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# Metaphors and education: comparison of metaphors for education among parents of children in school and home education

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## ABSTRACT

Home education is a practice in which parents choose not to send their children to school or public educational frameworks, and to teach them at home instead. This is not new, but in several Western countries the numbers of families home educating has been growing recently. The research on home education has used quantitative and qualitative instruments. One of the qualitative methods employed to learn about the worldviews of research participants is metaphor analysis, in which the interviewees are asked to suggest metaphors for the research subject. However, there is a lack of research on home education using metaphor analysis. The present research compared the metaphors of 15 home educating mothers with those of 15 mothers who sent their children to school. The research findings indicate differences between the groups in the degree to which the metaphors were positive, and different perceptions regarding the nature and functions of education itself.

## KEYWORDS

Home education; home schooling; metaphor analysis; qualitative methods; school choice

## Introduction

Home education is a practice whereby parents choose not to send their children to schools or other public education frameworks and instead educate them at home. In many cases, home education requires that the parents decide ‘what’ their children study – which subjects they will, and no less importantly, won’t study – (the curriculum). It also requires that parents decide ‘how’ their children will learn, the study methods they will use, when the teaching will take place, which tools they will use etc. In addition, parents are usually charged with the actual task of implementing the ‘how’ by teaching their children themselves (Meighan 1997; Neuman and Aviram 2003, 2008, 2015). In light of the responsibility that home educating parents assume for their children’s education, it is important to understand what they consider to be a good or desirable education.

Researchers have identified two types of home education: structured and unstructured home education (or ‘unschooling’). Structured home education involves a pre-set curriculum that is usually defined by the parents; unstructured home education generally focusses on

various subjects often determined by the children according to their needs and interests (Aurini and Davies 2005; Kunzman and Gaither 2013). An alternative understanding of the degree of structure of home education might refer the level structure in the content of learning and in the learning process, separately (Neuman and Guterman 2017).

Home education is not a new practice; it has been common throughout most of human history. It was only during the industrial revolution that education laws were introduced mandating that children attend schools regularly (Evangelisti 2013; Hiatt 1994; Neuman and Aviram 2015). In this way, parents lost their authority to make decisions about their children's education, which was now delegated to the state through the schools. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, parents in the United States began demanding renewed responsibility for their children's education. Home education began as a marginal practice in the 1970s, mainly in England and the United States, where reports estimated some 13,000 children being educated at home. In comparison, the number of children being home educated in the first decade of the twenty-first century was estimated to be 80,000 in Britain (Kunzman and Gaither 2013) and over two million in the US (Blok and Karsten 2011; Kunzman and Gaither 2013; Ray 2011).

Numerous studies have recently been conducted examining the reasons parents give for taking their children out of schools and educating them at home. The findings of these studies indicate diverse reasons for home education. For example, Olsen's (2008) study into the reasons for choosing home education in Alberta (Canada), revealed six factors: the negative effects of the child's relationship with the peer group, faith and religion, special needs of the child, negative experiences of the parent as a child at school, administrative problems with the school, and involvement of the child in an incident that occurred at school. Studies in the United States, in South Dakota (Boschee and Boschee 2011) and in California (Collom 2005), have shown that the choice of home education is sometimes derived from a desire to strengthen family ties and the relationship between siblings in the nuclear family (Ray 1999). Other research in the south-eastern United States and in California has indicated that the decision could also be based on dissatisfaction with different aspects of the education system and as part of a search for alternatives to that system (Anthony and Burroughs 2010; Dumas, Gates, and Schwarzer 2010; Green and Hoover-Dempsey 2007). With regard to fears about the child's well-being, in their examination of the 2012 National Household Education Survey conducted in the US, Noel, Stark, and Redford (2013) found that most parents identified fear of the school climate and its impact on their children as their top reason for choosing to home educate. In some cases, parents choose home education because they have more general criticisms of the education system; these criticisms derive from the disparity between what parents perceive to be good education and what is actually practiced in the education system (Neuman and Guterman 2013, 2016). Against this background, an important question arises: what do parents who home educate perceive as a desirable education? Without an in-depth answer to this question it is impossible to truly understand why parents decide to home educate.

Researchers who have examined this question have generally focussed on parents who home educate their children; little research has compared the answer to this question among parents who home educate and those who send their children to school. For this reason, the present research compared what counts as a desirable education in the two groups of parents: the home educators and those who sent their children to school.

In most of the previous literature, the question of the character of home education practices has been examined by means of quantitative instruments, or alternatively, by qualitative

research which asks parents directly about their attitudes towards the subject (e.g., Green and Hoover-Dempsey 2007; Olsen 2008; and others). Direct questioning, even as part of qualitative research, has a significant inherent limitation; in answering such questions interviewees may construct their responses and 'organise' the information they provide in a way that presents the interviewer with a pre-processed worldview. In other words, under direct questioning, the attitudes that parents present might reflect prevailing social views and perhaps, unconsciously, a desire to be seen in a positive light. Therefore, it is important, in addition to research that asks the respondents such questions directly, to also employ means that enable indirect, in-depth examinations of attitudes. Qualitative research offers several tools for this including narrative research, which examines the stories that arise in the interview and ignores processed descriptions or claims (Clandinin 2006; Wells 2011). Another qualitative method, which was used in the present research, is metaphor analysis.

### Research using metaphor analysis

Exploring metaphors can enable us to examine how people think and how they understand the world (Chan 2013; Cornelissen et al. 2008; Zanutto, Cameron, and Cavalcanti 2008). The power of metaphors lies, in part, in the possibility of using familiar tools and projecting them onto a new sphere that we wish to understand. If metaphors express people's unconscious responses to ideas, then research that pays attention to metaphors can enrich the interpretation of findings (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Ortony 1975) and enable an understanding of perceptions and attitudes that are difficult to discern in direct verbal declarations (Ritchie 1994; Tobin 1990). Several researchers have claimed that this type of investigation is particularly suitable for complex subject matter (including education) enabling the examination of areas such as values and beliefs (Cook-Sather 2001; Saban, Kocbeker, and Saban 2007; Sfard 1998; Tobin 1990).

In the present research, the metaphors used by parents who home educated and parents who sent their children to school were analysed to examine their beliefs about the nature of education and to explore what a 'desirable education' might look like. In light of the growing numbers of children being home educated, as well as its notable influence on parents and children, it is important to understand this issue. It is hoped that comparative research into the differences between groups using a methodological tool intended for in-depth examination of attitudes will help deepen and expand our understanding.

### Methods

The research described in this article used metaphor analysis in a qualitative, phenomenological study investigating interviewees' perceptions and experiences of education (Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Maykut and Morehouse 1997; Shkedi 2005, 2011). In his discussion of data collection by means of metaphors, Schmitt (2005) suggested several guidelines. He claimed that the qualitative method of metaphor analysis revealed significant complex structures by converting them into clear structures of thinking patterns. The basic actions in this method include determining the subject for metaphor analysis, preparing the interview, identifying the metaphors, and categorising them into metaphorical concepts or super-categories. In relation to analysing metaphors, Armstrong, Davis, and Paulson (2011) proposed the researcher discuss interpretations with the interviewees in order to ensure a common understanding of the concepts involved.

## *Research population*

The research population comprised 30 mothers, divided into two groups: 15 mothers whose children attended school (Mothers 1–15), and 15 mothers whose children were home educated (Mothers 16–30). The researchers attended meetings of home educators that were held in different regions of Israel. They described the research aims and procedure and invited parents who had children aged 6–12 to participate. Since the home educating community in Israel is small, the participants in these meetings represented most of families that educated their children at home. The participants who attended schools were recruited by contacting parents of children of the relevant ages (6–12 years). Thus, all the mothers had children aged 6–12. The mean number of children per family was 3 ( $SD = 1.08$ ). The mean age of the mothers was 38.80 ( $SD = 4.56$ ). The mean level of education of the mothers was 15.87 years of study ( $SD = 2.05$ ).

In order to examine whether there was a difference between groups of parents who home educated and those who sent their children to schools in level of education, independent-samples  $t$  tests were performed, comparing the education of the mothers whose children attended school with those whose children were home educated. The analysis indicated no significant difference between the two groups in level of education,  $t(28) = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.5$ . A similar test was conducted regarding the age of the mothers; it also revealed no significant difference between the groups  $t(28) = 0.35$ ,  $p > 0.5$ . In addition, the samples were compared in terms of number of children per family; this test also revealed no significant difference between groups,  $t(28) = 1.75$ ,  $p > 0.5$ .

## *Research procedure and instruments*

Interviewers conducted interviews with the mothers who participated in the research. In order to avoid bias, the group of interviewers included women who sent their children to schools and women who home educated; their assignment to participants was random. The interviewers made appointments to interview the mothers at a convenient time. The interviews began with an explanation of the research project and the mothers signing an informed consent form. The interview then proceeded according to predetermined questions.

In order to ensure that the interviewees understood the concept of metaphor, the interviewees gave them a few examples. After this, the mothers whose children attended schools were asked to 'please complete the following sentence using a metaphor: Education in schools is like ...'. The mothers who home educated were asked to 'please complete the following sentence using a metaphor: Home education is like ...'. In accordance with Armstrong, Davis, and Paulson's (2011) method (above), the mothers were then asked to explain why they chose the given metaphor. During our data analysis phase, this explanation helped to ensure that the researchers understood the metaphors and the concepts behind them as the interviewees did. The interviews were recorded and transcribed into a Word file.

## *Data analysis*

Following Schmitt's (2005) method, described earlier, the data analysis consisted of two stages: (a) the interview was reviewed to identify the metaphors used by the interviewees and the reasons they cited for choosing these metaphors; and (b) the metaphors were sorted

into super-categories, each representing a common denominator. These common denominators (or super-categories) were not decided upon a priori, but were obtained from the text itself, (a process of ‘in-vivo’ data analysis). In addition to these two stages, two more steps were taken: (c) the metaphors were divided into those of positive, neutral, and negative significance, respectively. This division was based on the interviewees’ explanations of their metaphors, and on the rest of the interview text; and (d) in keeping with the concept of peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba 1986), each researcher, after dividing the metaphors into super-categories and according to positive, neutral, and negative significance (the interpretive stage of the data analysis) presented his or her analysis to the other researcher for examination. In any case of disagreement, the researchers discussed the matter until it had been resolved to the satisfaction of both. The four stages described here were executed separately for each of the two groups of participants (those who home educated and those whose children attended school). ‘Atlas ti’ software, designed for qualitative data analysis, was used for the data analysis.

Findings

The following are the research findings for each of the two research groups – those who home educated and those whose children attended school – separately. Interviewees’ explanations of their choices were essential to understanding the underlying idea beneath most of the choices of metaphors, and to inform our judgement about whether they were positive, neutral, or negative in nature. Therefore, the metaphors are presented here along with excerpts from the explanations provided by the interviewees (see Table 1).

School education

A total of 17 metaphors were obtained from the 15 interviews: two of the interviewees presented two metaphors each. Three metaphors were judged to be positive in nature, four neutral and ten negative. The metaphors are presented according to their nature (positive, negative, or neutral) and according to the super-categories. The numbers in brackets are the identifiers allocated to the different interviewees.

Table 1. Metaphors mentioned, according to type of education and positive or negative nature.

	School education
	Positive
Preparation for life: bubble, education for life, and framework	
	Neutral
Continuity, continuation, and routine: work and endless work, routine, and tradition	
	Negative
Discipline and structuring: factory and Shelah (pre-military preparation)	
Lack – incomplete: a thin book, an unkempt garden, a mall, and a chick in a box	
Babysitter	
	Home Education
	Positive
Forces of nature: water, sea, river, flower, and light	
A part of life: home birth, life, and a recipe	
Creativity: a palette of colors, drawings, and bread	
Giving, positive emotions: love, kiss, and gift	
Freedom of choice: outside of the box and vacation	

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: Preparation for life.* Three metaphors were associated with this super-category: bubble, education for life, and framework.

Bubble (3): *It's like a bubble because after that, you go out into life ... In the bubble, you learn in a framework; after that you go out into the real world with what you learned.*

Education for life (10): *School education is like ... education for life. Because they teach them arithmetic and geometry and Bible, things that they need later for their entire life.*

Framework (5): *It's like a demanding framework because it prepares them for life in some place in some way, to cope with situations.*

Neutral metaphors. *Super-category: Continuity – Continuation and routine.* Four metaphors were associated with this super-category: work, endless work, routine, and tradition.

Work (7): *It's like you go to work ... from eight to two, I know. From eight to two.*

Endless work (15): *Like endless work because it has no end, it has no end, there's no place in education where you can say, 'I finished'; it's not assignments.*

Routine (10): *School education is like routine because it's something that everyone does and it has to be done and it's good, because routine is good.*

Tradition (14): *Tradition, because that's how it's always been. Tradition.*

Negative metaphors. *Super-category: Discipline and structuring.* Two metaphors were associated with this super-category: factory (mentioned by three interviewees; in order to simplify the presentation, the explanation of one interviewee only is given), and Shelah (a pre-military preparatory programme for high-school students).

Factory (11): *The first thing that comes to mind is a factory, a factory within some system.*

Shelah [pre-military preparation] (2): *Shelah, because from year to year the discipline and education are more intense ... from one year to the next they are given more discipline, more education, they are stricter with them.*

Negative metaphors. *Super-category: A lack, absence of wholeness.* Four metaphors were associated with this super-category: a thin book, an unkempt garden, a mall, and a chick in a box.

A thin book (6): *School education is like a book to which one can actually add very many pages that are missing, but in the meantime, it's a thin book ... Much more – many areas – can be added, and it can be bound like it should be.*

An unkempt garden (7): *School education is like ... you know one can compare it with the world of nature, with plants ... like a garden ... it's true that it's fertilised and cared for, but not enough, because [there's a lack of] budgets, personal attention.*

A mall (9): *School education is like going to a mall, because you see everything and you don't buy everything. Something like that. The lack of deep focus on any discipline comes at the expense of the existing abundance ... it's just scratching the surface.*

A chick in a box (11): *Like putting a chick in a box, because chicks need to run around outside on the grass, and not inside a box and every once in a while, peek out the window at the sun.*



Negative metaphors. *Super-category: Babysitter.* The metaphor of a babysitter was mentioned by two interviewees. To simplify the presentation, the explanation given by only one of the interviewees is presented.

Babysitter (1): *The school framework, in my opinion, has a lot of elements of babysitting, because actually if we are honest and say we want them to know arithmetic and math and English, it might be that we could do this in three intensive months of the year or x number of after-school classes and enable them to learn this and waste the rest of the time on other things. There's no doubt that the six hours every day are more because the parents need to work than because the child has to learn.*

## Home education

A total of 18 metaphors were collected from the home education group. Three interviewees suggested two metaphors each. All the metaphors mentioned were positive in nature. The metaphors are presented according to the super-categories.

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: Forces of nature.* Five metaphors were associated with this super-category (of them, three related to water): water, sea (mentioned by two of the interviewees. To simplify the presentation, the explanation given by only one of the interviewees is presented), river, flower, and light.

Water (16): *It's like water, because ... it enables you to be in a place that flows more with life, that is more correct.*

Sea (23): *Like the sea, because it lets you go where you want to, it's open, and it contains everything. You encounter everything, a range of shapes and colours ... it's an infinite world and quiet, too ... there a lot of life in in; on the other hand, it is totally detached from the outer world. There's a lot of flowing in it, too.*

River (26): *Like a river, because it has something very flowing and you can refresh yourself in it and swim in it and it's something very pleasant.*

Flower (24): *Like a flower, because you can blossom in it.*

Light (29): *The first thing that came into my head was light. The word is also my son's name, and I see a kind of light in it. As though ever since I tasted it, I love it and am attached to it, and I can't see anything else, it's as though it completed the picture of my life.*

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: A part of life.* Three metaphors were associated with this super-category: home birth, life (raised by two interviewees. To simplify the presentation, the explanation given by only one of the interviewees is presented), and recipe.

Home birth (19): *Like a birth at home because that's the right thing to do.*

Life (26): *Like life, because it's a continuum. I told you that we conduct ourselves as a family; we do everything together.*

Recipe (28): *It's like a recipe for life, because you can grow and develop from it in any direction.*

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: Creativity.* Three metaphors were associated with this super-category: a palette of colours, drawing, and bread.

A palette of colours (18): *A palette of colours because they make it possible to create something authentic from them.*



Drawing (16): *Like an abstract drawing, compared, for instance, with a realistic drawing. It's like an abstract drawing because it enables us to draw what we experience inside and not reality as it is.*

Bread (21): *Like bread, because it's basic, because it's tasty, and because it rises.*

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: Giving, positive emotions.* Three metaphors were associated with this super-category: love, kiss, and gift.

Love (17): *Like love, because it is also love.*

Kiss (20): *Like a kiss, because it is love.*

Gift (25): *A gift [because] it's a lot of surprises ... it's a gift to be together with the family.*

Positive metaphors. *Super-category: Freedom of choice.* Two metaphors were associated with this super-category: outside the box and freedom.

Outside the box (18): *Like living outside the box, because it enables a broader range of choices and also looking at the box from the outside.*

Vacation (27): *Like an eternal vacation, because you and not people from the outside determine what you have to do.*

## Discussion

The goal of this research was to examine how parents who home educate understand a 'desirable education'. As a first step, the attitudes of home educating parents towards education were compared with those of parents who sent their children to school. Examination of the metaphors that the participants in the two groups presented revealed that these metaphors could be divided into super-categories and into positive, neutral, and negative metaphors. It is interesting that the mothers whose children attended school presented diverse metaphors, some of which were identified as positive, some neutral, and some negative in nature. Thus, in effect, among the mothers of children who attended school, a balanced picture emerged of their views towards the school, including positive aspects of the preparation and training for life; neutral aspects of continuity, continuation, and routine; and negative aspects associated with too much structure and discipline in the schools, aspects that the schools lacked, and the function of the school as a 'babysitter' for children so that parents could do other things.

The mothers who home educated also presented diverse metaphors (forces of nature, part of life, creativity, giving and positive feelings, and freedom of choice), but unlike the metaphors presented by the mothers who sent their children to school, the view of the mothers who home educated was less balanced and more monotone; all the metaphors that arose were deemed to be positive in nature. No neutral or negative metaphors arose.

One way to explain these findings might be that it reflects a narrow way of thinking and deep conviction among the mothers who home educate. It also demonstrates their belief that their chosen path (of home education), which is not common, was the right choice. Perhaps this difference is because the mothers who sent their children to school did so as part of a broader consensus, and belong to the majority group of parents, whose children attend school. Their action is not a 'contrary' one, and therefore does not need deep conviction. As a result, they could identify positive aspects, but also neutral and negative ones. In contrast, the home educating mothers made a choice that was contrary to the consensus –

not the default of sending one's children to school – and therefore they repeatedly faced challenges associated with this choice (Neuman and Aviram 2003). As a result, they had to be very positive about it, that is, to perceive it as beneficial and correct. These findings may be consistent with those of Lees (2014), who examined the stage at which people choose home education over more conventional options, and found that the choice of home education and processes of religious conversion share many common characteristics.

Focusing on the main research question (what do parents who home educate perceive as desirable education?), examination of the findings indicated that a considerable proportion of the metaphors presented by home educating mothers were associated with a constructivist perspective in general, and a constructivist perspective on learning, in particular. In general, and epistemologically, the constructive perspective posits that the world is composed of constructs related to human consciousness, and there is no such thing as reality that is detached from the subject experiencing and describing it. In the context of pedagogy, it concentrates on flowing, changing, and open-ended processes of personally-tailored learning, in which the student takes an active and significant role in setting the process goals, design, and even evaluation, based on inner motivation and not external imposition. The constructivist perspective also promotes learning processes in which learners engage in solving relevant, authentic problems of daily life, and frequently in self-development and cultivation of the ability to self-direct, such as self-acknowledgement, development of skills in making choices, creativity, originality, and others (Brooks 1993; Cronin 1993; Dever and Hobbs 2000; Larochelle and Bednarz 1998).

The mothers who home educated suggested metaphors that were related to flow and change (such as water, sea, river); associated with the connection of action to daily life (such as home birth as part of daily life and not detached from life and occurring outside of the home, in a maternity ward), with creativity and originality (such as a palette of colours, a drawing), and with choice (such as the freedom to choose). In this respect, the findings of the metaphor analysis support those of previous research that showed that home educating parents have constructivist worldviews (Neuman and Guterman 2016).

Furthermore, some of the metaphors of the mothers whose children attended school were negative, dealing with the shortcomings of the school. It is interesting that these metaphors also relied, in part, on a constructivist approach, focusing on the shortcomings of the education system and conventionalism from a constructivist perspective. For example, they used metaphors of lack of flexibility and creating discipline (necessary when an action is not based on inner motivation, but on external compulsion), of restriction and lack of fit of the learning process to the student (like the chick in a box), and of routine and lack of innovation (such as endless work and tradition). This may indicate that the desire to allow one's child to study in a framework with constructivist characteristics is shared by those who choose home education and some of those who send their children to school. Both groups acknowledged the lack of fit of the education system to learning in the spirit of constructivism, even though each group responded differently through their choices.

In addition to these findings, examination of the metaphors presented in the two groups, also shed light on another possible answer to the main question of this research (What do parents who home educate perceive as desirable education?). Examination of the role of the school and the educational process in the eyes of the interviewees indicated that the metaphors of the mothers who sent their children to school dealt mainly with practical aspects of life, and some referred to the educational process, according to modern

perspectives, as a process of training for life. Examples of this were the metaphors of preparation for life (bubble, education for life, and framework) and of continuation and routine (work, endless work, and tradition). Some of the metaphors used by mothers who sent their children to school (for example, those included in the super-category, 'a lack, absence of wholeness') indicated dissatisfaction with the school system, but this dissatisfaction seemed to have originated mainly in the failure of the school to teach enough subjects, or the 'lack of deep focus on any discipline'. In comparison, the metaphors used by the mothers who home educated did not deal at all with training for life, but focused mainly on experience in the present (such as metaphors associated with feelings, creativity, nature, and freedom). These metaphors are consistent with a postmodern perspective which emphasises the present: on the one hand, they considered school as part of life, and on the other hand, they saw preparation for life as lifelong learning, and not something that should not be limited to the school years (Aviram 2010). Thus, the difference between the groups might be seen in terms of the difference between people who hold modernist and postmodernist perspectives, respectively. In the framework of the modernist perspective, school is considered a process of preparation for life, which ends when the child completes school and is ready to function in the world as an adult; according to a post-modern perspective, the opposite is true.

The research of metaphors presented here contributes to the understanding of what home educating parents consider to be desirable education by highlighting three main issues: First, home education can be seen as a contrary act, involving deep conviction that it is the correct path. In this respect, it might also be similar in some ways to faith and religion. Second, the choice of home education was derived from constructivist views, which were also shared by parents who sent their children to schools but criticised it, and third, this choice derived from postmodern views, which consider learning to be part of life, compared with the modernist perceptions of education as a period of training for life.

Despite the importance of examining how parents perceive home education and school education, the present research also has some limitations. First, because it is preliminary research which examined the metaphors of 30 persons in one country, the present findings should be considered a preliminary basis for further research. In future research, it would be interesting to enlarge the number of participants and to conduct similar studies in different countries, in order to examine the similarities and differences in the metaphors and their meanings. In these studies, it might also be interesting to ask respondents to analyse their metaphors, or to comment on the analysis of their metaphors by the researchers.

Another limitation is that the present research dealt with the attitudes of mothers towards education, but did not examine the attitudes of a very central stakeholder in the education process: the children. In future research, it would be interesting to also ask children to present their own metaphors regarding education and to compare children who attend school with children who are home educated.

Since the main question here was what home educating parents perceived as desirable education, it would be interesting to conduct research that examines this question using two or even three different research methods. A combination of metaphor analysis, direct questions, and observations could help not only to identify attitudes, but also to deduce the parents' views of desirable education from their actual practices. Comparison of the results from these three research methods might help deepen our understanding of the answers to this question. In addition, an examination of metaphors regarding this question in distinct groups of home educating mothers (for example those engaged in structured

and unstructured home education, respectively) might shed additional light on this question.

In spite of the limitations of the research, the research findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the practice of home education, and particularly of the reasons for choosing home education. In the present study, a technique that has not been used often, metaphor analysis, was employed. This enabled a view that is different, and in some ways deeper than that obtained using more common self-report measures. In addition, the present research compared parents who home educate with parents who send their children to school, enabling a study of similarities and differences in the attitudes of these two groups towards the education process. Indeed, the present research findings reveal differences between the groups, as well as a connection of the practice of home education to broader processes in education and in society. At a time of crisis in education in several countries in the Western world, and growing criticism from parents and other stakeholders in education systems, the practice of home education is growing. Accordingly, an in-depth understanding of the practice of home education and its comparison with conventional school education is essential to understanding and shaping the learning processes of the future, as well as informing attitudes towards home education.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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