Type of School and Parental Awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts When Selecting a College in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

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TYPE OF SCHOOL AND PARENTAL AWARENESS OF THE CLERY AND MINGER ACTS WHEN SELECTING A COLLEGE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Steven R. Briggs

August 2014
TYPE OF SCHOOL AND PARENTAL AWARENESS OF THE CLERY AND MINDER ACTS WHEN SELECTING A COLLEGE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

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The steadfast support of my wife Laura and my two wonderful daughters, Emma and Abby, have allowed me to accomplish my personal and professional goals and have given me the privilege to model the significance of education, not only to them, but for others. Thank you for always supporting me in all of my endeavors, and thank you for always achieving beyond what you think is possible for yourselves. It is to these amazing three ladies that I dedicate this dissertation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been a very unique and powerful journey into my professional and personal development. As the conclusion to this process draws near, there are many who need to be acknowledged. First and foremost and given my faith, I am thankful to my Lord, Jesus Christ, who on many occasions heard my prayers and provided strength to finish. Second, I must acknowledge my wonderful family. First, to my uber-supportive wife Laura, from the time you said, “Go for it” to your unending, tender, firm, and loving encouragement, you continue to serve as my strongest advocate in any endeavor I choose. I am blessed beyond any description to have you in my life and for the support you have given me. To my beautiful and intelligent daughters, Emma and Abby, I say thank you for putting up with my absence and my grumpiness these past four years as I completed this degree. Your steadfast faith in me, as well as growing into strong educated women with little guidance from me, provided more strength than you will ever know. To my parents, Steve and Nanceen, thank you for your support in all my education endeavors and instilling upon me a strong work ethic. I also have been afforded a challenging and rewarding position in the field of student affairs at a great institution, which allows me to pursue this educational opportunity. I am indebted to my mentor, friend, boss, and colleague, Brian W. Kuster for the financial and professional support in completing this degree. As I traveled further through this educational journey, I spent significant time with another mentor, who provided me with a professional voice. To HB (Howard Bailey), thank you for your time and wisdom. I also follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before me, whose support and encouragement were above and beyond in overcoming the many hurdles that arose during this process. I sincerely thank you, Dr.
David Parrott, Dr. V. Lynne Holland, Dr. Kelli Peck-Parrott, Dr. Denise Collins, and Dr. Peggy Crowe for your steadfast support in this endeavor. To my dissertation committee consisting of Dr. Aaron Hughey, Dr. Monica Burke, Dr. Fred Gibson, and Dr. Karl Laves, thank you for your time and selflessness in seeing me through this process as painless as possible. Bob Cobb, your tough love in methodology is exactly what I needed and thank you for refocusing my attention on quality research. I also would like to thank my link to the Kentucky Home School culture, Cari Small. Not only did I gain a unique insight of the home schooling perspective, but your work in connecting me to the parents of the home schooling community and assuring the parents that I was one of the “good guys” served to be very valuable in collecting data. I am indebted to Cathie Bryant for proofing this dissertation for final draft. I also would be remiss to not mention the encouragement from Gaye Pearl and Dr. Tony Norman, who on more than one occasion turned me around and kept me going. I will fondly remember each of your roles as I complete this dissertation. Dr. Hughey - thank you for the countless coffees, encouragement, and guidance. “We’ll get this done,” is a quote I plan to use in the future. I would like to thank my church family for their prayers as they powered me through many of the dark days. Most specifically to be thanked among my church family would be Dr. Mark Doggett and Mr. Rex Eaton. To my Cohort IV dissertation writing partner, Shahbaz Munawar, I appreciate our times of accountability and working each evening to take care of the task at hand. I hope to fondly keep your friendship well beyond our graduation. Finally, I would be remiss to not thank my Cohort IV family. Our class love and the motto, “We got this,” helped me to persevere.
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College and university campuses are being scrutinized more stringently in regard to the issue of campus safety. While media reports and advocacy groups may suggest to parents that college campuses are becoming more dangerous, research continues to demonstrate that colleges are a relatively safe environment. A problem exists that, although the Clery Act and the Minger Act in the Commonwealth of Kentucky require colleges and universities to report campus crime rates in order that parents and students can make an informed decision on selecting a college based on campus safety, few parents tend to be familiar with this resource. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of campus safety for parents of three types of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky as they assist their students in the college selection process. A key component to this research study was the parental awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act.

The research design of this non-experimental study consisted of collecting the responses of 678 parents of three high school types (public high school, private high school, and home school). Literature on home schooling parents, in particular indicated that aspects for choosing this environment were related to safety. The instrument for this study, the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI), was created by the researcher. Frequency distribution analyses, as well as simple t-test procedures, were conducted in an
effort to determine levels of awareness as well as importance of campus safety. Analyses indicated that a statistical significance existed for the level of awareness for the Clery Act for parents of private school environments. All types of parents indicated that the importance of campus safety was the top of ten factors when assisting their child in selecting a college or university to attend; however, a vast majority of the parents lacked awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act. Recommendations for future research focused on the techniques utilized by colleges and universities in creating an environment designed to partner with prospective parents would contribute to the current body of literature on parental influence and campus safety.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over the past seven years, attention has grown toward violence on college and university campuses. Media coverage and increased technology associated with social media has caused the awareness for college student safety to become a more pressing consideration for many students and parents as they begin to determine what type of college or university the respective student chooses to attend. The parental unit of today’s college students continues to serve as a relevant influence when selecting a college or university. While concerns such as intended major, location to home, and cost consistently form the core concerns for parents, federal and state legislative initiatives and increased media coverage of campus violence have prompted safety on college campuses to become a much more prevalent factor related to the selection of an institution for postsecondary education. The federal law designed to help inform parents of crimes occurring on campuses is the Clery Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), originally passed in 1990 as the Campus Crime Act. In the Commonwealth of Kentucky the law that provides information for parents on the state level is known as the Minger Act (The Michael H Minger Foundation, 2014). Parental influence also continues to serve as a guiding factor for prospective college students. Many university administrators can willingly provide a story in which parents inserted themselves when concerned for the safety of their child. This style of over-parenting has received a moniker popularly known today as “helicopter parents.” A study by Allen (2007) included participant interviews and prompted the following insight from the author, “it seemed parents of the participants were more concerned with Campus Safety than the actual participants” (p. 70).
A common misconception for the parental unit with regard to safety and the college student is the Latin phrase, *in loco parentis*, which is translated to, in lieu of the parents. While litigious court cases have consistently upheld that college students over the age of 18 are recognized adults (Kaplin & Lee, 2007) and are responsible for their own actions, many of today’s parents frequently hold to the notion that their respective students are now in the parental guardianship of the college or university. Yet, many of today’s college student parents still consider their 18-year-old adult children lack the skills of maturity, decision making, and preparedness when attending college, resulting in the parents increased involvement. Consequences of this form of parenting have been identified by Segrin, Waszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, and Taylor-Murphy (2012), as they described negative tenets of this form of parenting. Coburn and Treeger (2003) shared that some parents come to the time for their children to enter college, and “The effect of all this is to raise the college years to a larger-than-life, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that will make or break our children’s futures.” (p. 7). This form of thinking also may lead to the fallacious generalization by many parents that colleges and universities will provide an environment of complete safety for the respective student. Tantamount to this concern is the verbal mandate offered by Vice President Joseph Biden on April 4, 2011, who suggested, that the standard toward campus safety be raised from a standard of reasonable safety to the standard defined for universities as providing environments that are as safe as possible. “Students across the country deserve the safest possible environment in which to learn” (Peter Lake, citing Vice President Biden’s speech at the annual Association for Student Conduct Administrators featured speaker, February 6, 2014). While Hughey (1982) specifically referred to residence halls as a “microcosm of
our society,” the similar notion can be attributed to colleges and universities when related to campus safety for students. Although crimes and violence are generally accepted when occurring off of university properties (away from the campus the children are attending), for anyone to insinuate that colleges and universities are remiss from criminal behaviors seems unrealistic.

A more realistic and simplistic approach for parents to consider related to campus safety could be that, as violent crimes occur in the larger society, a university campus, also will not be exempt from violent crimes. One study suggested that 20 in 100 students at a public university are victims of campus crime (Wesley, Angela, & Pudrzynska, 2007). While the crimes in the previous study may or may not be determined to be violent crimes on campus, media reports and studies such as Wesley et al. can create a culture in which parents are more reticent in sending the respective student off to college. Specifically related to this concern is the increased amount of resources available to parents. These resources vary and include such venues as 24-hour news reporting, the internet, social media, and self-help books. Parents are inundated with various recommendations for consideration in selecting a college or university and are instructed to search, seek, investigate, and visit colleges and universities before making the decision. With these various factors and resources associated with selecting a college or university, one might believe parents make the final decision rather than the student. One example in which parents may see increased credibility of a college or university is identified by former Harvard University President Derek Bok. Bok (2006) identified the U.S. News and World Report’s annual rankings as an example of persuading parents as
they assist in the process of selecting a college or university. Bok, however, recognized these rankings and succinctly describing them for what they are,

A very different source of outside pressure has emerged in recent decades through the rise to prominence of national college rankings, such as those published annually by *U.S. News and World Report*. Most campus officials are sensitive to these ratings and want to move up the pecking order, hoping to attract better students and more donations. As a result, if the rankings had anything to do with the quality of education, they might force universities to work harder at improving teaching and learning. (p. 327)

Although parents continue to serve in a central role in the selection process, the task of parents has become one to assist in sifting through the copious amounts of information each respective institution sends in an effort to lure the student to their college or university. With the advisement role of the parent well established in the college selection process, and with a perceived lack of safety at college and university campuses, one may ask whether the concern for safety has become a more prominent factor in this form of investigation for today’s parents. Legislative efforts, news reports, and increased postings of inappropriate behaviors on college campuses via social media provide considerable fodder for the already over-involved parent. Is it possible that this social construct for decreased safety on the college or university campus could cause parents to place an increased emphasis on safety when serving in the role of assisting the respective student in selecting a college or university?

As some parents investigate the safety index of a prospective college or university, another influential factor related to the safety aspect of selecting a college may
be the moral standing of a specific institution of higher learning. Parents have spent the past 18 years or more in raising these prospective students so as to conduct themselves within a certain set of standards. For some parents, a false sense of security may exist for the smaller colleges, particularly those promulgating a Christian affiliation. In a blog writing on the benefits of a Christian college Ledbetter (2011) stated, “A Christian School is uniquely equipped to provide positive relationships for its students, in addition to relationships, a Christian university or college will normally provide an atmosphere more familiar to Christian students” (para. 2). A moral faith statement listed as part of the mission of the university does not necessarily guarantee a fully safe environment for the incoming first-year college student. Zuckerman (2010) has lauded that the Catholic doctrine demonstrating the importance and dignity of each individual has added an increased sense of community to the college campus. Further, Zuckerman’s study attempted to demonstrate that students who acknowledged the university’s strong sense of community also felt safer within that community. Traditional aged students, who have grown up with faith values attributed to Christianity, may be ill-prepared and somewhat naïve when interacting with certain peers who may not possess similar faith values, particularly at a secular institution of postsecondary education. Some parents may believe Christian-affiliated colleges and universities are therefore safer, under the premise that a moral faith statement from a Christian affiliated college or university offers an environment of values consistent to their perspective on Christian faith. It becomes reasonable and worth researching whether a social construct exists in which parents perceive that Christian affiliated institutions of higher education are safer than their public counterparts.
Thomas Shaw (2005), who has considerable experience with enrollment management at both public and private institutions of postsecondary education, dedicated an entire book related to the selection of a college or university from a Christian parent’s point of view (2005). These parents read Christian literature and rely on this form of information for instruction as their child is sent to college. Despite the role of character, Christian universities are not exempt from campus violence, including a campus mass shooting. On April 2, 2012, Oikos University student One Goh killed seven classmates and injured others. Oikos University is a Christian-affiliated nursing college located in Oakland, California and its website states as its philosophical statement, “At Oikos University, students are given the opportunity to obtain a Christian education that is based on solid Christian doctrine and ideology” (www.oikosuniversity.org). Do parents of students who have been educated in a Christian background believe that an increased element of safety exists among Christian-affiliated colleges and universities?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is multi-faceted and designed to address four concerns related to parental awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts. The first concern is seminal to the numerous hours of work several administrators have completed in fulfilling federal legislative mandates by providing the necessary crime related information. This concern is to directly determine whether an awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exists for parents of high school students seeking to attend college within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Subsequent to the passing of the Campus Crime Act in 1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), college and university administrators have expressed concerns in the reporting of this information (Janosik, 2001). While vast amounts of
human and financial resources are provided in the creation of these reports by colleges and universities in compliance with the respective legislation, specific results related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of these reports still wane. A most recent study suggested that the information provided by universities may not be trusted when it comes to reported burglaries and sexual assaults (Guffey, 2013). This study is intended to contribute to the body of research that evaluates the effectiveness of parental awareness derived from the efforts of administrators in fulfilling the federal and state mandates of the Clery and Minger Acts, respectively, which are intended to inform constituents of violent campus crimes. A lack of awareness by parents may serve to re-evaluate how prospective parents and students are educated about campus violence and, in turn, provide education designed to enhance the skills possessed by students in deterring campus crime.

A second concern to be addressed by this study is to determine whether the type of high school environment allows for a different level of awareness of these two legislative acts. Homeschooling parents are well versed in the educational systems of their respective states. “There is much to be learned here about possible forms of schooling in the 21st century, new conceptions and models that were unimaginable to the previous generation” (Murphy, 2012, p. 11). It would be understandable to investigate whether the type of schooling a child receives, be it public, private, or homeschooling, allows for an increased level of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts by the parent. In demonstrating a different level of awareness, university administrators can begin to tailor the process of reporting crimes as an effort to better inform prospective constituents.
This study also is intended to measure the value placed on campus safety and the type of high school compared to other factors related to the College Choice Phenomenon. The type of school a student attends may provide for a perceived level of safety. One resource book for parents identifies administrators with regard to safety, “These people are the ones who will have oversight of your child’s development, safety, and support - day in and day out” (Shaw, 2005, p. 99). As access to higher education increases, so too does the overall number of persons attending the respective colleges and universities. Drysdale, Modzeleski, and Simons (2010) suggested that increased attendance at college and universities begets increased crimes at the institutions. If parents have chosen for their child to attend a smaller type of school system (i.e. private school or homeschool setting) in an effort to provide increased safety, these parents should demonstrate a higher level of importance for the values of safety and/or Christian affiliation when preparing to select an institution, utilizing a similar logic that less students may lead to less crime. Closely associated with the higher level of importance being placed on safety and Christian affiliation is to determination of factors, based on the literature review toward the college choice phenomenon, serve as most important for parents of sophomores, juniors, and seniors seeking college in the future. This study will, not only determine whether parents of the three types of high school education place an increased value on safety, but also will identify whether a consistent factor exists within the college choice phenomenon for the parents of private and homeschool children.

Finally, a culminating concern to be addressed in this study is to determine whether, when all parents, base a decision solely on safety, does a perception of increased safety exist for private, Christian-affiliated postsecondary institutions for parents of high
school students within the Commonwealth of Kentucky? In identifying a perception of increased safety in the smaller, Christian environments, public institutions can begin to contact parents of prospective students to identify efforts that can be made on public campuses to assist in providing a stronger perception of safety.

These four concerns related to the awareness of laws concerning safety are significant for administrators of higher education. An increase in online degree programs, and a decreased level of confidence in the safety offered at traditional colleges and universities, could lead to a lack of enrollment considerations for these traditional types of colleges. As government and university constituents’ attention to violent acts of crime on campuses increases, parents and students will seek institutions that will provide the safest environment, as alluded to by Vice President Biden (2011), while completing a degree in higher education in his White House Initiative Speech. When considering solely the value of safety, does the Christian college environment, as opposed to the public university, become more appealing for parents? Murphy (2012) indicated that the number of parents choosing to homeschool their children identify with the Christian faith.

In some instances, parents of homeschooled children and those attending private Christian-affiliated secondary institutions have been swayed toward the private Christian-affiliated colleges and universities, not only because these environments allow for more personalized attention to students academically, but also because they provide an atmosphere consistent with the moral values established by the family. “More and more families view Christian colleges as havens from what they perceive as moral problems in society and at secular institutions,” wrote one author describing this phenomenon (Reisberg, 1999, p. A42). An investigation of parental awareness also will assist in
determining whether differences exist between parents, whose children are homeschooled and those who attend private schools in creating a consistent perception of increased safety for private Christian-affiliated colleges and universities in Kentucky.

Parents of Kentucky high school students provide for an interesting cross-section of the national population. A rationale for researching the Commonwealth of Kentucky is that the state provides a large number of parents within the various types of schooling environments. Yet another facet to Kentucky and the issue of campus safety is that in 1998, legislators established the Minger Act, which is legislation designated arson as a violent crime on campus within the state. Prior to the Clery Act update in 2011, to including arson as a part of this reporting rubric was not required from the federal government. At that time, Kentucky was noted by The Clery Center for Security on Campus (2014 - organization formerly known as Security On Campus, Inc.) as a model state in the efforts of informing constituents concerning the violent crimes occurring at the colleges and universities, specifically addressing the issue of arson.

In light of the layering effect resulting from a state in which two initiatives are designed to notify parents and other university constituents of the campus climate related to violent crimes, parental awareness of the Minger and Clery in Kentucky offers a unique perspective, in that an awareness of parents in this state may be higher than in other states. For example, a heightened parental awareness of the Clery Act may exist in the states of Virginia and Illinois, as these states host colleges recently influenced by violent mass shootings and have gained worldwide attention. Through research on parents in Kentucky, an awareness of these legislative initiatives and the information provided may serve as a benchmark for other state legislators and/or colleges and
universities in observing the effectiveness of reporting these crimes to determine which college to attend. The Commonwealth of Kentucky also serves as an interesting state, specifically when one also reflects upon the media attention and images of one of the first acts of campus shooting violence at the secondary school level, which occurred in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1997.

**Statement of the Problem**

Federal legislation was passed in 1990 requiring all colleges and universities accepting federal financial dollars to report violent crimes from the previous year. Then known as the Campus Crime Act of 1990, today this law is known as The Clery Act. This legislation was named to honor rape and murder victim Jeanne Clery, who lost her life at Lehigh University in 1987. The intention of this legislation has been to assist students, parents, and other constituents of colleges and universities to become knowledgeable concerning the violent crimes that have occurred at a college campus resulting in the ability to make an informed decision with regard to safety. This legislation is specifically intended to assist the various prospective constituents who are in the process of selecting a college or university to attend, work, or visit. The original intent was designed to create a standard format of reporting campus crimes. “This act required all postsecondary institutions participating in HEA’s Title IV student financial assistance programs to disclose campus crime statistics and security information” (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 1). A common understanding of college administrators at the time was that reporting criminal activity would serve to be counter-productive in recruiting prospective students. Parents and watchdog groups felt this philosophy resulted in false reporting. A somewhat recent example of this philosophy in action was the actions of university administrators in the rape and murder of Laura Dickinson at
Eastern Michigan University in 2006. A secondary intent behind the Campus Crime Act of 1990 was that an informed public would aid in decreasing the number of violent crimes occurring on college campuses (Janosik & Gregory, 2003, p. 183). One study found that parental awareness of the previously named Campus Crime Act was low and provided little influence in the selection of a college or university (Janosik, 2004). Little research on parental awareness of the law has since been limited.

Within the Commonwealth of Kentucky, legislators passed the Minger Act in 1998 which was the state’s version of the Clery Act. At the time of its creation, the Minger Act expanded violent crimes to include the crime of arson to honor the memory of Michael Minger, who passed away of smoke asphyxiation as a result of a fire started in a residence hall kitchen. In both cases where these violent crimes were perpetrated against Ms. Clery and Mr. Minger, the parents of the victims suggested that, had they known about the number of these types of crimes occurring on the respective campuses, they would have influenced their children to attend a different institution. These parents introduced to higher education administrators the relevance of parental influence and how it would become an increased critical component for future consideration as students begin the process of determining which colleges and universities to attend.

Partnered with these legislative initiatives during the decade of the 1990s, methods for educating children prior to higher education became increasingly diversified. One method of educating children in primary and secondary school gained renewed interest, which revitalized a form of schooling that was to become known as homeschooling. In 2014, the number of registered homeschooling participants within Kentucky was 10,252 (Kentucky Department of Education website, 2013). Attendance
of students at private Christian schools for kindergarten to 12th grades also increased during the 1990s and 2000s. One author noted, “Parents often educate their children at home for religious reasons, before sending them off to Christian colleges” (Reisberg, 1999, p. A42). The value associated with raising children in a conservative environment away from the increased issues associated with public schooling may have led to a false perception by parents that Christian-affiliated institutions of higher education are a safer environment for Christian students as well. While the Clery and Minger Acts have caused colleges and universities, that receive federal funding to become more forthright in the publication of crimes on their respective campuses, little research has been completed to establish the effectiveness of these acts in determining the role of college selection.

Associated with the higher level of parental influence in selecting an institution and the perceived notion that the moral postures associated with a private Christian-affiliated postsecondary institution are safer than the public institutions identified as public postsecondary education, parents are equipped with detailed information to assist with the selection of a postsecondary educational institution. If safety continues to serve as a prevalent factor as part of the decision-making process, a study designed to measure the effectiveness of these two legislative initiatives appears to be equally relevant, thus adding to the limited body of research concerning postsecondary institutional campus safety and college selection. Further, if rationale for homeschooling and attending private Christian-affiliated secondary institutions exists to ensure a safer environment for the pre-collegiate years, parents of homeschooled students and those attending private
Christian secondary institutions may possess an increased awareness of these two legislative initiatives. Minimal research has been completed in this area of study as well.

**Research Questions**

The following four research questions have served as a guide in conducting this study.

1. Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
2. Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?
3. Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?
4. Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

**Hypotheses of the Research**

As the study began, the following hypotheses were developed in an effort to analyze the data for this study:

1. Parents of the three types of high school students will be unaware of both the Clery Act and the Minger Act.
2. An increased awareness for the Clery and Minger Acts will exist for parents
whose students are homeschooled or attend private secondary institutions, when contrasted to parents whose children attend public secondary institutions.

3. The factors of safety and the Christian affiliation of a college or university serve as lesser determining factors in selecting a college or university for parents compared to other college selection factors.

4. The perception that Christian colleges and universities are safer than public universities exists at a greater level for parents whose children are homeschooled or attend private high schools, when compared to parents whose children attend public high schools.

**Significance of the Study**

The Clery Act, along with the collaborative Kentucky state legislative initiative of the Minger Act, have paired suggest that the Commonwealth of Kentucky served as a model state during much of the first decade since 2000 in regard to postsecondary education campus safety reporting. As a model state, this research in Kentucky will assist in determining the effectiveness of the legislative efforts specifically related to the awareness by parents of violent crime reporting within the state. With low awareness and the suggestion that reporting may be suspect, parents’ concerns for safety tend to decline until the next violent crime occurs on a college campus and receives national attention. Particularly when related to other college choice determinants, safety and religious affiliation tend to play a decreased role for parents in the selection of an institution. This research will allow college and university administrators to partner with students, parents, and governmental officials in re-evaluating the efforts of reporting campus crimes in
Kentucky. Through the utilization of this research, new and improved safety education programs can be created for prospective college students while still in high school and can provide preventative techniques intended to assist in deterring and decreasing, not only violent crimes occurring on campuses, but can also provide a sense of enlightened awareness. Armed with this knowledge, partnerships can be created between prospective parents, students and the various types of universities in Kentucky in an effort to truly allow for minimal occurrences of violent crimes on campus. Finally, this research is timely in many ways as 2014 marks the 27th anniversary of the Clery Act and the 10th anniversary of the Minger Act.

**Definitions of Terminology**

**Clery Act** – Federal legislation that requires all colleges and universities receiving federal financial assistance to annually report violent crimes that occur on and adjacent to campuses. This legislative initiative is named after Jeanne Clery, rape and murder victim at Lehigh University in 1987.

**Minger Act** – Kentucky state legislation that requires all member institutions of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to annually report violent crimes on campus. This legislative initiative is named after Michael Minger, victim of arson at Murray State University in 1997, and is recognized for including arson as part of a reportable violent crime.

**Student College Choice Phenomenon** – Broadly accepted term describing the process of selecting a college or university to attend
Public University – University receiving financial aid funding through the Higher Education Act’s Title IV law, which is obligated to comply with the legislative initiative known as the Clery Act

Private University – University that receives the vast majority of its funding through its own charges and does not receive federal financial assistance in its overall operation. Although most private universities identify themselves as not accepting public dollars, due to students accepting federal financial aid, most private institutions are equally required to comply with Clery Act reporting.

Helicopter Parents – Parents who “hover” over their children to shelter them from stress, resolve their problems, and offer unwavering, on-the-spot support and affirmation (Taylor, 2011)

FERPA – Acronym for federal legislation known as the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1970. This act was passed to protect students’ academic records.

Social Construction Theory – Social constructionism views society as existing both from an objective and a subjective reality and is fully compatible with classical grounded theory.

Interpretive Social Construction – Constructed foundations based on the premise that the meaning of things is not inherent

Objective Social Construction – Constructed foundations based from when a real phenomenon (as opposed to an interpretation or meaning) derives its existence or its dimensions from other social factors
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The dichotomy of providing an environment of higher learning linked to the developmental growth of young adults has become blurred, offering for what many believe is a pervasively less safe campus environment. Adding to the belief of decreased safety is the increased scrutiny over the quality of higher education, which has become commonplace (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2006; Hacker & Dreifus, 2011; Hersch & Merrow, 2005). During the decade from 2000 to 2010, violent crimes on college and university campuses served as the focus of much national notoriety. The Campus Crime Act of 1990 was created by the federal government as a mandate for institutions to disclose annual crime statistics. The legislation was intended to assist current and prospective students, parents, and university employees concerning the various crimes that take place on the respective campuses (Griffaton, 1993). By providing this information, people would be able to, not only make informed decisions about attending a particular university or college, but also become informed on the types of crimes, so as to be better prepared and hinder the occurrence of these crimes on campus through self-awareness.

This federal legislation has undergone several amendments and name changes and is currently known as the Clery Act. While victims’ advocate groups for the Clery Act have promoted positive results from the efforts of the legislation, others have questioned its effectiveness (Janosik, 2001, 2004; Janosik & Gregory, 2003; Sloan & Fisher, 2011). For those parents and students who are beginning the daunting task of selecting a college or university to attend, the Clery Act should be an integral element in the selection process. One seminal component of this legislation requires college and university
authorities to make known the statistics in written format (originally), while
demonstrating diligence in distributing this information to the varied constituencies. This
legislation allowed for these crime statistics to also be equally accessible for all members
of the university (later through electronic media). A major premise of the Clery and
Minger Acts is that the more informed a campus community is, increased awareness
allows the public to be adequately prepared for and, thus, potentially assist in reducing
the amount of violent campus crime acts that occur on the respective campuses.

Since the inception of the Campus Crime Act in 1990, university administrators
have expressed difficulty in generating the reports as requested. The Department of
Education published a compliance manual annually to assist in the clarification of these
concerns for administrators. Colleges and universities have allocated substantial
financial and human resources in providing the required information. Although the Clery
Act is celebrating over 25 years of existence, scarce is the research in measuring the
effectiveness of this legislation. Within the student affairs profession, attempts have
occurred to study the effectiveness in researching students (Janosik, 2001); campus law
enforcement officials (Janosik & Gregory, 2003); parents (Janosik, 2004); and chief
student affairs officers (Janosik & Gregory, 2009). The Campus Crime Act was
implemented in 1990. Colleges and university administrators in most instances have
offered their best efforts in attempting to comply with the federal requirements,
maximizing the use of resources both from a human and financial standpoint. Despite
these legislative initiatives, however, crimes on campuses are still occurring; during the
first decade of the new millennium, two of many mass shooting acts occurred on college
campuses, which has increased the concerns for safety of students. These shootings that
have taken place at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and at Northern Illinois University have grabbed national attention with a new medium source, which is now systematically utilized as part of covering major incidents of crime. This ever-evolving and improving medium is well known as social media. With the advent of “smart phones,” social media coverage has consisted of witnesses being afforded the opportunity to video record instances and placing the video on Internet-based websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and Tumblr. While technology on how to best communicate crime incidents has improved, the role of university personnel in preventing these types of events on their respective campuses continues to be questioned. By expanding research in determining the effectiveness of this legislation along the scope of college selection from a parental perspective, institutions can begin to become more strategic in educating potential students, as well as their parents, prior to attending the college or university of their choice. An intentional outcome would become one in which students of the various institutions become active participants in learning about the respective crime issues on campus. This would result in students becoming more involved in deterring campus crime and less likely become a victim. As Federal and state legislative initiatives are beginning to direct college and university administrators on how to create, as Vice President Biden stated on April 4, 2011, “safest environment possible,” administrators need to become more strategic in preparing prospective students for college. Students who are well informed and actively participate to ensure their own safety by adhering to common campus safety techniques will become less likely to be victimized.
History of Campus Crimes

College campuses have since the onset served as a location for students to gain a higher level of education. Rudolph (1990) quoted the publication, *New England’s First Fruits* (1643), in describing the intent of America’s first colleges, “One of the next things we longed for, and looked after, was to advance ‘Learning’ and perpetuate it to Posterity…” (pp. 3-4). Not long after America’s development of colleges, several violent crimes were reported to have occurred. Rudolph (1990) wrote of several reports of shootings and stabbings among colleges, resulting from the “Collegiate Way,” and promulgated by the creation of dormitory living:

Among the victims of the collegiate way were the boy who died in a duel at Dickinson, the students who were shot at Miami in Ohio, the professor who was killed at the University of Virginia, the President and professor who were stoned at the University of Georgia, the student who was stabbed at Illinois College, the students who were stabbed and killed at the University of Missouri and the University of North Carolina. (p. 97)

Although early history demonstrates that violent campus crimes have taken place from its beginnings. The mass shootings that occurred, most notably at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois universities, have given the public and the federal government cause for concern toward campus violence, resolving to decrease the number of campus incidents of shootings, sexual assaults, and harassment. With the perceived increase in campus crime incidents following the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois, a report related to campus crimes was compiled and co-sponsored by several federal organizations including, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the
Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Secret Service. This report was issued in April 2010 (Drysdale et al.) in an effort to provide a historical context to campus violence specifically related to campus shootings.

**Campus Environments Yesterday and Today**

Since the era when Thomas Jefferson wrote to Mr. Cooper, higher education administrators have struggled with the task of responding to the spirit of insubordination of college and university students in ways that were not only developmentally sound but that also were effective to create an environment in which all members of the academic community could live, work, and learn together. (Stoner & Lowery, 2004, p. 4)

For administrators, determining when a student’s act of debauchery extends beyond acceptable standards has become an increasing challenge. In a residence hall, one student’s poor choice to drink beyond the limit can at the least cause an environment of inconvenience and at worst, it can impede the safety of others in the residence hall. This question of college student developing maturity has been a thought-provoking consideration for higher education administrators for quite some time. Gathercoal (1991) articulated how a student comes to terms with the rights of self, versus the rights of others, when residing in a residence hall:

> Students must understand that their rights do not allow them to do as they please. Rights are quickly denied when individual actions infringe on the property and well being of others, or become a serious disruption of the educational living environment. (p. 38)
Violent crimes are well beyond what is viewed as acceptable by all colleges and universities. Has campus violence increased in recent years?

**Campus Shootings**

Based on research from open source reporting, 272 violent incidents of crime on college campuses were identified since 1900 (Drysdale et al., 2010). Other researchers have noted that campus violence has been a national issue since colleges were created, offering a chronology and themes to the types of crimes and increasing the level of concern (Katel, 2011). One of the first recorded incidents within the scope of the federal study occurred on April 29, 1909. “On this date, a subject, who was not affiliated with the affected IHE [Institution of Higher Education], fatally shot his former girlfriend, a student, on her campus” (Drysdale et al., 2010, p. 11). This report provided much insight into the history of shooting violence on campuses. The authors intertwined specific descriptions of incidents of violent crimes throughout the report. The value of this observation is that, in every decade except the 1910s and the 1940s, a violent crime has been specifically identified that involved a firearm and the death of an individual related to a respective institution of higher education (IHE) from the aforementioned firearm.

Federal legislative initiatives on gun control in the United States, and an increased level of safety anxiety by Americans in general, may lead to the perception that campus shootings are more commonplace in institutions of higher learning than in previous years. However, the federal study becomes more relevant as several state legislatures consider the dichotomous actions believed to promote an increased level of safety on a college or university campus. In April 2012, Chief Justice of the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s Supreme Court ruled in accordance with the second amendment that an individual with a
license to carry a concealed weapon was legally permitted to possess a firearm in his or her car on or adjacent to Kentucky campuses as long as the individual adheres to the rules of the conceal and carry permit. Chief Justice Minton ruled that carrying a weapon on a campus in the Commonwealth of Kentucky was still a matter of safety for the entire community and that a university was permitted to ask the licensed carrier of the weapon comply with concealing the weapon in their vehicle. Legislators in the state of Texas have attempted to pass a “conceal and carry” law for the state’s universities since 2008. The intent of this form of legislation is that, by being able to legally carry a weapon on a college or university campus, persons intending to elicit physical harm to fellow classmates would be inhibited due to the unknown protector of the peace legally carrying a handgun for just such an instance.

Historically, the research from the federal investigative study has suggested via charts and graphs that a possible rationale for the more recent increased violence on college and university campuses may be as simple an explanation as the increase in the number of students attending institutions of higher education (Drysdale et al., 2010). To further emphasize the idea that an increased concentration of people on a campus leads to increased incidents of violent crime on campus, a chart indicating months when violent crimes occurred is presented. This graph indicates a lower number of incidents occurred at certain times of the year. For example, during the summer breaks, fewer students are located on or around campus and, therefore, the number of violent crimes is less during this time frame. The researchers also indicated a large increase in the violent crimes taking place during the 1990s and 2000s. Drysdale et al. (2010) suggested that increased enrollment, along with more readily available press outlets is a rationale for the increase
in these types of violent acts. It is noteworthy to recognize that introduction of the Campus Security Act of 1990, now known as the Clery Act was ratified during this time period with the intent of decreasing crimes occurring on college campuses.

In a study designed to demonstrate the proximity of violent crimes that occurred to campus, DeLaTorre (2011) used this appendix item to offer a timeline for various assaults that occurred from 1970 to 2008. These assaults were investigated by the Drysdale et al. (2010) study. Of interest related to this timeline is that, when accounting for the number of assaults committed on college campuses by a firearm, the average number of reported assaults over the time frame of 1972 to 2008 averaged 3.5 assaults by a firearm per year. Equally important is that not every assault involving a firearm ended in the death of the victim. This annual average accounts for the mass shootings that took place at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois. In comparing these firearm assaults to that of the entire nation for a one-year time span, the 2011 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report identified that 8,512 murders occurred with a firearm within the United States. When compared to the reported murders associated and reported by campuses during the same year, the number of murders was reported as 36 (Note: addition in FBI Table appears incorrect and totals 32). When one compares these data to statistics related to colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, no murders (0) were reported for the Clery Act reporting period of 2011 (The Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013). Regardless of whether the total number of murders committed nationally on college campuses is 36 or 32, both numbers are much greater than the national average of 3.5 assaults by a firearm per year (Drysdale, et al., 2010).
Assaults by Other Means

While assaults by firearms have gained the most notoriety from current and varied media outlets, assaults using other forms of deadly force also have occurred. In researching DeLaTorre’s (2011) dissertation and analyzing the summary of violent assaults occurring on campus, the second most common form of assault on a college campus during this time period included stabbings or assaults to someone with a blade. Of the 272 assaults that were reported during this time period, 53 could be categorized as either stabbings or slayings with a blade. As part of the 2010 FBI Survey, Drysdale et al. (2010) identified nine other forms of assault that occurred on various college campuses during the time period 1972 to 2008. Other violent crimes have included: rapes [generally attached to another violent crime] (10); blunt force strikes to the head (10); fires (9); strangulation (11); bombs or bomb threats (8); poisoning (2); hammer (4); axes/machetes (3); and unknown (4). Many of these crimes have been racially motivated, which are currently identified as hate crimes (5) created during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. President Barack Obama signed into law an addition to hate crimes legislation by including sexual orientation in 2010.

As recognized in the category of rape, many of these violent crimes that are categorized individually occurred in the same incident and were denoted as two types of assaults. For example, in April of 1981 at the University of Michigan, a student tossed a firebomb into a residence hall (categorized as fire) resulting in residents leaving the building. As the students were evacuating the building, the assassin used a firearm in shooting the victims as they exited the premises (categorized as shooting), resulting in the two student deaths (DeLaTorre, 2011, p. 123). As long as the history of higher education
in the United States has been reviewed (Rudolph, 1990), violence has been associated with students attending the postsecondary environment. What has caused the perception that the hallowed campuses of higher education in the United States have become less safe in recent years?

The negative consequences resulting from harassment, bullying, assaults, and worse are not considered by any college or university as a part of the overall college experience. However, bad things do happen to good people and, as unfortunate as they may be, coping through negative experiences helps students develop. Educating students and their parents on issues of campus safety in many ways has become reactive, as opposed to proactive, related specifically to the theoretical perspective of social constructivism.

The various reports from news agencies would have parents believe that crimes have become the epitome of insubordination within the college campus. However, some researchers (Sloan & Fisher, 2011) have noted the occurrences of crimes on campuses in the past have become overshadowed, noting that recent trends in social and television media allow, not only for immediate reporting, but also may provide for the false perception of decreased safety by the general public. Parents, who watch only the media may be led to believe that, at present, campus shootings are more prevalent today than in the past. This is a very terse example of how social constructive theory is applied to campus crime. A detailed evaluation of social construction theory applied to campus crime is established in later sections of this dissertation.

When reviewing the most recent mass campus shootings that occurred within the past seven years at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois universities, parents and
prospective students need to understand that campuses today remain a relatively safe environment. This is specifically true when comparing crimes on a statewide or national level. Utilizing a social construction theory model, Sloan and Fisher (2011) provided evidence that the issue of campus violence is merely perceived to be more problematic when compared to the past, “As we show in the remainder of this chapter, however, claims about the threat posed to students by violence, vice, and victimization occurring on college campuses are not new” (p. 5). While some researchers believe that campus crimes have become more prevalent, Sloan and Fisher (2011) assist in framing the evolution of the culture of crime succinctly: “Simultaneously, however, they [institutions of higher education] were also dealing with an emerging student culture that condoned drunkenness, rowdiness, hazing, and criminality – the dark side of the ivory tower” (p. 9). This sentiment collaborates the findings of the Drysdale et al. (2010) study, in which increased enrollment of students begets an increased number of campus crimes. Henry (2009) offered a concise definition of social construct theory specifically related to crime in the United States, “By identifying some features of social life as significant, distinguishing those features from others, and acting as though they have a real, concrete existence, humans create social reality” (p. 296).

This concept of social construct theory can be attributed to the college environment as well. In an attempt to offer context, a college student, who is away from home from the first time, becomes a victim of a campus crime. For this example, a cell phone has been stolen. For this student, the social life of having no phone would be considered a concrete feature associated with their social life, i.e., not having a phone. For today’s first-year student, the theft of a cell phone can clearly allow for a
distinguishing life event having occurred. Upon hearing that another friend had a cell phone stolen in a similar fashion, the result may be perceived that everyone is having their phones stolen and is, thus, reported to parents in that manner as well. While no one wants to be a victim of this type of crime of opportunity, rarely is the situation described fully for the parents in that the student may have not locked the door, leaving personal belongings at an increased risk for being taken.

**Campus Violence as a Social Construct**

The writings of Sloan and Fisher (2007, 2011) have attempted to demonstrate this phenomenon of social construction in describing how campus crime and acts of violence evolve from one person’s being a victim of an act of violence into the perception of a rampant social concern, “...the social context of campus crime refers to social scientific research that has described and explained why campus crime happens and evaluations of the effectiveness of campus-level programs and policies designed to address campus crime” (2007, p. 10). Although campus crimes have occurred since the existence of higher education, many facets to social construction theory offer the perception that campus crimes are some type of new phenomenon. To suggest that campus violence crimes are a newer trend fails to follow scientific protocols. “We answer these questions by analyzing how Security On Campus, Inc., campus crime victims and their families, campus feminists, and public health researchers all played major roles in changing public perceptions about campus crime and, in so doing, prompted policy makers to respond swiftly and repeatedly to it” (Sloan & Fisher 2011, p. 27). A college or university could be deemed safe for several years, and one incident of a violent crime with the proper media coverage could develop into the provincial social norm that the respective
university, in which the act of violence occurred, is unsafe to college students who may consider attending. An exact description of crime as a social construct comes from Henry (2009): “Social constructionist views of crime reveal that there are multiple definitions, each of which suggests a different set of criteria as constituting a phenomenon” (p. 9). Emphasizing this point, during a presentation at a local church, a local newscaster described his training in broadcast journalism in determining which stories to cover. His statement was, “If it bleeds, it leads” (Dawson, personal communication, October 13, 2013). Due to increased media reports, the general public has become subject to believing that events such as mass shootings are becoming social problems. This description of events is specifically addressed by Best (2012):

> When social problems first come to our attention, perhaps in a televised news report, we’re usually given an example or two (perhaps video footage of homeless individuals living on city streets) and then a statistical estimate (of the number of homeless people)…Big numbers warn us that the problem is a common one, compelling our attention, concern, and action. (p. 17)

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) confirmed Best’s contentions by establishing three factors associated with the public belief that an issue has arisen to the level of a social problem. “In sum, a social problem exists when: (1) a group of people recognize or regard something as wrong; (2) they are concerned about it; and (3) they urge to take steps to correct it” (pp. 88-89). With this definition, viewers watching an evening news program may resolve that every issue presented could be categorized as a social problem.
Components to Social Constructive Theory

Social construction theory is not an easily outlined concept. The rationale for this concise description may be specifically related to researchers within the arena of hard sciences. The concept of social construction theory is often challenged. With hard sciences, a hypothesis of an experiment is created, and the hypothesis is tested and often re-tested. Credit for the term social construction is given to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Harris, 2010). As Gergen (2009) suggested, “There is no one single book or school of philosophy that defines social construction. Rather, social constructionist ideas emerge from a process of dialogue, a dialogue that is ongoing and to which anyone – even you as reader – may contribute” (p. 2). An individual’s perspective can be shared with others through appropriate research techniques and then compared, contrasted, discussed, and concluded until such time as the perspective is to be recalled. This describes how social construction philosophy persists and continues to evolve, specifically within the realm of social science. It also is the essence of the concept of the research website Wikipedia, which has begun to gain credibility among some scholars within higher education. Another stalwart within the arena of social construction theory is Ian Hacking (1999), who demonstrated the conflict between the social and physical sciences: “For sociologists, the processes of science, the scientific activity, should be the main object of study. But for the scientists the most controversial philosophical issues are about science, the product, the assemblage of truths” (p. 67). As with the field of sociology, identifying a single true statement that applies to all persons is unrealistic. Hacking provided an exceptional analogy in identifying the distinction between the two types of sciences by summarizing Thomas Kuhn’s thoughts:
Normal science, in contrast proceeds in a rather inevitable way. Certain problems are set up, certain ways for solving them are established. What works is determined by the way the world collaborates or resists. A few anomalies are bound to persist, eventually throwing a science into crisis, followed by a new revolution. (p. 97)

Hacking suggested that perhaps this new revolution of scientific thinking is benefited through the theory of social construction. When one considers some common understandings of social construction beliefs that seem consistent and proved through acknowledged scientific experimentation, the social construction theory begins to possess foundational firmness as a theory. A working definition of this theory comes from Henry (2009): “Advocates of social constructionism argue that the social world has an existence only, or largely, through humans’ routine interaction” (p. 1). Does a better description of higher education exist within this definition? As Bok (1986) recalled, “Indeed Clark Kerr has argued that they [universities] should be called multiversities because they are responsible for such a dizzying variety of programs and activities” (p. 2).

**Interpretive and Observant Constructionism**

Although Gergen (2009) argued against an absolute definition of social construction, Harris (2010) offered the opportunity for a more concise notion by breaking social constructionism down to two types. First, the concept of interpretive social constructionism (ISC) was discussed: “For many scholars, the core principle of ISC [Interpretive Social Constructionism] is the idea that ‘the meaning of things is not inherent’” (p. 2). Those that prescribe more to the ISC type of construction theory tend to
seek the actual meaning of an item. Harris cited items such as homelessness, views on war, animal cruelty, and as examples within the realm of interpretive social construction. The interpretation of views concerning war is dependent upon the individual. For example, a taxpayer, who is war weary, may interpret the spending for defenses toward the end of the war as a non-necessity. This interpretation may be directly contradictory to the soldier serving in the war, whose view may be that spending needs to be increased so as to be better armed than the opposition. This example shows the clear delineation of the role of interpretation.

Harris (2010) went on to discuss the second component of social construction theory and described it as observant social constructionism (OSC). “But again, simply put, objective constructionists argue that something is ‘socially constructed’ when a real phenomenon (as opposed to an interpretation or meaning) derives its existence or its dimensions from other social factors,” wrote Harris (2010, p. 6) in describing the diminutive nuances. For Harris, these components are tantamount in understanding the overall concept of constructionism, in that as people interact with one another, they are either interpreting the meaning of an item or identifying an item as real and observations concerning the item are constructed based on the interactions with others. Harris further outlined the distinguishing characteristics of ISC and OSC by providing examples along four key terms: contingency, essentialism, work, and reification.

Contingency is the first term in discerning the difference between observational social constructionism (OSC) and interpretive social constructionism (ISC). Contingency relates to how the individual views the nature of social life. In an effort to paraphrase Harris (2010), if an individual views the social life aspect as being more of a natural or an
inherent existence, the person reviewing interactions would be more of an adherer to OSC, relying on the social interaction to be constructed more based along what exists for the interaction to develop. Contingency oftentimes is more aligned with ISC, as interactions are dependent, and the viewpoint of the individual relies, not upon the “how” interactions are constructed, but rather on whether these interactions define what is being constructed. Harris’ example for contingency is the family unit. The OSC constructionist views the unit and seeks to review how the dynamics cause the unit to function. In contrast, the ISC constructionist’s viewpoint is one in which the dynamics create the identity of the family unit. The viewpoint is contingent upon the individual’s perspective.

The second term important in better understanding constructionism according to Harris (2010), is essentialism. Harris defined this term as, “the belief that some phenomenon has an essence or inherent nature that makes it what it is” (p. 10). For the arena of essentialism, the OSC constructionist views traits and characteristics to be natural traits. A phrase one might hear from someone leaning more toward an OSC constructionist view would be, “He sure has the gift of gab.” An ISC constructionist might reply to this notion, “Certainly, there are circumstances that influenced his development of those communication skills.” In both instances, the essential aspect is that a person is being observed as having communication skills. The two ways of determining the essential aspect’s existence is the determinant for the type of constructionism being utilized.

The third term offered by Harris (2010) is reification. As cited by Harris, Berger and Luckmann’s definition from 1966 tends to be most concise:
Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly super-human terms. Another way of saying this is that reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products - such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world. (p. 13)

The key for this component of social constructionism is from an observational social constructionist standpoint, an object is humanized. Harris utilized the examples of an organization, a family, or the term inequality. “What is being produced - actual social phenomena or interpretations of social phenomena?” (p. 13). Harris would suggest that the type of constructionist theory applied to reification can be determined by expressing the reification of an item as existing (OSC), versus possessing traits that can be analyzed as defining the reification (ISC).

The final term used to demonstrate the subtle differences between observational and interpretive social constructionists is work. Harris (2010) noted, “Reality is not automatic, natural, or self-generating; it is created by people’s actions” (p. 14). Harris listed work as well as people who work, as the epitome of constructionist development. People regularly add to the efficiency of the work that is being accomplished. An excellent example of this is to view the work in an athletic milieu. Particularly during the Olympic time frame, athletes, who traditionally compete against one another as well as a record time standard, have attempted to find ways to become more aerodynamic and quicker in participating within their respective sport. During the summer Olympics of 2012, a full bodied swimsuit allowed for faster times than those not wearing these suits,
resulting in a determination to ban the swimsuits. As recent as the 2014 winter Olympics, the United States speed skating team attempted to increase aerodynamics with a new suit, which resulted in no U.S. speed skater winning a medal in this event. Commentators noted how the suits were not tested prior to their use. Also listed was the mental advantage these types of suits created for athletes. Work related to Harris’ view of interpretive and observational social constructionism is simple and, as Harris stated, “Whereas OSC analyses tend to focus on the work it takes to create reality, ISC analyses tend to focus on the work it takes to create a sense of reality” (p. 16). As Harris concluded, social constructionism can best be described as a continuum, utilizing the four components of contingency, essentialism, reification, and work to continue the dialogue in a search for how people interact with one another. If constructionism seems relative, it would appear through Harris that one understands constructionism well, as he concluded, “Perhaps it is fitting that the basic premises of constructionism - that meaning is not inherent, that that it depends on people’s purposes and perspectives - apply reflexively to the concept of social constructionism itself” (p. 19). When considering campus crime, the challenges before postsecondary education administrators have exponentially increased. Social constructionism of campus crime has created a unique dichotomy. Sloan and Fisher (2011) indicated the involvement of parents and families in an effort to create a sense of a current problem existing: “To do so, claimsmakers encourage experts, victims or their families, or government agencies to come forward and agree there is a problem about which the public should be concerned and about which something must be done” (p. 67). The interaction of administrators in assisting to, not only educate a
student, but also appropriately inform the parent becomes an exercise itself in the
construction of its own social life phenomenon.

**Student Development as a Social Construct**

Colleges and universities continue to serve as a forum for students (specifically
the traditional-aged student) to begin the process of establishing a sense of who they are
as they learn to function with less parental involvement. This developmental process is
recognized as student development theory, which also has been challenged by the hard
sciences during its inception and possesses many attributes similar to social construction
theory. When considering student development, researchers may be more inclined to
take an interpretive social construct viewpoint. One seminal student development theory
that provides an exemplar to the social construction movement is Arthur Chickering.
Chickering’s theory that college students progress through seven vectors as they
matriculate through college has become widely accepted within the profession of student
affairs. While Chickering and Reisser (1993) established the fifth vector of his
theoretical development as establishing identity, the specific vector within Chickering’s
scope of theory of students most relevant to this study would be the second vector. This
second vector refers to the student as moving through autonomy toward interdependence.
For this type of development to take place, students need to become somewhat self-
sufficient and be afforded the opportunity to experience a new sense of freedom as a
young adult.

Initially, the Chickering theory envisioned this form of development as students
becoming financially independent from their parents, in which the environment of
necessity for parental involvement is no longer needed. As decades passed, an updated
version of this vector was needed, as many students developed too independently, resulting in unhealthy relationships with parental units. “The interplay between autonomy, interdependence, and intimacy is complex” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 24). While independence is very worthwhile for college student development, a student may at some point be in need of another person in a specific situation, i.e., needing financial assistance to meet one’s budgetary needs at the end of a month. The realization by a student that the necessity for others is not necessarily negative, and in many instances deemed positively appropriate, demonstrates the movement beyond independence and the relying on interdependence. This is the essence of Chickering’s developmental vector.

This form of development could be classified by Harris (2010) within the realm of social construction theory and specifically identified as interpretive social construct theory, as students are defining their experiences as they progress through college. It is because the student is experiencing his or her own meaning of the experience that allows for this amalgam of the two theories and allows for intellectual growth to occur. For the traditional-aged college student, coming to the realization of interdependence of others somewhat early in one’s college career can have a lasting and positive effect on one’s development in the other vectors described by Chickering. These other vectors include achieving competence, managing emotions, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing a sense of identity, developing a purpose, and developing integrity.

Even for parents and students who may observe the social construction of campus crime as a social problem, the university campus still remains a relatively safe
environment. It is an environment in which students begin to experiment with the area of social acceptance of peers. Indeed, the college campus continues to serve as an environment in which young adolescents can test the boundaries of independence while void of parental oversight. In attempting to adhere to the Clery Act, administrators who have established a strong foundation for communicating safety concerns to its students, and more importantly developing plans to partner with parents tend, to assist in creating an environment of safety and academic success. With regard to students and parent involvement, many administrators may review the social problem from an interpretive social constructionist lens, in that the parents’ over-involvement may be hindering the student’s development. Price (2008) has opined this notion, “To help parents understand why institutions do things the way they do, it might be helpful first to educate them on the concept of student development” (p. 32). Once parents understand that students continue to grow as adults while not under their tutelage, and administrators seek to show parents how the development is occurring, a more successful partnership can be obtained.

How is parental involvement viewed?

**Parental Involvement**

While many administrators view parental involvement as a negative aspect to the overall function of the development of the student, an emerging initiative of partnering with parents among college administrators has begun to serve as the more preferred or best practice in higher education (Carney-Hall, 2008). Even the well-known watch dog organization created out of the Jeanne Clery rape and murder, now known as the Clery Center for Security on Campus, has altered its approach to being more a partnership-based organization, as opposed to the role of gatekeeping investigator. This organization
has sought to become more proactive in assisting both institutions and parents, as opposed to operating from a more reactive and accusatory nature. This movement is designed to be more inclusive with parental involvement of the college student.

The socio-historical perspective of the triad relationship among student, parent and postsecondary institution that was created during the era of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) appears to be in direct contradiction to this newer concept of parental partnerships of today. During the FERPA era, movements involving civil rights, student rights, and anti-war demonstrations allowed for students to seek more autonomy from parents. “While various exceptions allowed information to be shared with parents, FERPA also reinforced the larger message that the courts expected parents to sit on the sidelines when it came to relationships between colleges and students” (Lowery, 2011, p. 195.) While students are legally viewed as adults, for many of today’s parents, these adults are still viewed as their respective “babies,” causing some administrators to view parents as an enemy rather than a partner. “For today’s traditional-age college students, the dichotomy of child versus adult is problematic,” noted Wartman and Savage (2008, p. 42). Perhaps college and university administrators have created their own version of a social construct when working with parents, assuming that the results are typically negative. A more refined means of operating with parents is to form more of a partnership.

Parent Partnerships as Best Practice

College and university administrators have come to realize that, in most instances, parents have spent 17 to 19 years raising this child, who is now considered an independent student. The institution, in turn, has the next four to six years to develop the
student into a matriculated, well-prepared graduate of their institution of postsecondary education. This realization has only served to confirm the necessity of administrators becoming more inclusive, involving parents in this developmental process. Carney-Hall (2008) recognized the importance of parents in the college decision-making process, “If asked, admissions or financial aid counselors would likely report that parents are highly involved in the decision-making process” (p. 6). Creating an environment of academic success now requires the assistance of several constituencies, not only providing numerous services at the institution, but also including the student’s parents. Wartman and Savage (2008) clearly articulated the goals needed by universities in encouraging parental involvement, “Best practices in parent programming, then, include components for not only educating parents on what is appropriate intervention but also helping them to understand why colleges and universities want students to handle their own college and university responsibilities,” (pp. 79-80). Parents serving as partners for students once they arrive at college is a practice that is becoming well recognized. “As colleges and universities strive to create more mutually beneficial relationships with their stakeholders, parents may quickly rise to become one of the most vital constituent groups” (Vianden & Ruder, 2012, p. 63). One positive example of how studies are beginning to demonstrate the positive influence of parents as partners includes parental notification as part of the educational sanction for a violation of alcohol or drug policies at a college campus (Cosden & Hughes, 2012). In their study, parents commented that personal sanctions, which are unknown to university administrators, also assist in influencing the alcohol behavior of students when parents are notified. During the 1980s and 1990s, university administrators were more prone to use FERPA as a standard to
avoid sharing conduct behaviors. This particular study demonstrated how partnering with parents may be more beneficial to students, as opposed to keeping educational records such as conduct records from the parents’ awareness.

Involvement of parents is not necessarily a new notion. Activities such as: providing an orientation, not only for students, but for parents; allowing for active parental associations; disclosing alcohol and drug violations on the respective campus; notifying parents during crises; and creating crisis action plans are techniques offered by Sells (2002) some 12 years ago. Many institutions are still working to integrate parents as partners specifically utilizing these techniques. Perhaps Taylor (2011) described the ideal realization of a partnership with parents: “Gradually I realized that parents - much like college educators - hope their children develop the capacities necessary to make wise decisions, navigate challenges, build meaningful relationships, and act upon their beliefs and values” (p. 186). Wartman and Savage (2008) identified reasons why an imperative of involving parents needs to exist: “If parents are served well and feel included in the campus community, they will bestow more on the institution than just their children and tuition payments: - they will contribute their time, goodwill, and monetary gifts” (p. 82).

**Parental Resources**

Parents of today’s prospective college student possess the most detailed information in terms of selecting a college or university than at any other time in the history of higher education. Acknowledging the influence of families, resources specifically available to parents in guiding the selection process are quite prevalent. “Another message to parents that can have a significant impact on their students’ success is the availability of campus resources,” pointed out Price (2008, p. 34). In many
instances, the student recruitment process by institutions for postsecondary education has shifted and now includes parents. Tierney (2005) edited a book in which the authors specifically identified family engagement as a critical proposition in considering the college preparation process. From websites offering specific techniques in selecting a college, to the “how-to” guides for parents, numerous resources exist for parents in the decision-making process. In utilizing the website, amazon.com, to search the phrase, “selecting a college for your child,” the result generated 13 online pages of books guiding parents in this process. Since 1983, parents and students also have utilized the *U.S. News and World Report’s* annual college and university rankings to assist with reputation. Admissions professionals prescribe to several theories regarding the means by which students and parents select colleges and universities. An entire chapter is dedicated to numerous safety concerns for parents getting ready to send their children to college in a book written by Carr, Carr, Carr, and Carr (2009). Bulleted concerns as listed by the parent Carr and consulted in collaboration with the collegiate Carr (daughter), offer tips and techniques for easing the transition for parents and students. Resources for parents even extend into specific categories. Shaw (2005) provided insights for Christian parents as they prepare for sending their children to college. Once parents get the children enrolled and participating at the respective university, parents can be encouraged on how to interact through another barrage of self-help type books to assist in the empty nest transition. One book that assists in the guidance of parents as their children are in college is offered by Coburn and Treeger (2003). In this book, anecdotal comments by college students and parents, along with professional expertise of the authors, provide tips for parents as various issues arise when a child attends college. Under the section of campus
problems, Coburn and Treeger mentioned, “Campus safety is at the top of most parents’ worry list” (p. 81). These authors actually go a step further and specifically mention the Clery Act as a part of encouraging parents to become informed prior to the student attending a college or university. This notation serves as another example of information for parents and students apart from the colleges and universities providing this type of information.

For those families more concerned with their values from a Christian framework, Shaw (2005) also provided parents a detailed instruction guide for preparing their students for the collegiate environment. Shaw cited a 2004 phone survey conducted by The Chronicle for Higher Education related to views toward private versus public institutions of higher education. Shaw emphasized that the survey demonstrated a general lack of concern in selecting between the two types of colleges. “Isn’t it interesting that a relatively high percentage of people surveyed were apathetic about the choice between private and public institutions and which had better educational quality?” (p. 56). Of specific interest is how Shaw repudiated large number of parents’ views that Christian colleges are sub-par higher education environments. “However, many times the public assumes that because those schools are committed to Christ that the degree of intellectual engagement that students experience is limited” (p. 71).

The National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) (2010) maintains a website with an online brochure that provides thorough and detailed considerations for students and parents as they prepare to select a college. While detailed, this guide neither lists safety considerations nor references the Clery Act as a part of the parent guide. In many instances, safety concerns tend not to be in the forefront of parent
resources, perhaps resulting in a false sense of security concerning the safety of the respective child.

**The Homeschooling Parent**

Parenting of teens and pre-collegiate attendees is not an easy task. One group of parents has chosen to prepare their students in a unique setting to ensure quality education, as well as to maintain family values. This group is known as homeschoolers. In the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) on its website cites over 10,000 homeschool units that existed using data from 2010-2011 (http://education.ky.gov/comm/edfacts/Pages/default.aspx). This same webpage identifies over 14,000 homeschooled children, again cited from the 2010-2011 school year. Hadeed (1991) has provided a very concise and thorough definition of the homeschool environment: “It [home school] embodies two interrelated components, the decision by parents not to educate their children in an institutionalized setting and the decision by parents to educate their children in a home setting” (p. 1). Murphy (2012) affirmed this definition of the homeschooling framework and provided further insight by stating,

> Using this framework, a student is homeschooled when (1) funding for the student’s education comes from the family, not the government; (2) the service is provided by the parents, not state-funded (or privately financed) employees; and (3) regulation of the enterprise is internal to the family, not the responsibility of the government (or another entity such as a religious body). (pp. 6-7)

Murphy also demonstrated the increased growth and popularity of homeschooling from the time span of 1970 to 2010.
Figure 1. Parent motivations for homeschooling. Adapted from: “Homeschooling in America: Capturing and Assessing the Movement,” by J. Murphy, 2012, p. 78.
(Murphy, 2012, p. 23). Another component often attributed to homeschool parents is the emphasis placed on their respective faith. “In his comprehensive studies for NHERI, Ray has also described the prevalence of a conservative Christian tilt in the homeschooling community” Of particular interest in the study of parents of homeschooled children is to note the demographics of the parents. Kunzman (2009) recognized the focus for conservative Christian homeschoolers: “For them, perhaps more explicitly than for other homeschoolers, homeschooling is a shaping not only of intellect but – even more crucially – of character” (p. 315). Murphy cited numerous studies in which the parents of homeschooled children possess the following traits: well educated, middle class, women, predominantly Caucasian, married heterosexual, and often located in rural areas. These attributes are affirmed by Gaither (2008), who identified four reasons why homeschooling has become more prominent as an educational alternative in the United States. The first rationale identified by Gaither is, “…homeschooling happened because counterculture sensibility became the American mainstream sensibility” (p. 233). The movement of anti-governmental structure became so prevalent that one of the first ways to participate in an active demonstration against a governmental institution is to self-educate one’s children. A second rationale for the increased popularity for homeschooling, according to Gaither, is the simple concept of “suburbanization” (p. 233). Another means of furthering oneself from governmental control is to move away and to educate children due to the absence of educational opportunities in rural areas. Gaither specified the third rationale for homeschooling as, “…American cult of the child” (p. 234). This is not a reference to a religious, brainwashing movement associated with some right wing conservative groups, but rather it is more of a celebration in preparing
children to serve within the world. Children become an emphasis in preparation for the future, which would include the education of the child. Gaither concluded the rationale of the occurrence of homeschooling through the evolution of today’s current education model. “As public schools grew larger, more bureaucratic and impersonal, less responsive to parents and less adaptable to individual or local cultural variations, many families felt increasingly alienated” (p. 234).

In conjunction with the celebration of the child at home, parents also can provide an educational alternative that allows for more control over curriculum, as well as an increased specialized attention for the student. Murphy (2012) affirmed Gaither’s suggestions in providing the following statement: “As we have attempted to make explicit throughout these pages, the hallmark issue in the homeschooling movement is control” (p. 59). While Murphy’s study on American homeschooling seems comprehensive, any research associated with homeschooling parents is still somewhat limited. One reason specifically alluded by Murphy included what other researchers also have found that when researching parents of homeschooled children, “Even when they agree to be counted, resistance on the part of some of the homeschool community to engage with researchers is legendary” (p. 13). This secretive type environment may lead to the notion that parents of homeschool students are attempting to protect and shelter their children within the realm of negative aspects within the public school structure. Murphy added to this notion in describing three motivational factors associated with homeschool parents. The first factor includes what Murphy termed “Religious-based motivations” (pp. 87-92). Parents prefer the moral value climate of the home, as opposed to the school environment provided by the government. “…for many faith-based
families, whether by negligence or active design, public schools have become unhealthy places, both morally and spiritually” (p. 92), concluded Murphy. The second motivational factor is associated with current school system structure and can be divided into two separate categories. According to Murphy, the first sub-categorical factor is “School-based motivations: academic deficiencies” (pp. 93-97). In this sense, the school systems are so flawed in educating students, along with ostracizing the involvement of the parent, the more robust alternative for educating children is to provide higher quality education at home.

The second sub-categorical factor related to the school system is the motivational factor known as “School-based motivations: social/environmental problems” (Murphy, 2012, pp. 93-99). In this subcategory, Murphy specifically addressed the concerns of many homeschool parents and their consideration of safety. “In the 2003 National Center for Educational Statistics study, fully 85% of homeschooling parents identified concerns with the school environment as important in their homeschool calculations, more so than the religious (72%) and academic (68%) rationales discussed previously” (p. 98). With safety and religious concerns serving as two of the stronger rationales for homeschooling, it may be logical for parents of this segment of high school students to be more familiar with implementation of legislative initiatives, as well as being more concerned or knowledgeable about safety issues when considering sending their children to college.

The final motivational factor Murphy articulated in describing motivations for parents in choosing to homeschool is the factor denoted as “Family-based motivation” (pp. 100 - 104). Murphy succinctly summarized this factor by stating, “All of the healthy family narrative crafted so far rests on the twin pillars of shared time and mutual activity” (p.
This final factor merely demonstrates that many homeschooling parents are seeking to model how a family should function for their children, and part and parcel to this role modeling is the time spent together. This factor may be indicative of an increased level of concern for safety, as a natural separation takes place when the student possibly leaves the confines of the family to attend their respective college or university. As Shaw (2005) noted, parents of homeschool children need, not only to be concerned about the aforementioned concerns, but also “parents who have home-educated their child may want to make sure the colleges they’re considering have a history of enrolling homeschoolers and are welcoming to them” (p. 85).

**College Choice Phenomenon**

Despite courts and postsecondary institutions treating the student as an adult, several studies continue to provide statistical evidence that parental influence serves as one of the strongest influences when a student is selecting a college or university (Allen, 2007; Lord Thomas, 2003). Since the mid-1980s researchers have begun to review the rationale for students’ selection of a respective college or university. Bateman and Spruill (1996) explained that college choice models have “…evolved from econometric and status attainment theories” (p. 1). Regarded by many as the seminal research in the college choice phenomenon is the process offered by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). The authors provided a model in which three stages are involved in the selection process. These three stages are identified and briefly defined by Bateman and Spruill and are known as predisposition, search, and choice. A review of college choice over the past 50 years was conducted in which the evolution of concerns and factors were identified during the last half of the 20th century and included insights for today’s students and
parents in the process of selecting a college or university (Palmer et al., 2004). These researchers noted that, “students generally consider the largest number of colleges their junior year of high school” (p. 36). The factors vary for the respective college student as they consider which college they should attend; however, some consistent themes are easily identified within the research of college choice. Lord Thomas identified 15 factors associated with college choice to include: available programs, crime on campus, transferability of classes, tuition costs, room and board costs, available financial aid, academic reputation, graduation rates, job placement rates, size of classes, number of computers on campus, on campus housing, job availability in college, size of student body, social life, and location of college. In Allen’s 2007 study, the researcher identified 12 factors associated with students in the Midwest as they began to select their respective postsecondary institution of study. These twelve factors include: degree information (type), financial aid and cost, college guidebooks, faculty, student body, parental influence, location of college, influence of friends and siblings, influence of admissions counselors, intercollegiate athletics, internet research, and the retention numbers of the college. One monograph by Palmer et al. (2004) emphasized six factors regarding college choice:

Around the junior and continuing on through the senior year, educational and career aspirations, socioeconomic status, ability, parental encouragement, college attributes (i.e., quality, campus, academic programs, distance from home), and financial limitations that are the factors that most influence students in their college choice processes. (p. 36)
As factors continue to evolve in the marketing of higher education to traditional-aged students, parents continue to serve as an integral part of this process. What are parental considerations when assisting their children in this process? Based on the literature of student considerations, 10 factors stand out for parents as they begin to assist with the selection process. These factors include: athletic reputation, condition of campus facilities, campus safety at the college, attending where I went to college, cost associated with attending college, Christian affiliation, overall reputation, location of the college, academic major of child offered at the college, and student to faculty ratio. Another consistent factor for parents that is increasingly significant is job placement following graduation. One study (Rothstein & Rouse, 2011) noted this concern as related to selection of early jobs: “Much or all of this effect is across occupations, as debt appears to reduce the probability that students choose low-paid ‘public interest’ jobs” (p. 150).

A study by Holmstrom, Karp, and Gray (2011) specifically addressed the concern of post-graduation, when related to attending the elite colleges. “Parents spoke of their children’s need to earn a living, to survive after graduation, and their hope that their children would not have to struggle financially” (p. ?). Many are surprised at the importance of the aesthetics of a campus or its facilities when selecting an institution. One such study suggested that quality of facilities adds to the overall perception of the university’s reputation and aids in the selection process (Price, Matzdorf, Smith, & Aghai, 2003). Yet another consideration of the college selection process, which seems to receive less attention, is the role of the athletic reputation in the search process. Pope and Pope (2009) provided validation for the increased applications of students following athletic success: “Additional evidence suggests that schools use these extra applications
to increase both student quality and enrollment size” (p. 776). Finally, Pugh’s (2013) recent research asserted that appearances in national championships with college football and in the spring tournament also provides for increased enrollment at participating colleges and universities (p. 112).

Bergeson (2009) appropriately indicated that high school students have several options since the creation of original college choice models and their evolvement: “In particular, they [college choice models] debunk a fundamental assumption of these models - that students have equal access to higher education” (p. 15). As part of the research provided by Bergeson (2009), several groups of potential college-bound students lack or possess the skills, resources, and guidance to make a selection. Further, the traditional models tend to focus attention on the Caucasian, middle-class portion of the United States college population. Although research is evolving relative to choice factors for under-represented populations in the United States, to that of a more positive evaluation of college choice, research today is focused toward accessibility and retention of students. Bergeson (2009) however, confirmed the factor of being informed: “Information is a significant element of the college choice process” (p. 14). Bergeson’s research focused upon the lack of preparation for under-represented groups in America resulting in a dichotomy at colleges and universities.

A dichotomy of mistrust begins to form when the under-represented high school students, who may be ill-prepared to attend institutions of higher education when compared to Caucasian, middle-class students, who may be better prepared to go to college and also have been isolated from interacting with the less prepared student. If students have been raised within a culture of social construction from social media,
television, or even family upbringing, skills that include a lack of communication
techniques or false impressions of what the attainment of a degree may provide, will lead
to an environment of increased tension specifically, centered around falsely-assumed
safety perceptions. The aforementioned suggestion of inequality among different types
of prospective students is addressed by Bergeson (2009), who aptly noted, “This move
represents a refocusing of the research from issues of choice to issues of access” (p. 6).
Despite a new awareness of considerations of recruiting diverse students, institutions of
higher education continue to recruit the top students from Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987)
model that consists of the three areas of predisposition, search, and choice. This
recruitment process for colleges and universities, along with the increased costs of higher
education, have caused many to view the selection process from a consumer approach.
Arum and Roksa (2011) suggested the aspect of consumerism and that the attraction of
students and parents to the institution has evolved away from academic rigor to
popularity. As the selection becomes associated with the sense of consumerism, much
like purchasing a house or a vehicle, more advisors outside the family will be needed to
conclude the process. Espinoza, Bradshaw, and Hausman (2002) reported that high
school counselors, who assist in the process of college choice are often biased toward the
larger flagship institutions in which the factors of reputation appear to be more important.
However, for the vast majority of high school students, the most important advisors tend
to be those who serve as the parental units and with whom they live. Palmer et al. (2004)
emphasized, “Also, for most high school students, parents continue to play an influential
role in their children’s college decisions” (p. 47).
Clery Act Research

Although research has been conducted in an attempt to determine whether universities are complying with this federal legislation, little exists as to the effectiveness of the Clery Act, specifically related to informing prospective students, parents, and current constituencies of the university. Dr. Steven Janosik’s name consistently arises to the forefront when researching the Clery Act. Janosik’s (2001) first study investigated the effectiveness of this federal legislation by measuring behavior changes and decision-making of college students. Subsequent to that initial study, Janosik has partnered with several researchers. Janosik and Gregory (2003) evaluated the Clery Act from the perspective of law enforcement officials. Janosik and Gregory (2009) also researched senior student affairs officers (CSAO) in an effort to ascertain their viewpoints on the effectiveness of the Clery Act. For these CSAOs, the difficulty of categorizing campus violence remains a consistent concern when attempting to fully comply with the Clery Act, as Janosik and Gregory (2009) found:

Given these results, one should conclude to continue to focus on increasing the categories of crimes reported, as has recently been approved by Congress, would not benefit prospective students or community members. Indeed, the findings of this body of research suggest the opposite is true. The research seems to indicate that, for the most part, the energy and emphasis devoted to the crime reporting requirements of the Act are ineffective and misplaced. (p. 224)

Parents and the Clery Act

Of significance to this dissertation is the research performed in 2004, in which Janosik studied the awareness of the Clery Act with parents whose students were
attending an orientation type session. The focus for this study sought to determine the effectiveness of the Clery Act within its intentional scope and consisted of parental views, with the purpose of measuring the awareness of and the implementation of Clery Act statistical information among the parents of first-year students. Second, researchers wanted to identify how this information was utilized between parents and students. As with the previous Clery Act studies, the most relevant intended purpose was to determine whether the Clery Act was meeting its goals. Participants of this study included parents of first-year college students at a large research institution located in the Southeast portion of the United States. Four hundred and fifty parents were selected at random by a summer orientation staff at a welcome table. The selection process consisted of every third parent receiving a questionnaire. The population of this study included 5,200 families attending summer orientation. Parents receiving the questionnaire were given the form and asked to return it prior to the departure of campus that day. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed with this study using categorical Chi-square computations.

The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, 21 of which were used to discern whether the parents possessed awareness of the Clery Act and the information provided by the university. These questions attempted to address the university’s strategies for providing campus safety and the parental perceptions of campus environment following the orientation visit. This questionnaire was based on previous questionnaires offered to students in an earlier study (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gregory, 2003). Those questionnaires resulted in an initial reliability coefficient of .73 for the study. Three remaining questions further identified parents via demographic information (i.e.,
educational level of parent, first student being enrolled, and whether a member of the family had been a victim of crime). An astonishing 435 of the 450 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 97% response rate. Only 25 percent (25%) of the parents expressed knowledge of the Clery Act. Forty percent (40%) remembered receiving crime summary information as part of the admissions process. When asked about recollection of reading the material provided, again 25 (25%) of the parents indicated they read the mandated materials distributed. Regarding college selection information, parent responses ranged from a meager 3% to 11% for the crime statistics serving as an influential factor in choosing a college. The larger percentage resulted from the parents who also indicated having been a victim of crime. When questioned about receiving the full report and reading the information provided, 22% remembered receiving the information, and 15% indicated having read the material. While 33% of the parent participants indicated their students would read the material, 58% believed that if their son or daughter read the report, behavioral changes in the protection of property would occur and 54% thought the behaviors in the protection of self would occur.

Parents responded at a rate of 52%, expressing their children would change the behavior of movement around campus after reading the crime stats material. While 68% believed passive promotion of the crime information would be viewed by their children and they would attend a campus safety program, 55% thought this style of informing students would provide for a change in behavior in the protection of property. Of interest was that parents who had attended or graduated from college seemed less inclined to support these forms of passive crime safety education. Parents’ views toward administrative efforts to inform about crime statistics were high and culminated in 84%
feeling an increased confidence for the university officials responsible for safety. Those most concerned appeared to be parents with only a high school education, first-time student, and having experience as being a victim of crime. Parent responses relative to the question of the university being forthcoming in regard to campus safety netted a positive response of 90%. Seventy-five percent reported they had discussed campus safety. A hidden question was added to the latter portion of the questionnaire to eliminate response pattern bias. From this question, 96% of parents responded that the university administrators were not attempting to hide information concerning campus crime.

The previously cited limitations allow for further research in the area of parental awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts and the perceptions of safety offered by the two different types of colleges and universities. Also, during the early part of the 2000s, Kentucky had been recognized as a model state by the non-profit organization, The Clery Center for Security on Campus, then known as Security On Campus, Inc., regarding layering the Clery Act with the state a legislative initiative known as the Minger Act. With the update of the Clery Act in 2009, the federal inclusion of arson as a violent crime was influenced by the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s Minger Act.

This research will allow for an examination as to the effectiveness of the federal and state laws designed to inform parents, students, and others associated with a college or university relative to the violent crimes occurring on campuses. The study is intended to determine whether a possible perception exists by some parents that four-year, private Christian-affiliated institutions are safer than the four-year public colleges and universities. Research centered on parents measures, not only the effectiveness of these
legislative initiatives, but also allows for universities to begin to take the lead in better preparing their respective college-bound students and their parents when related to safety concerns.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative research is to discover whether a different level of awareness exists for the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of specific types of high schools in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. University administrators spend considerable amounts of financial and human resources in preparing crime statistics to be published annually. The effort is required through federal legislation, as well as state legislation in Kentucky, monitored through the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (2011). The purpose in collecting this important information is intended to assist the various constituents of the postsecondary institution in making the most informed decision when selecting to attend, or actively become a member, of the institution. The awareness of these legislative initiatives allows for four research questions seeking to be answered. The four questions are listed below:

1. Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

2. Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?

3. Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?
4. Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

**Research Design**

The research design is from a non-experimental quantitative framework. In an effort to measure the values of awareness between parents of various types of high school students, parents of three types of high school environments will be surveyed. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) referred to this type of design as survey research and emphasize its importance: “It deals with the incidence, distribution, and relationships of educational, psychological, and sociological variables” (p. 16). For this study, analysis of the statistics based from parental participation will allow for a comparison of variables associated with the type of high school in which the student is participating. Each specific quantitative process for the research question will be specifically mentioned in the following sections.

**Parental College Decision Inventory**

The instrument utilized in conducting the study was created by the researcher in an effort to answer the four research questions. The Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI) evolved in its development and implementation through three pilot processes. The pilot testing of the PCDI with the various versions of the surveys is provided in Appendices A and B. These three pilot studies utilized parents of high school students and provided insights for feasibility, distribution decisions, and reliability. Descriptions on the methods used to conduct the pilot studies are listed in the latter portion of this chapter.
Identifying Population

Measurement of the parental awareness to the Clery and Minger Statistics will consist of evaluating each of the empirical research questions for parents whose children are currently attending a specific type of secondary educational system in Kentucky and are considering attending college in the near future. Selection of the parents to participate in the study will be completed by selecting three different types of secondary institutions (high schools) within Kentucky. These three types of high schools are recognized by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and include public high schools, private high schools, and homeschooling types of secondary education. The types of schools are defined from the Kentucky Department of Education’s list of secondary educational institutions. Currently, 208 public secondary institutions and 26 private high schools are listed on the Kentucky Department of Education’s website (http://education.ky.gov/comm/pages/high-school-web-sites.aspx and http://education.ky.gov/comm/pages/other-schools.aspx), respectively. In addition, a list of homeschool organizations have been identified by the researcher in an effort to partner with the leaders of the organizations to send the survey to the parents associated with this format of secondary education. The five organizations selected include Christian Home Educators of Kentucky (CHEK), Adair County Homeschoolers, Homeschool Legal Defense Association, Barren River Homeschool Association, and Audubon Christian Homeschool Co-Op. According to the Kentucky Department of Education, 10,252 homeschools during the 2010-2011 academic year (http://education.ky.gov/comm/edfacts/Pages/default.aspx).
Upon identification of these schools, five school systems from the private school list and five school systems from the public school list will be randomly selected in an attempt to reach the parents of college-seeking students. This sampling would include implementation of a stratified random sample of the 208 public secondary institutions and the 26 private secondary institutions, resulting in five public high schools and five private high schools being surveyed. Slavin (2007) describes this technique as, “one way to be sure that a sample is like the population from which it was drawn is to stratify on important characteristics” (p. 114). In randomly selecting five of each type of schools, this stratification will assist in providing for a more representative sample of parents. While College Choice literature has recognized the search phase for students that occurs during the junior and senior years, literature has also identified the benefits of parental involvement processes beginning much earlier (Crosnoe, 2001). Therefore, for the purpose of researching parents in this study, they will self-identify as parents of high school students seeking to attend college in the near future.

In order to reach the greatest number of parents of the third type of secondary institution (homeschooling), the researcher will seek to partner with five of the aforementioned Kentucky-related homeschooling organizations. The population of the participants will be the parents of homeschooled high school students within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As with the public and private high school parents, the homeschooling parents will receive the electronic survey (PCDI).

**Distribution of Instrument**

Each school principal or designee of the public or private high school, will be requested to send a link to the PCDI to each of the parents of the respective school or
organization for completion of the survey. Each homeschooling organization’s website identifies a leader; in a similar fashion as was completed for the public and private principals, the leader of the homeschooling organization also will be requested to send the link to respective participants. Social media distribution will be encouraged for the leaders of the homeschooling network in an effort to increase response rates. Each official will be asked to distribute the electronic survey as part of a weekly or monthly newsletter, or if more convenient, to each parent via the school or organizational e-mail distribution list. No specific identifying information is sought through this survey, and the information collected will be used for the sole purpose of conducting this study. Attached to the e-mail or newsletter will be the requisite institutional research board items for full disclosure and understanding by the participants. A link to the e-mail will begin with a statement to include information implying full consent, a brief explanation of the survey, and instructions related to incentive for completing the survey. Completion of the survey will serve as affirmation for consent to participate in this research (A copy of the approved IRB letter can be found in Appendix C.). Parents of the three types of high school students will be instructed that only one person of the parental family unit should fill out the PCDI to avoid multiple surveys from one family unit. In order to obtain information for these data to account for a level of generalizability and reliability, the anticipated approximate number of completed surveys is 850. Statistical analyses of the PCDI will be implemented through the analysis of each research question. Each question is listed, along with the question’s respective statistical analysis.
Research Question One

Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

The first empirical question allows for determining via descriptive statistics whether parents of all of high schools possess an awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts. Parents will respond to the level of awareness of the respective legislative initiative, either the Clery Act or the Minger Act. The question will be posed in a Likert format. In answer to the level of awareness exists for the Clery Act, the responses will consist of parents identifying as having no awareness, some awareness, and very aware. Parental awareness of the Minger Act will be assessed in a similar fashion. Seeking the overall awareness of these acts will allow the researcher to ascertain the existence of a level of awareness. Respondents indicating somewhat aware or very aware will reveal their awareness of these laws. The hypothesis related to this research question is that parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky will not be aware of either of these two laws.

Research Question Two

Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?

The second research question will be analyzed to determine the degree of awareness when cross tabulated to the type of high school the student attends for the parents, as answered in the PCDI. Utilizing an analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical technique, these data will be examined to determine whether a statistical significance
exists between the awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for the parents of private high school students and homeschool students, when compared to the awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts by public high school parents. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) identified this technique as an appropriate way of measuring these variables: “Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is an inferential statistics procedure by which a researcher can test the null hypothesis that two or more population means are equal (H₀: μ₁ = μ₂ = … = μₖ) (p. 416).

The null hypothesis for this question is that no difference exists in awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act for the parents of the three types of high school students, with the dependent variable as student attendance at a private, homeschooling, or public secondary institution. Research within the literature review has indicated that rationale for some parents of the homeschooling environment chose the homeschool type of education, not only to provide a higher level of education, but also as a means of avoiding the negative socialization associated with public schooling (Murphy, 2012). Related to the information obtained from the literature review, the hypothesis for Research Question Two is that the null hypothesis will be rejected, and a different level of awareness will be present for parents of students who attend private high school and are homeschooled, when compared to the awareness level of the parents whose students attend a public high school.
Research Question Three

Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?

The third empirical question allows for the identification of 10 factors important to parents of high school students when selecting a college or university. An analysis of covariates (ANCOVA) will demonstrate that a statistical significance exists in the rankings of the factors, specifically safety and Christian affiliation by parents of homeschool high school students and private high school students, when compared to the parents of public high school students. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) described this technique stating, “Analysis of covariance is a procedure by which statistical adjustments are made to a dependent variable. These adjustments are based on the correlation between the dependent variable and another variable, called the covariate” (p. 425). For this research question, measurement of the means of the three types of high school parents will allow for a null hypothesis stating that no statistical significance will occur between the three types of parents when controlling for the covariant of campus safety. This researcher hypothesizes that the null hypothesis will be rejected, which demonstrates the existence of a statistically significant difference among the three schooling types, specifically the private and homeschooling parents and the public school parents.
Research Question Four

Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

The final empirical question culminates the study, in which an evaluation of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts guides parents in selecting one type of institutions over another. Specifically, when based solely on safety, does a perception of increased safety exist at a private Christian-affiliated university environment when compared to public universities within the Commonwealth of Kentucky? This question has guided this study from the beginning as a parent from a Christian church reported to a university administrator, “We are looking at colleges for our daughter and have decided that we are going to send her to a Christian college, because Christian colleges are safer” (personal communication with parent, 2002). The final question of the PCDI asks parents to select the type of postsecondary institution based solely on the factor of campus safety. The two variables to be measured consist of the type of postsecondary institution the parents intend to select (i.e., private Christian-affiliated or a public postsecondary institution). A statistical significance is hypothesized to exist for parents who select a private Christian-affiliated postsecondary education in association of awareness of the Clery Act, and again with the Minger Act when cross-tabulated against those parents who select the public postsecondary institution. A simple t-test statistical analysis will be utilized to determine whether a statistical significance exists for parents of high schools students selecting a private Christian-affiliated university, compared to the parents of high school student selecting a public university. The hypothesis is that
there will be no significant difference, which will affirm that a perception of increased safety exists at private Christian-affiliated institutions, regardless of the awareness of the Clery Act or the Minger Act.

**Piloting the Study**

Seeking to add to the body of research related to homeschooling parents, other researchers (Ray, 2014; Murphy, 2012; Kunzman, 2009) have contended that gaining access and positive rapport with these parents has proved to be difficult. In an effort to ensure proper compliance with the university’s Institutional Research Board, yet attempting to reach the greatest number of parent participants, the process of creating and administering the Parental Decision College Inventory (PCDI) survey began with three significant pilot studies. The first was implemented to ascertain the feasibility of distributing a survey to parents through a public high school medium. The intent of the first pilot study also was to determine the response rate for the number of schools needed to obtain responses for generalizability.

**Initial Pilot Study**

A public high school in southcentral Kentucky was selected in the spring of 2012, and the principal was approached regarding the distribution an e-mail to the juniors of the respective high school, as research has shown that the junior year is the prominent year in which students begin to review materials in the search phase of college selection (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). The researcher was referred to the school system’s attorney, and permission was granted based on approval from the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to administer the survey. The initial PCDI was created (see Appendix A) and consisted of 44 questions for completion by parents of high school juniors. The
university’s IRB approved the pilot study to be administered through the high school. The original PCDI was sent to 255 parents, and 27 completed the 44-item instrument. An evaluation of the instrument demonstrated that it was too lengthy and many of the items were not needed in answering the four research questions. The researcher was instructed to shorten the survey and to pilot it a second time as part of a focus group. Homeschool parents were also added as part of the second pilot study.

**Second Pilot Study**

The second pilot study was offered with an updated version of the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI - Appendix B). The university’s Institutional Review Board Director consented to the focus group approach for distribution of the PCDI as the second phase of this pilot study. This survey was created as an abbreviated version designed to more specifically answer the research questions. A focus group consisting of parents of high school students, from both a public and homeschool setting, was formed. Ten parents, five from the public school setting and five from the homeschool setting were invited to participate in the second administration of the PCDI. This setting was designed for the ease of completion of the survey, along with understandability of the survey by the participants. Of the 10 participants, six parents attended the focus group meeting, consisting of three homeschool parents and three parents of public high school students. Based on the response rate from the junior sampling of the public high school, the researcher, in consultation with the methodologist, determined that a survey of parents of all high school students would gain greater response and aid in the educating the participants on the campus safety acts for the parents in both the pilot studies as well
as the current study. The parents had children ranging from freshmen to juniors in high school.

The participants completed the survey in approximately five minutes, and ease of completion was achieved. Ideas gleaned from the focus group suggested improved response rates through incentives for the completion of the survey. Parents noted that the survey was easy to complete, and the opportunity to receive an electronic device, such as a Kindle reader or an I-pad, would serve as a strong incentive for completion of the survey. Parents shared suggestions on increased participation through an electronic survey, and positively encouraged the researcher to administer survey electronically. The parents also discussed the vagueness of the study’s purpose, and questioned whether more detail could be provided on the rationale for the survey. It was determined that it would be more beneficial to provide more detail information about the college selection process. The participating homeschool parents provided insights as to how best to administer the survey and forewarned about the possibility of a low response rate from parents, who were not typically enthusiastic about being surveyed concerning homeschool techniques. Participants indicated a lack of awareness of the two laws; however they demonstrated an increased concern relative to reviewing information in the future as part of their children’s college selection process. Participants also affirmed that the 10 factors associated with selection of a college or university were consistent with the experiences of their children who were beginning the search phase. The participants questioned the factor regarding athletic reputation. However, upon hearing an explanation of the research whereby increased enrollment occurred at institutions after winning a national championship (University of Kentucky had recently won the National Collegiate
Athletic Association’s national basketball championship), parents understood the rationale, and indicated that athletic reputation was not an important factor in their decision. Overall, the completion of the second phase of the pilot study resulted in affirmation of the need for research on these legislative initiatives. More important, the second pilot focus group confirmed the ease of completion and understanding of the shorter, less intimidating, survey.

**Third Pilot Study**

In consultation with the methodologist, the researcher agreed that confirmation was needed on the reliability of the survey prior to launching the full study. The selection of another small sample of high school parents and offering a pre-test and post-test of the survey was determined to allow for reliability. In order to measure the reliability of the pre-test and post-test of the PCDI, a Kappa statistical procedure was utilized. According to Viera and Garrett (2005), “The calculation is based on the difference between how much agreement is actually present (‘observed’ agreement) compared to how much agreement would be expected to be present by chance alone (‘expected’ agreement)” (p. 361).

Participants for the final pilot study were chosen to represent the public and homeschool categories. The purpose for not selecting a private high school setting was due to the limited number of this type of high school within the Commonwealth of Kentucky (26). Not tapping into the pool of private high schools would allow for a larger response rate when conducting the research at a later date. As part of the third pilot study, a new request for IRB approval was submitted and granted, resulting in the completion of this final pilot study. All documents were submitted, along with a link to
the electronic version of the survey, and approval for the final pilot study was given in December 2013. (Appendices C & D). This survey was launched electronically to 15 parents of public high school students and 5 parents of homeschool students who were associated with the researcher. The practice that the parents of homeschool students be acquainted with the researcher was consistent with the literature review (Kunzman, 2009; Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2014). This familiarity allowed for a 100% response rate from the homeschool parents in this third pilot study. The pre-test was launched on Monday, February 17, 2014. Parents were requested to complete the pre-test by February 21, 2014. A total of 15 participants completed the pre-test by the due date and were sent the post-test on February 24, 2014, with a completion date of March 1, 2014. Of the 15 parents who completed the pre-test, 13 also completed the post-test and were able to be identified in order to ascertain the reliability of the pre-test and the post-test for the the third pilot study. As described earlier, the Kappa level allowed for the measurement of reliability. Viera and Garrett (2005) offered a description of Kappa through the utilization of a table to suggest agreement between a respective pre-test and post-test (Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kappa</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Substantial</th>
<th>Almost perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0</td>
<td>.01 - .20</td>
<td>.21 - .40</td>
<td>.41 - .60</td>
<td>.61 - .80</td>
<td>.81 - 1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An increased Kappa value indicates an increased level of agreement for the parents who took both the pre-test and the post-test as a part of the third pilot study.
Upon collection of the data for the PCDI pre-test and post-tests, the Kappa levels and agreement percentages were calculated for selected questions. Agreement percentages represent the proportion of respondents who answered the post-test questions, with the same value as the pre-test questions. The pre-test and post-test participant agreement percentages, along with the weighted Kappa levels for predicative items, are summarized in Table 2.

A high level of agreement as discussed by Viera and Garrett (2005), coupled with a high level of agreement as established in Table 1, indicate that all but two questions fall into “almost perfect” agreement level. Overall, the questions used for the analysis fall well within the substantial level of agreement category.

**Pilot Studies Conclusions**

The three pilot studies demonstrated reliability, and also allowed for a re-evaluation of the methodology to determine that additional schools from the two types (public and private) should be surveyed. In consultation with the methodologist and the committee chair, it was determined to increase the selected number of schools from 5 of each type of high school (private and public) to 15 in order to increase the sample size of the parents of high school students in Kentucky. These three pilot studies also demonstrated that few parents were aware of the Clery Act or the Minger Act as related to the safety of their children. These pilot studies provided affirmation of the direction of the research for the purpose of this study.
Table 2

*Kappa and Agreement Values for Selected Parental College Decision Inventory Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent Agreement</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number children attending private/Christian college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number children attending public university</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number children attending community college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>n/a*</td>
<td>n/a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number children attending private college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority are attending public HS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority are attending private HS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority are homeschooled</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the Clery Act</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the Minger Act</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of athletic reputation of college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of condition of campus facilities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of campus safety</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of attending where I went to college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of cost of attending</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Christian-affiliation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of overall reputation of college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of location of college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of academic major of child</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of student to faculty ratio</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of college you perceive to be safer?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No Responses to This Question

Summary

The purpose of this study is to determine whether parental awareness exists for the Clery and Minger Acts within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This chapter has provided information concerning creation of the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI) and also discussed the research questions and the statistical analyses that will be
utilized to evaluate the respective questions. The evolution of the instrumentation for the research was presented through a discussion of the three pilot studies associated with its implementation. As part of this discussion, the feasibility and reliability of the survey also was reviewed. The determination was made that the use of a Kappa statistical analysis for the PCDI was a reliable instrument for a full state wide study.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

An analysis of the results from the survey of parents of three types of high school students in Kentucky was completed by answering four research questions regarding awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts. As mentioned within the literature review, a seminal purpose for the Clery Act and the Minger Act has been for all constituents to become familiar with violent crimes that have occurred on college campuses. The two laws were created with the intent that constituents (students, parents, and others) would utilize published crime data to make informed decisions on whether to attend specific institutions. This chapter will review results from the survey of parents of three types of high school students: public high school students, private high school students, and homeschooled students. The survey instrument entitled the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI) was utilized in evaluating the four research questions that served as foundations in evaluating survey data:

1. Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

2. Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?

3. Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?
4. Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

The SAS 9.3 research software program was utilized for statistical analysis of the data. Statistical procedures, such as descriptive statistics and simple t-tests, were utilized for analysis. These data and their descriptions are presented in this chapter as well as description of the data collection process and a definition of the types of high schools researched.

**Data Collection**

Upon completion of the three different types of pilot studies of the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI), a concern arose relative to the feasibility of obtaining a sufficient sample of parents representing the three types of high schools. In order to increase the sample size, the selected number of random public and private high schools was increased from 5 to 15. The literature review revealed that college students and parents begin the search phase at an earlier point in high school (Flint, 1992). The determination was made that a greater result would be obtained by surveying the parents of students in all high school who are seeking to attend college. As an incentive for completing the survey, an I-pad Air tablet was awarded to parents of each of the three types of high school students (homeschooled, private, and public). The principals of 15 private high schools were contacted and provided with instructions on distributing a link to the PCDI on a specific date, with a closing date listed to encourage timeliness (Appendix E). As part of the approval process for this research, the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) requested that a letter of cooperation be signed and
submitted from each respective principal. Nine of the 15 private high school principals affirmed their willingness to participate. Three of the 15 public high school principals agreed to participate (A sample letter of cooperation is located as Appendix D.)

Similarly, efforts to distribute the PCDI to homeschool parents were accomplished through notification of the administrators of five state-based organizations for homeschooling parents in Kentucky. The intent was to obtain a letter of cooperation from the administrator of each organization and to request that the link be sent to the respective parents of the organizations. Three administrators of the five homeschool organizations agreed to distribute the PCDI link. This lack of willingness also is consistent with the literature review and is well as affirmed through personal conversations with a noted homeschool researcher (B. Ray, personal communication, April 15, 2014). Several homeschool parents who participated in the pilot studies also indicated that difficulty may be encountered in attempting to obtain responses. The distribution of the PCDI through these venues provided a response of 678 parents.

**Identifying High School Types**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the research questions associated with the parents of three types of high school students: public, private, and homeschool high school students in Kentucky. The result of question four of the PCDI provided unexpected data results. Parents identified having different students who attended both private and public high schools in some instances (see Table 3).

In order to identify the type of school, participants were divided into a private category to include the parents of students attending private high schools and parents of students in the homeschool environment. When two or more private indicators were selected, participants
Table 3

*Number of Children Attending Type of School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 (zero)</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public high school</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private high school</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are homeschooled</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

participants were determined to be a part of the private high school setting. The remaining parents were then placed in the public category, in which the majority of their children attended at a public high school. By segmenting the parents in this fashion, the number of participants whose surveys allowed for measurement of these data was 628 (N = 628) (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Two Types of High School Parents – Public High Schools and Private High Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Parent</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public high school parent</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private high school parent</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic Information**

The parents of these high school students differed, not only in the type of school their students attended, but also possessed other attributes complementing the literature review. The first demographic question asked via the PCDI was how the household was
described as a family type. The structure of the family dynamic is ever changing in society (Kim & Schneider, 2005). Parents of college students may not have a typical (father and mother) family. Participants were allowed to select two-parent family, single-parent family, or a blended family to assist in identifying the family unit. This allowed parents to self-identify the type of structure for their families (see Table 5).

Table 5

Demographics – Description of Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Family</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>81.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent family</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended parent family</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having children already in college has served as a demographic benchmark (Janosik, 2004) for parents, as information concerning safety and an increased awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts may exist at a higher rate for these parents. The demographic question was extended a bit further by asking, not only whether parents had children attending college, but also the number of college-age children attending and at what type of institution the children were attending. Parents with children already attending a college or university should have received information regarding campus crime reports, resulting in an increased awareness. Second-generation college students also may benefit from the knowledge of educated parents. Table 6 summarizes the demographics related to parents of high school students who had children already attending college.
Table 6

*Demographics – Type of College Attended by Siblings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of College Attended by Siblings</th>
<th>0 (zero)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Christian-affiliated college or university</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public college or university</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Non-Christian college</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2246*</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not a true total as this is the number of responding parents who do not have another child in college by type.

Participants who indicated at least one college-age child attending a college or university totaled 229 (36.3%). Parents with two students enrolled in college or university while also having a high school student seeking college numbered 34 (5.41%). Parents with more than three children enrolled in college while also having a student in high school seeking college numbered 4 (.63%).

Another demographic attribute discussed in previous parental awareness research included the educational level of the parents. For the purpose of this research, the levels of education criteria for which parents were able to respond included: some high school, high school diploma or equivalency, some college, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, and doctoral degree. Parental influence in attending college is a factor when parents have participated in postsecondary education (Kim & Schneider, 2005). The educational demographic statistics are listed in Table 7.
Table 7

Demographics – Level of Education for Parent Completing this Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>16.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>34.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>25.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Degree (Doctorate)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (68.15%) of parents who completed the survey demonstrated an educational level of bachelor’s degree or above. With regard to parents having achieved a Bachelor’s degree, (34.71%) achieved this level of education. The category of Master’s degree accounted for 161 (25.64%) of the respondents. Forty-nine (7.8%) of the parents possessed a doctoral degree.

Results of the Data

The results of the data that was collected will be analyzed by a review of each research question and the respective statistical analysis associated with that question.
Research Question One

Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

Participants were asked to respond to a question related to the awareness level of the Clery Act, which is the federal legislative initiative originally passed as the Campus Crime Act in which postsecondary education institutions are required to publish information for the constituents on the violent crimes that have occurred on campus and adjacent to campus (United States Department of Education, 2011). The statistical practice utilized to measure the awareness level was a simple frequency distribution table. Research experts offer three requirements needed when describing a distribution of scored or observations (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). The distribution effect for the awareness level of the Clery and Minger Acts will be addressed separately. The question to assess the awareness level of parents was stated in the following manner: Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of the Clery Act (select one)? Table 8 demonstrates the awareness levels of the parents responding to the Clery Act question (number 5) in the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI). Parents who responded to the PCDI typically spent five minutes per survey, which indicated that few exited the survey to seek information regarding the Clery or Minger Acts prior to responding to the question.

The vast majority of parents indicated they were unaware of the Clery Act. Only 24 (3.88%) were familiar enough to communicate to others. In keeping with the requirement of discussing descriptive statistics as per Wiersma and Jurs (2009), the location of the distribution scale is located magnanimously toward the lack of awareness...
Table 8

Clergy Act Awareness - Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of the Clery Act (Select One)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the first time I have heard of this law.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>80.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard of this law, but am unfamiliar with the details.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard of this law, yet I would be unable to explain to someone else.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with this law and I would be able to explain it to others.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very familiar with this law and have sought ways to volunteer and fund on its behalf</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

regarding to the Clery Act by participants. The awareness of the Clery Act is not well dispersed, as less than 4% of the participants indicated the ability to articulate the Clery Act to someone else. The form of the distribution is heavily skewed toward the lack of awareness of the Clery Act.

The awareness level of the Minger Act, which is the Kentucky state law that allows for the layering effect for institutions to report crime information to constituents. Similar to the question concerning the Clery Act, parents were asked to select the statement that best described their awareness of the Minger Act. The responses are capitulated in Table 9.

The distribution of the awareness of the Minger Act demonstrates that even fewer parents are aware of the state law, which provides similar stipulations for colleges and universities in Kentucky to report violent campus crimes. Unlike the Clery Act, no
respondents were familiar enough with the Minger Act to volunteer and fund on its behalf.

The location of awareness related to the distribution is well established, as the Minger Table 9

Minger Act Awareness - Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of the Minger Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the first time I have heard of this law.</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>86.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard of this law but am unfamiliar with the details.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard of this law, yet I would be unable to explain it to someone else.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with this law and I would be able to explain it to others.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very familiar with this law and have sought ways to volunteer and fund on its behalf.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Act is not well known by parents of prospective college-seeking high school students. The distribution was found to be skewed much greater with the Minger Act. The shape of the distribution is even more dramatic, as fewer parents are aware of the law and are able to communicate it to others. Interpretation of the data for Research Question One will be offered in Chapter V.
Research Question Two

Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?

As described earlier in this chapter, the types of schools were re-established and the respondents were parents of either private or public high school students. When measuring two variables, proper research analysis warrants a simple t-test to determine whether a statistical significance exists. The number of parents completing this portion of the PCDI to allow for a measurement for the t-test was 619. The number of parents categorized as those of private high school students was 464, and the number categorized as parents of public high school students was 145. The mean values of awareness of the Clery Act were analyzed for the two types of parents. Results demonstrated that a statistically significant difference exists between the parents of the two types of high school students related to the awareness of the Clery Act p < .0001. T (370) = 2.90; p < .0001. Table 10 summarizes the means of the two types of high school parents and their awareness of the Clery Act.

Table 10

Clery Act Awareness – Mean Values between the Two Types of High School Parents (Public and Private)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public high school parents</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private high school parents</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A similar-test was conducted between the parents of the two high school types related to the awareness level of the Minger Act, which is the Kentucky’s version of the Clery Act. As with the Clery Act analysis, the number of parents responding to the PCDI was 619. Unlike the Clery Act, the analysis for the Minger Act demonstrated no statistically significant difference between the parents of the two types of high schools. Table 11 summarizes the results of the t-test analysis of the Minger Act. The results revealed that no statistical difference existed between parents of public high schools and the awareness of the Minger Act. Interpretation of the data for Research Question Two will be offered in chapter V.

Table 11

| Minger Act Awareness - Mean Values between the Two Types of High School Parents (Public and Private) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Public high school parents                      | 145   | 1.15| .50 |
| Private high school parents                     | 464   | 1.22| .64 |

**Research Question Three**

**Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (When college selection items are compared)?**

Parents were instructed to identify the level of importance for the 10 factors listed as considerations of students and parents during the second phase of the college choice literature also known as the search phase (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). The 10 factors to
be considered as important as part of the PCDI included: the athletic reputation of the college or university, condition of campus facilities, campus safety, attending where I went to college, cost associated with attending college, Christian affiliation, overall reputation, location, academic major of child offered at the college, and student to faculty ratio. The original statistical analysis was intended to ascertain the significance of the measurable factors for parents of the three types of high schools. An analysis of the covariates (ANCOVA) statistical operation was utilized to complete the statistical analysis. Due to a lack of responses from the parents of homeschooled high school children, the proper utilization of an ANCOVA analysis was unable to be accomplished.

The conjunction of the two types of high schools (private and homeschool) allows for a comparison of means, demonstrating the ranking of the factors for the two categories of parents (public and private). Through the utilization of a frequency distribution table, an observation can be made regarding the level of importance of each of the 10 factors. When listing the factors in order of importance by the mean level for parents of public and private high schools, an analysis of importance and the level of importance can be determined. A comparison of these means can be found in Tables 12 and 13.

For parents of both types of high schools, parents rated safety as the top rated concern as part of considerations associated with assisting students in selecting a college or university to attend. Further detailed interpretation of the data for Research Question Two will be offered in Chapter V.
Table 12

*Mean Values and Order of Importance of Ten College Selection Factors for Parents of Public High School Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus safety</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.783</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic major of child offered at college</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.580</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost associated with attending college</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.321</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reputation</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.266</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of campus facilities</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student to faculty ratio</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3.720</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3.678</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Affiliation of the College</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2.545</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Reputation of the College</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1.545</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending Where I Went to College</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1.419</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question Four**

*Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?*

The utilization of a simple t-test was conducted to determine the means of the level of awareness of the two types of parents, and to determine whether a statistical significance occurred related to the level of awareness of the two legislative acts and the preferred selection of a specific institution. The null hypothesis for this research question was that no statistically significant difference would exist for the parents whose awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts are higher, when compared to their respective
Table 13

*Mean Values and Order of Importance of Ten College Selection Factors for Parents of Private High School Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus safety</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4.609</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic major of child offered at college</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4.425</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reputation</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4.245</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Associated with attending college</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4.131</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of campus facilities</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>3.943</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student to faculty ratio</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>3.655</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>3.550</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian affiliation</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>2.159</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic reputation</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1.738</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending where I went to college</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1.386</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

selection of a private Christian-affiliated college or university. The two questions related to this analysis are Number 5 to determine the level of awareness of the Clery Act; Number 6 to determine the level of awareness for the Minger Act; and the performance of a cross tabulation of Number 8 that asked parents, based on safety, what type of college was perceived to be a safer environment. The hypothesis for this question was that parents of private high school students (homeschool students and private high school students) would demonstrate a higher mean of perception that a private Christian-affiliated college or university is a safer environment when, compared to the public institutions.

Established earlier in the analysis of Research Question Two, a statistical significance was found to exist for parents in the awareness of the Clery Act. A
statistical significance was not found with regard to the awareness of the Minger Act. For Research Question Four, the hypothesis was that a significant statistical difference would exist for the parents of the private high school types, indicating an increased awareness of the two laws. Parents of both types of high schools participated in the final question of the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI), providing 580 respondents to conduct the simple t-test. Table 14 summarizes results of the t-test performance of parent participants related to the level of awareness of the Clery Act and the selection of a type of institution when based solely on safety. Results from this t-test will be interpreted in Chapter V.

The t-test analysis for the selection of the type of college or university based solely on campus safety revealed that no significant difference exists. A similar t-test was conducted related to the awareness level of the Minger Act. It also was hypothesized that an increased awareness of the Minger Act would result in an increased mean level in

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clery Act Awareness - Means and Type of College Selected Based Solely on Factor of Campus Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public university as safer environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Christian university as safer environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the selection of a private Christian-affiliated university for the parents of the private high school environments. Table 15 summarizes results of the t-test of parent participants related to the level of awareness of the Minger Act and their selection of a type of
institution when based solely on safety. Results from this t-test will be interpreted in Chapter V.

Table 15

*Minger Act Awareness - Means and Type of College Selected Based Solely on Factor of Campus Safety*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public university as safer environment</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Christian university as safer environment</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the results on the awareness of the Clery Act, the t-test analysis indicated no statistical significance for the awareness level of the Minger Act when selecting a type of college. An interpretation of these results will be provided in Chapter V.

**Summary of Results**

This chapter presented data collected in answering four research questions. Data collected on Research Question One revealed a considerable lack of awareness exists related to the Clery Act and the Minger Act for parents of high school students in Kentucky. A simple t-test examination for Research Question Two revealed a slight significant statistical difference for the awareness of the Clery Act and the type of high school parents attended. However, when conducting a similar t-test related to the Minger Act, no statistical difference was observed. The display of distribution frequency and mean levels for Research Question Three, specifically related to 10 college selection factors that were analyzed for parents of the two types of high schools. Safety was the highest ranked factor. The mean levels for the factors will provide for a detailed analysis.
in Chapter V. The results from a simple t-test analysis of Research Question Four revealed no significant difference when cross tabulating parental awareness of these laws and the selection of an institution, whether a public university or a private Christian-affiliated university. Discussion, implications, recommendations, and limitations of these results will be addressed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the awareness of parents of three types of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky relating to the Clery Act and the Minger Act. The study investigated four research questions designed to assess the awareness and importance of safety as a college selection factor for parents:

1. Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
2. Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?
3. Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?
4. Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

This chapter summarizes the research conducted with 678 parents of three types of high school environments and specifically discusses the findings of each research question. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of limitations, implications for further research, implications for practice, and recommendations.
Findings for Research Question One

Does awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts exist for parents of high school students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

This question was asked as an effort to assess the effectiveness of these laws in keeping parents informed concerning campus safety. The intent of this question was to investigate whether parents were familiar with the resources offered related to safety as a part of the college selection process. While literature on social construction has demonstrated a perception of increased violence and an unsafe environment on college campuses (Sloan & Fisher, 2011), recent studies show that increased levels of violence may be attributed to the increased population of students attending college, and not necessarily an increased social problem (Drysdale et al., 2010). It is noteworthy to establish that campus safety is a social issue worthy of parental consideration. If campus violence is a prominent social issue for parents, should they also be familiar with the resources to address this social issue, such as federal and state legislation? The first research question attempts to measure the awareness level for the Clery Act and the Minger Act.

Clery Act Awareness

Results from the first research question demonstrate a lack of awareness of the Clery Act in parents of high school students in Kentucky (see Table 8). Slightly over 80% (500) of the respondents indicated that the most accurate description for their level of awareness of this federal law was that it was “the first time they had heard of this law.” “I have heard of this law, but am unfamiliar with the details,” The overall number of respondents unaware of the Clery Act rose to 571 (slightly over 92%) when including the
second response from parents that, “I have heard of this law, but am unfamiliar with the details.” Even more interesting is a review of the demographic information, in which 228 (36%) participants indicated that at least one other child was already attending some type of college. This information would imply that parents had already participated in the college choice process at least once. Conversely, parents who indicated an awareness of the Clery Act numbered 24 (4%). One parent indicated a thorough awareness by the following response: “I am very familiar with this law and have sought ways to volunteer and fund on its behalf.” Overall, a vast majority of parents who completed the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI) demonstrated a lack of awareness for the Clery Act.

Minger Act Awareness

Sloan and Fisher (2007) provided research reviewing state laws that modeled the Clery Act, assessed the laws, and described how the state legislative initiatives complemented the Clery Act. For Kentucky, the researchers identified that three of the seven key requirements were met in the state legislative initiative. Kentucky’s version of this state law is known as the Minger Act, in memory of Michael Minger, who died in a residence hall fire at Murray State University. The efforts of the Minger family are lauded, as arson is part of the legislation that colleges and universities are required to report. Pursuant to the revision of the Clery Act to include arson, Security on Campus, the organization now known as the Clery Center for Security on Campus, recognized Kentucky as a model state in its efforts to raise awareness of campus crime in Kentucky. Despite of this increased level of activism within the Commonwealth of Kentucky, parents participating in this study possessed less awareness for the Minger Act, as compared to the Clery Act. Utilizing the same parameters of the Clery Act, parents who
indicated that the best description of awareness was, “The first time I have heard of this law,” numbered 536 (87%) of those participating. Again, when including the second response of, “I have heard of this law but am unfamiliar with the details,” the responses increase to 587 (93%) of the parents lacking an awareness of the Minger Act. Similar to the low level of awareness of the Clery Act, a mere 17 respondents (3%) indicated familiarity with the Minger Act enough, to be able to explain it to someone else. None of the participants indicated an awareness level to include activism such as volunteering and financial support. The hypothesis for Research Question One suggested that parents of the three types of high school students would be unaware of both the Clery Act and Minger Acts. Although the three types of high schools were not addressed in the analysis of this question, the results from the descriptive statistical analysis reveal that the hypothesis is confirmed. Implications concerning parental awareness will be discussed in the latter portions of this chapter.

Findings for Research Question Two

Does a significant difference exist in the levels of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts for parents of private or homeschooled students when compared to parents of students attending public secondary institutions?

A literature review of parents who chose to homeschool offered some rationale for this type of education as an effort to avoid the destructive influences of the public high school setting (Murphy, 2012). Private high schools typically operate with a much smaller student body and in keeping with the research by Drysdale et al. (2010), a smaller enrollment allows for less issues of violence and/or crime on campus. In selecting a private high school or homeschooling their children, parents seek to emulate the small
population environment. If the concern for a safer or more positive educational environment remains a concern for the parents, it is logical that parents who select a private type of high school environment may have an increased level of awareness concerning the Clery Act and the Minger Act. The hypothesis was that an increased level of awareness would be present for parents of the two private styles of high schools.

In order to determine the statistical significance of the level of awareness of the parents, a simple t-test function was performed. As was discussed in Chapter IV, due to the way in which parents were identified, the types of parents were culled from three types, (homeschooling, private school, and public school) to two types of school environments (public high schools and private high schools). The private high school parent category encompassed both private high school students and homeschooled students. Of the 619 parents participating in the PCDI to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists in the awareness level of the Clery Act, 464 were categorized as parents of private high school students and, 145 were categorized as parents of public high school students. A statistical significance was found for the parents of the private high school students, indicating a slightly higher mean for the level of awareness of the Clery Act. In calculating the statistical significance between the two types of parents in regard to the level of awareness for the Minger Act, the results revealed that no statistical significance in the means of the two types of parents. The rationale for this lack of statistical significance is that the awareness level for the Minger Act was skewed in the direction of non-awareness for parents of both types of high schools, resulting in no statistical difference being evident.
The resolution to answering Research Question Two can be discussed as half affirmed. Although only a slight statistical significance occurred between the two types of parents for the Clery Act, the level of awareness for the Minger Act demonstrated no significant difference. The hypothesis that an increased level of awareness for both the Clery Act and the Minger Act would exist for the parents of the private high school students cannot be confirmed at this time. Implications for future research specifically related to this research question will be addressed later in this chapter.

Findings for Research Question Three

Does the score for campus safety rank higher for parents of students attending private and homeschooled secondary institutions when compared to parents of students attending a public secondary institution (when college selection items are compared)?

Various researchers have attempted to identify the key factors associated with the college selection process (Allen, 2007; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Chapman, 1981; Clayton, 2013; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Rapp, 2012). These factors vary in type and will generally reflect the theme from the type of research being conducted. For example, Perna and Titus (2005) included the aspect of race and ethnicity when researching the level of parental involvement. Recent research has been conducted to determine the role of athletic reputation also as a factor in enrollment increases (Pope & Pope, 2009). While the research is immense in identifying factors and rationale for the selection of a college or university, the purpose of this study was to determine the importance of the factors of campus safety and Christian affiliation. The literature review assisted in the identification of other prominent factors associated with the college choice phenomenon.
Upon reviewing the numerous factors under consideration, 10 provided for a well-rounded list of considerations for which parents and students may enter into a dialogue as the second phase of the search takes place. The 10 factors utilized in this study were not those guided by the student, but rather, served as considerations from the lens of a parent, which leads to further discussion as the student transitions into the choice phase. For this study, those factors included: athletic reputation of the college or university, condition of campus facilities, campus safety, attending where I went to college, cost associated with attending college, Christian affiliation, overall reputation, location, academic major of child offered at the college, and the student to faculty ratio. An investigation of these factors assists in answering the third research question. Results for this question were attained by cross tabulating the category of the parent type and the means of the 10 factors for consideration as part of the college selection process. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of each factor from the parent’s perspective as they help in selecting a college or university. The Likert scale ranged from (1) low importance to (5) very high importance. The hypothesis for Research Question Three was that the factors of safety and the Christian affiliation of an institution would serve as lesser determining factors in selecting a college or university for their children, compared to other selection factors. The results revealed that parents of students in both types of high school environments were very uniform in rating the various college selection factors. Excluding the factors associated with cost and the overall reputation of the college, parents from both types of high school settings ranked the factors in a consistent manner; i.e., campus safety was the highest scoring mean for both sets of parents. Ironically, it
was hypothesized that an increased importance on campus safety would be garnered from parents of the private type of schools.

In actuality, the data demonstrated an increased mean for campus safety with the parents of the public high school students, where the mean for this group was 4.783. This mean was slightly higher than that of the parents of students attending private high school environments which was 4.609. Christian affiliation also averaged higher for parents of the public high school setting, at 2.545, as countered by the private school parents, whose mean for Christian affiliation was 2.159. Differences in the mean levels that did not serve as a consistent ranking between the parents of public high schools and those of private high schools consisted of cost associated with attending the college and the overall reputation of the college. The mean value for the factor of cost for parents of the public high schools was higher, at 4.321, and ranking third of the 10 factors. For the parents of the private high school students, the mean value for the factor of cost was 4.131. The other factor that changed positions within the level of importance for the two types of parents was that of overall reputation. For the parents of the private school students, the mean value for overall reputation was 4.245, yet it ranked third among those rated. For the parents of the public high school students, the mean value for the overall reputation of the college scored higher than the private high school parents, at 4.266, yet it ranked fourth following the factors of campus safety, academic major of child offered, and cost associated with the college.

Research Question Three sought to determine whether safety would rank higher among the parents of the private high school setting. The analysis of data indicated that campus safety ranked high for both types of parents. The hypothesis was that the mean
value for the factor of safety by parents of the private school category would rank much higher when compared to the parents of the public high school setting. The results may be presented in this fashion due to the increased number of parents in the private school category, as opposed to the number of parents in the public school category. The results also demonstrates that four factors ranking in the top four are not only consistent, but they also are important as the mean values for campus safety, academic major of child, overall reputation, and cost associated which all average above 4.0 and demonstrate their importance. Attending where the parent went to college was the lowest mean value for both types of parents, allowing for a score of 1.386 for the parents of the private high school setting and a mean score of 1.419 for the parents of the public high school setting. Research Question Three demonstrates that the implications for future research are abundant related to campus safety considerations and increasing the mode of communication for parents.

Findings for Research Question Four

Are there differences (parental awareness) for the Clery and Minger Acts and the type of college or university setting parents would encourage their children to attend?

This question was derived from a parent sharing with the researcher that Christian colleges were “safer.” To statistically analyze this final question, mean values of level of the awareness of the 580 respondents were analyzed against the selection of two responses from the Parental College Decision Inventory (PCDI). The final question of the PCDI instructed parents, “If based solely on the factor of campus safety, which type of college do you perceive to be a safer environment?” The two selections consisted of a
public university or a private Christian-affiliated university. A simple t-test analysis was performed in an effort to determine whether statistical significance occurred when an increased awareness of the Clery Act existed. The same statistical analysis also was conducted related to the Minger Act. The result of the analysis revealed no statistical significance for an increased awareness of either the Clery Act or the Minger Act. The rationale for this result remains with the largely disproportionate respondents who indicated a lack of awareness of the Clery and Minger Acts, closely associated by the vast majority 487 (84%) of the 580 respondents who answered that based solely on campus safety, they perceived the safer environment to be a private Christian-affiliated university. The results of this final research question reveal an apparent perception for increased safety existing at a private Christian-affiliated university, regardless of the type of high school that students attend, as well as the awareness or lack of awareness of the Clery Act or the Minger Act. This also challenges the hypothesis that a difference would exist in awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act, resulting in a more discerning evaluation of the factors involved with parents’ selection of the type of college or university.

Overall Summary of Findings

This study only partially resolved the research questions associated with parental awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act. The implications and limitations sections will address the unresolved issues. The data collected in this study support the premise of a prevalent lack of awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act and continue to challenge the notion the reporting of this information assists in allowing students, parents, and other constituents to make an informed decision related to their
choice of a specific college or university. These laws mandate that colleges and universities communicate crime information to their respective constituents in order to improve awareness. A different method of communicating information on the resources available to constituents is certainly needed. One of the most interesting aspects of this study is that, when linking the total number of respondents, who indicated that at least one child was already attending college, 266 (39.23%) parents had already participated in the choice process at least once. However, only 24 (3.88%) indicated an awareness of the Clery Act.

This study also demonstrated to a lesser degree that parents of the private form of schooling, whether private high school or homeschool, possessed an increased awareness for the Clery Act. As Murphy (2012) indicated, many of the homeschool parents are often better educated. The parents from the private school environments are somewhat more aware of the campus safety climate. The data also demonstrated that campus safety is a prominent factor for parents when assisting in the college selection process. Both parent types indicated that campus safety serves as the most important factor as they assist their children. Finally, the data also indicated that parents participating in this study, based on safety, possess the perception that private Christian-affiliated campuses are safer than their public university counterparts.

**Limitations of the Study**

The homeschooling portion of the literature review, as well as personal communications with several parents of homeschooled high school students, warned of the possibility of a low response rate from the homeschooling parents. The response rate was dramatically lower than expected to draw any conclusions related to the awareness
level of the Clery Act or the Minger Act for this study. The larger number of participating private school parents outweighed the public school parents by almost three times and allows for only slight significant differences in the t-test calculations where administered. This study was conducted within the Commonwealth of Kentucky in order that any conclusions drawn for parents of the types of high schools participating in this study may not represent the parents of similar types of schools in other states. Finally, determining the parents of the types of high schools became difficult in the wording of question three on the PCDI, as the researcher had not considered the possibility that some families had children who attended more than one type of high school venue. For future research, parents should identify themselves as a parent of the particular type of high school environment.

**Future Research Implications**

The purpose of this study was to investigate parental perceptions of safety for high school students within the Commonwealth of Kentucky during the selection process of a college or university. The primary intent was to examine the level of awareness of a federal law and a state law created to inform parents concerning campus crime in an attempt to complement other college selection factors in encouraging their children to make the most informed choice for higher education. This study also was designed to support the efforts made by administrators in fulfilling federal and state obligations of reporting crimes to their prospective constituents. The review of literature confirmed the influence of parents as students select a college or university (Allen, 2007; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). As this study evolved, the homeschooling culture offered a unique perspective in the area of safety and parental
awareness. Although a low response rate was recorded from parents of homeschool high school students, future researchers will benefit from partnering with researchers such as Murphy (2012), Kunzman (2009), and Ray (2014), on the topic of home education. Dr. Brian Ray, founder of the National Home Education Research Institute, provided guidance related to the topic of future research on parents of homeschooled children.

Partnering more intentionally with homeschool organizations will increase response rates.

Future research in the area of effectiveness of communication to constituents also would add to the established body of literature within the study of the Clery Act. Although research has focused primarily on the means of accomplishing the requirements established by the United States Department of Education (2011), few studies exist on the effectiveness of the reporting on the college decision process. Similar concerns can be voiced relative to Kentucky’s state law, the Minger Act. As results of this study indicate, very few of the respondents were aware of this law, which serves as a strong resource for decision making for parents and students. A culture of investigation currently exists when research on effectiveness should be the emphasis of studies. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of the laws in proactively deterring violent crimes is rarely considered and equally as difficult to assess. Scrutiny occurs only after an incident of a violent crime relative to assessing or evaluating how administrators fulfill obligations, which is a more positive connotation, rather than investigating and scrutinizing the university itself. The increased scrutiny of higher education in all facets of operation allows for future research in the effectiveness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act and allows for practical implications within the field of higher education, particularly for administrators charged with reporting and/or leading in the area of student conduct.
Recommendations

Increased scrutiny of colleges and universities has become commonplace, with the most recent coming from the viewpoint of cost effectiveness of obtaining a higher education degree. Hacker and Dreifus (2011) pointed to the increase in students graduating with huge debt and further added, “Many will go on for graduate or professional study, so six-figure indebtedness will become extremely common” (p. 125). Economic viability is not the only notion associated with strict scrutiny of colleges and universities. The review of literature has demonstrated the importance of partnering with parents of current college students, as well as all involved in the selection process. Arum and Roksa (2011) summarized parental views: “Parents – although somewhat disgruntled about increasing costs - want colleges to provide a safe environment where their children can mature, gain independence, and attain credentials that will help them be successful as adults” (p. 124). Results from this study indicate that parents in Kentucky are seeking the same expectations from colleges as previously described. In determining that parents are consumers and interested in the success of their children beyond achieving a degree, the time is ripe for university administrators to re-establish relationships with parents as partners, rather than antagonists. Partnering with parents to assist in guiding their children is becoming the best practice for administrators in higher education.

Campus Safety and Parent Partnerships

“Parents and university administrators share in their commitment to student safety,” (Merriman, 2008, p. 57). Parents may be swayed into believing that universities are not in the practice of partnering with parents or students when clear and open lines of
communication become hindered, offering a climate of miscommunication. Sloan and Fisher (2011) addressed this miscommunication in the form of a theoretical foundation of social constructionism. As discussed in the literature review, social media, informal mandates, and a lack of identification of the problem create an environment detrimental to creating a partnership with parents. Campus safety is not a new social problem, and partnering with parents can encourage students to establish practices that will assist in their safety, implying that university administrators need to become familiar and competent in their work. As university administrators, educating the student and the parent in essence may occur over the student’s tenure at the university. One recommendation is to urge lawmakers to avoid naming legislation after victims, but rather naming laws for what they are designed to do. The term Campus Crime and Information Act provides a succinct title that allows students and parents to become more familiar with the law. Laws that are easy to understand and articulate their purpose assist in encouraging a postsecondary environment where both the university and the parental unit work together to graduate the student and benefit all parties involved.

**Summary of Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the parents of high school students within the Commonwealth of Kentucky possess an awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act. By being aware of these laws, parents are best prepared to assist their children in making the most informed decision when selecting a college or university. This study suggests that, despite efforts of university administrators in preparing lengthy reports of crimes on campus and in attempting to make the campus as reasonably safe as possible, parents in Kentucky are unaware of the resources available to
them in guiding their children in the college decision process. Campus crime has become a new social issue for parents, which increases their concern because their child is no longer at home. Results from this study indicate that campus safety is the first ranked factor among 10 parental considerations when selecting a college or university. Results demonstrate a slight statistically significant difference for parents whose children attend a private high school setting.

Finally, while no statistical difference exists related to the awareness of the Clery Act and the Minger Act and the selection of a public or private Christian-affiliated university, the majority of parents who responded did feel that a private Christian-affiliated university is a safer environment. To combat the negative perception that college campuses are riddled with crime and debauchery, as created through the concept of social constructionism, university administrators are encouraged to seek out ways to participate through a principle of best practice, by partnering with parents of students, even prior to setting foot on campus.

With regard to campus safety, this study will end as it began. Hughey (1982) emphasized that components of the university are a microcosm of our society. Crimes will happen off campus, and crimes will happen on campus. As the research of campus crime awareness has demonstrated, by fully communicating and partnering with parents, an increased level of awareness will benefit students as they come prepared to practice techniques that will assist in securing their safety.
REFERENCES


http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer/vid=3&sid=21ebdd65-8f29-4b50-ab5d-173d961d8319%40sessionmgr113&hid=115


National Association for College Admission Counseling. (2010). Arlington, VA.


APPENDIX A: Initial Parental College Decision Inventory

Demographic Information

Family information –

Our household may be described as one of the following:

Two parent family  Single Parent family  Blended parent family

Which parent is filling out this inventory?

Mother  Father  Step Mother  Step Father  Surrogate Parent (foster, grandparent, etc)

If surrogate parent please fill in the type of parent here: ______________________________

The level of education for the parent filling out this inventory:

H.S. Diploma  Bachelor’s degree  Master’s degree  Terminal degree  N/A

Number of children:

1  2  3  4 or more

Number children currently in secondary education (high school):

1  2  3  4 or more

My child, who is preparing to select a college or university, was brought up in the following religious environment:

Christian (Protestant faith)  Atheistic  Islamic faith  Buddhist faith  Christian (Catholic faith)  Jewish faith  Hindu faith  Christian (Non-denominational)
Other faith (Please list out)

______________________________________

My child preparing to select a college or university currently attends the following type of secondary education (high school):

Public  Private  Parochial  Home  Schooled

Number of children currently attending postsecondary education (college or university):

1  2  3  4 or more

If other children are attending postsecondary education (college or university), how would you categorize its type:

Child 1 attending postsecondary education:

Public 2yr  Public 4yr  Private 2yr  Public 4yr  Community College  Other  N/A

Child 2 attending postsecondary education:

Public 2yr  Public 4yr  Private 2yr  Public 4yr  Community College  Other  N/A

Child 3 attending postsecondary education:

Public 2yr  Public 4yr  Private 2yr  Public 4yr  Community College  Other  N/A

Child 4 attending postsecondary education:

Public 2yr  Public 4yr  Private 2yr  Public 4yr  Community College  Other  N/A

To what degree of agreement would the following statements related to the selection of a prospective postsecondary institution apply for the junior student in the household: (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree):
The selection of a college or university is based on numerous factors.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

As the parental unit, my influence in selecting a postsecondary institution for which my son/daughter is attending will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

Location of the postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

Costs associated with attending the postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

My daughter/son’s status as a legacy of a postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

The perception of safety at a respective postsecondary institution will serve as a factor:
The proposed major of my son/daughter will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

The Christian affiliation of a respective postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

The overall reputation of the postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

The athletic reputation of the postsecondary institution will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

The condition of the facilities of a campus will serve as a key factor:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neutral  Somewhat Agree  Strongly Agree

Other key factors associated with the selection of a postsecondary institution:
List Here:
____________________________________________________________________

Ranking perspective considerations:
Please associate a ranking to the following listed considerations (1 serving as the most important key factor and 11 being the least important key factor):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Influence</th>
<th>Location of Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Institution</td>
<td>Legacy Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Safety at Institution</td>
<td>Proposed Major of my student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation of the Institution</td>
<td>Overall Reputation of the Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Reputation of the Institution</td>
<td>Condition of facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Factors Listed by Parent: (Please type in box listed below)

Level of Awareness: (1 No level of awareness to 3 High level of awareness)

As your junior level student prepares for the selection of a college or university, what level of awareness exists for the Clery Act?

1  2  3
No Awareness  Somewhat Aware  Very Aware
As your junior level student prepares for the selection of a college or university, what level of awareness exists for the Minger Act?

1  2  3
No Awareness  Somewhat Aware  Very Aware

Without doing research for the questions below, to what degree of agreement are under consideration for the following statements: (1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree):

The postsecondary institutions for which my junior has applied has provided instructions on how to access safety statistics related to the respective institution:

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neutral  Somewhat Agree  Strongly Agree

The nine public universities within the Commonwealth of Kentucky are safe for my junior to attend:

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neutral  Somewhat Agree  Strongly Agree

Four year, private Christian affiliated colleges and universities are safe for my junior to attend:

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neutral  Somewhat Agree  Strongly Agree
Four year, private Christian affiliated colleges and universities are safer than the public universities.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

Public universities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky communicate a stronger commitment to the mission of the university when compared to four year, private Christian affiliated colleges and universities.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

Four year, private Christian affiliated colleges and universities provide a climate for stronger moral character development when compared to public universities.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

If the decision was made today of which type of college my daughter/son would attend today, the selection would be for my son/daughter to attend:

Public University Private, Christian Affiliated College or University

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) is a federal law that requires colleges and universities to disclose certain timely and annual information about campus crime and security policies.

The Michael Minger Act is a Kentucky state law that requires public colleges and universities as well as private institutions licensed by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education to report campus crimes to their employees, students, and the public on a timely basis.
Both definitions are taken from the Clery Center for Security On Campus, Inc. website, http://www.securityoncampus.org/
### APPENDIX B: Final Copy of Parental College Decision Inventory

**Q1** Our household can be described as one of the following:
- Two Parent Family (1)
- Single Parent Family (2)
- Blended Parent Family (3)

**Q2** How many of your college-aged children are currently attending one of the following (if zero, select ‘0’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private, Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private, Non-Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Q3 The majority of your high school aged children are attending one of the following (if zero, select '0'):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 (1)</th>
<th>1 (2)</th>
<th>2 (3)</th>
<th>3 (4)</th>
<th>4 or more (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public High School (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private High School (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Home Schooled (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4 Level of Education for Parent filling out this survey:

- Some High School (1)
- High School Diploma or equivalent (2)
- Some College (3)
- Associate Degree (4)
- Bachelor Degree (5)
- Master Degree (6)
- Terminal Degree (Doctorate) (7)

Q5 Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of the Clery Act (Select one)?

- This is the first time I have heard of this law.
- I have heard of this law, but am unfamiliar with the details.
- I have heard of this law, yet I would be unable to explain it to someone else.
- I am familiar with this law and I would be able to explain it to others.
- I am very familiar with this law and have sought ways to volunteer and fund on its behalf.
Q6 Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of the Minger Act (Select one)?
- This is the first time I have heard of this law.
- I have heard of this law, but am unfamiliar with the details.
- I have heard of this law, yet I would be unable to explain it to someone else.
- I am familiar with this law and I would be able to explain it to others.
- I am very familiar with this law and have sought ways to volunteer and fund on its behalf.

Q7 Listed below are items often considered when selecting a college or university? For each item, please rate how important that item is to you, as a parent, when helping your child consider a college or university. Use this rating scale:
(1) Low Importance   (2) Some Importance   (3) Moderate Importance   (4) High Importance   (5) Very High Importance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Low Importance (1)</th>
<th>(2) Some Importance (2)</th>
<th>(3) Moderate Importance (3)</th>
<th>(4) High Importance (4)</th>
<th>(5) Very High Importance (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Reputation of College or University</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of Campus Facilities at the College Campus</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Safety at the College</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending Where I Went to College Cost Associated with Attending College</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian Affiliation of the College</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Reputation of the College</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of the College</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Major of Child Offered at the College</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student to Faculty Ratio at the College</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8 If based solely on the factor of campus safety, which type of college do you perceive to be a safer environment?
☐ Public University
☐ Private, Christian affiliated University

Thank you for taking the time to completing the Parental College Decision Questionnaire.

If you are interested in being considered for the I-Pad Air Drawing, please read the directions immediately below.

If you are not interested in being registered for the drawing, please click the completion arrow at the bottom right portion. Again, thank you for your time in taking this survey.

If interested in being considered for the drawing to win an I-Pad Air Tablet, please copy the link listed below:

https://wku.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cCpxf9igY1kYB5r

After clicking the completion arrow, you can paste the copied website into a new browser to register your name so that you remain anonymous with this survey, but will be considered for the random selection of receiving the I-Pad Air.
Dear Parent:

I am writing you today to request you to complete this brief electronic survey. This survey is for parents, whose son or daughter is considering attending college. Parents of children attending public and private high schools along with parents, whose students participate in being home schooled are being surveyed. The survey is intended to gain insights related to the factors parents use in assisting their child (children) in the process of selecting a college or university to attend. This survey is limited to parents within the state of Kentucky.

By completing this survey, participants will be providing information specifically for the fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The information offered in this survey is anonymous and will be used in answering research questions associated with the dissertation. No identifiable information will be printed or published as a part of completing this dissertation. This anonymous survey should only take up approximately five minutes of your time.

As an incentive for completing this survey, one parent from each category of schooling (i.e., public high school, private high school, and home school) will be selected randomly by computer program to receive an I-Pad Air Tablet (valued at $499). After completing the survey, participants interested in participating in this drawing will be asked to provide contact and shipping information – via a second website to ensure anonymity and only to be used if selected as a winner and for the purposes of shipping the I-Pad Air Tablet.

*Your completing this electronic survey implies your consent.*

If you should have any further questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact Steven R. Briggs at steve.briggs@wku.edu (270) 745-2037. Thank you for your participation in this research project.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Briggs

WKU Doctoral Candidate

Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129
APPENDIX D: Instructions for Principals and Administrators

Letter sent to Principals of Public and Private High Schools

Dear High School Principal or Administrator:

Thank you for allowing me to survey the parents of your respective high school. I am asking the parents of high school students in the public, private and home school settings to complete this five minute survey.

I have attached a link below for you to send out via your parental listserv, Facebook Account, Twitter Account, newsletter or other means that you have enabled to electronically correspond to your parents. The survey is to be launched on the morning of Monday, March 17, 2014 and will close at 4:30 p.m. on March 21, 2014. If on March 19, 2014, my responses seem low, I may ask that you again send out the link one more time to generate increased responses. Please know that the survey is an inventory, so there are no incorrect answers, nor will participants be linked to any school or organization.

In an effort to entice more responses, one parent from each category, who completes the survey will have the opportunity to register for a drawing to win an I-Pad Air Tablet, valued at $499.00.

I am placing the link below along with a short blurb that you can add. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at steve.briggs@wku.edu or via telephone at 270.745.2143.

The blurb:

Steven Briggs, a doctoral student at Western Kentucky University has randomly selected private and public high schools to participate in a parental awareness survey. Our high school was one of thirty high schools selected in the state of Kentucky. The survey is intended for parents, whose students are preparing to select colleges in the near future. Parents who participate in taking this five minute survey can become eligible for a drawing to win an I-Pad Air Tablet, valued at $499.00. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate various considerations of parents as they assist their children in selecting a college or university.

Your answers are anonymous. Please click the link below to complete this survey. The survey closes on Friday, March 21, 2014.

Survey Link: https://wku.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1XGDKvdB2eCYR
APPENDIX E: Sample Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation in Support of Doctoral Dissertation
Investigated by Steven R. Briggs, Doctoral Candidate
At Western Kentucky University

My signature below indicates that Steven R. Briggs, Doctoral Candidate at Western Kentucky University has contacted me seeking permission to submit his online survey to the parents of sophomores, juniors and seniors of the respective high school listed below. I have been informed that this survey is for data collection as part of completing his dissertation. I have agreed incorporate a link to this survey as a part of our communication efforts at our high school (i.e. via a newsletter, e-mail submission, Facebook Page or Twitter feed).

I understand that assisting Mr. Briggs entails sending the link to the online survey no more than twice within the one week time frame from March 17 to March 21, 2014.

Mr. Briggs has definitively informed me that the data collected is for research purposes only; the results are anonymous; and the e-mail information is in no way is intended to be utilized as a distribution list.

Principal or Leading Administrator

Date

Name of High School Participating