

HOME EDUCATION IN SOWETO: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS

Renuka Ramroop

Abstract

Home education is an alternate form of education that takes place outside formal schooling with children of school-going age. Parents take primary responsibility for their child's education, using an approach that is framed by the family's life philosophy. In this study, thirty parents from a home education network in a South African township provided insight and information on their context, experience and highlighted the importance of the network in their home education journey. The research, framed by the social capital theory, adopted a mixed methods approach to collate both qualitative and quantitative data via a questionnaire. A convergent design was used in the data analysis of the overall results. The results provide perspective and understanding of home education in this historically marginalised cohort. It demonstrates the social capital inherent in the group in terms of trust, reciprocity, shared norms and values and the importance of identity and community support in the group. The study recommends further research for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the group as they provide a unique and valuable voice in the realm of home education both nationally and internationally.

Keywords: Home education; natural learning; social capital

Introduction

The progress of a developing society is often viewed through its education system. Since 1994, South African (SA) education has been monitored with reference to the debilitating impact of Apartheid. After almost 30 years of democracy, schooling remains a contentious issue as many communities still suffer the inequalities of Apartheid and remain under-resourced and under-served (Spaull, 2012; Amnesty International, 2020). With the ever-growing divide between private and public schools, with rural schools lacking basic infrastructure such as safe toilets and with the disappointing academic results (Spaull, 2012; Amnesty International, 2020), schools are beginning to lose their authority as the conduit for social change and transformation. For many learners, the schooling environment itself is a site for struggle as it reflects the poverty and lack of their homes and communities (Mazama 2016) and cannot make the desired impact that education is touted to make.

However, some families, have decided to escape the conundrum of institutional schooling by opting to home educate their children. Globally home education has become one of the fastest growing social phenomenon in the last few decades (Brynard, 2007; Moore et al.; Fields-Smith, 2015) as more and more people are disillusioned with the quality of education in schools and the many social ills (negative peer pressure, bullying etc.) that seem to accompany institutional environments of this nature. Whatever the reason, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the growth in the number of people home educating has been steadily increasing by as much as 15 – 20% each year (Fields-Smith, 2015).

According to Dlamini et al. (2021), there is a lack of empirical evidence of the experiences of home schoolers. From social media platforms there is a significant number of Black families who are home educating in SA but there is very little to no empirical evidence to understand the context and experiences of this cohort. To address this gap, this study explored prevalence, context and the general experience of home educators living in Soweto,

an urban township in South Africa. According to Princiotta and Bielick (2006) it becomes necessary to understand the perspective of the parents from the traditionally marginalized groups who now have the power to make choices for their children, because it will contribute valuable perspective and insight into the broader understanding of home education and its place in modern society.

Literature Review

Home education, an alternative form of education that takes place outside the formal school with children who are of school-going age, is an umbrella term for all home-based learning. Parents take primary responsibility for their child's education (Holt & Farenga, 2003; Gray, 2013; Ramroop, 2020) by facilitating their growth and development with an approach underpinned by the family's life philosophy. Some parents choose to emulate a school environment at home by following a structured curriculum while others opt for a more eclectic approach. A growing number of families opt for the Natural Learning Approach, commonly referred to as unschooling or self-directed learning (Ramroop, 2019). Van Galen (1987) and Rothermel (2005) postulate that the home education community can be split into two groups: *idealogues* are those who choose to home educate according to their life philosophy/worldview; *pedagogues* are those whose primary concern is the development of their child which they believe the schools are not able to meet and due to socio-emotional or academic reasons, choose to home educate.

While most home education researchers attest to the significant growth in numbers in many countries over the last three decades (Princiotta & Bielick, 2006; Gray, 2013), the true number of families home educating has not been determined. In comparison to the USA and UK, home education in South Africa, in its common definition (parent takes the primary responsibility for the child's education during the compulsory school going age), is recent (Ramroop 2019). During the Apartheid era, home education was illegal and formal school

attendance was mandatory for white people from 1902 and the rest of the population from 1980 (South African History Online, 2017). However, the new Constitution in 1994 enshrined the right to education and passing of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) where Section 51 of this Act made home education legal. Thus, research on home education in South Africa remains recent and scant.

Until recent years most of the people who registered to home educate were categorised as white, Christian and middle class, which was in keeping with the general statistics and description of people home educating in other research studies. Both Fields-Smith (2015) and Mayberry et al (1995) found that home education in USA is seen as white, heterosexual, nuclear, middle-class and religiously based phenomenon. Thus, the data on home education has been predominantly on the white middle-class cohort. This was confirmed in a study in 2008 (Wits Policy Unit) in South Africa where it was found that the home education population was almost entirely white and in the middle-class category. This therefore fed the common sentiment in South Africa that home education is only for white people, a sentiment even expressed by government officials within the South African Department of Basic Education (Sosibo 2015). However, the number of people who do not fit this stereotype is steadily rising, well before the Covid-19 pandemic. While different figures are tabled regarding the number of people home educating in South Africa, it must be cautioned that there are many families who, due to their fear of the authorities, choose to remain ‘underground’ (Durham 1996), skewing the real figure of the number of people home educating.

Soweto, an acronym for southwestern township, is an urban settlement, commonly called a township, in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was created in the 1930’s for the Black African population and the last Census in 2011 indicated a population of 1,271,628. The township has a wide diversity of languages with isiZulu being the most spoken language.

The population is made up of 98.5% of people who are Black African with 49.6% male and 50.4% female (Soweto in detail 2017). The fight for equality has a long history in South Africa and Soweto became a site for civil unrest during Apartheid. The famous Soweto Student Uprising in 1976 – where school children protested against racialised schooling– remains a strong memory for people in Soweto. Therefore, for some people the concept of home education seems anti-revolutionary.

The struggle for equal opportunity for learning experiences continue in Soweto because the township, like many other historically disadvantaged communities, remain under-resourced and underserved in South Africa, perpetuating a black-white achievement gap. This brings to the fore the stark reality that the education for many children in post-Apartheid South Africa “still very much depends on where they were born, how wealthy they are, and the colour of their skin” (Amnesty International, 2020).

This study attempted to provide answers to the following questions: Who in Soweto are choosing to home educate; why did they choose to home educate; and how are they implementing this option? The study goes further to highlight how this social interaction builds on the social capital inherent in this group.

Theoretical Framework

The context of the Soweto home education group made it appropriate to place this study within the realm of the social capital theory. Hanifan (1916) in Carreon (2005) is said to have originated the term social capital as a concept that embodied the notion of goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among the groups of individuals and families that make up a social unit. Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009), state that social capital is complex and multidimensional and can be broadly defined as “a collective asset in the form of shared norms, values, beliefs, trust, networks, social relations, and institutions that facilitate cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits” (p. 480). Putnam (1993)

explains that social capital refers to and describes the features of social organisation—for example, the networks (connections among individuals) and the norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity that arise from the networks which then facilitates the action and cooperation for mutual benefit for all those who participate. According to Coleman (1988), one of the primary functions of capital is that it enables a person to gain access to human, cultural and other forms of capital as well as to resources and support. Coleman states further that social capital is productive in making possible the achievement of certain goals that would not be possible in the absence of social capital.

There are three types or functions of social capital (Patulny & Svendsen, 2007); linking, bonding and bridging. Linking social capital refers to the vertical relationship between people of different societal position or power (Claridge, 2018). Bonding social capital describes the relationship or connections with a group of people with similar demographic characteristics and interest and available information and resources. In a nutshell, bonding social capital ‘exists between *‘people like us’* who are *‘in it together’* and who typically have strong close relationships’ (Claridge, 2018, p. 2). Bridging social capital describes the connections and the social relation of exchange that bridge people from different societal divides, for example, race, class and gender, who share common interests or goals (Patulny and Svendsen, 2007).

In this study, both bonding and bridging social capital underpin the understanding because these two terms cannot be mutually exclusive. Home education is the common interest (bonding social capital) in the group and even though most of the members identify as Black they come from different geographical, educational, language, home education approach and economic backgrounds, denoting bridging social capital.

Methodology

The study used both purposive and snowball sampling strategies to get participants from the group for the study. The group consists of parents, mainly mothers, who live in Soweto or have a connection to Soweto. They came together to provide a safe space for both parents and children to discuss home education matters, socialise and support each other in their learning process. They also shared information and pooled resources to optimise their children's exposure to various activities like swimming and horse-riding.

In the absence of any baseline information on the people home educating in Soweto, gaining both qualitative and quantitative strands of data was essential for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The study therefore adopted a mixed methods approach to capture both strands of data (Creswell, 2015).

A questionnaire—primary data collection tool—simultaneously collected both strands of data. The questionnaire was first sent to five people in the group to provide critical feedback. Thereafter, the final questionnaire was accessible to all members of the group with only one parent per family completing the questionnaire. Consent to participation and for the researcher to use the data provided was included in the questionnaire. The participants were given the option of remaining completely anonymous and those who did provide their details were assured of strict confidentiality. From the fifty-six home educating parents identified, forty-six questionnaires were forwarded via email to the participating parent and thirty completed questionnaires were collated. The quantitative data provided the researcher with adequate information about the context and the people. The qualitative data captured in responses from the open-ended questions, provided more in-depth knowledge and understanding of their experiences.

A convergent design was used in data analysis, which enabled the researcher to merge both sets of data for a complete understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2015).

Thematic analysis was used to identify the themes embedded in the qualitative data aspect of

the questionnaire. The complex data sets were systematically analysed and organised in a search for themes to capture the narratives in the data to provide explanations of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

Findings

Table 1 provides information about the study sample. All participants who filled in the questionnaire were female, between the ages of 36 – 45 years, denoting a mature cohort of participants. According to Trillingsgaard and Sommer (2016), older parents tend to demonstrate increased emotional stability, tolerance and mental flexibility. They often complete their education, are more financially secure, enjoy a more stable domestic partnership and therefore in a better circumstance for a healthy parenting style (Panaccione, 2011; Ramroop, 2019).

The data reveals that 73% of participants are in a domestic or married partnership and 20% are single mothers. This data falls well below the 41.4% single parent statistic of South Africa and is higher than the 34% of children who have both parents at home (Hall & Sambu, 2018). This denotes that the choice of home education lies more in a domestic partnership cohort. The data shows that the majority participants do not have more than three children (37% = 2 children and 33 % = 3 children), thus indicating the lean towards smaller families. In keeping with the general characteristic of home educating families, most participants were self-employed or worked from home (Ramroop, 2019). The majority (94%) of participants identified as African. All participants completed secondary school with 50% completing a university degree. This does indicate their level of human capital in terms of their formal education and training which might add to their self-efficacy to home educate. It was interesting to note that, although not by a big margin, more participants in the group did not reside in Soweto itself. Their reasons for being part of the group is discussed in point 6 below.

Table 1: Characteristics of the study sample

Characteristic	Details	%
Gender	Male	0
	Female	100
Age	26-35	33
	36-45	67
Description of self	African	94
	Asian/Indian	3
	Foreign	3
Resident of Soweto	Yes	47
	No	53
Marital Status	Single	20
	Married or domestic partnership	73
	Divorced	7
Highest qualification	Secondary	10
	Trade	3
	Diploma	37
	Bachelors	27
	Honours	13
	Masters	7
	Doctoral	3
Employment	Full time	10
	Part time	3
	Self-employed	40

	Unemployed	17
	Work from Home	13
	Home Parent	17
Number of children	4	13
	3	33
	2	37
	1	17

Annual Household Income

One of the common myths about home education is that it is for the middle class and/or wealthy people because it does form the majority cohort within the home education movement (Fields-Smith, 2015; Sosiba, 2015). Therefore, it was important to find out more about the economic context of the participants in the study.

Table 2: Annual salary

Amount in South African Rands	% of participants
Confidential	40
614 – 1229	10
307 – 614	13
153 – 307	3
77 – 153	17
< 77	17

40% of the respondents chose to keep their financial information confidential which made it difficult to report on this aspect. However, with 34% of the respondents earning R153 000 and less per annum, it reveals that families not classified in the economic middle class

are equally able to make the decision to home educate their children. Further studies to investigate how they manage this process within their economic context would be important to deepen the understanding.

Where do the families conduct their home education programme?

Table 3a: Approach to Home education

Approach	% of families
Natural Learning (Unschooling)	47
Semi-structured	40
Structured	10
Other	3

Table 3b: Approach to Home Education

Approach	% of families
Home-based	73
Learning Centre	10
Other	17

The results confirmed that most participants (73%) saw home education as a home-based phenomenon where children learn at their own pace in a family setting with guidance from the parent. 10 % attended a learning centre and 17 % follow semi-structured programmes and adopted a mix of home, learning centres and online schooling.

Reasons for Home Education

From the qualitative data strand of the questionnaire the following themes emerged from the responses. Like Slater (2020), this study also revealed that parents have a range of reasons for their choice to home educate. For example:

General Dissatisfaction with Schooling

Most participants believed schools were not *‘teaching the important stuff’* and they felt that the system failed them. They felt that schools apply a *“one-size fit all narrative”* which did not meet nor support their children’s needs especially in terms of their *“level of creativity and learning development.”* They also felt schools were not safe spaces for their children. One participant stated quite boldly that the concept of school is dead and that it serves a society that she does not wish to co-create.

Family values/togetherness

Many families hold their values as paramount in their choice to home education. Often families that choose to home educate for this reason tend to do it from the time the children are very young (Rothermel, 2005). Many parents who choose to home educate right from birth see their choice as *“a natural extension of parenting and I want to be the biggest influence in my children’s education.”* Some participants expressed their joy in spending time together as a family. One participant stated that she wanted her children to learn in a natural organic way without the pressure and felt that their decision was *“better suited to the family and we have peace of mind.”* Other reasons indicating family values are:

We are opting to do with less and I’m seeking out my path to enlightenment along with my children.

I wanted to take powers back in my hands where raising my kids is concerned.

I want to focus on teaching them simple life values which I believe will build their strong personalities.

These responses indicate that parents are consciously choosing to ensure their values and worldview is the major influence on their children.

Protection/Compassion

Mazama and Lundy (2012) and Fields-Smith and Williams (2009) found that for some African American parents the choice to home educate came from a strong desire to protect their children from the negative effects of school-related racism. Some of the responses from this study echoed the need to protect their children from racism. *“In a world that disregards blackness...I want my kids to understand themselves through the lenses that their parents give them as opposed to the limiting definition of the world.”*

It was clear from some responses that the parents had a deep compassion for their child and the negative experiences their child might have to endure if they went to a mainstream school. One parent observed that her son’s love for learning was dying in school which prompted her decision to home educate. Some participants expressed concerns that their child would be forced to conform while others remembered their own suffering in schools and therefore wanted to protect their children from having to experience something similar.

One parent related that she spent hours in a taxi going from Soweto to school in a ‘white’ suburb in the hope of a better education. She remembers her suffering and the danger:

Being primarily based in Soweto meant that we would have to force our children (as we so experienced) to give up or rather disregard a precious unrenewable resource (TIME) in the façade of “getting a better education” ...waking up before dawn, to arrive back home after dusk, all the while being transported by a stranger (school transport driver) who’s so reckless whilst on duty (adheres to no traffic regulations), has zero respect for his passengers (zero consideration of over-loading school pupils)...

To protect her children from having to endure a similar experience, home education was a viable option. Further research into this phenomenon could deepen the understanding underpinning the decision to home educate for families of colour in South Africa.

Special Needs

Slater et al (2020) concluded that the decisions to home educate was due to the perceived limited understanding of the child's need by the teacher and the lack of provisions to support and accommodate the children's specific educational needs. This includes both children with specific learning difficulties and children who need an accelerated learning programme (Cook et al., 2013). In this study too, parents felt that the "*classroom environment was not conducive to learning*" with their children's special needs diagnosis. From the responses, two children with an ADHD diagnosis were expelled from mainstream schools because they were labelled disruptive. Other studies also indicate that a growing number of learners with an ADHD diagnosis are being home educated (Wedge, 2013). Simmons and Campbell (2019) also found that there is an increase in home-educated children with the autism spectrum disorder. One participant observed that her son struggled to concentrate which prompted her to home educate so that she could develop his interests more naturally and freely.

Financial

Apart from the growing dissatisfaction and poor results of the government schools (Spaull, 2012), it appears that the high cost of private education results in home education becoming a very viable option for those who do not desire the experience of public schooling but at the same time are not able to afford the exorbitant fees of private schooling. One participant stated that they "*hit a financial snag and therefore opted to home-school*" while another felt that the cost of private schools did not correlate with the learning and development they expected to see in their child: "*R3000.00 a month to learn ABC and counting was just too much.*" Other responses included the high cost of different curriculums. Taken into consideration the information provided in 4.1. - Annual Household Income - it would be worthwhile to further investigate if the cost of home education curriculums was

also one of the factors considered when choosing the natural and eclectic learning approaches.

Reasons for Joining the Group

It was important to understand why the parents joined the group and if they received any benefits from being part of the group. In other words, it was important to understanding the social capital phenomenon within this group. According to Lin (2001), social capital refers to the gains made by individuals or a group because of their interactions with individuals within a group. The value of the capital is embedded in the relations between the people in the network and in this study the focus was on highlighting and understanding the bonding social capital that has been nurtured in this group. According to Patulny and Svendsen (2007), bonding social capital comprises of networks that are inward looking and that establishes an exclusive homogenous identity within the norms of trust and cooperation. The notion of trust and trustworthiness of the individuals within the network is crucial because the greater the trust, the greater the value created and the greater the achievement of individuals and the group. In other words, the premise behind the concept of social capital is the investment in the social relationships (Lin, 2001). From the responses, the participants attest to the important role of the group in their families' home education journey. It was also interesting to note that most of the participants do not reside in Soweto but still chose to be part of the group for reasons other than geographical. The three main themes that emerged from the qualitative responses on why they joined the group, indicating the benefits and social capital in the group:

Sharing and Support

Bjørnskov and Sønderskov (2012) states that social capital has potential value because it provides individuals in a social network the opportunity to access information and resources. The participants in this study attest to this because through the group various

activities became more accessible, affordable, and often free. The families who were not residents of Soweto appreciated the added financial benefit because of the high cost of similar activities in the wealthier suburbs where they resided. One of the resident participants also stated that they can as a group “*club together as homeschoolers for activities like horse riding making it more affordable....*” and thus ensuring their children’s participation in an activity that is usually very expensive. This is an excellent example of the benefits of being part of a group and a good measurement of bonding social capital. One participant encapsulated the social capital of the group with this response: “*...the little ones actually bringing families together, through participating in group activities and making new friendships. Creative content sharing.*”

The responses show that the group has helped to cement relationships where mutual sharing of ideas, resources, energy and time has enabled the parents to successfully facilitate and manage their home education journey.

Trust

In general participants were positive and full of praise of the group. The responses show that members trusted one another in their home education journey. Trust lubricates social life (Putnam, 1993, p. 3).

Some of the responses that demonstrates the trust within the group:

They truly helped me navigate my journey far better than I would have had I not met them.

...general conscious concern about bringing up better spirited human beings resides within each member that contributes to the group.

People are knowledgeable and open-minded about home education very inspiring and enlightening.

The participants trust that the members of the group are the best people to guide and support them through their home education journey.

Identity and Community

One of the characteristics of bonding social capital is the notion of homogeneity (Claridge, 2018). The participants reported that the group helped them with their sense of identity and community. Families who did not reside in Soweto specifically joined the group because they felt they could identify with the group and saw it as “*one of the few spaces held for people of colour that offers community and support.*” The notion of identity and community was also highlighted with the following responses:

I liked the idea of being part of a black network of home educators who has some rootedness in the black community....

I needed moms who look like me and are trying this supposedly ‘white’ thing...

There are not many Black spaces in home education...the sense of ubuntu and wanting to share in resources ...the inclusion and freedom...

My son finds more acceptance with his friends in Soweto than any other suburb we have tried to integrate him into...

I identify with the passions and culture of Soweto...learning about township strengths, culture, weakness – is all part of my children’s education...

I prefer to integrate African perspectives and modern methods...

These are powerful responses that point to the immense need for identity and community in a highly racialised society and in agreement with Ekholm (2019) that bonding social capital is important in respect to identity. This group provides the space and opportunity for the participants to experience their home education journey with people they can identify with.

Challenges

Although there was an overwhelming positive sentiment the group was not without challenges. A few participants alluded to some discontent in the group because they felt that the group is not structured properly. It is also imperative to note the following:

People who mainly partake for the price benefits are not patient when challenges arise. They don't see the facilities as an extension of their homes so aren't interested in helping 'build' the facilities and aid where there are struggles. The relationship is strictly business, I pay a fee and you deliver. Whereas those who live in the township are more understanding.

This response brings to the fore some perceptions/experiences with bridging social capital that has the potential to create dissonance and bring up further challenges within the group. It also indicates that even though the group has many commonalities that bind them together there is still a difference between the ones who reside in Soweto and those who do not. The participant states that those who live in Soweto are more understanding of the problems that arise and more open to finding joint solutions. It would be valuable to track the development of the group over a 5-year period.

Discussion

This study revealed that families from all walks of life in South Africa show self-efficacy in home educating their children.

The data from the questionnaire indicate that the female parent is the primary home educator who facilitates the children's learning and development. Devitt (2017) found that mostly mothers are the stay-at-home parent with only 10% of fathers choosing this role. This alludes to home education as a gendered activity derived from gendered family ideologies and producing differential gendered effects on the family (Lois, 2017). However, while not denying the pervasive mainstream gender differentials that do exist in societies, a study done by Ramroop (2019) found that in some families the partner earning the higher

salary and who had the best job flexibility were the deciding factors on who became the stay-at-home parent rather than traditional home gender dynamics. Furthermore, it has been found that in general home-educated children have the space to develop their full potential without oppressive gender stereotypes often found in a schooling peer pressured environment.

According to Ellis (2008), even children who came from traditional homes, where feminist values were not evident, were still relatively free from negative gender stereotyping.

However, further studies on this phenomenon should be carried out for a deeper understanding in the context of this network.

Similar to Slater's (2020) study in Australia, home educating parents in this study are also well educated. Most participants completed a post-secondary school qualification with 50% holding a university degree, indicating a significant level of human capital (formal academic skills, competencies and knowledge) existing within the families which probably gives them the added confidence to home educate. It must be noted though that these formal qualifications are not necessarily a high requirement for a successful home education experience because when a parent lacks a particular skill that a child may require the expertise is often outsourced. Rather parental involvement is key to children's success in learning (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Home education adds one more activity to the numerous activities that parents engage in when raising happy, healthy and capable people. This is particularly evident in the Natural Learning Approach, where learning is not seen as separate to living and therefore an even greater sense of seamlessness between parenting and learning is fostered (Huang 2014; Pattison 2013; Ekoko 2007).

In Ramroop's (2019) study, 77.4% of the participants were married or in a domestic partnership and 22.6% were in single parents. In this study 73% are married or in a domestic partnership and 20% are single. Of the 6 participants who identified as single parents, 3 declined to provide information on their income and 3 earned R76 800 and less per annum.

According to a study conducted by Lansford (2016) single parent households are mostly women and are of lower socio-economic status than two-parent households. Ntoimo and Chadoka-Mutanda (2020) also confirm that single motherhood is associated with higher risks of poverty and the reproduction of poverty. With a significant number (40%) of the respondents choosing not to disclose their economic status and with 34% reporting that they earn less than R153 000 per annum, one can deduce that a significant number within this group do not fall into the economic middle-class category. Furthermore, with 17% reporting less than R77 000 per annum it is realised that some home educating families live within the extreme inequalities and socioeconomic realities prevalent in South Africa. Gray and Riley (2015) found that in many studies home educating parents following the Natural Learning Approach reported lower incomes, indicating that many families choose to sacrifice on income to pursue their commitment to home education. This can also be seen from the information on how families choose their employment: only 10% of the participants worked outside the home and this correlated with their home educating approach – learning centres and online platforms. The rest of the participants are home based. However, further research on the matter of employment and earnings in this cohort of home educators would be valuable for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

The data shows that all participants enjoy the easy atmosphere of sharing and caring that exists within the group, deepening their bonding and bridging social capital through home education. After all, as stated by Lin (1999), being part of a social group is described as social capital. The participants, especially those who do not live in Soweto, enjoy the further benefits of reduced costs for a variety of activities, for example, equestrian and swimming. One of the characteristics of bonding social capital is the circumstance of a homogenous group. This homogeneity, according to Patulny and Svendsen (2007) makes strangers more familiar with each other and easier to trust. In this instance, the group homogeneity lies in

their racial identification, their affiliation to Soweto and their decision to home educate their children.

Conclusion

The discussion around social capital resonates with the traditional concept of *ubuntu* in South Africa. The concept *ubuntu* which can be loosely translated to mean, ‘I am because you exist,’ points to the deep respect and value for the social nature of human beings and like social capital *ubuntu* is embedded in relationships. It is an expression of community life and collective responsibilities (Bayat 2005). Therefore, the notion of caring and sharing with each other, as encased in the understanding of social capital, is easily relatable to the notion of bonding social capital. This research demonstrates that when there is a common goal to be achieved, through working together, people can build on interpersonal trust, reciprocity, shared norms, values and understanding. In other words, they develop and accumulate social capital or show *ubuntu* in meeting their home education needs. It is strongly recommended that due to the energy of the group, their creativity and their circumstance, more research be conducted for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the group and home education. Without doubt, this group provides a unique and valuable voice in the realm of home education both nationally and internationally.

References

- Amnesty International. (2020). Broken and unequal. *The State of Education in South Africa*.
[<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1247956/download>] Date accessed: 23 January 2022.
- Bayat, A. (2005). Discussion paper defining social capital: A brief overview of the key aspects and debates.
https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2005/4/abdullah_bayat_paper_on_social_capital.pdf Date accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Bhandari, H., & Yasunobu, K. (2009). What is social capital? A comprehensive review of the concept. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37(3), 480–510.
- Bjørnskov, C., & Sønderskov, K. M. (2013). Is social capital a good concept? *Social Indicators Research*, 114(3), 1225–1242.
- Brynard, S. (2007). Homeschooling as an open-learning educational challenge in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(1), 83–100.
- Carreon, G.P., Drake, C., Corey, D., & Barton, A.C. (2005). The importance of presence: Immigrant parents' school engagement experiences. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(3), 465–498.
- Claridge, T. (2018). *Functions of social capital – bonding, bridging, linking*. Social Capital Research. <https://d1fs2th61pidml.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Functions-of-Social-Capital.pdf?x91095> Date accessed: 30 March 2022.
- Coleman, J.S. (1987). Families and schools. *Educational Researcher*, 16(6), 32–38.
- Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (Suppl.), S95–S120.

- Cook, K.B., Bennet, K.E., Lane, J.D., & Mataras, T.K. (2013). Beyond the brick walls: Homeschooling students with special needs. *Physical Disabilities: Education and Related Services*, 32(2), 90–103. [<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1061959>] Date accessed: 13 December 2021.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J.W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE Publications.
- Devitt, R. (2017). *Worldwide homeschool statistics*. Why on earth homeschool? Australian Homeschooling. <https://www.whyeearthhomeschool.com/homeschoolingfactsandstatistics454434.html> Date accessed: 12 February 2019.
- Dlamini, N., Maharaj, P., & Dunn, S. (2021). Home-schooling in South Africa: Adapting to the new normal of providing education. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(1), 106–121. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v39.i1.7>
- Durišić, M., & Bunijevac, M. (2017). Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *CEP S Journal*, 7(3), 137–153.
- Durham, K. (1996). Learning the home way: Home schooling and the South African Schools Bill. *Indicator SA*, 13, 76–79.
- Ekholm, D. (2019). Sport as a Means of Governing Social Integration: Discourses on Bridging and Bonding Social Relations. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 36(2), 152-161. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2018-0099> Date accessed: 15 July 2023
- Ekoko, B.E., & Ricci, R. (Eds.). (2014). *Natural born learners: Unschooling and autonomy in education*. Amazon.

- Ellis, R. (2008). Won't get schooled again. Feminists' homeschoolers are creating new ways of living and learning. *Briar Patch Magazine*.
- Fields-Smith, C. (2015). Black homeschoolers: Nowhere left to go. In P. Rothermel (Ed.), *International Perspectives on Home Education* (pp. 281–295). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fields-Smith, C., & Williams, M. (2009). Motivations, sacrifices and challenges: Black parents' decisions to homeschool. *Urban Review*, 41, 369–389.
- Gray, P. (2013). *Free to learn*. Basic Books.
- Gray, P., & Riley, G. (2015). Grown unschoolers' evaluations of their unschooling experiences: Report 1 on a survey of 75 unschooled adults. *The Journal of Educational Alternatives*, 4(2), 8–32.
- Hall, K., & Mokomane, Z. (2018). The shape of children's families and households: A demographic overview. *SA Children's Gauge*, 32.
- Holt, J., & Farenga, P. (2003). *Teach your own: The John Holt book of homeschooling*. USA: Perseus Publishing.
- Huang, V. (2014). Laying the foundations for democratic behaviour—A comparison of two different approaches to democratic education. *Journal of Unschooling and Alternative Learning*, 8(15), 30–68.
- Lansford, J.E. (2016). Single parent households. *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexual Studies*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss358>
- Lin, N. (2001). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lois, J. (2017). Homeschooling motherhood. In M. Gaither (Ed.), *The Wiley Handbook of Home Education* (pp. 186–206). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mayberry, M., Knowles, G., Ray, B., & Marlow, S. (1995). *Home schooling: Parents as educators*. Corwin Press/Sage.

- Mazama, A. (2016). African American homeschooling practices: Empirical evidence. *Theory and Research in Education*, 14(1), 26–44. DOI: [10.1177/1477878515615734]
- Mazama, A., & Lundy, G. (2012). African American homeschooling as racial protectionism. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(7), 723–748. DOI: 10.1177/0021934712457042
- Moore, G.L., Lemmer, E.M., & van Wyk, N. (2004). Learning at home: An ethnographic study of a South African home school. *South African Journal of Education EASA*, 24(1), 18–24.
- Ntoimo, L., & Chadoka-Mutanda, N. (2020). Demography of single parenthood in Africa: Patterns, determinants and consequences. In *Family Demography and Post-2015 Development Agenda in Africa* (pp. 135–150). DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-14887-4-8
- Panaccione, V. (2011). Advantages of being older parents. *Better Parenting Institute*.
<https://betterparentinginstitute.com> Date accessed: 27 April 2019.
- Pattison, H.D.A. (2013). *Rethinking learning to read: The challenge from children educated at home*. PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham.
- Patulny, R., & Svendsen, G.L.H. (2007). Exploring the social capital grid: Bonding, bridging, qualitative, quantitative. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 27(1/2), 32–51. DOI: 10.1108/01443330710722742
- Centre. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228375537-Social-learning-and-adaptation-to-climate-change> . Date accessed: 2 April 2022.
- Princiotta, D., & Bielick, S. (2006). *Homeschooling in the United States: 2003*. (NCES 2006-042). Statistical Analysis Report. National Center for Education Statistics.
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006042.pdf>
- Putnam, R.D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.

Ramroop, R.S. (2019). *Natural learning in the South African context: A critical analysis*.

(Doctoral Dissertation, University of Limpopo).

[http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10386/3001/ramroop_sr_2019.pdf?sequence=](http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10386/3001/ramroop_sr_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

[1&isAllowed=y](http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10386/3001/ramroop_sr_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) Date accessed on 07 June 2020).

Ramroop, R., & Singh, J.R. (2020). Natural learning and fencing: A case study of two fencers' lockdown training programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. In S. Manik (Ed.), *From High-risk Sports to Sports as High Risk: Crisis, Capitulation and Creativity during COVID-19* (pp. 1–16). ISBN: 978-0-9869936-8-8. DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-8-8/2020/AASBS05>

Rothermel, P. (2005). Can we classify motives for home education? *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 597 17(2–3), 74–89.

Slater, E.V., Burton, K., & McKillop, D. (2020). Reasons for home educating in Australia:

Who and why? *Educational Review*. DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2020.1728232

Simmons, C.A., & Campbell, J.M. (2019). Homeschool decision-making and evidence-based practice for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 31, 329–346. DOI: 10.1007/s10882-018-9643-8

Sosibo, K. (2015, April 2). Our children learn better at home. *Mail & Guardian*.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-02-our-children-learn-better-at-home> Date accessed:

01 April 2022.

South African History Online. *Towards a People's history*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za> Date accessed: 25 July 2018.

Soweto in Detail. (2019). <https://www.southafricanmi.com/soweto-in-detail.html> Date accessed: 20 July 2023.

Spaull, N. (2012). Education in South Africa: A tale of two systems. *Politics Web*.

<https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/education-in-sa-a-tale-of-two-systems> Date accessed 01 April 2022

Trillingsgaard, T., & Sommer, D. (2016). Associations between older maternal age, use of sanctions, and children's socio-emotional development through 7, 11, and 15 years.

European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 1. DOI:

10.1080/17405629.2016.1266248

Van Galen, J. (1987). Explaining home education: Parents' accounts of their decisions to teach their own children. *The Urban Review, 19*(3), 161–177.

Van Galen, J. (1991). Ideologues and pedagogues: Parents who teach their children at home. .

In J. van Galen & M. Pittman (Eds.), *Homeschooling: Political, historical and pedagogical perspectives* (pp. 67–92). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Wedge, M. (2013). *What's behind the 53 percent rise in ADHD diagnoses?* Psychology

Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/suffer-the-children/201304/whats-behind-the-53-percent-rise-in-adhd->

[diagnoses?msocid=292bdadc1a1466ed3539cf4a1bdd67c2](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/suffer-the-children/201304/whats-behind-the-53-percent-rise-in-adhd-diagnoses?msocid=292bdadc1a1466ed3539cf4a1bdd67c2) Date accessed: 13 January 2024

Wits Policy Unit. (2008). *Home education in South Africa*. (Version 17). Department of Education.

[https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Research%20Repository/Learner%20Wellness/Home%20education%20in%20SA.pdf?ver=2019-09-09-](https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Research%20Repository/Learner%20Wellness/Home%20education%20in%20SA.pdf?ver=2019-09-09-102346-950×tamp=1570191481302)

[102346-950×tamp=1570191481302](https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Research%20Repository/Learner%20Wellness/Home%20education%20in%20SA.pdf?ver=2019-09-09-102346-950×tamp=1570191481302) Date accessed 27 March 2022.

Biography: Dr. Renuka Ramroop is a researcher and practitioner whose work lies at the intersection of education, family learning, and alternative pedagogies. Her research focuses

on natural learning, homeschooling and unschooling, parental involvement, and social capital, with particular attention to South African contexts and marginalised communities. She examines how informal, relational, and self-directed learning environments support children's development and educational agency.