

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

HOMESCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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DECLARATION

I, Jennifer Rae STEYTLER, hereby declare that this dissertation is the product of my original work and it has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other University. All the sources used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete referencing.

Student's signature

Date

Supervisor's signature

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the memory of my late grandmother, Joy Morris, who loved and supported us all unconditionally, and to my sister Shelley and Conrad the Brave. Shell, your life has changed completely, but you have never lost sight of your goal – to do what is best for your child. I truly admire your fierce determination and warrior-woman spirit. You have shown such determination and resolve as you have fought against anyone who has tried to infringe on the rights of children with special needs, especially your very unique, intelligent son! Thank you for your advice, support and suggestions, and for opening my eyes to the possibilities of homeschooling.

ABSTRACT

Homeschooling is a growing phenomenon, in South Africa and worldwide. Despite this increasing popularity, it remains somewhat of an enigma, particularly in South Africa. This qualitative study explores the motivations of parents who have chosen to homeschool their children, their academic approach, and their perceptions of the academic, social and emotional benefits of homeschooling.

Initial sampling was purposeful, based on established criteria. Thereafter, snowball sampling was utilised. Data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and field observations. All research was conducted within the greater Durban area. There were eight participants, of which five were parents currently homeschooling and three were people who had other experience of homeschooling. Following the interview process, a non-participant observation was conducted at each of the homeschooling sites. Data from interviews was collected by digital recording and manual note-taking. Field observations were recorded manually. All data was transcribed by the researcher, and analysed using thematic analysis.

The main themes identified during the research design process were: the contextual circumstances leading to parents choosing to homeschool their children; teaching strategies used in homeschooling; the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children; and the challenges experienced in homeschooling. Several sub-themes arose out of the analysis of the data including, inter alia, the special educational needs of children, the perceived shortcomings of mainstream education, parents' perceptions of the socialisation needs of homeschooled children and plans for their future education.

The research findings suggest that homeschooling has benefits in the areas of academic, social and emotional development, and that it can therefore be considered to be both a valid and viable alternative educational setting in South Africa, that has value in meeting the individual educational needs of children.

Recommendations are made for both homeschoolers and education authorities, and suggestions for further research are proposed, in order to develop a more accurate and positive understanding of homeschooling in South Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BOSTES	Board of Studies, Teaching & Educational Standards
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DoE	South African Department of Education
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NSC	National Senior Certificate

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Homeschooling can be defined as a situation in which a child does not attend an ‘official’ school or institution, but remains at home to be educated by a parent or tutor. While homeschooling may be supplemented or complemented by other activities, most of the the child’s education takes place in the home.

The concept of homeschooling is not new. Parents worldwide have been informally teaching their children at home for as long as civilisation itself. More recently, however, homeschooling has evolved. Homeschooling became an expression of the rejection of values of mainstream society in America, beginning in the 1960s in response to a less conservative approach to education in that country (Gaither, 2008).

The numbers homeschooling families has increased exponentially since then. In America the number of homeschooled students had more than doubled, increasing from 850 000 in 1999 to 1 773 000 in 2012 (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017; Redford, Battle & Bielick, 2017).

Homeschooling in South Africa is not as prevalent as in America, but is also on the increase. The numbers of children being homeschooled almost tripled from approximately 11 000 in 2009 to 32 000 in 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2010; 2018). This number could be an underestimation due to reluctance of parents to disclose this information (van der Eems, 2013).

Although homeschooling was deemed illegal before 1994, the promulgation of the South African Schools Act in 1996 effectively legalised homeschooling. This has paved the way for the formation of a variety of homeschooling organisations, both formal and informal, to support the needs of homeschooling families.

Recent pronouncements by the Education Department (Gauteng Department of Education, 2017; Jacaranda FM, 2017), questioning the validity of the reasons for homeschooling, have left homeschooling parents feeling uneasy regarding the future of homeschooling, and

perhaps raise questions as to the legitimacy of homeschooling as an educationally sound system.

Perceptions surrounding the concept of homeschooling differ, making it a contentious issue that requires further exploration. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on establishing the reasons for homeschooling families in South Africa choosing this path for their children, exploring the methods adopted for teaching and ascertaining the degree and nature of their successes and failures.

1.2 Rationale for the study

As a teacher of 19 years, most of which has been in so called ‘ex-Model C’ schools, I had not any exposure to homeschooling and, consequently, had little understanding of how parents who teach their children at home approach this undertaking, its challenges or its successes.

This ignorance was first challenged when, after her third unsuccessful attempt to enrol her son, who has autism, at a preschool, my sister made the decision to homeschool him. The experiences, albeit only one or two days at each school, were very traumatic for him. Since starting to homeschool, his progress has been astounding and assessment has shown him to be academically on a par with his peers in most areas, ahead of them in some, and making acceptable progress in others.

Another factor arousing my curiosity is the number of learners from mainstream schools whose parents have removed them from school in order to homeschool. I was initially sceptical about their decision but, having had occasions to speak to the learners informally some time later, I realised that they were happier and had indeed made progress.

I was genuinely pleased that these children were now happier and more likely to achieve their potential but, nevertheless, it bothered me that despite my efforts at creating opportunities for learning for all my students, it was obvious that I had not been able to accommodate everyone’s needs. I had always prided myself on my efforts to ‘reach and teach’ every child in my classroom, but this led me to explore more creative and active teaching, learning and assessment strategies. However, the reality for me is that, as a teacher in a state school, I am bound by the curriculum of the day. My creative approach does not fit into the time constraints presented by the current curriculum, nor does it prepare learners for the tests and examinations they are required to write. This has raised questions for me; could

homeschooling be a viable, legitimate alternative to formal education, and who could benefit from homeschooling?

1.3 Problem statement

Contemporary homeschooling is an almost global phenomenon that has been gathering momentum since its inception in America in the early 1960s, when it began as an expression of rejection of the values of mainstream society (Gaither, 2008). The sheer numbers of homeschooling families brings with it an abundance of literature on the topic. However, there remain aspects of homeschooling that are under-researched (Boulter, 2017; Fields-Smith and Kisura, 2013; Murphy, 2014; Townsend, 2012 and others).

Research has been conducted on homeschooling in South Africa from a variety of different perspectives and using different approaches. The most recent research explored the participation of adolescents' in matters regarding their education at home (van der Merwe, van der Merwe & Yates, 2016).

Homeschooling in South Africa has been described as a growing trend, which is not showing signs of slowing down but is possibly being forced 'underground' as parents elect to exercise their right to educate their children as they see fit (van Oostrum, 2014). Olatunji (2014) proposes that South Africa is a frontrunner in homeschooling in Africa, but also acknowledges that there is a lack of available research and data on homeschooling in Africa (p. 6). It is a contentious issue, with a range of conflicting perspectives and purposes. It appears that there may be some misunderstanding of homeschooling and homeschoolers; Sosibo's (2015) article reports a black parent having been "lambasted" by a government official who informed her that "home-schooling is rubbish and it is for white people".

Whilst it is not within the scope of this study to investigate the prevailing issues regarding legality, or to debate around parental rights or possible political agendas, the phenomenon of homeschooling in South Africa is a landscape of ideologies, purposes and outcomes that is largely unexplored, but worthy of further attention. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain a deep and meaningful understanding of the concept of homeschooling as it currently exists in South Africa, specifically Durban, in the hope that it may contribute to a clarification of who is homeschooling, why they have chosen to do so and how successful the process has been.

1.4 Objectives

The lack of knowledge and understanding of homeschooling and the need for up to date, comprehensive research on the phenomenon have been discussed. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To establish the contextual circumstances of parents' decisions to homeschool their children.
- To identify the educational approaches used by homeschooling parents or tutors.
- To establish the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children being homeschooled.
- To establish the challenges of homeschooling.
- To establish the validity and viability of homeschooling as an alternative educational setting in South Africa.

1.5 Key research questions

This study aims to answer the following key questions:

1. What are the contextual circumstances that lead to parents choosing to homeschool their children?
2. What educational approaches are used by parents or tutors who homeschool?
3. What are the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children?
4. What are the challenges experienced in homeschooling?
5. Is homeschooling in South Africa a valid, viable alternative educational setting?

1.6 Theoretical framework and research paradigm

The theoretical framework utilised in this study is a phenomenological case study, within an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist approach enables the researcher to gain a clearer and more accurate interpretation of the experiences of others (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). A phenomenological case study allows a more comprehensive understanding of a participant's lived experiences, through the use of different data sources. (Al Riyami, 2015).

This notion requires that the research be understood through the multiple views held by people (Petty, Thomson and Stew, 2012a). It is because of this standpoint that interpretivism is able to include several versions of what we perceive as truth (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

1.7 Overview of the methodology of the study

This study was qualitative, and more specifically, phenomenological in nature. The methodology was a multiple case study, which took place in the natural settings of the phenomenon, i.e. the homes of participants (Al Riyami, 2015).

The study was conducted in the homes of homeschooling families in the greater Durban area. The sample consisted of five families, with a total of eight children being homeschooled at the time.

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the homeschooling parents, and the data was recorded electronically and transcribed by myself.

A non-participant observation was subsequently conducted, and field notes were recorded manually. All of the resulting data was analysed using thematic analysis.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the research and explained the rationale behind the study. The objectives of the study were presented, and the research questions outlined. A brief explanation of the theoretical framework and research paradigm as well as an overview of the methodology of the study were provided. In the following chapter the existing literature on the topic of homeschooling will be explored.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One explained the orientation and background and research questions of the study. Chapter Two focuses on an overview of the literature on various aspects of homeschooling as an increasing phenomenon, both internationally and locally.

2.2 History of homeschooling

Throughout history, children have been educated at home. As early as the seventeenth century, the English philosopher John Locke (1692) expressed his opinion regarding the benefits of home education in comparison to formal schooling:

And what qualities are ordinarily to be got from such a troop of playfellows as schools usually assemble together from parents of all kinds, that a father should so much covet, is hard to divine. I am sure, he who is able to be at the charge of a tutor at home, may there give his son a more genteel carriage, more manly thoughts, and a sense of what is worthy and becoming, with a greater proficiency in learning into the bargain, and ripen him up sooner into a man, than any at school can do (p. 34-35).

Homeschooling began as an expression of rejection of the values of mainstream society (Gaither, 2008). Both conservative and liberal families began homeschooling in the late 1970s and the 1980s. The conservative groups felt that the education provided by public schools was too liberal, and would expose their children to secular, ‘anti-Christian’ values, while liberal parents believed that the same education was too conservative and that their children were being forced to fit into a mould, rather than being given personal autonomy.

Christian parents began to feel uneasy at the changes implemented in the school curriculum, such as the re-introduction of the study of evolution. They felt that their children were no longer being taught in accordance with their beliefs. The American government’s decision to remove bible reading and Christian prayer from the routine of a school day was the proverbial ‘last straw’ and a catalyst for the migration of Christian families from the public-school system to home schooling (Krause, 2012).

Three of the foremost advocates for homeschooling in America at that time were John Holt, Murray Rothbard and Raymond and Dorothy Moore, and books they published then are still available today (Holt, 1981; Moore & Moore, 1977; Rothbard, 1999).

Rothbard published a series of journal articles in 1971, which were later published. The book chronicles the history of compulsory education, and the author's view of this is: "Obviously, the worst injustice is the prevention of parental teaching of their own children" (1999, p. 8).

Holt, however, is considered to be the most influential activist for homeschooling (Kapitulik, 2011). Originally a teacher who promoted school reform, he encouraged parents who were not happy with the state of their children's schools to become advocates for school reform. However, his position changed at the end of his teaching career, when he wrote a book promoting the concept of unschooling (Holt, 1981).

In apartheid South Africa, homeschooling was illegal. However, the advent of the new dispensation and the subsequent implementation of the Constitution of South Africa and its Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) and later the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) mean that homeschooling is no longer illegal in this country.

A substantial amount of literature is available on the topic of homeschooling in overseas countries, particularly America, Canada and England, although knowledge gaps remain (Martin-Chang, Gould & Meuse, 2011; Morton, 2010; Townsend, 2012), and there continues to be misunderstanding about the practice (Rothermel, 2010). In comparison, there is very little literature available on homeschooling in the South African context.

The research conducted locally has covered a range of topics, such as the social adjustment of homeschooled children (Kinnear, 1999 and Mearns, 2001), their academic achievement (Bester, 2002) and their experiences (Mills, 2009; van Schalkwyk and Bouwer, 2011).

An ethnographic study of a homeschool was conducted by Moore, Lemmer and van Wyk (2004) and the opportunities available to homeschoolers for studying after Matriculation were researched by Sansom-Sherwill (2014). De Waal (2000) and Moore (2002) both compared mainstream schooling to home schooling as an alternative form of education. Oosthuizen and

Bouwer (2007) and Botha (2005) focused on educators within the home; exploring their perceptions of their role and the causes of the stress they experience.

Brynard (2007) investigated the possibility of a co-operative relationship between home schools and public schools in South Africa. The unique nature of homeschools, the reasons for homeschooling and daily functions of homeschools were explored by van Schalkwyk (2010), through case studies of four different homeschools.

Olatunji (2014) provides an account of the struggle to legalise homeschooling in South Africa, reviews the history of homeschooling and provides some context on the present-day situation.

This lack of recent research could be a contributing factor to the existing misconceptions regarding homeschooling (Alfred, 2017). The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper and broader understanding of homeschooling in South Africa, in order to create a clearer picture of what is common practice in contemporary homeschools, and to possibly contribute to the justification of homeschooling as a legitimate form of education.

2.3 What is homeschooling?

The dictionary definition of 'homeschooling' is "to teach school subjects to one's children at home" (Homeschool, n.d.). Ray (2017, p.1) defines homeschooling as "parent-led home-based education" that has happened throughout history.

Holt (1981, p. 362) speaks thus about homeschooling: "I have used the words "home schooling" to describe the process by which children grow and learn in the world without going, or going very much, to schools".

In South Africa, homeschooling is defined as an alternative to school attendance that consists of a purposeful programme of education that is directed and supervised by the parent, primarily in the home, and which may include other forms of educational support. This programme must meet the requirements for registration, as detailed in section 51 of the Act (Department of Basic Education, 2018).

It should be noted that ‘cottage schools’ are often referred to by parents as homeschools. A cottage school is defined as a learning centre (often based in a home) that children can attend in groups (South African Home School Curriculum, 2017). Their learning is facilitated by a tutor, who is usually a trained teacher. However, cottage schools are not legally recognized in South Africa, unless they have registered with the Department of Education as a private school. In the context of this study, I have focused on homeschooling that is conducted in the child’s home by a parent or tutor, and is recognised by the Department of Basic Education (2018). Another important distinction is that this research focused on homeschooling as opposed to “unschooling”, which is considered to be a variation of homeschooling, in which children learn through life experiences rather than following a set curriculum (Wheatley, 2009).

2.4 Who is homeschooling?

The most recent information published in America, (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017) indicates that approximately 3 percent of students of school age are being homeschooled. This equates to 1.7 million homeschooled students, the majority of which are white children, followed by Hispanic. Far lower numbers of black, Asian and so-called ‘other’ students (which includes Native American and Alaska native children) were reported.

Ray (2016) describes a broad demographic of homeschoolers. He references “atheists, Christians, and Mormons; conservatives, libertarians, and liberals; low-, middle-, and high-income families; black, Hispanic, and white; parents with PhDs, GEDs, and no high-school diplomas.” (p. 1).

Currently some African countries recognise homeschooling as a legitimate form of education, while others do not. South Africa is at an advanced stage in the establishment of homeschooling as a recognised, legitimate form of education, and the amended *Policy on Home Education* (Department of Basic Education, 2018) has recently been published.

It is difficult to ascertain accurate figures of the number of homeschooling families in South Africa. This is for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the homeschooling parents’ reluctance to provide the Education Department with their personal details, particularly since pronouncements by the Gauteng Education Department regarding homeschoolers in South

Africa (Gauteng Department of Education, 2017; Jacaranda FM, 2017) in which the degree of autonomy of homeschoolers and their reasons for homeschooling were called into question.

Although there are no reliable figures available on the demographics of homeschoolers in South Africa, there is evidence that more black families are homeschooling than previously assumed (Sosibo, 2015). Furthermore, a search of homeschooling groups on Facebook reveals several groups dedicated to homeschooling, both in South Africa and other countries. One of these groups, Brownie Homeschoolers of South Africa, is dedicated solely to black parents, and has almost 900 members (www.facebook.com/groups/1661407437234598/).

2.5 Increased popularity of homeschooling

Ray (2016) explains that homeschooling is growing in popularity faster than any other form of education in America, and also proliferating in countries around the world.

English (2015) reports that homeschooling is becoming increasingly popular in Australia; a statement supported by a number of reports in the Australian media (Bird, 2017; Costello, 2017; Ferrier, 2017; Locke, 2017; Townsend, 2012). According to Townsend (2012) more than 50 000 children were being homeschooled across Australia in 2012.

There are about 2.3 million home-educated students in America. This is up from one estimate of about 2 million children (in grades K to 12) being home educated during the spring of 2010 in America (Ray, 2016).

The percentage of children aged between 5 and 17 being homeschooled had increased from 1.7% in 1999 to 3.4% in 2012. In 1999 there were approximately 850 000 homeschooled students. That number increased by 923 000 to 1 773 000 in 2012. (Redford et al, 2017).

Homeschooling is the fastest growing form of education in America, with estimates of 2.3 million students currently homeschool in America. This growth includes the increase in the numbers of black children being homeschooled. Other countries where the increase in homeschooling is gaining momentum include: Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand and the United Kingdom (Ray, 2016).

The number of children being homeschooled in South Africa appears to be increasing, but it is difficult to obtain definitive statistics, as the data from different sources is conflicting.

According to the General Household Survey of 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2018) 32 000 children were being homeschooled, while the National Census of 2011 puts the number at 57 000 (Census 2011: Census in brief, 2012). However, the fact that a single Facebook group, Homeschooling in South Africa (www.facebook.com/groups/homeschoolinginSA/), had over thirteen thousand members, having increased by more than 500 in the previous thirty days is indicative that homeschooling is becoming more popular.

2.6 Reasons for choosing homeschooling

Several research projects have established, inter alia, the reasons for parents' decisions to homeschool their children. The majority of this research was conducted in America, but there is some evidence available from other countries, including South Africa.

Reasons for parents homeschooling were: schools cannot cater for all children, so tend to focus on those 'in the middle'; schools were unable to provide for a child's special needs; little attention given to individual children due to time constraints; standardized testing, which results in education for the sake of passing a test and not holistic teaching; and lack of funding of schools leading to uncertainty for the future (Kapitulik, 2011).

Three main categories of motivations for homeschooling were; religious and moral reasons; concerns about teaching methods and standards of education; dissatisfaction with the state school system; negative peer influences; desire to take responsibility for the education of their children: lack of faith in the ability of schools to protect students from bullying and special educational needs (Bergstrom, 2012; Fields-Smith & Kisura, 2013; Sherfinski & Chesanko, 2014; Doke-Kerns, 2016).

Morrison (2014) divides homeschoolers into two main camps: religious and secular. The first group are described as "idealogues" (p. 36) whose primary concern was that their children should be taught at home according to their staunch belief systems. The second group, described as "inclusives", are those who are concerned with what they perceive to be the non-progressive education practices of public schools. Although apparently in opposition to one another, there is a degree of overlap of the two perspectives; "idealogues" express a degree of concern with the teaching practices in public schools, and "inclusives" are unhappy with the

norms and values of the schools, albeit very different to those of the “idealogues” (Morrison, 2014).

One of the perceived shortcomings of homeschooling is the socialisation of children. However, being teased and called names is one of the reasons given by parents for making the decision to homeschool (Fields-Smith & Kisura, 2013). The families stated that “the type of socialization experienced in a traditional school created a situation perceived as potentially damaging to their children’s self-image” (p. 275).

Ray (2015, p. 84) established three main reasons for homeschooling as selected by of African American parents. These were that they “prefer to teach the child at home so that you [the parent] can provide religious or moral instruction”, “accomplish more academically than in conventional schools” and “for the parents to transmit values, beliefs, and worldview to the child”. Only 2.5% of parents surveyed selected “desire to avoid racism in public schools” as a main reason for their decision to home school (Ray, 2015, p. 83). He therefore concludes that black parents’ reasons for choosing to homeschool their children are comparable to those expressed by the general homeschooling population in America. However, this is not supported by Huseman (2015), who reports that racial bullying in public schools is directly responsible for the rapid increase in the number of black children being homeschooled in America.

Continuing with the concerns expressed by black parents, Mazama (2015) found two worrying aspects of schools, namely; a Eurocentric curriculum, reflecting disregard for black history and experience; and the attitudes and behaviours of teachers, perceived as being hostile and racist. Some black parents in the study cited concern about male children having a “special education label placed on them for academic or behavior” (Fields-Smith & Kisura, 2013, p. 275).

In Kapitulik’s (2011) study, the participants emphasised that one of the problems faced by modern families is the shortage of time spent together, and cited it as a reason for homeschooling. Time together was considered to be essential to the development of intimacy and closeness. Parents pinpointed work and school for being the two main thieves of family time.

Kapitulik (2011) explains four subsets of homeschooling parents, with regard to their reasons for homeschooling. These are religious reasons; academic and pedagogical reasons; concerns regarding the safety of their children, in terms of both physical safety and safety from destructive influences; and desire for family cohesion. These subsets overlap, and so there are elements of each within the reasons cited for homeschooling.

Another concern expressed by parents was the safety of their children in the public school of their district (Fields-Smith & Kisura, 2013). In other research, the most common reason selected was “concerns with other schools’ environments”, which included physical safety, drug abuse and negative peer pressure. Other reasons reported were, inter alia, parents’ desire to “provide moral instruction” or “religious instruction”, and dissatisfaction with the teaching standard at public or private schools (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017; Redford et al, 2017).

In the Australian context, Bird (2017) categorises reasons for homeschooling: bullying, special educational needs; and the desire for more flexibility to address their child’s individuality. Another of the reasons was the lack of respect for teachers which had resulted in “disengagement and disruptive environment in schools” (para. 6). A Homeschooling Data Report (BOSTES, 2016) reveals that “philosophical” beliefs and special learning needs were two of the main reasons cited by parents for homeschooling. The third category of reasons, categorized as “other”, included those where parents had listed specific reasons, such as “my child learns best in a one on one situation”, “local school is not suitable” or “this suits our family best” (p. 7).

There is a dearth of recent research on homeschooling in South Africa, which has necessitated reference to more dated research. However, South African parents’ reasons for homeschooling are similar to those of parents worldwide. The available research has established that the main reasons for homeschooling were: the desire to give their children more personal attention and to strengthen family bonds; their dissatisfaction with state schools; financial considerations, where parents desired a better education for their children but could not afford private schooling; concerns about the lack of religious instruction at schools; children being unhappy in the school setting; children with learning difficulties; negative peer pressure and undesirable social groups; lack of consultation with parents before curriculum changes are implemented; lack confidence in the standard of the school curriculum; children with special educational needs; emotional instability in children;

unnecessary pressure placed on children and family; creativity being undermined; a preference for what was perceived to be a more favourable learning environment at home; medical reasons such as chronic illness; and to develop a life-long learning mindset in the child (Bester, 2002; Botha, 2005; Brynard, 2007; de Waal, 2000).

Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel (2016) confirm the concerns expressed above. Their research established teachers' limited capacity to support learners, based on their personal knowledge and skills, and the resources available to them. This reiterates the findings of Oswald and de Villiers (2013), in which teachers and principals confirmed that, although they believed strongly that the needs of gifted learners should be accommodated, there were no policies in place that addressed these needs.

As evidenced in the discussion above, there are many reasons why homeschooling is considered the most sensible option for many children.

2.7 Educational approaches used in homeschools

According to Farenga (2009) homeschooling parents use a variety of different methods to facilitate their children's learning. Farenga posits that the traditional methods used in schools to standardise achievements are becoming irrelevant, due to the growing trend, particularly within homeschools and other forms of alternative education, to adapt curriculums to suit children, rather than expecting children to change to suit the curriculum.

Homeschoolers spend time planning and preparing for their children's lessons (Doke-Kerns, 2016; Francis, 2018; Hanna, 2011; Johnson, 2014), and use specific, purposeful teaching methods, and carefully select age-appropriate teaching and learning materials, guided by the child's preferences and interests. Discussion of learning topics by the child is encouraged, regular praise is offered, and self-management is promoted. The use of computers has made myriad resources available to parents, providing access to an array of curricula and bringing parents into contact with support systems previously unavailable to them (Bell, Kaplan & Thurman, 2016; Hanna, 2011; McDowell, 2017; Sabol, 2018).

McDowell (2017) found that over 80% of participants in a quantitative study placed great importance on "hands-on activities and having fun while learning" (p. 20).

Homeschooling parents assisted their children to achieve mastery of concepts before proceeding to subsequent concepts (Cardinale, 2013; Francis, 2018; Sabol, 2018).

Cardinale (2013) found that parents attended homeschooling seminar and support group meetings, in order to extend and consolidate their knowledge. Parents had selected curricula with care, based on their child's learning style. Specific teaching methods included direct, child-centred teaching, emphasis on mastery of concepts, child-centred instruction, flexibility in teaching approach and schooling throughout the year. Some parents sought tutoring from subject specialists. Furthermore, Cardinale's (2013) found "home educators to be motivated and committed, wanting the best for their students" (p. 62).

Doke-Kerns (2016) explored the approach to education of six homeschooling mothers. Her results revealed an eclectic range of methods, although there were aspects common to all participants. Their approach to teaching was centred around the interests, needs and abilities of the child. They emphasised the importance of meeting the child "where they are" (p. 88).

One common thread in all participant interviews was the expression by participants of the need to be well organised, yet flexible and open-minded in one's approach to homeschooling. Another commonality was the extent of parents' efforts to ensure that the learning material was presented to their children in such a way that they would find it fun, interesting and challenging. Doke-Kerns (2016) found that the participants showed "a deep commitment to differentiating instruction for their students in order to foster greater social, emotional, and cognitive development" (p. 157).

Reading is used by many homeschooling parents as a means of promoting academic achievement (Johnson, 2014; Martin-Chang et al, 2011; McKeon, 2007). According to Anthony and Burroughs (2012), some homeschooling parents regarded reading as their primary teaching strategy.

Thomas (2017) investigated the reasons for the academic decisions made by homeschooling parents. Almost half of the parents indicated that these decisions were based on their "child's or children's unique learning style" (p. 2079). Martin (2016) describes methods of "informal, problem-based learning", in which her parents would use everyday problems as teaching opportunities (p. 74).

Homeschooling parents used a range of strategies and curricula to teach mathematics to their children (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012; Johnson, 2014). They used teachable moments to relate mathematics to activities in everyday life (Cardinale, 2013; Martin, 2016), and utilised household objects and activities to make concepts easier to understand (Doke-Kerns, 2016; Martin, 2016).

More than a quarter of the participants in research by de Waal (2000) spent between four and five hours on formal lessons every day, with some spending as much as six to seven hours, a favourable comparison with the total amount of actual teaching time in a school. This, combined with the fact that 35% of participants spent only 1 to 2 hours per day on self-study, and a further group even less than that, could lead one to deduce that a large percentage of homeschoolers preferred structured home schooling. De Waal expands on this, positing that homeschoolers in South Africa generally modelled their home education in a way similar to traditional school education, in which there is a relatively fixed time schedule and a specific curriculum is followed. Almost half of the participants relied on a purchased curriculum, but de Waal does caution that this could have been because participants were recruited via homeschooling associations and curriculum providers.

Holt (1981) rationalises the perception of teaching methods in homeschooling, saying: “[not] all families who try to teach their own children will learn to do it well. Some may not. But such families are likely to find homeschooling so unpleasant that they will be glad to give it up, the children most of all” (p. 54).

Again, little is known about teaching methods adopted in South African homeschools, which is another aspect of homeschooling that needs to be researched.

2.8 Homeschool curricula

A curriculum is defined as “all the courses of study offered by a school” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). By extension, a homeschool curriculum can be defined as the syllabus followed in each learning area or subject.

In most countries, state-controlled mainstream schools follow specific curricula. In America, individual states have developed broad curriculum guidelines, which are in turn interpreted and implemented by each school district (Department of Education, 2005). In England and

Wales, schools follow the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2013), while in South Africa, the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Basic Education is the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements, commonly known as CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2019).

Education authorities have differing legislation regarding the use of curricula by homeschooling parents. In both England and America, homeschooling parents are not required to follow any specific curriculum (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2013; Hanna, 2011). In South Africa, parents have the freedom to select a curriculum to follow, with the proviso that it provides an education of a standard at least equal to that in a public school (Department of Basic Education, 2018). This means that there is no single homeschool curriculum, and that parents are free, firstly, to decide whether or not to follow a specific curriculum or combination of curricula and, secondly, to select the curricula that best suits their needs.

This freedom has provided a gap in the market for curriculum developers, and a wide range of curricula are easily accessible online. Educational materials are available from over 70 publishers (Hanna, 2011). An internet search for homeschool curricula brings a plethora of results, in two broad categories, namely; faith-based and secular. Within each of the categories there are innumerable curricula available in a variety of formats, including web-based and hard copy, and ranging widely in price. The majority of these curricula are American or British (Home Education in the UK, 2019), but there are several homeschooling curricula available in South Africa (South African Homeschooling, 2014).

The most popular curriculum resources used by parents to assist them in homeschooling their children were, inter alia, support websites, libraries, bookstores and educational publishers. Predesigned curricula were not particularly popular (Redford et al, 2017). This was confirmed by Hanna (2011), who found that the majority of homeschooling families used an eclectic approach, combining prepared curricula with other materials. Religious homeschoolers used both faith-based and secular curricula, integrating the two based on their needs. The most important factor in parents' selection of a curriculum was that it meet the needs of the child (Doke-Kerns, 2016; Francis, 2018; Hanna, 2011; Johnson, 2014; McKeon, 2007).

Half of Doke-Kerns' (2016) participants used a specific curriculum, while the others either used a curriculum which they supplemented with other resources and activities, or created their own curriculum using a range of available resources. Some participants used a faith-based curriculum, while others specifically preferred a secular curriculum. A universal theme that arose in this research was that of flexibility in the approach to education. Parents' emphasised "the importance of the child over the curriculum or the plan for the day" (p. 136).

All of the participants in research by Francis (2018) made extensive use of a curriculum in their homeschooling, although the type of curriculum varied, while Rothermel (2002) found that only a small percentage of participants used a prepared curriculum, instead making use of a range of resources that were available to them. Furthermore, less than half of the families used the National Curriculum of England and Wales.

Locally, research revealed that some homeschoolers used a formal curriculum, while others combined curricula, based on their personal preferences with regard to what they felt was appropriate for their children. Of these parents, some elected curricula that would allow their children to write the NSC examinations. In other cases, parents had elected to continue with curricula based on those followed in a mainstream school in order to provide continuity for their children (van der Merwe et al, 2016).

2.9 Academic development of homeschooled children

2.9.1 Academic progress of homeschooled children

Martin-Chang et al (2011) undertook a project to assess the success of homeschooled children in standardised achievement tests in Canada, in comparison to those of children educated in public schools. They found the performance of children who were homeschooled in a structured home setting to be superior to that of children at public schools, and posit that this could be attributed to the fact that homeschooling parents were able to give their children differentiated instruction and dedicate more time on subjects such as reading and writing.

Boulter's (2017) study compared the academic achievement scores of American public-school children to their homeschooled counterparts. There was no significant difference in the scores achieved by the two groups in the major learning areas, indicating that the methods of teaching in each were similar in terms of effectiveness. Bergstrom (2012) disagrees with this, noting that homeschooled children were performing better academically than their peers in

public schools in America, but added that any child's academic performance depends on the quality of the teaching they receive, and encouraged parents to participate in standardised testing to gauge their child's performance compared to the norms.

Ray (2017) expounds that none of the studies conducted in America have shown that homeschooled learners scored lower than their public-school counterparts. He identifies three main findings of the collected data: the scores of homeschooled children are consistently above the national average; there is little discrepancy in the scores between children of different demographic groups; and the achievement of children is consistent with their parents' level of education, but less so than is found in students in public schools. In addition, while their peers in public school generally achieve below the national average, black homeschool students in Ray's (2015) study performed "as well as or better than" the general public-school population (p. 89). Furthermore, Ray (2016) reports that homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents' level of formal education or their family's household income.

Australian homeschooled children are eligible to undergo voluntary annual testing. Approximately five hundred homeschooled children participated in the NAPLAN tests between 2008 and 2013 (BOSTES, 2014). The learning areas assessed were literacy and numeracy. Homeschooled children achieved above the average of all students in New South Wales in all learning areas. These results should, however, be interpreted with caution, as only approximately 10% of homeschooled children participated.

2.9.2 Academic benefits of homeschooling

The academic benefits of homeschooling have been documented in several research studies, and several specific benefits identified. These benefits include, inter alia, the freedom to progress at the child's pace and to consider the child's preferences; opportunities for hands-on learning and real-life experiences; instruction that is differentiated and individualised according to the child's needs and interests; flexibility in both teaching routine and learning experience; and the careful selection of curricula (Bell et al, 2016; Bester, 2002; Cardinale, 2013; Doke-Kerns, 2016; Mills, 2009).

Furthermore, children learned to work independently and were able to maintain good academic standards (Bester, 2002), their education was "child-centred" (Bell et al, 2016, p.

339). The benefits of mastering the concepts taught were discussed by Johnson (2014) and Cardinale (2013).

2.9.3 Academic achievements of previously homeschooled children

Research has shown that homeschooled children not only progress to tertiary education, but also that they have achieved as well as or better than their public-schooled peers (Bagwell, 2010; Cardinale, 2013; Ray, 2013; Snyder, 2013). Furthermore, Cogan (2010) reports that in a study conducted at one university, previously homeschooled students were more likely than their public-schooled peers to complete their course of study and go on to graduate.

Snyder (2013, p. 305) concludes that “Since the results of homeschooling can be seen at the highest level in a college or university, there is no reason to doubt that the home is as effective as a traditional school in preparing students for academic success in higher education”.

Fink-Glass (2016) found that all of the seven participants in her research had achieved tertiary qualifications, mainly Bachelor degrees. Furthermore, three of the participants had achieved a Masters degree and one a Doctorate.

There is little researched evidence of the academic progress and later achievements of South African children who are homeschooling, and this is one of the aspects that this research study aims to explore.

2.9.4 Plans for future education

The academic achievements of previously homeschooled young adults in tertiary education were discussed in the previous section. However, there is little to no available research on how homeschooled children and their parents plan for their future education.

2.10 Social development of homeschooled children

Socialisation is defined as “the process beginning during childhood by which individuals acquire the values, habits, and attitudes of a society” and “social interaction with others” (Socialisation, n.d.). Socialisation is a person’s adaptation to the norms of a group. In contrast, social development is characterised as being aware of socially acceptable behaviour, development of meaningful relationships with other people and awareness of the needs of others (Silverman, n.d.-a).

The social development of homeschooled children is often raised as a point of concern when parents consider homeschooling their children. Alternative forms of education, including homeschooling, are considered dubious as they could “prevent the children’s social adjustment” (Silverman, n.d.-b, p.1). Homeschoolers refer to this as the “S question”—“What about socialization?”, as this has become a ubiquitous question asked of them (Ray, 2013, p. 327).

Ray (2016) asserts that parents’ motivations for homeschooling include being able to mediate and guide children’s social interactions, in order to inculcate values that are compatible with those of the family and, in so doing, to protect their children from negative social influences such as bullying, racism, substance abuse and inappropriate sexuality. These assertions are supported by Thomson and Jang’s (2016) findings that homeschooled teenagers were less likely to drink alcohol than their peers at mainstream schools. Furthermore, the homeschooled teenagers who did drink alcohol were less likely than their mainstream schooled peers to get drunk in public. They posit that these difference between the two cohorts can be explained by the closer parental supervision of homeschooled teenagers, the mindful selection of social activities and, in religious families, the likelihood that the children would socialise with children who have similar, religious, values.

Bester (2002) states that homeschooling parents went to great lengths to facilitate opportunities for socialisation with children of similar ages and interests for their children. Homeschooled children displayed maturity, and were able to socialise both within their own age group and with people older and younger than themselves. They were also happy to take on leadership roles within sport and during informal play. Participants in this study indicated that they were happy with their level of socialisation and did not feel isolated in any way.

Mills (2009) found that, although some children had expressed a wish to spend more time with other children, there was no doubt that they were confident and well-socialised, and appreciated the fact that they could choose their friends rather than being forced to socialise with whoever was in the same class as them.

Research by Doke-Kerns (2016) documented the opinion of parents that homeschooled children were more prepared for real life, due to the range of ages that they are able to socialise with. They felt that this scenario was preferable to one in which children are

grouped according to their ages. Furthermore, they felt that this vertical socialisation was one of the benefits of homeschooling.

Studies of socialisation have revealed that homeschooled children have more meaningful relationships with their parents and other significant adults, and that they are self-confident and show empathy towards others (Medlin, 2013).

Doke-Kerns' (2016) research revealed parents' serious misgivings regarding the "negative socialization" and "poor behaviors" that could result from their children attending a mainstream school, and assertions that their children were provided with a range of socialisation opportunities to foster their social development.

Interestingly, Bergstrom's (2012) comparison of data between public schooled and homeschooled children revealed that the majority of families whose children attended a public school felt that their child did not get enough socialisation time at school. This contrasted with the responses from families of homeschooled children, who indicated that their children socialised several times a week through a range of activities and with children of all ages.

2.11 Emotional development of homeschooled children

There is little available research on the emotional welfare of homeschooled children. This is confirmed by Rothermel (2012), whose research sought to fill this gap. The results of this research showed that the behaviour problems experienced by homeschooled children were no different to those experienced by children who attended school.

Medlin's (2013) review of the literature on this topic revealed that, compared to children at mainstream schools, homeschooled children were "happy, optimistic, satisfied with their lives, and have a positive attitude about themselves and about being homeschooled" (p. 290). Furthermore, it was revealed that they experienced less negative emotional and behavioural difficulties than their counterparts at schools. These findings are strengthened by the outcomes of research by Riley (2015), which revealed that homeschooling facilitates levels of competence, autonomy, and relatedness that are equivalent to or even greater than those in traditional educational settings.

2.12 Challenges of homeschooling

Moore et al (2004) described difficulties experienced by a homeschooling family. These included the financial implications of providing teaching equipment and materials; stress caused by the blurring of boundaries between homeschooling and family life; role conflict experienced by the parent who is the primary teacher; and feelings of insecurity by the teaching parent, specifically regarding the effectiveness of their teaching strategies, their confidence in their content knowledge and the amount of work they had covered.

Research by Reaburn and Roberts (2018) described ways in which homeschooling parents who had experienced difficulties with mathematics at school coped with the challenge of teaching the subject to their children. These included the use of the Kahn Academy website (www.khanacademy.org), enlisting the support of a neighbour and acquiring resources that would assist both mother and child.

A participant in Doke-Kerns' (2016) research stated that, while she was happy with the homeschooling aspects of her day, she felt that the biggest challenge was "being a mom all day long, every day" (p. 140). Botha (2005) also noted the difficulties experienced by the parent responsible for the homeschooling, who often felt overwhelmed in the face of the many demands being made of their time.

Botha (2005) uses the phrase "legislative indictment" to describe homeschooling parents' fear that their personal details would become known to the Department of Education, indicating that this was one of their main sources of stress due to fear of prosecution. Furthermore, some participants in that research had struggled to register as homeschoolers, while others were reluctant to do so for fear of being forced to follow a specific curriculum. This lack of engagement from the Department of Education had left participants feeling "fearful and stressed" (p. 50). Moore (2002) describes at length the conflict that existed between homeschooling organisation and the Department of Education.

Brynard (2007) however, draws the distinction that, despite the challenges faced by parents, they felt that these were outweighed by the importance of homeschooling.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the available literature on homeschooling, both locally and internationally. The following chapter will discuss the conceptual and theoretical frameworks being utilised in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two explored the existing literature on the topic of homeschooling. This chapter provides a detailed outline of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used, as well as description of the nature and location of the study.

The focus of the study is to develop a significant understanding of the concept of homeschooling as it exists in South Africa at present, in order to provide clarity regarding this phenomenon. The primary research question guiding this study is:

Is homeschooling in South Africa a valid, viable alternative educational setting?

3.2 Objectives

The lack of knowledge and understanding of homeschooling and the need for up to date, comprehensive research on the phenomenon have been discussed. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To establish the contextual circumstances of parents' decisions to homeschool their children.
2. To identify the teaching strategies used by homeschooling parents.
3. To establish the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children being homeschooled.
4. To establish the challenges of homeschooling.
5. To establish the validity and viability of homeschooling as an alternative educational setting in South Africa.

3.3 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework offers a delineation of the main concepts to be included in the study, determining what will be included. The concepts and any possible relationships between them are clarified (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A conceptual framework assists the researcher to organise their ideas and to present data in a systematic manner (Green, 2014).

Key concepts in my research are:

- The contextual circumstances that cause parents to choose to homeschool.
- Teaching strategies used by parents or tutors who homeschool.
- Social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling.
- Challenges experienced in homeschooling.
- Homeschooling in South Africa as a valid, viable alternative educational setting.

Miles and Huberman (1994) provide examples of the graphic representation of conceptual frameworks, but I have adapted those provided by Baxter and Jack (2008) and Stake (2006) to show the various concepts relative to my study, illustrated in Figure 1. These concepts were based on my personal knowledge of home schooling, as well as new knowledge I gained through my research of the literature.

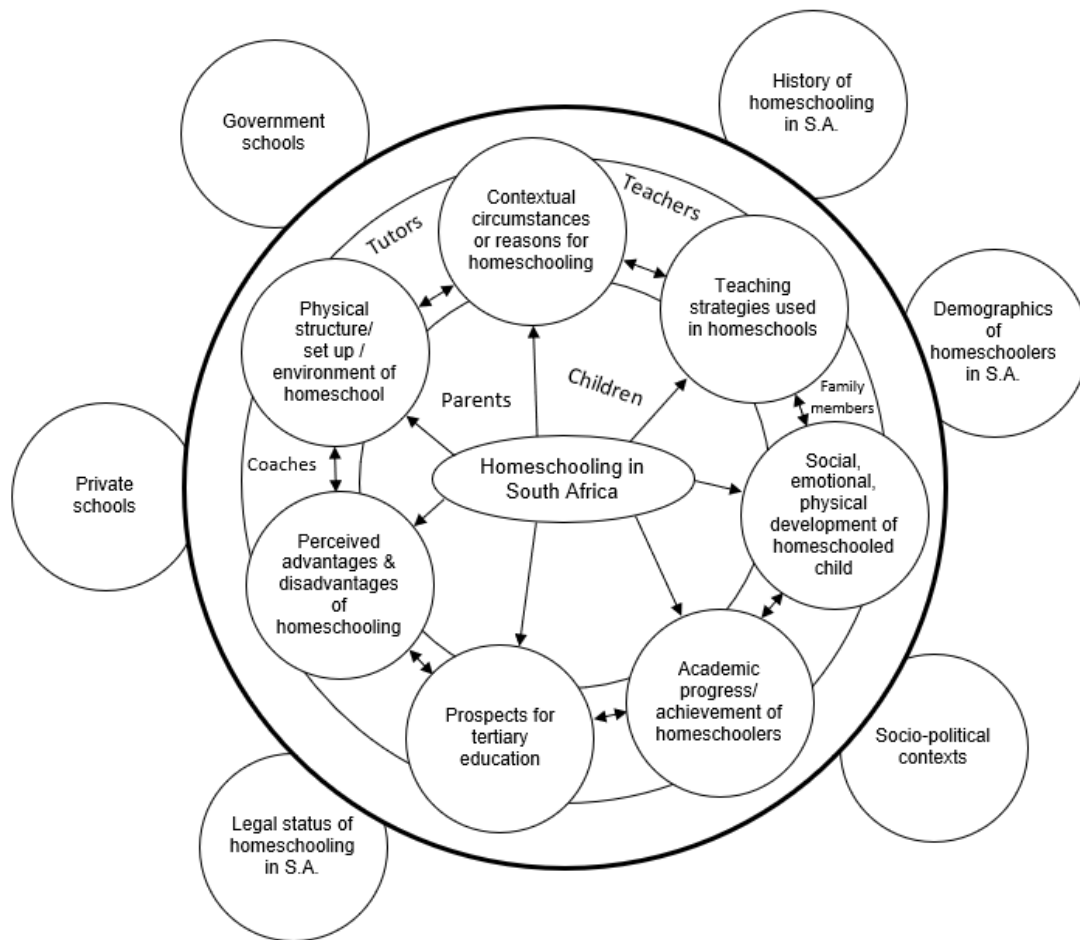


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for study of Homeschooling in South Africa

3.4 Theoretical framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) compare a theoretical framework to a “blueprint” (p. 1) for a house, describing it as “a grounding base, or an anchor...” (p. 12). They illustrate how a theoretical framework is used to support and guide the research process and emphasise that, just as there are a variety of types of houses, each of which appeals to and suits different people, different theories will be suited to different research projects. Likewise, Kawulich (2012, p.52) explains that there is no single paradigm or framework that is “correct”, and the researcher uses his or her own views of what is real, their own knowledge and understanding and value system to select the paradigm that is most suited to them.

Grant and Osanloo (2014) stress the importance of using a theoretical framework as a foundation, based on existing theory, on which to “construct” knowledge. Merriam (2009), who concurs that all research is underpinned by a theoretical framework, supports this emphasis on its importance and expounds that a theoretical framework is derived from existing theories that have been tested and validated by earlier researchers. Merriam’s (2009) description of a theoretical framework as a “scaffolding” (p. 66) for a study is analogous to Grant and Osanloo’s (2014) building blueprint metaphor.

The theoretical framework for this study is that of phenomenological case study.

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach of which Edmund Husserl is considered to be the founder. Although earlier philosophers referred to phenomenology, its systematic use, both as an approach to research and a method with defined goals, is attributed to Husserl (Nellickappilly, 2014).

A phenomenon is an event, a situation, an experience or a concept (Astalin, 2013, p. 119). A phenomenological study is one that “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). “Phenomenological research allows one to understand the essence of a human experience in order to gain a rich understanding of a particular experience from the perspective of the participant(s)” (Crawford, 2016, p.62). Using a phenomenological approach enables the researcher to gain a clear understanding of a phenomenon that is of interest or significance, by using a range of data collection methods (Al Riyami, 2015).

Case study is a methodology that has its origins in human and social sciences. It aims to understand what is distinctive or particular about a case (Petty, Thomson and Stew, 2012b). Stake (1995) defines a case as a “specific”, “complex functioning thing”, which could be an individual person, a classroom, a school, a policy or a system. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”, especially when there are no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and the context in which it exists.

I believe that by selecting to follow the principles of both phenomenology and case study, I was able to develop a deep and meaningful understanding of the phenomenon of home schooling as it was experienced first-hand by those who were living the experience.

3.5 Nature of the study

This study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research has its roots in anthropology and sociology, as well as education and psychology, and was used to understand the cultural and social contexts in which people lived (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research, as a systematic, scientific inquiry, aims to develop the researcher’s perception of a specific phenomenon through “holistic, largely narrative, description” (Astalin, 2013, p. 1). It is “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3) where the aim of the researcher is to observe a phenomenon in its natural setting in order to understand it. Various sources of data and collection methods may be used to support interpretation and deepen understanding methods that lead to interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The process of qualitative research is extensive and complex. Furthermore, qualitative enquiry is not a thing in itself, but rather a description of a broad field of research which encompasses diverse approaches and theoretical understandings, some of which are complementary and some of which are contrasting, but all of which seek to understand rather than prove or measure (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, pp. 245-246).

Qualitative research makes it possible to understand differing viewpoints and the meanings ascribed to them through language. Baxter and Jack (2008) describe this range of experiences

as different “lenses”, through which a phenomenon can be viewed. Qualitative research also takes cognisance of the researcher’s role in the interpretation and construction of knowledge (Petty et al, 2012a). This study uses a qualitative research approach as this provides the flexibility and range of methods needed to get to the heart of the topic.

Interpretivism is a research paradigm that has been used to research education since the late 1970s. It is guided by the aims of anthropology, which are to “understand the culturally different ‘other’ by learning to ‘stand in their shoes’, ‘look through their eyes’, and ‘feel their pleasure or pain’” (Taylor & Medina, 2013, p.4). Its essence is that reality exists in myriad ways, and is viewed through the personal perspective or viewpoint of people, based on their personal context. An interpretive paradigm enables researchers to see the world from the research participants’ perspective, which brings the researcher to a deeper, more meaningful understanding of their life-world, as well as providing the research with context when analysing and interpreting the data. It is the most appropriate to achieve the goal of understanding peoples’ experiences and perceptions, because it provides the data-rich reports that are needed to construct meaning of specific contexts (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The interpretive paradigm “portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing” (Thomas, as cited in Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Ontology refers to the nature of being, and how issues relate to reality and truth (Petty et al, 2012a). The ontology of interpretivism is that there are “as many intangible realities as there are people constructing them” (Kawulich, 2012, p.10) and so takes into consideration the various different views held by different people in different contexts in research different people. It is this ontology that makes interpretivism a paradigm well suited to my research, due to its ability to take into account multiple versions and perspectives of truth (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Epistemology refers to the ways in which it is possible to acquire knowledge, and questions the basis of knowledge (Kawulich, 2012). Petty et al (2012a) define epistemology as the means by which knowledge is acquired. The epistemology of interpretivism is essentially an extension of its ontology, and holds that “truth lies within human experience” (Kawulich, 2012, p. 10), which allows peoples’ stories to be considered as genuine, viable sources of knowledge. This epistemology is well suited to my research project, as it supports my view

that the experiences, feelings and beliefs of all research participants are both worthwhile and significant.

The nature of interpretivism is such that the research should take place in a natural setting. The methodologies that could be utilised include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, life history or case study (Al Riyami, 2015). These methods enable the researcher and participant to form a partnership that provides deeper insight into the phenomenon being studied, and resulting data that is rich and has depth (Tuli, 2011).

Interpretivism allows researchers “to build rich local understandings” of “life-world experiences” (Taylor & Medina, 2013, p. 4). The central focus of interpretivism is the understanding of the subjective world of the experiences of human beings. The researcher attempts to “get inside the person and to understand from within” (Cohen et al, 2000, p.22). This notion requires that the research be understood through the multiple views held by people (Petty et al, 2012a). It is because of this standpoint that interpretivism is able to include several versions of what we perceive as truth (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

From an educational perspective, interpretive inquiry encourages a more insightful understanding of how the various contexts (such as social, political and economic forces) influence the formation of social and educational systems in society. In addition, it facilitates the production of deep, real understanding of the life experiences of participants, from their own personal perspectives (Taylor and Medina, 2013), and provides an “holistic and longitudinal perspective” (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2013, p. 14).

My instinctive mode of communication is to interact with people and to understand how they think and feel through a process of dialogue. This, according to Wahyuni (2012), is the method preferred by interpretivist researchers. This technique enables them to gather rich, descriptive data of social constructs.

The nature of my topic and the goals of my research are both compatible with the tenets of interpretivism. My aim was to understand, from the perspectives of my research participants, the various aspects of homeschooling. Kawulich (2012) confirms that interpretative research has, as its purpose, the understanding of peoples’ lived experiences. The decisions by parents to homeschool have been made in a variety of contexts and circumstances, for a range of

different reasons and with a range of outcomes, each of which are personal and integral to each family. My research was not conducted to judge or ‘assess’ any person or context, but rather to attempt to see the phenomenon of homeschooling in its many manifestations through the eyes of the participants.

3.6 Location of the study

This study was conducted:

- Within the greater Durban area

This geographical area was large enough to provide access to participants from different demographic contexts, whilst being small enough to ensure that all participants were located within a reasonable distance from my home in order that logistical, time and financial factors did not become significant constraints.

- In the homes of homeschooling parents

In order to truly understand the experiences of homeschoolers, I conducted parts of my research within this setting. Interpretive research takes place in the setting in which participants work (Kawulich in Wagner et al, 2012). In the context of this research, this setting was the home or, more specifically, the homeschool.

- In meeting places with other participants

Interviews with other participants; those who were not currently homeschooling, but who have specific experience of the phenomenon, provided me with further sources of data, which enabled me to triangulate my data in order to enhance the validity of my research (Cresswell, 2014).

3.7 Conclusion

Chapter Three has set out the concepts and theories informing this study. The following chapter will detail its research design and methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three dealt with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks guiding this research. Chapter Four describes the research methodology used for this study. Firstly, it provides a description of the purpose of the study. Secondly, it describes the research design and methodology, positioned within the qualitative research paradigm and specifically located in a multiple case study design. Finally, it details the sampling and data collection methods used. It also explains the ethical considerations of the study.

4.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of homeschooling in South Africa. The main objective of the study is to answer the question: Is homeschooling in South Africa a valid and viable alternative educational setting?

This research question is supported by the following sub-questions:

1. What are the contextual circumstances that lead to parents choosing to homeschool their children?
2. What teaching strategies are used by parents or tutors who homeschool?
3. What are the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children?
4. What are the challenges experienced in homeschooling?

4.3 Research design and methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach to explore peoples' experiences of homeschooling. As the researcher, my aim was to understand the contextual circumstances that lead to the decision to homeschool, as well as to gain in-depth insight into the various issues pertaining to homeschooling in South Africa. To this end, I engaged a phenomenological approach. My decision to utilize this particular research design was based, inter alia, on the following reasons:

According to Creswell (2007), the selection of qualitative research is based on the researcher's standpoint regarding ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric and methodology. My personal philosophical assumptions, in the context of this study, were that I expected to find many, varying perspectives of the phenomenon, as perceived by each

participant; I aimed to establish a rapport with the participants, and to become a trusted “insider” (Creswell, 2007, p. 17); I was aware that each participant would have their own, individual value system and would therefore perceive the research questions from a personal perspective. Having examined my personal beliefs and viewpoints, I believe that a qualitative design was best suited to my research.

The structure of the research study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm. Thanh and Thanh (2015) explain that interpretive researchers have the flexibility to use various methods to establish the answers to their questions, and that the interpretivist paradigm is one that can “accommodate multiple perspectives and versions of truths” (p. 25). These answers are sought from the people who have experience of the phenomenon being researched. Interpretivism is focused on people, including the researcher, who interact within the setting of the research, and takes cognisance of the fact that the different viewpoints and opinions of each person participating will influence their mutual understanding (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2013). I selected an interpretive lens through which to approach my research, as it supported my desire to conduct research that is inclusive, and that values the opinions and beliefs of all participants.

Phenomenology enables the researcher to define how several participants make meaning of a common situation or phenomenon. It is most suitable for research that seeks to gain insight into how different people experience or perceive a specific phenomenon or situation. The focus in phenomenology is on how the participants construct or make sense of their own reality. (Creswell, 2007). In this study, my approach is a phenomenological one, in order to gain a deep, meaningful and authentic understanding of homeschooling.

4.3.1 Methodology

As mentioned above, I positioned my research in the interpretivist paradigm. I used phenomenology as a theoretical framework in which to conduct a multiple case study.

An important aspect to consider when selecting case study as a research method is that the phenomenon in question should be “intrinsically bounded” (Merriam, 2009, p. 41). Merriam goes on to provide a useful technique for making this distinction: if there is no limit to the possible number of respondents or participants, or the time that could potentially be spent observing the phenomenon, it cannot be considered to be sufficiently bounded to be classified

as a case. My study, involving homeschooling families in the Durban area, is bounded by the number of potential participants and their physical location.

Stake (2005, p. 445) outlines three types of case study, based on the intention of the planned study. The first of these are the “intrinsic case study” and the “instrumental case study”.

Stark explains that the two are not mutually exclusive, and may be used together in one case study. The third type of case study is the “multiple case study”, which is used when a number of cases are researched in order to cast light on a general situation (Stake, 2005). Each of the cases researched are chosen because the collective knowledge gained will be applicable to a greater situation. I have conducted a multiple case study. This enabled me to compare and analyse the data within each case as well as between each of the cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Yin (2006) outlines two situations in which a case study would be the methodology of choice; when the research question asks ‘what?’ (a descriptive question) or ‘how or why?’ (an explanatory question); or when the aim is to illuminate a situation or, in other words, to really get to grips with it, to understand it. The case study method relies on direct observations and the collection of data in natural settings.

Yin (2006) defines steps to be followed in the process of conducting case study research:

- The first step is to define the case that is to be studied. In my research, the case was homeschools. Each site at which homeschooling is conducted was an individual case study.
- The second step calls for a decision about which type of case study is most appropriate. The multiple-case study is most suitable to this research project, so I combined the data generated in each individual case study to form a multiple-case design.
- The third step entails deciding whether or not to use a theoretical perspective. Using a theory helps to develop suitable data collection methods, and to identify the strategies used to organise the data. The theoretical perspective in this study is phenomenology.

4.3.2 Sampling

Moser and Korstjens (2018) explain that a qualitative sampling plan should be developed. This plan outlines the number of interviews, observations or cases that will be necessary to ensure that sufficient, rich data is acquired. In phenomenological research, purposeful

sampling is used. This means that participants are selected based on specific criteria, related to the phenomenon being studied (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Stake (2005) explains that, in a multiple case study, individual cases are specifically selected for their potential to provide information and clarity that can then be applied to a larger number of similar cases. Cases need to be selected with care, to ensure that they are representative of the phenomenon under study. The best cases to select from are those that provide the most “opportunity to learn” (p. 451).

In my study, participants were parents whose children are currently being taught within their own home, by a parent or tutor, as well as other role players, such as people who work with homeschooled children. These participants were all from within the predefined geographical area. I endeavoured to find participants with a range of characteristics, such as ages of parents and children, number of children being homeschooled and number of years of experience in homeschooling. However, Stake (2005) cautions that although diversity amongst the selected participants based on their attributes is desirable, the ultimate aim is to select cases that can provide the newest knowledge and insight.

Moser and Korstjens (2018) estimate that, for a phenomenological study, less than 10 participants would be adequate. With regards to a multiple case study, Creswell (2007) states that, although there is no specified number of cases, it is general practice that researchers select four or five cases. Based on these guidelines, I selected five cases of homeschooling families. I was also able to interview a further three participants who have a connection to homeschooling but were not homeschooling families.

I used a purposeful sampling method at the commencement of my research, based on the criteria described. Initially, contact with potential participants was made via various homeschooling groups on social media, but thereafter I utilised snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a sampling strategy in which participants themselves are asked to make suggestions to the researcher regarding other people who are known to have experience in the phenomenon in question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I found my first two participants when they responded to a request that I had made on a Facebook group for homeschooling families in the Durban area participate in my research. A third participant was found after a chance encounter at a fundraising event. The remainder of the participants were referred by

the original participants. This includes the participants who were not a part of a homeschooling family.

4.3.2.1 Demographics of the participants

The following charts provide information about the homeschooling children who were involved in the study.

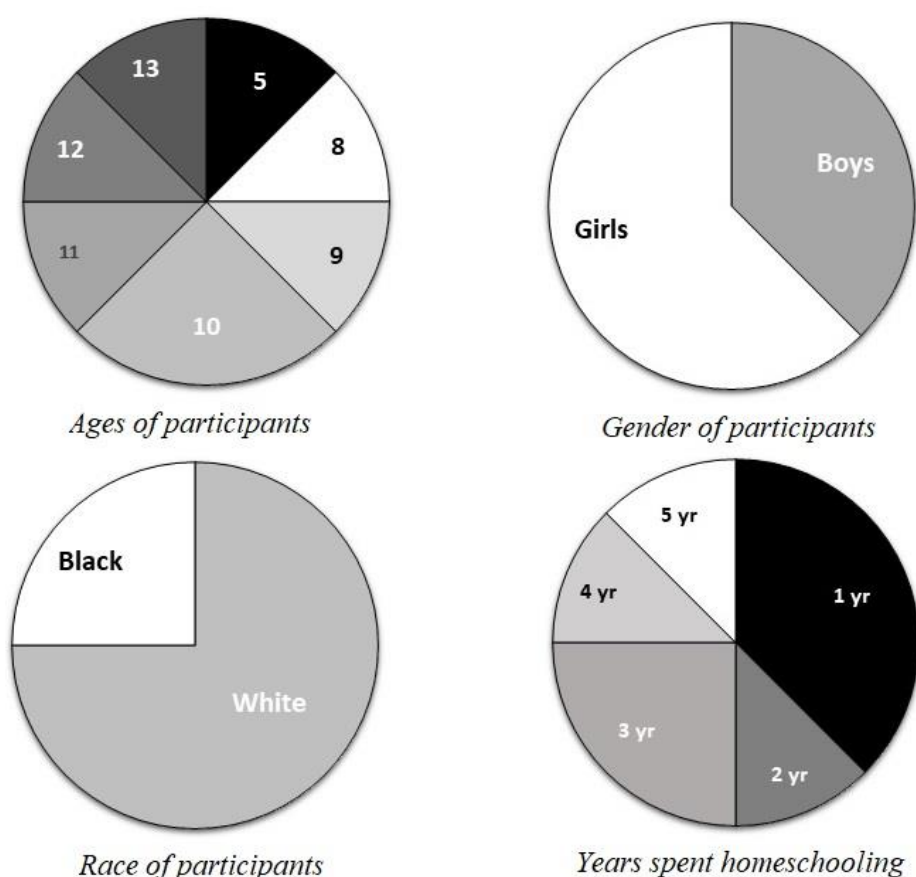


Figure 2 Demographics of participants

Five families participated in the research. In all the families, the mother was primarily responsible for the homeschooling of the children. One of the participants was a qualified teacher, although she had not taught in a school for several years prior to the study. One of the families employed a full-time tutor, as the mother worked full time.

The participants had a total of twelve children, all of whom had been homeschooled. Eight of the children were being homeschooled during the research period. I did not conduct interviews with any of the children, but all of them were observed during the field research

and interacted with me informally, in the presence of their parents. The oldest child was 13 years old and the youngest was 5 years old.

Between them, the families had a total of 25 years of homeschooling experience. The children involved in the research have been homeschooled for a total of 16 years.

4.3.3 Data collection and analysis

4.3.3.1 Data collection

The nature of this study is such that a variety of data sources were needed in order to provide me with sufficient pieces of the “puzzle” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554) to create a clear overall picture of the phenomenon of homeschooling. Baxter and Jack (2008) suggest interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, artefacts and documentation as possible sources of data, but caution against the collection of large quantities of data that then need to be analysed.

I elected to conduct standardised open-ended interviews and non-participant observations. Standardised open-ended interviews provide participants with the opportunity to give as much information as they wish, and provide the researcher with opportunities to ask follow-up questions to gain further clarity (Turner, 2010). Non-participant observation enables the researcher to focus fully on the interactions taking place (Guthrie, 2010). I also endeavoured to collect relevant artefacts where possible, to use as supporting data.

With the prior permission of participants, the interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. Participants were provided with a copy of the transcription to afford them the opportunity to change any aspects of the interview that they felt were inaccurate or did not correctly reflect their situation or opinions. Observations were documented in the form of written field notes, which were later transcribed. This, according to Guthrie (2010), is the preferred method, as the use of technology such as video cameras or computers, could prove unreliable or unsettling for participants.

4.3.3.2 Data analysis

The data from each case was analysed and themes identified, based largely on the key research questions. Thereafter, themes that were common between cases were analysed and

described. Finally, the emerging themes were interpreted, and a detailed “picture” of the cases created by way of participant narratives.

As far as possible, the collection and analysis of the data took place simultaneously (Baxter & Jack, 2008; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Silverman, 2013).

4.3.4 Ethical considerations

Flick (2009) explains that the common tenet of codes of ethical research is that researchers should “avoid harming participants involved in the process by respecting and taking into account their needs and interests” (p. 36). Research participants should be fully and accurately informed of the aims and objectives of the research. The confidentiality of participants should be guaranteed, not only through the use of pseudonyms or code names, but also by avoiding descriptions or other specific information that could identify the participants.

Flick (2009) also raises the matter of "doing justice to participants in analysing data" (p. 41), and cautions against judging the behaviours of participants, particularly in comparison to that of other people. It is important to base interpretations on the data, and not on personal perceptions.

4.3.4.1 Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was applied for and received from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Protocol Number: HSS/1026/018M) (see Appendix A).

It is important to note that, in the context of this study, it was not necessary to obtain permission from the Department of Education, as all research was conducted with people in their individual capacity within their own homes. Furthermore, any form of involvement by the Department of Education could have resulted in reluctance on the part of parents to participate in the research due to ongoing concerns regarding the Department of Education’s stance on homeschooling.

4.3.4.2 Informed consent

Prior to the commencement of the interview process, informed consent was obtained from all adult participants, including consent to make a digital audio recording of the interview (see Appendix B).

Participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary, and that they were free to stop participating in the research at any time and for any reason. They were also assured that any information that they provided would be presented anonymously, and in such a way that it would not be possible to identify them through unique or distinguishing information.

Participants were informed of the procedures regarding the safekeeping of all forms of data emanating from the study.

Anonymity and confidentiality of my research participants and their children has been protected through the use of code names for families and individuals. Specifics regarding the families' size, structure and composition were only detailed if this information was relevant to the focus of the study. In this way, families with specific identifying characteristics are protected.

The race of families is only relevant in the context of demographics of homeschoolers, and so it was not necessary to specify the race of a family when reporting on my observations of the homeschooling experiences of families. This further ensures anonymity of participants, as there will be few specific identifying details included.

4.3.5 Trustworthiness

Korstjens and Moser (2018, p. 121-122) refer to Lincoln and Guber's (1985) definitions of the criteria for trustworthiness. These criteria are:

- credibility, which refers to the fact that the integrity of the participants' original data has been maintained, and has been correctly interpreted and expressed. Credibility can be ensured through the use of triangulation, in which research findings from different data sources are compared to confirm that the findings are similar. Another method is "member check", in which the researcher's transcripts are returned to the relevant participants in order that they may confirm or correct the researcher's interpretations. The transcripts of all interviews were submitted to the relevant participants for approval prior to the commencement of data analysis.
- transferability, or the extent to which the findings of the research can be transferred to other instances of the phenomenon being researched. By providing "thick description" of

both the context of the research and the findings, I have endeavoured to make it possible for any interested persons to decide if the research is applicable in their personal situation.

- dependability, which requires that the researcher's interpretations and conclusions should be corroborated by the participants themselves.
- confirmability, which emphasizes the researcher's responsibility to use only data gained from the participants, and to develop interpretations based on this data.
- reflexivity, which refers to the researcher's practice of continuous consideration of how one's personal perspectives and experiences could affect perception of the participants and the information they share, as well as how the researcher identifies with a participant could impact on how the participant's responses are perceived.

All of the abovementioned aspects of trustworthiness have been borne in mind during the research study.

4.3.6 Conclusion

The research has focused on the lived experiences of families who homeschool their children. It used an interpretivist paradigm within a phenomenological framework. The research methodology took the form of a multiple case study. This approach was selected primarily because it provides for the use of a variety of data sources and gave the researcher multiple opportunities to engage with participants in natural settings.

The issues explored through this research are of importance in South Africa today, as explained in the literature review. Outside of homeschooling circles, very little is known about the phenomenon in its current form. The goal of this research was to begin to fill this gap in our knowledge and to establish the legitimacy of homeschooling as an alternative to mainstream education.

The following chapter will provide a presentation and discussion of the findings of this research.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to establish the validity and viability of homeschooling as an alternative educational setting in South Africa. The previous chapter detailed the research design and methodology used to obtain data. This chapter serves to present the findings of the data obtained from the standardized open-ended interviews and observations conducted in this study, and to discuss them within the context of the findings of previous studies.

The research questions stated earlier in this study serve as the guidelines for this chapter, and I have endeavoured to demonstrate how the data provides answers to these questions.

The key questions of this study were:

1. What are the contextual circumstances that lead to parents choosing to homeschool their children?
2. What are the educational approaches used by parents or tutors who homeschool?
3. What are the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children?
4. What are the challenges experienced in homeschooling?
5. Is homeschooling in South Africa a valid, viable alternative educational setting?

5.2 The homeschool settings

By its definition, homeschooling takes place in the child's home. I conducted all interviews with parents in their homes prior to conducting the observations of homeschooling 'in action'. Just as each home is unique to its occupants, the physical layout of each homeschool setting that I visited was different. There were, however, several common characteristics.

- **A dedicated space**

Each homeschooling family had a room in the home that was dedicated to the function of homeschooling. In one case, the family had all the equipment and resources stored in a small study, and homeschooling took place in their dining room. The remainder of the families had dedicated a room specifically to homeschooling. These rooms differed in size and layout, but their primary purpose was to serve as a teaching and learning space.

- **Furniture**

The teaching and learning space within each home was furnished with some form of desk or table and chairs for everyone participating in the homeschooling. One family made use of a standard, ‘traditional’ desk that accommodated mother and child, seated on simple office type chairs. Another family utilized re-purposed office furniture, in the form of a large L-shaped desk, which provided space for the two children and their mother to be seated comfortably on typist chairs, making it easy for their mother to oversee both at the same time. Modern furniture was used by another family, in the form of minimalist, modular ‘trestle-type’ desks and chairs for each child, as well as a more traditional desk for use by their tutor.

In addition, two of the rooms had designated areas for creative activities. In one case, this took the form of a large, round table on one side of the room; in another, the area consisted of a small table with storage spaces for equipment and materials, and a pin board on the wall above the table. The child’s work was displayed on the pin board.

- **Equipment**

Three of the five families that participated used computers in their daily teaching and learning activities. In these cases, each child had access to their own computer in their own work space.

- **Wall posters and décor**

The four homeschooling rooms that had been dedicated to this purpose were all decorated with appropriate educational posters. The types of posters included typical educational charts, such as alphabet frieze, number charts and a handwriting chart.

One of the rooms also had a timeline from 2099BC to 2000AD, on which are placed images of Biblical and other historical characters. This was not purely decorative, as it formed a part of a history lesson that I observed.

The walls of another room were decorated with the children’s art and colourful ‘planets’, which the children had created, hung from the ceiling.

- **Resources**

One factor common to all five families was the large amount of resources available for mothers and children. In all cases, these resources were stored in bookcases or cupboards, in a neat and logical manner.

The types of resources seen included reading books, reference books, teaching resource books, traditional textbooks (including several based on the current CAPS curriculum), puzzles, educational games and DVDs.

- **Impressions created by the rooms**

The most overwhelming impression created by these rooms is a sense of the families' dedication to their homeschooling, and the seriousness of their approach to this undertaking.

The rooms used for homeschooling were all neat and tidy, and well organized. Despite the particularly homely feel of one of the rooms, one is reminded of its function by the more formal noticeboard indicating test dates and so on. All families had some form of planning visible, whether it be on a wall or in a book.

For the majority of the day, the children would be seated at a desk while working. One mother chose to do reading while sitting in a comfortable chair with her child. One of the children relaxed on the floor while listening to an audiobook during a break.

In all cases, the contents of shelves and bookcases were arranged in a purposeful manner, providing easy access for mother and children.

The rooms were all functional and, through their arrangement and contents, conducive to teaching and learning.

5.3 Themes

The following themes were identified in the research design: the contextual circumstances leading to parents choosing to homeschool their children; teaching strategies used in homeschooling; the social, emotional and academic benefits of homeschooling for children; and the challenges experienced in homeschooling.

Further themes were identified during the analysis of the research data, and were broken down into subthemes as detailed in the table below:

Themes	Sub-themes
Contextual circumstances leading to parents choosing to homeschool their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's developmental delays and barriers to learning • Parental perceptions and experiences of mainstream education
Educational approaches to homeschooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum choices • Resources used by homeschoolers • Teaching routines • Teaching strategies in homeschooling
Academic development of homeschooled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic progress of homeschooled children • Academic success of previously homeschooled adults • Academic benefits of homeschooling • Plans for future education
Social and social development of homeschooled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialisation of homeschooled children • Social development of homeschooled children • Participants' perspectives on socialisation • Social benefits of homeschooling
Emotional benefits of homeschooling for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional benefits of homeschooling
Challenges experienced in homeschooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of teaching content • Pressure to perform • Financial implications • Family conflict • Role conflict • Department of Education

Table 1 Themes and sub-themes

5.3.1 Contextual circumstances leading to parents choosing to homeschool their children

There were a variety of circumstances that had resulted in parents electing to homeschool their children. The main sub-themes were a child's developmental delays and barriers to learning; and perceptions and experiences in mainstream schooling.

5.3.1.1 Child's developmental delays and barriers to learning

Two of the children whose parents participated in the research were being homeschooled partly because of specific developmental delays or problems.

Child D had a developmental speech delay. Her parents enrolled her at a local pre-primary school for her Grade 0 year. Her mother explained, *"We put her in school, an Afrikaans school here, and it was really difficult. The teachers didn't understand her, the kids didn't understand her."*

At the end of the first year, her parents were advised to let her repeat Grade 0 year but, despite doing so, by the third quarter of the year they realised that *"she's not fitting in. We had already put her a year back, and it was still not enough"*. Despite her efforts to find a suitable placement for her daughter, contacting all the remedial schools in the area, she found that *"unfortunately nowhere could have helped us in the Afrikaans"*. Having exhausted all other avenues, Child D's parents made the decision to start homeschooling their daughter.

Child F was born with a genetic condition that has an array of symptoms, including delayed motor development, varying degrees of learning disability and speech difficulties.

His mother explained some of his challenges: *"He also has extremely low muscle tone. [...] For him to set out and lay out an addition, multiplication [or] division sum is a nightmare. He can't hold the ruler and make straight lines."*

Participant 4 explained her reasons for homeschooling, *"Child E would struggle so much at school, because the teacher can't sit down and figure out another way to teach this for one child."*

Participant 7, who was homeschooled for most of his schooling, recalled:

my parents took my brother out, because of learning issues he was having at school, and they also felt that I would also have learning disabilities. They thought they could focus more on us individually and we'd get more out of it.

Child D's mother explained:

she'd have those days where she would know all her things so well, and then there's other days where she can't even tell me the alphabet, or show me the alphabet and show me the numbers... [...] I don't expect the teachers to just give the attention to her because it's not fair.

These findings are consistent with those described by other researchers. Bergstrom (2012), Bird (2015) and the BOSTES (2016) all found that parents had cited their children's special educational needs and barriers to learning as reasons for choosing to homeschool them.

These findings were echoed in the South African context. Both Moore (2002) and Bester (2012) stated that parents may choose to homeschool in order to provide for a child's specific learning needs.

Brynard (2007) confirms that homeschooling is seen as a means by which various special education needs of children can be accommodated, which is not possible in mainstream schools. This assertion is supported by Donohue and Bornman (2015), who found that, while teachers in mainstream schools supported the rights of all children to an education, they had genuine concerns about their capacity to include learners with severe barriers to learning, mostly due to lack of support from schools.

5.3.1.2 Parental perceptions and experiences in mainstream education

- **School unable to meet child's needs**

Participants identified specific needs that their children's schools had been unable to meet, including the need for constant supervision; academic extension and stimulation; and academic support for children with learning difficulties.

Child F's parents initially enrolled him in a private remedial school.

[...] for the first three years it went really well at school and [he] flourished. But the next year he had a teacher who, [...] wasn't able to cope with him because he did have emotional outbursts at school and he does perseverate, so that became a bit of an irritant.

Possibly the most significant symptom of Child F's genetic condition is the insatiable appetite of those affected. This has resulted in the family needing to keep all foodstuffs under lock and key, and had made it impossible for him to remain in a mainstream school. His mother's words expressed the gravity of the situation when she said: "*there is no school in South Africa to which Child F could go which would keep him safe.*"

With regards to Child F's compulsion to eat, his mother explained:

I've always been worried with him at school, and we had arranged with the school for things to be locked away, so the children's lunches were locked away, ... but as the school also got bigger, it became more difficult and days like... cake sale days were an absolute nightmare, because there was no control for me, with that.

The family realised they would have to homeschool him because they did not know of any South African school able to guarantee his safety while he was at school. Although the family had made an effort to make the school and the teacher aware of their child's needs, they felt that the school had not attempted to accommodate him.

The school wasn't prepared to read the research, or [the teacher] hadn't read the research that we'd given her, or the guidelines on how to handle him, so it became quite a difficult year that year and Child F wasn't happy at school.

Kapitulik (2011) found that parents had voiced concerns about the safety of their children. In South Africa, Bester (2002) also found that children were being homeschooled for medical reasons.

Two participants believed that their children would not receive the extension and stimulations they needed.

Participant 3 felt her daughter had not been extended at school:

I've just noticed her report and that also showed, every time she gets a report from the crèche it says she's bored, she's bored, so then they actually couldn't put her up in a higher group so they can stimulate her more.

Participant 4 was of a similar opinion:

[Ch7] would have been bored [in a mainstream school], because she would have been stuck where she can't move up. She sits when she's done with her maths work, she grabs my cell phone and checks all her maths problems because she wants to. [...] Ja, so at school I think she would have been frustrated.

This finding is confirmed by Kapitulik (2011), who found that schools cannot cater for all children, so tend to focus on those 'in the middle'. Oswald and de Villiers (2013) reported that South African teachers and principals had admitted it was "unlikely that the gifted learner would be singled out for extra attention and support".

Two parents were negatively affected by the perceived lack of remedial support for their children. Despite Participant 1's efforts to find a remedial school, in which she "went to basically all the remedial schools", she found no suitable Afrikaans medium school.

In Participant 3's opinion, "the biggest mistake [the education department] made is taking the remedial classes out of the schools".

Three of the five parents described events in which they had felt their child's school had not been prepared to co-operate with and support them.

Participant 3 had become increasingly frustrated at what she perceived as the school's lack of co-operation in her efforts to support her children in their school work.

... I would, when they come home, help them with their homework, when they had to write tests, I would check that they know their work. [...] and then I would just go through their books, and then I'd notice that they were failing most of their tests, and I couldn't understand why. And a few times I've gone to the school and sat with the headmaster and I sat with the teacher and said, 'Okay, from me as a

parent, what can I do to help my child? You as a teacher, what will you do to help my children?’ It only lasts for about a week and then it just went back...

Participant 6, who had experience teaching in a mainstream school, substantiated the views expressed by parents when she said: “With regards to the academics, I think we all, we actually learn at different rates, and *there’s not enough within the formal education system to actually allow for that.*”

These experiences echo those of Bester’s (2002) research, in which parents expressed the desire to give their children more personal attention than they had received at school. Nel et al (2016) found that although teachers were able to provide a limited amount of individual support to learners, this was difficult due to the demands of the CAPS curriculum. Brynard (2007) also noted schools’ inability to accommodate learners with special needs. Donohue and Bornman (2014) contend that many teachers have not received the necessary training to teach learners with disabilities effectively. These findings substantiate the view of Participant 6, who said: “*With regards to the academics, I think we all, we actually learn at different rates, and there’s not enough within the formal education system to actually allow for that.*”

- **Sub-standard teaching practices**

Participants whose children who had been previously enrolled in a mainstream school all reported experiencing unacceptable teaching practices at some point during this time.

Participant 2 reported the falsification of assessment results. She had had spent time teaching her child his times tables and, by the end of Grade 3 and “*he knew them perfectly, up to the 12 times table, from the very beginning of grade 3*”, so was shocked when she received his school report at the end of the first term of Grade 4, in which he had been given a ‘2’ for his times tables, indicating he did not know them. This is when Participant 2 realised the teacher “*hadn’t even tested him because she gave him a 2 for his tables, on his report*”.

Participant 2 was also concerned about the lack of attention paid to the “middle” children who are neither struggling nor achieving well felt that: “*school is geared for the child who excels... and the middle of the range can coast through and not be pushed...And generally, the ones with issues are just left to fall by the wayside.*” Participant 3 was shocked to discover that her child had been excluded from class without her knowledge, when she walked into her child’s

classroom to speak to the teacher about a sport related matter, and saw her son sitting on the far side of the classroom, away from the other learners. She asked the teacher if her son had been misbehaving, as he had been known to be mischievous. The teacher replied that she had given up on him, and he would need to continue on his own. She said to the teacher: *“Twice a week I see you, and not once do you come and tell me there’s a problem”*.

Participant 3 did try to have the issue dealt with by going to the headmaster, but this did not help: *“So same story; went to the headmaster, tried to sort out what can I do, what can you do, and I just didn’t get any joy”*.

There had also been other incidents cementing Participant 3’s lack of faith in the standard of teaching in mainstream schools. One of these was her belief that the curriculum was not fully covered by the teachers at her child’s school. This had resulted in a large number of students failing their June examinations.

I mean if it was just like a handful, I could say, “Alright, you kids just didn’t learn”, but even the clever kids, they were in tears when they wrote these exam papers, especially with the maths, [...] because they did so bad in the maths, but it’s because, like I say, stuff that they didn’t even work through in that school, in that term, and here they’re getting it in exam times.

Participant 3 expressed further concerns regarding the standard of teaching in her younger son’s class, which resulted in the decision to remove her children from mainstream schooling:

[...] they had to start preparing for exams. I went through his books and I would see some of the stuff is marked correctly, some is marked wrong, some are not even answered, but now he has to prepare for exams. So, I asked him what’s going on and he says [that] the kids are marking each other’s work. I couldn’t understand; how can the teachers allow the kids to mark each other’s work? It’s not right, because now he has to prepare for the exams, and this is the problem I’m facing. So, I said to my husband, “Do you know what, before I even go down that road, I’m taking them out.”

One of the participant’s children attended an elite private school. However, she still had concerns about the standard of teaching, particularly in isiZulu lessons, which were:

“... taught by a non-Zulu person, an Indian lady, who was pronouncing words wrongly. And you know my kids were now pronouncing Zulu words strangely”. When she asked her children about their incorrect pronunciations, their reply was: “... because our teacher says that”. She approached the school and was told that the teacher had a post-graduate degree in Zulu and had been teaching for the past fifteen years, and other parents were happy with the standard of teaching. This did not reassure her.

... listen to her language, she doesn't pronounce it properly and the kids were laughing in class, and she'd get angry at them, then shout at them, you know, so it was a never-ending cycle, and I was like, I can't do this anymore.

These findings confirm those of Fields-Smith and Kisura (2013), who revealed parents' dissatisfaction with what they believed to be an inferior standard of education compared to that of homeschools. De Waal (2000) also found that one of the main reasons given by parents for their decision to homeschool was the standard of education in schools.

Participants in research by Doke-Kerns (2016) expressed their reservations about the standard of teaching in schools attended by their children, which had led them to make the decision to homeschool.

Redford et al (2017) also found that parents were unhappy with the standard of teaching at public and private schools in America.

- **Discipline**

Poor discipline structures in schools was a cause for concern among parents.

Participant 2 explained another reason for having removed her child from mainstream schooling:

And I also think with the discipline issues and everything else, I would have found it very difficult with him at school. [...] It's just so much laxness all around, and I think, also because of the limitations placed on the schools, they can't correct stuff [...] in the school environment, and that's an issue, for me. So, I think he probably would have been homeschooled [even if he did not have the challenges].

This is a viewpoint shared by Participant 3:

Well, first of all the discipline is um... gone down the drain. If I just hear how the kids talk to the teachers. Obviously, it's a thing that [...] starts at home. I mean that's definite... but if I just hear how my other friends' kids are picking up all these bad habits and all these... bad things from school.

These findings are consistent with those of Bird (2017), who reported that a lack of respect for teachers had led to “disengagement and disruptive environment in schools”, and had resulted in parents removing their children from schools. Furthermore, Brynard (2007) and Bester (2002) both reported a lack of discipline in schools as instrumental in parents electing to homeschool their children.

- **Class sizes**

Two parents expressed concern about the large sizes of classes in mainstream schools, in terms of the fact that this makes it difficult for teachers to assist students. Participant 3 was understanding of the pressures faced by teachers in mainstream classrooms:

...there's so many kids in the classrooms that the teachers cannot sit and help a child that struggles.

This concern was also expressed by participants in Kapitulik's (2011) research, who were critical of the amount of time wasted during the school day, as children waited for the teacher to deal with everyone, resulting in little attention given to individual children. This is consistent with the views expressed in Bester's (2002) research, in which large class sizes were blamed for the lack of individual attention given to children.

- **Concerns regarding curriculum**

Ray (2015) established that parents wanted to “accomplish more academically than in conventional schools”, while Kapitulik (2011) found that parents had chosen to homeschool due to dissatisfaction with the curriculum, which did not provide for holistic teaching or real learning, but rather emphasised standardised testing, resulting in education for the sake of passing a test. Bester (2002) found that parents had a lack confidence in the school curriculum.

These findings were echoed in this research, in which participants voiced concerns surrounding the CAPS curriculum, which they found to be lacking in opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, while containing excessive amounts of content.

Although their misgivings were slightly different, two participants voiced their concerns about the school curriculum. One of the issues they had surrounds the perceived lack of development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills:

[...] if you look at the whole school curriculum, it doesn't really focus on those skills. It's more content, and how do I prove that I know the content. But life is about solving problems. Life is problem solving from day one till the end of the day. I mean, I've got a good career, and if I've picked up any training skills that I think are the most valuable skills, it's critical thinking and problem solving. And how does school teach that?

Those are two [vital skills], and then you have to be able to actually do, I call it navigating politics. Those are people skills. [...], how are those taught at school? Because these are things we need to be able to survive in this world. If you lack those three things, your life is gone.

Participant 5

Another issue raised was the belief that the CAPS curriculum contains an excessive amount of content, which placed pressure on teachers, and sacrificed opportunities for children to be creative:

... at the moment, because teachers are so rushed, classes are so big, the CAPS curriculum is ridiculous! [...] There's not time for creativity.

Participant 6

• **Bullying and racism**

None of the children whose parents participated in the study had reported being bullied by their peers, although Participant 2 did express her awareness of bullying in schools when she said: *"Reading about all the bullying, and things like that, it's scary."*

This contradicted with the findings in other research, in which bullying had been identified as a causative factor for children being removed from schools (Bird, 2017; Huseman, 2015).

Mazama (2015) reported that parents had removed their children from schools due to the attitudes and behaviours of teachers, which were perceived as being hostile and racist. These findings were repeated in this research.

The son of Participant 3 had been subjected to ongoing emotional bullying by a teacher.

... with my child being in grade two, he cried so much he did not want to go to school. It's the teacher that was... she was very cruel to the kids. ... just the way she was talking to the kids. "You kids are useless. You don't know what you're doing. You can't do this", and I'm standing there, I'm a parent, my child is sitting there, and this is how you talk to the kids. From an emotional point she [the teacher] was breaking him down tremendously.

Participant 5's child had been exposed to racist remarks directed at herself and some of her peers:

And then there was the whole issue of that... in the newspapers last year, where at [child's school] the whole racial thing, the teacher who blurted out racial comments to children. It was in my daughter's classroom, in her class that it happened.

- **Negative influences and peer pressure in schools**

Redford et al (2017) reported that the most common reason for homeschooling in America was parents' concerns regarding the environment of schools. These included fears for physical safety, exposure to drug abuse and negative peer pressure. Negative peer influences were also indicated in research by Bergstrom (2012) and Kapitulik (2011).

In South Africa, both Brynard (2007) and Bester (2012) had identified negative peer influences and undesirable social groups in mainstream schools as reasons for parents preferring to homeschool their children.

Similar findings emerged in this research. Participants expressed their concern that their children would be unduly influenced by their peers, and some specific issues were identified.

Participant 4 expressed concerns regarding the precocious behaviour and premature sexualisation of children in mainstream schools, thinking it may result in undesirable changes

in their behaviour and personalities: *“I love my children and I think sending them to school with the children and the people that they’re exposed to, I may struggle to like them then.”* She described what she had observed during visits from a child who is in mainstream schooling. Although she was *“a sweet girl”*, she talked about things that were *“too old for her age”*, *“...and you can see it’s things she’s been exposed to [in school].”*

Participant 5 was concerned about her children adopting values conflicting with those of the family. She described a sense of entitlement held by certain parents, who:

... believe that they’ve made it, they deserve the best ever, and they want their kids to get the best of everything in school, and then they would harass the principal, harass the teachers, and your child now is exposed to these children as well who have been raised in a home where you don’t have the same values of, but your child must now be in an environment to be part of this.

She went on to explain how she felt her children were being influenced by their peers, when they started asking her to buy them branded clothing in order to fit in.

The comparison thing started, because they were always comparing each other in school. And they start wanting things that they’ll never, ever get. Now my kids were like, ‘I want this kind of shoe’ and I’m saying, ‘that shoe costs two thousand Rand, I’m not paying that for a shoe, you’re going to wear it for a year, then it doesn’t fit you any more, I’m not buying that for you’, you know. And then it was, ‘but so and so has it’, you know.

Participant 5 felt that:

... in a way I was allowing other families to raise my child. And whose child is this? And by me being a working mum as well, they [friends and teachers] have more impact than I do now, because she spends more time at school than I do with her.

A perceived lack of control over when and how children learn about sexuality was another concern expressed by Participant 5:

[...] but they also get to be influenced by things that should not be influencing them, that they may choose not to have. For me, for instance, I want to teach my children about sexuality differently to what the world is saying. But if they’re

spending more time outside, they may find that they'll be taught much earlier than I would.

- **Pressure to perform**

Bester (2002) found that unnecessary pressure had been placed on children and family. This sentiment was echoed by two participants in this research, who had found that there was undue pressure on children to perform, both academically and in other spheres. Child 8's mother had noticed a change in her daughter's demeanour:

I started seeing them, my daughter in particular, a bit of an introvert, but she became more of an introvert and she was very stressed, to try to be the best in school, all the time. Beating somebody, beating that person, just to compete but it was just too intense.

Participant 6 also commented about seeing “*children under constant pressure to perform*”.

- **General disillusionment with mainstream education**

Doke-Kerns (2016) reported that three parents had expressed disillusionment with the state's schooling system. Interestingly, this correlates with the findings of this research, in which two participants specifically explained that they would not want their children to return to mainstream schooling, due to their lack of faith in the system and what they perceived as a disintegration in standards.

Participant 3 explained that she would not want her child to return to an Afrikaans medium school: “*I'd never send him back. I mean it's actually heart-breaking to see how the Afrikaans schools have actually gone backwards.*”

Participant 2 explained her reasons for not wanting her child to return to a mainstream school: “*Because I am becoming disillusioned, with everything I read about the school situation. ... I think with the discipline issues and everything else, I would have found it very difficult with him at school.*”

5.3.1.3 Conclusion

There are a broad range of circumstances that lead parents to elect to homeschool their children. The most common of these have been discussed, and there are obvious parallels

with the findings of this research and those of other researchers, both locally and abroad. There are, however, there were two exceptions to this. Firstly, although there were participants who utilised Christian based curricula, a desire to educate their children in accordance with specific religious principles was not expressed. Secondly, while one participant did mention a racist incident that had taken place in her child's classroom, none of the participants discussed racism, or the race of their children's peers or teachers in any other context.

5.3.2 Educational approaches to homeschooling

5.3.2.1 Curriculum choices

Although homeschooling parents have relative freedom to select the curriculum of their choice, from the plethora of curricula available both locally and internationally, three of the five families who participated in this research used the CAPS curriculum to some degree. Furthermore, a fourth participant indicated that in the following academic year she planned to follow the CAPS curriculum in its entirety. She stated that she preferred to utilise a "boxed" curriculum, as she felt this offered her certainty in her homeschooling. Additionally, she stated that:

... if it ever happens that he does want to go back to school, at least going with [the SA CAPS based homeschooling curriculum] it's a CAPS curriculum, so you will fall in easily.

Participant 3

Another parent expressed a similar motive for following the CAPS curriculum:

My reasoning has been that if he did ever have to go back to school, if there was nothing else, say something happened to me, I wanted him to have covered the topics that were covered in CAPS.

Participant 2

This reasoning was also expressed by participants in research by van der Merwe et al (2016). Rothermel's (2002) research findings reflected a similar attitude towards the National Curriculum of England and Wales, with approximately 4% of participants stating: "We follow it because they may return to, or enter, the school system" (p. 197).

Doke-Kerns (2016) reported that some homeschoolers had supplemented a curriculum with resources and activities that they felt were relevant for their children. This finding

was confirmed in this research, in which three of the participants used the CAPS curriculum as a base or starting point:

What I did was I took the normal CAPS syllabus, went through each thing and tried to cover it using some of the material from the CAPS textbooks, but a lot of it from online stuff or other stuff that I'd bought. I wanted to stick to a large extent to what was covered in our schools... Participant 2

... we follow a CAPS curriculum. We have the full curriculum that we go through, and we have, just like any teacher would have in school; there's worksheets, there's reporting, they get graded, like they were in real school, but then we add other additional things. [...] We do research, and then we find whatever we think is relevant, and then we craft it to their age. Participant 5

The CAPS curriculum itself was found lacking by most participants, who expressed a variety of opinions in this regard.

Some found it to be too heavy on content. Participant 1 explained: “... it's a lot of work to do, too much information for her”, while in Participant 6's opinion: “... the CAPS curriculum is ridiculous! It's just... there's too much content, you don't need to know all this content!”

One participant did not believe the curriculum to be of a high enough standard, and explained that, although she did at times get confused by curriculum choices, she was certain she did not want to use a CAPS based curriculum; “I know that I don't want a CAPS curriculum. Unfortunately I don't think it's good enough.”

Participant 5 felt the CAPS curriculum has certain limitations.

CAPS, as much as it's a good curriculum, it is lacking in some areas. [...] We have African history being incorporated into the content, because CAPS doesn't have much of that, so we're adding the things that we think are lacking, because we have time to do that.

These findings equate to those of Rothermel (2002), who found that the National Curriculum in England was only used by approximately 10% of participants. Their reasons for this were

similar to those expressed in this research, including: “Restrictive, narrow”, “Bad, unnecessary”, “Prescriptive, rigid, pressured”, “OK, looks sensible, fine for reference” (p. 197).

One of the participants in this research preferred to use a so called ‘boxed curriculum’.

I prefer... I think it's called a “boxed” curriculum. All the subjects from one company basically, I prefer that, and [I know] this is the amount of work he has to do for the year, so I can make sure that he stays on to... up to date. Participant 3

The curriculum of choice in this case was the Accelerated Christian Education curriculum. This curriculum, according to the organisation’s website, is “*a unique education system that offers students the opportunity to learn at their own pace while being guided by excellent, Biblically-based learning materials*” which offers “... *a high-quality, Christian alternative to the conventional schooling system*” (A.C.E. Ministries, n.d.).

The reason for this participant’s choice of curriculum was not specifically for religious reasons, but because of its clarity and ease of use” “*They are colour coded, so they would first explain what it is, and they’ll give you an example how to do it, and then you get the actual work to do.*”

Another factor was the level of mastery required for her child to progress. This reassured her, as she felt that she knew he had understood the work he was doing.

... there’s certain pages in the A.C.E. where he has to stop and mark this work first, to make sure that he understood what he was doing before he’s allowed to go on. And then every few pages there’s a test that he has to write and then I mark the tests, and then near the end of the book there’s another test again about the whole book. And then there’s a separate piece of paper which is his final test, basically.

This finding is consistent with those of previous research. Doke-Kerns (2016) found that only one of the six participants in her research did not use any curriculum at all. One of the participants made use of a curriculum that she followed exclusively. The other participants had taken a more eclectic approach to the curriculum, combining various homeschooling curricula and other resources available to homeschooling parents.

Participant 1 in this study had used three specific resources for homeschooling her daughter, namely; The Good and the Beautiful (The good and the beautiful, 2018), Math-U-See (Math-U-See, 2019) and Omvattend Afrikaans (Omvattend Afrikaans taal kurrikulum, 2019).

Participant 4 had explored a variety of the curricula available, both locally and from America. These included Math-U- See (Math-U-See, 2019), The Good and the Beautiful (The Good and the Beautiful, 2018), Footprints On Our Land (Footprints on our land - South Africa's heritage, n.d.), Sonlight (Sonlight Christian homeschool curriculum and programs, 2018), KONOS (Oikos Family Ministries, 2019), My Father's World (My Father's World Christian homeschool curriculum, n.d.) and modules of the Apologia (Apologia, 2018) range. She explained that, while there were aspects of each curriculum that she considered worthwhile, relevant and helpful to the homeschooling of her children, she had found other aspects not as conducive to their learning. This had led to her seeking an alternative curriculum. Some of the issues she described were:

... it's a beautiful curriculum, but I battled because it's [...] literacy based... a lot of literature, so you're reading books to learn. But they would tell you, read this page to this page in this book, this page to this page in this book, which just... [my child] can't focus. She can't concentrate, so jumping around wasn't working.

The maths programme that I bought ended up being too advanced for Ch6 at the time, so I bought another one, Math-U-See from the USA and we started using that, which is a great one. We're actually still using it.

Doke-Kerns' (2016) finding that some participants followed a curriculum to varying degrees, supplementing it with other resources as they felt necessary is consistent with this research. Some participants had taken a diverse approach, combining a range of curricula and resources to produce a 'customised' curriculum for their children. Their selection of resources was based specifically on the needs of their children.

This finding is also affirmed by Bell et al (2016) and Francis (2018) who both reported that parents used age-appropriate materials and were guided by the child's preferences and interests. They used the opportunity of homeschooling to adapt approaches and methods to suit the child's changing needs.

Farenga (2009) also states that homeschooling parents used a variety of different teaching methods in their approach.

Both Hanna (2011) and Cardinale (2013) noted that homeschoolers used specific, purposeful teaching methods, and select teaching and learning materials with care. This approach is described by a participant in this research, who said: *“We do research, and then we find whatever we think is relevant, and then we craft it to their age”*.

5.3.2.2 Resources used by homeschoolers

Hanna (2011) reported that the use of computers has provided access to countless resources, including various curricula, as well as connecting them with support systems they had not previously had access to. According to Redford et al (2017), some of the most popular sources used by homeschoolers were support websites, homeschooling publishers, public libraries and retail bookstores.

The homeschoolers who participated in this research all had internet connections in the home, and augmented standard educational materials and more traditional resources such as books, science kits and art and craft materials with various online educational resources and homeschooling support websites. These websites included YouTube (www.youtube.com) , Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org) and E-classroom, (www.e-classroom.co.za) as well as homeschooling websites, which provided them with support and guidance, lesson plans and assessment documents. Participant 1 explained: *“Luckily the internet is there, your help. Um, there’s so many other programmes also, like the Khan Academy that helps a lot.”*

Another participant explained how they followed the topics in the CAPS curriculum, *“... but a lot of it is done reading through these living books, the books with all of the nice pictures and explanations and the links to the internet”*.

Participant 5 fostered an interest in science and technology through the use of science kits, *“... so we will build robotic stuff, and we will build our own weather station and solar powered cars and things like that from these kits that I buy as well”*.

These findings correlate with those of de Waal (2000), who noted that homeschoolers used pre-made learning content, computers, educational videos or audio cassettes and library resources to supplement their teaching.

5.3.2.3 Teaching routines

De Waal (2000) found that over a quarter of the participants in her research spent between four and five hours per day homeschooling, and posited that their day was structured similarly to a school. These findings are substantiated by those of this research, in which all participants followed a structured daily homeschooling routine, with a homeschool week running from Monday to Friday, each day starting between 8.30 and 9am, and ending no earlier than 1pm, with breaks for tea and lunch.

From the very beginning we said that he would do exercise in the morning before school and then by half past eight we would start school and we told [Child F] he would finish at one. So, for him, his school day goes from half past eight to one.

Participant 2

I try to get the girls started by nine o'clock, and then we carry on until we're done. Lunch is at 12.45, so we'll have a break then. If we finish with school work, we're done, if not, after lunch we'll carry on and do it.

Participant 4

Participant 1 explained: "... and then we have another recess. It works out more or less, almost to 12 o'clock. Then afterwards we have lunch, then we start with Afrikaans and English, and I try to do a bit of spelling."

The participants were, however, flexible within these parameters. The concept of flexibility in homeschooling emerged as a dominant theme in Doke-Kerns' research, in terms of "flexibility in instruction, approach, timing, and even curriculum" (2016, p. 135).

The participating families had all developed a flexible yet structured approach to the homeschooling day.

[at] half past eight we start with maths. Depending on how long we take, because we just carry on for an hour and a half. So, we could finish maths in half an hour and then start science, or we could do maths for the whole one and a half hours.

Participant 1

A lesson does not have to be an hour or thirty minutes. Um... sometimes we only just do two or three subjects a day, because we can. Maybe they didn't get it, so we focus more, if they're still keen on carrying on.

Participant 8

Participant 4 described how she would take the opportunity to continue working if her children were engaged in a task: *"If we're interested in something, we'll say; let's have a sandwich quickly and let's carry on."*

Participant 7 had been homeschooled as a child, and recalled the flexible structure of the homeschooling day:

My mom always made sure that we would sort of get our work done [...] and then we'd have our own time to do whatever we wanted, and I'd go and play in the garden and do that kind of thing.

Interestingly, most participants stated that they did not stop homeschooling completely during the school holidays. This was also a finding in Cardinale's (2013) research.

Participant 2 said: *"So this suits us, from half past eight to one, every day. Often during school holidays as well."*

Participant 5 ensured that her children continued to work during school holidays: *"I do some [tutoring], because I always say that learning must continue, even though schools are closed, she [the tutor] leaves work for them to do."*

Participant 4 did not stop homeschooling during the holidays:

I don't take the government holiday. [...] because I find if we take, especially July or December holidays, it's too long, they forget what they've learnt, and then we really struggle to get back into a routine, so I just carry on.

5.3.2.4 Teaching strategies in homeschooling

Various sub-themes became evident when participants described the teaching strategies they employed during their homeschooling. All of the participants were taking

advantage of the fact that they were homeschooling, and used a range of strategies in their efforts to optimise their children's learning. These teaching strategies were similar to those in previous research (Cardinale, 2013; Doke-Kerns, 2016; Thomas, 2016).

- **Individualised learning**

At the heart of homeschooling is the opportunity to 'customise' teaching and learning materials and teaching approaches in order to enhance their understanding of concepts. Doke-Kerns (2016) found that participants' approach to teaching was centred around the interests, needs and abilities of the child. They emphasised the importance of meeting the child "where they are" (p. 88). This finding was echoed in this research by Participant 1, who put it most succinctly when she said "*... we try to work within her own space*".

Homeschooled children in a structured homeschool setting achieved better results in a range of tests than children at public schools, possibly due to the individualised instruction they received from their parents (Martin-Chang et al, 2011). In this study, several examples of an individualised approach to teaching were evident during field observations.

Participant 1 augmented her child's understanding of mathematical concepts by speaking Afrikaans to her during the lesson, translating the verbal instructions given in the video tutorial.

Participant 3's two children were on completely different levels and subjects, due to their difference in age, but she was able to oversee both of them simultaneously, and provide individual attention.

The tutor of Child A and Child I used a system whereby while she was actively teaching one of the children, the other child was busy working on a task independently. She continued to alternate between each child during the course of the session, although she did explain that there are lessons they did together, such as physical education and isiZulu.

Participant 4's children are of different ages, but were both doing the same work for mathematics, as Child H was struggling, while Child E was very good at the subject.

Even in homeschool situations in which there were two children, they were each receiving the amount of assistance they needed at any given time. There did not appear to be any conflict or sense of any one child lacking attention.

- **Accommodating children's learning styles**

Parents use differentiated approaches to teaching, designed to accommodate children's learning styles, including fun, hands-on activities (Doke-Kerns, 2016; McDowell, 2017; Sabol, 2018; Thomas, 2017).

The homeschooling parents I observed were also aware of their children's specific learning styles, and adapted their approach accordingly.

Participant 1 described her daughter as a visual learner, and had structured her teaching to accommodate this: *"I do a lot of visuals, put in a lot of videos and stuff"*.

Participant 1 also focused on trying *"to use hands-on methods"*. She explained: *"... you know what, the main thing for her is doing stuff with her eyes, and her hands. Doing practical stuff, not always putting it on paper."*

During the lesson, her child used various approaches to problem solving; if she was unable to find the solution, she used the blocks to assist her. She also verbalised her thought processes.

Participant 2 used different methods to create novelty.

And the history and geography we've done very differently I think although we've covered the same topics, we've used puzzles that we found with the world map and flags, and we made it a game.

Participant 4 used a creative approach to teaching writing:

So instead of making my girls write paragraphs and things, I make them write letters to all their pen pals. They've got pen pals everywhere, who send them money and postcards and so they're learning about the different cultures in real life too. ... and it's also nice to see the development, how the [pen pal] letters used to be like super short and untidy and now they're getting longer.

- **Planning and preparation**

Homeschoolers spend time planning and preparing for their children's lessons (Doke-Kerns, 2016; Francis, 2018; Hanna, 2011; Johnson, 2014). There was evidence of lesson planning and preparation in all the homeschooling sites I observed. For example, Child A and Child I had a homeschooling tutor who had planned their work a week in advance. She has shared this planning with them, and it was on a noticeboard in the room.

Child F's tutor had obviously planned the day's lesson in advance, and she referred to her planner, which was in the form of a diary to which both the tutor and Child F's mother had contributed, as she progressed through the lessons.

Participant 2 explained that she did her planning in advance, but did, at times, struggle to select what to include.

I have to make sure that I have planned well, ahead of time. And also, one of the challenges is that I tend to gather far too much information... and far too many things that we could do, and choosing what would be best is often hard.

She went on to explain that, although the week's work was planned in advance, the tutor who taught her child was able to be flexible within this planning:

His tutor comes and they just take everything out. [...] They're way ahead in everything, because they cover whatever they feel like on that day, although she has it planned. If he wants to continue with the English, they will continue with the English until one o'clock.

While observing a mathematics lesson, I noted that Participant 4 had written out pages of number bonds for each of her children. Each page consists of five columns of 40 number bonds, with spaces for the answers. This must have taken a considerable amount of time. When I enquired about this later, Participant 4 told me she does this preparation while the children are asleep.

- **Mastering concepts**

Homeschooling parents assisted their children to achieve mastery of concepts before proceeding to subsequent concepts (Cardinale, 2013; Francis, 2018; Martin, 2016; Sabol, 2018). In this research, participants encouraged their children to master certain concepts

before moving on. They were flexible in their approach to teaching, allowing themselves to be guided by the child's needs rather than rigidly following a timetable.

Participant 1 placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of her child mastering the concepts being taught.

The thing is, she's a visual learner, everything needs to be very practical, if something needs to be stuck in her head, it needs to be mastered. So that is what, these days, I try to focus on mastery, not just getting all the information in.

This emphasis on mastery was evident during my observation of the homeschooling session. Examples of this were seen in the interactions taking place during teaching. Participant 1 ensured some level of mastery at each step of her teaching, provided immediate, constructive feedback and did not continue until she was happy that Child D had mastered the day's concepts.

A factor informing Participant 3's choice of curriculum was the level of mastery required for her child to progress.

... there's certain pages in the A.C.E. where he has to stop and mark this work first, to make sure that he understood what he was doing before he's allowed to go on. And then every few pages there's a test that he has to write and then I mark the tests, and then near the end of the book there's another test again about the whole book. And then there's a separate piece of paper which is his final test, basically.

- **Reading and literature**

As in previous literature (Anthony & Burgess, 2014; Johnson, 2014; Martin-Chang et al, 2011; McKeon, 2007) the homeschooling participants placed importance on the teaching of reading and exposure to literature.

Participant 1 explained her belief in the need for children to be able to read.

I try to push it, especially the reading part, I try to push that and, even if we read two hours, that is fine. An hour here, and an hour in the evening. I do think that is the crux of any curriculum. If you can get your reading sorted.

She used a paired reading strategy, and mother and daughter sat together on the couch. They took turns to read, and Participant 1 encouraged her daughter to sound out the words she struggled with. Child D's reading was quite fluent, and she appeared happy and relaxed. Her expression while her mother was reading to her was one of excitement.

Participant 2 described her son's reading ability and his passion for reading.

He's very, very good at reading. He'll pick up a book and he will figure it out if he doesn't know what the word is, and say it. And 99% of the time, it's correct. And then you ask him what it means he will be able to tell you. So if he's heard a word before, and it's used in a context, he will use it in the correct context. [...] ... we read thirty-six books last year.

Participant 4 conducted a phonics lesson during my observation of the homeschool. Her approach was structured, and incorporated reading and writing of the 'ew' sound. The lesson involved both children working at their own level.

Participant 4 explained how the sending and receiving of pen pal letters had been instrumental in improving both girls' reading, but particularly Child H's, because she had been a reluctant reader, due to her difficulties with reading. In her words, "... *that's why I find the pen pal letters have worked so much because, "Here's a letter – I'm not reading it for you."*". Receiving a pen pal letter had provided the necessary novelty and motivation for Child H to become more determined to learn to read. Both girls were confident readers, and were happy to read aloud in front of me.

- **Mathematics**

Anthony and Burgess (2014) and Johnson (2014) found that homeschooling parents used an array of approaches and curricula to teach mathematics to their children.

Two of the participating families in this study used an American mathematics curriculum called Math-U- See. This system includes video tutorials and the use of manipulatives in the form of plastic blocks with specific number values.

Another two families followed the CAPS curriculum for their mathematics, while the fifth family used the ACE curriculum (A.C.E. Ministries, n.d.).

Cardinale (2013) and Martin (2016) related parents' use of teachable moments to relate mathematics to activities in everyday life. In this research, Participant 4 added another dimension to the mathematics she was teaching her children. The family had chickens and the girls had embarked on a small business, selling the eggs to friends and neighbours. As part of their mathematics lesson, they worked on updating graphs they had created to track the number of eggs being laid by their chickens. Each girl filled in her own graph. Participant 4 talked about other uses for graphs. They then looked at the graphs to analyse the information. Participant 4 asked them to suggest reasons for the difference in the number of eggs laid per day. There followed an interesting discussion regarding one of the eggs, which had broken. The egg was still counted as being laid, but could not be included in calculations of profit as it could not be sold. This activity is similar to the "informal problem-based learning" described by Martin (2016, p. 74).

Based on the above findings, I concur with Cardinale (2013), who found homeschooling parents to be "motivated and committed, wanting the best for their students" (p. 62).

5.3.3 Academic development of homeschooled children

5.3.3.1 Academic progress of homeschooled children

Obtaining quantitative data relating to the academic progress of homeschooled children was not within the scope of this research. However, participants whose children had previously attended mainstream schools reported noticeable improvements in their academic progress since homeschooling.

Participant 1 reported that the length of her daughter's attention span had originally been less than 5 minutes, but she could now keep her focused for longer periods of time, and could "*push it to 25 minutes, around there.*" Her child's progress had also been noticed by someone who worked at the aftercare centre, who remarked on how Child D's vocabulary had improved since being homeschooled. This affirmation was appreciated by Participant 1. She felt her daughter had made pleasing progress.

And that first year, I totally felt she developed, on her own, it was not really forced. And now our third year, we are doing, I would say, quite good with her

work, and it is really, I do think, for the age group and the grade group, she's doing well.

Participant 5 revealed an improvement in her children's academic performance since being homeschooled, which she attributed to *"the focus, the attention, I think, and being able to push some limits."* She felt that in the mainstream school, her children had focused on the content of a test, whereas she had advised them not to *"learn for the exam, learn to know, because it's information that you'll know for the rest of your life."*

Participant 5 went on to explain that her children's marks were continuing to improve, and described a system of target setting, in which she engaged with her children and empowered them to decide on achievable milestones, in order to *"encourage them without pushing them too much."* Even her son, who she described as *"not very academic"* had obtained good results. She explained: *"if you don't ask him to study, he won't study. He's very physical. He'll go and play more [...] and study less. But when he studies, it's very effective."* This could be attributed to the relative freedom of movement and degree of self-regulation inherent in homeschooling.

Participant 3 explained that her son was working through a demanding curriculum, and had been able to maintain the required academic standard, despite the fact that he had struggled in a mainstream class: *"The standards are also very high, because when he writes his tests, he has to have... most of the subjects they have to have 90% before he can carry on with the next work."* This bears testament to the fact that homeschooling had proved to be beneficial to him academically.

Previous research has also found that homeschooled children performed at least as well as, but often better than, their public-schooled counterparts (Bergstrom, 2012; BOSTES, 2014; Martin-Chang et al, 2011; Ray, 2017).

Bergstrom (2012) conceded that any child's academic performance depends on the quality of the teaching they receive, whether it is in a public-school classroom or a homeschool. It was apparent that the teaching in the homeschools I observed was of a high standard. Participant 4 reported that, despite having learning difficulties, her daughter had made good progress in

reading: *“I think she’s doing well. [...] her reading has improved. She struggled so much, and to look at her now, where she’s at, and she’s proud because she did it.”*

There had also been a notable improvement in her mathematics:

... her maths for example. When I look at her sums now, and at where we were, and how I thought I would never, ever be able to get her to do this, and now I look at the sums, and I’m like, “Man, that’s brilliant!”

5.3.3.2 Academic success of previously homeschooled adults

Homeschooled children do progress to tertiary education, and have found to have achieved as well as or better than their public-schooled peers (Bagwell, 2010; Cardinale, 2013; Ray, 2013; Snyder, 2013). They were also found to be more likely than their public-schooled peers to complete their course of study and go on to graduate (Cogan, 2010; Fink-Glass, 2016).

Participant 7 had been homeschooled until he attended an art college followed by a private university, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Design. He described his transition to the college: *“At first I was very shy, and not used to it, you know. But I warmed up and I did enjoy my time there. I definitely enjoyed it and I felt like it was a good idea.”*

He went on to explain that, despite initial difficulties, he achieved good results.

I did do well there. I hadn’t done art before, and so it was all new to me, but I picked it up quite quickly and I enjoyed it. Um... but at the very end my marks were quite high, particularly in photography and drawing. [...] I don’t remember my exact marks, but I was up with the top few.

The success he experienced in college continued when he went to university.

For most of the years I was top of my class. I think I got the second highest marks out of my year. [...] I was very dedicated, but it was a very stressful degree, but I put my all into it.

It is my opinion that Snyder’s (2013) conclusion that homeschooled children are as effectively prepared for tertiary education as children who were educated in a mainstream school is accurate.

5.3.3.3 Academic benefits of homeschooling

Numerous academic benefits of homeschooling have been identified in previous studies, several of which were reflected in this research.

Participants in this research saw the academic benefits of homeschooling in terms of the freedom it provided, enabling them to move at their children's pace, taking into consideration their children's needs and preferences. They were able to provide hands-on, concrete learning experiences and to differentiate their instruction as necessary. They also valued the flexibility afforded them by homeschooling, as they felt it allowed them to work at their child's pace, rather than having to struggle to keep up with a curriculum and expected attainment levels (Bester, 2002; Cardinale, 2013; Doke-Kerns, 2016; Mills, 2009).

... flexibility in curriculum, flexibility on style of teaching, and also flexibility of time. A lesson does not have to be an hour or thirty minutes. Sometimes we only just do two or three subjects a day, because we can. Maybe they didn't get it, so we focus more and if they're still keen on carrying on. There's no prescribed books. With schools, you know a lot of schools, you have to use [the prescribed textbooks].

Participant 8

Participants used the opportunity to ensure that their children had mastered concepts before moving on (Cardinale, 2013; Johnson, 2014).

[...] if you see your child is struggling in a specific thing, you can sit and focus and help that child until they can understand it before they carry on.

(Participant 3)

The thing I liked about it was that I would get one on one time with [my mother] and I would get time to understand something fully, you know. If I didn't know, she wasn't going to carry on without me understanding. [...] I just remember it being a lot more focused on me, obviously, because in a school environment there's a lot of you in a class and you don't get as much one on one time.

Participant 7

Conversely, parents were also able to extend their children beyond the confines of a prescribed curriculum, particularly if they were academically talented in a specific area, such as mathematics or reading.

...or you get a child that is extremely bright and that child can fly, so I also think that's a difference between school and homeschooling, because I mean if you have a bright child and he's in school, they get bored, they get frustrated, whereas if you home school them, they can run, you know, they're not kept back because of age.

Participant 6

And Child E is just... she is academically, she does brilliant. She catches on to things so fast. Her maths is... she's doing the same maths curriculum as her older sister. She sits when she's done with her maths work, she grabs my cell phone and checks all her maths problems because she wants to. Ja, so at school I think she would have been frustrated.

Participant 4

Child 3 was the oldest child in this study. He was able to work independently and was maintaining good academic standards (Bester, 2002).

[...] just out of his own, round about 8 o'clock, [...] he'll go to the classroom, then he'll go and sit and he works. [...] He knows the sooner he finishes his work, the sooner he's got the rest of the day for himself. So he would go to the classroom, start working, do a couple of pages, take a five minute break, come back, do a couple of pages... And the standards are also very high, because when he writes his tests, he has to have... most of the subjects they have to have 90% before he can carry on with the next work.

Participant 3

5.3.3.4 Plans for future education

Research has been conducted into the achievements of homeschooled children in college or university, but there does not appear to be any available research on the decisions made by homeschoolers regarding their plans for the future. However, the participants in this research had given thought to their children's future, and were cautiously optimistic in their expectations.

Two of the participating families were expecting their children to obtain a South African National Senior Certificate (NSC), although neither family had definite plans to return their children to mainstream schooling. Both families had adopted a 'wait and see' attitude, placing the decision with their children. Participant 3 said: *"so if he ever does want to go back to school then I'd put him in an English school. But I hope he doesn't want to!"*

Participant 5 explained:

And where to for high school, I don't know. We might continue, we might not. They must decide if they want to experience high school. They may say "I want to take a year of experiencing this other, whatever." We'll explore and see. I'm not anti, you know. Again, it's about the child.

A further two were aiming towards achieving an overseas based qualification, such as the International General Certificate of Secondary Education or the American based General Education Development test although, again, they were keeping an open mind about the future.

I don't think she will cope with Cambridge, Cambridge is a lot of work and I don't think that is will be able to cope so we will most probably do a GED. You have to now think, is she going to go to varsity, or college? So we try to keep on a good standard so she can move over to whatever she chooses.

Participant 1

Only one parent (Participant 4) expressed that she did not want her children to obtain an NSC: *"I don't want [my children to have a] South African [qualification]. I want my kids to be able to go where they want to go."*

However, she expanded on this, explaining that she did not see a formal qualification as being absolutely necessary, and was teaching them entrepreneurial skills in order to prepare them to be self-sufficient:

You don't need... [a formal qualification]. They can always... you study things online to help you with your own business. I'm trying to teach them, if we can't study afterwards, for financial reasons, [...] I'm trying to teach them to be entrepreneurs now, so that they can make things happen for themselves.

5.3.4 Socialisation and social development of homeschooled children

5.3.4.1 Socialisation of homeschooled children

Contrary to the concerns raised regarding the lack of socialisation in homeschooling (Silverman, n.d.-b; Ray, 2013), the participants in the research described a myriad ways in which their children socialised on a regular basis, both formally and informally. They had joined groups set up by fellow homeschooling parents, and were provided with opportunities to both organise and attend various social activities. These activities gave their children the chance to interact with their peers.

I've just now recently joined up with a homeschool group, with moms in the new church where we're going to now, so we meet every second Friday where we all get together, and either go to Giba Gorge, or it's somebody's house, so they do interact there with other kids as well.

Participant 3

We are getting together with another group that is homeschooling so next year we'll have a whole lot more activities and a reading club, and other parents who are actually doing this. We've connected with them and we've done a couple of the activities, but the kids were still nervous, so next year we'll start so they'll be exposed to all those things.

Participant 5

These activities provided opportunities for both mothers and children to socialise and to take part in various group activities. Participant 1 explained, “... *the theme last week was countries of the world. Each kid gets an area, say, India. They talk about it and bring food and so on and everyone enjoys it.*”

One of the participants also mentioned the fact that there is a Matric dance organised annually by a homeschooling mother, who “... *organises with the older kids, a Matric dance, so they have their dinner, they have their dance, so they're not missing out on things.*”

- **Participation in co-curricular and extra-mural activities**

Participants described the co-curricular activities their children took part in. These activities included visits to the South African National Blood Service, Eco Clubs, art and culture shows, visits to a local tea garden, leadership camps, book clubs, cultural events, holiday camps at a local farm, Durban Harbour and a visit to the UKZN Geology department.

Last year [we had] a homeschool event with the Shongweni K9 unit. There were about sixty kids, and moms and dads, and just hearing what they have to say, and educating them, practical stuff. Ag, there are so many outings. This year we are going to Hillcrest Hospital, last year we went to the fire brigade, there's really so many.

Participant 1

The frequency of participation varied. Most families participated in one activity a week, on a rotational basis. One of the participants preferred to only participate in one activity a month.

Coincidentally, all of the participants were enrolled with the local chapter of an environmental organisation where:

they go into plants and look at the ecosystem. The other day there was the snake handler, and [he] brought the snakes and we talked about snakes. And the month before was on bees, so they studied the stuff and physically handled them. ... they're learning about everything.

Participant 2

Two of the participants had attended a presentation at UKZN. They described the activities:

we went to the archaeology department. They had like a whole presentation and [also] the geology department. And they showed them all the different klippies [small stones] and different rocks, and what you can experiment with.

Participant 1

And then we went through their museum. It is incredible! Absolutely incredible. They even showed them how a tsunami worked and everything else. It's phenomenal!

Participant 2

As with the co-curricular activities, the children took part in a range of different extra-mural activities, both sport and cultural. These extra-murals included ballet, drama, music (piano and violin), Cub Scouts and sports days. The sports days were organised by homeschooling families, and appear to be very inclusive, as they ensured that all children could participate, regardless of age or ability.

They have a sports day. We'll have a sports day and all the kids participate – you've got your littlies, Child E will participate in it and last year Child H was

running down with a tiny little baby in her arms. So you've got the littlies participating with the big ones, in the same event, big ones helping the littlies!

Participant 4

... we have a sports day so they all participate in that. Now he can go and he can participate. It doesn't matter if he comes last or whatever, it's just a fun day, they do fun sporting activities, so he gets to do that as well.

Participant 2

These findings are comparable to those of Bergstrom (2012), who indicated that homeschooled children socialised several times a week through a range of activities and with children of all ages; and Bester (2002) who found that homeschooling parents went to great lengths to facilitate opportunities for socialisation with children of similar ages and interests for their children. The children were able to socialise both within their own age group and with people older and younger than themselves.

- **Friendships**

Mills (2009) found that homeschooled children had expressed a desire to spend more time with other children, but were also cognisant of the benefits of being able to choose their friends, as opposed to being forced to select them from children in their class. The children in the present study also had a smaller, more select group of friends. Participant 5 explained how her daughter had had to adjust to not being with her friend from school,

Child A had a good friend at school who she used to ask about, ... so she has had to adjust, ja. So that has been hard. I wouldn't say that they... she definitely doesn't have as many friends, as she had when she was at school.

However, the family has been able to accommodate their son's need to see his friends by organising social activities.

So whenever he says that he misses his friends, we have a playdate. So we get all his old school friends to come and visit. Or we meet up with the parents somewhere, and he sees his old friends and he's happy, then he'll forget about it, completely.

Participant 2 explained that her son did not have a typical child's social life while he was at school.

Do you know, even when he was at school, I think because of his differences, and that, he's never been a physically able child, so to play like the other kids did wasn't easy. So although he was accepted within the class situation, he was never invited to friends' places or anything like that; something he always desired.

She went on to describe how he had been able to develop friendships since they had started homeschooling:

So he's got two nice friends now, that we alternate the weeks going to and then they come here as well. He's very happy with that. He would like more, of course, any kid would... I've found that homeschooling kids are quite a diverse group... the ones we are friends with, that he goes to, accept him for who he is.

5.3.4.2 Social development of homeschooled children

Participant 1 had been very pleased to note that her daughter, who had previously been a very reserved child, due to her communication barriers, had become more confident and outspoken:

Now she's standing in front of people, say in church, and she's having her say, and that is wonderful. And helping her to build that confidence, and even if the words is not hundred percent clear.

This experience was shared by Participant 5, who felt her daughter's confidence had grown since being homeschooled, which she had put down to her no longer having the pressure to conform to the social norms of a private school.

I would say that her confidence has gone up quite a bit. My daughter is an introvert [...] And when they came this side, I saw the difference, literally a difference. I mean, my introvert became confident and explorative, more and more... even the way she speaks in public speaking. When I saw her in the theatre show, I was like; "Who's that child? Where did she come from?" you know, from somebody being the most extreme, hiding behind everyone to that.

Participant 4 explained that, unlike herself as a child, her children were not afraid of interacting with adults.

My children are socially, I think, well-adjusted, because they can talk to children of their own age, they can talk to their peers. They're not nervous to talk to adults.

Participant 2 described her son's confidence and ability to engage with adults in various social situations:

If we go into Total Sports and he's looking for something, he will walk up to somebody and he will say to them, "Please would you help me find this." He's got the confidence of anything, really, he's so confident in those sorts of things.

Participant 3's son had become more introverted since being homeschooled, and no longer wished to associate with all of his friends from school. She had put this down to his increased maturity and sense of self.

... he's become more of an introvert since he's been at home so he's very selective of who he wants to come and visit him. So he doesn't want me to just invite his friends. I need to run it by him first. [...] So definitely, it made him more mature and I think that could also maybe be why he doesn't want all of his friends, because they're all now too childish for him.

Participant 6 had observed several positive social skills in homeschooled children.

They actually are more confident when dealing with adults. They are also more caring when it comes to the younger children. They're more patient with younger children. They will actually help them develop, and they'll model behaviours for the little ones, and be way more patient than a child who is in a certain, specific grade at school.

Bester (2002) made similar observations, finding that homeschooled children were able to socialise both within their own age group and with people older and younger than themselves.

The social development of the children whose families participated in my research was demonstrated in their behaviour during my observations. Without exception, the children were relaxed and confident in my presence. For example: when I arrived at her home, Child B met me at the front door and introduced herself before taking me through to their school room. Later that morning, after her break, she brought me a flower she had picked for me;

during a break in their work, Child H asked if I would like a cup of tea, and then went to the kitchen with Child E to make it. At the end of their break, which they had spent in the garden, Child E brought me a flower she had picked in the garden; and Child F offered to bring me a blanket when I remarked on how cold it was. The impression I have of these children is that they were confident, well-mannered and well-adjusted children who were helpful and kind. As Participant 8 explained, “... *they’re just good kids!*”

It was evident during my field observations that they were sociable young people who were able to engage in appropriate conversation with ease. This bears out Medlin’s (2013) contention that homeschooled children were self-confident and empathic, and had meaningful relationships with their parents and other significant adults.

5.3.4.3 Participants’ perspective on socialisation and social development of homeschooled children

Participants expressed reservations about the emphasis on socialisation in homeschooling. They asserted that their children were provided with a range of socialisation opportunities to foster their social development but disagreed with the supposed need for children to be sociable and outgoing, as opposed to preferring to be alone or in smaller groups. Moreover, they held a broader view of the concept of socialisation in that, for them, socialisation takes place everywhere, and not only when the child is with peers. Participant 5 expressed this quite succinctly: “*It’s not about the kids on their own. It’s socialisation wherever it is. It should be diverse. It happens everywhere.*”

Participant 1 felt that homeschooling parents were placed under unnecessary pressure to ensure their children are socialising.

... you can run around doing [activities] ... people are freaking out; social, social, social. It can be very worrisome – sometimes a week can go past that we don’t see kids, or moms. And that’s fine with me. I just want to get some work done.

Participant 5 also had doubts about the apparent need for children to be sociable and outgoing, as opposed to preferring to be alone or in smaller groups.

If the child is happy, why are you concerned? Let the child be. So again, it goes to conformism, the social thing is that we want everyone to be an extrovert, but not everyone is an extrovert, not everyone is energised by people. Introverts are

energised by being on their own, so how does the school promote that? It doesn't promote that. It forces you to be an extrovert when you're not, and that's very uncomfortable. You most probably doubt who you are in the end.

In a similar vein, participants in Doke-Kerns' (2016) research acknowledged the different socialisation needs of different personalities, and questioned the premise that mainstream schools promote social development. Botha (2005) found that homeschooling parents found that they had put themselves under too much pressure in their efforts to ensure that their children were involved in extra-murals, perhaps over-compensating for the fact that they were not in a mainstream school.

5.3.4.4 Social benefits of homeschooling

Doke-Kerns' (2016) research finding that parents were perturbed about the type of socialisation and behaviour their children would be exposed to when attending a mainstream school was replicated in this study. The homeschooled children in the present study did not have a lot of friends, but rather socialised with a smaller, more select group. Participants viewed this as an advantage because their children were not exposed to negative influences that would have been out of their control if their children attended a school. This finding is borne out by those of Thomson and Jang (2016), who assert that children in mainstream schools are more likely to drink alcohol than their homeschooled counterparts.

I think that my children have benefitted hugely because I can be more selective as to who they're exposed to. ... maybe [they socialise] a little bit less, because it's not the actual amount of school time where they're actually with other kids, so it's definitely a little bit less but at least with this, I can sort of control who they socialise with and who not.

Participant 4

Participant 5 explained her perspective regarding the influence of peers in the mainstream classroom, and why she believed the purposeful socialisation made possible by homeschooling to be more appropriate for her children:

I would rather have that [purposeful integration] than have the same kind of group in the class every day, that then moulds who they become. Because [homeschooled children] are socialising but they're not being moulded by that system; the home still moulds them. But in a classroom environment, the mould sticks because it's the same people and behaviours and thinking. So I find that the

structured approach, or integration with purpose much more favourable than the one that is more open ended, that has more risks than benefits. That's how I see it. Processes and perceptions are being confirmed every day.

Ray (2016) lists the ability to mediate and guide children's social interactions as a motivation for parents to homeschool their children. The participants in this research were judicious in their choices of social events that took place outside their immediate circle of family and friends. Their selection of social events and activities was deliberate, specific and purposeful, contrasting with the almost random socialisation process that takes place in schools.

Participant 5, in particular, had very definite views on this aspect of homeschooling:

Socialisation for me in the homeschooling environment is very structured. It has purpose behind it, you know. So if it's going to a book club, there's a learning [opportunity] behind it. If it's about going for a nature walk, it's about nature and yes, we will integrate along the way, but the purpose is that we're going on a walk.

The idea that homeschooling is more representative of real-life situations than traditional schooling was expressed by two participants.

Participant 6 was of the opinion that homeschooled children are better able to “*deal with socialising in the vertical sphere*”. This view was shared by Participant 4, who explained that “... *because in a work environment you're not dealing with your age group, you're dealing with everybody, you have to have the confidence to talk to anybody*”.

Participant 6 went on to assert that, although children socialise at school, they do so mainly with their peers. However, the “*socialisation of life*” is different. Once children leave school, although they do continue to socialise with their peers, and “... *there's going to be somebody who's going to be older, or somebody who's younger. There is no institution, there is no job, where they are going to be in exactly the same age and grade. It's totally... it's against life.*”

These findings duplicate those of Doke-Kerns (2016), in which participants maintain that children's socialisation with people of a range of ages is “actually more representative of what occurs in real life” (p. 126).

5.3.5 Emotional development of homeschooling for children

Research conducted by Rothermel (2012) found no disparity between the behaviour problems experienced by homeschooled children and those who attended school. This was confirmed in this research, as no participants reported any behavioural issues beyond those expected of children.

Medlin (2013) affirmed this, saying that homeschooled children had positive attitudes and were “happy, optimistic, [and] satisfied with their lives” (p. 290), and experienced less negative emotional and behavioural difficulties than mainstream schooled peers. These findings were substantiated in this research. Participants described improved self-confidence and emotional stability in their children since starting to homeschool. Participant 1 said: *“I can see she’s got more confidence now”* and Participant 2 explained: *“... he has changed so much since the beginning of last year. [...] being at home, has helped his ability to control his emotions, so that makes it really much easier for us.”*

Participant 5 expanded on the concept of self-confidence as she described her concerns regarding her daughter’s emotional state while she was in school, which had been one of the reasons for her decision to homeschool her children.

Child A was reserved, I know, but she was feeling uncomfortable in the space she was in. And as she moved into puberty, it became an issue, getting skin breakouts, you know, and she went into puberty earlier than others in class, which became a problem because she was now the odd one out. And it was just so much pressure, it was too much pressure.

Participant 5 also believed her children were emotionally “*more balanced*” since they had started homeschooling, which she attributed this to the inclusivity of the homeschool environment. She explained her reasoning:

... the [homeschooling] environment is inclusive, which makes them feel that they matter. And if you feel that you matter, you value yourself better. You at least learn to love yourself more. [...] So that is how I think the balance comes.

Participant 6 had observed children becoming more confident while being homeschooled, but warned that parents should be circumspect about the amount of attention they give to their child:

If the parent is totally child-centred, that's not healthy either, because that child then will come and butt in [during] a conversation, so there's got to be a healthy balance, as well, of respect. [...] The parent can't always focus on what the child wants, and the child's needs, so she or he has got to make sure that the child is aware of others' needs around them.

Riley's (2015) research revealed that homeschoolers have higher feelings of competence and individuality and are therefore more intrinsically motivated than their mainstream schooled peers. This would, in turn, lead to increased maturity and independence, which is observed in homeschooled individuals.

[Homeschooling] has actually also made him a lot more mature, I think, because [...] there's not like a teacher in front telling everything to them. He's taken responsibility; "I have to read my work to be able to get the answers". He needs to [...] prioritise.

Participant 3

It was kind of a way to teach us responsibility at an early age. I remember it making me feel a bit more responsible for myself, you know. [...] That's another point of homeschooling that I feel is a positive, is that it made me very individual. I've learnt to sort of be myself and I just feel a lot more individual, just more creative within myself. I know I'm a lot different to other people. And now, [...] at work people sort of notice that. They say; you're not your average kind of person. I kind of like that. I don't want to be like everyone else. I like that I think a bit differently to most people.

Participant 7

5.3.6 Challenges of homeschooling

Homeschooling was not without its challenges, and participants were frank when voicing these.

5.3.6.1 Knowledge of teaching content

Participants expressed their apprehension surrounding their knowledge of subject content, and the effectiveness of their teaching strategies. Two participants specifically voiced their concerns about their ability to teach mathematics and both had enlisted the assistance of their husbands in this regard.

Participant 1 explained: *“I’m not terribly good with maths myself, so I try to get my husband in. He’s better at maths. [...] the maths is really a big struggle and I feel it is coming stronger next year. We are going to have a headache. It is not an easy task. [...] Um, there’s so many other programmes also, like the Khan Academy that helps a lot.”*

Participant 3 expressed a similar concern: *“I’m confident with all the subjects except for the maths! I’ve lost it in grade four already, the maths! That’s dad’s department.”*

This situation has caused frustration and anxiety for both parents. Participant 3 explained: *“at this current point, like I said, just the maths. It’s frustrating that I struggle to get somebody to actually help him with his maths.”*

Reaburn and Roberts (2018) identified homeschooling parents who had struggled with teaching mathematics concepts to their children. These parents had made use of other resources, such as Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org), or had asked for assistance from another person.

5.3.6.2 Pressure to perform

Some of the participants had found themselves feeling pressured to ensure their children had achieved a certain academic standard.

For Participant 4, this pressure was from other family members, who she felt were judging her daughter unfairly when they expected her performance to be on a par with her peers, due to her learning difficulties. She had to reassure her daughter of her abilities after she had visited these family members:

So I said, “She’s asking the wrong questions. You’re not learning what’s there, you’re learning something else, so don’t think you’re not clever, you know a lot more than some children on some things, and yes, a little less than some children at your age, though. But don’t worry, we’ll get there.”

For other participants, the pressure was actually due to their doubts about their own abilities as teachers of their children. Participant 1 revealed that her main concern was that she was not doing enough to educate her child: *“... a constant thing for us as homeschool moms; is it*

enough? That is our biggest, biggest worry. Is it enough?" She admitted she had put pressure on herself, *"... so I'm more of a critic than anybody else."*

Participant 6 summed this situation up when she said:

... it's very, very hard on the parent. Homeschooling parents, they need encouragement and support from each other because it is tough. [...] There's bad stuff that goes along with it as well. When you teach beautiful girls who love to read and learn, you know, it's so easy. But when you have a boy who just couldn't care less about reading and wants to go and play football or something, then it has its challenges and not all parents are cut out to teach. And it's very tough.

The findings described above quite literally reflect those of Moore et al (2004) whose research revealed feelings of insecurity by the teaching parent regarding their teaching strategies, content knowledge and the amount of work they had covered. This was also a finding by Botha (2005), who noted that the "competitive attitudes" of fellow homeschoolers had resulted in the standards aspired to being raised to "unobtainable heights" (p. 68).

5.3.6.3 Financial implications

The financial implications of homeschooling were described by participants.

... me having to be home with the children, it makes things harder because you've got generally one income for homeschool families, so everything is tighter. You struggle to do the extra things. So, financially I think homeschooling makes it really hard in a home.

Participant 4

This situation was confirmed by Participant 6, who said: *"They're convicted. They need to do it. That means they come down to one salary, which in this day and age is no joke."*

Participants detailed the types of items they had spent money on, which included the initial set-up of the homeschool, curricula, computers, books, science kits, art supplies, membership fees for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and so forth. Participant 5 explained: *'Home education is costly to set up. I mean, I had to get in computers, desks, buying your own syllabus for two kids only'.*

However, participants had also found ways to mitigate these expenses, such as buying and selling used resources, and even a business selling vegetables and eggs.

Moore et al (2004) also found that parents had noted the financial implications of homeschooling as one of its challenges.

5.3.6.4 Family conflict

Family conflict was one of the stressors identified in research by Botha (2005). In this research, two participants described the conflict that had arisen in the home, as a result of the family being in the home during the day. These were both families in which more than one child was being homeschooled solely by the mother.

Participant 3 said, “... besides not having time for myself, and sometimes they drive me up the walls, but that’s normal!”, while Participant 4 explained that conflict arose from “... being with mom all the time. Being with your sisters all the time. When you put people in the same space all the time, fuses run short. So some days we do have really bad days.”

However, Participant 4 did describe how the family is able to defuse the tension, “... we’ve got our own interests, so I’ll do my sewing and the kids will go and draw or make things or paint, and they’re allowed to watch TV a little bit.”

5.3.6.5 Role conflict

The separation of roles of mother and “teacher” had also proved difficult for some participants, particularly when it came to issues of discipline, and had resulted in role conflict.

One of the challenges is the discipline to... I still have to be their mom and I have to discipline them, and I’ve got to teach them at the same time. I’m teaching but I’m still their mom, I’m still doing it with all the love. There’s nobody who’s going to love my kids and want better for them, but it’s hard to have to discipline all the time.

Participant 4

So, you’ve got to be very involved, without being emotional. So it forces you to be less emotional in your approach to parenting, first and foremost, and to education, to teaching, because it’s two things in one. You’re a teacher, yet you’re a parent. These are conflicting roles.

Participant 5

The findings of Botha (2005) and Moore et al (2004) included role conflict experienced by the parent who was the primary teacher.

5.3.6.6 Department of Education

Both Moore (2002) and Botha (2005) described the tenuous relationship between homeschoolers and the Department of Education. Some seventeen years later it would appear that this situation continues. Participants raised genuine concern about the intentions of the Department of Education regarding homeschooling legislation, and were awaiting the release of the Basic Education Law Amendment (BELA) bill (Department of Basic Education, 2018) with some trepidation.

The government makes it very difficult for us now, with the BELA bill and so on. The last three months was a big, big, big headache and worry for us. We don't need that stress because we are already stressed about what we are doing. We have to think what our future will be for the children.

Participant 1

Participant 1 went on to express her fears regarding her daughter's future education:

... but it is very difficult, I do think if the government comes over and sees we're not on their level, I'm not sure what they will do because I can't put my kid back in... into say grade 3. She will be all over the place. It is a struggle for me to think what will happen to her. Where will they pop her in?

Participant 5 described her frustrations with the process of registering her children as homeschoolers:

The education department has no clue about homeschooling. I called them to get us registered. I called and I called, we couldn't find solutions, so we've just been trying and trying. [...] I've got no forms. I've been referred to so many different people, so we just keep our own reporting system. If an assessor comes eventually, they can come and see how we've done, but we haven't been able to [secure] an assessor, at all.

Botha (2005), Brynard (2007) and Doke-Kerns (2016) all draw the distinction that, despite the challenges faced by parents, they felt they were outweighed by the importance of homeschooling. This sentiment was shared by the participants in this research, one of whom

expressed herself quite clearly when she stated that, despite the disadvantages of homeschooling, she thought they: “... *should have started earlier.*”

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the research findings were presented and discussed according to the themes that emerged during the data analysis, and related to existing literature. The following chapter will present a summary of the findings, recommendations and limitations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter a summary of the findings regarding homeschooling in South Africa is provided. The limitations of this study are provided. Some recommendations arising from this study are put forward, as well as recommendations for further research. Finally, a conclusion of the study is given.

6.2 Summary of findings

6.2.1 Contextual circumstances that led parents choosing to homeschool their children

The participants in this research were candid when sharing information about their homeschooling journeys. They described their feelings of frustration and disheartenment as they struggled with mainstream schooling, before making the decision to homeschool their children. The contextual circumstances that had led to this decision were explored, and can be broadly divided into two categories, namely, the specific needs of children and dissatisfaction or unhappiness with many aspects of mainstream schooling.

Some children in this study had specific educational needs, which were better provided for within the homeschool context (Bergstrom, 2012; Bester, 2012; BOSTES, 2016; Moore, 2002).

Homeschooling parents had elected to homeschool their children as a result of negative perceptions of or experiences with mainstream schooling (Bergstrom, 2012; Bester, 2002; Brynard, 2007; de Waal, 2000; Doke-Kerns, 2016; Fields-Smith & Kisura, 2013; Kapitulik, 2011; Mazama, 20015; Ray, 2015; Redford et al, 2017).

The decision to homeschool had not been taken lightly, and parents appreciated the gravity of their undertaking. All the participants had made personal sacrifices to be able to homeschool, but were committed to the process and were making every effort to ensure that they did the best they possible could for their children. They showed determination and resolve to succeed in this undertaking, despite the personal sacrifices they were having to make.

6.2.2 Educational approaches to homeschooling

The participants described the various aspects of their different educational approaches to homeschooling, which were academically sound, well-prepared and well-resourced. There was clear evidence of the care and effort that had gone into their preparations for teaching their children (Cardinale, 2013; Hanna, 2011), and they had gone to great lengths to make their teaching interesting, age-appropriate and effective (Bell et al, 2016; Francis, 2018).

Some participants expressed reservations about using the government's curriculum (Rothermel, 2002), and had selected alternate curricula with the needs of their children in mind (Rothermel, 2002; van der Merwe et al, 2016).

There was also evidence that participants had taken a broader approach to learning and teaching, in that they had taken advantage of 'teachable moments' in their everyday lives, rather than restricting this to their chosen curriculum (Doke-Kerns, 2016). Most parents indicated that they did not stop teaching during the school holidays, as they believed that learning is an ongoing process, that should not be viewed in isolation (Cardinale, 2013; de Waal, 2000).

6.2.3 Academic, social and emotional development of homeschooled children

6.2.3.1 Academic development of homeschooled children

Despite experiencing some difficulties, such as with mathematics, the children had all made academic progress while being homeschooled (Bergstrom, 2012; BOSTES, 2014; Martin-Chang et al, 2011; Ray, 2017). In most cases, if not all, their progress was an improvement on their achievements while in mainstream schools. I believe that the academic challenges they described would have been experienced in any educational setting, and were not as a result of being homeschooled.

A participant who had been homeschooled had gone on to achieve academic success in a tertiary education, (Bagwell, 2010; Cardinale, 2013; Cogan, 2010; Fink-Glass, 2016; Ray, 2013; Snyder, 2013).

6.2.3.2 Social development of homeschooled children

One of the most common criticisms of homeschooling is the perceived lack of socialisation (Ray, 2013). However, this research found evidence to the contrary. The children of the participants were self-confident, well-mannered and communicative (Bester, 2002; Medlin, 2013). They socialised on a regular basis in a variety of social spheres (Mills, 2009), and displayed a positive self-concept. The children had all been given opportunities to participate in activities outside the home (Bergstrom, 2012; Bester, 2002), and were encouraged to be individuals. Their parents reported on the beneficial effects homeschooling had on their children's social development, such as improved self-confidence (Medlin, 2013).

6.2.3.3 Emotional benefits of homeschooling for children

There was evidence of the positive impact homeschooling had had on the children in this study (Rothermel, 2012), and parents reported increased confidence, self-regulation and responsibility (Riley, 2015). It would appear that without the pressure of conforming to peer pressure, the homeschooled children were free to become their true selves (Medlin, 2013), and develop true friendships based on a desire to be with other people rather than on convenience or proximity.

6.2.4 Challenges of homeschooling

The participants documented the challenges they had experienced while homeschooling, and described how they had overcome them. These challenges included; difficulties teaching mathematics, pressure to produce results, financial implications of one parent not earning an income, and family or role conflict (Botha, 2005; Moore et al, 2004; Reaburn & Roberts, 2018).

It is important to note that, while some of the disadvantages mentioned were inherent to the concept of homeschooling, others were caused by external factors, such as uncertainty regarding government policies on homeschooling (Botha, 2005; Moore, 2002).

It is also important to remember that, despite the challenges they faced while homeschooling their children, all participants felt that these were exceeded by the benefits (Botha, 2005; Brynard, 2007; Doke-Kerns, 2016).

6.3 Conclusions based on findings

The overarching aim of this study was to establish the validity and viability of homeschooling as an alternative educational setting in South Africa. Based on its findings, this research reveals that homeschooling could be considered to be a valid and viable form of education.

Homeschoolers are a diverse group of parents with one common goal; to provide their children with the best education possible. These parents are actively involved in the education of their children, demonstrating a high degree of commitment to the process. They are proactive in accessing resources and use a structured approach. Their children in this study had made academic progress, and had benefitted both socially and emotionally from being taught at home.

The various circumstances that lead parents to elect to homeschool are ultimately based on their desire to do what is best for their children, to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes in all aspects of their lives. The participants in this research were all dedicated homeschoolers. This would not necessarily be true of all homeschoolers. However, in the words of Holt (1981) "... [not] all families who try to teach their own children will learn to do it well. Some may not. But such families are likely to find homeschooling so unpleasant that they will be glad to give it up, the children most of all" (p. 54).

6.4 Limitations

This study aims to expand on the current perceptions of homeschooling in South Africa, particularly as a valid alternative educational setting. Through the data analysis of findings, some interesting results have emerged. However, it is important to take cognisance of the possible effects of the following limitations:

Limited sample size

This study was limited by its relatively small sample size and the fact that, for logistical reasons, the participants were all from within the greater Durban area. However, as posited by Creswell (2007), the case study researcher does not usually select more than four or five cases.

Recruitment of participants

Due to uncertainty regarding the status of homeschooling in South Africa, alluded to earlier, there was the possibility that potential participants may be reluctant to be a part of this study, particularly as I am an employee of the DoE. However, once I had interviewed my first two participants, they were kind enough to inform other homeschooling parents of my research and encouraged them to participate.

Child participants

As mentioned above, there is reluctance on the part of homeschooling parents to reveal information about their homeschooling practices. I did not wish to create unnecessary concerns regarding my intentions and so made the decision not to request permission to interact with homeschooled children separately to their parents. I believe that this decision was the correct one as I was able to develop a rapport with participants during the initial interview and they were therefore quite relaxed and happy for me to chat informally to their children during the observations.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 For homeschoolers

Homeschoolers are advised to continue to work in the best interests of their children. As was the case with the homeschoolers in this study, they should remain focused on the ultimate goal of this undertaking, the education of their children.

By keeping meticulous records of progress and achievements, homeschoolers will have evidence in the event of intervention by the Department of Education, and be able to prove that they are practising an academically sound education process.

Homeschoolers should be proud of their achievements, for their sacrifices are vindicated by the positive outcomes of their efforts.

6.5.2 For the Department of Education

Homeschooling is a fast-growing phenomenon that is meeting the needs of thousands of children in South Africa and, as such, is unlikely to disappear. It is therefore a recommendation that the DoE adopt a more amenable approach to homeschooling, as this would be more conducive to a constructive and open relationship between the role players. In

this way, the DoE will be more likely to succeed in creating a register of homeschoolers. The current situation is, unfortunately, one of mistrust and suspicion, as homeschoolers are afraid of being forced to either stop homeschooling or to follow a prescribed curriculum. This is evidenced by the reluctance of homeschoolers to participate in this research for fear of their information being shared with the DoE. Furthermore, even those participants who had attempted to register their children as homeschoolers had been unsuccessful, despite repeated attempts to do so. This had resulted in parents becoming frustrated and disillusioned, and a lack of confidence in the DoE had resulted.

6.6 Recommendations for further research

There is a need for more South African research on the phenomenon of homeschooling.

Suggested research areas are:

- Curriculum needs of homeschoolers
- A model for the monitoring and assessment of homeschooled children
- Homeschooling from the perspective of homeschooled children
- A comparative study of the academic progress of homeschooled and mainstream schooled children
- An empirical study to investigate the social, emotional and academical benefits of homeschooling compared to mainstream education

6.7 Conclusion of the study

The validity and viability of homeschooling as an alternative educational setting in South Africa has been established through this research, albeit limited to the research sample and therefore not broadly generalisable.

The challenges of homeschooling were discussed and recommendations made for both homeschooling families and the DoE.

In conclusion, the number of homeschooling families in South Africa will no doubt continue to increase. Based on the evidence from this research and other studies, these families deserve to be supported and encouraged in their efforts to be self-sufficient in their quest to provide for their children's needs.

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Appendix A: ethical clearance



22 August 2018

Mrs Jennifer Rae Steytler 217077673
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Steytler

Protocol Reference Number : HSS/1026/018M
Project title: Homeschooling in South Africa: A multiple case study

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 18 July 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Henry Muribwathoho
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Ms Sheryl Jeenarain

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Websites: www.ukzn.ac.za



1919 - 2019
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix B: informed consent

Dear Participant,

My name is Jenny Steytler. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus (Student no. 217077673). The title of my research is: Homeschooling in South Africa: a multiple case study. The aim of the study is to gain a clearer understanding of homeschooling in South Africa.

I am particularly interested in parents' reasons for choosing to homeschool their children, and the methods and approaches they are using. I would also like to find out more about the challenges faced by homeschooling parents, as well as the successes and achievements of homeschooled children. I would like you to participate in my research because I believe that you would be able to provide significant information and add value to my findings.

My research will take the form of case studies of different homeschooling families. Should you agree to participate, I would conduct an initial individual interview with you. Thereafter, I would need to spend some time observing while you homeschool your child or children. The initial interview should take approximately an hour. The number of observations needed is difficult to estimate in advance, but would probably be no more than 2 or 3, with a total of approximately 6 hours. Interviews and observation sessions would be arranged at times that are convenient for you.

It may also be necessary for me to conduct focus group interviews, which would consist of a group of 6 to 8 people discussing a specific topic related to homeschooling. You may be invited to participate in a focus group but this participation would be optional.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor

your identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.

- It will be necessary to make an audio recording of the proceedings, in order to ensure that the information is accurately recorded. These recordings will be stored together with the data as detailed below.
- Hard copies of the data as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a safe storage area accessible only to myself and my supervisor/s. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- A digital copy of the data (including audio) will be stored in the cloud, protected by a password and accessible only to myself and my supervisor/s. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be deleted.

Once my dissertation is complete, I would be happy to share the results of my research with you.

If you agree to participate please initial each page of this document, and sign the declaration attached to this statement.

I can be contacted at: School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: 217077673@stu.ukzn.co.za, Cell: 082 527 5436. My supervisor is Dr Henry Muribwathoho, who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: Email: muribwathohoh@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 031-260 701.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind regards

J.R. Steytler (Mrs)

DECLARATION

I..... (*full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix C: interview questions

Initial questions will be to establish a background to the current situation – marital status, number and ages of children and so on.

The questions asked in individual interviews will arise out of responses from the participants. The following list includes the more specific questions I am likely to ask.

1. Please tell me a little bit about your family (marital status, number and ages of children).
2. Which of your children are you homeschooling?
3. Have you ever homeschooled any of your other children?
4. I am interested in the circumstances surrounding your decision to homeschool. Please could you explain when and how you came to this decision.
5. Homeschooling parents use a variety of different teaching strategies. I would be interested in hearing your experiences with teaching strategies, particularly those you have found to be most successful.
6. In what ways do you think your child has benefitted socially from being homeschooled?
7. In what ways do you think your child has benefitted emotionally from being homeschooled?
8. In what ways do you think your child has benefitted academically from being homeschooled?
9. Please could you share with me any disadvantages or challenges you have experienced while homeschooling.

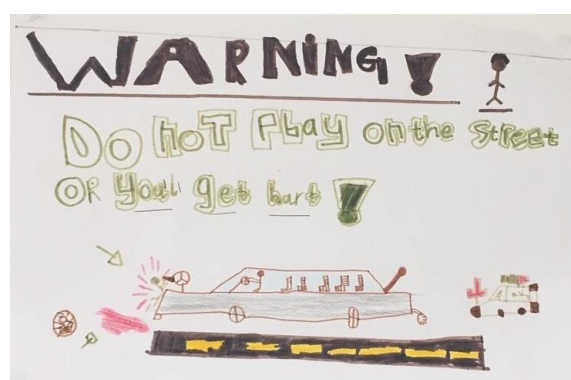
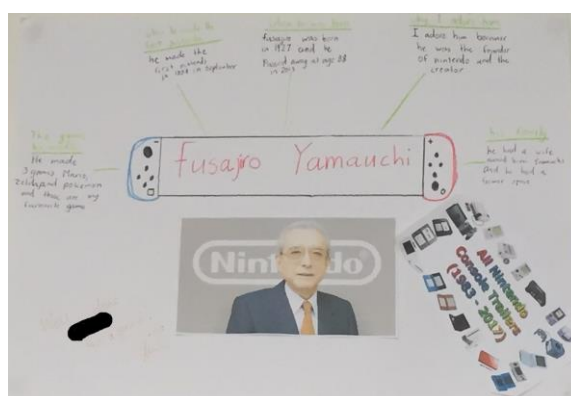
Appendix D: field notes template

Teaching strategies used by homeschooling parents.

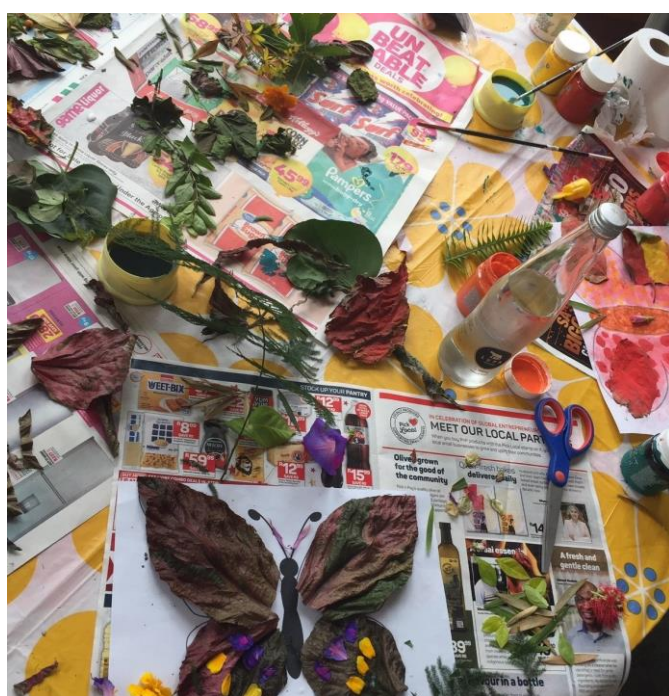
Critical question: What teaching strategies are used by parents or tutors who homeschool?

Date:		Time:
Identifier:		Length of observation:
Participants	Age	Role
Site:		
Site description:		
Diagram of layout:		
Observations:		Reflections:

Appendix E: posters, activities and examples of children's work



Examples of children's art displayed in homeschooling rooms



Creative activity in progress

9. September 2018

Tippie gaan ysskaats.

Frikkie vrac vir Tippie of hy
saam kan gaan. Tippie
val altyd. Frikkie tel Tippie
op. Hy leer Tippie om te
skaats.

Roxy maak baie
stintjies. Sy lê en slaap op
my bed. Roxxy maak gaatjies
in die grond. Roxxy jaag die
voeltjies. Roxxy is moeg.

LESSON PRACTICE

\$ = Dollars = R = Rand
d = Dimes = c = cents

27A

Subtract the money. The first one is done for you.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1. \text{ R } 1.23 \text{ } ^1\text{ } ^0 \\ - .75 \\ \hline \text{R } .55 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2. \text{ R } 9.00 \\ - 2.65 \\ \hline \text{R } 6.35 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3. \text{ R } .45 \\ - .10 \\ \hline \text{R } .35 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4. \text{ R } 6.15 \\ - 1.20 \\ \hline \text{R } 4.95 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5. \text{ R } 2.40 \\ - 1.35 \\ \hline \text{R } 1.05 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6. \text{ R } 8.00 \\ - 2.50 \\ \hline \text{R } 5.50 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7. \text{ R } 5.15 \\ - 3.70 \\ \hline \text{R } 1.45 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8. \text{ R } 26.00 \\ - 11.95 \\ \hline \text{R } 14.05 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9. \text{ R } 34.40 \\ - 22.05 \\ \hline \text{R } 12.35 \end{array}$$

Rand Rand.



6 = 4
5 = 5

voor?	Son ^{Sat} dag ^M	_____	Sat ^{er} er ^{dag}
na?	Ma ^S andag ^D	_____	Di ⁿ nsdag
voor?	Wo ^e nsdag	_____	Di ⁿ nsdag ^f
na?	Vr ^y dag	_____	Sat ^{er} er ^{dag}
voor	Sat ^{er} er ^{dag}	_____	Vr ^y dag

Hoeveel.

- 1. eerste
- 3. derde
- 5. Vyfde
- 8. agste
- 10. tiende
- 11. elfde

- 10:00. tien uur
- 1:00. een uur
- 4:00. Vieruur

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Subtract, using regrouping when needed. Check by adding.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1. \quad \overset{6}{7} \ 11 \\ - 43 \\ \hline 28 \end{array} \checkmark$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2. \quad \overset{8}{9} \ 18 \\ - 89 \\ \hline 09 \end{array} \checkmark$$

or

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3. \quad \overset{2}{3} \ 15 \\ - 17 \\ \hline 18 \end{array} \checkmark$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4. \quad 85 \\ - 45 \\ \hline 40 \end{array} \checkmark$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5. \quad 429 \\ - 311 \\ \hline 118 \end{array} \checkmark$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6. \quad 148 \\ - 26 \\ \hline 122 \end{array} \checkmark$$

Add.

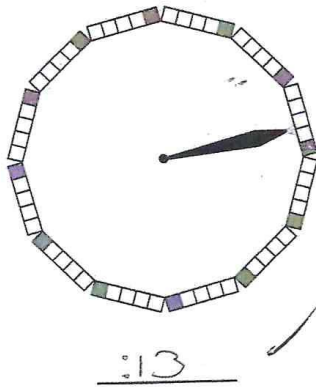
$$\begin{array}{r} 7. \quad \overset{1}{R}7.30 \\ + 1.85 \\ \hline R9.15 \end{array} \checkmark$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8. \quad \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 15 & 26 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array} \\ + \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 7 & 55 & 4 \\ \hline \end{array} \\ \hline \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 12 & 71 & 7 \\ \hline \end{array} \end{array} \checkmark$$

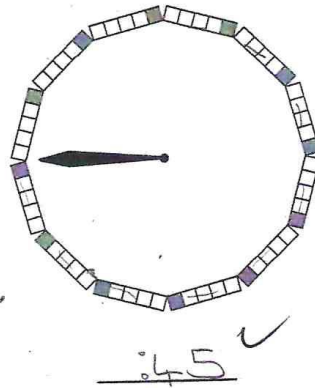
$$\begin{array}{r} 9. \quad \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 8 & 9 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array} \\ + \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 4 & 1 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array} \\ \hline \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 12 & 10 & 5 \\ \hline \end{array} \end{array} \checkmark$$

Write how many minutes are shown by each clock.

10.



11.



12. Anthony collected 16 red marbles, 21 green marbles, and 14 blue marbles. He gave 25 of his marbles to Jack. How many marbles did Anthony have left?

26

$$\begin{array}{r} 451 \\ - 25 \\ \hline 26 \end{array}$$

→

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ 21 \\ 14 \\ + \\ \hline 51 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ 21 \\ 14 \\ \hline 51 \end{array}$$

→

BETA

$4+3=7\checkmark$
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Appendix F: Turnitin report

Homeschooling in South Africa - A Multiple Case study

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Appendix G: declaration of proof reader

DECLARATION OF PROOF READER

*HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL
SHORTLANDS AVENUE
HILLREST*

10 April 2019

Hereby I declare that I have language edited and proof read the following dissertation:

HOMESCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

By

Jennifer Rae Steytler

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Educational Psychology)

For the past 37 years I have been a senior librarian and I have also had extensive experience in editing and publishing in-house publications – most notably for the SABC.

Yours sincerely



ELIZABETH GOMES

*B.MUS/ CLASSICS HON.
DIP. PER. MANAGEMENT & LABOUR RELATIONS
IPRC / NSC*