Influence of Parents on First Year Undergraduate Student Adjustment and Academic Achievement at University

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I. Thesis Summary

Following significant changes to HE, not least the marketization of HE, it is imperative that institutions understand the student experience in order to ensure appropriate support is offered. Using Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus, this study looks to understand the influence of parents on the student experience by comparing parental capital (their experience of HE, referred to as PEHE) and Term Time Accommodation (TTA) as key variables. Parents have been established as being crucial to a child's educational success prior to entry, however, little is known of their importance for university students. Data were gathered from a large-scale online survey from 750 first year undergraduate students, using the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1986), to establish the impact of the key variables on student adjustment, withdrawal and academic achievement. Phase I established that students living at home were significantly more likely to withdraw than those living in halls. Phase II concluded that parents were found to be key to students' decision to go to university and their support was valued by students. Further, a path was established which suggests that PEHE is related to TTA, which is related to levels of adjustment, which is then significantly correlated to achievement. Students living in halls are more likely to report higher levels of adjustment and achieve higher marks than students living at home. Significantly, students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds reported higher levels of total adjustment and achievement when living at home, whereas students from white backgrounds reported higher levels of adjustment and achievement living in halls. Whilst parents remain important for individuals, overall it is TTA that is significant in the student experience, not just in terms of adjustment, but also achievement. The findings have clear implications for the support offered by universities.

a. Keywords

Experience; Family; Performance; Transition; Capital

II. Acknowledgements

The journey to complete this thesis has been a challenging one for many reasons. I would not have completed without the support, guidance and patience of so many people. Firstly, I would like to thank the students who took part in the research, who shared their experiences so honestly. I would also like to acknowledge the time and support given by colleagues in extracting data from the student record system, both at Aston University and at De Montfort University.

I would like to express extreme gratitude to my supervisory team. Their honesty, and directness, helped me keep focus. They did not lose faith in my ability to finish and I feel very lucky to have had the excellent supervision I have had.

I would also like to express my thanks to my family, in particular my children and partner, for their patience and understanding. Finally, I would like to thank my Dad, who always supported my education and never doubted my abilities. I hope I can have such unwavering belief in my children.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis aims to improve our understanding of the student experience, specifically the role of parents of first year undergraduate students in the UK, in order to be able to offer better, more appropriate, student support. It will examine the role parents play in the adjustment to both the university process and academic achievement, to gather a more complete picture of the issues and challenges faced by students.

This area of interest originally evolved from my role as a Widening Participation Officer for the home site of this research, based in Birmingham, which is the second biggest city in the UK. This role involved developing and delivering *Involving the Family*, a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded Widening Participation (WP) project. Research undertaken by Aston Business School (Higson, Jha, & Foster, 2005) identified possible barriers to Higher Education (HE) faced by students from non-traditional backgrounds, specifically those from ethnic minority backgrounds. One of the findings of that research related to the important role parents play in the choices of their children in terms of HE.

Following on from Higson et al. (2005) the *Involving the Family* project was developed in order to support the parents identified by the research. It was established that parents of young people from under-represented groups such as Black and Minority Ethnic groups and lower social class groups, often did not have personal experience of the UK HE system, yet were assumed to be able to support and encourage their young person to attend. In contrast to traditional WP roles, the *Involving the Family* project involved working with parents and community organisations from under-represented groups, rather than with the students/potential students themselves. Staff from the project attended events within schools and community events as well as offering parents the opportunity to

visit a university campus; full details are published in Foster and Higson (2008). As someone who had previously worked within HE for many years, including a WP role at a university in a very rural area, it was interesting that the common themes for students and their family remained consistent, despite the diverse backgrounds of these two groups. Would they fit in? Was university for people like them? How could they afford it? What if they failed? What did being a student entail?

In addition to my WP activity, opportunities also arose for me to work with the admissions teams of an academic school on their open days. Over the years, it became apparent that there was an increase year on year in the number of parents attending such events with their children, with the majority of students attending with at least one parent, and often the whole family. It appeared to me that parents felt they had a vested interest in the decision their child was making. This raised the question of who, or what, was the driver for this new family involvement? Did the increase in fees mean that parents took the decision about where to commit their ‘investment’ more seriously? Or was it a reflection of the changing nature of parental involvement at a school level which continued much later than it used to?

At this time, I was seconded to work as a student support manager in an academic school. During this experience, it continued to be apparent that some parents were heavily involved in the lives of their children. On a weekly basis, I received telephone calls from parents asking if their child had been in attendance that week, who they were friends with, or if they had a girlfriend or boyfriend, in addition to queries regarding their assessments and marks. Managing the expectations of these parents whilst protecting the privacy of the students was a difficult line to tread. I realised how fragile the relationship is between university and student. The need to protect this relationship whilst understanding the worries and concerns parents held for their children was challenging. It also became clear that the type of parents who were in contact were not a homogenous group. This was not just parents who had or had not been to university themselves or those whose children

continued to live at home, but rather parents in a variety of situations.

The research question of this thesis began to form as a result of my years of experience in this field. It seemed clear to me that parents wanted to be active in their children's education and support them to their best ability, but that these parents had many questions: what if they didn't know how to support their children because they had not been to university themselves? What if their children failed? How could they help? It appeared as though parents were concerned about the transition to university life, which was an unknown environment compared to children's previous college or school. This situation caused me to question how we as a university supported our students, not only with their academic and social transitions to university, but also whether we did enough to support students in managing their relationship with their parents. If it was found that parental influence continued past the start of a university degree programme, the question would be raised of how best institutions could support both the student and their parents in order to help the student to achieve their full potential.

A literature review revealed that there was a lack of research pertaining to the parents of university students, and that the research which does exist tends to be of a similar methodology and ontology, positioned within the constructivist paradigm and predominantly qualitative in nature. The research question for this thesis was developed as a result of this literature review, with an aim to uncovering findings which can be applied to improve the student experience.

1.2 Higher Education and the Changing Student Experience

As this thesis is ultimately concerned with identifying ways in which universities can more appropriately support their students, it is imperative to include a summary of the significant changes within the sector, as well as their observed impact on the student experience. Since the 1960s, the UK HE system has undergone several marked periods of

transformation (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Foskett, 2011), moving from a ‘free at the point of entry’ system to an increasingly market-based approach. From an institutional perspective, there has been a significant increase in the number of universities offering degree programmes. The removal of the binary line (1992) when polytechnics gained university status, and changes to degree awarding powers (Brown, 2015), have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of universities in the UK, from 48 in 1979/80 (2015, p. 30) to 162 in 2015/6 (Universities UK, 2018). Whilst this may give the impression of greater student choice, there are concerns that removing obvious differences between institutions – for example by polytechnics and teacher training colleges becoming universities and smaller colleges merging to make much larger universities – choosing the right institution becomes much harder for the student and their family, especially for those who are first in the family to attend and so have no expert knowledge on which to draw.

Student numbers have also increased significantly over the past fifty years. From approximately 600,000 students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in the 1960s (Greenaway & Haynes, 2003), these numbers peaked at over 2.5million students in 2010/11, and have settled to over 2.2million students in 2015/6 (Universities UK, 2018). These growing numbers have changed the nature of student engagement. Lecture sizes have increased, staff to student ratios have declined, and student support services are under pressure to offer a quality service with ever decreasing resources. The advent of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has also changed the student experience, with many institutions offering recorded lectures or online content to supplement, or even replace, traditional face to face lectures. Parents of children currently attending HE who also went to university will have had very different experiences to their offspring.

Underpinning these changes, and arguably the most significant change, is in the structure of funding for HE. From a public sector, fully-funded system in the 1960s, to a market-based self-funding system in 2017, this transformation includes the introduction of tuition

fees. Previously, the cost of teaching was met by the government, while the cost of student living was funded through grants from the Local Education Authority. Following the reforms and marketization of HE, costs were incurred directly by the student, via loans to be repaid after graduation. The first wave of tuition fees, introduced in 1998, were £1,000 per year for full time students (1998). Variable fees of £3,000 were introduced in 2004, followed by deferred variable fees of £9,000 in 2012. As of the start of the 2017/8 academic year, tuition fees rose again to £9,250 per year, increasing the final debt students incur on graduation. When tuition fees were first introduced, the maintenance loan was income based, with students from poorer families, or in receipt of certain benefits, having access to a grant. This has now been replaced by a full commercial rate loan structure.

Further recent changes include the formation of the Office for Students (OfS) in Spring 2018, and subsequent disbandment of both HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and OFFA (Office for Fair Access). The new OfS is the regulatory body for HE in England which combines roles previously split across multiple departments. It has strategically shifted the focus of HE to encourage the growth of the competitive market as discussed above. The nature of that market, and the role of OfS, is significantly different to that of HEFCE, with discussion already in the mainstream press of how it is anticipated that struggling universities will not be saved or supported as they previously were. This move makes very clear that the HE market is not going anywhere, and that the student role of consumer will continue (Evans, 2018).

There are also key cultural changes that have occurred over the past ten to twenty years in response to the marketization of HE. The most significant could be argued to be the introduction of the National Student Survey (NSS, 2005), which cements the role of students as consumers. Distributed to final year students, the survey aims to capture satisfaction scores about programmes offered by universities. Continuing the shift into consumerism, the NSS asks students to rate their satisfaction on ten key aspects of their

experience. These cover teaching and learning issues (including assessment and feedback), support and organisation, resources, student voice, and overall satisfaction (National Student Survery, 2017). There has been discussion regarding the impact of the NSS on how universities react to student feedback. Utilising ‘you said, we did’ type campaigns, as seen in other service industries (Tomlinson, 2014, p28) reinforces the consumer relationship. Tomlinson argues that this approach utilises a reactive position to implement change or improvements, rather than encouraging institutions to think longer term and plan thoroughly for the future. It is easy to understand how this could have a negative impact in the long term for universities and their staff and student communities. Likewise, there is a potential negative impact on teaching, since if a programme challenges the students, they may rate their satisfaction as being lower than for those subjects which were less complex, since students may rate enjoyment higher than academic rigour. Staff report that the pressures to meet student expectations and increase NSS scores meant that they were in danger of overly simplifying courses (Stevenson, Burke, & Whelan, 2014). However, students do not consider this simplification to be a helpful response to their feedback.

Furthermore, the HE sector has seen increasing importance placed on external published data as well as the NSS. This external data has been introduced as a means by which customers could make an informed choice regarding universities, again cementing the role of students as consumers. Such external data, which comes from league tables, Green League, the Key Information Set (KIS, 2012), the newly introduced Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF, 2017), Research Excellence Framework (REF) and DLHE (Destination of Leavers from HE, 2002, soon to be replaced by Graduate Outcomes) have impacted the way institutions are viewed by both their competitors and potential students. Stevenson et al. (2014) surveyed HE staff, and report that not only are the multitude of league tables creating added pressures and demands on staff, but that achieving good league table positions often comes at the cost of pedagogy, with the league table pressures or looking to increase student satisfaction being the drivers rather than a focus

on teaching and learning excellence.

So, what is the impact of these changes on the student and their experience? It is clear that the nature of the changes has resulted in a very different experience for students from that of even ten years ago, let alone 20 or 30. For students commencing studies in 2017/8, the total student debt upon completion will be in excess of £50,000. It is therefore unsurprising that the expectations and views of these students have changed. Indeed, this appears to be a natural consequence of what Brennan and Shah (2011) call a paradigm shift of how HE is provided (2011, p. 19), with students positioned increasingly as consumers of a product. The role of the student as a consumer is a hot topic amongst the academic community (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Bunce, Baird, & Jones, 2017; Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009; Naidoo, 2004), with the perception being that students feel they have bought their education and therefore expect a standard of service. This marketization of HE brings other challenges and as Brown identifies, competition may damage quality, by lowering standards in order to please the consumer with higher grades for similar work, and by diverting resources away from learning and teaching to marketing, recruitment and administration. Interestingly for this thesis, the question is raised of how much knowledge can be shared between parents and their young people in terms of understanding the HE system, even if their parents have been to university themselves. Most parents of current students will have attended university before the introduction of student fees, with some perhaps experiencing the first wave of fee introduction. Furthermore, the introduction of fees has (as discussed below) changed the relationship between the student and the university, and for many parents, this means increased financial contributions.

Students were first identified as consumers in the Dearing Report (1997, p. 64). Whilst much of the existing discussion above relates to the teaching and learning activity of HEIs, there are also implications for student support from this shift in student role. This thesis is concerned with this latter issue.

Tomlinson (2014) examined the impact of government policy on student perception using interviews and focus groups with 63 undergraduate students from a mixture of university types in the UK. Tomlinson identifies that it is not just students who view themselves as consumers but also institutions themselves in response to the market forces. Tomlinson aimed to explore how students approach HE and their expectations against the backdrop of changes to the sector, specifically that of the marketization of HE. He argues that the financial contribution made by students (and their families) contributes to increased student expectations. His work identifies three groups of student consumer: the active service user, who identifies strongly as consumer; the positioned consumer, who looks for value for money but acknowledges the university experience is a two-way process in which they have to put the effort; and finally the resistor, who rejects the label of consumer and is actively looking to become a better person, rather than just achieving a good grade for a good job. He reports that students in the resistor group perceived that they actively distanced themselves from students in the other groups. In terms of student support, if the institution itself acknowledges that students are seen as consumers with a heavy reliance on reactive changes, the students who actively distance themselves from this position may feel alienated, or that they do not fit with the institution's aims and vice versa. This suggests that finding the balance is important for institutions to be able to offer appropriate support to a range of students.

Tomlinson (2014) further highlights ways in which students also experience difficulties during their studies. In his study, students report difficulties in finding the balance between academic and non-academic activity, with extra-curricular activity also being seen as important to the student experience. Students wanted to get the most out of their student life, stating that this experience was not just academic, but also included self-development and improvement as potential benefits.

Two conclusions from Tomlinson's study (2014) are pertinent to the current thesis. Firstly, the benefits of university, which are not just academic or economic, should be clearly

communicated to students prior to, and throughout, their studies, to provide as much information as possible. Secondly, extra-curricular activities are important to the university experience and in order to be effective, they should be embedded within university activity rather than added on as an afterthought.

Whilst Tomlinson's research (2014) enables us to understand student perceptions, it does not address the causes of these different perceptions, which may come from areas such as capital, social class or ethnicity. It would be useful to understand whether there was a relationship between such demographic variables and the categories of student suggested, specifically whether those from higher social class groups, who are more likely to not be first in family to attend university (and thus hold relevant capital) are more likely to be resistors than those who are first in family. Tomlinson's sample size also presents some challenges in terms of extrapolating the findings to a wider cohort of students. However, the detailed interviews have provided a spectrum on which to consider students and to be used when developing interventions and strategies.

Furthering the discussion on the effects of marketization, Bunce et al. (2017) looked to identify the impact that a student's perception of themselves as consumer had on their academic performance. They asked whether students who identify more as consumers do better or worse than those who identify less as consumers. The spectrum of students' self-perception echoes the work undertaken by Tomlinson (2014). Bunce et al (2017) surveyed 608 undergraduate students within England. They included key variables related to academic achievement including age, gender, part-time work, year of study. The sample was not representative of the HE sector at undergraduate level and was overrepresented by female students (81.4%) and white students (92%) and does not include ethnicity as one of the variables. A correlation was established between student perceptions and their academic achievement, with those students who identified more as consumers performing less well than their counterparts. As with Tomlinson's study (2014), data around whether or not the student was first in their family to attend university would

have been beneficial, as it is possible that knowledge of the system and of the purpose of HE prior to the paradigm change would alter students' self-perception and understanding of the system itself. In line with Tomlinson (2014), Bunce et al. (2017) also heed the warning relating to student feedback and reactive change. They argue that caution needs to be exerted when considering student feedback, as students who view themselves more as consumers will provide market-based expectation feedback, looking at the system in terms of value for money, satisfaction and enjoyment. Implementing changes based on such feedback could then negatively impact on those who do not view themselves as consumers, as the issues raised would not be shared across all students (Bunce et al., 2017).

Another outcome of the marketization of HE has been the streamlining of non-academic services under the umbrella of 'value for money', meaning that staff to student ratios have been invested in, while central support services have not. Furthermore, the increase in student numbers and in the diversity of the student population has presented student support services with significant challenges. For a student body with increased expectations, which also recognises the need for the wider 'student experience', there is a greater demand for such services.

Based on an Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) project, Williams (2011) clearly states that student support services are 'invisible and unsung' (2011, p. 46) yet remain vital to the student experience, with many relying on their service. As Williams states, the student experience is not just academic, but also encompasses other aspects of the student life. Student support services encompass careers, employability and entrepreneurship, study support, disability support, mental health support, financial support, accommodation, advice and guidance, and health and welfare. She warns that as HEIs seek to cut costs, as a result of the funding changes, student support services are under threat, since their relationship to impact and value is more difficult to prove. Given the increasingly diverse student body, specifically in

terms of an increase in the number of students who are first in their family to attend university, commuter students, a rise in the ethnic diversity of students, increases in the number of students declaring a disability, as well as students who have care responsibilities and who work part (or even full) time to support themselves whilst studying, the demand for student support services remains, and is in fact key to an institution's success in delivering the inclusivity promises made by marketing campaigns. However, the pressures of funding, budgets and accountability mean that there is a risk of only being able to offer support to either the largest group, or of making the assumption that students are a homogenous group who all live on campus, have no other commitments and are able to dedicate all their energy to their programme. It is imperative that universities understand their student body, as well as the pressures and challenges they face, and are able to offer appropriate and timely support based on evidence and not on knee-jerk reactive measures to satisfaction surveys.

My experience of working in the sector suggests that changes to the system have added extra pressures for both students and their families which must be managed alongside their studies. The impact of fees and student debt has been shown to deter students from lower social class families (Callender & Jackson, 2005, 2008; Callender & Mason, 2017) from entering HE and to impact their choice of study if they do decide to attend. For students with financial worries, the extra responsibility on them and their family creates extra demand for the student to manage. Changes to compulsory school education have resulted in young people being less able to critically engage with their studies, as the focus is now on passing tests rather than understanding subjects (Stotesbury & Dorling, 2015). The mismatch between institution and student expectations seems to be growing ever wider. Academics have said that the curriculum is being overly simplified for students entering the system, and that they are not encouraged to mark accurately but rather to try to avoid failing students due to the financial pressures on universities (Alderman, 2009; Scott, 2014). Whilst these factors may be the result of the marketization of HE, current students are now having to negotiate this new world, so we as practitioners must seek

ways to support and encourage them to achieve their potential without labelling them as less able, or as being in deficit, than previous students who may have had different motivations.

1.3 Student Experience and Parental Influence

The specific focus of this thesis is the impact of parental involvement on the student experience, specifically in terms of adjustment and academic achievement. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's education, starting from their child's first year at school. The Labour government of 1997 to 2010 encouraged parents to become "active partners in the production of educated children" (McNamara, Stronach, Rodrigo, Beresford, & Botcherby, 2000, p. 474). Furthermore, one review of the literature (Desforges, Abouchaar, & Britain, 2003) clearly identifies the important role parents play in their child's education, especially in terms of the child's success and achievement. The literature also suggests the importance of parents in the process around entry to HE (Payne, 2003; Moogan, Baron, & Harris, 1999) with parents being influential in not only the decision to attend university, but also in terms of which university to attend and the specific subject to study.

The discussion around student adjustment and withdrawal also highlights the importance of supporting students to achieve their potential, as well as the ways in which student support might influence the decision to withdraw from studies (Tinto, 1993; Leese, 2010). Furthermore, where a student lives during their studies also impacts on their university transition (Holdsworth, 2005, 2006), with students who live off campus being less able to engage in the social, extra-curricular aspects of university life. Understanding the importance of new friendships and peer support is key to a successful transition, and for students who are first in their family to attend university or who live at home, being less able to engage socially could mean taking longer to adjust to student life, which may have an impact on those students' ability to achieve their potential. Students must have been

judged as academically able to succeed on their programme, otherwise they would not have met the entry requirements; however, not all students are then able to succeed.

Underpinning all of the above is the concept of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu states:

> *Capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible. (1986, p. 46)*

In terms of the university experience, an accumulated knowledge of HE enables parents who themselves attended university to understand the system, the environment and the wider benefits. These parents have an advantage around being able to guide their child in the application process and the adjustment process. In contrast, students whose parents do not have experience of HE do not possess the advantage capital affords, and so may struggle to find ways to best support their child. In addition, the habitus – that is, the extent to which a student is able to fit into the environment (Bourdieu, 1986) – means that the potential mismatch for a student who is the first in their family to attend university can make the adjustment process complicated and confusing. If those students are also living off campus, such as in the family home, the clash between cultures may make that adjustment process untenable in the long term.

1.4 Research Objectives

In light of the above, this thesis aims to understand whether parents of university students continue to have a significant role in their child's education once they have enrolled on a university course. Whilst the traditional assumption is that once an individual is legally an adult, at the age of 18, the influence of their parents decreases, this thesis argues that parents remain a key influence in the student experience, particularly in terms of adjustment to and performance at university. In a time when the HE landscape is changing, it is imperative that institutions understand the changing external pressures

which influence and impact on a student's ability to perform and achieve their true potential.

Therefore, this thesis has the following overarching research question:

> *In what way, and to what extent, does the role and influence of parents continue once a student has begun their undergraduate degree programme?*

More specifically, the research aims are:

- To review current literature addressing influence of parents on the student HE life cycle
- To understand parents' influence on the student experience in relation to adjustment, achievement and withdrawal, specifically considering whether:
    - parents with personal experience of Higher Education affect the experience more than others
    - living at home affects the experience more than living in halls of residence
- To develop proposals to help support students, and their parents, successfully prepare for, and adjust to, university
- To propose potential intervention strategies for Higher Education Institutions as appropriate

1.4.1 Methodological Approach

The research was conducted in two phases. The first phase utilised a quantitative data analysis of student data extracted from the student management system. This phase was used to investigate one of the key proposed independent variables (term time accommodation; TTA). Once established that there was a difference in the performance and withdrawal data by TTA, the second phase expanded the research to the wider research question, as above.

The methodological approach of the second phase is a quasi-mixed methods approach. Using an established survey tool distributed to multiple universities, quantitative data was then built upon by qualitative open-ended questions, used to illustrate the experiences of

students. The method follows a concurrent data collection process, with the data analysed using thematic analysis for the open-ended questions, then using this data to both illustrate and triangulate the quantitative data.

In order to operationalise parental influence, based on the experiences gained through the work setting highlighted above, two key variables were identified as measures of parental influence. Firstly, using Bourdieu's concept of capital (1986), it was hypothesised that parents without experience of HE would not have knowledge or experience on which to draw to support their child through the transition to university and their first year of study. In contrast, those parents that do have the experience, or the 'hot knowledge' (Ball & Vincent, 1998) will be able to support and encourage their child within the system from a position of advantage. The second variable for parental influence looked at where students lived during their studies. Students who come from under-represented groups are more likely to live at home during their studies (Holdsworth, 2005) and are also more likely to have parents who do not have experience of HE. It is this interaction of parental influence that is the focus of this research.

Therefore, the two measures of parental influence or independent variables to be used in this study will be: parental experience of HE; that is whether they have themselves attended university, and therefore if they possess cultural capital; and where the student lives during their studies. The student experience measures, or dependent variables, used for hypotheses testing will be the level of student adjustment to the university and the average student academic achievement at the end of the first year.

The research was undertaken in two distinct phases. Phase I (study one) focuses on the role of term-time accommodation on achievement and withdrawal. Phase II (studies two and three) focuses specifically on the role of parents for first year undergraduate students, their adjustment and academic achievement.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

This thesis will bring together a wide range of literature including psychology, sociology, education and human geography, as well as a variety of research methods. The thesis will review a range of literature focusing around three key topics: capital and habitus; parents; and the student experience. Firstly, the concepts of capital and habitus will be explored, particularly in terms of how these can be seen in action throughout education and specifically at university. Secondly, the literature relating to parents will be reviewed, positioning the role of parents and their involvement in their child's education up to and including the HE decision-making process. Finally, the theme of the student experience will examine the literature around adjustment and withdrawal, as well as the impact living at home has on a student's experience of HE.

Whilst the literature is presented as distinct themes, it is necessary to consider how these interact and overlap for the student and their experience of the educational journey. For example, the capital of the family cannot be considered in isolation of the adjustment literature, which itself cannot be considered as separate from the adulthood literature. Consequently, there are clear and definite overlaps which will be highlighted throughout the text.

The methodology of the thesis will then be detailed. The methodology will also position the author and the research in terms of the paradigm, ontology and epistemology. The ethical considerations for all three studies will also be detailed. This will be followed by in-depth analysis of the findings of all three studies, both qualitative and quantitative. The thesis will then conclude with the discussion of the findings and their implications. The limitations of the research will also be highlighted, and future directions identified.

2. Literature Review

The focus of the thesis is to investigate the role and influence of parents on undergraduate students, their adjustment to university and academic achievement. Within the changing HE environment, as discussed in the introduction (Chapter One), and the increasing emphasis on the student experience, it is imperative that institutions understand as much as possible about their students so that they can offer appropriate support during their studies.

One under-explored aspect of this student experience is whether parents are a significant factor in the students' adjustment process or on their academic achievement. There are many aspects of parents and parenting that could be considered in this review. However, as the work focuses on the student experience itself, the literature below reflects this. My own work with students suggests that parents play a significant role in their children's student life. Whether this is the overly anxious parent ringing to enquire about their child's life at university, or active attendance at and engagement in open days, parents seem to have become increasingly involved over time. Moreover, a substantial proportion of students are choosing to remain in the family home during their studies and commute to the university daily. Parental expectations and finances mean that moving away from home is not an option available to some students. Already it is clear that there are many ways in which parents continue to be an influence on their student children's lives, but what is less clear is the extent of this influence.

From an institutional point of view, a student is legally classified as an adult, since they are over 18. The university's relationship with the student is based on this. However, my experiences raise the question of whether we, as universities, are offering the most appropriate support to our students, or even if we fully understand the pressures on their lives outside of the academic world which impact on their ability to achieve their full potential.

The introduction chapter identified three main bodies of literature on which this research draws, which will be reviewed here. The first section looks at the concepts of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Bourdieu & Nice, 1977). Capital can be defined as a process through which some members of society are able to benefit more from opportunities than others as a result of acquired capital, whether economic, social or cultural. In relation to this thesis, it is argued that students coming from families who are deemed as having the appropriate cultural capital have greater opportunities than those coming from families without that capital. This can be seen in action from access to the right support and encouragement through to the fundamental consideration of whether HE is an option for the student or not. It can also be argued that transition and adjustment to university is easier and has fewer leaps into the unknown for students coming from families with cultural capital, than for those whose family do not have capital. In contrast to capital, habitus is about our dispositions, although it does work in conjunction with capital. Habitus is created from our past experiences, such as education, and shapes our future experiences and our ability to adapt to new situations. Through my experiences, it seemed that there was an unspoken, invisible advantage that some students, along with their parents and families, had which resulted in the student being able to navigate the system much more effectively than others. Capital and habitus are included here as the method by which this advantage was afforded to some and not others.

The second section of this review then examines the literature specifically relating to how parents set the scene with their involvement in their child's education. It looks at the role of parents prior to the student beginning their university career, specifically during compulsory education (until aged 16 in the UK), through to decision-making regarding HE. This literature is included to position the role parents play in their child's education up to the point they start their university studies. When students and their parents attended open days, there seemed to be a lack of awareness for some families of how university would be different to the further education environment students were leaving. In order to contextualise this contrast, the literature relating to the role of parental influence pre-entry

is included.

The third section of the review will consider two aspects of the student experience. Firstly, it will specifically focus on the issues relating to adjustment and withdrawal; secondly, it will consider the experiences of students who live in the family home during their studies. Reference will be made to the role of the family where appropriate. The literature included in this section will focus on the demands experienced by the student and how these affect each student differently. Literature will be reviewed that explores the role of support and experience, as well as how these can influence a student's decision to continue with their studies or to withdraw early. Adjusting to university life means the individual must perform within the new environment academically, but also forge new relationships and friendships, as well as developing their own skills at independent living, which will contribute to both their academic success and their personal development.

The chapter will then close with a summary, identifying the gaps in the literature from which this thesis is developed, before articulating the research hypotheses for this thesis. Whilst sections are presented as distinct bodies of literature, it is necessary to consider how these interplay for the student within the educational journey. No influence works in isolation and as such, students themselves experience a range of influences and changes which shape their own personal trajectory. Therefore, the capital of the family cannot be considered in isolation of parental involvement in compulsory education, as the two are clearly directly linked. This will be signposted throughout the review.

2.1 Capital, Habitus and Field Within the Student Experience

This first section of the literature review considers the specific concepts of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Bourdieu & Nice, 1977; Grenfell, 2014; Thatcher, Ingram, Burke, & Abrahams, 2015). The concept of cultural capital underpins the development of the thesis. However, it is necessary to position capital within the wider theory in order to

fully understand the concept and how it impacts on education. Firstly, the concepts of capital and habitus will be reviewed. This section will then review literature which focuses on how this can be seen at play within the HE sector and conclude with a summary, drawing on these concepts and how they illuminate the issue of the role of parents in the student experience. It is recognised that there is also a third key concept of field in Bourdieu's work. Field is the social space in which the individual is based. It is the site in which capital and habitus interact and enable the individual to negotiate and succeed, or not (Thatcher et al., 2015). Fields can be social (peer groups, networks) or educational, amongst others.

This thesis focuses on the field of higher education, specifically the experiences of first year undergraduate students. Therefore, this is the field within which the concepts of capital and habitus are located. My experiences suggested that some students were more able to adapt to, and be successful at, university than others. Some could be described as being a fish in water (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009) while others the opposite and hence unable to thrive. Some seemed to be able to 'play the game' (Thatcher et al., 2015), whilst others struggled. Not only was I aware of the students' experiences but I also reflected on my own educational experience of never quite fitting in. It is for this reason that I, as well as others (Burke, Thatcher, Ingram, & Abrahams, 2016), felt a sense of euphoria when encountering the work of Bourdieu (2016, p. 3). His proposed theory of practice provided a lens through which this advantage, specifically the nature through which the advantage was seen at work, could be viewed. This work therefore provided the theoretical foundation for the thesis and a conceptual framework to enhance our understanding of the challenges that face students as they embark on their university career and how they acclimatise to the university environment during the first year of their studies.

2.1.1 Capital

Bourdieu's work on the importance of capital to human endeavour was first published in

1977, though has since had revisions, clarifications and expansions (1984, 1986). His theory states that capital in all forms is predominantly, though not exclusively, instilled in the home and reproduced through the generations, and that this accounts for the advantages and opportunities that some people benefit from in certain situations and throughout life (Bourdieu, 1986). He goes on to acknowledge that in all forms of life, opportunity is not an equal playing field and that some have more opportunities – greater advantage – than others, and that capital can explain these differences. Goodall (2012) argues that capital can be seen as the ability to navigate in the dominant culture. In relation to higher education, this could be seen as being the ability to understand the HE system, of having the language and knowledge necessary for success and the ability to adapt and benefit from the opportunities on offer.

Bourdieu suggests that together, economic capital (EC), social capital (SC), and cultural capital (CC) combine to create symbolic capital. While Bourdieu's cultural capital is of most relevance to this research, its insightfulness is restricted if considered in isolation. Economic capital focuses on money, wealth and property, either inherited or generated, such as the capital (money) within property and possessions. Economic capital can also facilitate families to buy both goods and services. In educational terms, this could include access to additional academic benefits which arise from having money, such as tutors, books and other related resources, or educational trips to other cities and countries. The benefit in such activities is not just educational, but can also boost self-confidence and self-assurance, both which will then also contribute to achievement.

Social capital focuses on an individual's networks, connections and communities, which can also be linked to status, such as a title of nobility (1986, p. 47) or more parochially, 'old boy's networks'. In educational terms, parental social capital can also be used for 'inside information' on a university or sharing knowledge between networks. For the students themselves, social capital will assist in forming networks and connections once they have arrived at university and beyond, into post-graduation employment.

Finally, cultural capital has three different states. In the embodied state, it refers to the disposition of the mind, or how experienced or open to new experiences an individual is. In the objectified state, it refers to cultural 'objects' such as books, art, instruments and so on. In the institutionalised state, it refers to qualification level, experiences and knowledge. Bourdieu (1986) goes on to argue that there can be conversion between capitals (for those who have it). EC can be converted quickly into CC by the purchase of relevant 'objects' of the time or specific services. Other conversions would take longer, such as those based on SC, which is developed over time. Likewise, CC can be converted into EC (for example the financial reward of undertaking a degree programme). However, this is limited to certain professions, and, with the increase in the number of people graduating with a degree, this impact is lessening.

Cultural capital is frequently used in education research (Dumais, 2002; Longden, 2004; Reay, 2004) as there are various ways to operationalise the concept, such as parental levels of education and whether parents attended university themselves. However, the concept of capital is not without its criticisms, often around the difficulty of testing it, or the suggestion that the concept is weak and lacks evidence (Kingston, 2001). Indeed, the original work does not define explicitly the ways in which capital can be measured and many of the original texts are difficult for the non-sociologist to follow, which can lead to misinterpretation. Bourdieu provides no empirical testing of such concepts, although this is acknowledged to be partially due to the paradigm predominantly within sociology. Rather than a reliance on hypotheses testing and significance, and thus a positivist or post-positivist approach, the approach taken by Bourdieu is broadly one of constructivism (Robbins, 2008). Despite such criticisms, it is suggested for this thesis that the concept of capital provides us with a framework within which the student experience can be considered, where some students seem to have an advantage over others, are more able to adapt to university life, know what to expect and how to make the most of their studies.

Bringing Capital up to date

One aspect of capital that emphasises the length of time between first publication and the present is the change in what constitutes high-brow activities and the ways in which education shapes capital. Work has been taken to recognise the time elapsed since the original theory proposal and the changing society in terms of technology and social habits. The literature referred to in this section can be found in Appendix 1, where methodology, sample size and location are detailed.

Since the theory's inception more than 30 years ago, there has been a shift in the meaning of CC due to changing norms within society (Tramonte & Willms, 2010). For example, access to television, cinema, music and theatre has undergone a technological revolution, from a family owning one television set with a handful of channels in the late 1970s to the ubiquity of multi-channel TV, the internet, streaming and downloading music in modern society. Access to such resources is no longer seen as being high-brow, but instead has become mainstream. However, much of this activity is reliant on families having access to a PC or other devices at home, as well as high-speed internet, which is not the case for all families. For example, just 65% of UK households had access to the internet at home at the time of this thesis (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2017).

Prieur and Savage (2013) who conducted research within Denmark and the UK, argue that whilst the concept of CC remains, the notion of high-brow culture has changed significantly, and that those exhibiting the original interests (classical music or opera for example) would now be perceived as being out of touch and staid (2013, p. 262) rather than being high-brow. They also argue that there is no longer as clear a divide between those practices which contribute to the CC of an individual. Instead, they propose that individuals who partake in a wide variety of cultural activities substantiated over time are seen as the marker of CC, rather than the specific interests themselves. Of course, a family with EC would be more able to provide their family and their children with the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities in this way, thus perpetuating the

divide between those who have capital and those who do not. For example, visiting the theatre is possible for everyone; to attend events frequently requires a level of EC not enjoyed by everyone. Nevertheless, whilst the discussion as to which activities contribute to creating CC continues, the concept as a way of understanding the advantage and insight that some students have in their student experience remains valuable.

Historically, attending university, acquiring a degree and acquiring capital from these experiences provided graduates with considerable capital in all aspects of their lives. However in recent years in the UK, the increase in the number of students completing a university degree has changed the economic capital accumulated by graduates (Prieur & Savage, 2013). While having graduated with a degree once afforded economic benefits (capital) to the individual, with more degrees being awarded, those economic benefits are now diluted.

As well as the changes to capital, its artefacts and activities, there has also been an emerging field of psychological capital (PC), which is characterised by hope, resilience, self-efficacy and optimism (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004). Drawing on key psychological concepts and theory, these authors argue that those in possession of positive PC are those who provide themselves, and their organisation, with clear advantage. Much like the work of Bourdieu (1986), Luthans et al. (2004) present their concept as a tool to understand, rather than as empirical evidence. It could be suggested that EC, CC, and SC all contribute to PC. The self-confidence and self-assurance enjoyed by those in possession of capital could result in high PC. As such, it should not be considered as a separate concept. This shows again how the concepts of capital are not constrained to the sociological fields. The theme of self-efficacy is echoed in the literature around parental involvement in compulsory education, with parents who believe they have the self-efficacy to support their child being more effective than those who do not, irrespective of their education level (Desforges et al., 2003; Reay, 2004). For this thesis, it is clear that through forms of capital family, and specifically parents, are able to reproduce

advantage to their children within specific settings.

2.1.2 Habitus

The second key concept in the work of Bourdieu relevant to this thesis is that of habitus. It is not possible to consider capital without habitus. Indeed, Dumais (2002) argues that:

> *Studying cultural Capital while ignoring Habitus leaves Bourdieu's theoretical framework incomplete in its practical application. It is necessary to consider both one's resources (Capital) and the orientation one has toward using those resources (Habitus) to implement the model of practice in the educational field in the way that Bourdieu intended. (2002, p. 45)*

Habitus can be seen as a set of acquired dispositions of thought, behaviour and taste (Robbins, 1993). As Dumais (2002, p. 45) explains, habitus can be viewed as one's view of the world and one's place within it. However, habitus is not static; it is both structured and structuring (Maton, 2008, p. 51). Habitus is created from one's past experiences and shapes our view of our position in the world, but also assists in creation of our futures, informing what we consider as possibilities available to us. A clear, singular, measurable definition of habitus is not available, and as Reed-Danahay (2004) state in their book, Bourdieu himself used a variety of words and descriptions to describe the concept (2004, p. 103). Whereas cultural capital is based on the possession of legitimate knowledge, habitus encompasses attitudes, beliefs and values and is thus much harder to conceptualise. This difficulty in conceptualisation is in part also due to the interplay between capital and habitus, and the nature of the contextual area within which the concept is described. Bourdieu (1984, p. 101) presented a simplified interpretation of the relationship between capital and habitus as:

$$[(capital)(habitus)] + field = practice$$

It is the interplay between capital and habitus within a specific field (or social space) that results in our practice as agents.

Habitus is not without its criticisms, with some arguing that it is “theoretically incoherent” (Sullivan, 2002). However, I would argue that in the field of HE, habitus provides a useful framework from which to consider the invisible factors at play for students. Through my experience with students as a practitioner, and through working with parents of school age children, I observed an obvious difference in the way some students, and their families, viewed the opportunities available to them and their ability to benefit from such opportunities. Some questioned whether university was ‘for people like them’, while in contrast others never questioned their progression. Both capital and habitus are products of one’s experience and opportunities. Capital is passed through generations, with families reproducing capital, as can be clearly seen in education (Reay, 2004). Habitus is also closely linked to the family, with a child’s experiences giving them the dispositions and ability to thrive within a field.

2.1.3 Capital, Habitus and the Student Experience

Despite the criticisms of both capital and habitus, these concepts have been used frequently in relation to education in general and HE specifically as a means of explaining involvement, access, choice, participation, adjustment and achievement. This section will review the literature relating to education and higher education, using both capital and habitus as underlying constructs. As Vyronides states, with reference to cultural capital and its importance to education:

> *“Cultural capital refers to legitimised knowledge present in a home environment, which allows parents and children to secure advantages from the educational process.” (2007, p. 868)*

This quote rebuts the argument of Sullivan who argues that the concepts are weak. Rather, Vryonides (2007) demonstrates that capital and habitus go some way to explain the differences in expereince between families. Tramonte and Willms (2010) identify two aspects of cultural capital that can be seen at play in the education arena. The first of these is static cultural capital; that is, the activities and practices of a family, also referred

to as the ‘high-brow’ activities above. The second is relational cultural capital, which is focused on interactions and communications within the family.

Tramonte and Willms (2010) found a direct relationship between relational cultural capital and educational outcomes. Using data gathered from 28 countries, they looked at literacy, sense of belonging and occupational aspirations as well as parental education, parental occupation and static and relational (cultural) capital. They found that relational cultural capital (RCC) has a significant effect on reading literacy, sense of belonging and aspirations. They conclude that not only does the cultural capital of the family have an effect on educational outcomes, but so does the interplay between the family’s capital and the education establishment itself (institutional habitus). This demonstrates that parents and family play a significant role in their children’s educational success, where those in possession of capital are able to positively influence their children’s outcomes by the advantages capital affords. In practice, this suggests that it is not the activities such as visits to museums, galleries, the ownership of books in the house and parental literacy rates where books can be shared with their children that are key to educational success. Rather, it is the underlying structures that enable that activity to happen, such as being confident about educational abililties and having good communication, language and discursive skills and the time and opportunity to share these with and spend time with their children.

Furthermore, during their review of the literature relating to parental involvement in compulsory school age education (see Chapter 2.2.1 for further discussion), Desforges et al. concluded:

> *“Of the many forms of parental involvement, it is the ‘at-home’ relationships and modelling of aspirations which play the major part in impact on school outcomes. Involvement works indirectly on school outcomes by helping the child build a pro-social, pro-learning self-concept and high educational aspirations.” (2003, p. 86)*

Again, this conclusion indicates that it is the ability to navigate through the system, of

knowing how to support and encourage, at home and at school, that make a significant difference to learning outcomes. For those parents who either lack the skills (such as a low-level literacy of the parents limiting the ability to support reading or school work at home), or the cultural and personal experience, the impact on the child could mean they do not develop the independent learner skills necessary for educational success, and so have reduced self-efficacy. Extending this to the HE field, it could be argued that students who come from a family with capital have the advantage of being able to adjust to the university and its way of life more effectively than those from families without the capital. Not only could this be seen in the student's adjustment, but also their educational outcomes, achieving higher marks than their counterparts.

In addition to capital, habitus can be seen in action in education in many ways. Habitus, as described above, is created from our history, our experiences and our family, and shapes the way we interact with our future. It is not static; once our early habitus is shaped from our earlier experiences, there is opportunity for individuals to use their capital and habitus to succeed in a new field. In relation to this thesis, that new field is university, where students need to be able to adjust to the student habitus. For those whose habitus is based in a culture where university attendance is not the norm, such as those from working-class backgrounds or from under-represented groups, this transition to the middle class environment of HE, or the institutional habitus, can result in anxiety and confusion (Reay, 1998).

For families who lack the personal experience of HE (derived from cultural capital as outlined above) or have a habitus firmly rooted in the working classes, this adjustment is more complicated than for families with a 'lifetime of middle class cultural capital' (1998), as the contrast between the two is much greater. This could be considered as a conflict between the student's own habitus and that the future institution's student habitus expectations. For those who are first in family to attend university, these feelings of uncertainty and anxiety may themselves be hurdles over which the student must first

climb before being able to adjust to their new university life. Whereas for those whose habitus is a closer match to the institution and its expectations of ‘student-ness’, this adjustment period may be much smoother. Furthermore, for students who continue to live in the family home, the family habitus remains a dominant presence for the student compared to those who live on campus and are able to immerse themselves into the new field.

Extending the work of institutional habitus and supporting the concept further, Thomas (2002) undertook research to investigate the role of institutional habitus in student retention in HE. Specifically, the aims were to investigate why some students withdraw from their studies, as well as what influences others to succeed with their studies. Taking a case study of a modern university with a track record of widening participation and with above benchmark state-school student numbers, the research utilised a mixed-methods approach (albeit with a small sample within a single institution) (2002). Thomas suggests that students who feel their choice of university matches their taste and interests (habitus) will succeed in their studies, whereas a student who feels that there is a mismatch may find that the gap between their own habitus and that of the institution adds a weight to the experience which contributes to their withdrawal/failure. She argues that institutional habitus applies to the whole institution, including academic staff, other students, policies and practices in place, and indeed ways of working and of communicating. She concludes:

> *“In relation to student retention in HE the notions of habitus and institutional habitus appear to be useful tools. If a student feels that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early”. (2002, p. 431)*

An institution’s ways of working could include pedagogy (the approach to methods of teaching, learning and assessment and the role of the ‘teacher’ within the dynamic) as well as support offered and social aspects. Pedagogically, the experiences of non-traditional students who may have entered university with qualifications other than A-

levels will be different to those who have studied for A-levels, with different methods of assessment (continuous versus exams and a different role of the teacher). It is clear that the habitus of such students will be different to that of the institution and, thus, they will be more likely to feel they do not fit in or are a fish out of water (Reay et al., 2009), as their practices are inappropriate to the new environment. For students who find a conflict between their own practices and those of the institution, adjusting to university life creates additional stress which can contribute to the decision to withdraw. In contrast, those students who find a match between their own practices and norms and that of the institution will have less of a struggle to adjust, which could positively support them to succeed.

There are clear linkages here between habitus and cultural capital. Students who understand the system, know what questions to ask and what to look for when applying can be considered as being at an advantage compared to students without that insight. The experiences students have prior to application and enrolment on a university degree can be argued to shape their post-enrolment experience beyond the academic. Being able to meet the entry requirements for a course, and thus being academically capable of the programme, only accounts for part of a student's success.

One of the students in Thomas's research identified the concept of a sense of 'belonging' (2002, p.437), which includes the way students dress and the attitudes they have. Again, this supports the idea of HE institutions as a ground for capital and habitus to self-regulate and reproduce. Whilst HE institutions are keen to highlight that each individual student's journey is unique, there is an underlying theme of habitus which contributes to the discourse of student success and withdrawal. When they begin their university career, students have a desire to fit in and feel that they belong in, and to, the institution. If they find they do not fit in, and they have an unsuccessful adjustment or delayed adjustment as a result, those students are at greater risk of withdrawal, irrespective of academic ability. This raises the question of how universities work with their student bodies. Undoubtedly,

each student experiences a unique journey, but in times of the massification of HE, student support is often centralised and generic, based on interactions with customers. This causes additional problems, as clearly students are not homogenous and do not come to university with the same experiences, dispositions and resources. However, for a competitive HE market, it is expedient to assume that all students are one homogenous group with the same support needs. This theme will be considered further in the adjustment literature.

Continuing the discussion around habitus as a ‘sense of belonging’, Read, Archer, and Leathwood (2003) investigated students’ sense of belonging at a post-1992 (‘new’) university and look to understand not only the role of habitus in the choice of university, but also how much institutional practices contribute to this sense of belonging. Their findings suggest that students select an institution which reflects their own identity, whether by age, gender, ethnicity or social class. However, by doing this, even within the HE environment, they are reproducing, to some extent, their existing status. Elite institutions continue to consist of students from traditional (elite) backgrounds (that is, white, middle class), and as a result, “other” students are focused on the new universities, thus perpetuating the divide (Read, Archer and Leathwood, 2003). The findings also suggest that whilst non-traditional students may select institutions in which the student body best reflects their identity, the operation of the institution is still tied up with the dominant culture (white and middle class). Read et al. (2003) argue that while students should feel that they are able to belong in any institution if they have shown they have the academic ability to succeed, this is not always the reality. When considering the student experience, it is clear that there is a responsibility of the institution for their role in perpetuating the advantages of some groups, whilst disadvantaging others. Whilst it is family background, experiences and capital that have afforded the student the opportunities, those who have not had the same opportunities should not continue to find their experience perpetuates their place within society.

Reflecting on my experiences, it is clear that some students are in possession of the ability to assimilate into the new student identity, or habitus, with greater ease than others. Not only does the institution have its own ways of being and its own disposition, but the nature of being a student at that institution also has its own structure. This can also be seen at a subject level; for example, what it means to be a business student is different to that of being a student in a social sciences or arts subject. For students where the gap between the two is greater, the adjustment process could either take much longer, or not be successful, leaving the student feeling that they do not belong. This leaves those students at greater risk of withdrawal or academic failure than those who are able to easily adapt and adjust to student life.

2.1.4 Summary

The literature reviewed in this section suggests that cultural capital and habitus can be useful concepts to understand how individuals' educational careers are shaped beyond just their own abilities and can influence their adjustment, sense of belonging and their achievements. This impact can be seen throughout the education cycle from compulsory education level, students' choices regarding entrance to HE and the nature of that choice in terms of subject and location, as well as their future success at university. A young person's capital and habitus are influenced by their family and their upbringing, and are to some extent out of their control. Whilst formed through previous experiences, habitus can also shape our future possibilities and how we can perform in new fields. In the context of this thesis, this continual influence of parents and family is more than just assisting with reading at home, but is also shaped by leisure activity, engagement with the world and views of their position in the world. Students who come from families without cultural capital or a habitus which matches that of the institution, will experience a more difficult adjustment to university than those in possession of capital. When considering the ways in which parents influence their young people, those parents' previous experiences, their dispositions and the gap between these and their university are all shaped from the family

up to the point of beginning a university course.

The literature above suggests that there is more to this than direct influence, but instead includes an underlying pervasive influence that goes unnoticed, one that is invisible. This raises the question of whether family capital, and the family's and young person's habitus, provides them, as students, with enough advantage at degree level so that they will adjust more effectively, and perform better, than their counterparts for whom there is little cultural capital, and whose habitus is at odds with that of both the institution and that of being a student at that institution.

2.2 Parents and Education

In the previous section, Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus (1977; 1984; 1986) were explored and contextualised within the education setting. This section will now consider the literature specifically focused on the role and influence of parents in their child's educational career, from compulsory schooling to the decision-making process surrounding entrance to university. In order to understand how parents may continue to influence a student's educational experience at university, it is important to understand the role parents have in their child's education before university. This involvement has undergone a significant transformation in light of policy decisions over recent years, so these changes will be explored. The literature looks at the ways parents are involved in their child's education, what type of involvement is of benefit, and what expectations are placed on parents and families by the education system.

The reason for inclusion of the role of parents in compulsory education is twofold. Firstly, this literature is included because the thesis seeks to understand the wider historical context of the role of parents in compulsory education. Secondly, there is limited literature relating to the role of parents for their children post university entry. In order to try to understand this role once a student has enrolled on a degree course, this literature is

included in order to understand the experience of parents, and their young people, up to the point of entry. How that role is shaped, the family characteristics relating to who is involved and how this benefits the young person will all be discussed. When universities are witnessing an increased involvement of parents at events such as open days, it is necessary to understand why this increase may be occurring. Policy changes will be considered to position the role of parents in their child's education. It is argued that the policy changes have created a relationship that parents expect will continue once they have enrolled into university.

This review will now consider literature around decision-making and choice regarding HE, specifically the role of parents in that decision-making, and how this influences the young person. Decisions include whether to attend university, what subject to study and where, and whether to move away from the family home. This is an area in which parents have been established as being important influences. Along with the inclusion of literature on parental influence pre-entry, this review aims to provide understanding of the nature of parental influence post-entry. A summary of the methodology, location and sample size of the literature referred to in this section can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

2.2.1 Compulsory Education and the Role of Parents

Before considering the literature on the role of parents, it is important to contextualise parental involvement in education by reviewing policy changes which relate to the role of parents in a young person's education over the past 20 years. This underpins the nature of parental involvement as well as the expectations of parents and schools around what this role is.

2.2.1.1 Government Policy

The Labour Government of 1997 to 2010 encouraged parents to become "active partners in the production of educated children" (McNamara et al., 2000, p. 474). In 1997, the

Department for Education and Employment (*DfEE)* published the white paper “Excellence in Schools” (Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), 1997), which stated:

> *“Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers. They play a crucial role in helping their children learn. Family learning is a powerful tool for reaching some of the most disadvantaged in our society. It has the potential to reinforce the role of the family and change attitudes to education, helping build strong local communities and widening participation in learning. We want to encourage more effective involvement of family learning in early years and primary education.” (1997, p. 53)*

Specific initiatives aiming to foster parents’ closer involvement in schools were detailed in this paper. These initiatives include the need for schools to produce home-school agreements (which specify the school’s expectations regarding attendance, discipline, homework and the information schools and parents will give to one another), encourage attendance at parents' evenings and membership of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and for schools to share information between the school and the parent, such as pupil reports.

The Department for Education (2011), under the coalition government (2010-2015) explicitly stated the legal obligations of schools to all parents and detailed the following rights for all parents of pupils:

- *to receive information, e.g. pupil reports*
- *to participate in activities, e.g. vote in elections for parent governors*
- *to be asked to give consent, e.g. to the child taking part in school trips*
- *to be informed about meetings involving the child, e.g. a governors' meeting on the child's exclusion.*

(2011)

Understanding the level of involvement of parents in their children’s educational experience prior to university may go some way to understanding the increased level of parental involvement post entry to university. Parents of children within the compulsory education system are activity encouraged, and increasingly expected, to be active partners in their child’s education. In contrast, once their child begins their university

career, parents are excluded from the experience. Once their child turns 18, the law does not permit engagement with or by the parent in their university life without explicit consent from the student.

However, this thesis proposes that parental influence does not cease at the age of 18, but continues through modes such as capital and habitus. Parents who have become accustomed to the ways in which education has been structured thus far, and who do not have the personal experience of HE and as such are not familiar with the system, may not be aware of the change in expectations of parental involvement at university level. Whilst it is accepted that parents have good intentions and wish to support their child, without knowledge of the HE environment and its ways of working, it may become difficult for those parents to know how to support their children and what to expect of the experience.

2.2.1.2 Compulsory Education and the Role of Parents

Within the UK, compulsory education starts at age five and continues until age 16. In order to attend university, students must complete Further Education (FE) level qualifications, either continuing their education post 16 or returning at a later stage. It is clear from the literature that parental involvement is accepted as a positive influence on the educational outcomes of the child of compulsory school age (Desforges et al., 2003; Sacker, Schoon, & Bartley, 2002). However, due to the individual experiences of each child, there is no ‘one size fits all’ model of parental influence. Focusing specifically on the key themes of this research, the literature is considered in light of capital and habitus.

Possibly the most extensive research relating to the role of parents for school-age children is that of Desforges et al. (2003). In their review, they identify ways in which parents impact on their children’s educational career. This could take many forms, such as provision of a secure environment at home, encouraging discussion between parent and child, having high aspirations for their child, or parental participation in school events and

governance (2003, p. 4).

The literature suggests that children who have the support and involvement of their parents are more successful and higher achieving than those without the support of their parents (Desforges et al., 2003). In fact, the review argues that at a primary school level, parental involvement has a bigger impact on achievement than the effect of school (2003, p. 86). As the child gets older the impact of parental influence lessens and changes form, but is still vital to success.

While Desforges et al.'s review (2003) may be criticised, particularly in relation to its selectivity, balance, and the age of some source material, its conclusions remain pertinent here and bring together two key important themes for this thesis. Firstly, the significant value of parental involvement at primary age is fundamental; indeed, the role and influence of the parent is of greater impact than the school itself. Rather than being a secondary force, this conclusion places the role of parents as a primary factor in the children's achievement at school. Secondly, the authors go on to conclude that not only are parents important during the early education years, but that their influence continues through to decisions and choices of non-compulsory education – that is, post-16 years old.

Furthermore, Desforges et al. state that:

> *"Of the many forms of parental involvement, it is the 'at-home' relationships and modelling of aspirations which play the major part in impact on school outcomes. Involvement works indirectly on school outcomes by helping the child build a pro-social, pro-learning self-concept and high educational aspirations." (2003, p. 86)*

It could be argued that this conclusion emphasises the role of cultural capital in educational outcomes. Indeed, there are clear links between these findings and capital in all forms. The authors identified factors relating to the parents themselves which are associated with the level of parental involvement. Such factors include social class, where

typically those from higher social class groups value education more, find it easier to navigate the system – since they possess the capital which enables them to do this – and to match the values of the school (habitus), thus being able to be more involved. Furthermore, the authors also state that factors such as the level of education of the mother (as the primary care giver, again demonstrating the power of capital) is crucial.

Parents who have capital, who understand the education system, support and encourage their children, and value the importance of education, are able to help the child benefit from their experiences, develop high ambitions and become successful. In contrast, those parents without capital may value education just as highly but struggle to support their children in an unknown system and lack confidence in their ability to give support. Their children may not achieve their full potential, struggling to fit into their university. When these conclusions are considered in light of the HE environment, it is possible to propose that students who find it easier to adapt to university life are those from families who possess capital pertinent to the educational field. It is also possible to consider that even though the young person has become a university student, parents still continue to play an important role in that young person's educational success. The range and breadth of the work included in this literature review enables some confidence to be placed in the conclusions. However, it must be noted that this is a synthesis of research rather than the presentation of empirical work.

Furthering our understanding of the roles parents play in their child's education, Moon and Ivins (2004), on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills, undertook a large-scale telephone survey (n=3742) of parents and carers of school aged children (aged 5-16) in the UK to assess the parents' or carers' level of involvement in their child's education. The purpose of the research was to investigate the impact of policy changes emphasising the role of parents in their children's education, to establish whether more parents felt they were involved, and in what capacity. Whilst the sample is large and the sampling strategy appropriate for the questions it sought to answer, there is no detail as to the format in

which questions were asked. The results are presented as categorical data, but it is not detailed whether the parents were asked to choose between answers or whether analysis was conducted on responses to provide the categories. Finally, parents may have exhibited a social desirability bias in their responses, given the sponsor of the research.

Moon and Ivins results indicated that 38% of parents felt very involved in their child's education, but that this varied by gender of the parents, and by full-time or part-time employment. They found that women who worked part-time, had experience of working in a school, and whose child was in primary or infant school reported that they felt highly involved with their child's education. They also found that parents from disadvantaged groups, including lower social classes, were likely to say they feel very involved, but that this represented very specific forms of involvement. Parents in social classes D/E (where the main income earner is either employed in unskilled manual work, or dependent on state benefits) were involved in helping at dinner duty or school trips, but were less likely to be involved in PTAs, taking their children to galleries or museums, playing sport with them or undertaking school projects together.

Further, Moon and Ivins (2004) found that social class played a mediating role on the involvement of parents via its influence on parental confidence. Parents from lower social classes reported less confidence in their ability to assist their child with their homework and were less confident when talking to teaching staff. This suggests again that capital empowers some parents to be involved more explicitly and confidently in the education of their child and to understand the value of additional activities, whereas parents without capital may feel able to offer only operational support to the school. If applied to the HE environment, it is possible to consider how these variations in engagement and support could also vary depending on the family and its previous experiences. This work did not examine whether these forms of parental involvement contributed to the educational success of the child, but these findings nevertheless highlight visible patterns of behaviour and how these vary depending on the family's status, experience and knowledge.

There are barriers to parental engagement and involvement with schools and their child's learning, which could be argued to continue into a child's university experience. Firstly, expecting parental involvement in their child's education, as per the government policy, assumes a level of parental education. It assumes that parents have basic literacy and numeracy skills at a sufficient level for them to be able to assist their child. Based on research with 591 parents and children from the north of England and from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, Crozier and Davies (2007) raise concern with the increased expectations placed on parents. They question the assumption that parents are a homogenous group, who understand what is expected of them, and possess the skills and knowledge to enable them to be an active parent.

> *"the complexity of the different types of involvement that parents may engage in is not acknowledged and nor is the diversity of the parent body. Seeing parents as a homogeneous group imposes normative values of the white middle-class and often male parent, thus rendering white working class parents, and mothers in particular, and parents from minority ethnic groups invisible, in terms of what they have to offer." (2007, p. 296)*

When parents do not fit into this homogeneous group, the perception is that they are 'hard to reach', or difficult, rather than that the environment of the school is problematic due to its consonance with middle-class values and ways of being (2007, p. 301). These concerns raise the issue of capital and habitus, with schools operating in a way that does not acknowledge the life of the students or their family. For many schools with diverse student populations (whether by ethnicity or social class), rather than fostering positive involvement, such practices can instead alienate parents. Crozier and Davies (2007) argue that schools operate in a white, middle-class manner, which does not value the behaviours of the parents, nor does it make clear what expectations are in terms of involvement, meaning the label 'hard to reach' may be a misnomer. Instead, the situation is a result of conflicting habitus.

This research (2007) suggested that parents found the schools communicated in a way that was perceived as offensive, potentially racist, based on stereotypes and lacking in

respect. Therefore, until the school, and by extension the university, adapts to the parents they have by better reflecting their habitus, they will fail to engage those parents in their child's education. Given the experiences of these parents within the compulsory education field, it is possible to argue that not only will these parents not have the first-hand knowledge and understanding of the system, but, should their young people progress to university, they will continue to lack the ability to support their children through the decision making or adjustment processes. These families are likely to obtain little direction from the HE institutions as to what is needed, since universities themselves also maintain a white middle-class habitus (2007). Therefore, students from these communities are less likely to consider HE as being for them, and if they do progress may be at greater risk of withdrawal. This research is based within specific communities within the UK, and with families with English as an additional language. By using interviews with parents and children for whom accessing the education system is complicated by language, it is possible that language is the barrier to involvement rather than a reluctance to engage. However, it could be argued that given the diversity of the population of the UK, schools and education providers need to be able to include methods of working with families who have English as an additional language, or who experience a different habitus, to ensure they are able to be involved. This also applies to universities, where student populations are also diverse and thus so are their families. Whilst much of the expansion has been amongst the middle classes rather than non-traditional students, there has still been an increase in the diversity, albeit not to the extent expected. In order to fully support students to achieve their potential, it is essential that universities understand their student body as much as possible and do not assume that students are homogenous in their support needs.

Furthering the discussion as to why some parents may be, as Crozier described above, "hard to reach", Goodall (2012) looked at the engagement of parents with the school, and acknowledged the factors which can act as barriers to parental involvement, such as ethnicity, language, social class/economic status and parental experience of education

(2012, p. 142). Using data gathered from a review of empirical literature, Goodall (2012) developed a 6-point model of parental engagement. Of particular relevance to this thesis, and in support of the work above, she acknowledges that some forms of engagement by parents can be ignored or overlooked by the school if it does not fit with their expectations – that is, with the institutional habitus. Similar to Crozier's work (2007), Goodall (2012) found that what constitutes parental involvement is pre-set by the schools, and if the actions of the parents do not fit this expectation (or this habitus) they are not considered to be involved or are seen as being difficult. It is argued here that if parents of students are unsure of the system, the support they offer may not be what the student needs in order to thrive. In their conclusions, the authors are keen to stress that the model they propose cannot be a one size fits all approach, and that schools should adapt the model for their own situation (2012).

Adding to the work of Desforges et al. (2003) into the way parental roles change over time, Sacker et al. (2002) looked at the role of parents at key transitional periods of a young person's educational journey: from infant to junior school at age seven; from primary education to secondary at age 11; and from compulsory to further education at age 16. In contrast to the work discussed earlier in this review, which predominantly relies on qualitative and interview based methodologies, Sacker's dataset is derived from the National Child Development Study, which collected data from children born between March third and ninth 1958 and followed them through key age transitions at ages seven, 11 and 16. These age groups correspond to transition periods in school; that is, moving from infants to juniors, then to secondary, then onto further education. However, as the young people included in the study would now be entering their 60s, the responses and findings need to be treated with caution, not least given the changes in the education landscape reported in the introduction above.

Sacker and colleagues initially explore a "class inequalities" model which focuses on the extent of the impact of social class inequalities on educational achievement and

psychosocial adjustment (see figure 1, below). They argue that the simple class inequalities model provides an incomplete account of the impact of class on educational achievement by not considering the complex interplay of aspects of family life, whereas the systems model includes such considerations and is able to offer a much clearer understanding.

Figure 1: Class Inequalities Model (Sacker et al., 2002)

(2002, p. 865)

Therefore, they extended their modelling into a more comprehensive ‘contextual systems’ model (see figure 2, below) which seeks to understand the pathways from family social class to the educational achievement and adjustment of the young person through key resources such as ‘material deprivation’, ‘school composition’, ‘parental involvement’ and ‘aspirations’.

Figure 2: Contextual Systems Model (Sacker et al., 2002)

(2002, p. 866)

Sacker at al. confirm that there is widespread acceptance of the role and importance of the family environment on a young person, with joint family activities, reading to the child, interest in their education and parental aspirations being associated with both adjustment and achievement in school (2002). Parents with higher aspirations are more likely to be involved in their children's education and development than those with low aspirations, and those parents who are middle-class tend to hold higher aspirations for their young people than those in lower social classes. In terms of transitions, the authors conclude that the nature and influence of parents reduces over time from a key role at primary age education, to a lesser degree at the end of secondary schooling, so that at age 16 the importance of parental involvement on educational achievement is no longer as significant a variable as material deprivation and school composition (2002).

Throughout the transitional stages of schooling, the role of capital and habitus are clear. Understanding how to support children (by reading with them, offering encouragement and having aspirations) to help them achieve their full potential as a result of parents' own positive experience of education has an impact on achievement (Desforges et al., 2003; Moon & Ivins, 2004; Sacker et al., 2002). Sacker states that although by the age of 16 that direct influence has decreased, the power of capital and habitus, that is, the level of deprivation of the family (with social class being directly linked to capital), and the habitus

of the school and family continues to play an important role.

Whilst the work of Sacker et al. (2002) is of importance to this thesis, there are some limitations to the methodology they identify in their paper. Firstly, the education system itself is evolving constantly, with new curricula and greater expectations of both the child and their family. Secondly, the measures used within the study also present challenges. Whilst using staff to report on the family reduces the risk of parents interpreting the statements differently, for the *parental involvement* measures, teaching staff were asked to rate the parents on a scale (father's/mother's interest in child's education") from *show little or no interest* to *over concerned in their child's education*. This brings with it a potential bias, which could arise from the teacher being influenced by their relationship with the parent or by their own prejudices and assumptions, which could negatively impact on results.

While it is neither possible, nor appropriate, to review all the literature relating to parental influence at compulsory school age, it is important to understand the more active and engaged role parents have and are encouraged to foster whilst their child is at school, both at primary and secondary levels, and to set the scene as to how this role may continue into the university experience. One difficulty with the literature relating to parents and education is the lack of recent work. Despite this, the findings provide an understanding of not only how parents are involved, but why and of what benefit to the child this is. Parents start at a primary level as being the most important influence on a child's educational success, but this reduces over time to being one of a range of influences by age 16. There are key characteristics of parents that can result in differences in the effectiveness of their involvement, such as the social class of the family, level of parental education, gender and ethnicity, and thus their capital and habitus. Given that parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's education, it is suggested that this continues through to university, despite the students now officially being adults.

2.2.2 Parents, HE Decisions and Choices

Further to the influence and involvement of parents during a young person's education career, it is also important to review the literature surrounding the role of parents on the decision-making and choice process regarding HE. This is an area of research in which parents are clearly positioned as being influential and important, and is the last established area in which parents feature prominently. Following entry to university, research into the role of parents is limited. As such, this literature is included here to identify ways in which parents stay involved during the decision-making process regarding HE and to consider how this may continue post-entry. The literature will consider general ways in which parents are shown to be involved in the decision-making process and then ways in which this varies by social class, and thus capital.

In this context, parental influence can be seen in a variety of factors, including whether the young person should or could attend university, which course or subject to study, which university to attend and whether to move away from the family home. This influence differs significantly from that related to compulsory schooling, in that it is about the young person's future plans and career aspirations, as well as taking the first step into independence as an adult (for traditional age students).

The university decision-making process itself is considered to be complex and difficult. Indeed Connor et al. (2001) describe the complexity as a "choice maze" (2001, p. 21) through which students must navigate. In terms of parental involvement in the process, Moogan et al. (1999) identified that there has been an increase in the involvement of parents in the decision-making process regarding HE, evidenced by the increase in parental attendance at events such as university open days, as noted in the introduction. The literature reviewed next explores the ways in which parents are involved in this decision-making process. As with previous sections, the literature will be considered alongside the key themes of this thesis, specifically that of capital.

There are many factors which influence a young person's post-16 education choices. These include parents, the family's demographic factors (such as social class, ethnicity and gender), careers education, teachers, friends and labour market forces. Catley (2004) sought to understand factors considered by students in choosing their course and the university at which to study by undertaking research with law undergraduates. Their findings regarding the sources of information the students used are summarised in table 1 below, ordered by reported importance (2004, p. 5).

Table 1: Information Provision by Importance (Catley, 2004)

Advice from family is ranked as the fifth most important source of information, above their school/college or the careers service. This demonstrates the value of family and parental advice to the young person. Whilst this provides a picture of what a student considers as part of their choice process, and where they seek information from, it also shows that some students have an understanding of the HE system, of where to find information relating to the reputation of a course and/or institution, and importantly how to interpret such data, such as those with the appropriate capital. It must be recognised that these conclusions are drawn from students who were able to successfully navigate through the

decision and applications process and enrol on their chosen degree. As this thesis also focuses on the experience of those who have enrolled on a degree, this presents no limitations. Reflecting the work of Sacker et al. (2002) this suggests that whilst parents are not the most important factor, they still remain key. Whilst this data is informative, the sample was derived from law students in the same academic year and thus may not reflect the wider population of students.

In 2003, Payne (2003) undertook a review of the literature surrounding choices at the end of compulsory schooling for young people relating to all possible post-16 pathways. Their review suggests that parents influence a young person's choice in a variety of ways, both direct and indirect. The role the parents have played in the educational journey to date (as discussed above) impacts on the young person's success at 16 (the age at which GCSEs are taken in the UK), which in itself has a major impact on the post-16 opportunities that are available. In addition, parents can also influence a young person's view of education and its value, as well as being important sources of information and advising the young person. This supports Catley's work (2004), and that of the previous section, showing that parental influence continues throughout young people's educational career. Whilst the findings are relevant to this thesis, and indeed support others presented in this thesis, Catley's paper (2004) is a literature review and does not present empirical evidence. Whilst literature reviews synthesize a range of literature to support a general understanding, care must be taken when utilising them, as interpretation of the research questions of original papers may result in generalised results that do not reflect the primary focus.

Continuing the focus on student HE choice, and in contrast to previous work cited in this review, Connor and colleagues (1999) undertook a large scale (over 20,000 respondents) report, published by the Institute of Employment Studies, looking at students' processes for choosing a university. Acknowledging the changes to HE and the marketization of the sector, Connor et al. look to understand which sources of information and which particular

information students are looking for when they make their choices about university, as well as how universities can improve their information provision. Key influences were predicted academic success, careers advice and expectations from home and school. Again, this reinforces the role of parents in this process, acknowledging an increased role of parents not only as advisers, but also – as a result of the financial changes to HE – as funders, along with a habitus that offers academic achievement and careers advice.

This therefore suggests that there are both direct (advice given) and indirect (academic success) ways in which parents influence decisions around university. Indeed, the indirect ways in which parents influence a potential student's decision draw clearly on Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus (1986). Not all parents are able to draw on the advantage of their own experience, knowledge and thus, capitals. For those with the relevant capital and habitus, this contributes to feeling more able to support this process.

There has been a number of studies which have explored the impact of social class on decision-making regarding university. There are clear linkages between social class and Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus, with those from higher social classes benefitting from all forms of capital as well as habitus, by increasing what are perceived as being possible opportunities. In HE terms, that means knowing that university is an option, understanding how the HE system works and the values attributed to different institutions, understanding the language used – for example in prospectuses or league tables – and having the ability to make the most of the opportunities.

Focusing on the choice process amongst working-class students, Archer and Hutchings (2000) examine student constructs regarding HE, such as risk, costs and benefit as held by working class groups. They are keen to highlight that 'working-class' identity is not homogenous and that it is structured vertically and horizontally (2000, p. 555). This mirrors previous discussions of the assumed homogeneity of students when constructing student support and serves as a reminder that not all parents, nor students, will have the

same experience, whether they come from similar groups or not. In terms of application to university, whilst students from working class backgrounds were able to identify benefits of attending, they perceived significant risks (and costs) to the process of application, with no guarantees that they would be successful. If they were to succeed in their application, the perceived risk of failure (either end of year, or end of programme) also weighed heavily on the students. Further risks were also highlighted, such as financial risk associated with funding HE against the possibility of not being able to secure a graduate level position upon completion.

The authors argue that such perceived risks are not evenly distributed through society and as such, decisions relating to participation in HE by those from the lower social classes differ significantly from those from the higher social classes. Archer and Hutchings's participants saw university as a way of achieving social mobility for those from the lower social classes, which was a key benefit of participation. However, these students perceived greater risk in participation than their higher social class counterparts. With further changes to the funding of HE since this research was conducted, in the form of increased fees and no maintenance grant for the 'disadvantaged' students, the risk of attending is greater than ever.

Just as it was previously, problematically, assumed that all student families have similar experiences, Brooks (2003) argues that it is assumed that middle-class families have similar educational histories, in particular parental attendance at university. Brooks states that the evidence from the interviews suggests that parents, and step-parents, play a "pivotal role in informing their attitudes for HE" (2003, p. 287), but that there was a considerable difference in the extent to which they were involved in the actual decision-making process.

Therefore, the assumption is that these parents will possess the capital and habitus of those who have been to university. Their findings demonstrated that for families who did

not have first-hand experience, an alternative was that they could acquire knowledge through their workplace and thus were able to support their children. In some cases, the students themselves had high ambitions which encouraged the parents to develop their own understanding in order to support them. However, this suggests that the students had the time and ability available to dedicate to the process, as well as the self-confidence that they were able to do so. Brooks argues that when literature refers to middle-class families, the reality is that it is the upper middle-classes that are identified rather than the lower middle-classes, who do not always have the experience or knowledge it is assumed they have. This is where the use of social class group can limit our understanding of the student experience, as it assumes that all students within a social class group, which are often reduced to grouping NS-SEC groups together, have a similar experience.

Reay (1998) contrasted the decision-making process for ten higher social class students and found that their processes were substantially different to those described in Archer and Hutchings's work (2000), but reflected those of Brooks (2003). The intra-class differences again are clear, with the assumption that all middle-class families are in possession of capital and habitus as related to university when this is not the case. Reay's work shows that private school applicants typically possess the cultural capital of understanding the education system and how it functions. Consequently, their choice processes went beyond a simple decision about which academic programme to choose, with additional factors considered including the institution itself, since students understood that the institution carried weight of its own.

Reay's findings (1998) speak clearly of the advantage of some middle-class students, those with the relevant family educational history, where they are able to understand the 'system' and can attribute appropriate importance to issues of habitus, such as reputation of institution, which cannot be learnt from a prospectus alone. Reay's work (1998) draws on case studies, undertaken in London and with a very small sample size, of students in the process of applying to university from the London area from a mix of school types and

family backgrounds. This methodological approach provides a deep understanding of the choice process for these students, set against a backdrop of a changing HE landscape. However, caution must be applied in terms of their generalisability, not least the references to the increase in the mature student population which, since the 2012 fees changes, has seen a dramatic decline.

However, social class in itself is only part of the story regarding the influences on decision making. Connor et al. (2001) extended their investigation to include issues of ethnicity and gender. They identify that parents indeed have a role to play as an influencer in the decision-making process, but that the influence was mixed. Although no participants in this study reported that their parents actively discouraged them from attending, they found that the influence parents did have on decision making involved the subject to be studied (favouring 'higher status' subjects, such as medicine), and whether to move away from home to attend university or not. In terms of family background differences, they also found that whilst the parents of students from the lower social classes may not have attended university themselves, members of their wider family (such as siblings and extended family members) often either had been to, or were currently at, university and therefore these participants did not enter the process entirely naively. Further, the authors found that for some female students from minority ethnic groups, in order to attend university they had to go against their family's expectations, which could cause difficulties (2001, p. 41).

In line with previous findings, Connor et al. (2001) conclude that although family support was an influence, for most it was the pre-16 educational experience that was the greatest influence. This again supports the work of Sacker et al. (2002), where for many young people, parents are not the main influence, but instead remain part of a range of influences. Apart from for those female ethnic minority students mentioned earlier, parents were encouraging, although not a source of information. However, as highlighted above, parents and families influence the compulsory schooling experience heavily. In addition,

as the majority of students from this sample were from families for whom few parents had attended university themselves (and as discussed in the 'cultural capital' Chapter, 2.1), it may be that parents find it difficult to advise on a system of which they have no experience or personal knowledge.

Connor's subsequent work (2004) represents one of the few papers looking explicitly at the role of parents in the university decision-making process. Focusing on the experiences of BAME students in HE, Connor, Tyers, Modood, and Hillage (2004) conducted large-scale surveys with potential students, current students and parents, and found that such students were more likely to be studying locally, at a new (post-1992) university and studying specific 'prestige' subjects such as medicine, dentistry, computer science and law. They also found that the influence of the family was greatest in terms of location of study, with respondents indicating that remaining close to the family home, if not in the family home, was important. The authors summarise that the decision-making process is "dynamic" (2004, p. 25) and is constructed of many factors – such as social class, ethnicity and gender – which shape the decision. Included in this dynamic are internal and external structural factors, with internal factors relating to the family's demographics and external factors including teachers, careers advisors, labour market forces, finances and family/community expectations. The influence of parents on students from minority ethnic groups was found to be much greater than for white students. Connor et al.'s research (2004), published by the Institution of Employment Studies, suggests parents of Black African, Pakistani or Bangladeshi and Indian students were the most influential sources of advice and guidance regarding decision around HE (2004, p. 29). They also found that this influence was very active, with parents becoming involved in activities such as attendance at open days and so on.

Moving away from capital and issues associated with social class and ethnicity, one final strand of research on the influences on student choice looks at the role of students, and their parents, as consumers. This perspective is reflective of the marketization of the HE

environment discussed in the introduction. Pugsley and Coffey (2002) study explored the relationship between the family/parents and the HE system within the process of decision-making, by positioning parents as consumers within a higher education market place (2002, p. 41). Utilising a longitudinal, qualitative approach, Pugsley and Coffey gathered data from 760 further education level pupils and their parents. These data were gathered in Wales (UK), before the increase in fees was introduced, meaning their generalisability may be limited.

With the further increases in tuition fees and the removal of the maintenance grant, it could be argued that parents are increasingly positioned as consumers alongside the students. Nevertheless, these findings (Pugsley & Coffey, 2002) echo the changing role of parents over the previous decades, as encouraged by governmental policies and actions, and propose that these changes have created a situation whereby parents have also become consumers who choose the university with their child, actively engaging in the market of HE. Pugsley and Coffey argue that parents, along with their children, desire to "know" what it is they are paying for (2002, p. 45), and that this is especially the case for those who have no personal experience of HE. Parents are influenced by factors such as safety, happiness and proximity to home rather than subject/institutional reputation. The research also found a greater level of involvement at events such as open days, accompanying children to interviews, and expectations that they would be involved in these proceedings. This perhaps reflects a greater attempt at due diligence adopted by those purchasing a product. These findings detail a need by the parents to ensure their child continues to be safe and that the environment of the university will act as a protector for their child, almost a continuation of the *in loco parentis* role schools offer.

Pugsley and Coffey (2002) also found that for those parents who do not have personal experience of HE, the literature relating to universities was difficult to navigate and understand, resulting in parents feeling frustrated that they could not always help in the way they wished. Whilst this paper seeks only to provide an alternative way of viewing the

role of the parent in the decision-making process, it is important to include, in order to understand the position in which some parents may perceive themselves and their role.

2.2.3 Summary

This section examined the key literature relating to the role and influence parents have on their children throughout their educational journey up to and including the decision-making process relating to HE. Parents clearly have a role for their children during the early compulsory schooling years, but they also impact significantly on choices of and application to university and beyond. Whilst the nature of this influence varies depending on factors such as ethnic group, gender and social class, the role and influence of the parents remains consistent. Whether this is a result of the positioning of the parents as a consumer of education, or as an outcome of the increased involvement at compulsory schooling (or a combination of both), the result is that for most future students, the process of applying to and attending university also involves their parents.

In terms of this research, the support, involvement, influence and role of parents from the first year of compulsory schooling, through to the decision-making process regarding HE, suggests that once students begin their programme of study, many parents expect that they will continue to be involved in their academic life. Parents may not only expect to continue to be a strong influence on their young people, but for some, the financial involvement may mean they have a vested interest in ensuring their child succeeds, and so mitigating the risks associated with attending university.

Once a student enrols onto a university programme, which traditionally is at age 18, the change in the role of the family is marked. A university does not engage with parents (indeed is prevented from doing so without the explicit permission of the student themselves) and does not provide that open relationship that parents have been used to and encouraged to develop for the previous 13 years of education. Parents find

themselves no longer part of the relationship between student and education provider, and their role in their young person's education is very different to the previous experience. Despite this, universities are noticing marked increases in the number of parents attending events such as open days. Through my own experiences, I have witnessed how parents continue to be involved with their child's life. It is perhaps not surprising to be witnessing such increases given the changes in student finances, living arrangements and previous educational experiences. It is, therefore, essential that universities understand the underlying dynamic when considering the student experience.

2.3 Student Adjustment and Living at Home

The previous sections of the literature review have examined the concepts of capital and habitus, and how these can make sense of the apparent advantage some students are seen to possess in HE. The literature relating to the role of parental involvement from compulsory education through to the decision-making process regarding HE has been reviewed, positioning parents as both key to educational success throughout the compulsory education phase and important to students' decision-making about university. It has also been shown that parental involvement varies depending on characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and social class. As this thesis is focused on the student experience, this final section of the literature review will consider the experience once a student enrols on their degree, and the role of parents within this. It is proposed, that given the close relationship between parents and educational success up to the point of entry for students, they will continue to be a significant factor in the adjustment and success at university. Through my work both as a WP practitioner, and in other roles working with students, it seemed that the parents of many students continued to be heavily involved with their lives.

This section looks at two distinct bodies of literature. Firstly, the literature relating to the process of adjustment to university, as well as the factors that contribute either to a

student's early withdrawal from their studies or their successful adjustment and achievement. The role of parents within this process, as far as it is known, will be highlighted throughout. Withdrawal can be considered as being, in part, the result of unsuccessful adjustment to university, whether academic or social. The literature relating to adjustment to university will also be considered in light of expectations, preparation and capital. Secondly, the literature relating to the experience of students who choose to live in the family home during their studies will also be reviewed. Literature asking whether where students live during their studies changes their experience of university and exploring the role of parents throughout the process will be reviewed. A summary of the literature referred to in this section can be found in Appendix 4 and 5.

2.3.1 Adjustment to University

Assuming that a student has successfully navigated both the decision-making process and the application process, they will then have to adjust to being a student. Schlossberg (1981) proposes that a transition can be seen to occur when:

> *"an event, or non-event, results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships." (1981, p. 5)*

There are many ways in which the transition from school to HE impacts on students' lives, requiring them to change their way of working and forge new relationships. These relationships will be both professional – with university staff – and personal, in terms of developing new friendships and adjusting to a new peer group.

From the academic perspective, learning expectations shift from experiences guided and supported by the teacher into expectations of independent study, deeper study, changes to the processes and frequency of receiving feedback, as well as increased academic demands of the subject. This transitional period must be navigated for a student to adjust to their new student life (or habitus) and reach their academic potential. There is no one

student habitus for all institutions. Instead, habitus varies between institutions and reflects the values, norms and habitus of the individual university itself. Given the literature considered in the first section, it is suggested that for those students who come from families with capital and habitus appropriate to the particular university, this period of transition, or adjustment, will be smoother and easier to navigate than for those who arrive with neither.

Tinto's work into student retention and withdrawal (1993) also highlights this:

> *"At the very outset, persistence in college requires individuals to adjust, both socially and intellectually, to the new and sometimes quite strange world of the college. Most persons, even the most able and socially mature, experience some difficulty in making that adjustment. For many, the period of adjustment is brief, the difficulties they encounter relatively minor, but some find it so difficult they quit." (1993, p. 45)*

This quote not only demonstrates the adjustment process, but also highlights the direct links between the adjustment literature and capital. Those who come from families who lack the capital gained from personal experience of HE will find the new environment a "strange world" (1993).

Since students are not a homogenous group, no two students will experience the period of adjustment and potential withdrawal in the same way with the same outcomes. Whilst some students may experience many factors which could indicate the possibility of withdrawal, they still choose to remain in their studies. In contrast, there are other students who experience only a few factors which influence the decision to leave and yet still make the choice to withdraw early from their studies.

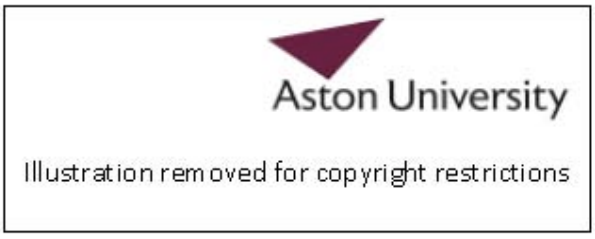
In any discussion of student adjustment, the work of Tinto must be considered. Tinto's (1975) model of student withdrawal (see Figure 3 below) seeks to explain the dynamics at play between the individual, the institution, and the decision to either withdraw or continue with studies. Drawing on existing literature, the theoretical framework within which Tinto

developed this model was Durkeim's theory of suicide (1975, p. 91). Tinto argues that there is a similarity between the theory of suicide and dropout from HE, in so far as suicide is more likely to occur where an individual is insufficiently integrated into society, both morally and socially. Tinto (1975) suggests a similar definition can also be applied to HE withdrawal, in that it can be considered a lack of integration with both the institution and social adjustment.

Of course, withdrawal from HE has many different facets. A student can be made to withdraw (academic failure, breaking institutional rules) or leave voluntarily (personal difficulties), and it is the dynamics at play in the different situations that Tinto aimed to explain by developing the model of dropout (1975). In an increasingly competitive HE marketplace, retaining students once they have begun a programme of study is felt to be just as important as marketing to new students.

Tinto's model should be seen as a longitudinal process of interactions between the individual, the academic and social aspects of the institution, and the students' own goals, aspirations and ultimately decision to drop out or not (1975, p. 94).

Figure 3: A Conceptual Scheme for dropout from College (Tinto, 1975)



As represented in the model, there are various factors that contribute to a students' final decision to withdraw from university. Experiences prior to entering HE, motivations and reasons to begin a university programme, the institutional environment itself (both social and academic), and the commitment of the student both to their goals and their institution all impact on the decision of whether to withdraw from their studies or continue. It is also important to note that within this model, pre-college schooling and family background are identified as important elements in the schema, contributing to the commitment of the student to their educational career. This supports the literature presented in Chapter 2.1 regarding the importance of family and parents on the educational journey, which showed that parents can positively influence the educational success of their children (Desforges et al., 2003; Moon & Ivins, 2004; Sacker et al., 2002) and that those with capital of all forms have significant advantage over those without. It is therefore suggested that parental involvement is both explicit and implicit.

The significant contribution of Tinto's model (1975) is that it provides recognition of the multifaceted aspects of the student experience during the transition process. Tinto suggests that students who have become successfully integrated into the institution are more likely to succeed than those who have not (1975), and that students who withdraw are more likely to hold values that do not match those of the institution. This further supports the concept of "institutional habitus" as an important factor in the adjustment process (Reay, 1998). Whilst Tinto's work is seen as fundamental in understanding student adjustment and withdrawal, it does have limitations, not least its age. The UK HE system has changed significantly since the 1970s, with increasing financial pressure, debt on graduation, increasing pressure to secure 'graduate level' jobs, increasing numbers of non-traditional students for whom there are additional considerations, such as students with care responsibilities, disabled students and those who are care leavers. However, these could be considered to be additional moderators to the experience rather than factors which fundamentally change it.

Extending the work of Tinto, Bean and Metzner (1985) developed a model of student attrition, based within the USA, focusing on issues for non-traditional students. This model identifies again that the student experience of HE is an amalgamation of social, academic and psychological factors which contribute to the overall experience. However, this model adds the ways in which ’environmental factors‘ play a significant part for non-traditional student groups.

Bean and Metzner (1985) highlight that for students, if the environmental factors are positive – such as child care, family support and so on – they are more likely to stay with their course, irrespective of academic performance. If the environmental factors are poor, and academic performance is also poor, then a student is likely to withdraw. They state that “academic support will not compensate for weak environmental support” (1985, p. 492). Students that come from families which lack both capital and knowledge of how to support are at greater risk of withdrawal.

The environmental factors in Bean and Metzner’s (1985) model include finance, student part-time work, family responsibilities, external encouragement and opportunity to transfer, all of which act as moderators. This reinforces the message that the transition process does not happen in isolation for students, and that there is more to their lives than just becoming a university student. Young people whose environmental variables cause difficulty or extra pressure/demand are at risk of withdrawing; the model demonstrates that this is not just because of a lack of fit between the student and the university academic and social systems. This update is welcome; however, the study was undertaken in the US, where the university system is significantly different from in the UK, not least in terms of finance. Non-traditional students in the US will also be different to those classed as such in the UK.

More recently, Braxton and Hirschy (2004) extended Tinto’s approach by looking at what they term the ”departure puzzle” (2004, p. 89). They argue that Tinto’s theory, where

student withdrawal is a result of the students' interaction with the institution, misses the importance of the institution itself (institutional habitus). Taking the empirically supported aspects of Tinto's model – that is, student entry characteristics, students' initial commitment to the institution, students' continued commitment to the institution and social adjustment – as indicators of persistence, Braxton and Hirschy (2004) also introduce the concepts of the institutional characteristics (identified as IC on the figure below). These include the institution's commitment to the welfare of students, both academically and socially, its integrity as measured by the actions and beliefs of staff, the institution's goals and missions, and the institution's communal potential, whereby students are able to identify other students with whom they share goals, beliefs and values (2004, p. 95). Of particular relevance to this thesis is the role of, and need for, commitment to the welfare of the student in order for the student to successfully adjust.

Figure 4: A Revision of Tinto's Theory (Braxton & Hirschy, 2004)

If an institution is committed to its students' development and achievement, and provides the necessary support and assistance, the effects of stress, worries about finance and so on that a student may experience can be mitigated. Likewise, if the staff within an institution demonstrate behaviours that are incongruent to the ethos of the institution, as portrayed through marketing materials and events such as open days, the student may experience a conflict of expectation which could contribute to the decision to withdraw.

In addition, there are links between institutional integrity and both capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1986), for example if staff demonstrate middle-class values, but the institution has been advertised as a WP focused institution. The conflict of capital and habitus may result in the student feeling that they do not fit in and this can contribute to the decision to withdraw.

Finally, the communal potential plays a powerful role in the decision to withdraw. If the student feels that there are no others who share their beliefs and values (again indicating links to capital and habitus), this could result in them failing to make friends from their peer group. All three institutional factors directly feed into the social integration of the students, which, if not successful, will affect their commitment to the institution and consequently impact on their decision to withdraw early. This model is an important addition to the work of Tinto (1975), as the role of the institution itself is fundamental to the success of the student. It is not just the role of the student themselves which is key, but rather the interplay between student and institution which is fundamental to the decision to withdraw or not.

Expanding our understanding of the adjustment process in this way firmly positions the importance of a range of factors working together. However, the position of parents in this process is less clear. It could be argued that parents have a direct influence on the student entry characteristics, but it is also possible to suggest that communal match will be indirectly influenced by parents. Students from families with the relevant capital and habitus are more likely to find a match between themselves and the university, thus facilitating their adjustment.

One of the overriding criticisms from practitioners of such models (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Tinto, 1975) is over the lack of information around how this knowledge can then inform the practice of the university. Despite this, the models provide a starting point on which student support can be focused.

2.3.1.1 Preparedness and Expectations

Further to the models of adjustment and withdrawal presented above, there are key themes that emerge from the literature and are directly relevant to this thesis in terms of how improved student support can be structured. The first is that of preparedness, which is explicitly linked with expectations. What the student expects university to be like, and how prepared they feel they are, compared to their experience, is linked to how easily and quickly they are able to adjust to the new environment.

Citing an abrupt shift from school/college and living in the supported family environment to the HE environment, where students are expected to take responsibility for their academic and social life away from their support networks, Lowe and Cook (2003) argue that students who are ill-prepared for the transition are more likely to underperform as well as drop out. Students who were unprepared did not know what was expected of them on their course, such as the number of hours to be spent on learning activities, the academic options to be chosen, or the assessment methods to be used. Lowe and Cook (2003) argue that students who are better prepared are more accurate in their perceptions of what university will entail and will find the transition easier than students with unrealistic expectations. They found that inaccurate expectations, and thus poor preparation, contribute to disengagement, poorer academic performance and ultimately increased withdrawal. They also stated that the gap between the student's expectations and their lived experience is key in predicting the ease of the student's adjustment to university life.

Surveying first year students at one university, Lowe and Cook (2003) established that students who had inappropriate expectations of university life struggled more with the adjustment process than those who did not. Whilst parents are not referenced in this work, the role of capital and habitus, and thus the indirect influence of parents, is clear. Students from families who possess capital are at an advantage over those who do not by having more appropriate expectations; their capital and habitus mean they are more able to be

prepared. These conclusions again support the need for adequate student support to work with students who are struggling to adjust.

Continuing the theme of expectations and preparedness Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, and Alisat (2000) found that complexity of expectations can act as a buffer to the stress that many experience when starting university. In their study with first year students at an American university, they found that stress was related to student adjustment, with those reporting lower levels of stress finding it easier to adjust to university than those with higher stress. However, for students who reported high levels of stress, expectations and the level of complexity of expectation could act as a moderator. Students who held less complex, simple, almost romanticised expectations adjusted to university life less well than those who reported high levels of stress but who held more complex expectations. This may be a result of the student not being prepared for the reality of university.

There are clear parallels in the work of Lowe and Cook (2003) with the role of capital and habitus. Students with complex expectations and more realistic expectations of student life could be from families with the appropriate capital and habitus. Pancer et al. (2000) explicitly reference parents in the formation of complex expectations, stating that the creation of complex expectations is a result of discussions, including those with parents. This infers that those parents are able to provide relevant information, again demonstrating the advantage of capital.

In order to fully understand the nature of stress for first year students, who typically have not yet begun to experience the demands of their course compared with those in the final year, it is relevant to consider a model of organisational stress. The job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) argues that for individuals in the workplace, stress is not itself a stand-alone entity, but is instead the interplay between the demands of the role and the resources available to the individual. Demerouti et al. (2001) argue that stress is felt when there is an

imbalance between demands and resources. The revised working model (figure 5, below) demonstrates the role the demands and resources play in organisational outcomes, which for students could be interpreted as academic outcomes.

Figure 5: Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

(2007, p. 313)

When applied to the student experience, this model helpfully highlights the role of support. For students, this support could include not only peers on the course, but also family and more specifically the family's capital. Students who are able to access and utilise such resources are likely to encounter less imbalance between demands and resources, and therefore may experience less stress than those who do not have the same level of resources available. Demerouti et al. argue that job resources can buffer the impact of job demands for an individual, and therefore those who have higher resources (including social, economic, cultural (Bourdieu, 1986) or psychological (Luthans et al., 2004) capital) will be better equipped to cope with higher levels of job demands than those without. This model demonstrates how preparedness and expectations also impact on the ability to cope with job demands. Those who are prepared, who have an understanding of what going to university entails, and who have more support and internal resources on which to draw, are more likely to be resilient to the demands of entering university and thus are more likely to perform well. Finally, there are clear parallels to the earlier models

presented in this section (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Tinto, 1975), with the success of the student being based on not only their own abilities but also on the support available, their motivation, and the relationship between organisation and individual all being contributing factors.

As students become more familiar with the ways of working within the university environment, levels of stress decrease, and adjustment level increases (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, and Cribbie (2007). Friedlander et al.'s study focused on first year undergraduate students at a university in Canada to identify the role of social support, self-esteem and stress on adjustment. Social support was key to the successful transition to university, with those students who reported increases in such support (particularly from friends) also reporting increased adjustment. When considered against the different aspects of adjustment as measured by the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ; a frequently-used measure when investigating the adjustment level of students, and as used by this thesis), social support from friends (though they do not specify whether these are university friends specifically) was predictive of an increase in both personal-emotional and overall adjustment, whereas an increase in family social support only predicted an increase in the overall adjustment. Again, this reinforces the need for universities to offer student support in terms of official outlets, but also by facilitating opportunities for students to forge new friendships and make the adjustment to the student life. In a time of change within the HE sector, when universities find themselves under increasing financial pressures, it is imperative that quality student support is not sacrificed.

2.3.1.2 Social Class, Adjustment and Capital

The second factor relating to the adjustment process is social class. The literature above has shown how successful adjustment, preparedness and expectations can also be viewed through a lens of capital and habitus. Due to the relationship between social class and capital, it could be argued that the advantage of some students in the adjustment

process is not simply a result of class, but of the invisible influence of capital and habitus. While the following papers explicitly refer to class, the relationship with capital will be highlighted throughout.

Following a meta-analysis, Rubin (2012) found that social class was a predictor of a successful transition and adjustment to university. Working-class students were demonstrably less prepared for HE, less engaged after enrolment, less likely to achieve good qualifications and more likely to withdraw prior to completion of their programme than their middle-class classmates. Taking a position derived from the cultural capital agenda discussed in the previous section (Chapter 2.1), the authors argue that since working-class students receive less support from family and off-campus friends than middle-class students, they therefore would benefit most from successful social adjustment or acquiring the “college knowledge” (2012, p. 23) as provided by other students and the institution itself. This is an example of the advantages of capital in action. It is this social integration that enables these students to build those support structures needed to succeed that other students already have on enrolment to university. Whilst the social support remains important for those whose parents have attended university and so who already possess the knowledge they need, they don’t benefit from social support as much as students without capital. The overall gain is much higher for those without capital.

Whilst only 35 papers were considered in Rubin’s meta-analysis, the methodology and analysis employed provided robust conclusions which support the need for opportunities to be facilitated by the university to enable students to participate in activities which grant them the knowledge needed to succeed should they come from families without the advantages of capital. What is lacking in this research is the individuality of the experience – that is to say, the assumption is that all students from a similar social class will have a similar experience.

Supporting the link between social class and adjustment further, Cooke, Barkham, Audin, and Bradley (2004) found that ‘advantaged’ students (those from higher social classes) were more likely to have parents who had been to university, less likely to be employed in paid work opportunities, more likely to be involved in non-academic activities, drink less alcohol, and socialise more in the earlier years of their studies compared to students from disadvantaged social classes. The findings from this study support those of Rubin (2012), suggesting that there is a link between social class and the integration of students on campus. The authors build on that work by specifically identifying the ways in which the opportunity to participate is reduced depending on the external pressures on the student. The participation and adjustment of those students from lower social class backgrounds, who thus lack both cultural and economic capital, will be different than for those with these capitals. Students who undertake paid part-time (or even full-time) work alongside their studies, who have care responsibilities, or who remain living in the family home have reduced opportunities to integrate socially in their student life. This results in further increasing the conflict between habitus of the student and institution, adding additional stresses on the student without providing additional support (Demerouti et al., 2001), resulting in further difficulties for the student to overcome.

The link between social class and capital is clearly relevant here. Using the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as the theoretical framework, Leese (2010) explored the process of adjustment for students and asked whether cultural capital and habitus influenced this. This research was conducted at a new university with a strong commitment to widening participation and as such has a higher percentage of ‘disadvantaged’ students (such as those from lower social classes). Over 70% of students were engaged in paid employment alongside their studies, and 27% reported that they were finding it difficult to find time to study. Approximately half (53%) of respondents reported that they spent their free time with friends from outside the university (2010, p. 244) rather than with friends on their course or from university. Many students found the language of the institution difficult to understand, feeling they did not have the appropriate

language to navigate their education. Given that this research was conducted at a university with a higher percentage of disadvantaged students, these results are perhaps not surprising. These findings support Bourdieu (1986) in that the language of the institution is biased to the middle-classes and thus potentially excluding to those from lower social classes. Also, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be working during their studies and less likely to engage in social activity as part of the university experience. This supports the work of Holdsworth (2005) who argued that the need for paid employment or living at home (often common for students from lower social classes) limits the opportunity to engage in the social aspect of university.

Looking specifically at the UK, Yorke and Longden (2007) indicate, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the greater the number of risk factors in the students' experience, the more likely it is that they will have considered withdrawing from their studies (2007, p26). Such factors included reporting poor or worrying experiences in academic demand, coping with the academic work, feedback, supportive teaching, stimulating learning experience, prior knowledge of the course and/or institution, worry about finances, and anticipation of obtaining graduate job. When the findings were analysed by student demographic data on social class, a positive relationship was found between students of higher social classes and the ability to cope with academic work as well as social engagement in HE. This builds on Bourdieu's notion of capital (1977, 1984, 1986), highlighting that those from higher social classes reported more social engagement and better ability to cope with academic demands than those from lower social classes, since they had resources which supported them.

Thomas (2002), however, warns that it is too easy to label students as being the problem of poor adjustment and withdrawal. As student numbers increase, so too do the numbers of students from non-traditional backgrounds, meaning there is a danger that the discussion becomes focused on those students who are not able to be prepared enough, not as academically able or not as motivated. Rather than universities changing their

support structures and reviewing their ways of working, and thus their habitus, it becomes easy to blame the non-traditional students. Thomas's work focused on student retention and utilised a mixed methods approach, gathering information on seven key areas that influenced student adjustment and retention. The seven areas are academic preparedness, institutional expectations and commitment, academic and social match, family support and commitments, university support services, finance and employment, and academic experience (Thomas, 2002).

These findings suggest that not only is the habitus of the institution an important factor in the retention of non-traditional students, but also that individual differences play a significant part. Thomas found that the majority of students felt great financial pressure, but had accepted that they would be in debt and have to work long hours to support themselves. She also found that the relationship between staff and students was important to students' ability to cope with academic pressures, and that social support from fellow students was key, which in turn enabled students to become members of the university as well as to develop their sense of identity and belonging. These themes support the work of Tinto (1975) in accepting that there are both internal and external factors which influence the decision to persist with or withdraw from studies.

2.3.2 Students Living at Home

This section reviews literature relating to students who remain in the family home for their studies. Universities in the UK have noticed an increasing trend of students choosing to remain living in the family home instead of moving into university accommodation (typically halls of residence). At Aston University in 2017/8, approximately 40% of first year undergraduate students were living at home, an increase from 25% during 2007/8. This could be for a variety of reasons, but with the introduction of variable tuition fees and increasing student debt, as well as the perceived risk non-traditional learners take by entering HE (Archer & Hutchings, 2000), this trend is predicted to continue. It is important

therefore to consider the impact that living at home has on the student experience and specifically how this may influence adjustment and success during their studies. Holdsworth (2006) notes that the perceived traditional transition to university is often seen as a rite of passage, a new phase in a young person's life, the assumption being that university students will leave the family home.

Focusing on the issue of which students choose to stay in the family home rather than move into university accommodation and why, Holdsworth (2005) suggests that students who continue to live in the family home are likely to be attending a new university, studying science programmes, be in their first year, be male, a first generation student and also from a lower family social economic group (as measured by the father's profession). Holdsworth (2005) also identified that students make decisions regarding living arrangements by taking into consideration the financial cost of attending university and the option of moving away. Staying in the family home is seen as a way of reducing costs by not incurring additional accommodation charges and wider living expenses. Students who lived at home were also more likely to report working whilst studying and relying less on parents for financial support. Findings suggested that students living at home were more likely to be from lower social classes, meaning their parents may not be in a position of being able to support their child financially in addition to them living within the home. Indeed, Holdsworth states that these students were also more likely to be making a contribution to the household budget, which negated the financial savings perceived to be made by remaining at home, although this did not incur the same costs as living away from home.

Using Bourdieu's 'capital' as the theoretical framework, Holdsworth (2005) argues that young people from middle-class families expect they will move away to attend university. However, those from lower social classes do not hold the same expectations, and staying with their family provides familiarity and safety during a period of activity which is outside their family's frame of reference. Holdsworth concludes that whilst the feelings of

familiarity may be a driver for remaining in the home, that familiarity is not in the context of being a university student. Some students reported that they felt that they were outsiders in their own town (Holdsworth, 2005).

Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005) similarly identified the role of finance as a motivator for remaining in the family home. They conclude however that for non-traditional students, specifically those from lower socio-economic groups, not only is going to university a financial risk, but it is also a risk to their identity, which remaining in the family home goes some way to mitigating, both financially and by offering a safe and secure base from which to participate in a system for which they have little or no cultural capital.

2.3.2.1 Impact on Student Experience

Students who live on campus will clearly have a different experience to those who live off campus. Holdsworth (2006) notes that there are barriers to adjustment for students who remain living at home, such as practical issues (travel time from campus), adjusting to university life, and other students' opinions or assumptions about those living at home (2006, p. 515). These results show that living at home makes a considerable difference to the student experience, especially the non-academic aspects of the experience. If students were living some distance away from the university, participation in social or sport activities was much more complicated than for those who lived on campus or close by. Literature around adjustment (Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Friedlander et al., 2007; Yorke & Longden, 2007) indicates that those students who were able to participate in the social aspect of the university adjusted quicker to student life than those who could not engage.

Holdsworth (2009) investigated underlying assumptions relating to moving away to university, as well as how these impact on students and influence the transitions both to university and to adulthood. She notes that as students who remain in the family home tend to be 'non-traditional', there is an emergent two tier system, whereby going away to

university is becoming an elite practice, with only those financially able to move away – that is, those families with the economic capital to financially support their children or with the cultural capital to value the experience of moving away – doing so. Those whose families do not have either type of capital have no choice but to stay in the family home, with the associated difficulties in terms of development to adulthood.

Holdsworth (2009) also highlights that the discourse around social mobility and university is built on the assumption that students move away from home, experience a new environment and develop their independence and skills necessary to succeed. She also considers the way universities market themselves to potential students. Often the marketing promotes moving to campus. This means that the university is suggesting that those students who cannot do this are not the expected norm before they have even arrived, which may have a negative impact in terms of their adjustment to, and success at, university. The habitus of the institution has already positioned itself clearly, with students living with family not fitting in before they begin their university career.

These findings are further supported by research undertaken with Aston University students in an internal report produced by Arya and Smith (2005). They found that students who remain at home for their studies do not have the same relationship with, nor access to, the university as students who move away from home. They also conclude that students who live off-campus in the family home identify as students in academic terms only, whereas those on campus identify in personal growth terms. However, their results show that this difference reduces during their time at university.

Strom and Strom (2005) acknowledge various possible drivers which could explain the changes in student living arrangements such as finance, including the rise in fees, as well as the general cost of living and a desire to have a ‘good standard of income’. Accepting that more students choose to remain in the family home, they suggest that it is necessary for both parent and child to renegotiate their expectation of each other and their

relationship during this period (2005, p. 520), but highlight that research into how this can best be achieved is limited.

Undertaking interviews with both parents and students who live in the family home, Strom and Strom (2005) found that students report difficulties with a lack of independence as well as a level of frustration over their financial dependency on parents, as well as having to abide by parental house rules with little, if any, perceived discussion. Of course, there are benefits to living at home during university, such as the opportunity to develop into an adult, fully supported by their parents in a safe environment, where the parents act as role models and demonstrate key coping strategies which the young person can develop. If a student is supported and encouraged at home, this may have a positive impact on their performance and experience at university, a point which is key to this thesis. Conversely if the young person doesn't have the support or guidance of their parents and feels pressure to remain in a parent-child relationship, their university work may be negatively affected, giving more stress to the young person.

As part of the adjustment process, a student needs to negotiate the move from their old life (with family and friends) to a new 'university student' life, or habitus (Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). It can be argued that where a student lives during term time will affect their ability to negotiate this adjustment, with students living at home potentially not being as immersed in the student life living as students in halls.

Identifying the impact of accommodation on social support, Wilcox et al. (2005) established that not only did those at home find it difficult to adjust to the student life, those in halls also experienced difficulties. Those who remain in the family home reported finding it difficult to engage with the on-campus social life, whereas those that live away from home in halls reported finding the process daunting and in some cases found themselves living with other students who were not compatible. This highlights that the

relationship with accommodation is not simple, and is not the same for all students, again demonstrating that each student experience is unique. It is not possible to argue that students who live on campus have an easier experience; indeed, those who had withdrawn often cited problems with accommodation, those they were sharing with, and the clash of expectations between the students in terms of socialising and cleanliness (2005). In addition, many respondents commented on the facilities and layout of the university accommodation, with some types limiting the possibility of social support due to a lack of communal space.

What is consistent across all literature pertaining to student adjustment is the importance of support and family. Without the right support, the student is less likely to adjust successfully. This could result in withdrawal or poor achievement. For families with the appropriate capital, knowing what to expect and what support to offer will afford indirect advantage for their children.

While most students navigate the transition to university despite experiencing issues and concerns, these findings suggest that there may be ways in which the transition could be made easier. If universities are to become more attuned to the different behavioural expectations of their students, there needs to be better communication between teachers and potential students prior to enrolment. Universities might consider developing induction events into longer term, fully supported processes which cover not only academic preparedness but also attitudinal and social preparation (Lowe and Cook, 2003, p. 75).

2.3.3 Summary

The literature reviewed in this section demonstrates the adjustment a student must negotiate in order to become a member of the university environment. It highlights the ways that individuals need to adjust, not only in terms of their academic studies but also their social adjustment and personal development. The literature then positions the

adjustment to university and experiences prior to university in the withdrawal theories, which show the multi-faceted influences which can contribute to an individual choosing to withdraw from their studies early.

Those students who felt more prepared and who had positive/realistic expectancies regarding the university environment may have had families and parents who had experience of HE. It is possible they were therefore able to guide their children in understanding what would be expected of them and how universities operate, enabling the student to have realistic expectations of the new environment by understanding how the system works.

Students who already understand the HE system (and thus have the cultural capital) also have more opportunity to be involved in the social aspects of university, increasing the opportunity to make new friends and become adjusted to the institution's culture and values. Students from the disadvantaged social classes, who may need that social support more in order to successfully adjust to university life, have less opportunity to engage in it. The increase in the number of students from disadvantaged groups who also work in paid employment when compared to advantaged groups further reduces the opportunities and time available in which to participate in the social aspects of the institution.

The literature reviewed here looked at the ways that remaining in the family home impacts on the integration and adaptation to university, particularly that of social integration. The literature suggests that those who live at home take longer to adapt to the new university student identity and take longer to settle in and enjoy the social aspect of university life. Also considered is the role that the university could be playing in supporting those students who live at home. Institutions who market themselves in such a way as to assume all students live on campus could be impacting on students who do not fit this perception by making them feel they are not part of the institution and do not fit what is

expected of them, which in turn can negatively influence their adaptation. The literature suggests that those living at home are more likely to be non-traditional students who do not have parents with personal experience of HE and who, therefore, are more likely to struggle adjusting.

2.4 Summary of Literature

This final section of the literature review aims to synthesize the literature presented in the three separate sections of this chapter. It will begin with a short summary of the three bodies of literature presented, and then bring the themes together.

The first section introduced the concept of capital, specifically cultural capital and habitus. Families who have cultural capital and habitus relevant to HE, as gained by their own experiences and education, are likely to negotiate the path to university more smoothly than those without. This influence can be seen in decisions regarding which institution to attend, what subject to study, how to finance a university career (that is, whether the student needs to work), students' ability to involve themselves in the social aspect of the university and whether the individual feels that they fit in. All of these factors can be attributed to the capital and habitus of the family. For those with higher levels of capital, and in possession of the relevant habitus, negotiating the new environment is significantly easier than for those without capital. Those without capital may find themselves experiencing a conflict between their habitus and that of the institution, and therefore find the adjustment process more challenging, not just academically but also socially. For these students, there is an increased risk of early withdrawal from studies. Capital and habitus are created within, and passed down through, family. Capital affords benefits and advantage in a variety of ways. Parents who had capital and habitus, and thus understood the workings of the university, were able to better support their children during their studies. What capital and habitus on their own cannot answer is why parents are increasingly involved in their child's university life, as described in the introduction.

Since there is a lack of literature relating to the role of parents for university students, the second section considered the known role of parents in their child's education. The literature reviewed here explored the current expectations of parents in the education journey of their child in order to provide some understanding of the increase in the involvement post-entry. Parents' involvement during compulsory education has been encouraged by government policy which clearly positions those parents as active contributors to their child's education. The effect of parental involvement suggests that children whose parents are involved in and support their learning through actions such as reading at home will perform better academically than those without parental support. Knowing how to support, as well as having the personal and financial resources available, are thus clearly linked to capital and habitus.

The nature of parental involvement in education changes over time; as the child gets older, parents become less of a key influence in their success. The literature relating to the decision-making process regarding HE shows that parents do remain important in the process, although again, some families are advantaged. Those whose families come from higher social classes are able to support the decision-making process in different ways, with both parents and children understanding the system, valuing information and considering which university to attend differently to those from lower social classes. However, caution must be taken when using social class as a method to group participants in HE, as there are intra-group differences to be considered. The advantages in the university selection and application process can again be attributed to capital and habitus, with those in possession being able to more successfully navigate the decisions to be made than those without.

The third and final theme of literature addressed adjustment and withdrawal, including the experiences of students living at home. Parents are positioned as one of many factors which contribute to the successful adjustment of a student. The adjustment process itself is recognised as being a complex and multi-faceted period through which students must

navigate while studying for their chosen course. The literature considers aspects of both the student (preparedness, social class, support available) as well as of the university itself and how it is structured to support students adjusting to their new life. Identifying that social adjustment was considered fundamental to the adjustment process, the literature showed that students who lived at home or who had part-time work adjusted less well than those who could involve themselves in the social aspects of the university. The link to capital and habitus is again clear in this context, with those without capital, especially economic capital, having an increased need to work part-time, thus reducing opportunities to engage in the social activities of the university. The literature also suggests that students who have a realistic expectation of what being a student will entail adjusted better than those who had less realistic views. This again can be linked to capital, with those whose families have personal experience of HE being able to prepare their child for university. Those who have no experience of HE, and thus no capital, may find it difficult to understand what is expected and what the reality is. At a time when students are undertaking this adjustment, they are also expected to perform academically, further complicating the situation.

Finally, students who remain living in the family home during their studies are more likely to be non-traditional students who do not have parents with experience of Higher Education. Those living at home may not have the same opportunities to adjust socially to the new environment and may experience difficulty in understanding the practices of the university (by lacking capital and habitus), so therefore are at more risk of withdrawing early from their studies. The literature has demonstrated that students living away from campus have a different experience of HE, although how this then impacts on their achievement is not discussed. A different student experience may not necessarily result in lower achievement, although such experiences are attributed to a possible increase in withdrawal.

Whilst these three themes of literature have been addressed individually, it is clear that

there are considerable overlaps as well as a lack of understanding of the role of parents in the first-year experience. Despite observing an increase in the involvement of parents in the student experience, the literature does not fully explain this role, although the concepts discussed go some way to building the picture.

Capital can be seen in terms of success during compulsory education, the decision to enter HE, the opportunity to do so, adjustment to the university student life, and participation in a range of activities available. However, there are no conclusions as to whether this also leads to academic success at a university level. For parents who have been to university, who have a higher level of cultural capital, who have supported their children in gaining a breadth of experience throughout their childhood, and who contributed to their success at school, it is perhaps not surprising that this involvement continues post-entry. Students who are able to navigate the adjustment process more smoothly may come from families who have the capital and habitus necessary to undertake this transition, and are those who not only have more opportunities available to them but are also are more able to take advantage of those opportunities. A second possible influence of parents occurs for students who continue to live in the family home for their studies. Students who live at home are more likely to be from non-traditional groups who do not possess capital. Students at home are also less able to take part in the social aspects of university, either because of the distance between home and campus, or because of a lack of understanding of the importance of the non-academic aspects of university, or a combination of both.

In a time of increasing financial commitment for university students, it is not anticipated that the number of students choosing to live at home will decrease. The number of students living at home may rise further if there continues to be increases in student fees. In addition, and in light of the documented changes to the HE sector, not least the marketization of HE, pressure is on universities to provide value for money, which often results in a generic approach to student support. To effectively support students, it is

necessary to understand the factors which contribute to a positive experience. In order to improve student support, this thesis seeks to understand the role of parents and the influence they have on their young person and the student experience. Student bodies are anything but homogenous, meaning there is a conflict between the aims of marketization and consumerisation and what is in the best interests of the students.

2.5 Theoretical Model

2.5.1 Gaps in the Literature

The literature review identified clear gaps, which this thesis aims to address. Firstly, whilst it is possible to explore the university adjustment process overall, the specific role that parents and their capital plays in this process is not clear. Nor is it obvious in what ways parents do and do not contribute to their child's achievement at university. There has been reluctance to investigate the role of parents post university entry, perhaps due to the expectation that once enrolled and aged 18 university students are adults, so it is assumed that parents no longer play such an important role. As has been shown, parents continue to be involved up to the point of application to a university course, so it seems to be making a gross assumption that parents stop being a factor in the success of their child after that point.

Given the nature of the changing student population, noticeable in terms of where students live during studies, alongside an increased involvement of parents during their child's compulsory education, it is suggested that not fully understanding the role of parents in the student experience limits institutions' ability to best support their students. The literature demonstrates that the university adjustment process is far from simple. It is proposed that the influence of parents continues throughout a student's university career, but the shape and form of that influence varies depending on the cultural capital of the family and where the student lives during their studies.

A secondary gap that this thesis aims to address is one of methodology. A number of studies conducted into the student experience, certainly those from the WP field, are based in the constructivist paradigms, utilising qualitative methodology and frequently conducting interviews or focus groups with small groups of students (Archer & Hutchings, 2000; Brooks, 2003; Moogan et al., 1999; Reay, 1998; Thomas, 2002). Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion by undertaking a quantitative approach. This is not to replace existing work but to compliment and add to our understanding of the student experience. Both the WP discipline, and higher education research, are influenced by sociology and psychology with associated research reflecting the underlying ontological positions. It is only considering this variety of approaches can the intricacies of the student experience be understood (Tinto, 1993; Yorke & Longden, 2004). Whilst quantitative data can never provide the depth of understanding, it can provide a robustness and generalisability that can provide a broader understanding of behaviour and the student experience, and as such, can support policy and practice changes.

2.5.2 Theoretical Basis

This section will identify the emerging theoretical model, based on the reviewed literature, demonstrating the links between that literature and the hypotheses to be tested. This section will be separated into the key research themes of the thesis rather than mirror the structure of the literature review. This study will investigate the influence of parents on student adjustment and achievement once a student has enrolled on a university degree programme, focusing on first year undergraduate students.

2.5.2.1 Parents: Capital and Term Time Accommodation

This first section of the theoretical model focuses on parents themselves. Two key measures of the influence of parents will be taken from the family's capital (as measured by the parent's experience of HE) and where the student lives during term time, whether on campus or remaining in the family home. Links between capital and university

attendance have been demonstrated (Connor et al., 2001; Cooke et al., 2004; Moogan et al., 1999). Students whose parents have experience of HE are hypothesised to be more likely to have moved away from home to attend university. Such families, who have themselves attended university, have the cultural capital needed to help them support their children in their university education. These are the parents who understand university, who understand how to benefit from the experience and, of significance to this study, understand first-hand the impact of moving away in the experience of university and their role in their child's adjustment and achievement at university.

Holdsworth (2006) draws links between social class and TTA, identifying that those from lower social classes are more likely to remain in the family home for their studies. The link between social class and capital was identified in the literature review, so it could be concluded that the majority of those who remain living in the family home during their studies are first generation students, whose families do not have the cultural capital gained from attending university themselves and are therefore less able to support their child in an unknown system with unknown expectations, a clear route through which parental influence can be exercised. Even if they are not first generation students, the domestic habitus is more prominent than the university one. Given the issues relating to intra-class differences (Brooks, 2003; Reay, 1998), this thesis will focus on capital, rather than social class, as being the method through which some families experience advantage.

Therefore, the first set of hypotheses of this thesis will examine this link between parental experience of HE (and the capital of the family, PEHE), social class, and the location of term time accommodation (TTA) for the student.

1a. *There will be a significant relationship between social class and PEHE, with parents from higher social classes more likely to have been to university than those from the lower social classes.*

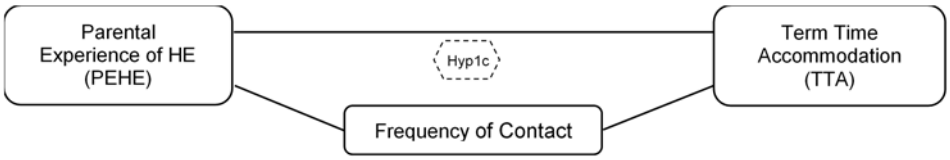
1b. There will be a significant relationship between PEHE and TTA with students whose parents have PEHE more likely to live in halls than those without.

Figure 6: Hypothesis 1b

Of course, in the current technology-based society, whilst a student may live on campus, if they are in daily contact with their parents by email, text or other messaging systems, their adjustment to university life may be different than those with less frequent contact. The following hypothesis will therefore look at the link between frequency of contact with parents, TTA and PEHE. It is proposed that those students who live on campus but come from families where the parents have not attended university will be in more frequent contact than those on campus whose parents have themselves attended university.

1c There will a significant relationship between TTA, PEHE and frequency of contact with parents.

Figure 7: Hypothesis 1c



2.5.2.2 Adjustment to University

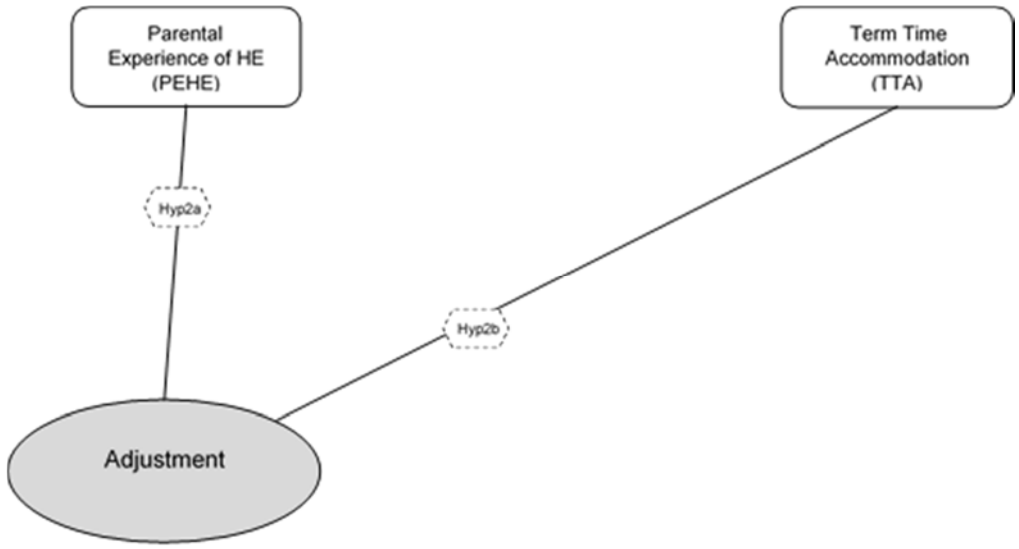
This thesis will look at the influence of parents on student adjustment to university. It is recognised that students who have adjusted to university life will perform better and are less likely to withdraw. Reay (2000) explicitly states that those parents from lower social classes, and therefore those with less capital, are less able to support their children academically. Furthermore, Lowe and Cook (2003) argue that those who are ill-prepared

for the transition to university are more likely to withdraw. Students whose parents have not been to university may be less prepared for the transition than those whose parents understand university and how to support their child in the process. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed to investigate the influence of parents on the adjustment process.

2a. *There will be a significant positive relationship between PEHE and student adjustment to university, with students whose parents have been to university reporting higher levels of adjustment.*

2b. *There will be a significant relationship between TTA and student adjustment to university, with students who are living in halls reporting higher levels of adjustment.*

Figure 8: Hypotheses 2a & 2b



It is also important to note that TTA and frequency of contact with parents could potentially act as moderators on the relationship between PEHE and adjustment. Therefore, the following hypotheses are also proposed:

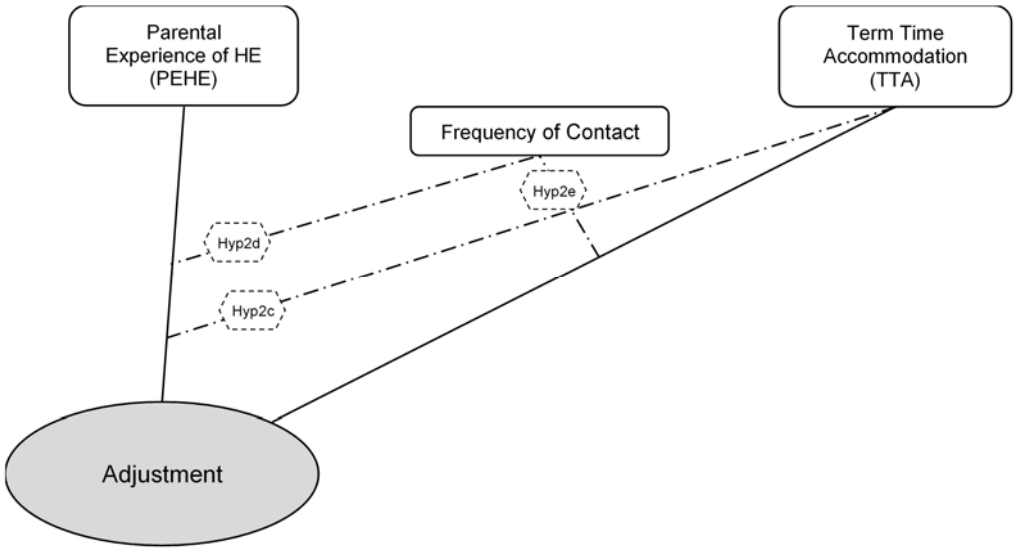
2c. *TTA will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.*

2d. *Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between PEHE*

and adjustment to university.

2e. *Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between TTA and adjustment to university.*

Figure 9: Hypotheses 2c, 2d & 2e



2.5.2.3 Adjustment Over Time

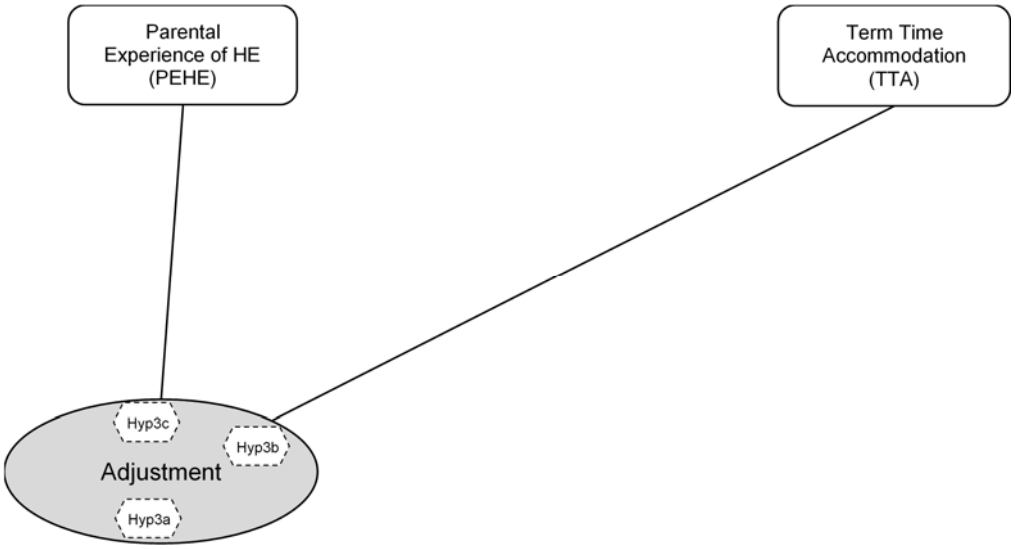
Further to the influence of parents on adjustment as measured above, it is also proposed that students will report higher levels of adjustment in the spring than they did in the preceding autumn, when they first started university. Therefore, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

3a. *There will be a significant positive relationship between levels of student adjustment over time, with students reporting higher levels of adjustment by the spring.*

3b. *Students who have parents who have PEHE will adjust to university quicker than those whose parents do not.*

3c. *Students who live in the family home will take longer to adjust to university.*

Figure 10: Hypotheses 3a, 3b & 3c

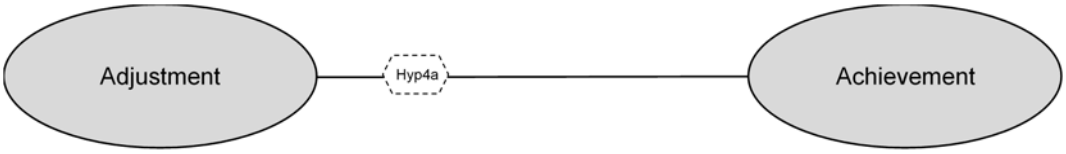


2.5.2.4 Achievement

The final area to be investigated by this thesis is that of student achievement. As with adjustment, literature identified in the review suggests that there is a direct link between adjustment and academic achievement (Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Tinto, 1975), with those ill-prepared (Lowe and Cook (2003) likely to perform less well than their counterparts. It could be suggested that those who are poorly prepared take longer to adjust to the new environment, with those remaining in the family home and with parents who do not possess capital taking longer to adjust compared to their on-campus peers. Furthermore, the literature highlights the value of social adjustment on achievement, with those from higher social classes (therefore those with the capital) more involved in the social activity on campus (Yorke & Longden, 2008). Braxton and Hirschy (2004) report that those with unsuccessful social adjustment will have a lower commitment to the university and be more likely to withdraw. In addition, Leese (2010) reports that those from lower social classes (so with reduced capital) are more likely to spend time outside of academic commitments with friends from outside of the university. The first hypothesis of this section will therefore ascertain whether this data matches that of other studies:

4a. There will be a significant positive correlation between student adjustment and student achievement.

Figure 11: Hypothesis 4a

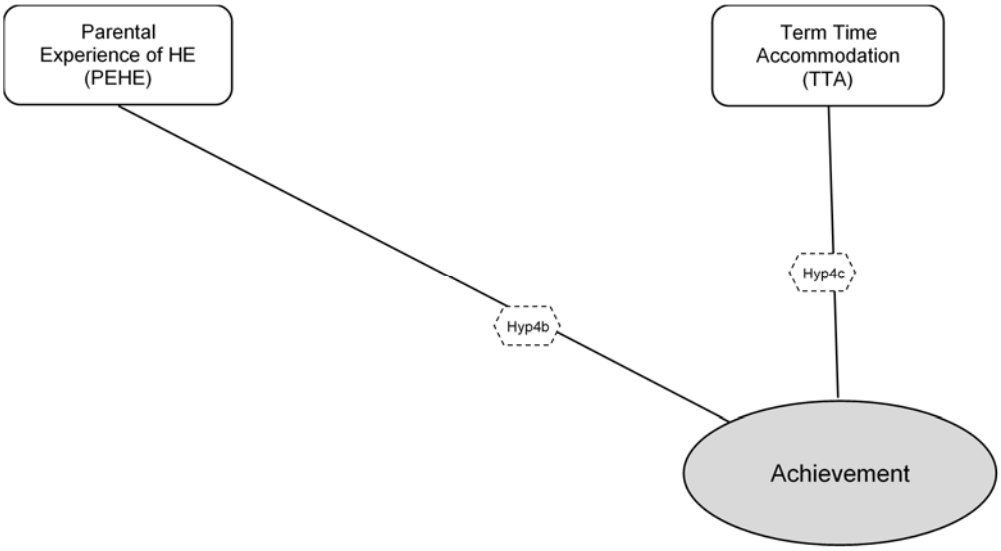


Again, as with student adjustment, it is necessary to examine the influence of parents on student achievement and as such the following hypotheses are proposed:

4b. There will be significant relationship between PEHE and student achievement.

4c. There will be significant relationship between TTA and student achievement.

Figure 12: Hypotheses 4b & 4c



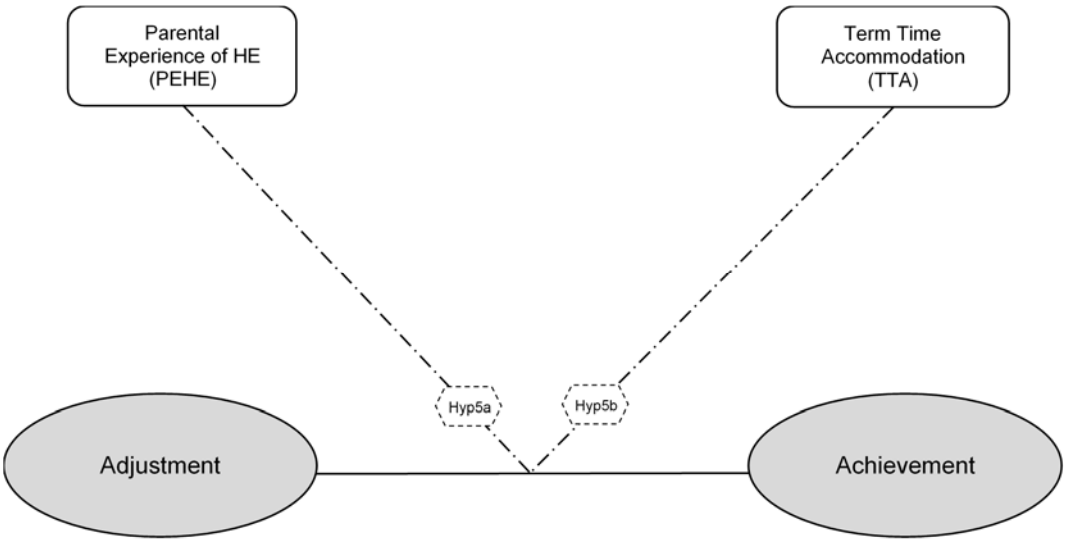
2.5.2.5 Moderator Effect: Adjustment and Achievement

It is also necessary to consider both PEHE and TTA as moderators in the relationship between adjustment and achievement:

5a. The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by PEHE.

5b. The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by TTA.

Figure 13: Hypotheses 5a & 5b



2.5.3 Summary of Hypotheses

Parents: Capital, Social Class and Term Time Accommodation

1a. There will be a significant relationship between social class and PEHE, with parents from the higher social classes more likely to have been to university than those from the lower social classes.

1b. There will be a significant relationship between PEHE and TTA, with students whose parents have PEHE more likely to live in halls than those without.

1c. There will a significant relationship between TTA, PEHE and frequency of contact with parents.

Adjustment to university

2a. There will be a significant positive relationship between PEHE and student adjustment to university, with students whose parents have been to university reporting higher levels of adjustment.

2b. There will be a significant relationship between TTA and student adjustment to university, with students who are living in halls reporting higher levels of adjustment.

2c. TTA will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.

2d. Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.

2e. Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between TTA and adjustment to university.

Adjustment over time

3a. There will be a significant positive relationship between levels of student adjustment over time, with students reporting higher levels of adjustment by the spring.

3b. Students who have parents who have PEHE will adjust to university quicker than those whose parents do not.

3c. Students who live in the family home will take longer to adjust to university.

Achievement

4a. There will be a significant positive correlation between student adjustment and student achievement.

4b. There will be significant relationship between PEHE and student achievement.

4c. There will be significant relationship between TTA and student achievement.

Moderator Effect: Adjustment and Achievement

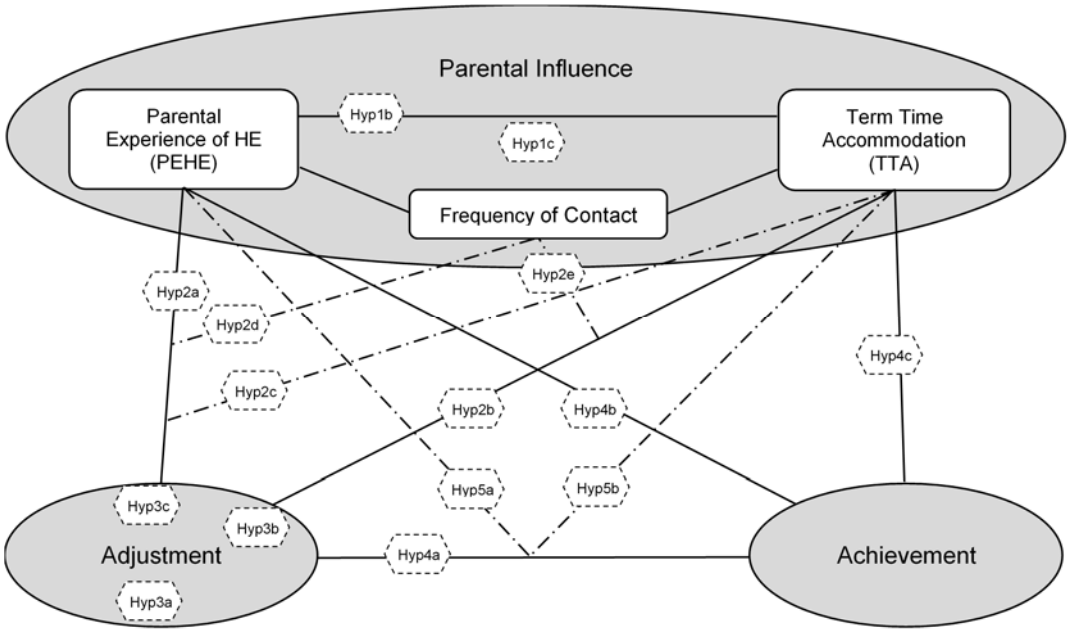
5a. The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by PEHE.

5b. The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by TTA.

2.5.4 Influence of Parents Model

The diagram below represents the theoretical model and details the hypotheses to be tested by this thesis. The diagram brings together all aspects of the hypotheses presented above, which are to be explicitly tested in the results chapter. The time-based hypotheses are not included on the model as they are a measure within adjustment.

Figure 14: Influence of Parents Model with Hypotheses



This model identifies the key variables to be used by this thesis, the independent variables of parental influence, PEHE and TTA, and the dependent variables of adjustment and achievement. Direct relationships to be investigated are identified by a solid line. Moderated relationships are indicated with a dashed line.

3. Methodology

This chapter of the thesis will detail the methodology used in the research. It will begin by positioning the research in terms of the paradigm, ontology and epistemology of the author. A brief summary of the structure of the research will be presented, followed by a description of the main research site. This will then be followed by the detailed methodology of both phases of the thesis, including ethical considerations, measures, methods and participants.

3.1 Paradigm, Ontology and Epistemology

Paradigms are a basic set of beliefs which provide a perspective and framework for researchers to work within (Rosnow, 1981). There are three foundational tenets of paradigms, which are: the nature of reality (ontology); the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subject to be studied (epistemology); and the methods through which knowledge is acquired (methodology; Locke, 2001). Independent of the paradigm of the research and author, there are key elements to all research regarding conduct and design of investigations which are associated with the “scientific method”. Robson (2002) states that methodological approaches need to be systematic, sceptical and ethical. In addition, validity, generalisability and credibility are vital components.

Positivism, the dominant scientific paradigm, states that events have causes which can be uncovered and understood, and that such events can be determined by circumstances which can be accounted for and controlled. Positivism also holds that theory should be simple, observable, replicable and testable, and that findings should be generalisable to the wider population (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Whilst the contribution of positivism to our understanding of the known world is clear, when investigating human interaction within a social setting where opinion, belief and experience are key to the research, positivism has some limitations.

Methodologically, the positivist approach, in which experimentation is central, raises difficulties within social science research. Often, social interaction is the focus of such research, which cannot be replicated in the experimental way. Robson states that *"social phenomena do not exist external to the researchers but exist in the mind of everyone"* (2002, p. 23).

In response to criticisms of the positivist paradigm, and the lack of fit between it and social science research, a variety of paradigms have emerged. These are often presented in the literature as being post-positivism, constructivism, critical theory (Guba, 1990) or transformative, which encompasses feminist, Marxist and action researchers among others (Creswell, 2014). These paradigms identified the limitations of positivism in social science research and sought adjustments to address these concerns. They acknowledge that, epistemologically, it is impossible to completely separate the researcher from the inquiry. Whilst these post-positivism paradigms have significant differences between themselves, epistemologically they share the belief that human behaviours cannot be governed by laws and rules (Cohen et al., 2007). Despite adaptations from positivism enabling the post-positivist researcher to acknowledge their role and relationship to the participants and the research, there are still limitations to the paradigm, especially from the educational approach. For the purposes of this research, only positivism, post-positivism and constructivism will be discussed further, since both the worldview of the author, and the research question posed do not call upon other paradigms.

The educational research field values the role of positivist research. However, there are still many questions which it cannot fully answer. Lincoln and Cannella (1985) also raise concerns about the applicability of empirical/scientific inquiries into education and state that this model is not suited to public education with its complex and dynamic nature (1985, p. xi).

They further argue that it is social differences that are fundamental to the effective development of policy regarding education. This view is supported by the author; clearly, there is a need for a variety of methods and paradigms to be able to understand fully all facets of education. In terms of WP-focused research, as supported by Thomas (2000), a focus on setting numerical targets as a measure of success often overlooks the purpose of interventions. Success cannot be measured in such a simple way, as educational interventions do not only have a single outcome.

It is valuable to WP that potential students make the right decision for themselves, which may include the decision that university is not the appropriate option. This may be perceived as being negative for the universities, but it could be a positive outcome for the young people in question. Thomas (2000) also argues that the traditional positivist paradigm, prevalent within educational research since the 1970s, focuses on quantitative data such as enrolment numbers and degree classifications as measures of success (2000, p 97), and so lacks the ability to examine the processes involved behind the statistics and therefore provide any explanation.

The research problem of this thesis is clearly firmly rooted within the social sciences. It draws upon literature from a wide range of subject disciplines and as a result of the nature of the scientific enquiry, brings contrasts. Psychology-based research is often conducted within the positivist/post-positivist paradigms, whereas sociological research often works within a paradigm of constructivism, with the methodologies reflecting those paradigms. Originating from a WP standpoint, this thesis has identified a gap in both the literature and the methodology. As discussed in the previous chapter, the literature reviewed in this thesis is heavily weighted to the constructivist paradigms and small sample qualitative research. This thesis aims to address the methodological gap in the literature by undertaking a large-scale, predominantly quantitative survey.

Whilst the contribution of qualitative papers is invaluable to our understanding, it is

proposed that our understanding is limited as a result. Being able to position the existing literature against a larger, statistically robust background will contribute significantly to our understanding of the field of the student experience. This work is offered in addition to the existing literature, to give a complementary view.

This thesis is therefore positioned within a post-positivist paradigm. Post-positivism must not be seen as an amendment or minor change to positivism, but instead an upgrade (Adam, 2014). Indeed, post-positivism acknowledges the benefits of the scientific methods used by positivism such as prediction, control and hypothesis testing, whilst also acknowledging that the ideal of pure objectivity is not achievable within social science research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and that the absolutes of positivism and truth are not realistic. Creswell (2014) adds to this description by identifying that post-positivist research starts with a theory or an idea, which is looking to describe a cause which determines outcomes or effects. Data is collected and analysed which either supports or refutes the theory (2014, p. 7).

This thesis utilises a quasi-mixed methods approach, predominantly consisting of a large-scale, quantitative study with the inclusion of qualitative aspects in the form of open-ended questions included in the survey. As such, data were collected concurrently rather than at two different time points and are drawn from the same sample. Analysis combines thematic analysis of the open-ended questions and hypothesis testing of survey data, with comparisons between the two highlighted in the results chapter. It is the author's belief that to fully understand the nature of the student experience, there is a requirement for a variety of quantitative and qualitative research which spans differing paradigms.

3.2 Structure of Research

This section will consider the structure of the research, how the research question and aims of the thesis will be addressed, and the methods used to do this. The overarching

research question of the thesis is:

> *In what way, and to what extent, does the role and influence of parents continue once a student has begun their undergraduate degree programme?*

Specifically, the thesis aims to better understand how parents influence the student experience in relation to adjustment to university and academic achievement. In particular, whether parents with personal experience of HE (that is, cultural capital) have a different impact on the student experience to those who don't have personal experience of HE, and whether living at home affects the experience in different ways than living on campus or in university accommodation.

In order to address these aims, this study uses a combination of student data extracted from the student management system, large scale survey data, and qualitative data in the form of answers to open-ended questions. The research was conducted in two distinct phases. Firstly, an exploratory phase (study one) was conducted to examine the impact of term-time accommodation on student performance and student withdrawal rates. This study used existing student data, extracted from the student management system at Aston University. This phase established whether where a student lived during term time had an impact on their performance or their tendency to withdraw. The second phase consisted of two studies (studies two and three). Study two acted as a test study for the instruments to be used by the main research. The main study (study three) then saw the research expanded within Aston University and extended to other institutions. For analysis purposes, data from studies two and three will be grouped together.

Table 2: Phase I and Phase II Study Details

	Phase I	Phase II	
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Location	Aston University	Aston University	Multiple Universities
Sample	First year UG students	First year UG students	First year UG students
Data/Method	Data extracted from student management system	Online survey + data extracted	Online survey + data extracted

3.3 Research Base Location

The majority of this research was undertaken at Aston University, which is located in Birmingham, in the UK. Aston University has traditionally been one of the smaller HE institutions in the UK. Although it has seen an increase in student numbers, not least following the removal of the student number controls, the total undergraduate population remains at the lower end of UK institutions. At the time of this research, the UG student population was under 6,000 students (data supplied by Aston University's planning team). The location of the university is in the heart of the city of Birmingham, with the main train station being approximately 10-15 mins away by foot.

The university's location, in the second biggest city in the country, means there are a number of other institutions within easy commuting distance. For students from the West Midlands, there is no need to move out of the family home to be able to access a variety of university types or subjects of study. Students who choose to move into accommodation during their studies are able to choose at the time of this study between institutionally-owned accommodation (traditional halls of residence), or from a number of private providers, some of which are physically located on, or on the edge of, the university's campus. The proportion of students living in the family home varies depending on the subject being studied. At the time of this study, within the Business School approximately 18.2% of first year UG students live at home with family, whereas the Life

and Health Sciences programmes have approximately 31% of students living with family. The university's undergraduate programmes are predominantly delivered full-time on campus, although there is an increasing number of work-based or online programmes available. Undergraduate students on campus tend to be 18 to 19 years old at the start of the programme, and there is a significant emphasis on undertaking a placement year as part of the degree course, with most programmes having compulsory placement years. Aston is a diverse institution in terms of ethnicity and social class, but not in terms of age. In 2008/9 over 50% of UG students were from a non-white background, and over 25% from NS-SEC groups 4-7.

3.4 Phase I

3.4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this initial phase of the research (study one) was to determine how many students at Aston University chose to remain in the family home during their studies. This phase specifically examined whether where a student lives during term time (that is, in university accommodation, or off-campus with their family) affects first year students' performance in terms of end of year results and withdrawal. As discussed in the literature review, research shows that the students who live off-campus engage with the campus in different ways to their on-campus counterparts (Arya & Smith, 2005; Holdsworth, 2005), but any impact this has on their end of year performance and continuation decisions has not as yet been reviewed.

3.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the data being extracted from the student management system, the list of data required was discussed with and given approval by Aston Business School. To retain the anonymity of the students, data were extracted by a colleague in the student management system team and any identifying details (such as name and student number) removed

from the dataset. Data were stored on a computer to which only the researcher has access, and which requires a password to unlock.

3.4.3 Method

The dataset extracted from the student management system included undergraduate students from across the university (all subject areas), who were in the first year of their studies. The dataset excluded international/overseas students, as it was accepted that due to the location of their 'home' being in another country, their experiences were not comparable to UK students, both in terms of their time at university and their prior educational experience. International students were excluded based on the UCAS fee code, which identifies home or overseas fee payers. Although it is recognised that it is possible for some students who pay overseas fees to live with family in the UK (and vice versa), the decision was taken to use this as the definition for the purposes of this study since whilst the situation described above is possible, it is anticipated to be minimal.

The data extract calculated the overall stage mean (that is, results for students' first year of studies as a percentage), the type of accommodation the student was registered as inhabiting during term time (see below for categories used), and the end of first year progression status during the 2004/5, 2005/6 and 2006/7 academic years. To calculate the mean stage mark (which is not stored on the student management system), each first year module result was identified and an overall percentage calculated, weighted accordingly to account for credit weighting of a module. In some cases, where the student had to repeat a module (such as through academic failure), only the repeat assessment mark was available. It is important to recognise that whilst this will present a different profile for the stage average for those students, due to a cap being applied to the possible mark when a failed assessment is repeated, this was not considered to be detrimental to the research due to the relatively small number of cases. The progression decision at the end of the first year was also extracted to identify those who had withdrawn from their

studies.

The three types of term-time accommodation were used both by the student management system at the time of this study and the analysis. These were: ‘Institution Maintained’ (on-campus), ‘Parental Home’ and ‘Own Home/Rented’ (both off-campus). The student management system also offered a fourth category of ‘Other’. Due to the small number of students identifying this category as their term time accommodation type (n=73 over the three years), and the potential variety of what that accommodation type covered (for example, living with children, in temporary accommodation, in hostels and so on), it was excluded from the analysis.

3.4.4 Participants

The table below shows the number of students by accommodation type.

Table 3: Total number (and percentage) of participants in study one by Term Time Accommodation (TTA)

	2004/5 Percent (number)	2005/6 Percent (number)	2006/7 Percent (number)
Institution Maintained	49.7% (n=785)	54.4% (n=981)	44.6% (n=805)
Parental Home	32.8% (n=519)	30.1% (n=542)	31.2% (n=562)
Own Home/Rented	17.5% (n=277)	15.5% (n=279)	24.2% (n=437)

3.4.5 Limitations

Discussion with students during enrolment in the 2005/6 academic year revealed evidence of misperception by some students as to what “Own Home/Rented” included, with some selecting this option when they lived with their parents or when they lived with friends/other family members, as they saw that home as their own. It is worth noting that the following academic year, the accommodation categories were changed following an update by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Further discussion on this change will

be discussed during the study two methodology, as these changes only impacted on the data from 2007/8.

When considering performance and withdrawal data, it must be considered that students do not enter university on a level playing field in terms of their educational experience to date. One variable which could have benefitted this research was that of UCAS entry tariff. Whilst degree programmes have common entry requirements, students will enter their programme with differing grades. For example, if the entry requirement to a programme is BBB at A level (or 300 UCAS points as at the time of this research), some students may enter with those exact grades, others might enter with BBC, or with three A* grades. Unfortunately, due to the way the students' qualifications prior to entry were recorded within the student management system at the time the data were extracted, it was not possible to include actual entry grades as a variable in this analysis. Only an overall UCAS tariff is recorded in the system and not the qualifications which were used in the offer and acceptance of the student. Whilst it may seem that these would be the same, the overall UCAS tariff includes additional A levels, AS levels, and other qualifications the student may have completed but that were not used in their offer and entry to university.

An additional variable which also impacts on this data is that of the age on entry of the student and the commitments and responsibilities of mature students. For those with care responsibilities, the option of living on campus for their studies is not available, which again could impact on the results. Unfortunately, as with entry grades, the data regarding age on entry held within the student management system at the time of data extraction was not reliable enough to be included in this research.

3.5 Phase II

3.5.1 Introduction

Phase II consisted of two distinct studies. Firstly, a pilot (study two) was conducted at Aston University during 2008 to test the survey tool. The second element of phase II (study three), consisted of the main data collection of this thesis. Study three was conducted at Aston University and seven other institutions.

3.5.2 Ethical Considerations

Extensive consideration was given to the ethical considerations for second phase of the thesis. Ethical approval was sought and granted by Aston Business School's Research Ethics Committee (SREC). Although it would be ideal to conduct research with the parents of current undergraduate students, it was considered that this could potentially harm the relationship between the institution and the student. Due to the delicate relationship between students and universities, the decision was made not to contact the parents of current undergraduate students. It is recognised that students are legally adults, and that the university's formal relationship is with the student. It was felt that directly contacting their parents, even with students' consent, could change the dynamic of that relationship, which may in turn impact their success. This risk was deemed too large and, therefore, parents were not included.

Participation in the research was voluntary, and participants gave informed consent (copies of the email and survey can be found in Appendices 1 and 2). Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time with no adverse consequences. Responses would remain anonymous in any reports or papers, and the data collected were confidential and would remain with the lead researcher. As the studies asked detailed questions about students' adjustment to university, participants were offered the opportunity to take part in a debrief after the closing date for the survey.

Several students flagged that they would like to take part in a debrief session, but upon contact, no students responded. Students were asked to provide their university ID so that their questionnaire responses could be matched with their grades.

Data were also extracted from student management systems which, as in study one, were not extracted by the researcher. Student ID numbers were used to match the student survey data to the data extracted but were then removed from the data-set in order to retain the anonymity of the participants. For the mean first year mark to be gathered, students were explicitly asked if they would grant permission to access their student records. In order for the researcher to gain access to their records, participants had to enter their student ID number into an optional field in the survey. Additionally, students' social class data were extracted from the student management system for those studying at Aston University.

3.5.3 Measures

The method used for both study two and three was an online survey which consisted of two parts. Firstly, to measure the students' adjustment to university, the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker and Siryk, 1986) was used. This was complemented by additional qualitative open-ended questions specifically targeted to record the student experience, with focus on the role and influence of parents. A full copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 6.

Prior to distributing the survey, permission was sought from SACQ publishers Western Psychological Services (WPS) to use the survey online rather than in printed format, as well as adapting the terminology to reflect the UK language (for example, dormitory became halls of residence, and college became university). As soon as this permission was received, the survey was reproduced online.

The survey was distributed via an online platform. This was chosen as it was considered to benefit the research in terms of cost, ease of access to data, and familiarity of the software by students. The Bristol Online Survey software has been used within Aston University for previous research with students and was appropriate for this study. Due to the demands on the first-year students, not only academically but also in terms of the number of surveys they are asked to complete, the online method was deemed the most appropriate method.

Whilst online surveys often do not return as high a response rate as surveys issued in a timed environment (such as a lecture; Cohen et al., 2007), it was concluded that enabling students to complete the survey in their own time and space was an advantage, particularly in the context of the subject under investigation. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS (v23) for PC and Mac.

3.5.3.1 Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

In order to measure a student's adjustment to university, an established survey tool, the SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1986) was utilised. Whilst other measures of student adjustment to college/university are available, such as the College Adjustment Test (Pennebaker, Colder, & Sharp, 1990) and the College Adjustment Scales (Anton & Reed, 1991), the SACQ focuses explicitly on the various aspects of adjustment relevant to this thesis. The College Adjustment Test consists of 19 questions measuring overall adjustment and homesickness, while the College Adjustment Scales were developed to provide a screening function for college/university counselling services focusing on stress, coping, conflict and difficulties rather than the overall adjustment of each student. As a result, both measures were discounted from this study as they were both considered to be too narrow in their focus.

The SACQ was established in response to researchers and practitioners needing a

means by which a student's level of adjustment could be established, in order to understand fully their experiences. Recognising a lack of appropriate alternative scales, Baker and Siryk (1984) developed the SACQ. They aimed to establish a scale which not only considered the various aspects of adjustment, but which addressed the limitations of previous scales and provided reliability, as established using Cronbach's Alpha. The SACQ consists of 67 statements to which participants respond via a nine-point Likert scale, indicating the level to which the statement applies to them (1 = 'applies very closely to me' to 9 = 'does not apply to me at all').

The SACQ provides scores on five scales of adjustment: an overall measure of adjustment, academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and attachment (to the institution). Academic adjustment measures the participants' attitudes to their academic demands, such as workload, academic goals, how effectively they are applying themselves, and their satisfaction with their environment. Social adjustment measures the extent to which the student has adjusted to the social aspect of their university life, such as participation in social events, making new friends, settling into their new accommodation and whether they are experiencing loneliness or homesickness. Personal-emotional adjustment measures how the participant is feeling, both physically and emotionally, focusing on stress and nervousness. Finally, the attachment measure aims to establish to what extent the participant feels a part of the new institution, whether they fit in and if they expect to stay for the duration of their programme. To code the adjustment scales, care was taken to give student responses a score based on their answer, with consideration given to reverse scored questions. The subscales were then calculated using guidance from the SACQ user manual.

3.5.3.2 Additional Questions

As well as the SACQ, additional questions were included in the survey to capture key demographic variables for the research. These questions pertained to the following:

degree programme; gender; age; student status (home/EU/overseas); home postcode; ethnicity; parental and family experience of HE; students' term time accommodation type; participation in social activities. A full copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 6.

In addition, qualitative questions were included to investigate wider issues relating to parents and students' adjustment to university. The questions were answered in open-ended text boxes, allowing students to reflect on their personal experience and provide details in their own words. The SACQ does not focus on the family, parents or the experiences of the student relating to parental influence. The list of additional questions is as following:

1. When making your decision to come to university, who or what was most influential on your decision?
2. Why did you choose to live where you live?
3. What do you like most about living where you do whilst you are at university?
4. What do you like least?
5. Do you feel you have settled into life at university?
6. What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?
7. In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?
8. Do you feel your parents expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?
9. Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?
10. Has this affected your university life?
11. If you were to advise other students about living at home, what would you tell them?
12. If you were to advise other parents about their child living at home whilst at university, what would you tell them?

3.5.4 Study Two

The purpose of study two was to test the SACQ and additional questions prior to expanding the research. This was conducted in two stages. Firstly, a paper copy of the additional questions was tested using a focus group (N=10) of first year students from Aston Business School. Students were invited to take part by email and were asked to complete the additional questions. Participants were then invited to provide feedback on the questions and asked specifically about their interpretation or understanding of what was being asked, as well as their perception of the relevance of these questions to the research question. Feedback from the students included amendments such as grammatical errors and question enhancement. This was used to refine the questions and were incorporated into the online version. The survey answers from the focus group were discarded and not included in any analysis.

Following the qualifying report viva, undertaken to progress onto the doctoral pathway, additional questions relating to the student's frequency of contact with their parents electronically (such as via email, text or social media) were added to the survey.

The second stage of this study was the pilot, which tested the full survey tool online, using a small sample from Aston University. This tested how well the survey operated on the online system. Feedback from discussion with the pilot participants identified no operational concerns with the format or structure of the survey, but did identify spelling and grammatical errors, which were corrected. Following these discussions, the survey was rolled out to a wider sample of students. This formed the main study data sample and will be detailed in study three.

3.5.4.1 Method

The survey was distributed in May 2008 and April 2009. Participants were recruited to the research by an email invitation sent to all students who were first year undergraduates

during both the 2007/8 and 2008/9 academic years at Aston University. A link in the email took students who wished to participate straight to the online survey tool (see Appendix 7).

Following completion of the survey, participants were asked to provide feedback on the format and structure of the survey and the additional questions. Minor amendments were made to the survey based on these comments. Amendments included operational errors such as spelling mistakes, or fields being labelled mandatory when they should have been optional. The amended survey was then distributed in April 2009 for final checks before being rolled out to form the main study.

3.5.4.2 Participants

A total of 122 participants took part in this pilot study, of which 69 were male and 51 female; two students did not complete this field. Of the 122 participants, 25 reported that both parents had been to university; 28 reported that one parent had been to university; and 69 reported that neither parent had attended. Table 4 below shows the term-time accommodation type for the participants.

As highlighted in the study one methodology, during 2007/8, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) made changes, nationally, to their student return that included expanding the term-time accommodation options from the limited six options in use in 2005/6 to the expanded options in 2007/8.

This change better reflects the complicated lives many students have when living off-campus. Most notably, the rise in the number of private student halls available next to the campus widened the options available to students in their first years. Whilst living off-campus, many also did not live at home, so the factors influencing their experience of university were different again. The data from phase II therefore uses the new categories

of term-time accommodation as detailed above.

Table 4: HESA Term Time Accommodation Categories

2005/6	to	**2007/8**
1. Institution maintained property		1. Institution maintained property
2. Parental/guardian home		2. Parental/guardian home
3. Own home		*3. (not used – withdrawn category)*
4. Other		4. Other
5. Not known		5. Not known
6. Not in attendance at the institution		6. Not in attendance at the institution
		7. Own residence
		8. Other rented accommodation
		9. Private-sector halls

Table 5: Study Two Participant Breakdown by Term Time Accommodation Type

At home with parents/guardian	26
At home with family	3
University accommodation	71
Private Halls	5
Private rented house (with friends)	12

Results from this phase of the research have been amalgamated with study three in order to create a larger student sample for analysis.

3.5.5 Study Three

The main study expanded the sample from study two to include other universities as well as Aston University. As identified in the literature review, the type of institution (whether old or new, meaning one that was a university prior to 1992 or one that gained university

status during 1992 or beyond) can impact on the social demographics of the students in attendance, with differences specifically appearing in terms of social class and cultural capital. In addition, recognising the low response rate of online surveys, it was hoped that expanding the pool for data collection would result in a larger sample size on which to conduct the data analysis. Participants were offered the opportunity to enter a prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher after they had completed the survey.

In total, 18 universities within England were contacted and invited to take part in the study. Those targeted were geographically spread across the country and were a mix of traditional and new universities. Of those invited, seven accepted the invitation and distributed surveys to their students. Contacts were made either through the researcher's own contacts at the institution (contacts through the WP networks), or via the researcher's supervisor or other academic colleagues' networks. Performance data was gathered from the lead institution (Aston University) and De Montfort University (DMU) only.

The universities included in the study were Aston University, De Montfort University, Newman College University, University of London (Royal Holloway campus), University of Exeter, University of East London and the University of Salford. Contacts at the universities were emailed a summary of the research, invited to ask any questions and to clarify the requirements in terms of survey distribution. The researcher complied with local ethical approval requirements for the additional universities where necessary, or provided evidence of SREC's documentation if requested.

Email templates (see Appendix 7) were provided to the key contact in institutions to facilitate distributing the survey to students, but also to ensure consistency of the message to potential participants. Contacts were asked to email students twice, once at the beginning of the collection period and once again two weeks later as a reminder. The survey remained open at each institution for one calendar month. The online survey was administered by the researcher to ensure participants had access when advertised.

Students were provided with the researcher's contact details in case they encountered any difficulties or wished for further information about the study. The email invitation contained a specific link to the survey for their institution so that the institution type could be identified for analysis.

3.5.5.1 Structure

The survey was distributed at the following key points over two academic years: first year students in each year of data collection, and second year students during the second year.

Table 6: Survey Time Points

Year of Study	Survey Number	Dates
First Year	1	November/December 2009
First Year	2	April 2010
First Year	3	November/December 2010
First Year	4	April 2011
Second Year	5	November/December 2010

To minimise the effect of one year's cohort influencing the findings, the survey was designed to be distributed over two academic years, which provides a longitudinal aspect to the study. Although not specifically targeted, the survey aimed to capture the same students twice in their first year. In the second year of data collection, the survey was also sent to second year UG students with the hope of capturing those same students who had progressed from year 1 to year 2. The time points were identified to minimise the impact on the adjustment and performance of the participants. The first six weeks are considered to be important in terms of transition (Blanc, DeBuhr, & Martin, 1983; Tinto, 1993), so this period was avoided. In addition, the second survey in the year was distributed prior to the Easter vacation to minimise the impact and demands on the student whilst preparing for their end of year exams.

In addition to data gathered by the survey, students' mean first year marks were supplied by Aston University (AU) and De Montfort University (DMU). For both AU and DMU the student number (as entered by the student) was used to retrieve student module data from the respective student management systems to calculate a mean mark for their first-year studies. A list of the student numbers from each institution was given to the lead contact at DMU and to the student management system team at AU. Once completed, the mean mark was added to the overall dataset. All data was then stored securely on the author's computer, password protected.

3.5.5.2 Participants

Participants taking part in the main study of this thesis were all 'home' students, meaning they paid UK fees. Students from the EU or further afield were excluded from the research due to the differences not only in home country culture, but also the educational experience prior to entering university.

In total, 909 responses were collected across all time points, 122 from the pilot surveys, 687 from the first-year surveys (autumn and spring over two years) and 100 from the second-year students. In total, seven responses were removed from the sample due to duplication or incomplete answers. Table 7 below shows the total number of students who completed the longitudinal aspect of the study.

Table 7: Total number of matched responses over time

Surveys Completed	**N**
Autumn and spring first year	37
Autumn first year and autumn second year	10
Spring first year and autumn second year	5
Autumn and spring first year and autumn second year	3

Across all time points, there were more female than male participants: 563 females

compared to 273 males. Eleven participants did not respond to this question. This over-representation of female students in the sample needs to be considered when reviewing the results of the analysis. Whilst there were more female than male students in the first year of a first degree in the UK during 2004/5, with 54.4% female students compared to 45.6% male students (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2006), this sample has a higher ratio of female to male at 66.5% female, 32.2% male.

4. Results

This chapter of the thesis will present and discuss the results of both phases of the research. Firstly, the results from Phase I (study one) will be presented, identifying the role term-time accommodation (TTA) plays on student end of first-year academic performance and on student withdrawal within the first year. As this phase informed the direction of the thesis, the results from Phase I will be discussed before moving to the second phase of the study. The chapter will then consider Phase II. Findings from open-ended questions will be presented, followed by the statistical analysis of the quantitative data as per the hypotheses. The chapter will then re-present the conceptual model, highlighting key findings and significant results. Discussion of the findings and their implications can be found in Chapter Five.

4.1 Phase I (Study One)

4.1.1 Results

Study one investigated the relationship between TTA and both academic performance and withdrawal, asking whether remaining in the parental/family home was a key variable. Three categories of accommodation are included in the analysis: university accommodation; parental home; and own home or rented, as per the HESA categories and as detailed in the methodology (Chapter Three). Data did not include students who were repeating or trailing modules. Data were extracted from the student management system at Aston University. The analysis excludes *other* and *unknown* accommodation categories, as they were only used by a small number of students (2004/5 n=27, 2005/6 n=33, 2006/7 n=30) and are also too imprecise to allow any conclusions to be drawn. The analysis also excludes any records where the TTA field did not hold data or where there was no module data following early withdrawal (that is, before formative assessment has taken place and marks recorded accordingly).

4.1.1.1 First Year Performance Data

Table 8 below shows the mean first year mark as a percentage for the three accommodation types for first year students in 2004/5, 2005/6 and 2006/7 academic years. The number of students in each category is shown in brackets.

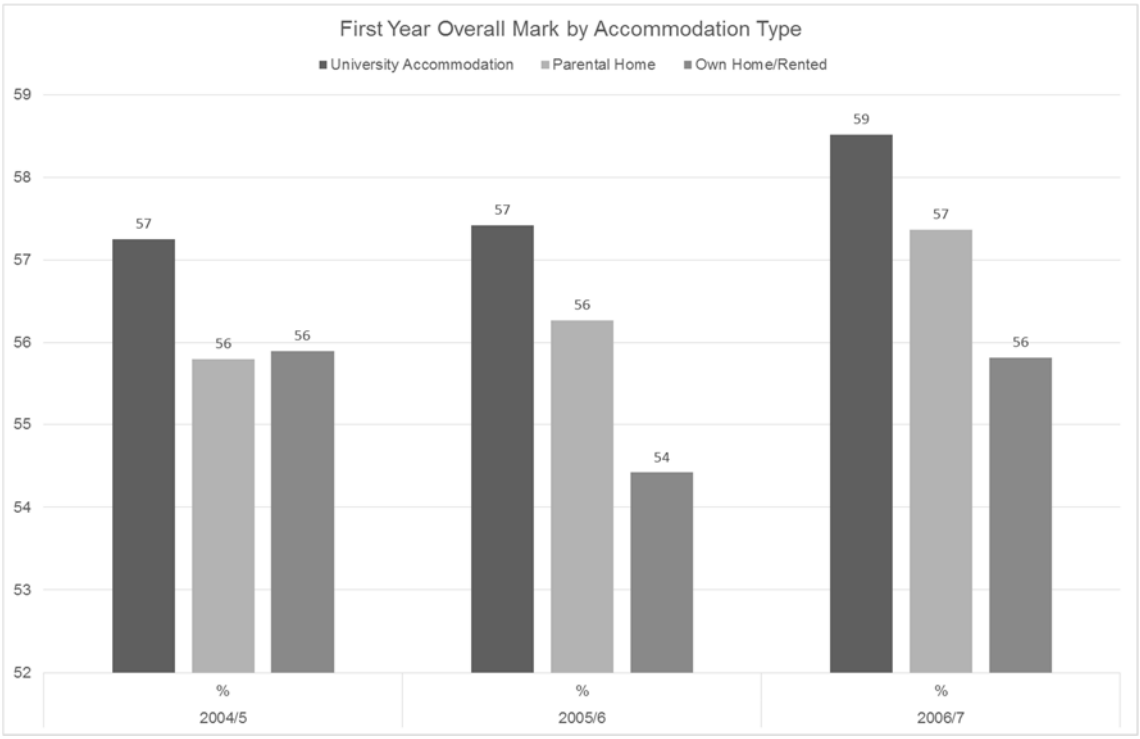
Table 8: Mean first year mark (%) by term time accommodation type

	2004/5 Percent (number)	2005/6 Percent (number)	2006/7 Percent (number)
University Accommodation	57.25% (n=785)	57.42% (n=981)	58.52% (n=805)
Parental Home	55.80% (n=519)	56.27% (n=542)	57.37% (n=562)
Own Home/Rented	55.90% (n=277)	54.42% (n=279)	55.82% (n=437)

In order to understand this difference clearly, the data is presented in Figure 15 below. The mean mark is indicated above the columns.

It is clear from the table and figure that the overall year mark varies between the accommodation type categories. Students living in university accommodation performed consistently better than those who either lived at home with parents or off-campus in their own home. In order to ascertain whether this difference is significant, the data set was analysed using a one-way ANOVA, followed by Scheffe F test.

Figure 15: Mean First Year Mark by Accommodation Type



The results from the one way ANOVA (2004/5 $F(2, 1578) = 4.830$, $p=.008$; 2005/6 $F(2, 1799) = 14.503$, $p<.001$; 2006/7 $F(2, 1801) = 13.871$, $p<.001$) suggest that there is a significant difference between the groups for all three academic years. To identify the nature of this difference, the Scheffe F test was conducted (see table below).

Table 9: Scheffe F results – Mean Difference

	University Accommodation	Parental Home
Parental Home 2004/5 2005/6 2006/7	 -1.444 * -1.149 * -1.153	
Own Home/Rented 2004/5 2005/6 2006/7	 -1.351 -2.992 * -2.699 *	 0.093 -1.843 * -1.546 *

** indicates mean difference is significant at 0.05 level*

The results of Scheffe F show that the difference in the overall year performance percentage is significant ($p<0.05$) between university accommodation and parental home in 2004/5 and 2005/6, but not in 2006/7. The difference between university accommodation and own home or rented is significant in 2005/6 and 2006/7, but not 2004/5. There is also a significant difference between parental home and own home in 2005/6 and 2006/7. This suggests that TTA is an important variable in terms of student achievement.

TTA is clearly linked to performance of students in the first year, with students living on campus significantly more likely to achieve higher marks. However, it is worth noting that there is inconsistency within the results; there is not a significant relationship between TTA and first year performance across all years. This could be a result of a variation in the underlying category responses. In 2006/7, twice as many students reported living in their own home or rented than in the previous two years. This change may have contributed to the different results in that year. This variation also reinforces the importance of longitudinal studies, which identify effects over time.

4.1.1.2 Student Withdrawal

The proportion of students withdrawing from the institution by TTA was also measured. Table 10, below, shows the percentage of students in each accommodation type to withdraw during their first year of undergraduate study, whether for academic or non-academic reasons.

The percentage has been calculated as a percentage of their peers in the same accommodation type. For example, 6% of students who lived in university accommodation during 2004/5 withdrew from their studies before the end of year one, compared with 15% of students living in the parental home.

Table 10: Percentage (number) of students withdrawing by TTA type

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
University Accommodation	6% (n=848)	3% (n=1028)	5% (n=902)
Parental Home	15% (n=630)	15% (n=656)	12% (n=669)
Own Home/Rented	16% (n=310)	17% (n=304)	15% (n=615)

Figure 16: Percentage of Students Withdrawing by Accommodation Type

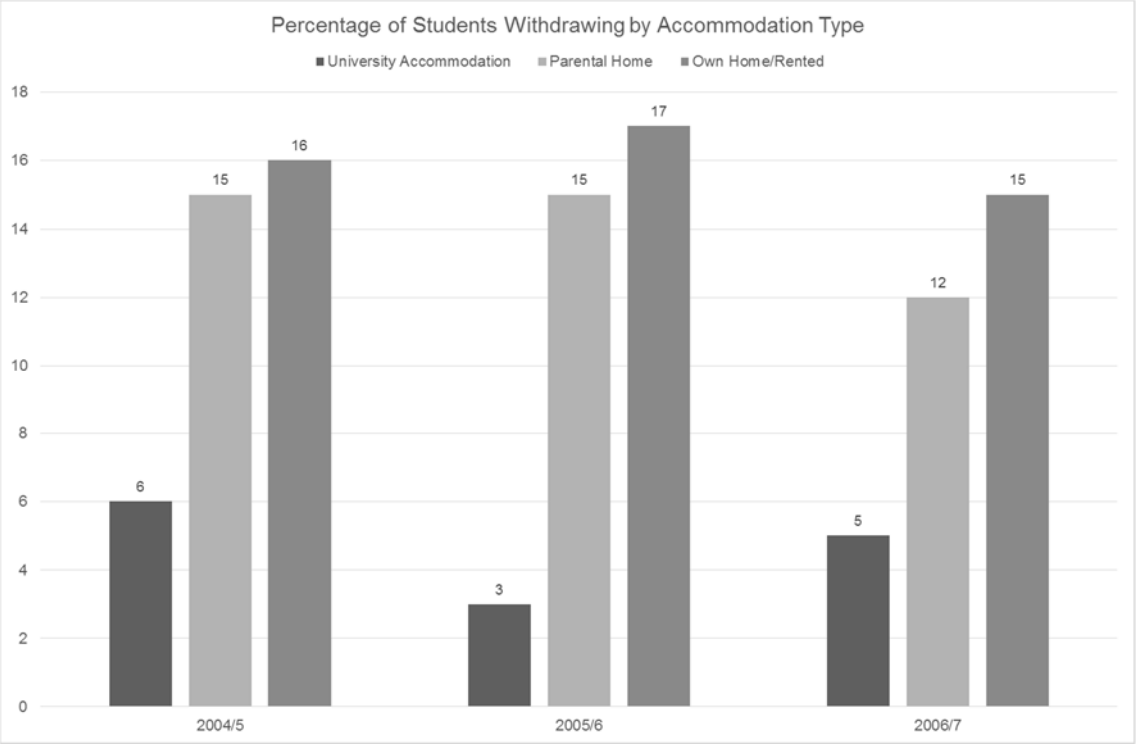


Figure 16 above shows the withdrawal data by TTA across three academic years. These results raise cause for concern. 15% of students who live in parental accommodation during their first year in both 2004/5 and 2005/6 and 12% in 2006/7 withdrew from their studies, compared to only 6%, 3% and 5% (2004/5, 2005/6 and 22006/7 respectively) of those who live on-campus. Furthermore, 16%, 17%, and 15% of students who live in *own home or rented* accommodation withdrew from their studies in the first year. When analysed using Chi^2, the results were found to be highly significant (2004/5 χ^2 (2, N=1818) = 35.33, p<.001; 2005/6 χ^2 (2, N=2036) = 93.35, p<.001; 2006/7 χ^2 (2, N=2186) = 43.73,

p<.001).

However, it is worth noting at this point, as discussed in the methodology chapter, that the category of *own home or rented* caused confusion amongst students, with some using this to mean family home. Nevertheless, the data suggests that there is a consistent and highly significant difference between on-campus and off-campus students in terms of their withdrawal.

4.1.2 Discussion

The data from study one clearly suggests that students who live off-campus, i.e. in either the parental home or own home/rented, are likely to perform significantly less well, and are also significantly more likely to withdraw, than those living in university accommodation. Given the proportion of students who remain in the family home for their studies, it is important to understand the experiences of those students in order to ensure they have the opportunities and support needed in order to meet their potential and to reduce the withdrawal rates where possible. The results also highlight the student body itself as being one that is far from homogenous, with students having different experiences according to their TTA. Whilst this is not a causal relationship (for example, living at home causes students to withdraw early from their studies), the increased likelihood suggests that students who do live at home are in some way undergoing a different student experience than those on campus and, as a result, are less likely to perform well than their on-campus counterparts, and are also more likely to withdraw.

Drawing on the research presented in the literature review chapter, it is possible to identify possible explanations as to the why the differences highlighted in the analysis above exist. Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005) argued that students who chose to remain at home were more likely to be ‘non-traditional’. It is unlikely that the parents of these students will have been to university themselves and therefore may be supporting their children with little or

no personal experience or understanding of the HE system. These parents are thus lacking what Bourdieu (1986) defined as cultural capital. Furthermore, difficulties for students off campus in terms of forming new friendships and becoming familiar with the ways of working of the new organisation could also contribute to the results found. For example, students living at home may spend more time travelling to and from the university or may have fewer opportunities to meet with study groups. The element of risk for non-traditional students (Archer & Hutchings, 2000) may also influence the decision to withdraw early. Students in the current HE system often hold down part-time jobs. Students who live on campus may also get jobs on campus. One could posit that these students who live and work on campus with their friends will find it easier to adjust to university life than those whose support networks, friends and work are all off campus.

As identified by Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005), students living in the family home are more likely to be the first in family to attend university. Therefore, it is important to understand whether the parents have experience and understanding of the HE system within which their young person is studying – that is, whether they have cultural capital. Whilst living in the parental home may bring increased influence of the parent, primarily due to proximity, but also due to students still being integrated members of the family unit, if the parents do understand the system as well as the opportunities or benefits available, they may influence the young person differently from those who do not have that experience. In addition, and as described above, a student's experience at university amounts to more than just their end of year results. In line with the understanding of student retention, how a student adapts to the university and their role as a student also is important. It is suggested that families with cultural capital will encourage their children to become full members of the institution, engaging fully in both social and academic activities.

It is proposed that the parents of students who continue to live at home during their studies are a key variable in that HE experience. Parents will have usually been involved

in all stages of their children's education up to HE, including the decision-making process pre-application to university. Furthermore, it is suggested that PEHE may also be a key factor in the student experience or journey, with students whose parents have been to university able to support and encourage them with better understanding, thus affording those students advantage over those who are first in family to attend.

As highlighted in the introduction, the pattern of engagement for students living at home is very different to those on campus. Students who live off campus will often be seen being dropped off in the morning and collected mid to late afternoon. Their social time on campus may be limited to business hours, and when the main social activities are evening and weekend based, these students may be unable to take part in these extra-curricular activities. In contrast, those on campus were more able to take part in the extra-curricular activities. On-campus living also provided other obvious benefits by way of having the living space near to campus. Not being dependent on the facilities offered by the university for refreshments and social space, by way of having their own space in accommodation for cooking and entertaining, seemed to make acclimatising to student life easier. The next steps of the research aimed to investigate how much influence parents have on this adjustment process.

4.1.3 Limitations

The results from this investigation indicate that TTA is an important variable in the student experience. However, the research has some limitations. As discussed previously, this analysis did not include the moderator effect of the UCAS entry tariff, as this data was not available from the student management system at the time of extraction for this cohort. It is also recognised that students living in university accommodation are not a homogenous group all experiencing university in the same way. It must be recognised that some students, whilst living on campus during term time, may return to their parents' home every month, some may return home more frequently (every week) and others much less

frequently (once a term or less). In addition, the introduction of mobile phones and an increasing number of methods of communication have also brought the ability to keep in touch much more frequently than for previous generations of students. The once traditional once-a-week call from the phone box in the halls of residence has been replaced with the potential for instant and constant communication. So, while some students may be physically returning home on a variable basis, students will also be in touch with their parents virtually with a differing level of frequency. So, whilst students have been categorised by their TTA, these experiences cannot be considered identical.

4.1.4 Next Steps

Following the results of this first initial phase of the research, it is clear to see that the student's term time residence plays an important role in the student experience. Whilst this mirrors work previously undertaken into the effect of living at home (Arya & Smith, 2005; Holdsworth, 2005, 2006), this thesis wishes to look at the TTA in relation to the influence and role of parents on that student experience, as well as whether parents are the key variable underpinning this variation in academic achievement. Specifically, it will consider TTA as a measure of parental influence, alongside PEHE as a proxy measure of capital.

4.2 Phase II (Studies two and three)

This section will present results from the survey utilised in Phase II (studies two and three). For the purposes of analysis, the data gathered during the pilot stage of study two will be merged with study three to form a larger data set, as described in the methodology (Chapter Three). The section will begin with descriptive statistics. Secondly, the qualitative open-ended questions will be analysed, identifying any common themes reported by students. The themes will then be analysed in the context of the two key variables of the study: TTA and parental experience of HE. Following this, the results of the reliability

analysis of the SACQ survey questions will be presented. Finally, this section will present the statistical analysis testing of the hypotheses, as detailed in Chapter 2.5.3. The chapter will then conclude with a summary of the findings and present the conceptual model, highlighting significant findings.

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

4.2.1.1 Sample Size

In total, 909 valid responses were received. All participants granted explicit permission for their data to be analysed and used in this thesis. Duplications, incomplete surveys and errors were then removed, leaving a total sample size of 902.

For general analysis, the data set comprises only unique respondents as required. Second year respondents are excluded so that where adjustment scales are analysed, these students, who have had longer to become adjusted to the university, do not skew the findings. Where categories have been excluded from analysis due to either low numbers (for example, social class 6 *semi routine occupations*) or due to a lack of information (for example, social class 9 *not classified*), this is detailed clearly in the appropriate section below.

4.2.1.2 Survey Distribution and Sample Size

As detailed in the methodology (Chapter Three), the survey was distributed at six key time points across seven different institutions. Table 11, below, details the timings of the collection points and total number of respondents. The largest number of respondents was from the home institution of the researcher (Aston University), closely followed by De Montfort University. The second collection point in the year (spring, collections 2 and 4) had fewer respondents than the first collection point (autumn, collections 1 and 3). This may have been an issue with timing, such as the increased workload of the students prior

to Easter and assessment preparation, or due to a change in students' willingness to participate in surveys. Data collection point stage 5 targeted students in their second year of study only.

Table 11: Total Respondents by Institution and Data Collection Point

	Time Collection Point					
Institution		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Pilot	First Year		First Year		Second Year
		Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Aston University	122	152	29	122	49	53
De Montfort University		62	36	50	54	47
Newman College University		16	8	24	6	
University of London, Royal Holloway		5	3	1		
University of Exeter		19	4			
University of East London			6	19	5	
University of Salford		10				
Total	**122**	**264**	**86**	**216**	**114**	**100**

Of the respondents, 37 completed both surveys in their first year, 15 completed both a first year (either autumn or spring) and second year survey, and three completed all three possible surveys. Due to the low numbers of respondents completing all three surveys, it is not possible to conduct the intended longitudinal analyses except for the data from within the first year (that is, for students who completed both the autumn and spring survey in their first year).

As all analysis except explicit time-based analysis is undertaken on first years only, second year surveys are removed from the main data set (n=100). The second matched pairs surveys are also removed from the main data set (n=37). Finally, the TTA category of *other* was removed as it lacked the key information needed by this study (n=15). This leaves a total data set of 750 first years and 100 second years.

4.2.1.3 Sample Demographics

As identified in the participant section of the methodology (3.5.4.2 and 3.5.5.2), more females than males responded to this survey. Table 12, below, shows the gender breakdown by the collection points. This table shows that throughout the study, females are over-represented. When considering the results of this study, it is important to consider that this sample is not representative of the wider UK undergraduate student population, where for first degree students, 54.5% are female and 45.5% are male.

Table 12: Gender of Sample by Data Collection Point, number and percentage of collection

	Time Point Collection				
		1st Year		2nd Year	
	Pilots	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Total
Male	69 (57.5%)	134 (28.2%)	47 (29.2%)	24 (28.9%)	274
Female	51 (42.5%)	341 (71.8%)	114 (70.8%)	59 (71.1%)	565
Total	120	475	161	83	839

This sample has an over-representation of ethnic minority students when compared to the national data (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2006). The national data suggests 78.1% of first year students at undergraduate level are white, whereas only 69.8% of the total sample of this thesis are white. This may be due to the location of the two institutions with the largest number of respondents. Aston University is based in the city centre of Birmingham (see Chapter 3.4 for details of the demographics of the lead site), and De Montfort University is based within Leicester, both cities with higher than average ethnic minority populations. Once again, as with gender, it is important to consider that this sample is not representative of the wider UK student population. However, it is representative of institutions based within the major cities of the UK. The ethnic groups represented in the sample were as follows:

Table 13: Ethnicity of Sample, number and percentage of collection

	Time Point Collection				
	Pilots	1st Year		2nd Year	Total
		Autumn	Spring	Autumn	
White	106 (88.3%)	318 (66.9%)	110 (67.5%)	59 (69.4%)	593
BME	14 (11.7%)	141 (29.7%)	49 (30.1%)	22 (25.9%)	226
Other	0 (0%)	16 (3.4%)	4 (2.5%)	4 (4.7%)	24
Total	120	475	163	85	843

4.2.1.4 Variable Summary

Tables 14 and 15 below, show the number and percentage of unique first year respondents by the two key independent variables used in this thesis.

Table 14: Responses by TTA

Term Time Accommodation	**Number**	**Percent**
At Home with Parents/Guardian	213	28.4
At Home with Other Family Members	46	6.1
University Accommodation	336	44.8
Private Halls (i.e. UNITE)	82	10.9
Private Rented House (with Friends)	73	9.7
Total	750	100.0

Table 15: Responses by Parental Experience of HE

Parental Experience of HE	**Number**	**Percent**
Yes - Both	121	16.1
Yes - One	167	22.3
No - Neither	462	61.6
Total	750	100.0

This summary illustrates that more students live in university accommodation than any

other type of accommodation, and that more than 60% of students in the data set had neither parent with experience of HE.

For the purpose of further analysis, both TTA and PEHE were regrouped into fewer categories, which increased the number of respondents per category. The TTA variable was grouped into three new categories: home (with parents and family), halls (to include both university accommodation and private halls) and rented (Table 16). Following a review of the HESA TTA type table, extra categories were introduced to capture the variety of options available to students and to reduce confusion when selecting the category. This introduced the category of private halls. Private halls of residence are similar to traditional halls of residence but not owned or managed by the university itself, but instead by companies such as Unite. Many universities no longer offer their own halls of residence. Students are instead able to rent similar privately-owned properties, often on or extremely close to their campus. At the time of this research, the lead site continued to offer accommodation in its own halls, but competition from private halls was increasing. Students who responded *other* to the accommodation category have been excluded from the analysis (n=15) as not enough information is provided to consider their own situation.

Table 16: TTA Regrouped

	TTA Group
At Home with Parents/Guardian	Home - (34.5%, n=259)
At Home with Other Family Members	
University Accommodation	Halls - (55.7%, n=418)
Private Halls (i.e. UNITE)	
Private Rented House (with Friends)	Other Rented - (9.7%, n=73)
Total	

The final table below shows the number of first year students by TTA and PEHE.

Table 17: First Year Students by TTA and PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE (PEHE)	
Term Time Accommodation (TTA)	**Yes**	**No**
Home	24.3% (n=70)	40.9% (n=189)
Halls	67% (n=193)	48.7% (n=225)
Other Rented	8.7% (n=25)	10.4% (n=48)

This table shows that students whose parents have experience of HE are more likely to be living in halls than any other accommodation type, compared to those whose parents do not have experience of HE.

Hypothesis 1a

Before further analysis is conducted on the data gathered, and to be confident in the measure of family capital used (PEHE), the first hypothesis examines the relationship between capital and social class. Table 18, below, presents the count and expected count by social class and PEHE. The expected count shows, were the sample evenly distributed, how many individuals should be in each category. The count then shows how many of the sample were in each category.

This table shows that there are more students from the higher social classes whose parents have experience of HE than expected, and likewise there are fewer students from the lower social classes with parents who have experience of HE. A Chi^2 analysis indicates that these differences are significant (χ^2 (3, N=251) = 36.57, p<.001).

This result demonstrates a direct relationship between PEHE and social class, in that those from the higher social classes are more likely to have been to university (and thus have the associated capital) than those from the lower social classes. Whilst this thesis does not focus on social class specifically, this demonstrates that the measure of capital used fits with expectations.

Table 18: Count and Expected Count, Social Class and PEHE

		Parental Experience of HE	
		Yes	No
Higher Managerial	Count	20	7
	Expected	10.9	16.1
Lower Managerial	Count	54	53
	Expected	43.1	63.9
Intermediate occupations	Count	16	29
	Expected	18.1	26.9
Lower Classes	Count	11	61
	Expected	29	43

The summary provided above presents a picture of the sample on which this thesis is based. In order to capture more understanding of the student experience prior to the quantitative analysis, the following section examines the qualitative data gathered by the survey, which illustrates the key themes provided by the students in terms of their parents, their adjustment to university life, and how they feel their parents positively or negatively impact their experience. The section will be followed by testing the explicit hypotheses of this thesis, and where appropriate, comparisons between the qualitative and quantitative findings will be drawn.

4.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

4.2.2.1 Introduction

The following results focus on the qualitative questions asked as part of the survey. The findings are from completed surveys of unique respondents. These additional questions included in the survey capture the information that illustrates the experiences of the student participants.

The qualitative data aimed to gather illustrations of the ways students perceive the influence of their parents during their studies. The questions were also used to build an understanding of the student experience, both positive and negative. The questions also contribute to the overarching research question posed by this thesis:

> *In what way, and to what extent, does the role and influence of parents continue once a student has begun their undergraduate degree programme?*

It was not initially intended to analyse the data statistically. However, following the thematic analysis and identification of the themes by the key variables (TTA and PEHE), it became clear there were systematic differences and as such, further statistical analysis was conducted, and results presented.

4.2.2.2 Analytical Approach

In the survey, participants had optional free text boxes within which to respond to the open-ended questions. These were analysed using thematic analysis, and key themes were identified by the author. Once initial themes were identified, these were checked by another qualitative researcher, acting as a critical friend to the thematic analysis process. This researcher is an academic colleague at Aston University who teaches qualitative research methods and supports students in designing their own surveys. Where necessary, a discussion between the researchers took place to clarify any queries. Once themes had been confirmed, responses were grouped by the two key measures of this research – TTA and PEHE. The sample only includes unique respondents from the first year of their studies except for question three, which also includes second year data.

The questions analysed were:

1. When making your decision to come to university, who or what was most influential on your decision?

2. Why did you choose to live where you live?
3. Do you feel you have settled into life at university?
4. What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?
5. In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?
6. Do you feel your parents expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?
7. Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?
8. Has this affected your university life?

When coding the responses for questions one, two, four and five, up to four themes were identified per response. Participants completed an open text box for the questions, in which they could report several responses without indicating priority. This was in order to ensure that key themes were included. Analysis of questions three, six, seven and eight revealed that only one answer theme was identified for these questions per participant.

4.2.2.3 Results

The findings for each question are presented below. The main themes are first identified for the sample as a whole, then considered by the two key variables: TTA and PEHE. A brief discussion of the findings follows and, where appropriate, statistical analysis is included.

Q: When making your decision to come to university, who or what was most influential on your decision?

The first qualitative question of the survey examined whether the key influencers identified in the literature review (Catley, 2004) were also those reported by the sample. Table 19, below, shows the identified themes ranked by number of responses. The total number of themes identified for this question was 906, from the sample of 750 respondents.

Table 19: Decision Influencer by Theme

Theme	No. of Responses	% of total
Self	161	18%
Parents	150	17%
Career	141	16%
Course	104	12%
Location	79	9%
Family	77	9%
Tutors	72	8%
Reputation	56	6%
Total No. of Responses	*906*	

Themes identified by less than 5% of the sample have been removed from the table. The full table can be found in appendix 8.

This table shows that the top three influencers of a student's decision to come to university when looking at the sample as a whole are: *self*, *parents* and *career*. A much smaller proportion of respondents identified *finance*, *friends*, *university* and *reputation* as being key influencers in their decision-making process. This supports the suggestion that parents act as key influencers on student choice, but also that students are focused on their specific course more than the university or their friends. Those whose parents have been to university received specific advice. These parents to some degree create an expectation that the student would attend:

> *"Always planned to come to University from a young age; so I guess my parents."*
>
> *"It's what I 'Should' be doing."*

Both responses from students whose parents have experience of HE (PEHE – Yes) and who are living in halls (Halls)

Tables 20 and 21 below, show the responses when the sample is grouped by the two key independent variables used in this research; PEHE and TTA. Table 20 looks at the PEHE variable, and whether the students' parents have experience or not of HE.

Table 20: Decision Influencer by PEHE

Theme	Yes	No
Self	18%	18%
Parents	19%	16%
Career	14%	17%

* The full table can be found in appendix 9.

This shows that whilst the top three themes for students whose parents have and have not been to university themselves are the same, the order is different. For those whose parents do have experience of HE, parents are more influential on their decision to attend university than for those whose parents do not have that experience. This suggests that the capital of these families enables them to support their child through the educational process with more understanding and relevance, or that they have higher expectations for their child and have encouraged them to consider going to university from an earlier age. For those students whose parents do not have experience of HE, their parents are still important but are not as influential in the decision, with students instead ranking *self* and *career* as more influential. However, when the top three themes are analysed using Chi^2, results indicate that the difference between the two PEHE groups is not significant.

Table 21: Decision Influencer by TTA

Theme	Home	Halls	Other Rented
Self	18%	18%	23%
Parents	18%	17%	*11%*
Career	17%	14%	20%
Course	*9%*	14%	12%
Family	13%	*6%*	*8%*

* Full table can be found in Appendix 10

This table shows more differences between the frequently cited themes than when decisions are ordered by PEHE. For those who live at home with their parents/family, the themes of *parents*, *career* and *self* are equally weighted. Those in halls (university and

private) reported *self*, *parents* and *course*/*career* as the influential themes, and those in private rented/other accommodation report *self*, *career* and *course*. This suggests that for those who have chosen to remain living in the family home, parents are more influential than for those who moved away for university, whether into halls type accommodation or other private or rented accommodation, although all three groups have parents in the top three themes.

Interestingly, there is a large difference between the three TTA categories and the rating of family. For students living at home, *family* is more important than *course*, while in contrast for both halls and private rented/other students, *course* is more important than *family*. It is also important to note that for the two groups not living at home, *self* is the most important influence, whereas for those living at home, *self* is weighted equally with *parents* and *career*. When the differences between the groups are analysed using Chi^2, the differences are significant ($\chi^2(8, N=634) = 20.54$, $p=.008$).

Looking at the details provided by the participants in the survey, some students reported both themselves and their parents as being key influencers:

> *"I influenced myself to go to university as I am a determined individual. If it was not for my mother I would not have had the support or guidance on what decisions to make to help me become confident in my future decisions."*

PEHE - Yes, Home

In contrast, another type of parental influence can be seen in the quote below, which highlights the differing forms and basis of parental influence:

> *"The fact that my dad was in a dying trade and jobs started to require more skilled employees. I didn't want to undergo the redundancies and hardships my dad had."*

PEHE - No, Halls

It is also possible to identify expectations that participants would attend university:

"Parents. Going to university had been spoken about from young age"

PEHE – Yes, Halls

"My Future career choice influenced my choice to come to university quite strongly however the fact that I would also be the first in my family to ever go to university also drove me to achieve my required grades for entry to higher education."

PEHE – No, Halls

"Always planned to come to University from a young age; so I guess my parents."

PEHE – Yes, Halls

"My mom was most influential, she told me I should go to University and follow my aspirations."

PEHE – No, Home

The quotes demonstrate the varied ways in which parental influence can be felt, both positively and negatively, by the student. From a background where the student had clear aims to attend university or where it was expected that they would do so, parental influence could be felt in different ways. Parents could encourage, support and set expectations regarding university for their children from a young age. It must be considered that the quotes included in this thesis are from students who have successfully navigated access to university, and therefore are only representative of those who have achieved the aim of attending.

Q: Why did you choose to live where you live?

As with question one, students were given a free text box to detail their reasons for choosing to live where they did during their first year. Up to four themes were identified (if required) per participant. Table 22, below, shows the full list of themes identified. Themes chosen by less than 5% of the sample have been excluded from the table (but can be found in Appendix 11).

Table 22: “Why did you choose to live where you live?”

Theme	No. of responses	% of total
Location	231	23%
Finance	227	23%
Easy or convenient	90	9%
Meeting others	79	8%
Experience	58	6%
Total responses	*1005*	

* The full table can be found in appendix 11.

The top two responses for students’ reason for choice of accommodation are *location* and *finance*. These two choices were far more popular than other choices. However, there is considerable variation in the meaning behind the top two themes depending on where the student lives. It is worth noting that the use of *location* varies depending on the situation of the student. For example, for those living in the family home, *location* could be interpreted as proximity to family or friends or being an area they know. In contrast, those in halls may use *location* to mean proximity to the university. When considering the results below, it is important to consider this difference in interpretation. Tables 23 and 24, below, show the themes grouped by PEHE and TTA.

Table 23: “Why did you choose to live where you live?” by PEHE

Theme	Yes	No
Location	24%	23%
Finance	20%	25%
Easy or Convenient	8%	10%
Meeting others	9%	7%

* The full table can be found in appendix 12.

For those students whose parents have been to university, *location* is the top theme, followed by *finance* and then *meeting others*. In contrast, for students whose parents do not have experience of HE, the top three themes are *finance*, *location* and *easy or*

convenient. Once again, this suggests that students whose families have experience of HE have different expectations and understanding relating to the transition to university. These students understood the value of meeting other students as well as undertaking their degree course. Students without that experience have *finance* as the top theme, with *easy and/or convenient* as their third theme and less emphasis on meeting others.

Table 24, below, shows the themes as grouped by TTA. The picture from this table is very different from that above, showing larger variation between the groups.

Table 24: "Why did you choose to live where you live?" by TTA

Themes	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other/Rented**
Location	17%	27%	29%
Finance	41%	12%	20%
Meeting others	*0%*	14%	*1%*
Family	10%	*0%*	*5%*
Independence	*1%*	*5%*	8%

* The full table can be found in appendix 13.

These results suggest that the key deciding factor for students who chose to live at home was *finance*, whereas for students living in halls and *other/rented*, the number one factor was *location*. The third theme varied across all three TTA categories. For those living at home the third most important reason was *family*; for those living in halls, it was *meeting others*; and for those in other/rented accommodation, it was *independence*. This demonstrates very different motivations, with *family* playing a key role for those at home. When the data is analysed using Chi^2, the differences between the top two themes by TTA is highly significant ($\chi^2(2, N=457) = 66.89$, $p<.001$). When analysis is conducted on the third theme by TTA, the results are also highly significant ($\chi^2(4, N=91) = 47.21$, $p<.001$).

This clearly demonstrates the different priorities and expectations of students when

grouped by their TTA, and to some degree PEHE. The following responses from the students emphasise this variation:

> *"Found it easier to live in Birmingham rather than make a daily commute – plus wanted to have 'student' experience"*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"I didn't want to move away from home; university isn't very far away from home."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"Because I did not want to live with people I may not get on with and continuously move between university and home with all my belongings, when I only want to study."*

PEHE – Yes, Home

> *"Easier to make friends, feel more involved and a member of the university."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"Definitely for the social life, university, I believe, is all about the experience, as far as I'm concerned if you come out of university with nothing but a degree, you wasted your time there, for the most part at least, it includes building yourself as a personal [sic], both as a character and individual, expanding your networks, broadening your horizons and gaining new skills/qualities (i.e., greater confidence etc.). Ergo, what better way to start than to dive in by living on campus along with other students, immersed in the university life."*

PEHE – No, Halls

> *"To become independent and participate in student life, by living in halls I would be more directly involved with, and more able to participate in student activities."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

There are also clear links to family expectations and demands in the reasons given by student for their accommodation choice:

> *"Parents thought it would be best"*

PEHE – Yes, Home

> *"The university is in the same city I live in so I believe it would be a waste of money to live out and it only takes 20 minutes on the bus to get to university. Also, my family would not be happy with me living out."*

PEHE – No, Home

"My parents don't speak English so I handle all the affairs at home (i.e. making phone calls, writing letters etc.) and also help my younger brother with his studies where my parents are unable to do so."

PEHE – No, Home

"Because it's easier and cheaper. My parents do not want me to live away from home to study at university even if it's a better university than closer to home."

PEHE – No, Home

"…but I also understand that my parents would never agree to living on campus, for numerous reasons, but mostly due to cultural reasons."

PEHE – No, Home

"My parents were uncomfortable with me living away from home and I also did not want to leave university with a lot of debt"

PEHE – No, Home

Likewise, there is also clear evidence of understanding the students' own needs in their own developmental processes:

"At first I was not intending to live in halls, due to the fact that I live in "Birmingham anyway, and so would have been able to commute. But after going on a few of the open days, I felt moving away was a big part of going to university, and would help me gain more independence."

PEHE – No, Halls

"I wanted to get some independence and also enjoy university life to the maximum by being able to integrate with others socially as well as in lectures."

PEHE – No, Halls

"To live away from home and to learn how to live alone without a guardian, for example managing money, catering for myself, looking after myself and becoming wiser to adult life. To integrate myself to the highest extent into the university."

PEHE – No, Halls

"I hardly felt ready for university as it was without the added pressure of having to adjust to a new living situation. I'm hoping to move into halls next year though."

PEHE – No, Home

"Uni for me is not just about getting a degree it's a life experience that is simply not the same if you live at home, it's about growing up, spreading your wings and gaining some more of your independence."

PEHE – Yes, Halls

Not only are the extra and various demands on students from their families clear in the above – health issues, communication issues, as well as expectations of what they should be doing – they also emphasise the role of capital, with students whose parents have experience of HE valuing the benefits of the wider student experience. Of course, not every student fits neatly into these categories; the individual stories must not be lost. For example, students who come from families from lower social class groups may not have the option of moving into halls for their studies for financial reasons, likewise, some families may not wish for their child to move away for cultural reasons. It must be remembered that not all students have the same options available to them and that for some, their options are limited.

Q: Do you feel you have settled into life at university?

Due to the timing of the surveys, it is necessary when analysing this question to separate out data based on the time of collection – that is, autumn, spring and second year. If the literature relating to transitions and adjustment holds true for this sample, it would be expected that over time students felt more settled, so that students from the spring cohort would report feeling more settled than the autumn cohort. In addition, second-year students should feel more settled again.

The table below shows the degree to which the students felt they had settled in to the university, as identified using thematic analysis, separated into the data collection point time.

Table 25: “Do you feel you have settled into life at university?” by Data Collection Point

	Autumn 1st Year	Spring 1st Year	2nd Year
Yes	83%	85%	92%
OK	7%	5%	4%
Nearly	5%	3%	0%
No	6%	6%	4%
Total	480	283	82

As would be expected, the proportion of students reporting that they felt settled into university does increase over time, with those in the spring term of their first year, and those in their second year, more likely to report being settled that those in the autumn term. The number of students who reported *OK* or *nearly settled* both decreased over time, as did those responding with *no* between autumn and second year.

When grouped by PEHE, as we can see in table 26, below, there is little variation between the groups, with the majority from both groups reporting that they felt they had settled in. Following Chi^2 analysis, these differences are not significant. These results will be compared with the data gathered to address the hypotheses which look explicitly at adjustment over time in the statistical analysis chapter (4.2.3).

Table 26: “Do you feel you have settled in?” by PEHE

	Autumn		Spring		2nd Year	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	82%	83%	89%	83%	92%	92%
OK	7%	7%	2%	7%	3%	5%
Nearly	4%	5%	2%	4%	0%	0%
No	7%	5%	8%	5%	5%	3%

Table 27, below, shows the results by TTA.

Table 27: “Do you feel you have settled in?” by TTA

	Autumn			Spring			2nd Year		
	Home	**Halls**	**Other Rented**	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Yes	77%	85%	90%	78%	91%	71%	88%	98%	88%
OK	6%	8%	4%	6%	3%	14%	4%	2%	6%
Nearly	6%	4%	2%	7%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%
No	11%	2%	4%	9%	4%	11%	8%	0%	0%

The results from this question suggest that location of TTA does impact on the student’s adjustment to university. Over all three time points, students living in the home felt less settled at university than those living in either halls or other/rented. When this difference is tested using Chi^2, the difference is found to be significant for the autumn and spring term time points (autumn = ($\chi^2(6, N=466) = 19.78$, $p=.003$), spring = ($\chi^2(6, N=316) = 17.86$, $p=.007$), but not for second-year students. Whilst the data is not significant in the second year, 98% of students reported they felt they had settled in, with the remaining 2% reporting *OK*. In contrast, 8% of those living at home reported they did not feel settled at this point. The results from this question will be compared with the analysis of the SACQ adjustment measures.

However, it is worth noting that the students were not asked in which ways they felt they had settled in to university life, a question which could encompass accommodation or studies. The level to which the students have adjusted to university life will be measured in more detail by the SACQ questions of the survey (see Chapter 4.2.3).

The following quotes from the students evidence the uniqueness of each individual’s experience. There is clear understanding of the nature of adjustment, with students acknowledging the difference between social and academic adjustment:

"Yes and no. I feel like I've settled well into the academic side of things but not so much the social aspects of University life. This can be frustrating as I'm very outgoing and find that often, my daily life seems highly unbalanced with most of my days spent studying and not so much 'having fun'."

PEHE – No, Halls

"I feel like I have settled into the social aspect of uni really well, but the academic aspect has been a bit harder and I feel like I've given up a little already on trying to go to lectures and doing my work. There is less motivation to do work/go to lectures here than back at home/school."

PEHE – Yes, Halls

"I think I have settled in academically but do feel like I am missing out on the social life..."

PEHE – No, Home

"Definitely, I quickly became settled into university. I was lucky to move into a very sociable flat at the beginning of university, and those whom disliked the overly social/party aspect of our flat have moved out (some to regret, others; not so much), and others more suited have moved in. I have immersed myself in various societies (i.e., Hockey, RAG, Relay for Life 2012 Committee)."

PEHE – No, Halls

In addition, the following quote emphasises the complexity of the adjustment process, demonstrating the multifaceted demands a first-year student finds themselves facing:

"I think I've settled surprisingly quickly. I don't have much difficulty making new friends and am fairly independent so yeah, University life wasn't too much of a readjustment. I did however find it difficult to cope with paying my own way. It's not necessarily a new concept, but it did take a bit of getting used to."

PEHE – No, Home

These quotes also demonstrate the complex nature of settling into university life, which is not just about the academic work but also the social adjustment, and the balance between the two that is needed in order to be successful.

Q: What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?

Some 1005 unique responses were identified from the data in response to this question.

The top six of which were *financial support*, *advice/support*, *contact*, *food/cooking* and *encouragement* with the sixth theme being *nothing*.

Table 28: "What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?"

Themes	**% Response**
Financial Support	27%
Advice/support	23%
Contact	9%
Food/cooking	7%
Encouragement	7%
Nothing	6%

* The full table can be found in appendix 14.

When the responses to this question are grouped by PEHE, once again the variation is small, with both groups reporting that *financial support* and *advice/support* are the top two themes. *Contact* is the third theme for those whose parents have been to university, while *contact*, *encouragement* and *nothing* are joint third for those whose parents have not been to university. More students whose parents have been to university rated *financial support* as something that their parents do that makes their experience better. As students whose parents have experience of HE tend to live on campus, which is expensive, this is unsurprising.

Table 29: "What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?" by PEHE

	Yes	**No**
Financial Support	30%	25%
Advice/Support	22%	24%
Contact	10%	8%
Food/Cook	8%	7%
Encouragement	6%	8%
Nothing	5%	7%

* Full table can be found in Appendix 15

Table 30: “What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of university better?” by TTA

	Home	Halls	Other Rented
Financial Support	18%	31%	30%
Advice/Support	28%	20%	27%
Contact	1%	15%	2%
Food/Cook	6%	9%	2%
Encouragement	9%	5%	13%
Nothing	10%	4%	8%
Study Support	8%	2%	4%
Home Comforts	9%	1%	0%

* The full table can be found in appendix 16.

Table 30, above, shows the responses to this question grouped by TTA. As the table demonstrates, there is little variation in the top three themes, with the top two themes of each group being *advice/support* and *financial support*. The third theme does vary by TTA, with university accommodation reporting *contact,* which is understandable given the distance from their family and potential homesickness. Students who live at home are more likely to report that their parents do nothing to make their experience better. Given that students who live at home are more likely to have parents who have not been to university themselves, this could indicate that those parents do not know how best to support their child. In contrast, students living at home also report that their parents help with *study support,* which seems to contradict to the statement above. Students who live on campus are able to access the study support services of the university as well as benefit from peer support and therefore may be less likely to report *study support* as something that their parents provide.

Whilst *financial support* and *advice/support* are the top two themes regardless of PEHE or TTA, the following quotes emphasise the variation within those groups. Parents of all types encourage social activity participation, managing workloads and being supportive and interested in their child’s studies.

"Encourage me to socialise and study hard"

PEHE - Yes, Halls

"help out financially and sometimes read over work that ive done to check spelling grammar and if it makes sense! they are very supportive"

PEHE - Yes, Halls

"Discuss my work with me, as well as being interested in what I am doing."

PEHE - Yes, Home

"Encourage me to get involved in social activities, being supportive of me enjoying myself and having space"

PEHE - No, Halls

"discuss with me my work load and ways i can manage it"

PEHE - No, Home

"Encourage me to keep working hard and not to give up on the course, even when times are hard."

PEHE - No, Home

"I suppose it is what they don't do; they don't nag me, or pressure me to do things. They never have. They know that I am motivated enough academically to sort my life out. One advantage I do have is that mom still cooks for me and does my washing (typical mommy things!) so I don't have to worry about that."

PEHE - No, Home

The results in this section demonstrate that there is still an underlying influence of parents, and that the support and advice they offer, in terms of both finance and study, or by offering practical guidance around timetable planning, indicate that parents are still important to the student and therefore the student first-year experience. Rather than moving away from home and establishing themselves as entirely independent adults, contact and support from parents continues.

Q: In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?

The most reported answer to this question is *nothing* (47%), meaning students do not consider their parents to negatively impact their experiences. The top five themes

reported are *nothing*, *emotional pressure*, *academic pressure*, *don't understand* and *independence*.

Table 31: "In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?"

Themes	% Response
Nothing	48%
Emotional pressure	8%
Academic pressure	7%
Don't understand	6%
Independence	5%

* The full table can be found in appendix 17.

When the data is grouped by PEHE, the second and third theme for those with PEHE are *academic pressure* and *emotional pressure.* In contrast, for those whose parents have not had experience of HE, the second theme is joint between *don't understand* and *emotional pressure*.

Table 32: "In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?" by PEHE

Theme	Yes	No
Nothing	48%	47%
Emotional pressure	8%	8%
Academic pressure	7%	6%
Don't understand	4%	7%
Independence	4%	6%
Expectations	4%	2%

* The full table can be found in appendix 18.

Students whose parents have experience of HE report *academic pressure* and *expectations* slightly more frequently than students whose parents don't have experience. This indicates that these parents may hold higher expectations for their children.

Alternately, those whose parents have not got the experience of university are more likely to report that their parents *don't understand*, which may explain why they also are less likely to report *expectations* being a negative influence.

Once grouped by TTA, the top theme remains *nothing.* However, for those living in the parental/family home, the second theme is *don't understand*, demonstrating a potential link between TTA and capital, with those who live at home more likely to come from families who have not attended university and are therefore unable to understand the environment within which their student is studying. The third theme for those at home is *independence*, while for those in university accommodation, it is *money*.

Table 33: "In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at university?" by TTA

	Home	Halls	Other Rented
Nothing	38%	53%	50%
Emotional pressure	6%	9%	7%
Academic pressure	9%	4%	11%
Don't understand	11%	3%	6%
Independence	10%	3%	0%
Home Needs	8%	1%	2%
Distraction	4%	0%	0%

* The full table can be found in appendix 19.

Further to the top three themes, students living at home are also more likely to report *home needs* and *distraction* as ways in which their experience is negatively influenced. Students who are at home may be expected to take part in family events, share their living space and contribute to the operation of the house in ways that students living away from the family home do not. This indicates that the pressure, workload and commitment of the university experience is not understood by those families, meaning the transition to student life needs to run alongside the student's family commitments. Again, this demonstrates the complexity of the students' lives outside of their university studies. This

complexity is further evidenced in the quotes below:

> *"Although they don't set rules and boundaries for me, sometimes I feel living with them is restrictive."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"Always asking me to come home - I enjoy seeing them, but I also enjoy the freedom and it's difficult to balance."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"Do not appreciate the amount of work required as part of a degree and put other stress related to home issues etc."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"Friends don't always understand that you can't come home for events like birthday nights out etc. because you have a lot of work or the train is too expensive /too short notice."*

PEHE – No, Halls

> *"I feel like I can't ask my mum to help out with my financial issues in regards to getting books and other supplies for my studies. I also feel like sometimes, my mother doesn't realise how difficult a university degree can be and I don't feel like she can support me as much as she tries to because she doesn't understand (having not done a degree herself)."*

PEHE – No. Home

> *"I sometimes feel pressured into having to update them constantly on my life and they expect me to speak to them on the phone every single day which isn't always convenient."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"I feel like they expect so much of me."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"Sometimes feel as though i have a lot to live up to as both my parents came from not very wealthy backgrounds and have always worked really hard to make sure me and my brother get the best possible life. My mum did a BSC and MSC getting a first in both whilst working full time and bringing up two young kids, so I feel a lot of pressure that I have to do really well!"*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

It is possible to predict the way in which many parents without the experience of university may struggle to understand the implications of what being a student involves and the work demands on the young person. However, the final quote shows clearly that it is not always

those parents who negatively influence the experience. A parent who has academically succeeded can also negatively affect their son or daughter by applying extra academic expectation and pressure. This is consistent with the data above which, when examined by PEHE, shows that students whose parents have been to university themselves report more academic pressure than students whose parents have not.

For students who report that their parents do not understand university life, the role of capital is clear in the quotes below.

> *"They feel it's like school and don't understand the amount has to be read and studies are high standards makes it extremely difficult to do best. They think all work should be done in uni time."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"By not experiencing university do not understand completely what it is like and also academically they are unable to help me with my studies as they used to when I was in both primary and secondary education."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"My Mom really tries to make things as positive as she can for me because she's never had an opportunity like this and she really wants me to do well. However I think she feel's unable to fully support me as she don't know what University really entails."*

PEHE – No, Halls

> *"My parents influenced my experience at university negatively in the sense they are unable to give me advice on how to do essays or how universities operate and function. Also due to unemployment my dad is unable to fund me financially as my mum does which has made funding books or socialising difficult."*

PEHE – No, Halls

These quotes emphasise that some parents who do not have the experience of HE themselves struggle to best support their child. This could have a negative impact on the student's adjustment. In contrast, students whose parents do have experience of HE report other negative influences such as a perception that their parents have very high expectations of them academically.

Q: Do you feel your parents expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?

Responses to this question showed that some students felt their involvement with family and home life was expected to continue once they were at university. Respondents were asked three questions regarding these commitments. Firstly, they were asked if they felt they were still expected to be involved with family life. The thematic analysis for this question identified one response for each participant. As a whole cohort, 60% reporting yes, 25% reporting no, and the remaining 15% reporting either a little or if they were able to. Table 34, below, groups the responses to this question by PEHE.

Table 34: “Do you feel your parents expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?” by PEHE

	Yes	**No**
Yes	59%	61%
Sometimes	7%	4%
A little	4%	6%
If able to	7%	3%
No	22%	26%
Total	*283*	*462*

Whilst there is some variation between the two categories, overall the picture is similar with no differences between the two categories. Most students report that they are still expected to be involved in family life. When the data is grouped by TTA, the difference between the groups are clearer.

Table 35: "Do your family expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?" by TTA

	Home	Halls	Other/Rented
Yes	70%	57%	45%
Sometimes	3%	5%	12%
A little	4%	6%	5%
If able to	3%	6%	3%
No	20%	26%	35%
Total	*250*	*420*	*75*

Students living at home reported most strongly that they were still expected to be involved in family life and commitments. Students at home also reported the least that they were not expected to be involved. This is compared to those living in halls or other/rented accommodation, with 57% of students living in halls reporting they were expected to be involved in family commitments, and 26% reporting they did not. Only 45% of those living in private rented/other reported that they were expected to be involved; the smallest group out of the three.

Students living at home are expected to juggle not only the demands of their course, alongside the transition to university, but also their role within their family. This may suggest that those at home have less independence than those living in halls (who, to some extent, have in-built support in the form of nearby peers) or those living in private rented/other accommodation, who have no formal support structures in place and are able to choose where and when they spend their time.

Q: Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?

Following on from the question above, which looked at expectations, this question focused on whether the student was still able to be involved in family activity. Whilst involvement might be expected of students, it may not be possible due to location or academic demands. Overall, the picture suggests that students are able to be involved in family life, with only 11% reporting no or not really.

Table 36: "Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?"

Theme	% Response
Yes	67%
Mostly	22%
Not really	6%
No	5%
Total	*739*

When separated by the two key variables this picture does not change. The table below shows the influence of PEHE on the question responses.

Table 37: "Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?" by PEHE

	Yes	No
Yes	65%	69%
Mostly	21%	22%
Not really	7%	5%
No	7%	4%

As is clear, there is very little difference between the two categories. The table below shows the data by TTA.

Table 38: "Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?" by TTA

	Home	Halls	Other Rented
Yes	78%	62%	62%
Mostly	16%	24%	28%
Not really	3%	8%	6%
No	4%	6%	4%

When grouped by TTA, the variation is more marked, with those living at home reporting they were more able to take part in family events, which, given the location of their TTA, is to be expected.

Q: Has this affected your university life?

Finally, the last question looks at how much this involvement affects the students' university life. Where students feel that they are expected to be involved in family life, the important issue is whether affects their university life. Some students may feel huge pressure to be involved in family life, which could serve as either a distracter or take significant time away from studies or extra-curricular activities.

Overall responses are presented in Table 39, below, where 73% of respondents stated that this involvement had not affected their university life. However, 10% reported that it had.

Table 39: "Has this affected your university life?"

Theme	Response
Yes	10%
Sometimes	3%
A little	5%
Not really	9%
No	73%
Grand Total	*813*

When the data is analysed by PEHE and TTA, there are differences between the groups. Table 40, below, shows the data by PEHE. Students whose parents have no experience of HE are more likely than their counterparts to report that it had impacted on their university life and less likely to report it had not. Parents who lack the HE capital, who may not understand the system and demands on the student, may also lack the understanding of how the family themselves can impact on the student's studies whether through physical attendance at events or emotional demands being made of the student.

Table 40: "Has this affected your university life?" by PEHE

	Yes	No
Yes	7%	11%
Sometimes	4%	3%
A little	3%	7%
Not really	9%	9%
No	77%	70%

Once grouped by TTA, the impact of the involvement in family life is very clear for those who remain in the family home during their studies. Of the students living at home, 15% reported that this involvement had affected their university life, compared to only 7% of students in halls and 4% of students living in other private rented/other accommodation.

Table 41: "Has this affected your university life?" by TTA

	Home	Halls	Other Rented
Yes	15%	7%	4%
Sometimes	4%	2%	6%
A little	6%	5%	6%
Not really	11%	8%	6%
No	64%	77%	79%

Likewise, of the students living at home, only 64% reported that the involvement had not affected their university life compared to 77% of those in halls and 79% of those in private rented/other accommodation.

This demonstrates that parents do continue to influence their young person’s education once they have begun their university career. The quotes below provide examples of the ways in which students reported the impact of the family involvement on their studies and again demonstrate complexity and variation in students’ experiences. Such variation is both positive and negative, with students reporting that whilst it can negatively impact their university life, by being needed to be back home rather than stay on campus for example,

there are also positive ways in which this expectation affects the student experience.

> *"Enriched it in some ways, but also sometimes puts a strain on when I get time to do my work too."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"I believe it has enhanced it. Without the strong family system and contact I have, I believe that I would have found my first year much more difficult."*

PEHE – No, Halls

> *"On occasion, I did not join any societies due to the fact that I needed to be home when the ones I was interested I were running. I also feel I cannot stay at university to get my work done because I have to be back home."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"To an extent yes, because I always need to leave University by 4:30pm Mon-Fri due to family commitments. Such family commitments also restrain me from attending some events i.e. parties, joining clubs/societies."*

PEHE – No, Home

> *"Yes positively because I know everything is ok at home and with the family so I can relax more."*

PEHE – Yes, Halls

> *"Yes. I feel more stressed as I have to worry about keeping my mother happy whilst trying to organise my University life, e.g. attending lectures and workshops, completing homework and coursework, attending society meetings and also working part-time."*

PEHE – No, Halls

4.2.2.4 Qualitative Survey Questions Summary

A clear finding from this section of the research is that the role of PEHE is less influential on the student experience than that of TTA. In every question asked there was little, if any, variation on the key themes identified by students for each of the questions based on the PEHE categories. However, for all of the questions there were differences between the key themes when grouped by TTA. Decisions regarding entering HE, where to live whilst studying, adjusting to university life and involvement in family life all showed clear variation between the TTA of the student. Whilst this does not suggest that any experiences are less positive for the student, it does support existing work highlighted in the literature review (Arya & Smith, 2005; Holdsworth, 2005, 2006) which has stated that

the experience for students who live away from the university is very different from that of those students living on campus. It is the purpose of the next stage of this study to investigate what impact this has on the students' adjustment and ultimately their success/performance whilst at university.

Students whose parents have been to university, and therefore are presumed to possess cultural capital, are more influenced by their parents in their decision to come to university. They feel they have settled into university life, and report that their parents' financial support makes their experience better. These students feel that they are still expected to be involved in family life but that it doesn't affect their university life. In contrast, students whose parents have not been to university report that they themselves were the key influencer on the decision to come to university and that finance was the main reason they chose where they live. They also report that they have settled into university life. Again, they report that they are expected to still be part of family life and most state that this does not affect their university experience. However, more of these students report an impact in this regard (11% vs 7%) than students whose parents have been to university.

In addition, meeting others was a key reason for those whose parents have been to university in choosing where to live. This demonstrates that students living in halls of residence are looking for the additional aspects of the university experience beyond the academic. In contrast, students whose parents have not been to university rated career as being more important an influence than those whose parents have not been to university. These two results suggest that the reasons students are at university, their motivations and drivers, may differ depending on their background. This again illustrates that students are not one homogenous group and that any assumptions made, or support put in place, must consider this in order to be effective in reaching students.

When considering the different experiences by TTA, students who live at home for their studies report that it was jointly self and parents who influenced their decision to come to

university. They report that finance was the main reason for choosing to live at home. Whilst these students mostly report feeling settled into university life, more reported not feeling settled than in the other groups. Students living at home state that parents make their experience better by offering advice and support, but negatively affect the experience by not understanding. More of these students reported being expected to be part of family life and are the highest proportion of students who say this does affect their university life, at 15%.

Students who live in halls report that they were the main influencer for coming to university, and that location was the reason they chose to live in halls. They feel settled at university, and report that parents offering financial support makes the experience better. These students feel expected to be part of family life, but this mostly does not affect their studies.

The qualitative data presented here not only gives us an illustration of the way students perceive their parents' influence, both positively and negatively, it also suggests that the PEHE variable has little, if any, impact on the student experience after enrolment. It is clear from the literature (Moogan et al., 1999; Payne, 2003) that parents are influential in the decision-making process, while the findings above demonstrate that parents were influential in where students live during term time (either directly or indirectly). However, once enrolled on their degree course, there is little from this data to suggest that the cultural capital of the family plays a significant direct role other than for a few individual students.

However, throughout each of these questions, when the data are considered in light of TTA, there are observable differences between the groups. Students who live at home report different reasons for their choice of where to live.

When analysing the quantitative data (below), attention will be paid to whether the results

reflect those found above. Of course, it is not possible, based on this data, to suggest that the two variables do not work together. Therefore, any potential interaction between PEHE and TTA will be examined in the following statistical analysis.

4.2.3 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data will now be analysed to build on the findings presented in the previous section. During qualitative analysis, the influence of parents who had been to university was not found to be as important as the role of term-time accommodation. The data below will continue to examine these differences and will then compare findings.

The data used in this section were gathered using the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Additional demographic data were collected, such as social class, as well as the key variables of the research (PEHE and TTA). This section will explicitly test the hypotheses proposed by the research and will present results alongside the conceptual model for easy identification. Key findings will be discussed as the section progresses to build up the picture of the student experience. The section will conclude with a summary of results presented alongside a revised conceptual model, indicating the significant findings.

For all analysis, all repeated surveys (within year) are excluded from the dataset, along with second year respondents, except where time-based hypotheses are to be tested, within year or across years. The dataset also excluded TTA categories of *other* or *not known* (n=15). The total sample size used by this analysis is 750 surveys completed by first-year students. Where time-based hypotheses are tested, the total sample size will be detailed.

4.2.3.1 Reliability Analysis

The survey tool used by this research was the Student Adjustment to College

Questionnaire (SACQ). To test the reliability of the survey tool and its five scales, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. To be confident in the survey scales, a Cronbach's Alpha score of at least 0.8 is sought. Table 42, below, shows the Cronbach's Alpha score obtained from this data set for each scale, the number of items, and the expected range as per the SACQ manual (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Table 42: Cronbach's Alpha – SACQ

Adjustment Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Expected Range*
Total (Full Scale)	.942	67	.92 - .95
Academic	.892	24	.81 - .90
Social	.866	20	.83 - .91
Personal Emotional	.873	15	.77 - .86
Attachment	.848	15	.85 - .91

Three of the five subsets of the SACQ fall within the expected range, while one subset (*personal-emotional*) is above the expected range and another (*attachment*) falls marginally below. It was judged that these Alpha scores are acceptable and sufficiently similar to those expected for such a data set. The SACQ is therefore assumed to be a reliable measure.

When the adjustment scales are analysed further (see Table 43 below), there is also a positive correlation between each of the scales of adjustment. Students who report high levels of adjustment on any scale are also likely to report higher levels on all scales.

Table 43: Adjustment Subscales Correlation Matrix

		Academic	Social	Personal-Emotional	Attachment	Total
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**	.596**	.556**	.847**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	750	750	750	750	750
Social Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1	.484**	.870**	.798**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	750	750	750	750	750
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.596**	.484**	1	.508**	.807**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001	. <.001		<.001	<.001
	N	750	750	750	750	750
Attachment	Pearson Correlation	.556**	.870**	.508**	1	.829**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	750	750	750	750	750
Total Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.847**	.798**	.807**	.829**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	750	750	750	750	750

4.2.3.2 Exploratory Analyses

Prior to testing the main hypothesis, exploratory analyses were conducted to investigate the relationships between gender, ethnicity, age and the key dependent and independent variables.

Gender

The first variable to be considered in this exploratory analysis section is gender. When gender is analysed by PEHE, no significant relationship is found. When the data is analysed by TTA (home or halls), female students are more likely to be living at home than their male counterparts. As per Table 44 below, 41.6% of female students are living at home, compared to only 32.6% of male students.

Table 44: Gender by TTA

	Home	Halls
Male	32.6% (n=72)	67.4% (n=149)
Female	41.6% (n=186)	58.4% (n=261)
Total	258	410

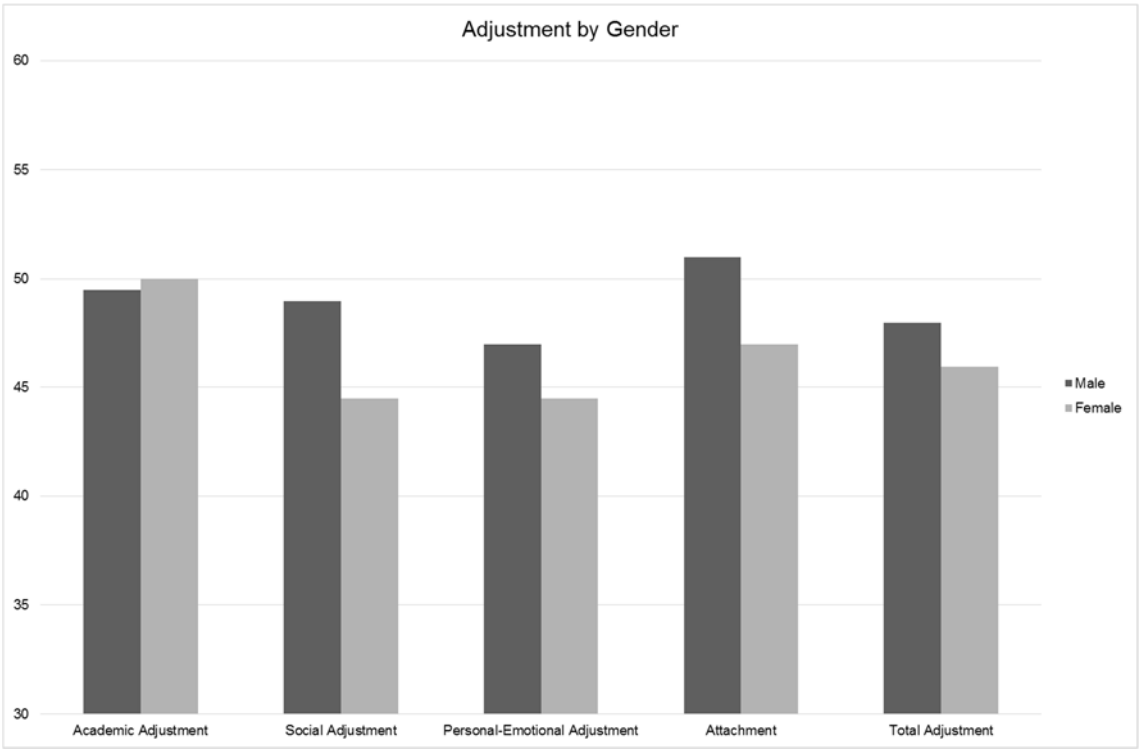
When analysed using Chi^2, this difference is significant (χ^2 (1, N=668) = 5.08, p=.024). When gender is considered by adjustment there are some differences between male and female students. In order to interpret the mean raw score, these have been converted to T score, as per the SACQ manual (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Due to the way the T scores are calculated (first term and second term onwards, and by male and female), the T scores used in the graph below are averaged over the two time points (autumn and spring).

Figure 17, below, clearly shows that female students score lower on four of the five adjustment scales, with only academic adjustment showing a higher level of adjustment. When analysed using a one-way ANOVA, all differences are significant except for academic adjustment (Social F(1, 666) = 6.21, p=.013; Personal-Emotional F(1, 666) = 15.81, p<.001; Attachment F(1, 666) = 4.53, p=.034 and; Total F(1, 666) = 7.12, p=.008).

When gender is analysed by achievement, there is no significant difference found, either as a direct relationship, or when considered together with TTA, meaning neither female nor male students who live in halls perform better or worse than those who live at home.

Given the differences identified here, consideration will be given to gender. However, it is worth mentioning that the gender differences in TTA and adjustment scores may, in part, be due to location of TTA rather than simply gender, as more females live at home than males.

Figure 17: Adjustment by Gender



Ethnicity

There is minimal variation in the proportion of students from different groups in reported PEHE. Respondents were divided into a binary classification of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) or white. The resultant Chi^2 demonstrated no significant variation between the categories in terms of PEHE.

Turning to TTA and using the same binary classification, it is apparent that students from BAME groups are over-represented in the home TTA group. There is a significant relationship between ethnic group and TTA ($\chi^2(2, N=723) = 42.87$, $p<.001$).

Table 45: TTA by Ethnic Group (% of cohort and number)

	Home	Halls	Other Rented
White or White British	27.6% (n=144)	61.2% (n=319)	11.1% (n=58)
Black and Minority Ethnic	51.4% (n=114)	41.9% (n=93)	6.8% (n=15)

Finally, looking at the dependent variables of adjustment and performance, very little variation was observed between white and BAME students. The table below shows the mean adjustment score by ethnic group.

Table 46: Mean Adjustment Scores by Ethnic Group

Adjustment Scale	**Ethnic Group**	**Mean Score**
Academic Adjustment	White	145.84
	BME	145.63
Social Adjustment	White	122.77
	BME	117.55
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	White	83.99
	BME	85.18
Attachment	White	104.03
	BME	101.16
Total Adjustment	White	412.16
	BME	406.37

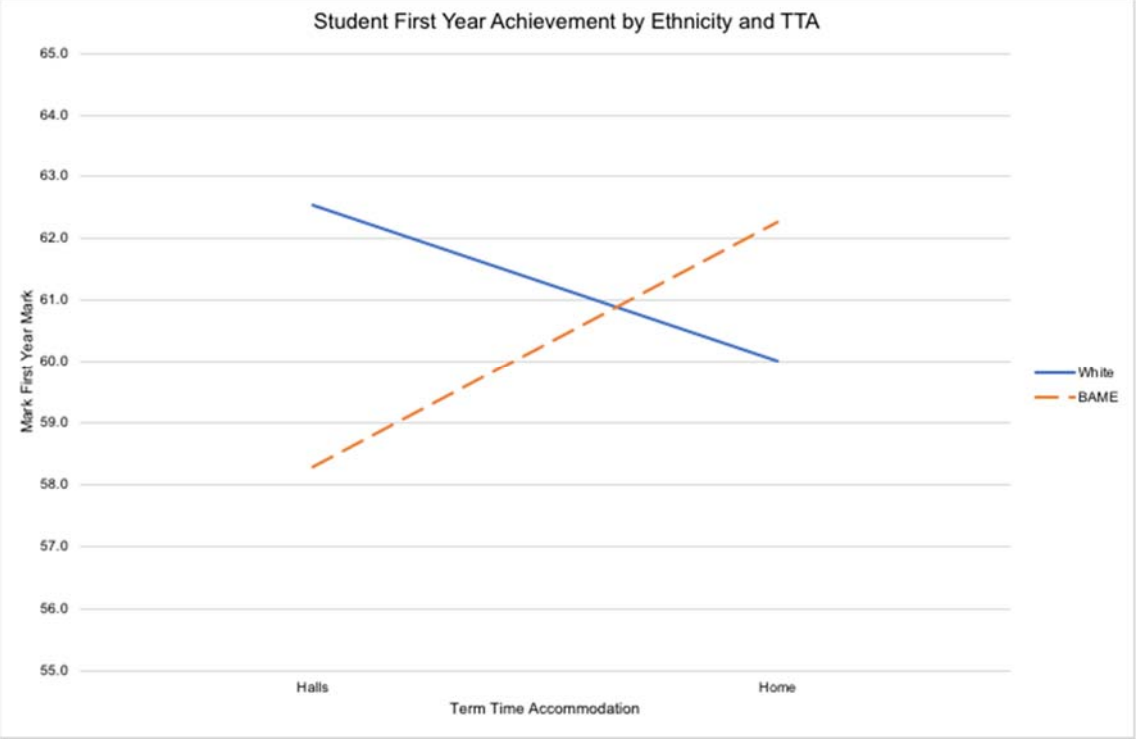
From the mean adjustment scores, only social adjustment showed significant variation (ANOVA: Social $F(1, 721) = 5.52$, $p=.019$).

As with the results for gender, these findings are perhaps not surprising. For students who are more likely to live away from the university, in the family home, there is less opportunity to socialise and become part of the university life than for those living in halls.

Further, following a two-way ANOVA which aimed to examine the difference of ethnicity by TTA on achievement, no main effects were observed either for TTA or ethnicity.

However, the interaction term was significant ($F(3, 373) = 4.52$, $p=.034$). Students from a white background who lived at home performed less well than their white counterparts who lived in halls. In contrast, BAME students who lived at home performed better than their BAME counterparts in halls. The mean end of first year results by ethnicity and TTA are shown below.

Figure 18: Student First Year Achievement by Ethnicity and TTA



This result suggests support for the concept of habitus as discussed in the literature review (Maton, 2008; Thomas, 2002). The process of developing a student habitus, of adjusting to the university campus, is not one that all students are able to achieve. Students who do not match the university's habitus, or whose own family habitus is significantly different, are able to perform better when they stay within the world in which they are familiar. In contrast, for students whose family habitus is closer to that of both the institution and the new student habitus, the adjustment process is smoother, thus resulting in higher achievement. This concept is key to this thesis and will be discussed further in the discussion (Chapter Five).

Age

The final exploratory analysis looks at the potential variable of age. In terms of parental experience, students aged 20 and over were significantly more likely to have parents with no PEHE than those aged 18 and under or 19 (see Table 47 (χ2 (2, *N*=723) = 42.87, *p*<.001).

Table 47: Age Group by PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE	
Age Group	**Yes**	**No**
Aged 18 and Under	102	141
Aged 19	106	154
Aged 20 and Over	70	150
Total	278	445

With regard to TTA, students aged 19 and over were more likely to be living at home than the younger students. However, since this group are more likely to have care responsibilities, this is to be expected.

Table 48: Age Group by TTA

Age Group	**Term Time Accommodation**		
	Home	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Aged 18 and Under	66	177	0
Aged 19	90	158	12
Aged 20 and Over	96	65	59
Total	252	400	71

With reference to the relationship between age and adjustment, as with both gender and ethnicity, students aged 20 and over had significantly lower scores for both social adjustment and attachment than younger students (Social *F*(2, 720) = 5.09, *p*=.006; Attachment *F*(2, 721) = 5.19, *p*=.006). Considering that older students are more likely to

be living at home, this is expected and mirrors the findings of ethnicity and gender. When age and TTA are considered in terms of achievement, no significant relationship is found.

4.2.3.3 Capital and Term Time Accommodation

The first set of hypotheses this thesis is testing looks at whether there is a relationship between PEHE and TTA. It will then consider the frequency of contact variable. Hypothesis 1a has already been presented above but is referenced here for completeness.

1a. There will be a significant relationship between social class and PEHE, with parents from the higher social classes more likely to have been to university than those from the lower social classes.

1b. There will be a significant relationship between PEHE and TTA with students whose parents have PEHE more likely to live in halls than those without.

1c There will a significant relationship between TTA, PEHE and frequency of contact with parents.

Hypothesis 1b

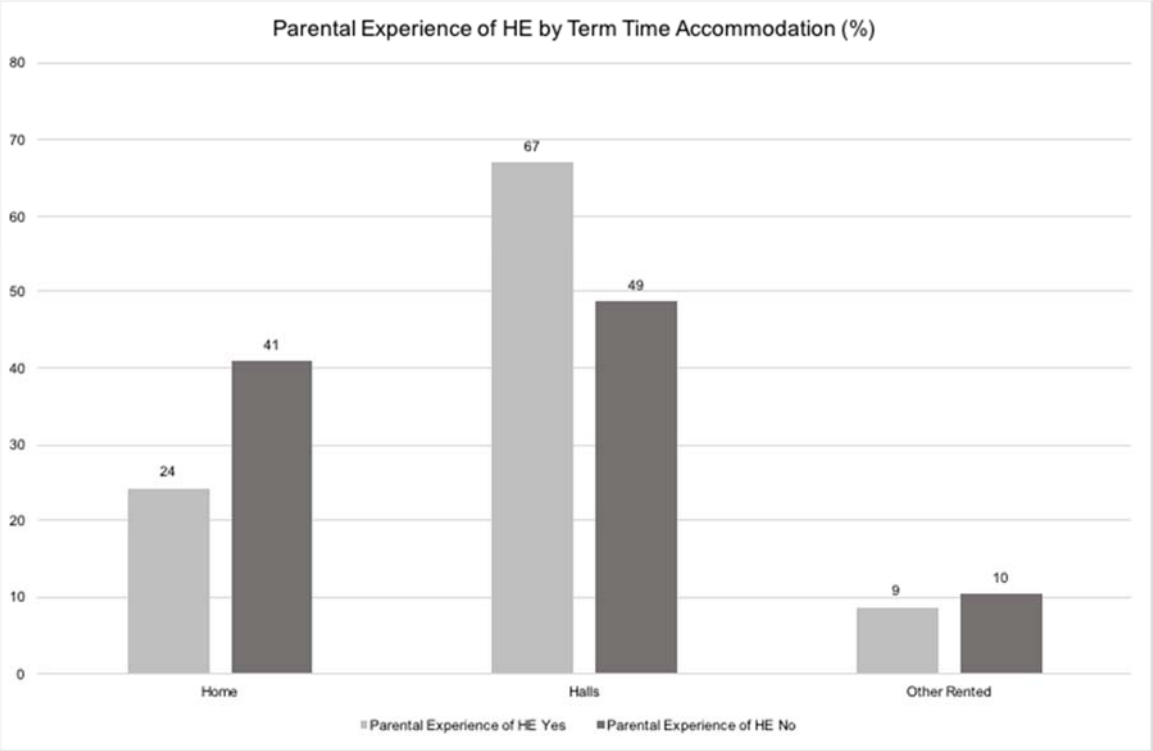
Secondly, the relationship between TTA and PEHE will be tested, as identified on the model below (H1b).

Figure 19: Model – Hypothesis 1b

Figure 20, below, shows the count of students by TTA and PEHE for first year students only, excluding the second year respondents. As specified above, all repeated surveys (that is, where a student has completed both first year surveys) have been excluded from analysis.

As the graph demonstrates, students who have parents with experience of university are more likely to be in halls when compared to those without that experience. This is confirmed by a highly significant Chi^2 (χ^2 (2, *N*=750) = 25.37, *p*<.001).

Figure 20: PEHE by TTA



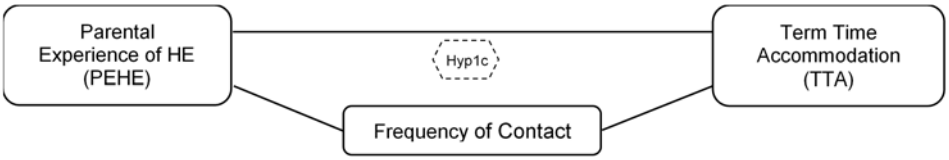
As is clear from this analysis, there is a significant relationship between PEHE and TTA. Students who have parents with experience of HE are more likely to be living on campus, and students with parents with no experience of HE more likely to be living within the parental/family home. Following this analysis, hypothesis 1b is accepted.

Hypothesis 1c

The next hypothesis looks to investigate the relationship between PEHE, TTA and frequency of contact with parents. It is expected that students whose parents have experience of HE, and who are living in halls, are less frequently in touch with their parents than students whose parents do not have experience of HE and who are living in halls. With regards to the TTA variable, it is expected that those living away from home

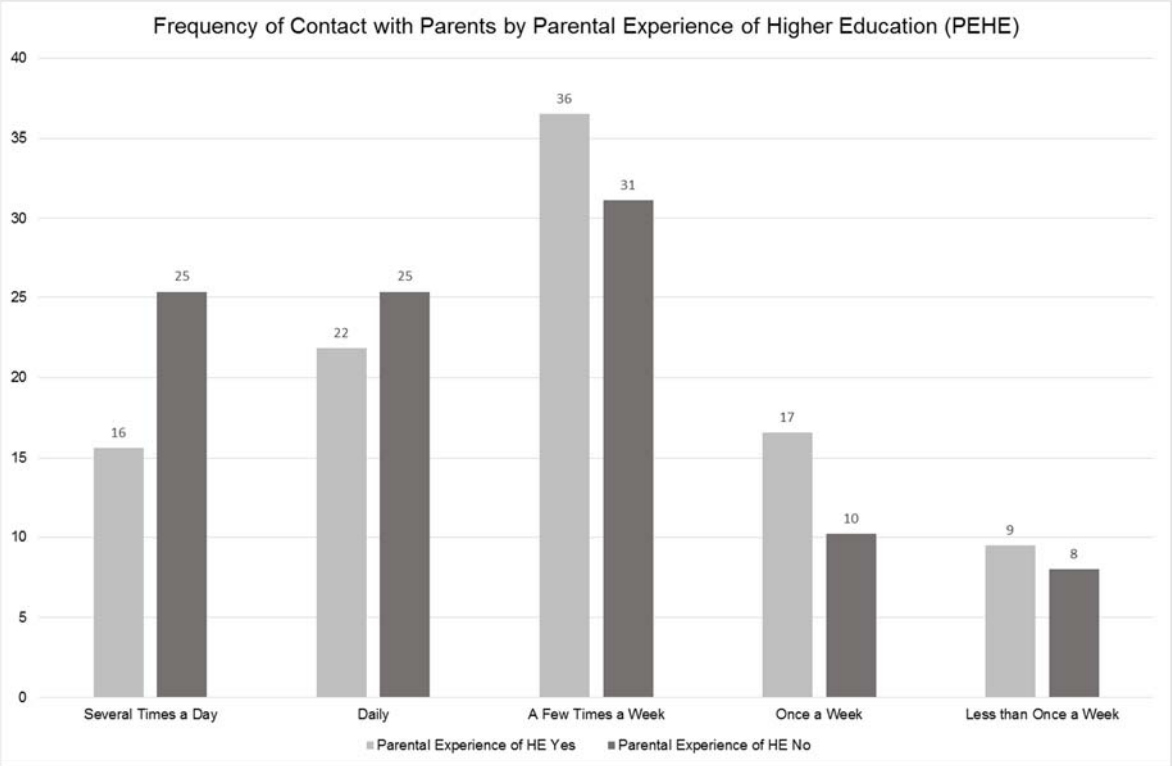
would have a lower frequency of contact with parents than those living at home. Frequency of contact here refers specifically to electronic communication, with the question specifically mentioning telephone, email, Facebook and text messaging rather than in-person contact. This is highlighted in the model below.

Figure 21: Model - Hypothesis 1c



In order to test this hypothesis, it is first necessary to examine the relationship between PEHE and frequency of contact, and then TTA and frequency of contact, before examining the relationship between all three. Figure 22, below, shows the proportion of students from both PEHE categories against the frequency of contact with parents. This has been calculated as a percentage of cohort. For example, looking at the figure below, 16% of students whose parents have experience of HE are in contact with their parents several times a day compared to 25% of students whose parents do not have experience of HE.

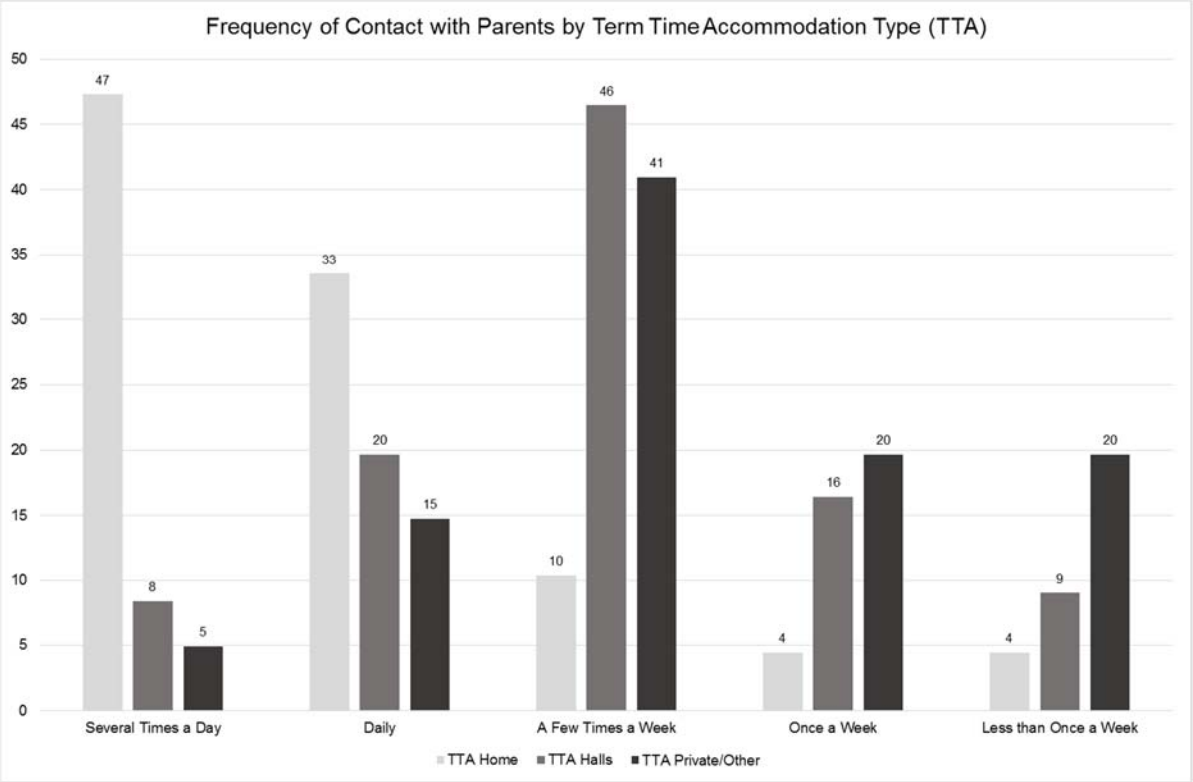
Figure 22: Frequency of Contact with Parents by PEHE



This illustrates that, in line with expectations, students whose parents have experience of HE are in touch significantly less frequently than those whose parents do not have HE experience ($\chi^2(4, N=574) = 12.33, p=.015$).

Figure 23, below, shows the actual count for TTA and frequency of contact with parents.

Figure 23: Frequency of Contact with Parents by TTA



As with PEHE (Figure 22), there are differences in the frequency of contact between the groups. Whilst it is to be expected that those living in the family home are in touch with their parents more frequently, this question specifically asked for frequency of contact via telephone, Facebook, email or text. Once analysed using Chi^2, this difference is highly significant ($\chi^2(8, N=574) = 185.8, p<.001$).

This indicates that the relationship between frequency of contact and both TTA and PEHE is significant. Following these results, the relationship between TTA, PEHE and frequency of contact will then be examined as per the hypothesis. In order to analyse the data, a two-way ANOVA will be used with frequency of contact as the dependent variable (Table 49).

Table 49: Two Way ANOVA – TTA, PEHE and Frequency of Contact

Source	df	F	Sig.
PEHE	1	2.08	.150
TTA	2	76.43	<.001
PEHE * TTA	2	0.74	.479
Total	574		

The results of the two-way ANOVA suggest that whilst TTA has a significant relationship with frequency of contact individually, neither parental experience of HE, nor the interaction between the two, is significant ($F(2, 574) = 0.74$, $p=.479$). Therefore, this hypothesis is only partially accepted.

In light of the exploratory analysis, frequency of contact will also be considered by gender. When analysed using Chi^2, the results suggest there is a significant difference between male and female students in terms of how often they are in touch with their parents ($\chi^2(4, N=548) = 22.64$, $p<.001$). Female students are in contact with parents more often than their male counterparts. This may be due to the larger number of female students who are living at home compared to male students, with TTA being the key factor rather than gender itself. Table 50, below, shows the breakdown of the frequency of contact by gender. Given that the sample is dominated by female respondents, differences observed may be exaggerated.

Table 50: Frequency of Contact with Parents by Gender

	Several Times a Day	Daily	A Few Times a Week	Once a Week	Less than Once a Week
Male	21	27	59	26	21
Female	99	107	119	43	26
Total	120	134	178	69	47

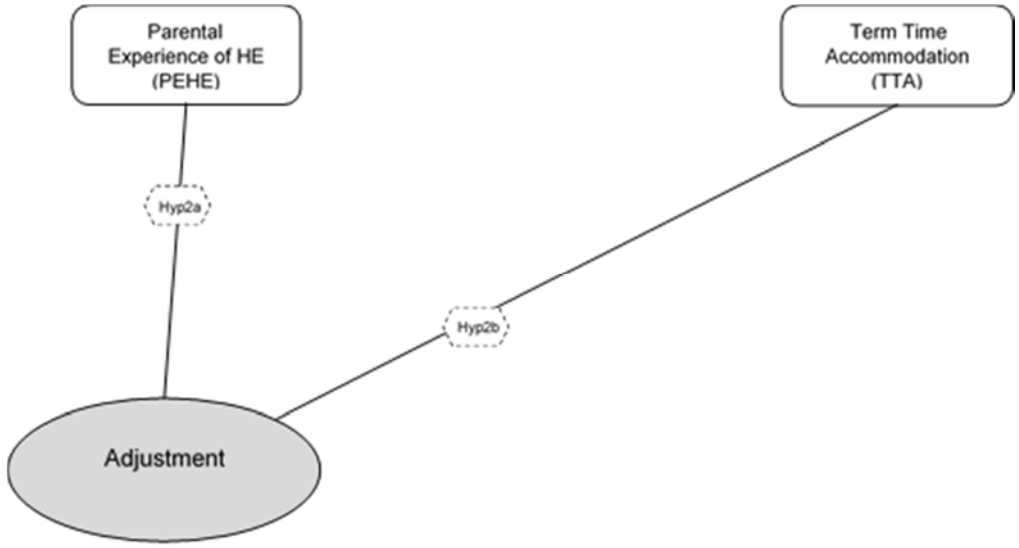
4.2.3.4 Adjustment to university

The second set of hypotheses to be tested examine the relationships between TTA, PEHE and student adjustment, as identified on the model below. The hypotheses will be tested using the full data set, as well as autumn and spring data independently. For both hypotheses, all five adjustment subscales will be analysed. It is suggested that the longer students have been part of the university (so by the spring term) the more they will be adjusted and settled into life at the university than in their first term (autumn). Therefore, it is important to consider the data in differing ways.

2a. There will be a significant positive relationship between PEHE and student adjustment to university, with students whose parents have been to university reporting higher levels of adjustment.

2b There will be a significant relationship between TTA and student adjustment to university, with students who are living in Halls reporting higher levels of adjustment.

Figure 24: Hypotheses 2a and 2b



Hypotheses 2a

Hypothesis 2a looks to investigate the relationship between PEHE and student

adjustment. Table 51, below, shows the mean adjustment scores by PEHE category for all participants. It is anticipated that students whose parents do not have experience of HE will not be as adjusted as those whose parents do have experience.

Table 51: Mean Adjustment Score by PEHE – All Data

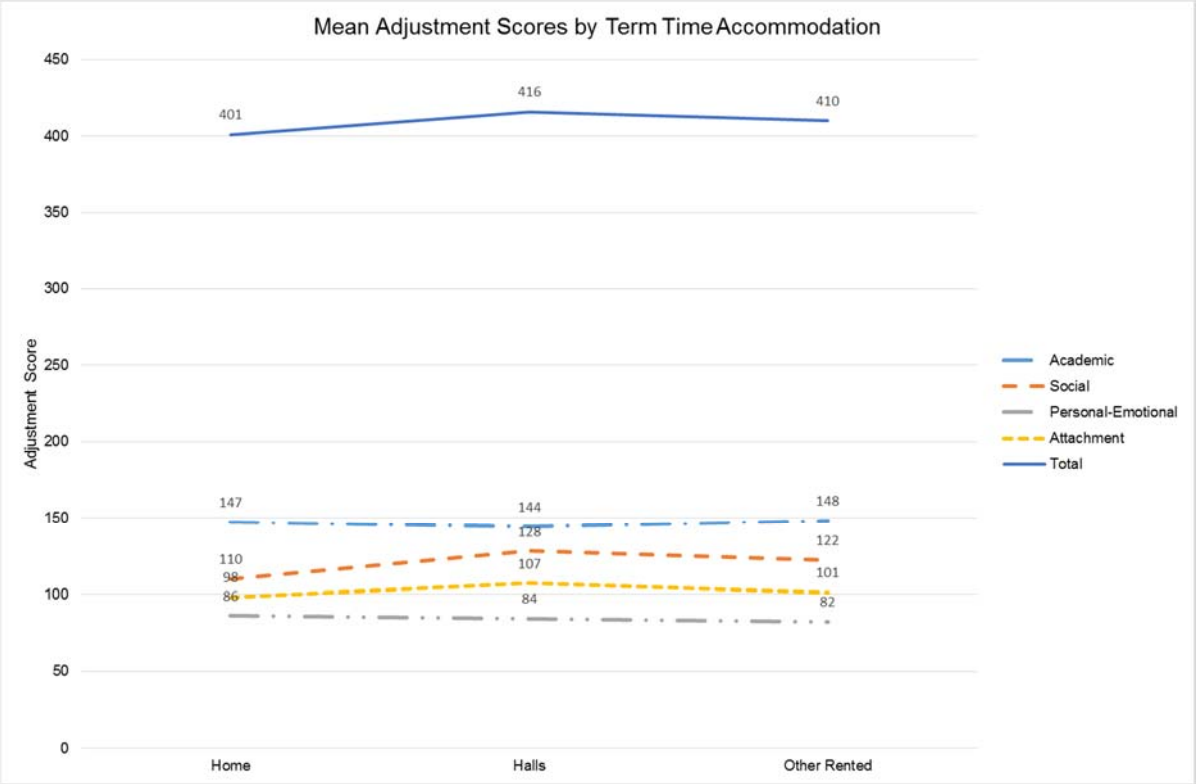
	Parental Experience of HE	
	Yes	No
Academic Adjustment	145	146
Social Adjustment	124	120
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	84	84
Attachment	104	102
Total Adjustment	412	409

The mean scores shown above suggest minimal variation in adjustment between those whose parents have experience of university and those whose parents do not. This would suggest at best a very limited effect of capital and only on certain aspects of adjustment. When this data is analysed using a one-way ANOVA, only the social adjustment difference is significant ($F(1, 749) = 4.63$, $p=.032$). Following these results, hypothesis 2a is only partially supported. These results mirror those from the question “Do you feel you have settled into life at university?” from the previous section, with little variation by PEHE.

Hypotheses 2b

Hypothesis 2b looks at the impact of TTA on student adjustment. It is expected that students who live at home will not be as adjusted to university life as students who live in halls. Figure 25, below, shows the mean adjustment score by TTA.

Figure 25: Mean Adjustment Scores by TTA



This graph shows that there are differences in students' levels of adjustment based on TTA, with those living on campus reporting higher levels of social adjustment, attachment and total adjustment than those at home or in other rented accommodation.

As with previous analysis involving TTA, since there are very limited data as to what *other rented* accommodation includes, and there was a low response rate from this category (n=73) compared to the home and halls accommodation types (n=259 and 418 respectively), this category will be excluded from further analysis.

When the data is analysed using a one-way ANOVA, differences between the groups for social, attachment and total adjustment are all significant (Social $F(2, 749) = 40.266$, $p<.001$; Attachment $F(2, 749) = 18.17$, $p<.001$and; Total $F(2, 749) = 3.48$, $p=.031$). However, neither academic nor personal-emotional differences are significant. Interestingly, whilst not significant, it is worth noting that students who live at home report slightly higher levels of academic adjustment than those in halls. This result echoes

findings from the previous hypothesis, where students whose parents did not have experience of HE also report higher levels of academic adjustment. This may be down to the reasons they are attending university and the associated risks for this group (such as finance, Archer & Hutchings, 2000), meaning they are more prepared academically and have different motivations than the more traditional student, who assumes they would be going to university and who is there to enjoy their student life as well as focus on their studies.

Following the results of the ANOVA, hypothesis 2b is partially supported, with the data suggesting that student TTA is related to student adjustment. As with hypothesis 2a, these results reflect those from the previous section. In the open-ended question thematic analysis, it was clear that students who live at home for their studies reported they felt less settled than their on-campus counterparts.

Hypothesis 2c

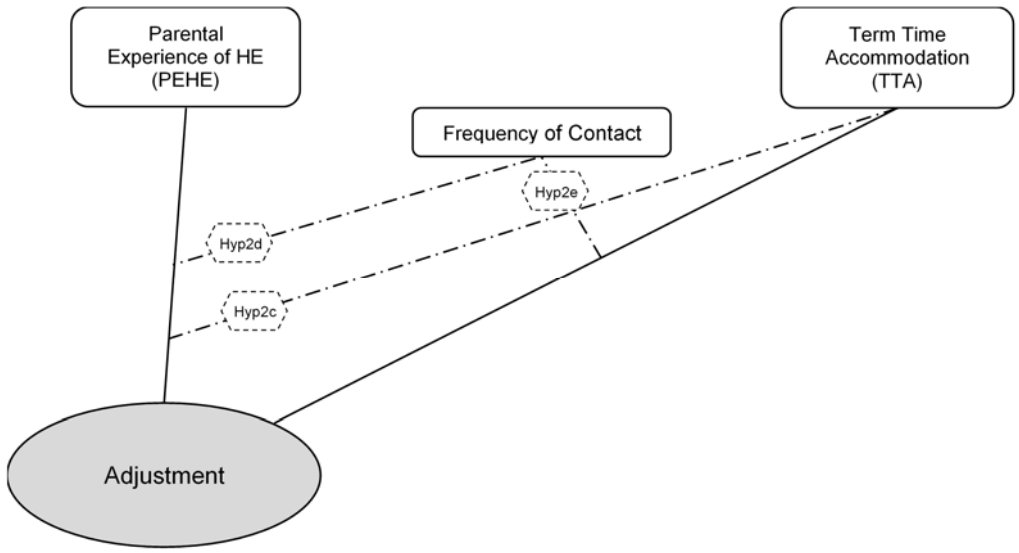
Hypothesis 2c aims to investigate the interaction effect of both PEHE and TTA on adjustment. Hypotheses 2d and 2e specifically focus on the moderator effect of frequency of contact, as shown on the model below. To fully understand the relationships between PEHE and TTA, it is useful to consider whether frequency of contact is a moderator on the relationship between TTA and adjustment, or PEHE and adjustment.

2c. *TTA will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.*

2d. *Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.*

2e. *Frequency of contact with parents will act as a significant moderator of the relationship between TTA and adjustment to university.*

Figure 26: Model - Hypotheses 2c, 2d & 2e



Hypotheses 2c, 2d and 2e will be analysed using a two-way ANOVA. The dataset used in this analysis are unique respondents from first-year surveys, as used in previous hypotheses (n=750).

Hypothesis 2c

Hypothesis 2c examines the interaction between TTA and PEHE on adjustment. It is expected that students who live on campus, whose parents have experience of HE, will be more adjusted than students who live at home and whose parents have not been to university.

Table 52, below, demonstrates that whilst in some cases (such as social, attachment and total adjustment) this is the case, this is not consistent across all scales of adjustment. When analysed using a two-way ANOVA, there is no significant interaction effect between PEHE and TTA on student adjustment. Therefore, hypothesis 2c is rejected.

Table 52: Mean Raw Adjustment Scores by TTA & PEHE

		Parental Experience of HE	
		Yes	No
Academic Adjustment	Home	149	146
	Halls	*143*	*145*
Social Adjustment	Home	112	109
	Halls	*130*	*127*
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	Home	86	85
	Halls	*84*	*83*
Attachment	Home	98	97
	Halls	*108*	*106*
Total Adjustment	Home	404	399
	Halls	*418*	*415*

Hypotheses 2d and 2e

Hypotheses 2d & 2e consider the role of frequency of contact on the relationship with adjustment for both PEHE and TTA. When both were analysed using a two-way ANOVA, the results indicate that there is no moderator effect of frequency of contact on the relationship between PEHE and student adjustment, or on the relationship between TTA and student adjustment.

Following these results, both hypotheses 2d and 2e are rejected. Frequency of contact does not have a moderating role on the relationship between either PEHE or TTA and student adjustment. Further, there is no interaction effect between PEHE and TTA on student adjustment. Whilst both key variables do have significant relationships with aspects of student adjustment (as per hypotheses 2b and 2c), these variables do not interact.

4.2.3.5 Adjustment over time

The following hypotheses advance the adjustment discussion by examining the impact of

time on adjustment. It is suggested that by the spring term, students will demonstrate higher levels of adjustment than in the autumn term, as they have had time to adjust to the new environment. The first hypothesis will test the time-based effect for all participants, then hypotheses 3b and 3c will test the effect of PEHE and TTA respectively.

3a. There will be a significant positive relationship between student adjustment over time, with students reporting higher levels of adjustment by the spring.

3b. Students who have parents who have experience of HE will adjust to university quicker than those whose parents do not.

3c. Students who live in the family home will take longer to adjust to university.

Hypothesis 3a

Hypothesis 3a investigates the longitudinal aspect of the research. The survey, issued at two time points in the first year, provides an opportunity to investigate whether length of time at university changed the level of adjustment of the student.

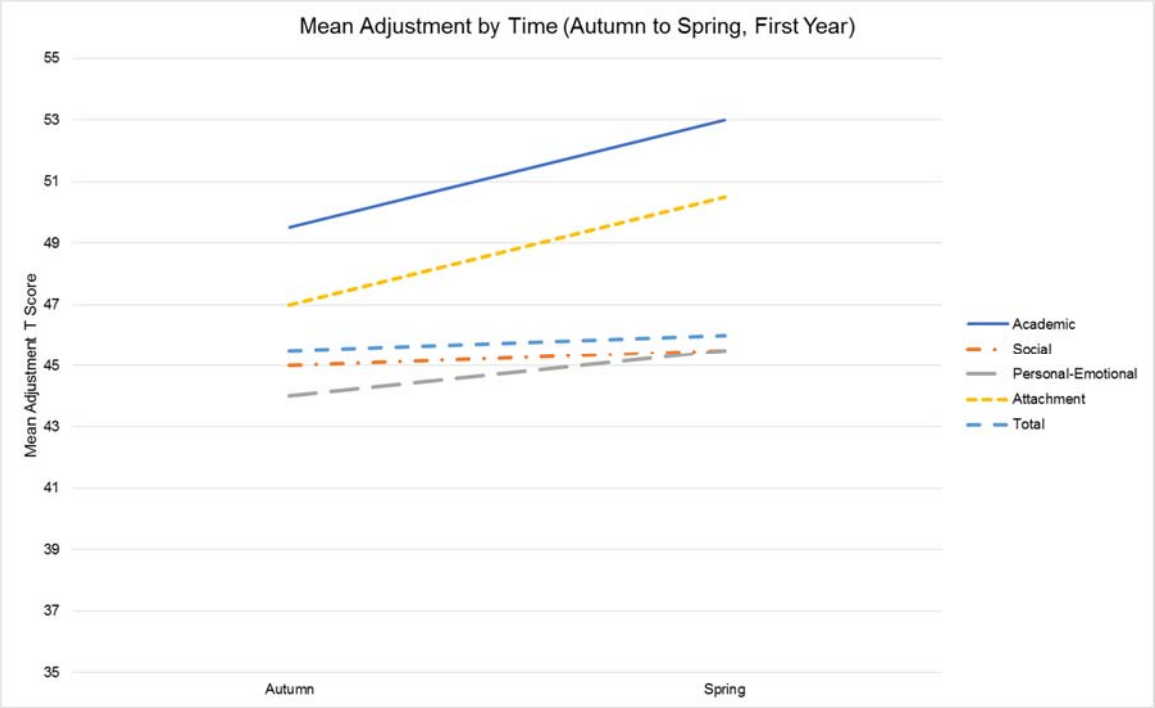
The dataset used to test these hypotheses (3a, 3b and 3c) were matched pairs, identified by their student number. There is a total of 35 matched pairs, where students have completed a survey both in their first year and in their second year. Therefore, the results are not as conclusive as intended. The table below shows the number of participants in this sample by their PEHE and TTA groups.

Table 53: Participant Numbers by PEHE and TTA

	Parental Experience of HE	
	Yes	No
Home	3	10
Halls	9	13

The figure below shows the mean adjustment T score for all five facets of adjustment as measured by the SACQ.

Figure 27: Student Adjustment by Time (autumn to spring, first year)



As predicted, the mean score for each facet of adjustment is higher in the spring than autumn, suggesting that students have become more adjusted to university over time. The table below shows the means for each type of adjustment and the results of a repeated measures t-test on each component.

Table 54: Comparison of mean adjustment scores over time

	Autumn	Spring	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic Adjustment	144	154	-0.978	36	0.335
Social Adjustment	116	121	-1.639	36	0.11
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	81	86	-2.104	36	0.042
Attachment	101	106	-1.564	36	0.126
Total Adjustment	400	404	-0.301	36	0.765

When tested using a dependent t-test, the data show that the differences between the mean adjustment scores are not significant except for personal-emotional adjustment (t(36), -2.10, p=.042). Hypothesis 3a is therefore only partially supported. However, it is

important to consider the impact of the small sample size, 35 matched pairs in total, on the final data analysis. Whilst it is difficult to compare this data to that of the previous section due to the sample size, the data from the open-ended questions do suggest that there is a little variation over time in general, with students marginally reporting that they feel more adjusted between the autumn and spring term. There is a much larger rise, as expected, in reported adjustment by the spring of the second year; however, this could not be tested statistically as the sample size was too small.

Hypotheses 3b and 3c

The final two hypotheses to be considered are the influence of PEHE and TTA on adjustment. Whilst the overall effect of time, as above, is shown not to be significant, data will still be analysed by the two key variables to establish whether they do influence the adjustment scores. The table below shows the mean adjustment scores from autumn and spring by PEHE. The data used in this analysis is the matched pairs data (n=35).

Table 55: Mean Adjustment Score over Time by PEHE

	Yes		No	
	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring
Academic Adjustment	136	141	148	160
Social Adjustment	121	128	114	118
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	75	86	84	86
Attachment	99	106	101	105
Total Adjustment	390	416	405	398

Table 56 shows that whilst for many of the adjustment scores the pattern is as expected, that is, that students whose parents have been to university are more adjusted than those whose parents did not, and that this adjustment also increases over time, there are also some unexpected results. There is a larger increase in the mean academic adjustment score for students whose parents have not been to university than for those whose parents had been to university. In addition, the total adjustment score for those whose

parents did not go to university decreased over time.

Table 56: Mean Adjustment Score over Time by TTA

	Home		Halls	
	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring
Academic Adjustment	146	154 (+8)	142	155 (+13)
Social Adjustment	102	117 (+15)	126	126 (+0)
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	86	91 (+6)	78	83 (+5)
Attachment	91	103 (+8)	107	108 (+1)
Total Adjustment	369	423 (+54)	406	394 (-12)

Table 56, above, shows the mean adjustment scores over time by TTA. As with the PEHE table above (Table 55), the data support the assertion that students report higher levels of adjustment over time. The exception is *total adjustment* for those who live in halls, which is again potentially due to the small sample size. It is not possible to draw conclusions based on these results due to the number of matched pairs. Whilst initially the data suggests that the adjustment of students who live in halls plateaus over time, whereas those at home show they continue to adjust, further investigation is needed with a larger sample.

When the results for PEHE are analysed using a repeated measures ANOVA, there are no significant differences between the adjustment scores over time. However, when the data for TTA are analysed over time, results for *social adjustment* are significant ($F(1, 33) = 5.26$, $p=.028$). Hypothesis 3b is therefore rejected, and hypothesis 3c is partially supported, where TTA is a significant factor in *social adjustment* over time. Results suggest that students living at home initially report much lower levels of adjustment than their on-campus counterparts, but that by the spring, they have more than caught up with those in halls. The individual scales suggest that it is the *personal-emotional* and *total* subscales where those at home report higher levels of adjustment. When this data is compared to the previous question, which asked students if they felt they had settled into

life at university, data from students living in halls suggests that they also felt overall more settled by spring, which contrasts with the data here. The sample size of the statistical analysis may be skewing the findings.

Following from the exploratory analysis which identified ethnicity as a key variable in the student experience, Table 57, below, shows the five subscales of adjustment by ethnicity and TTA. This shows that white students who live in halls report higher levels of adjustment than white students at home. As highlighted above, it would be expected that those who live on campus report higher levels of *social adjustment* and *attachment* because of their proximity to the campus activity. However, BAME students' *attachment* does not vary by TTA as it does for white students.

Table 57: Adjustment by Ethnicity and TTA

	White		BME	
	Home	Halls	Home	Halls
Academic Adjustment	147	145	149	139
Social Adjustment	107	130	114	122
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	84	84	88	81
Attachment	95	108	101	102
Total Adjustment	395	420	410	399

When the data is analysed using a two-way ANOVA, results support the argument for interactions between TTA (home or halls) and ethnicity (BAME and white) on some of the adjustment scales. For *social adjustment*, the data suggest that there is a highly significant effect of TTA ($F(1, 648) = 44.91$, $p=.00$) but that ethnicity has no effect on its own ($F(1, 648) = .02$, $p=.88$), however the interaction is significant ($F(1, 648) = 10.27$, $p=.001$). When the *attachment* scale is analysed, there is a significant effect of TTA, no significant effect of ethnicity, but the interaction effect is significant ($F(1, 648) = 10.97$, $p=.001$). Finally, when total adjustment is analysed, neither the TTA or ethnicity variables

have a significant relationship with total adjustment, but the interaction effect does (F(1, 648) = 7.75, p=.006). For *academic adjustment* and *personal emotional adjustment* there is no significant interaction.

These results suggest that whilst TTA has some relationship with the adjustment scales when the additional variable of ethnicity is introduced, the interaction effects are only significant for three of the subscales (*academic*, *attachment* and *total*). When the equivalent is analysed for PEHE, there are no significant interactions.

Caution must be applied to these results, as BAME students include a wide range of ethnic groups. As with the student body as a whole, BAME students cannot be assumed to be a homogeneous group. However, the results do indicate that there is an adjustment process at play that works differently for students from white backgrounds than for students from BAME backgrounds. It is not possible to state whether this difference is a result of the family/parent's influence, or the institution's influence, or as Bourdieu (1986) and Reay (2001) may argue, the family or institution's habitus at work and the conflict between those.

4.2.3.6 Adjustment and Achievement

This next section tests the relationships between adjustment and student achievement. It is anticipated that there will be a direct relationship between adjustment and achievement, with students who score higher on the scales of adjustment also achieving higher end of year average marks.

4a *There will be a significant positive correlation between student adjustment and student performance.*

Figure 28: Model – Hypothesis 4a

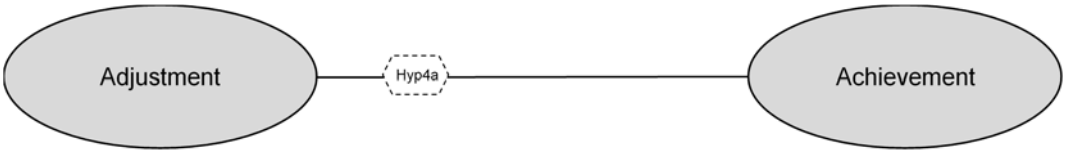


Table 58: Student Adjustment and Achievement Correlation Matrix

	Academic	Social	Personal-Emotional	Attachment	Total
Pearson Correlation	.285**	.102*	.185**	.151**	.232**
Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001	.019	<.001	.001	<.001
N	412	412	412	412	412

These results indicate clearly that all five scales of adjustment are positively correlated to student achievement, with students who report higher levels of adjustment also scoring higher mean first year marks. This suggests that levels of adjustment to university life are fundamental to student achievement, where students who are not as well-adjusted do not achieve as well.

When this is considered in light of the results of hypotheses 2c (effect of parental experience of HE and adjustment) and 2d (effect of term-time accommodation on adjustment) it would appear that term-time accommodation is a key factor in levels of adjustment and thus achievement, whereas parental experience of HE is not. The following hypotheses will test the direct effect of parental experience of HE and term-time accommodation on student achievement.

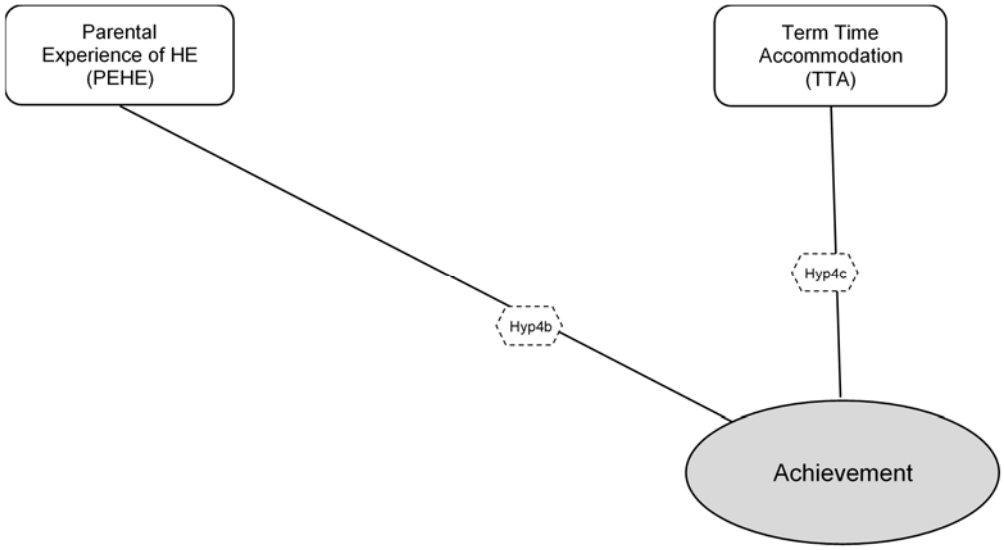
Hypotheses 4b and 4c

The next hypotheses proposed by this thesis will examine the direct relationship between the measures of parental/family influence and the end of first year performance, as highlighted on the conceptual model below.

4b There will be significant relationship between PEHE and student achievement.

4c There will be significant relationship between TTA and student achievement.

Figure 29: Model - Hypotheses 4b and 4c



It is proposed that students whose parents have experience of HE (and thus capital) will achieve higher average marks than students whose parents do not, although the earlier results suggest that this relationship may not be strong. It is also suggested that students who live on campus will have higher levels of achievement than those who live in the family home, a suggestion supported by the analysis so far, in that on-campus students are better adjusted than home-based (Hyp2b) and better adjustment leads to better performance (Hyp4a).

PEHE was found not to be significantly related to achievement, leading to the rejection of hypothesis 4b. While this is in line with the data reported so far, the similar ANOVA performed to test for a direct relationship between TTA (using just the Home and Halls levels of the TTA variable) and performance also proved not to be significant.

These findings are in contrast with those from Phase I of this thesis (Chapter 4.1) where a significant relationship between term-time accommodation and academic achievement

was found. This difference may be due to methodological differences, specifically that the sample from studies two and three are self-selecting and therefore being more engaged in their studies, more adjusted to university and therefore higher achieving, compared to study one which included data from all students across the first year. In addition, the Phase II studies included other universities not just the home site of this research. There is potentially further work into the role of term-time accommodation and its impacts on achievement.

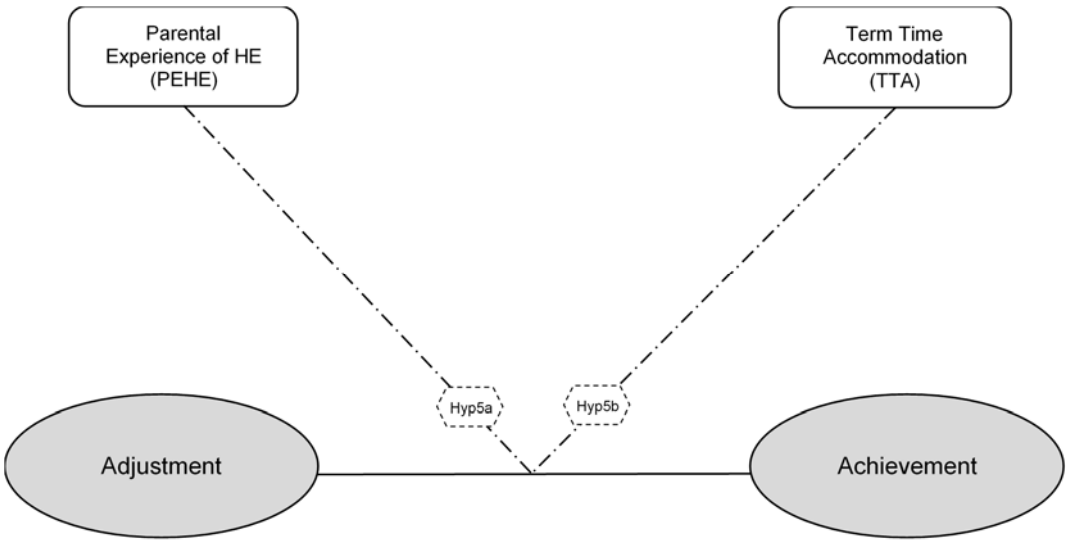
4.2.3.7 Moderator Effects – Adjustment and Achievement

Hypotheses 5a and 5b aim to investigate whether PEHE or TTA moderate the relationship between adjustment (all five scales) and achievement.

5a. *The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by PEHE.*

5b. *The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by TTA.*

Figure 30: Model - Hypotheses 5a & 5b



Multiple regression analysis was used to test for these effects as illustrated in the figure

above. The data were first recoded in order to conduct the analysis (Miles & Shevlin, 2007) into two categories, that is TTA focuses specifically for *at home* (value 1), and *in halls* (value -1). PEHE became either *yes* (value 1) or *no* (value -1). A further variable was then constructed to calculate the interaction effect (TTA or PEHE x Adjustment Score). Then the adjustment score was centred. These new variables were incorporated into the multiple regression analyses presented below.

Hypothesis 5a

To examine the moderator effect of PEHE on the adjustment-performance relationship, separate regressions analyses were carried out for each of the five adjustment scales (see Table 59 below). As identified in hypothesis 4a, all five scales of adjustment are positively correlated to achievement.

The moderator analysis was undertaken using a hierarchical multiple regression two step process. Step one included PEHE and the adjustment scale. The interaction term was added in step two. The model summaries below show the outputs, with the change in R2 value indicating if the interaction term was significant.

Table 59: Hypothesis 5b – Moderator Analysis – PEHE, Adjustment and Student Achievement

Model Summary – Academic Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.286[a]	.082	.077	12.62573	.082	18.205	2	409	<.001
2	.287[b]	.082	.076	12.63698	.001	.272	1	408	.602

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Adjustment, PEHE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Adjustment, PEHE, PEHExAcaAdj

Model Summary – Social Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.108[a]	.012	.007	13.09833	.012	2.424	2	409	.090
2	.123[b]	.015	.008	13.09214	.003	1.387	1	408	.240

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Adjustment, PEHE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Adjustment, PEHE, PEHExSocAdj

Model Summary – Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.186[a]	.035	.030	12.94468	.035	7.365	2	409	.001
2	.189[b]	.036	.029	12.95483	.001	.360	1	408	.549

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal-Emotional Adjustment, PEHE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal-Emotional Adjustment, PEHE, PEHExPEAdj

Model Summary – Attachment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.155[a]	.024	.019	13.01687	.024	5.022	2	409	.007
2	.167[b]	.028	.021	13.00627	.004	1.667	1	408	.197

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attachment, PEHE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attachment, PEHE, PEHExAttAdj

Model Summary – Total Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.234[a]	.055	.050	12.80905	.055	11.876	2	409	<.001
2	.239[b]	.057	.050	12.81082	.002	.887	1	408	.347

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total Adjustment, PEHE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total Adjustment, PEHE, PEHExTotAdj

The analysis of all the adjustment scales indicate that PEHE does not act as a moderator variable on the relationship between student adjustment (all scales) and student achievement. This means that whether a student's parents have attended university or not

is not an influencing factor in the relationship between their adjustment and their end of first year achievement, therefore hypothesis 5a is rejected.

Hypothesis 5b

Hypothesis 5b looks at the TTA variable and asks if this acts as a moderator on the relationship between student adjustment and performance/success. The same approach as described above was adopted and, as with the previous hypothesis (5a), results will be presented together.

The analysis of TTA as a moderator was completed as per hypothesis 5a above, with TTA and adjustment added to step one, and the interaction term added to step two.

Table 60: Hypothesis 5b – Moderator Analysis – TTA, Adjustment and Student Achievement

Model Summary – Academic Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.277[a]	.077	.072	12.70858	.077	15.844	2	381	<.001
2	.280[b]	.078	.071	12.71491	.002	.621	1	380	.431

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Adjustment, TTA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Adjustment, TTA, TTAxAcaAdj

Model Summary – Social Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.119[a]	.014	.009	13.13289	.014	2.726	2	381	.067
2	.200[b]	.040	.033	12.97547	.026	10.301	1	380	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Adjustment, TTA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Adjustment, TTA, TTAxSocAdj

Model Summary – Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.192[a]	.037	.032	12.97993	.037	7.307	2	381	.001
2	.252[b]	.063	.056	12.81662	.027	10.772	1	380	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal-Emotional Adjustment, TTA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal-Emotional Adjustment, TTA, TTAxPEAdj

Model Summary – Attachment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.166[a]	.028	.022	13.04318	.028	5.393	2	381	.005
2	.232[b]	.054	.046	12.88405	.026	10.470	1	380	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attachment, TTA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attachment, TTA, TTAxAttAdj

Model Summary – Total Adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.234[a]	.055	.050	12.85850	.055	11.061	2	381	<.001
2	.273[b]	.075	.067	12.73963	.020	8.143	1	380	.005

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total Adjustment, TTA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total Adjustment, TTA, TTAxTotAdj

In contrast to PEHE, TTA moderates the relationship between four of the five adjustment scales and overall academic achievement at the end of the first year. There is no moderator effect of TTA on academic adjustment, as students reported equal levels of academic adjustment across both accommodation types.

The following charts illustrate these moderation effects.

Figure 31: Moderation effect of TTA on Social Adjustment and Achievement

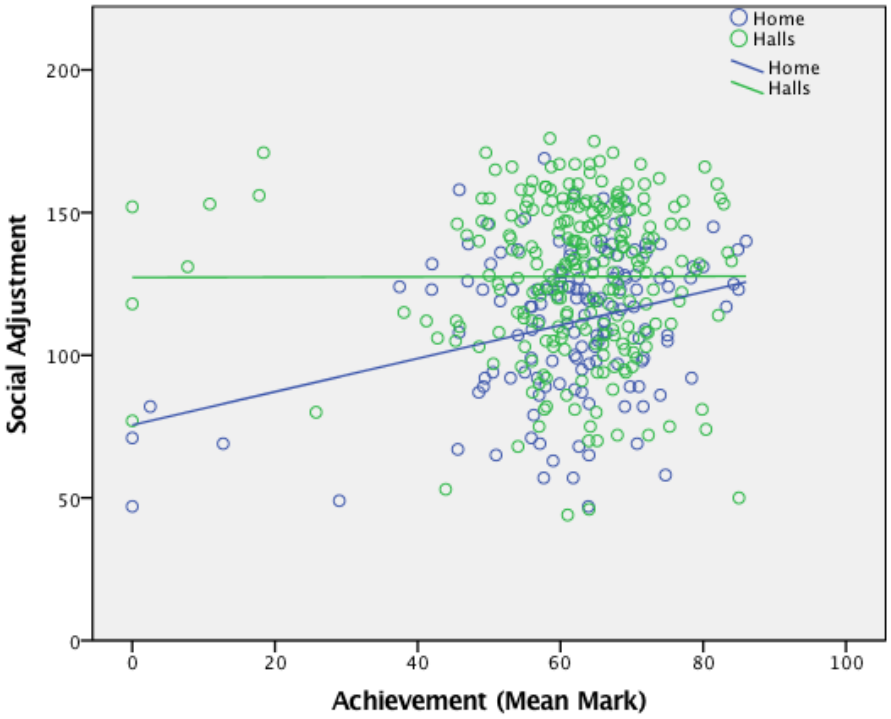


Figure 32: Moderation effect of TTA on Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Achievement

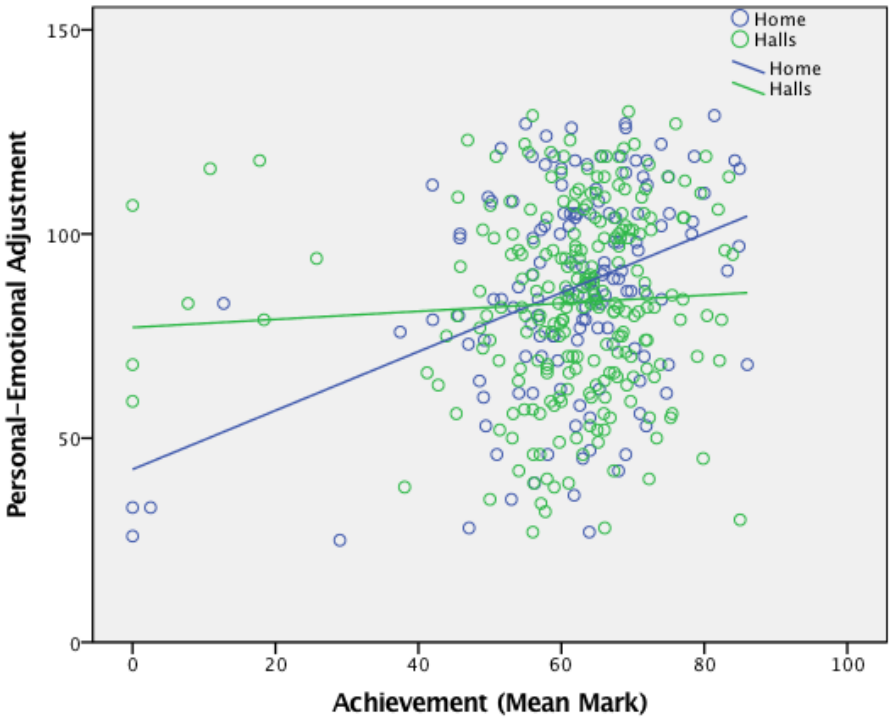


Figure 33: Moderation effect of TTA on Attachment and Achievement

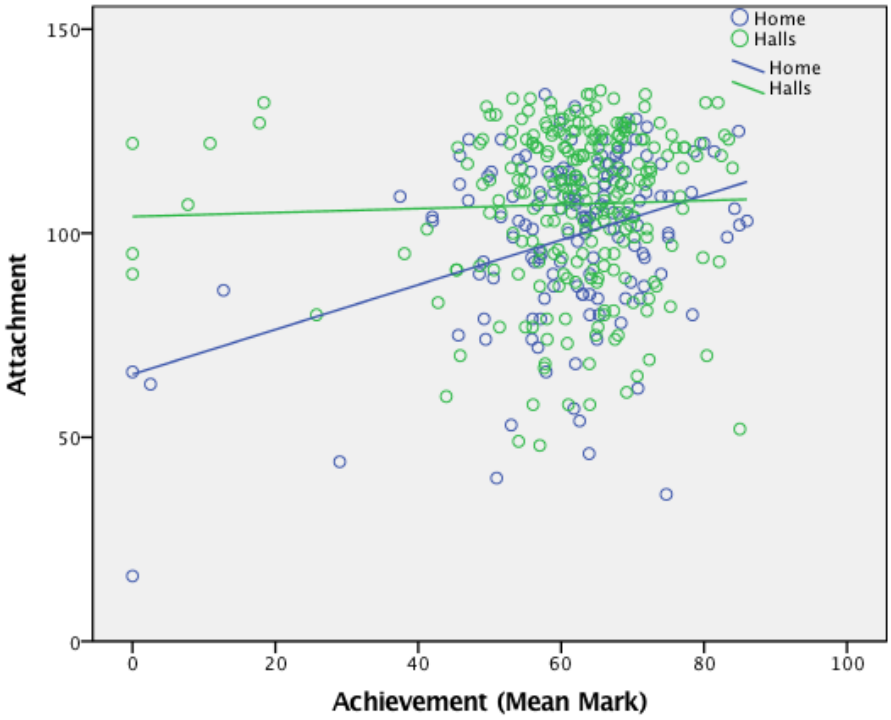
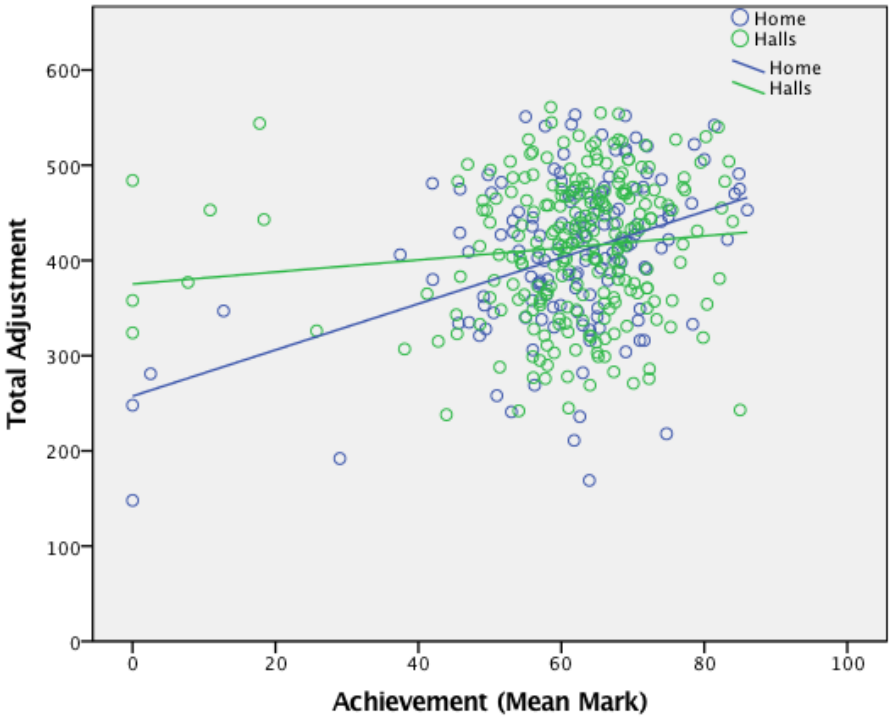


Figure 34: Moderation effect of TTA on Total Adjustment and Achievement



In contrast to the results by PEHE, TTA is shown to be a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and achievement on four of the adjustment subscales, as illustrated in the figures above. This suggests that whilst TTA does not have a direct effect on student achievement (Hyp4c), TTA does have an indirect effect as a moderator, therefore hypothesis 5b is partially supported. Students who live on campus show very little relationship between adjustment and achievement, with those achieving lower marks at the end of their first year still reporting similar levels of adjustment to those who score higher marks. In contrast, those living at home show a positive relationship between adjustment and achievement, with those scoring higher adjustment scores (that is, those who are better adjusted) also scoring higher marks, and those with lower levels of adjustment also achieving lower marks.

4.2.3.8 Results by Hypotheses

The table below details the hypotheses of this research along with their associated results; that is, whether each hypothesis is supported or rejected.

Table 61: Results by Hypotheses

Hypotheses		*Finding*
1a.	There will be a significant relationship between social class and PEHE, with parents from the higher social classes more likely to have been to university than those from the lower social classes.	Supported
1b.	There will be a significant relationship between PEHE and TTA with students whose parents have PEHE more likely to live in halls than those without.	Supported
1c.	There will a significant relationship between TTA, PEHE and frequency of contact with parents.	Rejected
2a.	There will be a significant positive relationship between PEHE and student adjustment to university, with students whose parents have been to university reporting higher levels of adjustment.	Partially Supported
2b.	There will be a significant relationship between TTA and student adjustment to university, with students who are living in Halls reporting higher levels of adjustment.	Partially Supported

2c.	TTA will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.	Rejected
2d.	Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between PEHE and adjustment to university.	Rejected
2e.	Frequency of contact with parents will moderate the relationship between TTA and adjustment to university.	Rejected
3a.	There will be a significant positive relationship between levels of student adjustment over time, with students reporting higher levels of adjustment by the spring.	Partially Supported
3b.	Students who have parents who have PEHE will adjust to university quicker than those whose parents do not.	Rejected
3c.	Students who live in the family home will take longer to adjust to university.	Rejected
4a.	There will be a significant positive correlation between student adjustment and student achievement.	Supported
4b.	There will be significant relationship between PEHE and student achievement.	Rejected
4c.	There will be significant relationship between TTA and student achievement.	Rejected
5a.	The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by PEHE.	Rejected
5b.	The relationship between adjustment and achievement will be moderated by TTA.	Partially Supported

4.2.4 Summary of Results

The findings across the three studies reported here present a complex view of the process of student adjustment and of parents' role within that. Phase I showed that where a student lives during their studies influences both withdrawal rates and achievement, with students living on campus being less likely to withdraw and more likely to achieve higher marks than those living in the family home. In contrast, there was no direct significant effect found between TTA and achievement in the Phase II studies. The findings from Phase I informed the direction and basis of Phase II, so this inconsistency is important to note. Whilst this may be due to sampling differences (Phase I included all students from their first-year studies, while Phase II was self-selecting), this is an important finding for this research. It is possible that the role of TTA is more complex when considering

multiple institutions, as used in Phase II. Phase I consisted solely of Aston University students. At the time of this study, Aston University owned their own halls. The accommodation policy offered all students, irrespective of home location, a place in university accommodation upon acceptance of an offer. In contrast, the students in the Phase II datasets came from a range of universities with a variety of situations with their accommodation provision. As a result, the results from Phase II of the study may be a truer reflection of the wider implications of TTA for students than Phase I and in terms of generalisability may then be more representative of the wider student population.

Phase II showed that the student experience is complex. Rather than finding a direct relationship between capital (PEHE) or where a student lives (TTA) and student adjustment, the relationship was found to be indirect. The qualitative data shows that the reasons why students choose to live at home or in halls are varied, and that not all students have the opportunities or choices available to them. Self and parents were cited as the most common influencers on the decision to attend university, with meeting others and course also important. The majority of students reported that they felt they had settled into life at university, but students living at home reported that they felt less settled than those in halls. This presents a more nuanced view of the student body, beyond the simplistic assumptions institutions make regarding who their students are and what options are available to them.

When asked what their parents did that made the university experience better, students responded predominantly with support, either financial or advice. Students whose parents had been to university reported financial support as being beneficial and students whose parents had not been to university reported advice. Students who live in halls also reported financial support as being the number one theme, with those living at home stating advice. This reflects that students whose parents have been to university are also more likely to be living on campus. Support with the extra costs involved in living away from the family home is valued by the students. In contrast, for those who live at home,

financial support is either not as pressing (for example their accommodation costs are lower due to not paying rent in halls) or, since those parents are less likely to have been to university themselves, they may not have the financial ability to support their young person in this way. Students who live at home reported that their parents did nothing to make their experience better twice as often as those in halls. However, there was limited variation by PEHE. Those who reported that their parents did nothing to make their experience better may be experiencing increased demands to manage both their university life and that with their parents.

When students were asked what their parents did that negatively influenced their university experience, students whose parents had not been to university reported that their parents did not understand university life and its demands, which negatively affected their experience, as did a lack of independence. This is also reflected for those students who live at home during their studies, who report their parents not understanding as negatively affecting their experience. As highlighted in the sample description above, students whose parents have not been to university are more likely to live in the family home during their studies. Students living in halls say their parents negatively influenced their experience through distractions.

In terms of family commitments and expectations, students living at home were 13% more likely to say they were still expected to be involved in family commitments than those in halls. It is not surprising that students who are away from the family home are not as involved in the family as those who continue to live at home. Further, most students responded that they were still able to be involved in family commitments. As expected, students who live at home are more able to remain involved in family life than those who have moved to halls. For most students, this was found to not have a negative impact on their university experience. When considered by PEHE, students whose parents had not been to university were more likely to respond that involvement with family life had affected their university life than those whose parents did have experience. This may

suggest that parents who possess the capital of their own university experience are more able to understand the pressures and deadlines facing their young people, enabling them to understand the experience and accept that additional expectations from home are not beneficial. Likewise, those at home were more likely to respond that the involvement had affected their university life than those in halls.

Overall, the results from the open-ended questions have enabled us to illustrate the role of the two key variables of the study. Whilst PEHE initially does not seem to play such a role in the experience of students, there are ways in which it could be argued that capital and habitus have enabled the student to adapt to their new role quicker than for those parents without the relevant capital or habitus. In contrast, TTA clearly has a role in the experience, from the ways in which parents make the experience better and the expectations from home through to the impact this has on their student experience. TTA is clearly linked to capital, as students whose parents have been to university are more likely to be living in halls, thus more able to adjust to the new university life.

Initially it was suggested that TTA and PEHE were two unrelated variables. However, there is a clear overlap between the two. Whilst in this data PEHE often did not show a direct impact on the answers given, PEHE is related to the decision of where to live during term time. Once the student has arrived on campus, the interplay of habitus and capital facilitates the ease with which they adjust to the new environment. Students whose parents had been to university were more likely to be living on campus than those whose parents had not. Where students lived had a direct relationship to PEHE, with higher reported levels of some forms of adjustment (social, attachment and total adjustment) but not for academic adjustment or personal-emotional adjustment. Where the relationship was significant, students living in halls reported higher levels of adjustment than those living at home.

Moving to student achievement, all five subscales of adjustment were related to end of

year academic achievement, with students who reported higher levels of adjustment also achieving higher marks. When this relationship is analysed with TTA as a moderator, this relationship is strengthened. However, students who live at home and report higher levels of adjustment were also achieving higher marks than those living at home who reported lower levels of adjustment. Likewise, students who live in halls but report lower levels of adjustment also achieved lower marks compared to those living in halls who reported higher levels of adjustment. When the relationship between adjustment and achievement is analysed with PEHE as a moderator, no significant results were found.

As demonstrated, it is not possible to assume that PEHE and TTA work in isolation, as capital clearly plays a role in where the student lives during term time. Furthermore, following the analysis of TTA and ethnicity, it is also possible to argue that the family habitus is key in the student experience, specifically whether this is in conflict with the habitus of the institution or not. BAME students achieved higher results when living at home than when living in halls, and white students achieved higher marks living in halls than at home. Students living at home were more likely to report lower levels of adjustment than those on campus.

When the data were considered by student characteristics, ethnicity was shown to be an important variable. More female students lived at home than male students, as did students from BAME groups. Further analysis showed that white students reported higher levels of adjustment and achieved higher marks when living in halls instead of at home, whereas BAME students reported higher levels of adjustment and higher marks when they lived at home and not in halls.

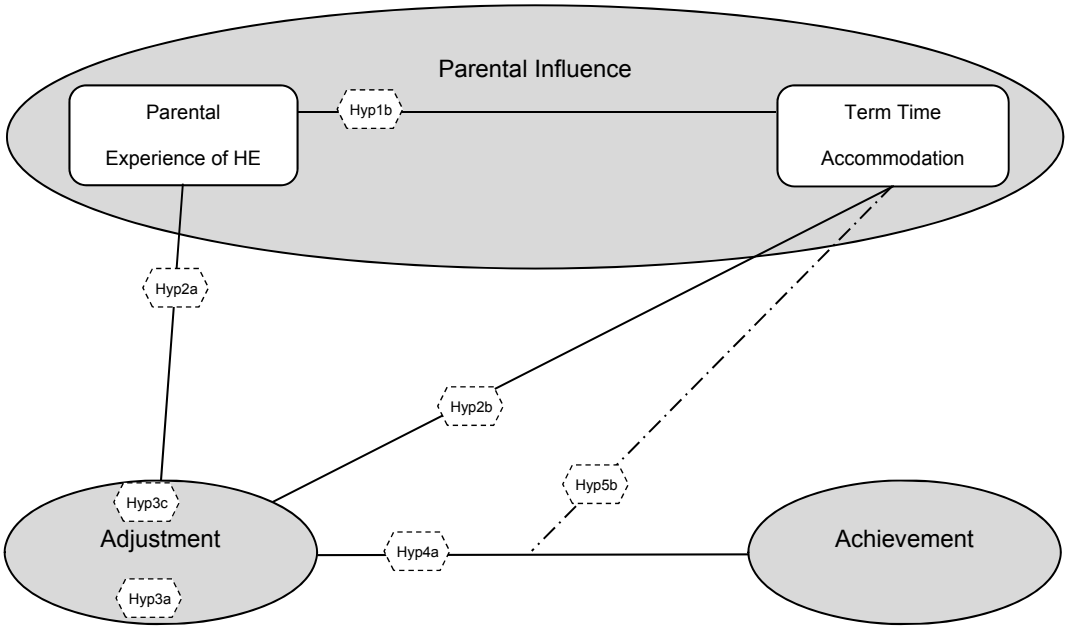
4.2.5 Updated Conceptual Model

Following these results, it is possible to re-draw the conceptual model to identify clearly the significant relationships. Figure 35, below, shows the revised model following analysis

of the data. The data suggest that there is a path through which the relationship works. PEHE influences where a student lives during their first year, and where they live is related to their reported levels of adjustment. Adjustment, all five subscales, is positively correlated to achievement. Therefore, a student whose parents have been to university is more likely to live on campus, report higher levels of adjustment, and achieve higher marks.

It is clear from this model that the role of PEHE (capital) is not as significant in the student experience as that of TTA. In addition, whilst frequency of contact was significant for both PEHE and TTA independently, there was no significant relationship between all three. Therefore, this variable is removed.

Figure 35: Revised Model



5. Discussion

This section will discuss the findings detailed in the results chapter and consider their implications and relevance to the research presented in the literature review. It will compare the findings with the original aims and research question in order to evaluate the extent to which those aims have been achieved and questions answered. It will then look at the limitations of the research. It will present the implications for theory, methodology and practice, considering the stakeholders of universities, students and parents. A short autobiographical reflection will then be followed by a conclusion.

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the role of parents within the student experience, with reference to student adjustment and achievement. In order to ensure that universities offer appropriate and effective support, understanding the experience of students is fundamental. As a result, the overarching research question was:

> *In what way, and to what extent, does the role and influence of parents continue once a student has begun their undergraduate degree programme?*

The first research aim of the study was to review current literature addressing influence of parents on the student experience. In order to address this aim, the current literature pertinent to this research was reviewed, with relevant literature grouped into three core themes of capital and habitus; parents and education; and student adjustment including TTA. The literature review considered the concepts of capital and habitus and how these bring advantage to the holder. It identified ways in which capital may advantage some students, particularly those whose families have experience of the HE system. The literature suggested that students who come from families with the appropriate capital and habitus would find it easier to adapt to the new student habitus, and so would feel able to fit in and succeed at university. In contrast, students coming from families without capital or habitus would find it harder to adjust, feeling like fish out of water, and being more likely to withdraw early from their studies.

Next the literature looking at the role and influence of parents through the education cycle was reviewed, highlighting the active role parents hold in the education of their child up to and including the decision-making process regarding HE. This literature demonstrates that throughout the education life-cycle, parents have a positive impact on their children's education, but that this is influenced by the family's capital, education, gender and ethnicity. Students from families with capital were at an advantage academically compared to those without capital. Students whose families did not match the school's habitus found it harder to be accepted by the school, and whilst they were involved in their child's education, this was in other ways compared to those whose habitus was aligned with the school. In terms of the HE decision-making process, parents remained an influential source of information and, again, capital can be seen to be important. Students who understood where to find information, and how to interpret such information, were at an advantage to those who were not familiar with the ways and language of HE.

Finally, the student adjustment literature was considered, including the impact of living at home on the student experience. It examined the factors which influence adjustment to university, looking at what contributes to successful adjustment and what contributes to a student's early withdrawal from their studies. The literature suggests that the adjustment process is complex and has many factors which influence the outcome. These factors include family, support, environment, commitment and resources on which to call. Again, capital can be seen to facilitate this process. Having the right resources, support and understanding positively influenced the adjustment process. The literature also looked at the ways in which the students' level of preparation and expectations could assist the student with the adjustment process. Students who were better prepared, with realistic expectations, adjusted better than those who were unprepared and who held romanticised notions of what student life would entail.

The literature relating to living at home demonstrated that students who live at home are more likely to be from what universities term "non-traditional backgrounds": particularly,

they were the first in the family to attend university. Finance was often a reason given for why students have chosen to stay at home during their studies, and the concept of risk-minimising for these students was discussed, with students who felt that staying at home mitigated the risk of failure should they not succeed. The literature shows that students who live at home have a different student experience to those who live on campus, with participation in extra-curricular activities, such as sport and societies, presented as being more difficult. In addition, students living at home were more likely to have part-time work commitments. Again, the themes of capital and habitus can be seen, with students from families with capital of all forms being more likely to live on campus, have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities – either because they do not have the same need to work (economic capital) or because they understand the wider benefits from attending university (cultural capital) – and are able to adapt to the new student habitus, coming from a background which is closer to the institutional habitus.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The second aim of this research was to understand if parents influence the student experience in relation to adjustment, achievement and withdrawal via parental experience of HE (PEHE) and term-time accommodation (TTA). The following summary of results speaks to these aims.

Utilising a large scale online survey, data were gathered on students' level of adjustment, TTA location and whether their parents had been to university, as well as key characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and questions relating to their experience. The survey was distributed to home (UK, rather than EU or international) students, in the first year of their undergraduate studies in both autumn and spring terms. In order to capture longitudinal data, the survey was repeated in the autumn term of the students' second year.

The key findings of this thesis suggest that there is a clear path relationship between PEHE, TTA, adjustment and achievement. This can be demonstrated as below:

PEHE → TTA → Adjustment → Achievement

This states that students who come from families with capital (as measured by PEHE) are more likely to live on campus (Hyp1), to report higher levels of adjustment (Hyp2b) and achieve higher end of first year marks (Hyp4a). Students who come from families without capital are more likely to live at home (Hyp1), report lower levels of adjustment (Hyp2b) and not perform as well (Hyp4a). Students who live at home are also more likely to withdraw from their studies than those who live in halls (Table 10, p130).

However, this is not to say that all students who live at home report lower levels of adjustment, nor that all students on campus report higher levels of adjustment. Indeed, if a student is living at home but reports higher levels of adjustment they also will go on to achieve higher marks. Likewise, if a student lives in halls but reports lower levels of adjustment they are more likely to achieve less well. Furthermore, when ethnicity is considered with TTA, adjustment and achievement, students from white backgrounds adjust and perform better if they live in halls, but students from BAME backgrounds adjust and perform better if they live at home.

When the moderation effect of TTA on the relationship between adjustment and achievement was examined (Hyp5b), it was found that this strengthened the relationship. For social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, attachment, and total adjustment subscales, the relationship between adjustment and achievement was strengthened for those living at home. In contrast, there was very little relationship between adjustment and achievement for those living in halls. The key factor in this relationship is levels of adjustment. The results here suggest that whilst there is advantage afforded to some students, it is how the student then adjusts that makes the biggest difference in their

achievement.

5.2 Theoretical Discussion

This section will consider the findings of this research in light of the literature presented in Chapter Two in order to assess whether the research aims have been achieved. The literature of the three main themes of the thesis will be considered: capital and habitus; parents and education; and student adjustment including living at home. The findings speak clearly to all three bodies of literature.

The results from this study strongly suggest that parental influence, as measured by PEHE and TTA, continues through the students' first year experience, albeit in an indirect and unexpected way. The findings support those regarding the different experiences of students who live at home (Arya & Smith, 2005; Holdsworth, 2005, 2006). However, these findings take our knowledge one step further and demonstrate that where the student lives not only changes their experiences of university, but also impacts on their adjustment and subsequent achievement. It is this interlinking of the variables, the path through which they interact, that is of value to this research. It is important to note that there is not a direct relationship between TTA and achievement, rather that TTA is related to adjustment, which in turn is related to achievement.

The first area supported by the findings is the overall involvement of parents in their child's education. Existing research shows that parents continue to have an important role in education for their children up to the age of 16 (Desforges et al., 2003; Sacker et al., 2002) and in the decision-making process (Payne, 2003). The current research demonstrates that this role does not stop at age 18 but continues through into the first year of a university degree course. This reflects my experiences gained through working with students, where it was clear that parents remained active in the lives of many students.

The evidence of continued parental involvement was also demonstrated though the Phase I data. The findings suggest that parents are a key influence on the decision to come to university, with students whose parents had experience of HE reporting parents to be the greatest influence, although other sources were cited as per the literature (Catley, 2004; Payne, 2003). These results paint the picture that families with experience of HE (and thus, capital (Bourdieu, 1986) are perhaps confident and able to help their child navigate the decision-making process and its complexities. Responses to the open-ended questions also illustrate the role of capital and habitus, with students whose parents had attended university reporting that they always knew they would go to university, demonstrating that parents had influenced the decision from a young age (Moogan et al., 1999). It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that universities are noticing an increase in parents attending events such as open days when they are so influential in the decision-making process. This involvement follows from parents' engagement with compulsory schooling, as actively encouraged by government policy.

When choosing where to live during their studies, a number of students living at home reported that their family was the reason they chose to stay at home. Given this data also suggests that more females than males, and more BAME than white students live at home, it is possible to suggest that cultural reasons influence this choice. Indeed, in their work, Connor et al. (2004) found that some female BAME students had to go against their parents' wishes in order to attend university, meaning it is possible to consider that staying at home was a concession some students make in order to attend university. This is an important consideration when conceptualising the student experience, as the assumption is all too often that if students choose to stay at home this is due to finances, and that all students are able to take part in all aspects of the university life with no limitations. If a student is living at home and is from a family for which going to university is not fully supported, they may have even less opportunity to partake in social aspects of university life. Therefore, it is essential universities understand that students may have pressures from part-time work, care responsibilities, cultural and family demands, especially for

those living at home.

The statistical analysis showed that students whose parents had PEHE were significantly more likely to be living in halls, and those whose parents did not were significantly more likely to be living at home. This can be seen as the first direct step of the influence of capital. Not only is cultural capital at play as articulated above, but also economic capital (being able to afford to live away from home) and an understanding of the wider social and extra-curricular benefits of being in halls, already possessing the “college knowledge” (Rubin, 2012).

This thesis proposed that students whose parents had PEHE (cultural capital) would be able to utilise the advantage that this afforded them in understanding the HE environment and system, by enabling those students to adjust quicker or more effectively than their counterparts and therefore be able to achieve higher academic performance as a result. In the qualitative data, students whose parents had been to university articulated that they always expected to come to university. Habitus can be viewed as our view of the world and our place within it (Dumais, 2002; Maton, 2008). It is shaped from our past experiences but also shapes our view the present, the future, and what is possible. Students from families with the capital relevant to HE are confident that their future includes being able to attend and succeed at university.

Based on Bourdieu’s work, it was expected that students from families with appropriate capital would adjust better to university (Bourdieu (1986); Braxton and Hirschy (2004); Lowe and Cook (2003); Tinto (1975) as they would be able to use their capital and habitus together as currency within the new environment, and therefore would be more able to navigate through the dominant culture (Goodall, 2012). It was also expected that these students would achieve better marks as a result. However, this was not found to be the case. Students whose parents had been to university did report higher levels of social adjustment to university, and those with higher levels of social adjustment did achieve

higher marks, but there was no direct relationship between PEHE and the other four subscales of adjustment, nor with achievement. It has been argued that social adjustment is key to student adjustment, retention and achievement (Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Leese, 2010). The lack of direct relationship of PEHE to adjustment (other than social adjustment) and achievement could suggest that even if family have the relevant capital, it is not transferable to the student once they have begun their degree course. There may be other factors which are more pressing in the student experience and that can enhance or override the advantage of that capital.

The relationship between PEHE and social adjustment is not unexpected, given that students from such families were more likely to be living on campus. It was anticipated that those in closer contact with the university would find it easier to take part in the social aspects of the university. However, the same could be argued for the attachment subscale, that being in halls would mean that the students were in closer contact with the university and therefore would report higher levels of attachment to the institution. This relationship was not found to be significant, so whilst students report that they are socially adjusted to the university by participating in social events, settling into their new accommodation and making new friends, they may not be engaged in a way that improves their achievement and marks.

There are possible explanations for why capital has not been shown to have a direct effect in the way it was expected to. It may be that the advantage of capital gained through parental experience of HE is (assuming that parents also attended at traditional age) now out of date compared to the current HE system. There have been significant changes to the university sector over the last 20 years, not only in terms of student funding and participation rates, but also in the structures and focuses. Due to the marketization of HE, universities are now focused on employability and the ability to secure a graduate level job. It could therefore be that parental experience of university is vastly different. In an environment characterised by large lecture classes and pastoral support offered through

centralised services, parents may find that the system, or dominant culture (Goodall, 2012) in which they are experienced no longer exists, thus negating their capital. It may also be that parental capital as measured by PEHE cannot be passed to the student themselves; they need to gain their own advantage through participation.

Students who are ill-prepared for university are more likely to struggle to adjust and are more likely to drop out (Lowe & Cook, 2003), so it could be argued that students who come from families where their parents have PEHE (and thus capital) are at an advantage as they should be better prepared and more able to fall back on their parents for support. The support of parents is clearly evidenced in the qualitative data, where students whose parents do not have PEHE report that the way in which their parents negatively influence their experience is by not understanding. Parents who cannot understand the academic demands or the education system will be unable to offer the support their child needs. Whilst the open-ended questions support this view, when the data from the SACQ is analysed, no significant differences were found between students whose parents do or do not have PEHE and their levels of adjustment, specifically total adjustment, except for social adjustment. This suggests that whilst for some students, parents not being able to offer support to them, or knowing how to prepare will impact on their experience, this is not consistent for all students.

Students also reported that the ways their parents made their experience of university better was by supporting them, whether this was financial support for those living on campus, or advice and support for those living at home. Whilst the slightly different focus of the support offered varies by TTA, this reaffirms the importance of family support for a successful adjustment (Bean & Metzner, 1985). If universities are able to position and guide parents in how best to support their child, and to open that dialogue as soon as possible, this may facilitate a smoother adjustment period for students who may otherwise have struggled. By being clear as to what support may be needed, how the university operates and where information can be found, students may find the adjustment process

easier.

A possible negative influence on adjustment is the role of demand and expectations of others. The demands placed on the student are demonstrated in the data relating to family commitments and the effect these have on university life. Students who remain living at home feel they are expected to continue to take part in family life, which for some has a negative effect on their studies. This again illustrates the external demands on students of which, traditionally, universities may not have been mindful when considering the student experience. As highlighted in the adjustment literature (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton & Hirschy, 2004; Tinto, 1975) the adjustment process is multifaceted; if a student is under too much pressure, or if the demand on them is too great (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001), their risk of withdrawal increases. When universities are focused on not just recruitment but also retention, an awareness of the nature of these factors is essential.

Clear messages to students and parents around how best to navigate adjustment, the demands of the course and peak work times, as well as information on how to support the student may mitigate unreasonable expectations of parents which negatively impact on the experience. Several students also reported that not understanding was a way in which parents negatively influenced the experience. An openness about how universities work may help parents who do not have the knowledge to be able to offer accurate and appropriate support, thus again contributing to a more successful adjustment.

Rubin (2012) also found that time acted as a moderator on the level of adjustment, with students adapting to the norms and patterns of university life over time. The data from this study do not support this. Only personal-emotional adjustment was found to be significantly higher in the spring term than in the autumn. However, it must be considered that Rubin refers to time as being academic years, not just within the first year. In addition, the sample in this study was very small (35 matched pairs), which may have impacted on

the analysis. Average adjustment scores on the overall adjustment scale plus four subscales increased over time, although not significantly. As such, the statistical findings may have been different with a larger sample.

Returning to the theoretical model underpinning this research, the results suggest that there is a pathway through which the variables are linked. The main findings suggest that PEHE has a direct relationship with social class, with students from higher social class groups having parents who have experience of HE. PEHE is also directly related to TTA. Apart from social adjustment, PEHE is then not directly related to adjustment or achievement. Instead, it is TTA that has the direct relationship with adjustment, with students living in halls reporting higher levels of social, attachment and total adjustment. The analysis then showed that all five subscales of adjustment directly related to achievement. This pathway can be described as follows:

PEHE → TTA → Adjustment → Achievement

So, whilst PEHE may not be directly related to adjustment and achievement, it is influential in deciding where to live. Although not measured by this study, the implicit knowledge of how to adjust may also influence students' knowledge of where to seek help and the value of extra-curricular activity which both contribute to the increased levels of adjustment. This information is crucial to universities when structuring their student support. By understanding the interplay between TTA and adjustment, as well as that students who live at home tend to come from families without PEHE, it will be more possible to structure student support to work with such students.

The results which do indicate a relationship with capital, and especially habitus, come from when the data were analysed looking at the inclusion of ethnicity in the relationships. When adjustment and achievement were considered alongside TTA and ethnicity, it was shown that white students living on campus adjusted and achieved better than white

students living at home. Conversely, BAME students living at home adjusted and achieved better than those living on campus. This speaks strongly to habitus, specifically institutional habitus (Thomas, 2002). The habitus of the university itself is important in the adjustment process, with students who feel that there is a mismatch between their social and cultural practices and those of the university experiencing difficulties in settling in (Reay, 1998; Thomas, 2002). For students whose own habitus matches that of the institution, the process is smoother (Reay et al., 2009). Living in halls will match the habitus of white students more closely, meaning those students can have confidence in their new environment, the student habitus, and subsequently that their achievement is positive. In contrast, BAME students are more likely to experience a conflict between themselves and the institutional habitus, meaning that living in halls is a less positive experience, which negatively impacts adjustment and achievement. If these students remain in the family home, there is more of a match with their social and cultural practices, which can provide comfort and familiarity (Holdsworth, 2005), so whilst there are extra commitments on their time in terms of travel to and from university, the pay-off for the students is worth it.

The results from this thesis emphasise the varied and unique nature of the student experience. Literature discussed in the introduction chapter demonstrated the impact of marketization of HE on the student experience, for example through student services being centralised and the provision of an explicitly customer service role. Through the streamlining of such services, the danger is that support is of a one-size-fits-all approach, which cannot address the variation demonstrated in this thesis. It is essential that universities understand that there is more to the student experience than academic aspects (Williams, 2011), and that in order to produce a rounded individual who is able to adjust and achieve, students must have access to excellent student services. As is evidenced by this thesis, the student body is increasingly diverse, with many living off campus and out of the support of traditional students' halls of residence. Even those who choose to live in halls now find themselves in privately owned accommodation with

different support networks to those of the university. Universities have no control over the students' family characteristics, nor where they live during their studies, but they can directly influence the adjustment process.

Whether the marketization of HE is a positive or not, universities owe it to their students to not treat them as consumers of a product, whether the students identify as customers (Brennan & Shah, 2011; Bunce et al., 2017; Tomlinson, 2014) or not, but as co-creators of an educational experience through which they grow into and develop their full potential. This can only be achieved by linking academic and support activities together in a meaningful and appropriately resourced way.

5.3 Implications for Theory

Following discussion of these results, it is possible to identify the contribution to our understanding of the student experience developed by this research. The gaps in knowledge identified at the start of this thesis were twofold: the role of parents once a student has started on a degree course; and a gap in methodology. This section will look at the gap in knowledge and how this research has addressed this.

Previously, it has been established that parents played a changing role in their child's education over time, which was influenced by characteristics of the family. What was not established was whether this role continued post enrolment to university. As a result of this thesis, it can be concluded that parental influence does continue past aged 18, and this influence can be both positive or negative depending on the individual circumstances. However, the benefits expected for students who come from families with PEHE was not evidenced in the findings. Whilst a relationship was found between PEHE and TTA, and between PEHE and social adjustment, there were no other direct relationships found. This raises the question of whether capital can be transferred once a student has enrolled on

their course. Whilst capital has been shown to benefit students prior to enrolment, once they have the left the family home the advantages are not as transferable.

The main area in which this thesis has contributed to knowledge is regards to where a student lives and the impact this has on adjustment and achievement. It has been evidenced that living at home creates a different student experience than living in halls (Arya & Smith, 2005; Holdsworth, 2006), but the impact of where a student lives on their adjustment to university, as measured by the SACQ, and the subsequent impact on achievement, has not been established previously. The moderator effect of TTA is also enlightening. Students who live at home show much greater variation in the relationship between adjustment and achievement. A student who lives on campus will report similar levels of adjustment whether they achieve lower or higher marks at the end of their first year. In contrast, students at home have a positive correlation between adjustment and achievement. This suggests that adjustment, especially social adjustment, for students living at home can have a significant effect on achievement, much more so than for students who are living in halls.

The introduction of ethnicity into the debate of the impact of TTA on adjustment and achievement also contributes to knowledge. The attainment gap between white and BAME students has been a focus of research throughout WP literature for some time. The results of this thesis suggest that TTA is a key variable for BAME students, so this should be considered when looking at the attainment gap, as it may account for some of the variability in degree outcomes. This is not simply a matter of encouraging more BAME students to live on campus, but of considering what factors contribute to the different experiences on campus, understanding why students from BAME backgrounds do not adjust or achieve as well as those at home. Alongside this, it is important for the institution not just to consider this as an issue with the student, but to also consider its own habitus, and whether structural changes could support students who do choose to live in halls to adjust better, which would then lead to higher achievement.

5.4 Implications for Methodology

The second gap in identified at the start of this research related to methodology. Much of the literature from the WP area are from a constructivist paradigm, using qualitative methodologies. As this thesis aims to consider how the knowledge can inform practice, it looked to use an existing methodology applied to a new domain to establish evidence on which proposals could be made to inform practice and identify future research. The methodology employed here used a large scale online survey. The survey gathered predominantly quantitative data but was illustrated by students' responses to open-ended questions relating to their experience. An online format was chosen in order to access a significant number of students, whilst acknowledging the limitations of online surveys, particularly in response rate (Cohen et al., 2007). The challenges for this research were sample size and variety of institution. Undertaking multiple-site research remains difficult, which is acknowledged by these studies.

The findings from this research have also shown that whilst patterns of behaviour can be identified, the ways in which these patterns emerge challenge our assumptions. This reinforces the need for further research.

5.5 Implications for Practice

In order to address the final two research aims, it is necessary to identify the implications of this research, specifically how the results can inform future practice of supporting students to achieve their full potential.

The final two research aims of this thesis proposed to identify ways in which parents, students and universities could better prepare the student for university life and how to support them during their studies. The results show that parents of some students continue to be a significant influence, but that this is not consistent across student groups.

The data shows that where the student lives during term time is fundamental to their adjustment and achievement. Thus, it is advisable for institutions to consider how best they can support students living off campus, in order to facilitate the student to achieve their true potential. For students and their families who lack the appropriate capital and habitus, the university could provide information and opportunities that would give those students a chance to develop the knowledge, skills, values and advantage already possessed by others.

Firstly, it is essential to provide information to parents regarding the expectations of university and what being a university student means. This is not only in terms of workload, but also in relation to the wider benefits of community involvement. This could be used by the student in negotiating the adjustment period, providing them with information which may strengthen their argument to perhaps move into university accommodation, or to be able to partake in the social activities. If an institution is open about their ethos, values and ways of working earlier in the process, students can use this information to help inform their decisions. This is especially useful for those who may choose to continue living in the family home, as the data shows it is these parents who are more likely to not have the personal experience of HE on which to draw.

In addition, it is imperative that the university recognises challenges faced by individual students, so that they are not lost amongst the masses. With an ever-increasing number of students studying at a university level, individual experiences can easily be diluted. It is those individuals who may be at an increased risk of withdrawing. With university data being gathered on non-completion, it is essential for universities to attend to this withdrawal risk as closely as possible, although it must also be remembered that some withdrawals are the right decision for the student. The data from Phase I shows how much more likely students living at home are to withdraw.

Consideration must also be given over how to work with students who continue to live in

the family home through their studies. It is not possible for some students to move away from home, either for financial or cultural reasons, and so support must recognise these students. The data from this thesis show that if some students, particularly BAME students, had adjusted to the university, they thrived both in terms of adjustment and achievement. Offering tailored information, support and the opportunity to take part in social activities which encourage adjustment to the university must be explored.

The value of engagement should also be promoted to students. Such information would explain why students should be involved with the university, in what ways they will benefit and how they can help shape the future of the university for other students, as well as encouraging students to make the most of the sources of support available, such as personal tutors, and being clear as to why such support exists. For those unable to attend every event on campus, or who are not sure which ones they should attend, there should be an opportunity to utilise social media to form virtual communities which will support those who are away from their peers on the course.

Student induction periods, including (but not limited) to freshers' week, are an excellent opportunity for institutions to create social opportunities and hence minimise the risk of withdrawal. Such opportunities should last throughout the first year, not just at the start of the first term, to give students an opportunity to take part at a time and place that suits them. Rather than solely focusing on the academic aspect of the course, time must be given to the social adjustment period, especially for those who live away from campus. There are some practical opportunities which universities must explore. Social space available on campus is ever more at a premium. Common rooms have been renovated into teaching spaces, removing a space for students and staff to socialise. These spaces are of value to all members of the community of the university but especially so for those who travel into the campus daily. Somewhere for students to eat, meet others, and expand their peer networks should not be lost. Students who need to eat on campus but are unable to afford the prices of bought food each day should have access to facilities

and space to enable them to do this. Opportunities such as monthly lunches offered for students who live at home are an example of how the social adjustment process can be supported by the university. Finally, a buddy or mentoring scheme that matches two students both living at home together could be beneficial. This would enable not only sharing of experiences but also, if peer-led across academic years, could encourage involvement in non-academic aspects of the university and facilitate introductions.

5.6 Future Directions

The findings of this research indicate some clear future directions that could be followed up. Firstly, it would be beneficial to extend the research beyond achievement at the end of the first year and look beyond through the whole course, to include the progression statuses each year, whether a student had withdrawn from their studies early, needed to repeat any modules or if they proceeded through their programme. It would be interesting to include the final year degree classification to examine whether first year adjustment impacted longer term and whether it is a predictor of future success.

Secondly, further work into reported levels of adjustment through the first year would also bring added benefits. Social adjustment is cited as being important in the adjustment process but for first year students in the current system, we do not know what contributes to higher levels of social adjustment. Future research could ask which activities have a positive relationship with adjustment and what is the role of – for example – the Students' Union, societies and sports clubs in the adjustment process. Included in such considerations could be the traditional freshers' week activities, research undertaken to understand the role these activites play in a student's perceived level of adjustment and whether events spread throughout the year would contribute to higher levels of adjustment.

Thirdly, further investigation into the differences between ethnic groups by TTA would

provide clarity on the findings detailed in this thesis. Students from BAME backgrounds appear to benefit from the experience more if they remain living in the family home. However, this research cannot establish why that difference exists. This may be a result of capital and habitus, cultural differences or proximity to campus. The methodology used in this research cannot investigate why, or the details of the student experience, and it would be beneficial to understand this situation further.

Finally, the role of student support as offered by the university should also be investigated, specifically whether students perceive that support available is fit for purpose, and how this relates to adjustment. This thesis says relatively little about the support provided by the university and its agents, but suggests that support using a one-size-fits-all model will not meet the needs of a diverse student body. Undertaking longitudinal interviews with students from a range of programmes and a mixture of PEHE and TTA backgrounds, as well as ethnicity, would contribute significantly to the shaping of student services of the future. However, given the changing landscape of HE, the drive to market and promote the university to remain competitive, it is essential that resources are not taken away from core services. If universities do not wish for students to be consumers of a product, then we must work together to co-produce knowledge, support students' development and facilitate their learning in such a way that they achieve the very best they can.

5.7 Limitations of study

There are a number of limitations that can be identified through the course of this thesis. Firstly, the sample itself is not fully representative of the wider student body within the UK. With the two main participant universities (Aston University, in Birmingham, and De Montfort University, in Leicester) both being in diverse, large cities, the ethnic breakdown of the participants does not represent the wider student body. While attempts were made to engage with a wider range of HE institutions of different types and constituencies, the sample ultimately was dominated by the two more willing participant universities.

However, for the analysis looking at the role of ethnicity on adjustment and achievement, the increase in numbers of BAME students has enabled more robust analysis and conclusions to be drawn. In addition, there was also an over-representation of female students in this study. Both of these issues reflect the nature of the sample, in that by being self-selecting, it is not possible to ensure an equal representation of the target population.

There are other underlying characteristics of the student which also may have enabled additional comparisons between group types. Prior to entry to university, given that students must all have met the entry requirements for their course, there is little variation in qualifications. However, the school attended and its type (such as state or private school) may also have given extra information as to the capital of the family. In addition, increased information gathered about the PEHE would have been advantageous, as would gathering the age of the parent. There would be great variation between the experience of HE for a parent aged 60 compared to a parent aged 40, assuming attendance at the traditional age (18), as there would between a parent who attended at that age, or one who only recently completed their degree as a mature student. As detailed in the methodology, this thesis made the positive decision not to include parents in the research. However, now more is understood of the role of parents, a more targeted approach to gathering additional data relating to parents would contribute to our understanding.

It is also important to note the limitation of the time period in which this data was collected. The survey was distributed during the 2008/9 and 2009/10 academic years, since which time the UK university sector, and the wider economy, have seen significant changes, with more to come in the near future. This does not mean, however, that the findings from this research are not of value. As the data confirm previous work, also undertaken some 20-30 years previously, the nature of adjustment and adulthood themselves are not as easily affected by these changes.

Consideration must also be given to the key variables themselves and whether they are an accurate measure of parental influence. PEHE and TTA are both categorical variables. It is possible for one parent to have been to university but not be the residential parent (that is, the parent with whom the student lives). It is also possible that the parent attended university later in life themselves and as such, the early life influences were of a parent without capital. Further, it is also necessary to consider whether measures of parental influence measured what was intended. The findings related to TTA could be a result of the influence of parents, distance from campus, demands on the student (such as part-time working, care responsibilities), or a combination thereof.

Finally, the measure of frequency of contact with parents only recorded the actual frequency, but did not inquire as to the purpose of the contact. This may range from trivial requests through to support or advice. Nor did it record who initiated the communication. Both of these variables would have provided a richer context within which to understand the frequency of contact.

5.8 Reflection

Undertaking this research represented a significant journey for me as the author on three key levels. As for many students undertaking a doctoral programme, the process has been incredibly testing. Firstly, identifying my place as a researcher has been challenging. As a practitioner operating in an academic world, it has been difficult to find that position, being neither ‘just’ a practitioner nor a fully established academic. Reflecting on my experiences of working within a business school, rather than a school of education, and identifying fellow researchers who have a similar approach has not been without difficulties; throughout, there has been a feeling that I do not ‘fit in’. This has been exacerbated by being part-time and a parent. Fellow doctoral students within my institution are predominantly, although not exclusively, full-time non-parents. This battle to identify where I sit within the world of research has been at times very uncomfortable.

However, I feel that as a researcher the process has been worth it.

Secondly, an additional complication has been the shift in my role within Aston University. When this thesis began, I worked full-time within the WP field, immersed in the activity and ethos at the time. Through various opportunities, my career path has led me away from this area, so the feeling of disconnect between my 'day job' and my research has, at times, been difficult to transcend. Whilst I remain within the professional services side of the university, the work I now undertake has taken me away from working with students and to more institution-focused activity which, whilst involving the Students' Union, does not include working with students on a frequent basis. A recent change in role has enabled me to work closer to students once again either directly, or via delivering projects which aim to positively impact on the student experience. This has contributed to a reconnection to the subject of the thesis.

Finally, since the start of the programme, I have found that my philosophical position has shifted and become more focused. This is largely due to the length of time it has taken for me to complete this thesis, which is a result of changes in personal and occupational circumstances. After starting the work in a post-positivist position, the development of my understanding of the literature has challenged that position. After the collection of data for this study had been completed, and particularly as a result of discussion with peers, I have found that I have further developed my understanding of my own worldview. Whilst I am confident that I am not a constructivist, nor a positivist, where my position lies has been a significant challenge. On the path to understanding my worldview, I have considered critical realism and, more recently, pragmatism. Within the discussion chapter I have discussed how, were I to undertake research of this nature again, I would include supplementary qualitative data. My attention has been drawn to truly a mixed-methods design and the pragmatic paradigm (Creswell, 2014).

Whilst the original research methods could be classed as quasi mixed-methods, they

cannot be categorised as a true mixed-methods design. However, this is where I would like to undertake research in the future. The pragmatic paradigm also appears to fit a practitioner background, so further consideration will be given to fully understand these implications. However, despite this recent potential paradigmatic shift, and in order to address both the gap in the literature and methodology as per this thesis, the large-scale survey was the appropriate path to take. In particular, it closed a gap in the literature which has to date been dominated by qualitative research. The final aim of this research was to not only contribute to knowledge, but to also inform practice, and to propose practical implications to improve the support and experience of students in the UK HE system.

There have been many trials and tribulations on the journey to submission, but the final results of this thesis are reassuring in their findings. No matter what the future holds for the continued marketization of HE (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Foskett, 2011; Molesworth et al., 2009), the funding structures or the participation rates, universities should understand who their students are and ensure that the support is in place to enable those students to become the best that they can be, no matter where they come from.

5.9 Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate the role and influence of parents on the first-year student experience. In order to answer this, the literature pertaining to capital and habitus, parental role in compulsory education, and the decision-making process regarding entry to HE and adjustment, including living at home, was reviewed. The thesis gathered data from first-year home undergraduate students across eight universities using a large-scale survey.

The important findings from the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that parents have a limited direct effect on students overall, but the effect of capital, as

measured by parental experience of HE, could be seen to influence indirectly, with a significant relationship between PEHE and where the student lived during term time (TTA) being established. Where a student lives during their studies, however, was demonstrated to be fundamental in both the adjustment to university and achievement. However, this took different forms depending on the characteristics of the student. Overall, a significant positive correlation was found where students who reported higher levels of adjustment also achieved higher marks.

Interestingly, students who were from BAME backgrounds were more likely to report higher adjustment levels, and thus achievement, if they were living at home rather than in halls. Likewise, students from white backgrounds were more likely to adjust and achieve better if living in halls than at home. Finally, TTA was a significant moderator between adjustment and achievement. If students living at home reported higher levels of adjustment, they also achieved better marks, while those who reported lower adjustment achieved less well. In contrast, living in halls did not have the same relationship between adjustment and achievement.

Universities have little if any control over parental education level of its students, nor of where they choose to live during their studies. There are however many practical interventions that can be put into place to ensure the success of the students by supporting them in their adjustment to the university.

6. References

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Capital and Habitus and the Student Experience – Table of Literature

Author, Year	Title	Sample	Method	Location
Luthans, Luthans and Luthans (2004)	Positive psychological capital: Beyond human and social capital	Theory/model development through literature		USA
Prieur and Savage (2013)	Cultural capital and its effects on education outcomes	Literature Review		Britain and Denmark
Read, Archer, & Leathwood (2003)	Challenging Cultures? Student Conceptions of 'Belonging' and 'Isolation' at a Post-1992 University	85 students (from larger study of 175 students).	Focus groups at one university.	UK
Reay (1998)	'Always knowing' and 'never being sure': familial and institutional habituses and higher education choice	10 HE applicants from London, UK plus 3 parents and 2 teaching staff.	In-depth interviews	UK
Thomas (2002)	Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus	32 students, and discussions with senior staff.	University case study: utilising a range of methodologies including focus groups and interviews.	UK
Tramonte and Willms (2010)	Cultural capital and its effects on education outcomes	224,058 students in 8364 schools from 28 OECD countries.	Subset of data collected from the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (2000)	Canada

Appendix 2: Parents and Education: Compulsory Education – Table of Literature

Author, Year	Title	Sample	Method	Location
Desforges, Abouchaar and Britain (2003)	The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review	Literature Review		UK
Moon and Irvins (2004)	Parental Involvement in Children's Education	3742 Parents & Children	Survey	UK
Crozier and Davies (2007)	Hard to reach parents or hard to reach schools? A discussion of home–school relations, with particular reference to Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents	591 Parents and Children	Semi-structured and Unstructured Interviews plus 20 Case Studies and 69 Teachers and Youth Workers	UK
Goodall (2012)	Parental engagement to support children's learning: a six point model	Model Development through Literature		UK
Sacker, Schoon and Bartley (2002)	Social inequality in educational achievement and psychosocial adjustment throughout childhood: magnitude and mechanisms	National Child Development Study Data from 1958. Over 10,000 individuals included		UK

Appendix 3: Parents and Education: Parents, HE Decisions and Choices – Table of Literature

Author, Year	Title	Sample	Method	Location
Archer and Hutchings (2000)	'Bettering Yourself'? Discourses of risk, cost and benefit in ethnically diverse, young working-class nonparticipants' constructions of higher education	109 non University students aged between 16-30	Focus Groups	UK
Brooks (2003)	Young People's Higher Education Choices: The role of family and friends	15 16-18 FE College Students	Longitudinal Case Study	UK
Catley (2004)	Which University? Which Course? Undergraduate Students' Reflections on the Factors that Influenced their Choices.	235 Law Undergraduates	Focus Group and Questionnaire	UK
Connor, Burton, Pearson, Pollard and Regan (1999)	Making the Right Choice How Students Choose Universities and Colleges	1900 year 11 students and 200 first year undergraduates	Survey, Interviews and literature review	UK
Connor, Dewson, Tyers, Eccles, Regan and Aston (2001)	Social Class and Higher Education: Issues Affecting Decisions on Participation by Lower Social Class Groups	223 College students, 1600 University students and 112 non-HE choosers	Focus groups, questionnaire and telephone interviews	UK
Connor, Tyers, Modood and Hillage (2004)	Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates	1300 undergraduate students, 1000 pre-university students and 80 parents	Survey and interviews	UK
Moogan, Baron and Harris (1999)	Decision-Making Behaviour of Potential Higher Education Students	19 students applying to university	Longitudinal group discussions	UK
Payne (2003)	Choice at the end of compulsory schooling: A research review	Literature Review		UK
Pugsley and Coffey (2002)	Keeping the 'Customer' Satisfied: Parents in the Higher Education Market Place	760 FE students	Longitudinal focus groups and interviews	UK
Reay (1998)	'Always knowing' and 'never being sure': familial and institutional habituses and higher education choice	10 HE applicants from London, UK plus 3 parents and 2 teaching staff.	In-depth interviews	UK

Appendix 4: Student Adjustment and Living at Home: Student Adjustment – Table of Literature

Author, Year	Title	Sample	Method	Location
Bakker and Demerouti (2007)	The job demands-resources model: State of the art	Model refinement		Netherlands
Bean and Metzner (1985)	A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition	Model Development through Literature		USA
Braxton and Hirshy (2004)	Reconceptualizing antecedents of social integration in student departure	Model Development through Literature		USA
Cooke, Barkham, Audin and Bradley (2004)	How Social Class Differences Affect Students' Experience of University	378	Longitudinal questionnaire	UK
Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001)	The job demands-resources model of burnout	374 employees from Germany	Questionnaire	Netherlands
Fisher and Hood (1987)	The stress of the transition to university: A longitudinal study of psychological disturbance, absent mindedness and vulnerability to home sickness	145 1st year undergraduates	Longitudinal questionnaire	UK
Friedlander, Reid, Shupak and Cribbie (2007)	Social Support, Self-Esteem, and Stress as Predictors of Adjustment to University Among First-Year Undergraduates	115 1st year undergraduates	Longitudinal questionnaire	Canada
Jackson, Pancer, Pratt, and Hunsberger (2000)	Great Expectations: The Relation Between Expectancies and Adjustment During the Transition to University	356 1st year students	Longitudinal questionnaire	Canada
Leese (2010)	Bridging the gap: supporting student transitions into higher education	180 first year undergraduates (early childhood studies students)	Questionnaire and discussion group	UK
Lowe and Cook (2003)	Mind the Gap: Are students prepared for higher education?	691 1st year undergraduates	Longitudinal Questionnaire	UK
Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt and Alisat	Cognitive Complexity of Expectations and Adjustment to University	226 1st year students	Questionnaire	Canada

(2000)	in the First Year			
Rubin (2012)	Social Class Differences in Social Integration Among Students in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis and Recommendations for Future Research	Meta-analysis of 35 studies		Australia
Thomas (2002)	Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus	32 students, and discussions with senior staff.	University case study: utilising a range of methodologies including focus groups and interviews.	UK
Tinto (1975)	Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research	Model Development through Literature		USA
Yorke and Longden (2007	The first-year experience in higher education in the UK: Report on Phase 1 of a project funded by the Higher Education Academy	7,109 students from a range of subjects	Survey	UK

Appendix 5: Student Adjustment and Living at Home: Living at Home – Table of Literature

Author, Year	Title	Sample	Method	Location
Arya and Smith (2005)	Living at Home	55 undergraduate students	Interviews and log-diary	UK
Holdsworth (2005)	The Choices and Experiences of Higher Education Students Living in the Parental Home	3282 undergraduate students	Online survey, focus groups and interviews	UK
Holdsworth (2006)	'Don't you think you're missing out, living at home?' Student experiences and residential transitions	Same data as Holdsworth (2005)		
Holdsworth (2009)	'Going away to uni': mobility, modernity, and independence of English higher education students	Same data as Holdsworth (2005)		
Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005)	'Seize That Chance!' Leaving Home and Transitions to Higher Education	Same data as Holdsworth (2005)		
Strom and Strom (2005)	Parent-child relationships in early Adulthood: college students living at home	166 students and 218 parents	Interviews	USA

Appendix 6: Complete Survey

Page 1 - Welcome

About this Study

What is this project about?
The purpose of the study is to identify in what ways parents and family continue to influence you as students once you have enrolled on a degree course. It will look at the differences for students who live on-campus or off-campus, and for students whose parents have been and have not been to university. The survey will also focus on adjustment to university and how you have become a member of its community.

Who is conducting the project?
This research is being undertaken by Catherine Foster, a part-time PhD student based at Aston Business School, (Birmingham). Catherine is contactable on c.s.foster@aston.ac.uk if you have any queries about this research.

If I Take Part What Will It Involve?
You will be asked to complete the online survey, which will ask questions relating to your experiences here at University. The survey is expected to take no longer than 15mins. There are a total of 7 pages, including this introduction page and the final completion screen. There are 5 screens which require you to complete answers. Please ensure you have completed all the screens.

Completed entries can choose to be entered into a Prize Draw (prizes include Amazon vouchers). This option is on the last page.

The data will then be used as part of a PhD dissertation and results or findings may also be presented at relevant conferences/published. Copies of the research report will be available from the researcher.

Confidentiality of Information
All questionnaires will be kept confidential. The data will be stored on online survey server and is accessible only by the researcher. For the purposes of analysis, files will be stored on a private computer again accessible only by the researcher. You will remain anonymous.

Volunteer's Statement
I have read and understood the above explanation. Before you begin the survey it is important to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to refuse to answer any question
- You are free to withdraw at any time

Consent

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided above and grant my consent for my data to be used for this study.

Yes/No

Page 2 - About You

Please enter your student (or UCAS) number:

What is the name of your degree programme? (i.e. Psychology, Business, Business & Finance etc)

Please state your gender:

Please state your age:

Are you a Home, EU or International student? Home/EU/International ☐

What is your home postcode? (i.e. non-term time postcode):

How would you describe your ethnicity? Please tick the description that best suits you:

A - White
- ☐ British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Eastern European
- ☐ Other Western European (not UK)
- ☐ Albanian
- ☐ Kosovan
- ☐ Bosnian
- ☐ White Gypsy/Roma
- ☐ Other Eastern European
- ☐ White Traveller
- ☐ Irish Traveller
- ☐ Any other White background (please write below)

B - Mixed
- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Asian and Black
- ☐ Any other Mixed background (please write below)

C - Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Gurjerati
- ☐ Kashmiri
- ☐ East African Asian
- ☐ Sri Lankan
- ☐ Any other Asian background (please write below)

D - Black or Black British
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African
- ☐ African Somalian
- ☐ Any other Black background (please write below)

E - Other ethnic groups
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Arab (not Yemeni)
- ☐ Yemeni
- ☐ Afghani
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Kurdish
- ☐ Iranian
- ☐ Any other (please write below)

Have your parents been to university? Yes Both/Yes one/No neither ☐

Have other members of your family been to university? Yes/No

Page 3 - Parental Influence/Family Life

What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of University better?

In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at University?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My parents understand what my degree programme entails					
I have a quiet area at home in which to study					
My parents support me in my studies					
My parents are aware of what I am doing on my course					
My parents understand how University works					
My parents understand when the busy exam times are					

Do you feel your parents expect you to be involved in family life/commitments?

Are you still able to be involved in family life/commitments?

Has this affected your University life?

ONLY: If you live at home with your family during term time

How many people live with you?

Who lives with you? (Parents/Siblings/Extended Family (Aunts, Uncles, Cousins)/Other)

What was the main influence in your decision to live at home?

If you were to advise other students about living at home what would you tell them?

If you were to advise other parents about their child living at home whilst at University, what would you tell them?


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Please indicate if you would like to be entered into the Prize Draw (if Yes, you will need to provide your email address).

Yes/No If yes, please enter your email address:

Page 7 – Thank you

You have completed the survey and your results have been saved. Thank you.

Appendix 7: Email Template

Dear students,

My name is Catherine Foster and I am a part-time PhD student at Aston University. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to take part in a piece of research I am currently undertaking as part of my studies. I appreciate that this is a busy time of year for you all but wondered if you would be able and willing to help me out?

The purpose of the study is to identify in what way parents continue to influence you as students once you have enrolled on a degree course. It will look at the differences for students who live on-campus or off-campus, and for students whose parents have been to university and those whose parents have not been to university. The survey will also focus on adjustment to university and how you have become a member of its community.

This research is conducted online, and will take approximately 15mins. There are no right or wrong responses, and you are urged to be as honest as possible during this assessment. Participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for non-participation. You may withdraw at any time. All results and personal data collected during this research, and subsequently used in any reports/papers, will be anonymised.

The results from this survey may lead to publications and conference presentations, however, all results will be anonymised and not attributed to an individual student. Further details regarding this study are available upon request. A copy of the final analysis will also be available upon request.

Please find the survey at *website address*

Please complete this questionnaire by *date*.

If you have any queries, I can be contacted by email c.s.foster@aston.ac.uk.

Best wishes

Catherine

Appendix 8: When making the decision to come to University, who or what was most influential on your decision – Full Table

Themes	% response
Self	18%
Parents	17%
Career	16%
Course	12%
Family	9%
Location	9%
Tutors	8%
Reputation	6%
University	3%
Friends	2%
Finance	1%
Prospectus	0%
Grand Total	**100%**

Appendix 9: When making the decision to come to University, who or what was most influential on your decision – PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE	
Themes	**Yes**	**No**
Self	18%	18%
Parents	19%	16%
Career	14%	17%
Course	13%	11%
Family	7%	10%
Location	11%	8%
Tutors	6%	9%
Reputation	9%	5%
University	2%	3%
Friends	1%	3%
Finance	1%	1%
Prospectus	0%	0%

Appendix 10: When making the decision to come to University, who or what was most influential on your decision –TTA

	Term Time Accommodation		
Themes	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Self	18%	17%	21%
Parents	18%	16%	15%
Career	17%	13%	19%
Course	9%	14%	12%
Family	13%	6%	8%
Location	9%	9%	7%
Tutors	6%	9%	8%
Reputation	5%	9%	3%
University	1%	4%	4%
Friends	3%	2%	2%
Finance	1%	1%	2%
Prospectus	0%	0%	0%

Appendix 11: Why did you choose to live where you live? – Full Table

Themes	% Response
Location	23%
Finance	23%
Easy and/or Convenient	9%
Meeting others	8%
Experience	6%
Facilities	5%
Family	4%
Independence	4%
Social Life	4%
Other	3%
Parents	3%
Own Home	2%
Partner	1%
Safety	1%
Environment	1%
Expectation	1%
Friends	1%
Halls not available	0%
Health	0%
Recommendation	0%
Convenience	0%

Appendix 12: Why did you choose to live where you live? – PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE	
Themes	**Yes**	**No**
Location	24%	23%
Finance	20%	25%
Easy and/or Convenient	8%	9%
Meeting others	9%	7%
Experience	8%	5%
Facilities	5%	4%
Family	4%	4%
Independence	4%	4%
Social Life	5%	2%
Other	4%	3%
Parents	1%	4%
Own Home	1%	2%
Partner	1%	2%
Safety	1%	2%
Environment	1%	1%
Expectation	2%	0%
Friends	1%	1%
Halls not available	1%	0%
Health	1%	0%
Recommendation	0%	0%
Convenience	0%	0%

Appendix 13: Why did you choose to live where you live? – TTA

	Term Time Accommodation		
Themes	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Location	17%	27%	28%
Finance	41%	12%	20%
Easy and/or Convenient	9%	10%	3%
Meeting others	0%	14%	1%
Experience	0%	10%	2%
Facilities	1%	7%	4%
Family	10%	0%	5%
Independence	1%	5%	9%
Social Life	0%	6%	1%
Other	2%	3%	6%
Parents	9%	0%	0%
Own Home	4%	0%	5%
Partner	2%	0%	8%
Safety	0%	2%	2%
Environment	2%	0%	3%
Expectation	0%	2%	0%
Friends	0%	1%	3%
Halls not available	0%	1%	1%
Health	1%	0%	0%
Recommendation	0%	1%	0%
Convenience	0%	0%	0%

Appendix 14: What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of University better? – Full Table

Themes	% Response
Financial Support	27%
Advice/Support	23%
Contact	9%
Food/Cook	7%
Encouragement	7%
Nothing	6%
Independence	5%
Study Support	4%
Home Comforts	4%
Visit	3%
Travel	2%
Childcare	1%
Send things	1%
Let me get on with it	0%
Safety Net	0%

Appendix 14: What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of University better? – PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE	
Themes	**Yes**	**No**
Financial Support	30%	25%
Advice/Support	22%	24%
Contact	10%	8%
Food/Cook	8%	7%
Encouragement	6%	8%
Nothing	5%	7%
Independence	4%	6%
Study Support	5%	3%
Home Comforts	3%	4%
Visit	3%	4%
Travel	2%	3%
Childcare	1%	1%
Send things	2%	0%
Let me get on with it	1%	0%
Safety Net	0%	0%

Appendix 15: What do your parents/guardians do that makes your experience of University better? – TTA

	Term Time Accommodation		
Themes	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Financial Support	18%	31%	30%
Advice/Support	28%	20%	27%
Contact	1%	15%	2%
Food/Cook	6%	9%	2%
Encouragement	9%	5%	13%
Nothing	10%	4%	8%
Independence	5%	5%	7%
Study Support	8%	2%	3%
Home Comforts	9%	1%	0%
Visit	1%	5%	2%
Travel	4%	2%	2%
Childcare	2%	0%	1%
Send things	0%	1%	1%
Let me get on with it	1%	0%	0%
Safety Net	0%	0%	1%

Appendix 16: In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at University? – Full Table

Themes	% Response
Nothing	48%
Emotional Pressure	8%
Academic Pressure	7%
Don't understand	6%
Independence	5%
Money	5%
Home Needs	4%
Worrying	3%
Hassle	3%
Expectations	2%
Contact	2%
Distance/Miss them	2%
Distraction	2%
Social Expectations	2%
Lack of interest	1%
Study Opportunities	1%
Parental Illness	0%

Appendix 17: In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at University? by PEHE

	Parental Experience of HE	
Themes	**Yes**	**No**
Nothing	48%	47%
Emotional Pressure	8%	8%
Academic Pressure	7%	6%
Don't understand	4%	7%
Independence	4%	6%
Money	5%	5%
Home Needs	3%	4%
Worrying	3%	4%
Hassle	3%	2%
Expectations	4%	2%
Contact	3%	2%
Distance/Miss them	3%	2%
Distraction	2%	2%
Social Expectations	2%	1%
Lack of interest	1%	2%
Study Opportunities	2%	1%
Parental Illness	1%	0%

Appendix 18: In what way do your parents/guardians negatively influence your experience at University? by TTA

	Term Time Accommodation		
Row Labels	**Home**	**Halls**	**Other Rented**
Nothing	38%	53%	50%
Emotional Pressure	6%	9%	7%
Academic Pressure	9%	4%	11%
Don't understand	11%	3%	6%
Independence	10%	3%	0%
Money	3%	6%	6%
Home Needs	8%	1%	2%
Worrying	2%	4%	4%
Hassle	2%	3%	4%
Expectations	3%	2%	6%
Contact	1%	4%	0%
Distance/Miss them	1%	3%	2%
Distraction	4%	0%	0%
Social Expectations	2%	1%	2%
Lack of interest	1%	2%	0%
Study Opportunities	2%	1%	2%
Parental Illness	1%	0%	0%