



**An exploration into the perspectives of why children are homeschooled at different stages in education, and does this have an impact on them socially?**

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## **Abstract**

Over a period of forty years, there has been an increase in parents electing to home educate their children. This is due to more knowledge around the subject being available, and the positive impacts this has on children both academically and socially, compared to that of their peers that are in mainstream education according to the literature.

This small-scale research project tried to ascertain why parents are choosing to home educate their children. The research was based on parents that have either previously homeschooled their children in the past, or are currently in the process of home educating their children. For that reason, this research was conducted using a mixed method approach, whereby the information gained was demographic and qualitative to represent the contributing participants demographic background. This was pertinent to ascertaining their resources and cultural capital that gave them the opportunities to home educate their children. Using questionnaires and an interview revealed a greater breadth of information, with understandings of how and why parents are opting to either remove their children from mainstream education or are choosing to never send their children to school at all.

The findings from this research elaborate that parents are very dissatisfied with mainstream education, with bullying, limited or no support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, alongside government policies with unnecessary assessments and testing, so the participants either never sent their child to school or removed them.

Everyone learns how to live outside school. We learn to speak, to think...to play... to work without interference from a teacher (Illich, 1971, p. 28).

## Contents Page

<b>1. Introduction</b>	1
<b>2. Literature Review</b>	3
2.1 What is Homeschooling	3
2.2 History of Homeschooling	4
2.3 The Phenomenon of Homeschooling When and Why	5
2.4 Why People Homeschool and the Benefits	7
2.5 Issues with Homeschooling	8
2.6 Impact of the Social Characteristics of Homeschooling	9
<b>3. Methodology and Methods</b>	11
3.1 Introduction of Methods and Methodology	11
<b>3.2 Methodology</b>	11
3.3 Approach	11
3.4 Participants	12
<b>3.5 Methods</b>	12
3.6 Questionnaire	12
3.7 Interviews	13
3.8 Ethics	14
3.9 Analysis	16
<b>4. Analysis and Discussion</b>	18
<b>4.1 Demographic Information</b>	19
4.2 Age of Participants	19
4.3 Level of Attainment and Occupation	19
4.4 Age of Children Starting School	19

4.5 Age of Children Now	19
<b>4.6 Graphs</b>	20
4.7 Age Range of Participants	20
4.8 Education of Participants	20
4.9 Age Home Education Started	21
5. How Old are the Participants Children Now	21
<b>5. 1 Key Themes</b>	22
5.2 Commencement of Home Education	22
5.3 Birth	22
5.4 Parental Removal of Child from Mainstream Education	22
5.5 School Refusal	23
5.6 Bullying	23
<b>5.7 Social Impacts</b>	24
5.8 Diversity	24
5.9 Comparisons to Schooling	25
6. Home Education and the Social Structure	25
<b>6.1 Education Curriculum and Assessment</b>	26
6.2 Curriculum	26
6.3 Assessment Grades and League Tables	27
6.4 Autonomy	28
6.5 Freedom	28
6.6 Education	29
<b>6.7 Special Educational Needs and Disability</b>	30
6.8 Disability	30
6.9 Autism	31

7. Mental Health and Anxiety	31
7.1 Labelling	32
<b>7.2 Review of the Methodology</b>	33
7.3 Validity and Reliability	34
<b>8. Conclusion</b>	35
8.1 Further Research	36
8.2 Final thoughts	36
<b>9. Reference List</b>	37

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to analyse and explore why home education is becoming increasingly prevalent with parents over the last few decades, thus becoming a phenomenon (Fortune-Wood, 2005, p. 1). Currently according to BBC (cited in House of Commons Library, 2019, p. 5) there are over 48,000 children being homeschooled in 2017. However, these statistics are not conclusive due to parents not having to register their child. As a result, the Government in 2018 gathered information from the local authorities to gather more conclusive data, this has surpassed the previous data to 57, 600 children, which evidences home education is rising (House of Commons Library, 2019, p. 5). This may be more conclusive due to the Government putting pressure on parents to register their child (DfE, 2019a, p. 13). Even more worrying is parents with children that have a health care plan are now under more scrutiny, where they may not be allowed to remove their child from mainstream education, without the permission of the school (DfE, 2019a, p. 13).

The title of my research is pertinent to what I want to pertain from the participants, to deeply unpick their motives from their decisions, which I am cognizant of the enlightening elements that can be correlated with home education. Moreover, according to the Department for Education, 89% of children being home educated have attended school at some point, which correlates with the findings in this small-scale research (DfE, 2019b, p. 9). However, the research findings delve more into the misconceptions of social pressure with criticisms of homeschooling and socialisation, which brings to the surface the challenges that parents have encountered, with aiming to educate their child in an aficionado way that they believe is in their best interests (Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 1; Meighan, 1995, Introduction: paragraph 3).

There were fifteen participants from different backgrounds, relaying different experiences about homeschooling which they freely gave on the questionnaire, as this was less restrictive (Denscombe, 2017. P. 34). Throughout my research I have discovered many elements that correlate with why parents remove their children, due to feelings of being failed by

the education system, or parents opting to home educate from birth as a result of this, alongside, the positives that their child has gained from homeschooling. According to Meighan (1995, Home-Based Education Effectiveness: Paragraph 3) the purpose for mainstream education is fixated on how to teach the children, whereby, home education's ultimate focus is on how children learn.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 What is homeschooling**

Being home educated removes barriers to education such as peer pressure and the need to conform to renowned stereotypes. This gives the children more freedom to choose their learning by self-direction with communication being more open, informal and simplistic to their requirements (Meighan, cited in Brown, 2002, p. 140).

Importantly, Homeschooling is not associated with teaching in the environment of the home but is associated with the person to whom is taking responsibility for the teaching; known as the facilitator (Kunzman, cited in Lees and Noddings, 2016, p. 179; Davies, 2015, p. 535).

Homeschooling can be quite diverse in its approach, and often spread over a large continuum of a more planned approach to the autonomy and heutagogy, where children take the lead on what, and how they learn (Carnie, 2003, p. 135; Safran, cited in Lees, 2014, p. 30). The ultimate focus is that of the child where this is encompassed by their personal interests, which often cumulates to more in-depth learning in other areas; this holistic approach is more beneficial to the child's exploratory learning of new skills, alongside understanding the world, with learning at a pace suitable to the child's needs (Carnie, 2003, p. 136 – 137; Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 266).

There is often a misconception that the child's learning environment is constricted to the home. Contradictory to this, learning often occurs beyond the home at various locations, both planned and unplanned, at various times throughout the day (Lees, 2014, p. 31). Therefore, it is important to note, before children reach the schooling age, children are learning, developing new skills and socialising within the home. Therefore, if parents choose to continue this education process of the child being the facilitator of their own learning, this promotes their independence and the benefits of homeschooling (Davies, 2015, p. 534).

## 2.2 History of Homeschooling

Charlotte Mason, from the late nineteenth century was very influential with her views on home education, and the importance of parental roles that shaped the child's mind by exposing them to a broader range of experiences (de Bellaigue, 2015, p. 501 p. 503). Therefore, she promoted home education, yet did not advocate continuation beyond the age of nine, as the purpose was preparing them for entry into school (de Bellaigue, 2015, p. 503). However, in England homeschooling was deemed quite controversial, where it was often argued in the media. Moreover, those that promoted homeschooling often wrote books to provide didactic materials for learning (Grenby, 2015, p. 464). Notwithstanding, these books were not written for pleasure, but were perceived as a tool for parents to play an active role in their child's learning (Grenby, 2015, p. 466, p. 468). Nevertheless, Mason was ahead of her time with her views on home education, with training parents to implement this themselves, yet schools dominated the setting of the agenda (de Bellaigue, 2015, p. 512). Notwithstanding, home education has developed in the twenty first century, where focus is now on children's individual learning of autonomy, thus preparing them for their future, where parents and the child choose what they learn and are strategic; unlike that of mainstream schools (Fortune-Wood, 2005, p.7).

Home education is becoming increasingly common in Britain and some countries like Australia and New Zealand, yet in other countries like Germany it is forbidden, due to 'Dutch law' and those that challenge this in the courts fail dramatically. One family (Neubronner family) were so passionate about home educating their children they immigrated to a country that allowed them to (Brown, 2002, p. 134; Lees, 2014, p. 38; Reimer, 2010, p. 7). Interestingly, in Greece the only children allowed to be homeschooled are those with a special educational need (Brown, 2002, p. 134; Lees, 2014, p. 38). Other countries by law that are forbidden to home educate are the 'Netherlands and Spain' where children have to mandatory attend a school (Kendall and Taylor, 2016, p. 298). The majority that home educated their children were in traditional marriages,

their average income was considerably higher than the national average, whereby, one quarter of the families, one parent had a teaching certificate (Brown 2002, p. 138). According to Rudner, (cited in Brown, 2002, p. 138) those parents choosing to commit to home educating their children have provisions to provide a very successful academic environment. By the year 2000, according to Meighan (cited in Brown, 2002, p. 139) it was 'estimated that 50, 000 British children were being educated at home'. Kunzman, (2016, p. 180) agrees there has been a dramatic growth in elective home education, but states figures are only estimates due to non-regulation.

The 1996 Education Act, Section Seven, the Butler Education Act 1944 states that providing the child is receiving full time education, which is deemed 'equal to their ability, age, aptitude and special educational needs'; then parents are legally entitled to home educate their child (Carnie, 2003, p. 133; Lees, 2014, p. 37; Legislation.gov.uk, 1996). Interestingly, parents often are under the misapprehension that schooling is compulsory, yet it is 'education that is compulsory' (Meighan, 1995, Introduction: paragraph 3). Intriguingly, the clause in the amendment for legislation was due to the 'first organisation founded in 1976' for home education; the name derived from the clause in the Education Act 'Education Otherwise' (Carnie, 2003, p. 133; Meighan, 1995, Introduction: paragraph 6). Importantly, there has been an update of the Education Act 1996 (436B) stating parents are required to register their child with the Local Authority, informing them that they are homeschooling their child. The Local Authority can then visit their home and assess the child's educational development, by means of an interview with either the parent, and, or the child with viewing their work (Publications.parliament.uk, 2018).

### 2.3 The phenomenon of homeschooling when and why

There is now a phenomenon of parents that are electing to home educate their children in the world; particularly those in 'English speaking countries' such as 'England, the United States of America, and Australia', where their children are being taught by home education and not through

the schooling process (Brown, 2002, p. 133; Kendall and Taylor, 2016, p. 298). This is a growing phenomenon, where there has been an increase of over 40% electing to homeschool. Nonetheless, as legislation did not state children needed to be registered to be homeschool, this cannot be accurately captured, however with changes that came into effect in 2018, this could become more accurate (Brown, 2002, p. 133; Kendall and Taylor, 2016, p. 298; Fortune-Wood, 2005, p. 1).

The issues with classrooms are: pupils are restricted with the regimented curriculum and ongoing assessments, communication limited whilst being placed within an age correlated cohort, which is not inclusive to what they will experience in the wider community after education has ceased (Brown, 2002, p.140; Montes, 2006, p. 16). There may be an increase in numbers choosing to home educate their child, due to feelings of being failed by schools, where parents perceive issues to be not taken seriously, bullying and lack of support for special education needs (Davies, 2015, p. 536; Kid and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 259). As stated in the Badman Report 2009, (cited in Kendall and Taylor, 2016, p. 297; Rothermel, cited in Spiegler, 2010, p. 62) parents were dissatisfied by the mismanagement and inadequate provisions given to children with special educational needs and disabilities. They did not necessarily withdraw them for home education per se, but by 'default', as this was their only option for their child to be taught and treated fairly, and were able to learn more effectively in an environment that was diverse to encourage autonomous learning. However, even though most parents consider this as a positive, some see this negatively (Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 209). Therefore, those that have cultural capital are more able to facilitate home education, by taking control of their social capital, this correlates with Bourdieu's concept of structure and agency (Wellington, 2015, p. 52-53). Moreover, those that are from low socio-economic backgrounds, or are single parents often have less opportunities to home educate than those from more affluent backgrounds or from two parent families; as homeschooling can be quite costly, with resources, outside educational experiences with a loss of earnings (Montes, 2006, p. 16, p. 11). Nevertheless, educating

their child at home is often deemed as beneficial for their child's future (Wray and Thomas, 2013, p. 76). Meighan interviewed children and discovered they believed their learning was more efficient with more productive learning at home, than pupils at school; this is reiterated with startlingly statistics that a homeschooled child can outperform their counterparts by 'two to ten years' (Meighan 1995, Efficient Use of Time: Paragraph 1; Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 259). Furthermore, children with special educational needs and disabilities excelled further than those who were schooled with similar disabilities (Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 259).

#### 2.4 Why people Homeschool and the benefits

According to 'officially recognised assessment criteria', many children surpass those children in mainstream formal education in the standards of their attainment in tests and examinations (Brown, 2002, p. 134). Unlike schools, homeschooled children are given opportunities to explore their own interests with their learning, where they are enthused by this; thus, it magnifies learning opportunities. This often leads to other areas of interest, building on previous knowledge, while they are also being given the freedom to 'learn at their own pace' (Jones, 2013, p. 116; Wray and Thomas, 2013, p. 82).

Reasons why parents chose to home educate include: concerns about the size of the class and bullying, wanting education to be more child orientated, catering for their child's needs, or for their own 'moral or philosophical beliefs' (Brown, 2002, p. 139). Parents often put the needs of the child first: some choose to home educate their child as an alternative, resulting from lack of support from the school, which then alleviates any pressures, frustrations or intimidation that may have been present before (Wray and Thomas, 2013, p. 81). Meighan (cited in Brown, 2002, p. 140) declares 'it is not a question does it work, but why'. Moreover, children that are home educated are often surpassing their school-attending peers in many areas, not just in education, but in social skills, social maturity, emotional stability, confidence and communication skills, states Meighan (cited in Brown 2002, p. 140). One reason why

parents elect to homeschool is due to them not being restricted by the curriculum and time frames, but can focus on an area that their child is interested in, or has an aptitude for, as the child will stay focused, learn more, and therefore, will have autonomy of their own learning which the parents help shape (Brown, 2002, p. 144; Kunzman, 2016, p. 182). Another reason parent's home educate are due to the restraints the National Curriculum holds with segmenting learning into subject areas instead of offering a broader, autonomous and holistic approach, which gives children more opportunities to make links and learn through exploration and play (Carnie, 2003, p. 163; Davies, 2015, p. 536). Holt (cited in Meighan, 1995, Why does it work so well: Paragraph 1) proposes that children are natural learners, gathering information through their different experiences throughout their daily activities, whereby constant learning takes place, yet is not taught. However, some home educators may choose to monitor the National Curriculum and teach a selection of this, as this leaves an option for reintegration into school later if the child or parents decide on this option (Fortune-Wood, 2005, p. 56).

## 2.5 Issues with homeschooling

The phenomenon of home education raises profound, but neglected questions about the nature of learning and teaching, the validity of assessment regimes and desirable forms of interplay between state institutions and families in the education of children and young people (Brown, 2002, p. 135). If their child has already attended school, it is important the school is informed of their intentions to home educate, thus ensuring that they have requested their child's name be removed from the school register (Carnie, 2003, p. 134). If the school does not, then the parents could be prosecuted for non-attendance (Carnie, 2003, p. 134). Some parents decide to reintegrate their child back into mainstream education when nearing examination points in their schooling life (Davies, 2015, p. 536). Nonetheless, one possible key issue of parents homeschooling their child, is they are also their teacher, so this questions how much control the parent has on what the child is learning or experiencing, alongside, do they organise their friendship groups (Jones,

2013, p. 117). Another key issue is lack of 'evidence-based knowledge' and information with biases about home education, due to there being very limited information regarding successful outcomes of homeschooling (Jones, 2013, p. 118). Notwithstanding, when parents initially start to home educate their child, they often start off being regimented like the school environment, however, they soon learn to be less structured and more flexible. Nonetheless, this learning is more autonomous, therefore due to it being tailored individually, can be quite intense, stressful, costly and time consuming (Wray and Thomas, 2013, p. 76; Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 268; Montes, 2006, p. 16).

## 2.6 Impact of the social characteristics of homeschooling

Children can learn particularly well in a less formal setting of schools, where the atmosphere is open for discovery, interpretation and inquiry, in an atmosphere that is free to explore and discuss, without being dictated to with biases of knowledge (Brown, 2002, p. 133). Many professionals often argue that home education impacts on social skills and interactions, where they are frequently in favour of the more conventional teaching of the children attending schools (Brown, 2002, p. 141). Brown (2002, pp. 141-142; Shyers, cited in Meighan, 1995, Home-based Education Effectiveness: the evidence from systematic studies: Paragraph 1) highlights that homeschooling does not socially isolate the child, but to the contrary enriches them socially by the different interactions that they encounter with other peers; not just those that are age equivalents. Furthermore, this gives them more learning opportunities to collaborate, build on new skills and initiatives, whilst experiencing different environments, cultures and anything of interest to the child. Moreover, it prepares them more explicitly for their future interactions in society. According to Lees (2014, p. 32) even though the child's friendship group can be smaller than a child who attends state education, their friendship group is not restricted to their peer age group unlike school children. A homeschooled child has a much wider breadth of different diverse friendships, that are both encouraged and influenced by their interactions and observations with each other. This enables the child to learn more

about the world in a more confident and less formal environment (Jones, 2013, p. 115). Davies (2015, p. 547) reiterates this by stating that children often develop socially, by their relationships within their family, whereby, they learn through engagement within family life.

### **3. Methodology and Method**

#### **3.1 Introduction of methods and methodology**

The aim of this research is to explore the growing phenomenon of why parents are electing to home educate their children at different stages within the child's schooling lifetime. Therefore, the topic needs further analysis to acquire a better understanding of this paradigm. Moreover, as parents have chosen this route of home education, and not the child, it is important to grasp the reasoning behind the parent's thoughts, feelings and rationale, as they are stakeholders in their child's progression of alternative education (Lees, 2014, p. 29). Therefore, one way to explore the parent's views of this paradigm is to send questionnaires and interview to gain a better understanding.

#### **3.2 Methodology**

#### **3.3 Approach**

This is a small-scale idiographic qualitative research study, to gain in-depth information about the lived experiences of the participants to assist with attaining good quality data to analyse, by using interpretative phenomenological analysis. (Denscombe, 2017, p. 18, De Vaus, 1996, p. 42). Moreover, it is important to use hermeneutics to extricate the supposition of interpretation, to assist with clarification of an experience that they reflect on which has significantly impacted on their lives (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 1, p. 3).

I shall be using mixed methods and methodological triangulation, where participants will be filling in questionnaires and interviews, as this will give a greater breadth of information about this growing phenomenon of homeschooling and the possible social impacts this may have on children (Thomas, 2017, p. 153).

It is important to note, that due to this being a small-scale research study, this is a small sample of the home educating community participating, therefore, the data collected from the sample group cannot be generalised (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 55). Using hermeneutic

phenomenology, this will translate the language of information given in the questionnaires which shall contribute to depicting the motives of the participant's decision to home educate (Rothermel, cited in Spiegler, 2010, p. 62; Ray, 2017, p. 606). Therefore, this will be interpreted by focussing on the participant's lived experience (Heidegger, cited in Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 24).

### 3.4 Participants

There were 15 participants for the questionnaire and one for the interview. These participants were selected from the researcher's previous knowledge of homeschooling parents or they were self-selected from those known to other participants (De Vaus, 1996, p. 108).

### **3.5 Methods**

#### 3.6 Questionnaire

Firstly, the design of the qualitative questionnaire was designed to obtain rich information to facilitate homogeneous data. Therefore, the questionnaire contained no more than nine open-ended questions, that did not correlate with the previous question, so were not leading. This was to eradicate any pressures to answer in a certain way that could be interpreted as the researcher being persuasive (De Vaus, 1996, p. 109). The questionnaire contained demographic questions to help ease the participant into filling in the questionnaire, as often participants are more likely to answer non-committal lengthy questions alongside gaining information about the sample (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 68; Moser and Kalton, cited in Bell and Waters, 2018, p. 211). The length of the questionnaire was kept concise as participants often do not complete questionnaires (Denscombe, 2017, p. 187; Wellington, 2015, p. 195; Oliver, 2010, p. 58).

Participants may prefer questionnaires to other forms of research methods, due to being able to complete them in their own timeframe, without being pressurised from the researcher, or feeling intimidated to answer in a specific way, not having to have face-to-face meetings, alongside, knowing that their response is anonymous (Thomas, 2017, p.

218). However, paper questionnaires can be exorbitant due to material costs, with no guarantees of responses (Denscombe, 2017, p. 13). Therefore, minimising the questions, alongside giving a deadline for responses to be returned encouraged participants to complete the questionnaires, as usually the response rate is quite low for paper questionnaires (Oliver, 2010, p. 58; Denscombe, 2017, p. 187; Wellington, 2015, p. 195).

Paper questionnaires were posted, with the information letter and consent form, alongside a stamped addressed envelope for its return, to those that acknowledged that they wanted to participate with the research, as some were known to the researcher (Coe, et al, 2017, p. 228-229; De Vaus, 1996, p. 108; BERA, 2018, p. 9). There were two copies of the consent form sent to the participants, as one was retained by the participant, with the deadline highlighted and email address included (Oliver, 2010, p. 58).

### 3.7 Interviews

The rationale for the interview was to gain greater depth from the questionnaire by doing a semi-structured interview of one participant to gain further knowledge and understanding to a couple of questions answered, without leading or prompting the answers (Denscombe, 2017, p. 168-169; Thomas, 2017, p. 206). If the participants were interested in taking part in the interview, at the end of the questionnaire there was information, including the Newman University email address (Brooks, te Riele and Maguire, 2014, p. 121).

During initial contact about the interview, arrangements were made, whereby the participant chose where the interview took place, as it was vital that the participant was made to feel at ease to talk openly and freely and did not feel pressurised throughout the interview process (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 91). Moreover, the participant was given three options of places to be interviewed due to the nature of the paradigm, as it was recognised that the parents are often the facilitator to their child's learning, so they may have needed time and a quiet space to be able to speak freely.

The first option was a face-to-face interview where they could attend Newman University, which would have been captured using Panopto (Denscombe, 2017, p. 215). Another interview option would take place within their home; to facilitate their comfort and to try to ensure they had minimal inconvenience; however, this may have inhibited their answers if children were present or possibly compromised their privacy; this would only have been offered to the participant if they were known to the researcher to ensure the researchers safety (Denscombe, 2017, p. 14- p. 15; Thomas, 2017, p. 50). The final option, and the one chosen by the participant, was a telephone interview, as they were able to choose the time, did not have to travel or have their privacy impeded; this was voice recorded on a smart phone (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 92; Denscombe, 2017, p. 14).

Semi-structured interviews can be a great source of information. Previous knowledge obtained from the questionnaires was built on to gain a deeper breadth of understanding to their answers (Thomas, 2017, p. 206 p. 207). Hence, an initial structure for the interview was important. However, as the interview progressed the researcher deviated to gather further information (Thomas, 2017, p. 207).

In contrast, this highlighted an issue, as the participant could not remember what they answered on the questionnaire (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 95). Due to the participant's personal lived experiences, sensitive information was divulged possibly causing distress, so ethical considerations and safeguarding was considered, where the participant was given the option to cease the interview. (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 89).

### 3.8 Ethics

As per Denscombe's (2017, p. 180) guidelines, ethical approval was sought from the University prior to research taking place. Anonymity was kept throughout the process starting from the questionnaires, where a pseudonym was given to each participant's response. All documentation was securely stored, to ensure confidentiality which was continued

throughout the research study and after it had finished (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 168).

Participants were given an information sheet with the consent form, detailing all the information about the research about homeschooling in the questionnaire and the interview. Within the information sheet was information about their right to withdraw at any time without explanation. This form required the participant to write their name, signature and date of signing and return this with the questionnaire (Information Commissioners Office, 2018, p. 56). A duplicate copy was sent for them to keep and refer to, with my email details; should they want further clarification or withdraw from the study (Brooks, Te Riele and Maguire, 2014, p. 121). Before embarking on the interview, the consent was clarified, and again to check if they approved for their information to be used, with the potential to be shared for other researchers to use (BERA, 2018, p. 17; Bell, 2010, p. 152).

Before completing the questionnaires, participants had the information sheet informing them of the purpose of the research and what would happen with their data. This included the importance of safeguarding their anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and integrity with the general data protection regulation (BERA, 2018, p. 23, p. 30; Information Commissioners Office, 2018, p. 120). If they decide to withdraw, they could do so without explanation. The participant chose a telephone interview, which was recorded on a password protected device, this was explained before the research commenced (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 168). Before the interview took place, it was reiterated that confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were paramount and would be treated with the utmost respect and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (BERA, 2018, p. 23-24). Whilst the interview was taking place it was important to ensure the participant was comfortable with their answers, and at any point that they became distressed, the researcher took steps to offer relevant support information, as the participant ended the interview in a calm state of mind (Thomas, 2017, p. 50). Once the researcher has completed all

analysis and written documents regarding the data, all questionnaires and the interview recording will be destroyed. Participants will be given the opportunity to have an email copy of the dissertation; if requested

### 3.9 Analysis

All the data was collated from the questionnaires and interviews then analysed using interpretative phenomenological, as this was supported with identifying patterns and themes, which were coded to ensure anonymity continued throughout (Harding, 2013, p. 111). The interview commenced within a short period from the responses of the questionnaires and were transcribed within a short time frame, to capture the essence of the participant's response which assisted with analysing the data (Denscombe, 2017, p. 15, p. 307). Nonetheless, it was important to recognise that dependent on where and how the interview took place, could have had an influence on the participant response, as the University could have been deemed as too formal and intimidating. However, the chosen place for interview was more practical, but I was aware there may have been distractions; but there were none (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 91). The data obtained from the questionnaires were organised in a table identifying emergent themes and patterns, and the interview was transcribed, organised in themes and patterns and added to the table. Using methodological triangulation all the data obtained was linked together with the literature (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 257; Denscombe, 2017, p. 169).

Furthermore, using the literature around homeschooling, with the themes and patterns of responses from their experiences was reflected on using hermeneutics. This is an interpretation of the presuppositions of information gained from the respondent's accounts, where the themes within this research were through personal choice, dissatisfaction with state education, lack of support with special educational needs and disabilities, or the curriculum (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 1, p. 99; Harding, 2013, p. 111; Montes, 2006, p.15; Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006, p. 111). Using interpretive phenomenological analysis, I have tried to understand the participant's responses from the data, by attempting to

assimilate their experiences about specific encounters, alongside their decisions made in relationship to these. I have tried to envisage the participant's viewpoints as much as possible, then relate this to theoretical contexts (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006, p. 104). However, imperatively when analysing data, I recognise the possibility of potential biases (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 21; Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006, p. 113).

#### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter from my research findings is to analyse the data gained from the small-scale research of the participant's responses to the questionnaires, and the interview that was undertaken by one participant. Therefore, I realise the responses to my questions of their phenomenological experiences are relied upon my interpretation of the data, as I must acknowledge that there will be some bias as a result of my previous knowledge and personal viewpoint about homeschooling. As Denscombe (2017, p. 8) agrees that personal experiences and viewpoints are inadvertently used. Acknowledgement that the findings gathered are a small sample of the homeschooling community opinions are generalised and are only relevant to the research study. Sandelowski and Stephens, (cited in Braun and Clarke, 2013, p, 281) argues that qualitative research can possibly be generalised. According to Braun and Clarke, (2013, p. 281) the 'language is a flexible tool' where the transferability of the language used and interpreted can change over time. Moreover, the participants have one opinion dependent on their experiences, where they will automatically associate home education as being more beneficial than mainstream education; yet some parents would proclaim school benefits the children more, therefore this can be viewed as a 'fuzzy generalisation' (Bassegy, 1999, p. 51).

The objective of my research is to analyse the viewpoints of responses from participants from the paper questionnaires about homeschooling, with one participant who elaborated further through an interview. These responses were to assist with my research questions, whilst encompassing my original research question.

I have identified the themes for discussion from the information gained from the questionnaires and the interview, where I have selected a small sample of the data from both, as an overall arching consensus of agreement to the information obtained. I will present themes and sub-themes in the order presented. I recognise that by taking 'purposive samples' from the information gained, this can influence the findings, however these are being used illustratively, to demonstrate the overall

consensus of a representation of the phenomenon of the participant's responses to each theme and sub-theme (Denscombe, 2017, p. 42).

#### **4.1 Demographic Information**

##### 4.2 Age of participants

The age of the participants is relevant to the research as some participants had previously home educated their children, and some are homeschooling at present, so it is interesting to observe the personal experiences of these, with any possible differences.

##### 4.3 Level of attainment and occupation

Often it is portrayed that only the most affluent or those from good academic backgrounds such as teachers are accomplished enough to homeschool (Montes, 2001, p. 11, p. 16). Yet the attainment of my participants appears to be contradictory to what is expected from the literature. Also, their occupations are quite diverse, so questions whether socioeconomics is an influence in society today on home education.

##### 4.4 Age of children starting homeschooling

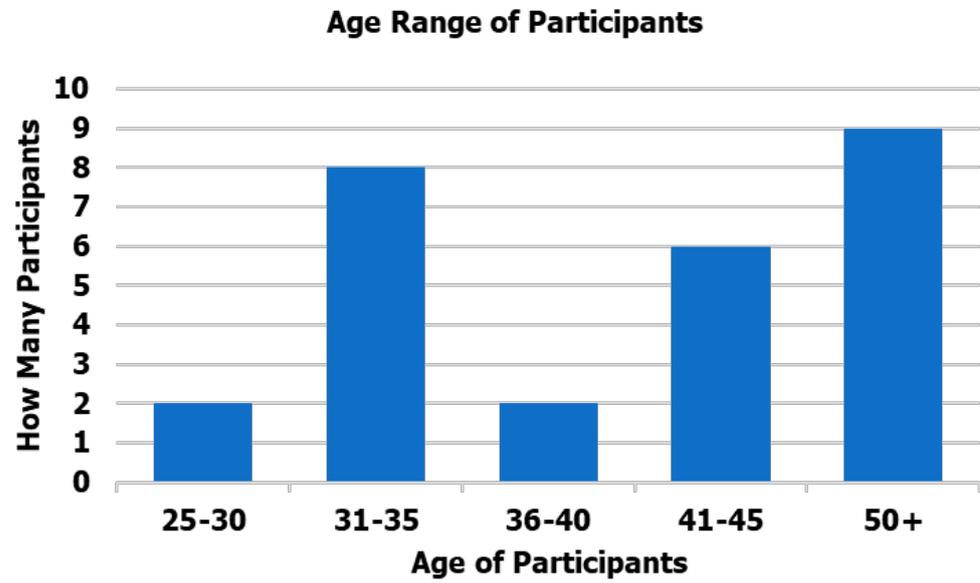
The age of children being homeschooled is relevant as this is pertinent to how parents are now researching about this before their child starts formal education. Those children that have started homeschooling after being in mainstream education, is often due to parents being dissatisfied with the establishment and the standards it represents (Ray, 2017, p. 609).

##### 4.5 Age of children now

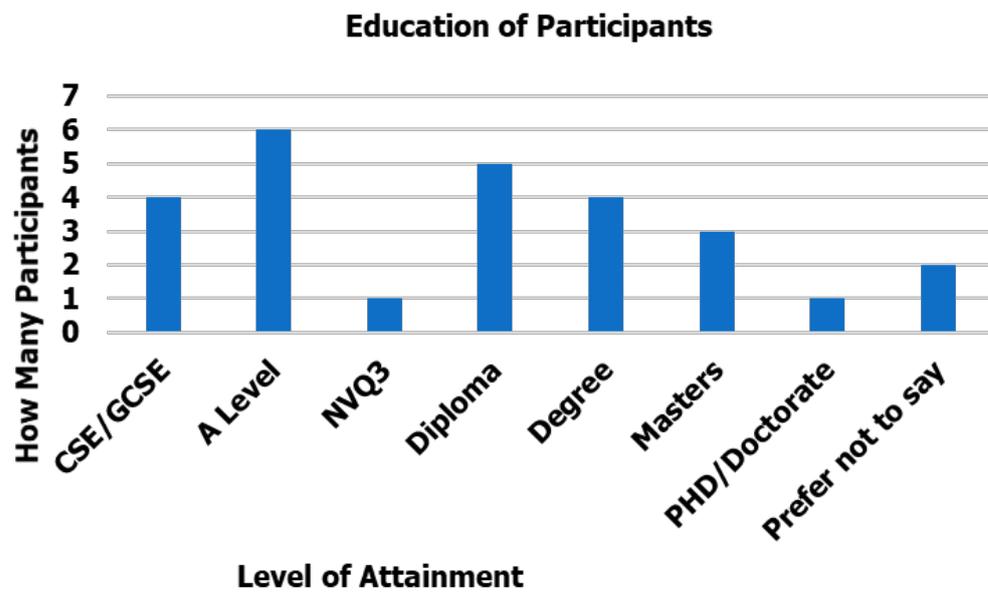
Interestingly, the ages of the children now, compared to when they commenced homeschooling is important as this shows that the children in my research have experienced home education from the late 1980's to the present day.

## 4.6 Demographic Graphs

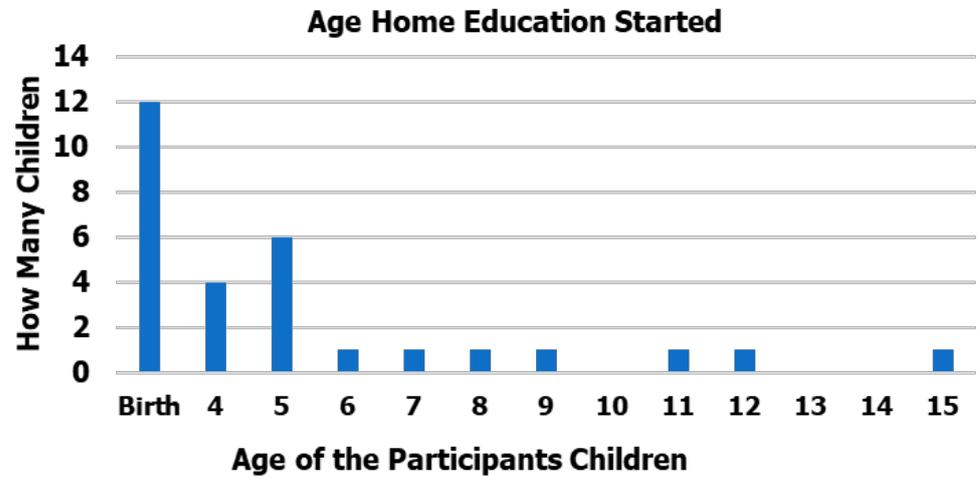
4.7



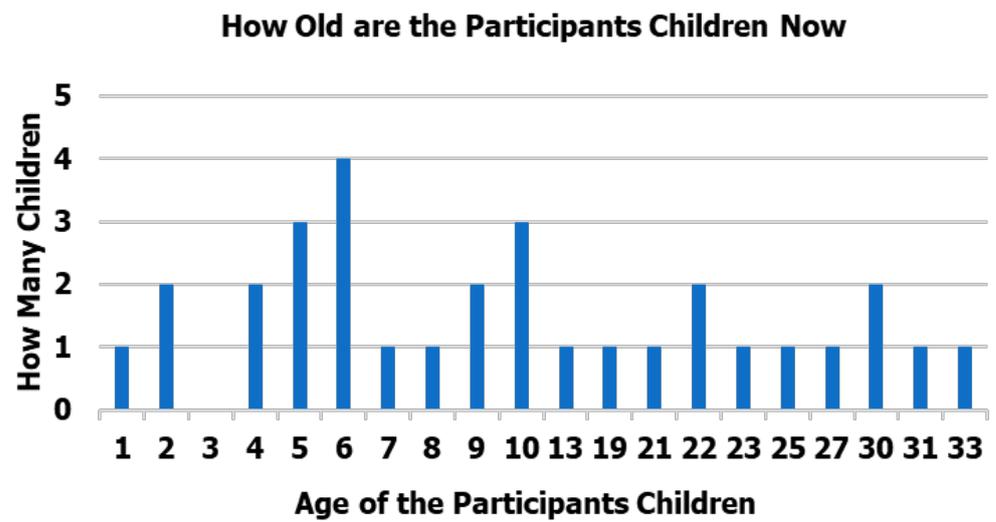
4.8



4.9



5.



## **5.1 Key Themes Identified**

### 5.2 Commencement of Home Education

### 5.3 Birth

Parents are more aware of home education and the possibilities and the impacts that this can have on their child. Therefore, parents are electing to facilitate this as a continued process from birth, where 'dovetailing' is where the parent assists the child to the next stage of their learning journey (Meighan, 1995, Why Does it Work so Well: Paragraph 1).

Gray and Riley's (2013, p. 12) findings complemented the findings in this study as the participants viewed the age of starting school as too young, especially for a child to be made to sit down for a long period of time. They therefore maintain that their child would benefit substantially by continuing learning in a familiar environment, with people that they are conversant with. For example, Participant D did not send their child to school as they believed this was not the best option to facilitate their learning:

I just thought 2+ was so young for prolonged separation from the primary caregiver. I started researching brain development and how it is affected by nurture in early years (or lack of) and also how children learn best and the more I discovered the less reason I had not to.

However, findings from participant I's viewpoint was they disagreed with the ethos of the school system, and the failings of this, so elected not to send their child to mainstream education: 'I do not agree with the school system anymore and don't believe they are doing enough to tackle bullying or help those who struggle with needs'. This demonstrates how participants differ in their reasons for homeschooling from birth. Participant C agrees 'avoidance of authority, bullying and peer bullying'.

### 5.4 Parental Removal of Child from Mainstream Education

Some of the participants elected to remove their child from state education because they were disappointed with the education system.

Participant H reverberates '... didn't meet child's needs'. Participants concluded that mainstream schooling does not cater for their child's needs, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (Rothermel, cited in Spiegler, 2010, p. 62). However, some participants maintain that they are coerced into removing their child by the school; thus disadvantaging the child. Participant M identifies 'Yes. It was our decision, but just happened because her school imposed so much obstacles to her needs that we were left with no other option' this is reverberated by Kendall and Taylor (2016, p. 298; Independent, 2018). According to Kaczmarek (2010, p. 258) for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, schooling is stressful and sometimes causes anxiety, so school is not an all-inclusive experience.

### 5.5 School Refusal

When children feel vulnerable within a school setting, some then express their feelings by refusing to attend school, which can be equally problematic and distressing for both the parent and the child. This is usually associated with the child being distressed, as they associate anything to do with learning or the school environment as being a negative. Children may often show signs of being unhappy, by asserting drastically how they feel, moreover 'threaten to jump out of the window' (Thambirajah, Grandison and De-Hayes, 2008, p. 13, p. 30). This echoes what participant F stated, 'he'd rather jump out of a window, rather than go to school, anymore'. Therefore, if there is an alternative for their child to be educated, parents may opt for homeschooling, as some participants did. School refusal can be interpreted to refuse to participate within the classroom which Gray and Riley (2013, p. 10) discovered in their research. Participant G 'my eldest son kept refusing to go to school'.

### 5.6 Bullying

One prevalent element of school refusal can be bullying; this may entail bullying from their peers or teachers (Davies, 2015, p. 536). Hence, as parents are the ultimate carers and are responsible for their child's well-being, they will ultimately protect their child. School is seen as a place for

learning, yet parents often discover they can protect their child whilst facilitating their learning by home educating. Predominantly, the participant's children were removed from state education due to bullying from teachers not treating all children equally, segregating the child, alongside the school not adequately addressing bullying as per their policy (Thambirajah, Grandison and De-Hayes, 2008, p. 36). Participant H agrees 'Teachers were not treating my child fairly'. Therefore, participants elected to homeschool to safeguard their child from the situation, as they believed they were failed by the educational system. For instance, Participant F's child experienced 'He had been subjected to physical bullying by children within school and hospitalised'. Interestingly, once the child is removed, they gain more confidence and learning progresses (Wray and Thomas, 2013, p. 82).

## **5.7 Social Impacts**

### 5.8 Diversity

Homeschooling gives children many opportunities to socialise with a diverse group of people, from different ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and abilities (Brown, 2002, p. 140). Participants within the research believe this advances their child's social skills naturally, at a pace that is suitable to them. Children are more empathetic and caring, as participant B suggests 'The home education world for many is a myriad of networks which involve socialising across age ranges, across genders, and across religions' unlike children in schools (Heur and Donovan, 2017, p. 10). Moreover, this is reiterated by participant N who states 'They have a fabulous social life and are able to interact well with children and adults of all ages', where their children have more opportunities, due to less time restrictions and wide-ranging environments to engage within the diverse communities that they encounter, which Meighan agrees (1995, Abstract: Paragraph 1). However, Illich (cited in Hart, 2009, p. 70) argues that 'schooling... recognised as a powerful instrument of social control'. Therefore, homeschooling removes this power and gives ownership back to the child.

## 5.9 Comparisons to schooling

Schooling commonly incorporates children to associate with peers of their own age group, unlike that of homeschooling which comprises of a balance of interacting with diverse ages. Moreover, they benefit socially by learning in a more natural environment that is associated with real life experiences and not that of a contrived setting (Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 2). Participant D echoes this sentiment 'It has exposed them to a mixed age range group of friends and peers... allowed them to develop their social skills naturally, at their own pace, instead of forced 'artificial staged environments'. Schools are often teaching a class of thirty children, whereby they are taught a generic prescriptive curriculum that does not account for all children's abilities and interests. It is timetabled to precision and does not give the social structure of the real world unlike that of homeschooling which participant B declared '... very credible argument... that a well-balanced home education is far more in line with the social structure of the real world... than the artificial structure created by schools'. Participant A maintained 'Home education allows for much more experiential, hands on learning in the real world with real people'. Nonetheless, Apple and Reich (cited in Murphy, 2014, p. 259) identifies that children that are homeschooled are likely to experience indoctrination, due to the restricted socialization of associating with a small network of groups, including that of family, which Davies (2015, p. 547) and home educators strongly deny.

## 6. Home Education Community and the Social Structure

The public often associate children that are homeschooled to be restricted to the home environment, yet this is categorically not the case, as Participant B profusely condemns this stereotypical viewpoint:

So, the premise of the question...more anxieties of people's stereotypical expectations... the image of the child sitting at the kitchen table dryly working through text books with no social contact.

Consequently, homeschooled children often socialise within their own community. Some chose to collaborate with other homeschooling parents to give their children more diverse experiences that are needed for socialisation in the real world, and not that of an artificial construction, which Participant B believes is true of schools. Furthermore, homeschooling parents often associate children attending school are the ones restricted by the education system and the curriculum, as they have fewer opportunities to socialise and experience the real world, unlike those being home educated that have greater opportunities (Lees, 2014, p. 125). Participants from the research believe their children have more opportunities to have a childhood and experience life at their own pace, which is both natural and unrestricted, opposing that of a school environment. The parents often get complimented on their child's social skills as Participant J answered 'I often get positive comments on their behaviour and social skills'. Subsequently, Participant F reaffirms this stance:

Knowing what I know now about home ed, from the whole host of amazing people we've come to know through the home ed community, I would never put a child of mine into this antiquated school system- not fit for purpose!!

## **6.1 Education Curriculum and Assessment**

### 6.2 Curriculum

The consensus from the participants about mainstream education is that 'the curriculum is outdated and not fit for purpose', according to Participant A, as it is not child focused, but associated with other agendas from the Government (Brown, 2002, p. 24). Notwithstanding, teachers are more focused on attainment within their cohort, that children become emerged into one as participant F articulates 'Children treated like cattle'. Furthermore, teachers are under extreme pressure to teach a curriculum that is time restrictive and demanding to meet the adequate criteria expected, which leaves less time for compassion for the individual child. Therefore, it can be deemed that newly qualified teachers can appear to

be uncaring due to these demands. Nonetheless, it is their ultimate responsibility whilst the child is in school to be compassionate, as they are classed as being loco parentis, which is what Participant F was despondent about 'Uncaring newly qualified teaching staff, unable to meet commands of the national curriculum'.

### 6.3 Assessment Grades and league tables

Schools are mainly focused on grades and league tables from their pupil's attainment, which is primarily Government focused, as Participant J states 'I feel like Government school's care more about grades than they do kids'. This then removes emphasis on their other needs and disregards the child's other abilities in many other subjects, that are not seen as important (Brown, 2002, p. 165). Furthermore, in mainstream schooling, assessment and grading is more focused on recalling information than experience or enjoyment of a given subject, so is more of a tick box criterion. This can be detrimental to a child that does not attain the expected level, which teachers often do not agree with; however, comply with (Meighan, 1995, Home-based Education Effectiveness: the evidence for systematic studies: Paragraph 3). Interestingly, Participant N who was a school teacher agrees with this statement, so chose not to send their child to school 'I have worked in schools as a teacher and became very aware that I was unable to be the kind of teacher I wanted to be, due to assessment 'tick boxing'. Interestingly, Holt (cited in Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 11) was a former teacher who too condemned schools for what they stood for. Dewey (cited in Aubrey and Riley, 2016, p. 8) reiterated the same conviction of 'passively remembering facts and figures' which participant D agreed with 'Mainstream schooling prioritises memory recall, academic performance and league tables'. Conversely, homeschooled children do not have their learning focused around testing, which removes pressure and brings back the enjoyment of learning, whereby, these children often excel their counterpart peers that attend school (Brown, 2002, p. 134).

#### 6.4 Autonomy

Homeschooled children have the autonomy to explore and investigate the many different interests they may have, whilst learning without the boundaries or restrictions of a curriculum with expectations of testing, assessment or time limitations (Gray, cited in Lees and Noddings, 2016, p. 61). Participant B specifies their beliefs about the quality's autonomy brings:

...encouraged by home education and a proactive family life: autonomy, independence, resilience, confidence, self-awareness, organisational skills, accountability and integrational communication skills.

These children are often happier and self-motivated as they take ownership of their own learning and progress, at a pace that is suitable to them or their needs, where they learn through every day experiences and not just prescribed like that of schools (Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 3). Participant N agrees '... able to take control of their own learning'. As Holt (cited in Meighan, 1995; Why Does it Work so well: Paragraph 2) states children are 'natural learners' so teaching is not needed; but experiences of the real world. Participant E had noticed a positive difference once homeschooling commenced 'He has been able to become his own person'. According to Lees (2014, p. 71) this is a learning journey to discover themselves, unlike that of being taught within the education system. Illich (cited in Hart, 2001, p. 70; F, 1995, Introduction, Paragraph 5) alluded to 'the pupil is schooled to confuse teaching with learning', which is why education is compulsory, and not schooling, as is the preconception.

#### 6.5 Freedom

With home education a homeschooled child is often given the freedom or the autonomy to choose what they want to learn, at their own pace where parents are often the facilitator (Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 3; Spiegler, 2010, p. 62). Therefore, they are not restricted to a timetable with a prescriptive curriculum like in school, as Participant C substantiates 'Following your own interests' as Montes and Brown agrees of not being

forced to learn something of little interest to them (Montes, 2001, p. 11; Brown, 2002, p. 24). Subsequently, this gives parents opportunities to take their child to a variation of learning spaces that incorporates their interests, anywhere in the world, any time of year, not just during holidays, weekends or evenings. The positives are lower costs, often fewer people, which gives opportunities for socialisation within a wider community. Participant O said 'Freedom to learn passions and to learn anywhere in the world' which is a holistic approach according to Dewey (Brown, 2002, p. 42). This promotes the child to use their basic learning instinct within the social environment to become an independent learner, where more often they learn more than being taught (Gray, cited in Lees and Noddings, 2016, p. 50). Participant K believes 'They are confident, curious, passionate learners' having freedom to decide their own learning. These opportunities give the child prospects to interact with diverse groups that have similar interests where they can collaborate, develop their skills and broaden their knowledge further, which is restrictive in schools due to the curriculum and pressures of assessments (Jones, 2013, p. 115).

## 6.6 Education

When parents remove their child from education, often they do not understand what homeschooling entails, so try to mimic the curriculum and the regimented teaching of school, then have an epiphany that learning is everywhere and does not need to be directly taught. Participant I stated, 'I believe a child's education does not begin and end in a classroom. Learning is everywhere', Dewey defined this as 'an active experience' (cited in Lees and Noddings, 2016, p. 2; Aubrey and Riley, 2016, p. 8) There are numerous educational positives to homeschooling: giving children independence with the creativity to explore their interests, for children to socialise within the home education group to gain further knowledge, whereby children collaboratively work and learn together from a range of diversities, which Participant O reiterates 'We unschool/child led, they have control and autonomy'. Conversely, schools have limited time frames, specific subject information, resources and time for children

especially those with special educational needs and disabilities. Hence, some parents elect to remove their child from mainstream education, as they believe their child would achieve more (Spiegler, 2010, p. 60). As Participant M reiterates

State education has a one size fits all approach that doesn't meet her needs and I don't mean just her learning disabilities needs, but as a learning profile.

## **6.7 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

### **6.8 Disability**

There is often a link between homeschooling and special educational needs and disabilities, as parents are aware of the lack of understanding, support, recognition of diagnosis's in schools and limited resources to assist with their progress, so remove from education as identified in the Badman Report, 2009 (Cited in Kendall and Taylor, 2014, p. 297; Lees, 2014, p. 10). Furthermore, parents often endure pressure from schools to remove their child, as schools struggle to address their needs in class. Some parents feel compelled to home educate or others elect to safeguard their child, and to facilitate the child's needs in a familiar calm setting that will benefit them. Participant A is an example of the often-coerced choice of removal 'Eldest has global delay and didn't want to waste time fighting for support for him, when I could spend the time and energy doing a better job of educating him myself' as the parent would rather facilitate their child's learning and progression at their pace, rather than a school education giving minimal support, and diagnosis's are time consuming (Chittom and Newton, 2018; Kidd and Kaczmarek, 2010, p. 266). If disabilities are mishandled, which occurs in schools due to time restraints, pressures of attainment and inexperienced staff, this could mean a child is overlooked or side-lined and as Participant E's child experienced 'Child 1 has autism, social anxieties... I took the decision after a failed (thankfully) suicide attempt'. This is an extreme, therefore in this current climate, it is something to be acknowledged, as this is more apparent with children with special educational needs and disabilities; with

bullying being a denominational factor (Spiegler, 2010, p. 62; Child Commissioner, 2018, p. 6). This parent was left with no choice but to homeschool. However, non-formal education can be an excellent alternative... to formal schooling for all children' (Community-Based Rehabilitation, 2010).

### 6.9 Autism

As schools struggle to get a diagnosis for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, this can be both frustrating for the child and the school. However, when they are given confirmation, often the child's support does not change, but appear as a hindrance to teachers (Davies, 2015, p. 536). Atkinson and Hornby (2002, p. 163) state some children excel in some areas, yet is not addressed, so they become bored and possibly disruptive. Subsequently, parents remove their child for their happiness and enjoyment of learning, as participant E and D reverberated. Participant E:

He has diagnosed ASD and other learning difficulties that the school would not recognise...so far in front they couldn't keep his interest... he's the problem child, send him to the back of the class, sit there and be quiet.

Parents opt to homeschool, as they believe it to be beneficial to their child, as they can give them a worthier learning experience than that of a rigid structure of the curriculum with teaching methods in mainstream education, as identified by Participant D:

My eldest daughter is on the ASD spectrum (undiagnosed) and mainstream school would have damaged her irreparably since the setup of it doesn't make logical sense to her.

### 7. Mental Health and Anxiety

Home educators often recognise that the pressures of schooling and assessments often have a detrimental effect on the child's mental health (ADCS, 2017, p. 4). Inexperienced staff that are not supportive of a child's needs can be detrimental to the child and leave them vulnerable to bullying or ostracization (Children's Commissioner, 2018, p. 5).

Participants frequently state they noticed an improvement of the child's mental health, anxiety and achievements once their child had been removed. A sample of the participants concluded their children experienced some form of mental health issues, where mainstream schooling held a huge influence, yet once removed their mental health improved (Atkinson and Hornby 2002, p. 114). Participant F's opinion of senior staff 'Inexperienced SENCO's 'Mental health car crash zones' due to poor practices, where Participant E child had an 'attempted suicide'. However, stress can be eradicated in homeschooling as there is less pressure to perform with competitiveness with peers and testing, so learning can be abundant, as Participant B states '...naturally achieve a better academic performance... not under pressure... important for their mental health as well as academic aspirations'.

### 7.1 Labelling

There is often an association with children with special educational needs and disability, including those that are gifted and talented, as being given a label, which can be detrimental to the child's happiness, mental health, well-being and asynchronous development within the hegemonic system of schools, where teaching is insufficient (Winstanley, 2009, p. 349). In contrast, those that experience a homogeneous experience of homeschooling, mix with diverse groups, so appear more accepting, are less likely to categorize children, thus disperses any form of labelling, and bullying as a result (Brown, 2002, p. 142). With no pressures of times to complete tasks or assessment, with comparisons to peers, this eradicates being labelled for being too slow, failing or being too competitive (Winstanley, 2009, p. 349). Two comparisons of labelling, from participants: participant G refers to their child never having to experience labelling or bullying as they never attended school '... younger two did not have to negotiate bullying, labelling, fear of non-achievement, teacher disapproval etc. This has been a big bonus'. However, the language used refers to previous knowledge either from older children or personal experience themselves (Gray and Riley, 2013, p. 9). Whereas, Participant E blatantly refers to labelling of their child's special educational needs and

abilities which resulted in the child having mental health problems, 'he was labelled "lazy" "stupid" and "a trouble maker" because he could not conform' and startlingly, her granddaughter is experiencing this many years later 'son and granddaughter both have autism. Both excelling so lose interest'. What is pertinent to participant E's answer is that there appears to be no change in fifteen years within the school education system with the stigma of labelling (Brady, Lowe and Lauritzen, 2015, p. 83).

My analysis has revealed many facets around homeschooling and socialisation, from the participant's responses. In my conclusion, I shall be reviewing and evaluating the outcome of this research.

## **7.2 Review of the Methodology**

With this small-scale idiographic qualitative research, I chose a mixed methods approach of questionnaires and interviews, as I wanted to gain a greater breadth of the fascinating paradigm of home education.

My first chosen method of questionnaires was the right choice, as this gave extensive opportunities to gather more homogeneous information without being intrusive. However, my choice of paper questionnaires; which I believed to be a better option due to knowing some participants and relying on them to distribute them further, unfortunately did not happen, as only two were willing. Fortunately, those two participants acquired me many names, addresses or passed the questionnaires on. Even though this was quite costly, I sent out twenty-eight and had over half back, which according to the literature, paper copy responses are minimal (Denscombe, 2017, p. 13). The substantial responses gained, gave significant insights into the perceptions of why homeschooling was chosen with their views on socialisation, as opposed to public perceptions that they interpret to be negative.

One participant responded via the questionnaire wanting to give more information. A brief plan of outlined questions for a semi-structured interview was planned, as I wanted them to elaborate further. However, the outcome was interesting as the participant had forgotten what they

wanted to say; which was unexpected, so I had to reiterate what they had wrote. The interview embellished the data already collected.

### 7.3 Validity and Reliability

According to Denscombe (2017, p. 299) if the quality of data obtained has uncertainties, this question's the credibility of the outcomes. The validity of the questions asked were pertinent to the research question and the answers obtained which Denscombe (2017, p. 300) corroborates.

However, Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 280) reverberates that validity within qualitative research is important, as this captures reality which can be problematic as there are multiple facets and therefore can be more generalising which can be based on assumptions. Hammersley (cited in Thomas, 2017, p. 148) states that one piece of evidence, maybe insufficient, therefore, if this is a plausible piece of evidence, this needs to be backed up by previous literature or other evidence from the participant's responses. As the participants answered the questionnaires without influence of other participants, where their answers had similar traits, this shows the reliability of the answers gained and could be used again, to further prove the reliability (Denscombe, 2017, p. 301).

## **8. Conclusion**

Within this chapter I shall focus on summarising my findings from the research and critically evaluate my analysis of the data. Finally, I shall conclude with reference to possible further research from the information gained from my small-scale research.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perspectives of why parents elected to homeschool with the social impacts on the child. With my findings this has proven to be significant to previous research and could further contribute to additional investigations within this subject.

From the research questions, I ascertained homeschooling parents were very passionate and determined to give their child the best start in life. Interestingly, the demographic data obtained questions the current climate of parents choosing to home educate, regardless of their occupation and previous education, due to their cultural capital. However, single parents and the less affluent do not have the same opportunities, so are least likely to homeschool.

Also, with the new legislation regarding registering homeschooled children, with this becoming more widespread, this highlights if Ofsted will be next to check on progression like schools, thus deterring parents choosing this option. Parents are more aware of homeschooling than thirty years ago, a parent stated, alongside school education has now become more regimented.

Interestingly, Sahlberg (2010, p. 97) denotes that the global hegemony affects educational policies teachings and organisations. Homeschool parents were dissatisfied with the current uniformity system of standardised testing and the curriculum, whereby they perceived their child to be labelled due to the testing regime contrasting countries like Finland who trust teacher assessments (Bignol and Gayton, 2009, p. 36; Sahlberg, 2010, p. 66). Parents believed they were coerced into homeschooling, due to a communication breakdown (Alexander, 2001, p. 227).

## 8.1 Further Research

Further research could be to investigate the child's perspective on homeschooling, as one participant suggested that it would be better to get their viewpoint on the impacts on being home educated, as their view may differ from that of parents.

## 8.2 Final thoughts

Homeschooling has always been of interest, however, I have gained further insight into the thorough research parents undertake to ensure their child receives the greatest learning opportunities for development, with a greater understanding of the diverse world in which they live. This research has been enlightening, thus made me question schooling, the enforced control of the curriculum, the establishment and the hegemony of the government. This is Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony:

... the most effective kind of domination takes place when both the dominant and dominated classes believe that the existing order, with perhaps some marginal changes, is satisfactory, or at least represents the most that anyone could expect, because things pretty much have to be the way they are. (Gramsci, cited in Liowitz, 2000, P. 532).

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