular mail through letters, cards, or packages with your Mother/Parent1? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
35.	How many times per week do you communicate by text messaging with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
36.	How many times per week do you communicate by phone (voice-to-voice) with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
37.	How many times per week do you communicate by social networking service (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
38.	How many times per week do you communicate by video teleconference (such as Skype, Face Time, etc.) with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
39.	How many times per week do you communicate by email with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
40.	How many times per week do you communicate face-to-face (in the same physical location) with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
41.	How many times per week do you communicate by regular mail through letters, cards, or packages with your Father/Parent2? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>

The following statements inquire how often your mother/parent1 or father/parent2 has intervened in your college experiences. Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate number on a 1-to-5 scale.

		Not at All		Sometimes		Frequently
42.	How often does your Mother/Parent1 gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?	1	2	3	4	5
43.	How often does your Father/Parent2 gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?	1	2	3	4	5
44.	How often do you ask your Mother/Parent1 to gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?	1	2	3	4	5

45.	How often do you ask your Father/Parent2 to gather information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you are having at college?	1	2	3	4	5
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The following items are looking for open ended responses. Please write out a detailed response to each question.

46.	How would you describe your parents' involvement in your higher educational experiences?
47.	Tell me a story about a personal experience when your mother or father gathered information on your behalf to try and solve a problem you were having at college (<i>Who was involved? What was the topic of discussion? When and where did the interaction occur? How did the interaction take place – face-to-face, over the phone, via email?</i>)
48.	In the personal story you just shared, did you ask your mother/father for help? Yes No
49.	Tell me a story that you heard about someone else's parents gathering information on their child's behalf to try and solve a problem their child was having at college. (<i>Who told you the story and/or what was the source – another student, parent, co-worker, a news article? When and where did the story get told? What was the discussion topic?</i>)

50.	Are there any other parent stories or comments you would like to share? If so, please describe.
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The following demographic questions are optional. Your answers are completely anonymous. Please indicate your response by circling the appropriate answer.

51.	Your ethnic background.	African American Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin Asian/Pacific Islander American Indian Caucasian Other: _____
52.	Current School Year Residence.	On Campus Residence Hall/Apartment/House Off Campus Apartment /House Lives at Home with Parents
53.	Your family's yearly income.	Under \$25,000 \$25,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$75,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$149,999 Over \$150,000

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF PARENT IDENTITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN THE TRIADIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL

You are invited to participate in a study that will gather and examine pertinent information about the construction of parent identity in higher education. Results will be used to help undergraduate students, parents, and university personnel successfully and effectively navigate the modern college experience. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the doctoral dissertation requirements of the primary researcher, Daniel W. Johnson, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (johnson1dw@aol.com), and is supervised by Dr. Elizabeth Suter, Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver, Denver CO 80208, (303-871-4492, esuter@du.edu)

Participation in this study should take about 15-20 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 55 questions about parental involvement in higher education. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue your participation at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be anonymous, identified by code number only, and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to individual data. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the completion of your questionnaire, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may email du-irb@du.edu, or call the Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050, or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

PARENT-ADULT CHILD RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. This brief survey examines the degree of closeness, use of computer mediated communication (such as text messaging, email, video teleconference, etc.), and parental interaction in parent-adult child relationships.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you have more than one child in college, please select only one of those children and complete this survey with that child in mind. Please follow the directions highlighted in bold. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential.

The following questions will help us define your parent-adult child relationship. Please indicate your response by circling the appropriate answer or entering the desired information.

1.	Your sex.	Male Female
2.	Your age.	_____ Years Old
3.	Your child's age.	_____ Years Old
4.	Total number of children in your family.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Other _____
5.	Birth order of the child you selected for this survey.	1 st 2 nd 3 rd 4 th 5 th 6 th 7 th 8 th 9 th Other _____
6.	Your child's year in college during the 2013-2014 academic year.	First Year Student Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate Student

Parents and adult children often have varying degrees of closeness with one another, therefore please answer the following questions about your level of closeness with your son or daughter by circling the appropriate number on a 1-to-5 scale.

		Not at All		Somewhat		Very Much
7.	How openly do you talk with your son/daughter?	1	2	3	4	5
8.	How careful do you feel you have to be about what you say to your son/daughter?	1	2	3	4	5
9.	How comfortable do you feel admitting doubts and fears to your son/daughter?	1	2	3	4	5
10.	How interested is your son/daughter in talking to you when you want to talk?	1	2	3	4	5
11.	How often does your son/daughter express affection or liking for you?	1	2	3	4	5
12.	How well does your son/daughter know what you are really like?	1	2	3	4	5
13.	How close do you feel to your son/daughter?	1	2	3	4	5
14.	How confident are you that your son/daughter would help you if you had a problem?	1	2	3	4	5

15.	If your son/daughter needed money, how comfortable would he/she be asking you for it?	1	2	3	4	5
16.	How interested is your son/daughter in the things you do?	1	2	3	4	5

The following statements concern the ways parents and adult children communicate in their relationship. Please report how often you communicate with your son or daughter via the following means.

17.	How many times per week do you communicate by text messaging with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
18.	How many times per week do you communicate by phone (voice-to-voice) with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
19.	How many times per week do you communicate by social networking service (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
20.	How many times per week do you communicate by video teleconference (such as Skype, Face Time, etc.) with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
21.	How many times per week do you communicate by email with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
22.	How many times per week do you communicate face-to-face (in the same physical location) with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>
23.	How many times per week do you communicate by regular mail through letters, cards, or packages with your son/daughter? _____ <i>Times Per Week</i>

The following statement inquires about your interaction in your son's or daughter's college experiences. Please answer the following question by circling the appropriate number on a 1-to-5 scale.

		Not at All		Sometimes		Frequently
24.	How often do you gather information on your son's or daughter's behalf to try and solve a problem he or she is having at college?	1	2	3	4	5
25.	How often does your son or daughter ask you to gather information on his or her behalf to try and solve a problem he or she is having at college?	1	2	3	4	5

The following items are looking for open ended responses. Please type out a detailed response to each question.

26.	How would you describe your role in your son or daughter's higher educational experiences?
27.	Tell me a story about a personal experience you had gathering information on your son's or daughter's behalf to try and solve a problem he or she was having at college? (<i>Who was involved? What was the topic of discussion? When and how did the interaction take place – face-to-face, over the phone, via email?</i>)
28.	In the personal story you just shared, did your son or daughter ask for your help? Yes No
29.	Tell me a story that you heard about another parent gathering information on his or her child's behalf to try and solve a problem his or her child was having at college. (<i>Who told you the story and/or what was the source – another parent, co-worker, a news article? When and where did the story get told? What was the discussion topic?</i>)
30.	Are there any other related stories or comments you would like to share? If so, please describe.

The following demographic questions are optional. Your answers are completely anonymous. Please indicate your response by circling the appropriate answer.

31.	Your ethnic background.	African American Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin Asian/Pacific Islander American Indian Caucasian Other: _____
32.	Your son or daughter's current school year residence.	On Campus Residence Hall/Apartment/House Off Campus Apartment /House Lives at Home with Parents
33.	Your family's yearly income.	Under \$25,000 \$25,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$75,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$149,999 Over \$150,000

Appendix D

PARENT INVITATIONAL EMAIL

SUBJECT: University of Denver Parent Research Project – Request for Participation

Dear Parent:

As an important participant in your child's undergraduate college experience, you are invited to participate in a study that will gather and examine pertinent information about the construction of parent identity in higher education. Results will be used to help parents, undergraduate students, and university personnel successfully and effectively navigate the modern college experience.

In addition, this study is supported by the Parents Program at the University of Denver, and is being conducted to fulfill the doctoral dissertation requirements of the primary researcher, Daniel W. Johnson, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver.

Participation in this study should take about 10-15 minutes of your time, and will involve the completion of an online questionnaire consisting of 33 questions about parental involvement in higher education. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary.

Please click on the link below to complete the questionnaire.

[INSERT LINK TO ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE]

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in this valuable research project.

Daniel W. Johnson
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Communication Studies
University of Denver
Denver, CO 80208
johnson1dw@aol.com

Appendix E

PARENT INFORMED CONSENT FORM via PAGE ONE OF ONLINE SURVEY

THIS PAGE IS TO DETERMINE YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE:

This study is supported by the Parents Program at the University of Denver, and is being conducted to fulfill the doctoral dissertation requirements of the primary researcher, Daniel W. Johnson, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (johnson1dw@aol.com), and is supervised by Dr. Elizabeth Suter, Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver, Denver CO 80208, (303-871-4492, esuter@du.edu).

Participation in this study should take about 10-15 minutes of your time. Participation will involve the completion of an online questionnaire consisting of 33 questions about parental involvement in higher education. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue your participation at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be anonymous, identified by code number only, and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to individual data. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this survey address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the completion of your online questionnaire, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may email du-irb@du.edu, or call the Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050, or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

If you understand and agree to the above description of the study entitled, “An Analysis of the Construction of Parent Identity in Higher Education within the Triadic Relationship between Parents, Students, and University Personnel,” please click on the link below to complete the questionnaire. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please contact the researcher with any questions you have.

Furthermore, by selecting the link to the questionnaire below, you are acknowledging that you have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study, and have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that you did not fully understand, and thus consent to participate in this study.

[INSERT LINK TO THE START OF QUESTIONNAIRE]