

# **Exploring adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context**

**A dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work at North-West University**

**FOCUS AREA: AUTHeR**

**STUDY LEADER: Dr Mariette van der Merwe**

**CO-STUDY LEADER: Dr Hannelie Yates**

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**Candidate: E.A. van der Merwe**

**University number: 23290269**

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother-in-law, Miekie van der Merwe, who encouraged me to keep on studying.

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I am very thankful to the following people, without whose support and encouragement this study would not have been possible.

- My husband and children, Schalk, Skalla and Lize-Mari for their love, patience and motivating me to not give up.
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- My aunt Petro Humphries
- Drs Mariette van der Merwe and Hannelie Yates for their guidance and patience throughout this research process.
- All the homeschoolers and their parents who took part in this study.

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Aloïse van der Merwe, declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work. All the sources that were used and quoted from have been acknowledged by means of references. I also declare that this dissertation has not previously been submitted to any university in order to obtain a degree.

Signed:

Aloïse van der Merwe

Research student

North-West University

Student no: 23290269

## LETTER OF PERMISSION

The candidate opted to write an article with the support of her supervisor and co-supervisor. I, the supervisor, declare that the input and effort of Aloïse van der Merwe in writing this article reflects research done by her. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination purposes in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister in Social Work*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. van der Merwe". The letters are cursive and connected.

Dr Mariette van der Merwe

Supervisor

## DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

### Anne Kruger Language Practice

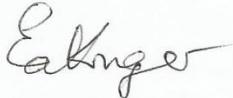
- ❖ 19 Nooitverwacht, 105 Main Street, Paarl 7646
- ❖ tel 072 374 6272 or 021 863 2315
- ❖ [annekruger25@gmail.com](mailto:annekruger25@gmail.com)

---

22 October 2014

#### DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

Elsje Anne Kruger obtained a BA degree (Languages) from the University of Stellenbosch in 1971 and a Higher Education Diploma in 1972, also from SU. She taught English and Afrikaans at various schools and from 1978 to 1983 she lectured in Communication at Paarl College. From the latter half of 1983 she worked as journalist, proof reader and editor at Paarl Post until retirement in 2011. Upon retirement she completed modules in Translation and Editing Methodology at SU and now works from home as freelance editor and proof reader. She is an associate member of the Professional Editors Group (PEG) and SA Translators' Institute (SATI).



Anne Kruger

## **PREFACE**

This dissertation is presented in article format in accordance with the guidelines as set out in the **Manual for Postgraduate Studies 2013** of the North-West University. The technical editing was done within the guidelines and requirements as set out in Chapter 3 of the manual.

The article in Section C will be submitted to the journal *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*. The guidelines for submission to the journal are attached in Annexure 4 in Section D.

## **SUMMARY**

Children's rights to participate in decision-making in matters which impact them directly, is a topic leading to increased research since the 1990s. Today, most countries, including South Africa, have included the right of children to participate and to be heard, in their legislation. In reality, however, there is still a big gap in the implementation of children's right to participation. Home schooling as an alternative to mainstream schooling has also gained momentum in South Africa with an estimated 50 000 – 75 000 children being home schooled. When children are home schooled, the families spend more time together than children who spend 6-8 hours per day attending a local school. Decisions with regard to curriculum, subjects and social interaction which would normally be the responsibility of the school, now become the responsibility of the parents.

Children in the adolescent life phase have an increasing need to gain independence from their parents. In the home school context, the fact that the parents are also the teachers, could lead to increased frustration and conflict between adolescents and parents. In this context it would therefore be important that the adolescents should be allowed to participate in decisions pertaining to their schooling.

This study focused on exploring adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context. This research is important as little is known about the perceptions of adolescents and their parents about participation in the home schooling context.

The research took place in the Western Cape. Eight families, which consisted of 21 participants, were involved in the study. Data saturation determined the sample size. The participants were selected from specific home schooling forums and had to reside in the Western Cape. Semi-structured interviews were held with all the participants and an interview guide was used for consistency. Different themes were identified by using thematic analysis.

The study found that families have different views about the adolescents' role in participation. It varied from adolescents who were allowed to initiate change to adolescents not allowed to participate in decisions at all. In the families where the adolescents were allowed limited or no participation in decision-making, the adolescents indicated that they understood that their parents

had their best interest at heart, although they felt that they (the adolescents) would welcome a bigger say.

It is recommended that home schooling families be made aware of the need of their adolescent children to be allowed to participate more in decision-making in the home schooling context on all levels, ranging from educational matters to social interaction.

*Key words:* Children's rights, Participation, Home schooling, Adolescence, Parent-child relationship

## OPSOMMING

Kinders se deelname in besluitneming in sake wat hulle direk raak is 'n onderwerp wat sedert die 1990's al meer deur navorsers ondersoek word. Die meeste lande, ook Suid Afrika, het die reg van kinders tot deelname en om gehoor te word, by wetgewing ingesluit. In werklikheid is daar egter steeds gapings in terme van kinders se reg tot deelname. Tuisonderwys as alternatiewe vorm van onderwys, is besig om algaande momentum te kry en na raming is daar tans tussen 50 000 en 75 000 kinders in Suid-Afrika wat tuisonderrig ontvang. Families waar kinders tuisonderrig ontvang, spandeer meer tyd by mekaar as wanneer kinders tussen 6 en 8 ure skoolgaan. Besluite rondom aspekte soos die kurrikulum, skoolvakke en sosiale interaksie wat normaalweg die skool se verantwoordelikheid is, word nou die ouer se verantwoordelikheid.

Kinders in die adolessente lewensfase het 'n toenemende behoefte aan onafhanklikheid van hulle ouers. In die tuisonderrig-konteks kan die feit dat die ouers ook die onderwysers is, toenemende konflik en frustrasie tussen ouers en kinders veroorsaak. In hierdie konteks sal dit daarom belangrik wees dat kinders aktief deelneem in besluite wat hul skoling raak.

Die fokus van hierdie studie was om kinders se deelname in besluitneming in die tuisonderrig-konteks te ondersoek. Die navorsing is belangrik aangesien daar min inligting beskikbaar is in verband met die persepsies van ouers en kinders met betrekking tot deelname in die tuisonderrig-konteks.

Die navorsing het plaasgevind in die Wes-Kaap. Agt gesinne bestaande uit 21 deelnemers is by die studie betrek. Dataversadiging het die steekproef-grootte bepaal. Die deelnemers is gekies uit spesifieke tuisonderrig forums en moes in die Wes-Kaap woonagtig wees. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is met al die deelnemers gevoer en 'n onderhoudskedule is gebruik ten einde eenvormigheid te verseker. Tematiese analise is gebruik om die verskillende temas te identifiseer.

Die studie het getoon dat die gesinne verskillende sienings gehad het oor die kinders se rol in deelname. Dit het gewissel van ouers wat hul kinders toegelaat het om veranderinge te inisieer tot gesinne waar die kinders glad nie deelgeneem het in die besluitnemingsproses nie. In die gesinne waar die kinders beperkte of geen deelname in besluitneming gehad het nie, het die

kinders aangedui dat hulle verstaan dat hulle ouers in hul beste belang optree, maar dat hulle (die kinders) tog 'n groter sê sou verwelkom het.

Daar word aanbeveel dat gesinne wat tuis onderrig, bewus gemaak word van die behoeftes van adolessente kinders om toegelaat te word om meer deel te neem in besluitneming op alle vlakke van tuisonderrig, van opvoedkundige sake tot sosiale interaksie.

*Sleutelwoorde:* Kinderregte, Deelname, Tuisonderrig, Adolessensie, Ouer-kind verhouding

## **SECTION A**

### **PART 1 ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The idea for a research topic is often found in practice, theory, previous research or the personal interest of the researcher (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:82; Mouton, 2001:40; Jansen, 2010:5). The research topic of this study was stimulated by all of the above factors, including a personal interest of the researcher.

As a social worker in private practice, the researcher found that some home schooled children were frustrated because they verbalised that they were not allowed to be as independent as some of their peers who were in public schools. Words they used to describe their frustrations were often “feeling suffocated”, “overprotected” and “mistrusted”. Questions arose concerning how and to what extent adolescents participate in decision-making processes in the home schooling context.

The researcher has been a home schooling parent for the past six years. As a member of various home schooling forums, the researcher became aware of a recurring theme. Parents of children in the adolescent phase started asking for advice and support, as they had increased difficulty of feeling in control of both the educational aspects of home schooling and of their children’s behaviour in general. These observations led the researcher to the topic of exploring the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home schooling context by looking at the experiences of both the parents and children.

A literature review was done about children’s participation as a children’s right as well as the growing phenomenon of home schooling, including the reasons. According to Viviers and Lombard (2013:7), the participation of children as a children’s right has become an increasingly prominent issue on both the international and national front. The fact that most countries have ratified the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) shows that governments are, in theory, aware of the importance of acknowledging the rights of children. The two main ideas expressed when looking at the rights of children, are firstly that children are vulnerable and should be protected, but secondly that they are capable of expressing their thoughts and ideas, as well as having a say in matters which directly affect them. Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) expresses clearly the right of the child to have a voice as follows: “States

Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (UNCRC, 1989; Dillen, 2008:51).

In South Africa, the Children’s Act (38 of 2005) echoes the above sentiment when it specifically states the following: “Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child has the right to participate in an appropriate way and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration”. When this is read together with the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and the Bill of Rights, children should be made aware that they have the freedom of choice, which includes freedom of belief, religion, political views, freedom of thoughts and expression and the right to access information and the right to privacy.

The Children’s Act of South Africa (Act38 of 2005) “requires anyone holding parental rights and responsibilities to consult children before taking major decisions that affect the child’s education, e.g. changing schools.” This statutory requirement is also applicable to home schooling. Parents and teachers often misunderstand the right of children to participate in decision-making. They see these rights as a way of their “power” as parents being taken away from them and the child given the power to have all the say. In this research the concept of participation refers to the right of children to be heard/listened to by adults. The fact that they are being listened to does not mean that the final decision will be made by the children, but rather that they are to be seen as key stakeholders in decisions made in their best interest (Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:245).

On both local and international levels, a child is generally defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children’s Act 38 of 2005:22; UNCRC, 1989:2). In developmental psychology this age range is broadly broken down into phases such as infancy; childhood and adolescence. In literature there is no standard definition of an adolescent and although the age range of 10 to 19 is often used as a criteria, other factors such as physical, cognitive and social development are also used to describe this developmental stage (American Psychological Association, 2002:1; World Health Organization, 2006:B-11). Adolescent children between 13 and 18 years are in the age group where there is a transition between primary school and high school. It is also the

period where children need to start making subject choices which will in turn impact their study and career choices.

Identity formation and the establishment of identity are crucial in adolescent development. One of the ways in which adolescents establish their identity is by separating themselves from their parents. Although their thought processes are more formal and complex, there are still similarities with the previous developmental stage in terms of egocentricity which often lead to conflicts with others, especially authority figures (Hook, 2009:297; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991:52).

It is estimated that there are between 50 000 and 75 000 children in South Africa that are being home schooled. Exact figures are not available, as many parents choose not to register with the Department of Education (Pestalozzi Trust, 2012; Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys, 2012). The steady increase in home schooled children can be attributed to various factors (Eastern Cape Homeschooling Association (ECHSA, 2012); Pestalozzi Trust, 2012; Association for homeschooling, 2012), including the following

- The state of education in South Africa is seen as chaotic with constant curriculum and syllabus changes which lead to a lowered standard of education;
- Parents are unhappy with the political and/or religious content of syllabuses;
- Safety in schools cannot be guaranteed (includes physical violence as well as emotional bullying);
- Too many children per class and not enough individual attention;
- No schools nearby, e.g. some farms are isolated and far from urban areas, and parents do not want to send their children to hostels;
- Special needs of children are not catered for in mainstream schools.

While some parents home school their children from Grade 1, other children are taken out of school to be home schooled when the parents and/or the children become unhappy with the formal education system. The children who are home schooled from Grade 1 typically do not have any choice in the matter, as they are considered too young to make an informed choice. Ansell (2005:234) is of the opinion that children should have the right to express their opinion

about matters at any age, but the weight given to their views will be a reflection of their ability to understand the particular situation. If children ask to be taken out of school to be home schooled, parents will sometimes listen to the reasons and then either agree that it would be in the best interest of their children or they decide that even though there are valid points, they are not in the position to home school their children (Kunzman, 2012:84; Moran, 2011:1081).

When parents become unhappy with the formal schooling system, one of two things usually happens. They will discuss the issue with their children and if the children are unhappy with the idea of being home schooled, they will look for other alternatives such as private schooling or the use of tutors. The other scenario is that parents inform their children of their decision to take them out of school to be home schooled whether the children agree with the decision or not. This unilateral approach can be problematic especially when the children are adolescents, because their peer group is playing an important role in their social development at this stage in their lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:727; Brynard, 2007:91; Hook, 2009:297; Moran, 2011:1079).

Parents who are authoritarian in their parenting style often refuse to even contemplate the idea of allowing their children to participate in any decisions, even when taking a decision about schooling which will not only have an effect on the children at the present stage, but also with regard to their future course of study and career preparation (Ansell, 2005:228,236; Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:235). It is therefore important that the right of children to participate should not be seen as the loss of parental rights. The emphasis should always be on the protection of relationships (Melton, 2005:646).

In the scientific fields of psychology, social work, education and child and youth studies, there are many articles on home schooling and the rights of parents to home school their children (Blokhuys, 2010:199; Cooper, 2007:110; De Waal, 2000:1; De Waal & Theron, 2003:144; Glanzer, 2008:1; Kunzman, 2009:311; Ray, 2000:272; Reich, 2002:56). No research was found on the right of children to participate in the context of home schooling. Articles were found on home schooling as an alternative form of education and the various reasons why parents chose to home school (Green, 2007:264; Hill, 2000:20; Meighan, 1995:275; Merry & Howell, 2009:363; Winstanley, 2009:347). None of these articles focused on the role, if any, that the children

played in the decision to home school, or their participation in the home schooling context. Some articles were found that focused on socialisation and academic issues (Bester, 2002:38; Collom, 2005:307; Medlin, 2000:107; Ray, 2000:71; Rothermel, 2004:273). Research on the perceptions of home schoolers about various home school related topics and on the dual role of parents as a parent and teacher are also available (Clery, 1998:1; Lois, 2010:421; McDowell, 2000:87; Mills, 2009:vi; Oosthuizen, 2005:3; Taylor, 1992:23). The researcher has, up to date, not found any research that explores the views of parents and their children with regard to participation in decision-making in the home schooling context.

The problem that this study addressed is the knowledge gap that exists in terms of how adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context is viewed by home schooling families. This study can be seen as a contribution from Social Work for the enhancement of a supportive environment for children's participation and the parent-child relationship in the home schooling context.

Based on the above problem formulation, the formulated research question was: How do adolescents participate in decision-making in the home school context?

Sub-questions:

How do adolescents view their participation in decision-making in the home schooling context?

How do parents view their adolescent children's participation in decision-making in the home schooling context?

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Aim**

The aim of the research was to qualitatively, through the use of a case study design, explore and describe the views of home schooled adolescents and their parents on the children's right to participate in decision-making within the home schooling context. Western Cape home schooled adolescents and their parents were included in the research.

## **2.2 Objectives**

- To explore and describe the views of home schooled adolescents on their right to participate in decision-making in the home schooling context.
- To explore and describe the views of parents of home schooled adolescents about their children's right to participate in decision-making in the home schooling context.

## **3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT**

According to national and international law, children have the right to participate. This study aimed to explore and describe how adolescents participate in decision-making in the home school context. The views of the parents and adolescents were taken into account by listening to their views of participation by the adolescents in decision-making. The extent of how the views of parents and adolescents differ or agree was also taken into account. Guidelines, where the participation of the adolescent in the home schooling context is encouraged, could be formulated to enhance the parent-child relationship.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Literature review**

The literature review provides the broad context of the study and clarifies the scope of the research. Both historically relevant literature and current research literature were considered by the researcher to demonstrate the significance of the research and to identify gaps which exist in current literature (Boote & Beile, 2005:4; Fouché & Delport, 2011:109; Fox & Bayat, 2007:36).

Resources that were used included text books, journal articles and electronic search engines. The search engines were available through the NWU library services:EBSCOhost, A to Z Journal List, Google Scholar, JStor, Scopus, and Sage Publications. The following elements have been included in the literature review:

- The concept of the right of children to participate
- Charters on the Right of the Child, relevant legislation, policy documents
- The critical aspects that may influence relationships between parents and adolescents
- Adolescence and home schooling

## **4.2. Research design**

In this research study the case study design was chosen because the researcher wanted to know **how** home schooled adolescents participate in decision-making in the home schooling context. Yin (2009:4) stated that a case study should be used when the researcher has “how” and “why” questions to be answered. Creswell (2013:98) is of the opinion that the case should be a bounded system which means that it can be described in terms of specific parameters with the case being an individual, a group or community.

The data gathered will enable a rich understanding about participation in the home schooling context which will help fill the gap that has been identified in the literature. This research design works especially well in the exploration of family interaction because the researcher interprets the meaning that people give to their experiences (Ambert *et al.*, 1995:880; De Vos *et.al*, 2011:320; Nieuwenhuis, 2010:76). The case study will be “... an in-depth study of one type of phenomenon” (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321; Mills, 2009:7; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:75; Sarantakos, 2013:218; Yin, 2009:4), in this case the participation in decision-making of adolescents in the context of home schooling. It is not the aim of this research to generalise findings as it is qualitative research with a case study design. In this regard Sarantakos (2013:218) indicate that one of the weaknesses of case studies is that data generated lack breadth, even though they have depth. The research was mainly applied as it seeks to inform practice (Fox & Bayat, 2007:10; Sarantakos, 2013:15).

## **4.3 Research method**

### *4.3.1 Sampling*

In purposive or judgment sampling, as a form of non-probability sampling (Sarantakos, 2013:177) the researcher selects her sample from the population based on her knowledge of that population. The researcher therefore selected participants who according to her judgment were relevant to the research and who were thought to be the most useful in gaining the information needed for the study (Rubin & Babbie, 2011:447; Sarantakos, 2013:177; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:69). In this study purposive sampling was used because a very specific population, namely home schooled adolescents and their parents, were the target group. The population is the home schooling community in the Western Cape who belongs to one of the

following home schooling forums: Durbanville homeschoolers; Cape Home Ed; Eastern Cape Homeschooling Association; Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys; HS Kitchen Table; or CIE at home.

The number of participants was not decided on beforehand. Greeff (2011:350) describes two criteria whereby the researcher will know that she has “enough” participants, namely sufficiency and saturation of information. The number of participants should be sufficient so that people outside the sample will still be able to find some degree of association with the experiences of the sample. Saturation is when no new information is forthcoming. In this research, data saturation had been reached after interviewing 8 families, consisting of 21 participants, because although there were recurring themes, no new information came to light.

The following criteria were thus required for participation in the research:

- The children had to fall in the 13-18 year age group.
- The parents of the participants had to be the primary caregivers and one of the parents needed to be directly involved in the home schooling of the child.
- Any home schooling family could participate irrespective of race, gender, language or religion.
- The home schoolers had to live in the Western Cape Province.

## **4.4 Data collection**

### *4.4.1 Method of data collection*

One-on-one semi-structured interviews were used in this study. These interviews enabled the researcher to get a detailed account of the views of participants, while still allowing the flexibility needed to follow up on any new information which might lead to even more in-depth knowledge of the situation. An interview guide was developed to ensure that the questions were asked in a logical order and that the most sensitive topics were left until later in the interview (Greeff, 2011:352). According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:166) an interview guide with a list of broad themes and topics will direct the semi-structured interview. Probing can also be used to clarify vague answers.

The interviews were tape-recorded (with the permission of the participants) and then transcribed. Field notes were also used. Before the interview guide was used, the researcher collected the biographical data of the participants (see Annexure A) to give a general overview of the participants' ages and number of years that they were home schooled. The interview guide is attached as Annexure B.

#### *4.4.2 Procedures*

Greeff (2011:349) refers to Seidman who urged researchers to make use of pilot interviews. This means that the researcher will conduct interviews with a few people who adhere to the criteria for inclusion in the study as suggested by Padgett (2008:106) and Sarantakos (2013:265). It will make the researcher aware of any flaws in the way the questions are formulated which may lead to one word answers and thus not giving enough information, or which may not lead to the in-depth communication of personal experience that is needed for the study. It will also indicate whether new topics should be introduced to the interview guide. The pilot interviews ensured that the researcher was comfortable with the interview guide and with the whole interviewing process. The interview guide has been pilot tested on three families, who were all home schooling and who fit the criteria for inclusion to the study as set out above.

The following procedures have been used:

- The researcher made initial contact with the participants via the various home schooling forums. The main aim of the research had been communicated via email, and the families were invited to participate in the research.
- Individual arrangements were then made with the families who showed a willingness to participate in the study.
- Pilot interviews were conducted with three families. In two families, the mothers and children were interviewed while in a third family, only the two children were interviewed.
- The interviews were conducted via Skype (2 pilot studies); telephonically (follow-up interview with one family) or in person (1 pilot study and 21 interviews with the 8 participating families).

- Field notes were made during the interviews and at the end of the interviews. These notes were discussed with the participants. This ensured that the researcher did not misunderstand the answers of the participants and also reassured the participants that their views were not taken out of context.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:99), data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process which means that data collection, processing, analysing and reporting are interlinked and not a process that follows specific steps. It is often necessary to go back to the participants to either obtain more information; verify that the information was correctly understood, or to get feedback from the participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2011:159).

Thematic analysis as described by Clarke and Braun (2013:120) was used to identify themes (Annexure 3 and Table 2 in Section D). The researcher named or coded each incident after which similar incidents were compared and then organised into categories. This enabled the researcher to identify patterns and themes which emerged from the interviews, which were then linked to the aims and objectives of the study (Sheridan *et al.*, 2010:148). Transcribed interviews and field notes were also used to discover themes and patterns but this was raw data and needed to be interpreted by the researcher (Pope *et al.*, 2000:114).

#### **4.6 Ethical aspects**

Ethical aspects form an important part of the research study. These aspects not only protect the participants against possible harm from participating in a social experiment, but also researchers and their institutions (Alderson & Morrow, 2011:3). This research has been registered under the project: Developing sustainable support to enhance quality of life and well-being for children, youth and families in South Africa: a trans-disciplinary approach. The ethics number is NWU-00060-12-A1. The researcher also adhered to the SACSSP Code of Ethics regulating professional conduct of social workers.

The following guidelines for research ethics have been followed:

- Avoidance of harm: The most basic rule of social research ethics is that no harm, whether physical or emotional, may come to the participants. It is therefore important

that the researcher should weigh the possible risks against the good that will come out of the research, but at all times remember that she is obligated to protect the participants (Strydom, 2011:115). As this study explored the views of home schoolers and their parents, the emotional aspects had to be handled sensitively. The researcher explained the concepts in such a way that the participants had a clear understanding of what they needed to share, and they understood that they could stop or withdraw if they felt uncomfortable.

- Voluntary participation: Babbie (quoted by Strydom, 2010:116) says that participation should always be voluntary, although it is not always a simple matter.
- Informed consent: Participants should be fully informed about the research project before asking them to take part. According to Oliver (2012:28) “fully informed” means that subjects should be given all the information that they would need to make a decision on their participation or non-participation. In this research the researcher firstly asked the forum moderators for permission to publish the details of the research project on the forums. The families were then able to contact the researcher if they were willing to participate. The researcher also attended the monthly home school meeting in her immediate vicinity and asked permission beforehand to have a short meeting with the attending parents to explain the research project. An informed consent form (Annexure 1 in Section D) was given to the participants and the interview process was explained. The participants were given the opportunity to read through the form and clarify any uncertainties. Parents were given the choice of allowing their children to participate or not. They had adequate time to decide as they could contact the researcher later.
- Deception of participants: Deception could be either a deliberate misrepresentation of facts, misleading of participants or withholding of information from participants. (Strydom, 2011:118). Sometimes by telling people too much about what is being studied, the results could be contaminated because people might act differently because they know what the researcher is looking for. In such a case it might be possible to give enough detail so that they can give informed consent, but not so much as to contaminate the results. Because this research explored the views of participants on the participation of the adolescents in the home schooling context, it was stressed that there were no right or wrong answers and the main reason was to gather information. Participants were not

misled in any way. Strydom (2011:119) makes a distinction between deliberate deception and deception of which the researcher is unaware and which only develops later. It is the responsibility of the researcher to then inform the participants of the new developments either immediately, or if that is not possible, during the debriefing interview. The researcher is already a member of her local home schooling group, so in this instance it would be unethical to gather information as a home schooling parent and then use it in the research project without disclosing this fact.

- Privacy/anonymity/confidentiality: Strydom (2011:119) and Alderson and Morrow (2011:31) agree that privacy refers to an individual's right to personal privacy. Privacy can be affected by the use of hidden cameras, one-way mirrors and microphones, and therefore should not be used without the consent of the participants. In this research, the participants' permission was asked to record the interviews.

Anonymity, according to Babbie (2010:67), is when both the readers of the research as well as the researcher herself, is unable to link responses to a specific participant. Sometimes more honest answers are given by participants if they know that no-one is able to identify them. The ethical problem here can be when researchers promise anonymity but secretly mark the questionnaire so as to know who the participant is (Strydom, 2011:120). The researcher had difficulty with anonymity, as the number of participants was limited and even though she used pseudonyms, she could remember the participants. This fact however, made no difference in the use of the information gathered from the participants. Their identities were protected and not reflected in any of the transcripts and research report.

Confidentiality has to do with the way the data about respondents are handled. Babbie (2010:67) says that confidentiality in a research project is when participants and their responses are known to the researcher, but the researcher promises not to make any of the identifiable detail public. Participants should know who will have access to the data, how the data will be stored and what will happen to questionnaires/recordings/videos which may contain their identities/personal detail (Oliver, 2010:83).

Many home schoolers are not registered with the Department of Education, and are therefore wary to take part in activities which could lead to their “exposure”. It was therefore important that they understood that the researcher respected their privacy and that she would take the necessary steps to ensure that their data were kept confidential and anonymous.

- Debriefing of participants: According to Babbie, (2010:70) debriefing is “Interviewing subjects to learn about their experience of participation in the project, especially important if there’s a possibility that they have been damaged by that participation.” Strydom (2011:122) summarises the process of debriefing as follows:
  - Subjects must get an opportunity to work through their experience and the consequences (positive or negative). Through this, researchers are able to minimise any harm that might have been done – assisting can sometimes mean referring for therapy. In this study, the researcher gave the participants an opportunity to give feedback around their experience of the whole interview process directly after the interview. The researcher also gave the participants her contact details, should they wish to contact her should any questions arise.
  - Rectify any misconception which might have arisen, and also give information that developed out of the research which the researcher may not have known from the beginning, but which is essential for the subject to know.
  - Where there were therapeutic benefits, the termination and withdrawal must be handled in a professional and sensitive way.

The last two points regarding debriefing were not really applicable to this study.

- Actions and competence of researchers: Researchers should at all times be honest, competent and skilled enough for the research they wish to undertake. There may never be any misrepresentation of the facts of the research; the self-presentation of the researcher or about any possible risks to the participants. Plagiarism, manipulation or false data are also unacceptable (Strydom, 2011:123). The researcher made sure that she explained all aspects of the research to the participants from the start of the empirical process.

Researchers should be self-aware and strive to develop their own skills and competencies on an on-going basis. They should be aware of anything that might make them subjective in their research, and try to find a way to objectivity; otherwise it might influence the outcome of the research. The researcher herself is a home schooling parent, and had to stay aware of the fact that she could not use her own experience and what is working for her family to try to influence other families. She should also not make judgements in cases where other families differ in the level of the rights to participation they give to their children.

- Publication of the findings: When writing and publishing the research findings, it should contain all the information so that the reading public is able to understand the study. The reports should not be biased toward anyone, and should not be open to misunderstanding and misuse of information. Any problems or shortcomings which could be identified by the researcher and which might have an effect on the results should be described by the researcher. Subjects should be informed about the results (Strydom, 2011:126).

The researcher will give all the families feedback by arranging a group meeting and thereafter also give a report to the various home schooling forums. The article which forms part of this research report will be sent for review to *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*.

While doing this study all data were stored on a password protected computer or locked away. After completion of the study the researcher will give all the raw data to the line manager at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies in Wellington where it will be locked in a safe. A system of record-keeping is in place and the data will be destroyed after five years.

#### **4.7 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is an important issue in both quantitative and qualitative research (Krefting, 1991:215; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:113). There are four factors that researchers should keep in mind to ensure the trustworthiness of their research, namely truth, value or credibility; applicability or transferability; consistency or reliability and neutrality or confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). There are several strategies which could be

followed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Krefting, 1991:217; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:113).

#### *4.7.1 Credibility*

Credibility has to do with the ability of the reader to have confidence in the “truth” of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). In this study the researcher used data from semi-structured interviews to reach conclusions about the views of the adolescents regarding participation in decision-making in the home schooling context. Information was gathered until data saturation which will lend credibility to the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:81,113). While saying this, the researcher was also aware that data saturation is an elusive concept which is prone to subjective interpretation. This is in line with Padgett (2008:172) who refers to the opinion of Morse (1995) that it is easier to reach the conclusion that data saturation has been reached than to prove it. Nevertheless, the researcher did 21 interviews and it was clear that the themes and subthemes have been repeating. Also, in line with Padgett (2008:170) this was a study “... with modest aims.” The aim was not to generalise but to expand on a topic of which little is known.

#### *4.7.2 Transferability*

Transferability is the extent to which the findings can be used in other contexts or with other subjects. In this research, transferability should not be an issue because the case study design is used and research takes place in a bounded system that does not have generalisation as goal (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:115). The goal of the research findings is rather to explore and describe the views of the parents and the adolescents about the children’s right to participate in the home schooling context

#### *4.7.3 Reliability*

A study will be seen as reliable if the same findings are repeated when using the same or similar subjects in the same or similar context. The use of the pilot study and then semi-structured interviews were also a good indication of the reliability of the research, as the same questions in the interview guide have been used every time in order to gain a deeper and richer understanding of the views of the participants.

#### 4.7.4 Neutrality

Neutrality is achieved when the results are solely based on the data collected from the participants and not because of biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). The researcher is aware of this specific factor of trustworthiness because she is a home schooling mother herself and because of this awareness, bracketed any emotional aspects during the research process. The researcher has also asked the participants to verify the data gathered from the interviews by reflecting the information given by them during and after the interview. This ensured that the coded data were correct and not slanted by the researcher's own perspectives or motivation. The researcher also took care when doing the literature study that she did not only include articles which supported the arguments of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:115).

### 5. Choice and structure of research article

The dissertation follows the article format as prescribed by the North-West University. The dissertation consists of the following sections:

- Section A
  - Part I: Orientation and problem statement
  - Part II: Literature review: Adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context
- Section B: Article: Exploring adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context
- Section C: Summary, evaluation, conclusion and recommendations
- Section D: Annexures

*Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* has been identified as a possible journal for submission and Author Guidelines have been attached in Section D, Annexure 4

## **6. Conclusion**

This section gave a broad overview of the research study, by explaining how the topic was chosen; the background of the study and how the literature study has been undertaken. The research process from sampling to data analysis was discussed. The importance of the ethical considerations as well of the trustworthiness of the study was also highlighted. The next section is the literature review where the key terms used in this study will be discussed using classical as well as more current literature.

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## PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context

#### 1. Introduction

The literature review provides an exploratory and descriptive perspective on the participation of children in decision-making in the home schooling context. All the key concepts were reviewed, with the starting point being a description of participation by children. A literature gap was identified with regard to the how home schooled children participate in decisions which affect them in the learning and teaching context in general, but also specifically in the South African context. Literature pertaining to home schooling nationally and internationally was included in the study.

Although the participation of children is to a great extent a human rights issue, the relational aspect cannot be overlooked, because the parent-child relationship and the wellness of the family as a relational unit can be influenced by the participation or non-participation of children. The parent-child relationship can be influenced by parental styles, which for that reason has also been included in the literature study. The children participating in this study, were in the adolescent life stage and literature and theories on this life stage have been included.

#### 2. Participation

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was drafted in 1948 gives recognition to the fact that every human being has certain rights afforded to them because they are human beings. This declaration is seen as the foundation of most of the international laws regarding human rights ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). Many of the articles in the declaration have to do with the fact that human beings have the right to *participation and inclusion i.e.: All people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being* (<http://www.unfpa.org/rights/principles.htm>; <http://www.humanrights.is/>).

In the context of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, (UN, 1989) (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Participation.pdf>), seven of the articles pertain to the participation of children and giving them a voice.

- Article 4: Protection of rights
- Article 12: Respect for the views of a child
- Article 13: Freedom of expression
- Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 15: Freedom of association
- Article 16: Right to privacy
- Article 17: Access to information; mass media

Article 2 stresses the fact that all decisions made should be in the best interest of the child. Article 5 concerns the evolving capacities of the child, namely that adults should provide guidance to a child “in accordance with the child’s evolving capacities” and that the child should be supported as he exercises his rights (Lansdown, 2010:11). Evolving capacities refers to the right of children to be heard on matters that directly concern them. Their views should be considered, although it does not mean that children have the insight and maturity to make decisions on their own (Krappmann, 2010:505; Lansdown, 2010:13). Malone and Hartung (2010: 26) quote a definition of participation by Chalwa (2001) as “a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions.” Furthermore, these authors outline another definition by Hart (1992) namely that participation is a “process of sharing decisions which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured.”

In South Africa, the Children’s Act (Act 38 of 2005) states in Section 10: “ Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child has the right to participate in an appropriate way and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration.” Jamieson *et al.* (2011) note that this act is the only one nationally and internationally that uses the specific reference to “the right to participate” of children.

## 2.1 Levels of participation

Literature distinguishes between two ways in which children are viewed namely the “caretaker perspective” which sees children as vulnerable and therefore in need of protection and the “child

liberator perspective” which sees children as agents of change who are capable of voicing their opinions and capable of making decisions on their own (Ansell, 2005:225, Dillen, 2006:237). These two perspectives have a direct influence on how the participatory rights of children are viewed.

When adults have the caretaker perspective on children, they have the view that children are mainly vulnerable, and are seen as a group who needs to be protected and who are not capable of taking part in decision-making (Driskill *et al.*, 2010:275; Desmet, 2012:15). According to Arce (2012:379) these sentiments about children are not necessarily based on “facts” that children are not capable of making decisions, but based on preconceived ideas, images and projections of children by adults. This sentiment is echoed by Malone and Hartung (2012:26) who explain further that adults often think that children are not capable of initiating their own projects based on their needs, but always need adults to initiate something for them.

The child liberator perspective views children as having the capabilities to actively take part in decisions which affect them. This perspective allows for children to be given self-determination and to have a choice (Dillen, 2006:239). This sentiment often makes adults uncomfortable as they fear that this means that the rights of their children override their rights as parents (Melton, 2005:664).

Both these perspectives have the best interest of the child at heart. When adults realise that there is a place and time for both of these sentiments, a balance could be found which will both protect the child and allow active participation in decision-making (Ansell, 2005:228; Dillen, 2006:239).

Four levels of participation in decision-making are identified by Alderson and Montgomery in Lansdown (2010:13) while a fifth level described by Shier (2001) was added by Layland (2009:388)

- to be informed and listened to, which implies that adults should listen to what children want to say, although it does not mean that they have to accept or implement what the child says (Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:245).
- to be supported in expressing an informed view

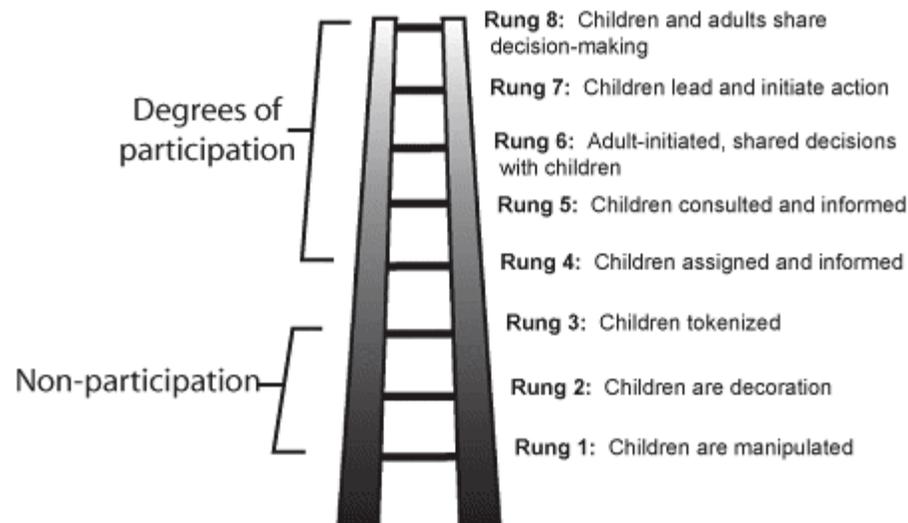
- to have the view taken into account
- to be the main or joint decision-maker
- to share power and responsibility

Participation of children is thus seen as the right that children have to take part in the decision-making process as the main or joint decision maker, should they have the capacity to do so. Linked to this, Lansdown (2010:20) identifies three levels of children's participation which can be used to assess the extent to which the child is involved in decision-making. All these levels, as described below fulfill a role, as participation takes place in different contexts and on different levels. It is sometimes necessary for example, to start on a consultative level and the issue may then evolve and end in child-led participation as the child involved, gains more insight, knowledge and confidence.

- Consultative participation is led by the adult, but the child may express his view because the adult recognises that the child has some expertise about the topic. However, the child does not participate actively in the decision-making process.
- Collaborative participation takes place where there is active interaction between the adult and the child. The child has a more active role in this decision-making process. In this type of participation, children are placed in the position where they can influence not only the process, but also the outcome of the given topic. Peer education and counselling are examples of this type of participation.
- Child-led participation is where children are given the opportunity to identify the problems to be solved as well as allowing them to search for alternatives or solutions and implementing actions necessary for the change. Children can either initiate the action as an individual or as a group. In this instance the adults will only act as facilitators by advising and supporting the children, as well as giving them information needed.

## 2.2 Ladder of participation

Linked to the levels of participation, Mniki and Rosa (2013:188) used Hart's ladder of participation which illustrated different ways in which children can participate in decision-making. There are 8 rungs on the ladder but only the top five imply different degrees of participation which will depend on children and the context in which their involvement takes place. The bottom three rungs are not seen as participation and are not promoted.



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

### **Figure 1: Hart's Ladder of participation**

Malone and Hartung (2010:28) express criticism against this model, namely that the ladder could be wrongly interpreted as if the top rung represents the highest form of participation. Even Hart himself has said that it is necessary to move beyond the ladder because there are valid criticisms against the wide use of the model, such as cultural bias, as it was developed from his work in the UK and USA. The ladder was mainly used to describe children's participation in projects and programs and not necessarily to describe the everyday, informal decision-making of children (Hart, 2008:20). These developments all contribute to the importance of participation in this life stage, as it is directly linked to the "evolving capacities" of the child as well as the natural move toward more independence from the adult caregivers.

### 3. Adolescent participation

Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood with many different developmental tasks which have to be completed during this phase. It is for this reason that the researcher included the developmental theories of Erikson (Smits *et al.* 2008:152; Steinberg, 2001:3), Piaget (Elisha & Ruck, 2012:424; Mills, 2009:35) and Bronfenbrenner (Rosa & Tudge, 2013:243; Hombrados-Mendieta, 2012:646; Smith, 2007:148). Growth spurts are common in the adolescent phase and the physical developments that take place and by which children are transformed into adults, are often referred to as puberty. The physical changes which take place during puberty are due to hormonal changes – the primary (growth of the reproductive organs) and secondary sexual characteristics (visible changes such as facial hair in boys and breast development in girls) being the most prominent changes which take place (Keenan & Evans, 2009:96; Ruffin, 2009:1; Stang & Story, 2005:1).

On a cognitive level, adolescents operate on a formal operations level, according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development. This means that their ability to think abstractly increases and with it the ability to think and plan ahead. This is also the stage where the deductive reasoning is developed. Adolescents are also able to think inductively where specific topics can be changed to broad generalisations. Put together, this ability to think abstractly and reason inductively and deductively, often leads to conflict with parents and other authority figures (Cockcroft, 2009:338; Stang & Story, 2005:7).

Elkind (1967:1029) describes a term which he calls adolescent egocentrism. This means that while the adolescent is able to think for himself, he is also able to conceptualise the thoughts of others around him. The self-absorption of adolescents leads them to think that other people's thoughts are also centered on them and this leads to the egocentric thoughts which lead to egocentric behaviour.

Niegowski, Evans and Epstein (2010:2) identified three thought processes by using Elkind's term of adolescent egocentrism, namely

- *Personal fable* where adolescents believe they are so unique that no-one has ever experienced what they experience and they often feel misunderstood.

- *Imaginary audience* where adolescents are of the opinion that everyone is looking at them and what they do. The word “audience” is used to describe the notion of adolescents that they are the centre of attention and “imaginary” because in most cases everyone will not be looking at the adolescent.
- *Risk taking behaviour* increases because adolescents typically believe that they are invulnerable and that bad things will not happen to them, because of the personal fable where they are confident in their uniqueness. Although this risk taking can lead to dangerous actions, there is a positive side where adolescents are motivated to experiment with new situations. These new experiences will allow them to become more independent (Cockcroft, 2009:339)

The cognitive and emotional changes that take place in adolescence, have a direct link to the evolving capacities of participation in decision-making. Adolescence falls into Erikson’s Stage 5 of psychosocial development. This is the stage of identity vs. role confusion. Identity formation and the establishment of identity are important tasks which have to be mastered in this stage among others, by decision-making about matters such as careers and relationships. It is in this stage that the different aspects of the self needs to come together (Bester, 2007:177; Graf, 2008:58; Hook, 2009:297). Other important decisions that have to be made in this stage are career choices, choice of a partner and awareness of their role in society. An inability to fulfill the aforementioned tasks can lead to role confusion and have a negative impact on the transition into adulthood (Hook, 2009:298). Home schoolers would therefore have to be given opportunities to participate in decision-making, especially as they do not participate in the same activities as their peers in mainstream schools.

In adolescence, the peer group relationships play an increasingly important role. Although the number of friends will typically decrease during the adolescent period, the peer relationships will become deeper and become a main source of social support. The relationships will become increasingly intimate as dating becomes an important part of adolescent relationships. Friendships in adolescence revolve around a better understanding of the self, and therefore there will be increased self-disclosure.

Dunphy (1963) in Keenan and Evans (2009:278) states that there are two primary structures in the life of an adolescent, namely the crowd and the clique. While the crowd is groups of

individuals who are grouped together because of stereotypes, e.g. nerds (academically-oriented learners) and jocks (athletes) etc., cliques are close-knit groups of friends (Geldenhuys, 2010:2; Young *et al.*, 2014:139). The cliques will be between three and nine people and are bound together because of common interest and mutual understanding and acceptance. One negative aspect which can occur at this stage is over identification with the group that the adolescent is a part of, which can hinder the stability of the own identity (Hook, 2009:298).

In home schooling, the “crowd” can be seen as the community of home schoolers. In families where the child had no participatory rights in the decision to home school, it can lead to relational difficulties between them and their parents, because they had not had a choice in how they were viewed by their peers (Medlin, 2000:111).

#### **4. Bronfenbrenner’s theory of human development**

Bronfenbrenner’s theory of human development started out as an ecological model (1973-1979) which looked at the effect the environment had on development. He identified four systems which he called the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:8; Rosa & Tudge, 2013:246). During the period 1980-1993, Bronfenbrenner added a fifth system, namely the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:724; Mills, 2009:33). This theory does not centre solely on the development which takes place in the individual, but also on the environmental development. It focuses on the interaction between the individual and the environment and the further belief that what happens in one of the units has a ripple effect on the other unit and vice versa (Hook, 2009:503).

In 1998, Bronfenbrenner described “proximal processes” in the bioecological model as follows: “A proximal process involves a transfer of energy between the developing human being and the persons, objects, and symbols in the immediate environment. The transfer may be in either direction or both, that is, from the developing person to features of the environment, from the features of the environment to the developing person, or in both directions, separately or simultaneously” (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000:118). The Process-Person-Context-Time model (PPCT) was seen as being the “theory’s appropriate design” Each of these aspects will be discussed below.

- Proximal process – Human development takes place over an individual’s entire lifespan with the interaction between the individual and environment becoming gradually more complex. The interaction can only be effective if it takes place on a regular basis, for an extended period of time. The more regular and predictable the interaction is, the better the developing individual will respond (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000:118; Rosa & Tudge, 2013:252). In the home school context, it is therefore important that children are allowed to grow more independent, by allowing them to participate in decision-making on a more regular basis, with less parental input, keeping their evolving capacities in mind. It is through this participation that the interaction will become more complex and that will, in turn, ensure ongoing development.
- Rosa and Tudge (2013:253) distinguish between three different person characteristics, namely demand characteristics, resource characteristics and force characteristics.

Demand characteristics refers to characteristics that can either encourage or discourage interaction between the developing individual and the environment, e.g. age, race, gender and physical appearance, as well as other personality traits (Rosa & Tudge, 2013:253; Tudge *et al.*, 2009:6). Children in the home schooling context are often interacting with children in other age groups than their own, because their “classroom” is not divided according to age. This could have a positive influence on their socialisation because they are used to, and comfortable with interaction on all levels.

Resource characteristics has to do with mental, emotional, physical, social and material resources which can either assist or hamper interaction between the individual and the environment (Rosa & Tudge, 2013:253). The families who home school are “different” from families whose children attend mainstream schools. In some instances it could lead to marginalisation because not everyone has a positive view of home schooling.

Force characteristics are characteristics which refer to traits such as temperament, motivation, persistence etc. (Tudge *et al.*, 2009:5). In the home school context it is very possible for siblings to be “equal” with regard to the other characteristics,

but still differ in their motivation or persistence. This could lead to conflict and limited interaction within the home school environment, especially if the parents do not take the children's differences into consideration and do not allow the children to participate in decision-making which meets their specific needs.

- Context refers to the environment in which the developing individual interacts. In earlier works there was a distinction between four systems, namely micro, meso, exo and macro.

The microsystem consists of the developing individuals and the immediate people that will have an influence on them, such as their parents and siblings, other family, teachers and peers. The family is seen as the main environment where development takes place. In the context of this research study the teacher and the parents will be the same. Hook (2009:505) explains that Bronfenbrenner's microsystem is made up out of 3 basic factors, namely the activities, roles and interpersonal relationships which influence the developing individual. The roles refer to the role the individual plays in relation to others around him, such as being someone's son, a learner, friend, etc. These roles are played while taking part in activities within the context of personal relationships with others.

The mesosystem consists of various microsystems which form as the developing individual moves into new settings. Examples would be the school as a whole; the family home as part of a neighbourhood; the immediate family as part of an extended family (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:723; Hook, 2009:506). Bronfenbrenner notes that a change in one of the systems may have an influence on the other systems, e.g. when the child has problems at school it may show up in his behaviour at home and vice versa.

The exosystem refers to the setting or organisation which will have an effect on the developing individual, although he is not immediately involved in that setting. Examples here are the adolescent's parent's workplace, a sibling's class or social clubs (where people come together because of a common interest or hobby e.g. book club.)

The macrosystem is the level which consists of the economic, cultural, legal, educational, political and health systems. It is within this level that a society's values, laws and customs are located (Hook, 2009:507).

- Time in this model, is also divided into sub-categories, namely micro time, macro time and meso time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013:254; Tudge *et al.*, 2009:6). Micro time is the time spent on a specific activity; meso time refers to the frequency and consistency of the interactions and macro time is what used to be called chronotime (Rosa & Tudge, 2013:254). The chronosystem was included in Bronfenbrenner's model because of the effect that time has on all the developmental systems (Hook, 2009:507).

A quote of Smith (2007:148) renders support for the inclusion of Bronfenbrenner's theory in this study: "As children gain experience and their skills and competence grow, they become more able to initiate and share responsibility". This is true for all levels of Bronfenbrenner's system, although in the home schooling context, the home and school are one.

## **5. Home schooling**

Home schooling or home education is described as an alternative to traditional schooling where a learner is educated by one or both his parents in the family home (Allan & Jackson, 2010:55; Carson, 2009:1; Moran, 2011:1063). According to the SA Schools Act of 1996 (Act 51 of 1996), home schooling is a legal alternative to public education, provided that this choice is in the best interest of the child and that the education received is not of a lower standard than that of traditional schools. It is estimated that there are 100 000 South African families who are currently home schooling (South African Homeschool curriculum, 2012) but the figures could be higher as 90% of home schooling families choose not to register with the Department of Education (Association for Homeschooling, 2012). The main reason parents have for not registering is mainly because of unlawful interference from provincial education departments (Home School Legal defense association).

### **5.1 Reasons for homeschooling**

The reasons why families choose to homeschool vary, but according to Aasen (2010:12) the three main reasons are academic reasons, the school environment and religious or moral reasons.

In a study by Anthony and Burroughs (2010:4) a fourth main reason was identified, namely family needs. In the South African context similar reasons are some of the motivating factors which lead families to home schooling as an alternative to public schooling (Mills:2009:25).

### *5.1.1 Academic reason*

According to Selebalo (2012, Institute for Security Studies) the following results were revealed when the Department of Basic Education released the Annual National Assessments of 2011:

- Grade 3 learners scored an average of 35% in literacy and 28% in numeracy tests
- Grade 6 learners' scores were 28% in languages and 30% in mathematics
- The National Planning Commission (NPC) diagnostic overview emphasised that while the pass rate for Matric in 2010 was 67.8%, it does not show the fact that only 15% of those learners achieved an average of 40% or more.
- One million learners exit the school system annually – 65% without a Grade 12 certificate.

Added to the above, research indicates that classes are too big and children are not given the individual attention that home schooling parents can give their children. Parents also indicate that because of the class sizes, discipline is often lacking and there is also little room for individual development. In theory, schooling is portrayed to be inclusive, but in practice, very little room exists for special needs of children (Aasen, 2010:13; Bester, 2002:28; Eastern Cape Homeschooling Association (ECHSA, 2012); Pestalozzi Trust, 2012; Association for homeschooling, 2012).

### *5.1.2 School environment*

The impact of the school environment on their children's physical as well as emotional well-being is often a motivational factor in the parents' decision to home school (Spiegler, 2010:62; Allan & Jackson, 2011:64). In this regard, Medlin (2000:109) said that parents were of the opinion that peer pressure and the authoritarian environment in schools have a negative effect on their children and their self-esteem.

In South African schools more serious incidences of violence are on the increase and the local newspapers are full of reports of children being hurt and killed by fellow classmates (City Press 2014. See Annexure 5). According to Claire O'Connell, Conference Director of African Education Week, the school violence is not confined to only attacks of fellow learners on one another, but also of learners against teachers and teachers against learners. She said that 40% of South African children are victims of violence in schools and that one fifth of all sexual assaults against children take place in school (Behle & Sehlapelo, 2014:101).

### *5.1.3 Religious or moral reasons*

Some parents are not happy with the religious content or the lack thereof in public schools. An aspect which goes hand in hand with the religious aspect is that of morals (Aasen, 2010:12; Olsen, 2008:1830). Many parents, interviewed by researchers, stated that it is their responsibility to create an environment where they can teach their children the morals and values of their choice (Carson, 2009:23; Lake, 2011:680). They indicated that they want to make the decision as to what their children should be exposed to. As teachers play an important role in the lives of learners, parents are sometimes not comfortable when the teachers' values differ from those the children are taught at home, as it might lead to confusion (Morton, 2010:51).

### *5.1.4 Family needs*

The decision to homeschool can also include practical reasons, such as the home being in an isolated area with no schools nearby and the unwillingness to send children to hostels. Sometimes one of the parents travels a lot because of work and the family chooses to spend the time travelling together, but it becomes too disruptive to move the children from one school to the next. Children who take part in extra-murals such as modeling, acting or some professional sport, are not able to attend school regularly and the families will then choose to home school (Bayer, 2010: <http://www.examiner.com/article/celebrities-who-homeschool-their-kids>; Du Plessis, 2012:28; Korkmaz & Duman, 2014:3895; National Centre for education statistics, [www.homeschool.com/articles/MovieStars/default.asp](http://www.homeschool.com/articles/MovieStars/default.asp); [www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=91](http://www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=91)).

## 5.2 Methods of home schooling

There are several methods of teaching used by home schooling families. Research shows that most families will use a combination of different methods and it is very seldom that families who home school, will stay with one method throughout. Mills (2009:28) discusses some methods used by home schoolers such as Unschooling, Montessori, Theory of multiple intelligences and Charlotte Mason. Other popular methods are Unit studies; Classical; Waldorf; Relaxed/Eclectic; Literature based and Traditional methods (Aasen, 2010:12; Allan & Jackson, 2011:55). The researcher has chosen to discuss 3 main methods which often incorporate some of the other abovementioned methods.

### 5.2.1 *Unschooling*

The word “unschooling” was first used as a noun in 1977 by John Holt. He proposed “unschooling” as an alternative for home schooling, as he felt that the education that took place at home was more than just a copy of what was done in school. The meaning of the term “unschooling” has since evolved and some synonyms are “child-led”; interest-driven; natural; organic; eclectic or self-directed learning (Chang, 2011:201; Green-Hennessy, 2014:442; Mills, 2009: 28; Olsen 2008:41). Farenga and Holt (2003:238) defined “unschooling” as “allowing children as much freedom to learn in the world, as their parents can comfortably bear”.

When using this method, parents will typically allow their children’s interest to lead the topics to be studied, e.g. if a child is interested in trains, this topic will be used in language arts by reading about trains, in science by exploring how trains work and in history the history of railroad travel.. The child’s timeframe is used and the learning takes place by using books or the internet ([www.leapingfromthebox.com/art/kmg/whatis.html](http://www.leapingfromthebox.com/art/kmg/whatis.html)). The learning is therefore not linked to a specific outcome to be achieved by a certain age, but parents will allow children to learn things when they are ready for it. It can thus happen that a child will only start reading at 10 while an 8-year-old can already be studying astronomy (Farenga & Holt, 2003:239).

### 5.2.2 *School-at-home*

This method uses the same basics as a traditional school. All the subjects are taught as separate subjects; there is a set timetable; a boxed curriculum is often used and tests and exams are

written regularly (Anthony & Burroughs, 2010:7; Chang *et al.*, 2011:195; Morton 2010:51). This method is often one which new home schooling families are most comfortable with because it is a known method. Some families will use this approach but combine it with the eclectic method which allows them to choose their own curriculum and which books they want to use (Aasen, 2010:12; Allan & Jackson 2010:57)

### *5.2.3 Charlotte Mason/literature based approach*

Charlotte Mason was a nineteenth century teacher in Britain who was especially passionate about teaching underprivileged children (Mills, 2009:29; Macaulay, 2009:6). The basis of Charlotte Mason's approach was that children are persons and should be respected as such. Her teaching philosophy was, in her own words: "Therefore, we are limited to three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas. Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life" (Mason, 1923:xxix). The atmosphere of education refers to the environment in which children live their everyday lives. She believed that children should be allowed the freedom to learn in their natural surroundings and not an environment artificially created for their level. By "discipline of habit, she meant that a child should cultivate good, healthy habits". Charlotte Mason's belief in education as life, was based on her view that the moral, intellectual and physical needs of children should be met, as children are born with a hunger for knowledge (Mason, 1923:xxix; Mills, 2009:30).

Core subjects are taught by the use of "living books" such as reference books, rather than school text books. Nature walks and other outings are encouraged to make the subject being taught a real-life experience (Allan & Jackson, 2010:57). This approach is sometimes used by home schooling families in combination with the unit study approach and/or the eclectic approach.

## **6. Parent-child relationship**

In the home schooling context, the main difference in the parent-child relationship of home schooled children and children in mainstream schools are that the parents have a dual role because they also act as teachers. Participation in the home is therefore not only restricted to family decisions, but also includes more educational decisions.

## 6.1 Parent-child relationship in adolescence

In the adolescent years there is a shift from close relationships with parents to close relationship with peers. Parent-child conflict increases during this time as adolescents start to separate themselves from their parents while establishing their identities. The fact that the adolescent wants and needs to separate himself emotionally from his parents does not mean that the emotional support from the parents does not still have an important role to play (Bester, 2007:178; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991:49, Saxbe *et al.*, 2014:415). In most instances, the reason for the difference in opinion stems from the fact that parents and adolescents look at issues differently. Where a parent might view an issue as important, the adolescent might shrug it off and not understand why such a small issue leads to so much conflict (Steinberg 2001:6, Koepke & Dennison, 2012:79).

The way in which the dual role of parent-as-teacher is managed, will differ from family to family. McDowell (2000:199) found that where the decision to home school was “forced” by circumstances rather than because parents chose to home school, the parent-child interaction may be negative. This will happen when the mother resents the fact that she has to be both parent and teacher and the underlying anger may have a negative impact on the relationship.

On the other hand, the parent-child relationship may become stronger because the relaxed environment will allow the parents and children to come to a greater understanding of each other. Parents may feel less stressed because there is less of a safety concern with regard to their children’s emotional and physical well-being as a home schooler. The child might be more relaxed because he is able to work at his own pace without having to constantly compare himself with peers (McDowell 2000:198).

According to Hall-Lande *et al.* (2007:268), family connectedness is an important factor for the emotional health of adolescents. Thus, in families where there are close bonds, the sense of belonging will have positive long-term effects on the well-being of the adolescent. Merry and Howell (2009:372) discuss the positive effect of intimacy, not only on the adolescent, but on the parent-child relationship. They are of the opinion that the communication between home school parents and their children is more open than that of children in traditional schools. The open communication in turn, enables parents to address issues which may arise and threaten the

emotional health of their children more quickly than would have been the case if they were not home schooled. Bester (2007:178) emphasises the importance of strong parent-child relationships during adolescence as this has a positive influence on the adolescents' self-image.

## 6.2 Parenting styles

Parenting styles can have a definite effect on the parent-child relationship. As far back as 1971, Baumrind (1971:1) identified three distinct parenting styles namely authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. These parenting styles have since been researched over and over and still prove to be relevant today.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) added two dimensions to the description of parenting styles, namely responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness is the degree to which a parent encourages his child's individuality and self-assertiveness and is achieved by the parent's support of the child through his attentiveness and responding to requests by the child. Demandingness refers to the parent's expectation that the child becomes a socially integrated part of society. The parent uses behaviour control and regulation, often by directly confronting the child (Baumrind, 2013:425, Darling & Steinberg, 1993:491).

Each of the parenting styles has a different influence on the parent-child relationship – some more positive than others. It is seldom that a parent only makes use of one parenting style. The parenting styles are sometimes combined or are alternated, depending on the situation.

### 6.2.1 *Types of parenting styles*

Authoritative parents are on the one hand demanding and controlling, while at the same time being warm and open to communication with their children. They encourage their children to function independently, but are there for support if needed. Authoritarian parents, who are also demanding and controlling, lack the warmth of the authoritative parents and are somewhat detached. The permissive parents are neither demanding nor controlling, but they are relatively warm. The neglecting-rejecting parent, like the permissive parents, are not controlling but also not warm (Baumrind, 2013:423; Smetana, 1995:299).

### 6.2.2 *Parenting styles: Responsiveness and demandingness*

By looking at the imbalance between responsiveness and demandingness, Baumrind (2005:62) explained further differentiation between the four types of parents.

- Authoritarian-Directive parents are highly imbalanced and are low responsive but high intrusive and high demanding.
- Non-authoritarian-directive parents are moderately imbalanced by being high demanding but moderately responsive and low to moderately intrusive.
- Parents who are high responsive but low demanding are described as a highly imbalanced lenient type and called “permissive”.
- Democratic parents are described as being moderately demanding and high responsive and are seen as a moderately imbalanced lenient type.
- Authoritative parents are high demanding, high responsive and low intrusive.

The parenting styles will be kept in mind during the study in order to determine whether there are differences between the parenting styles of the home schooling parents. It will also be interesting to see whether there is more than one parenting style within the same family, e.g. that a parent is authoritarian in matters to do with education but democratic with regard to socialisation.

### 6.2.3 *Parenting styles: Effect on children*

- The authoritarian parents are strict in their control over their children and they demand a high level of obedience with strict rules. These parents tend to discourage their children from engaging in conversations about these set rules, and expect the children to be obedient despite their own thoughts and beliefs. Because these parents are so controlling, the children do not have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives (Dornbusch et.al, 1987:1245; Fan & Zhang:2014).

The home schooled children who are referred to the researcher for therapeutic intervention seems to come from authoritarian homes, in terms of the theoretical definition. The typical problems which are identified by them is that they do not feel

trusted or important in the home environment, because they are generally not asked what their opinions are on the world around them. The communication at home usually centers on their academics and a very strict and formal curriculum is usually followed – it is typically school at home. One of the main reasons for home schooling by authoritarian parents is because they want control over what their children are taught. In some instances the children are not given any say in the choice of subject and this leads to frustration and unwillingness to learn.

- Permissive parents are the total opposite of the authoritative parents. They allow the children to make their own decisions and do not enforce discipline or rules on the children. Children are therefore not taught to take responsibility for their own behaviour, and will have difficulty in accepting authority, because they are not taught why it is important to have boundaries (Baumrind, 1966:889; Dornbusch et.al, 1987:1245). In the home schooling community the permissive parents usually follow the unschooling method. The children are left to decide when, about what and if they want to do formal work.
- Authoritative parents encourage their children’s individuality, open communication and try to involve the children in decision-making. They also tend to explain the reasons behind rules which are important in the family and encourage the interaction with all the family members as they are taught to take responsibility for each other (Baumrind, 1966:891; Baumrind, 1996:412).

## **7. Conclusion**

The literature review emphasised the increase in research about the participation of children in decisions that directly have an influence on them, internationally as well as in South Africa (Gwandure & Mayekiso, 2011:234; Driskill et.al. 2010:268; Viviers & Lombard, 2012:8). Since home schooling is a growing trend in South Africa, and the Children’s Act (Act 38 of 2005) specifically mentions children’s involvement in matters pertaining to their education, the researcher found a gap with regard to literature exploring participation in the home schooling context.

As seen in this section, the parent-child relationship does change during adolescence due to various reasons. This is a natural event in the context of the developmental phase of adolescence and the developmental tasks to be completed successfully. It is necessary for the autonomy of the adolescent that he gains independence from his parents and turns toward his peers. Cherney (2010:80) said that adolescent children tend to push the parental boundaries while searching to increase their autonomy. This process can lead to tension between the adolescent and the parent, because of possible opposing views the two parties have on children's rights. Very little specific literature was found which discussed the parent-child relationship and participation in home schooling families.

Children are increasingly aware of their rights and this might lead to some parents feeling uncomfortable because they are afraid of losing their rights as parents to have a say in what their children may and may not do. Parenting styles may have an influence on the way in which the parents will allow the adolescent to be more autonomous and to exercise their rights with regard to issues that directly affect them.

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**SECTION B**  
**ARTICLE**

**Exploring adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context**

The purpose of this study was to explore participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home school context. The sample consisted of 21 participants from 8 families in the Western Cape. Data collection was through semi-structured interviews. Five themes were identified through thematic analysis. Families disagree about the role children are allowed to play in decision-making. Participation in decision-making varied from children being the main decision makers to children having no right to participation. Recommendations include parenting workshops to create awareness that children's evolving capacities and participation in decision-making should be respected to meet the children's growing need for independence.

*Keywords:* Children's rights, Participation, Home schooling, Adolescence, Parent-child relationship

## **INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The researcher is a social worker in private practice and a home schooling parent. Local support groups and internet forums are important support structures for home schooling families. A recurring topic on the forums was the breakdown of communication between parents and their adolescent children who were home schooled. More than half of the researcher's clients in her private practice were home schoolers. The same pattern was observed among the home schooling clients, in that the parents were frustrated and hurt that their adolescent children were distancing themselves from the parents and the adolescents felt overprotected.

The home schoolers felt that their parents were not allowing them to be as independent as their peers in mainstream schools. They felt "mistrusted, and "suffocated". When listening to what the parents and adolescents had to say, it seemed as if one of the reasons contributing to the communication problems was the adolescents' perceived lack of participation in decision-making.

Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood and is a phase where many different developmental tasks have to be completed. Physical changes which take place during puberty are due to hormonal changes with the primary (growth of the reproductive organs) and secondary sexual characteristics (visible changes such as facial hair in boys and breast development in girls) being the most prominent changes which take place (Keenan & Evans, 2009:96; Ruffin, 2009:1; Stang & Story, 2005:1). According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, adolescents operate on a formal operations level which means that their ability to think abstractly increases, and together with it, the ability to think and plan ahead. Deductive reasoning as well as inductive reasoning, where specific topics can be changed to broad generalisations also develop

during this phase. The combination of deductive and inductive reasoning as well as the ability to think abstractly is one of the reasons why conflict arises between the adolescents and their parents or other authority figures (Cockcroft, 2009:338; Stang & Story, 2005:7). There is a direct link between the cognitive and emotional changes which take place in adolescents and their evolving capacities of participating in decision-making. Stage 5 of Erikson's psychosocial development, is identity versus role confusion where the identity establishment and formation are important tasks to be mastered which includes decision-making about relationships and careers (Bester, 2007:177; Graf, 2008:58; Hook, 2009:297).

Home schooling is where a learner is educated by one or both his parents in the family home and is an alternative for traditional education (Allan & Jackson, 2010:55; Carson, 2009:1; Moran, 2011:1063). Mills (2009:3) explored the experiences of home schooled children in middle childhood by hearing their thoughts on various aspects of home schooling. Although the focus was not specifically on the children's participation in decision-making, the study gave a good overview of the child's view of home schooling. These aspects will be kept in mind by the researcher, although the focus of this study is slightly different and the children who participated in this study were in a different life stage.

In South Africa, the Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005) states in Section 10: "Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child, has the right to participate in an appropriate way and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration. Viviers and Lombard (2013:11) say that, although legislation makes provision for the participation of children, factors such as power, status and the relationships between children and adults will influence participation. The SA Schools Act (Act

84 of 1996) makes provision for a child to be home schooled and stipulate that home education entails a child receiving education in his own home.

The fact that there is specific legislation which makes provision for the participation of children in matters which affect them, together with the problems identified by home schoolers, led the researcher to explore the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home schooling context. The objectives were to listen to the views of both the parents and the adolescents on the topic of participation in decision-making in the home schooling context.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research approach and design**

Qualitative research was chosen for this study to obtain rich and descriptive data (Fouché & Delport 2011:65; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:50; Mack et.al. 2005: 2) by interviewing home schooled adolescents and parents in their homes and listening to their interpretation of children's participation in the home schooling context.

The case study design was used for this study to answer how” and “why” questions to obtain in-depth knowledge about a social phenomenon (Yin, 2009:4). Creswell (2013:98) points out that a case study should be a bounded system which means that the researcher is able to describe it by using specific parameters. In this study, the case to be studied is therefore the social phenomenon of home schooling, while the families who were interviewed are units within the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008:546; Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:75).

## **Selection of participants**

As it would be impossible to include everyone from the population in the study (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:180), only those families who belonged to the Durbanville homeschoolers; Cape Home Ed; Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys; HS Kitchen Table; or Cambridge International Examination at home, who lived in the Western Cape, and whose children were in the adolescent phase were included in the research.

Purposive or judgment sampling were used, which is a form of non-probability sampling where the researcher judges which cases would be a good representation of the population needed for the study. The researcher must therefore know exactly what the parameters of the study are (Sarantakos, 2013:177). The researcher is a home schooling mother, and therefore had knowledge of the population and started with the search for participants on the various home schooling forums to which she belongs. After a brief explanation of the proposed research, a request was made on the forums for home schooling families, who had children between the ages of 13-18, to participate in the study. By using the sampling method described above, 8 families, consisting of 21 participants, responded. The participants who were selected were then numbered as follows – families were numbered from 1-8. The alphabet was then used to further label the participants. The parent, in all the cases the mother, is indicated by “(m)” in front of the chosen letter of the alphabet. The following table gives a summary of the participants.

**TABLE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS**

Family	Code	Sex	Age	No of years home schooled
1	(m)_A	Female		
	B	Female	13	8
	C	Female	14	9
2	(m) D	Female		
	E	Male	15	6
3	(m) F	Female		
	G	Female	17	2,5
	H	Male	14	5 months
4	(m) I	Female		
	J	Male	16	2,5
	K	Female	15	1,5
5	(m) L	Female		
	M	Male	13	8
	N	Male	15	10
6	(m) O	Female		
	P	female	14	9
7	(m) Q	Female		
	R	Female	13	6months
	S	Female	15	6 months
8	(m) T	Female		
	U	Female	16	2.5

The table shows the age and sex of the participants as well as the number of years that they have been home schoolers.

### **Data collection**

A pilot study was used to test the interview guide. Pilot studies are useful in that they serve as an aid to the researcher by “testing” certain parts of the study to detect any problems prior to conducting the main study (Maxwell, 2009:227; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Two families and two adolescents from a third family were used for the pilot studies. It became clear that the information gathered was much more detailed when the researcher did not use the interview guide’s questions too strictly in a particular order, but rather allowed a natural conversation to develop while keeping the questions in mind.

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The interviews took place at the homes of participants, which meant that it took less time for them to feel comfortable, as the environment was known to them, as suggested by Greeff (2011:353). The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants.

An interview guide was used as a guideline. The researcher found as with the pilot study, that the format of the interview was more in the form of a conversation than a question and answer session. This ensured that the researcher could get rich descriptions from the participants (Greeff, 2011: 353; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:88; Seidman, 2006:7). In some instances it was not necessary to directly ask all the questions as per the interview guide, as the answers became clear from the participants’ conversation.

The researcher only referred to the schedule at the end of the interviews to ensure that all the information had been gathered.

## **Data analysis**

All the interviews were transcribed. Numbers were used for participants as described above. The transcripts and field notes were then studied and recurring patterns were identified and divided into themes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes were then linked to the aims and objectives of the study (Pope *et al.*, 2000:114; Sheridan *et al.*, 2010:148).

The steps taken during data analysis were an ongoing process rather than a progressive one. The steps of processing, analysing, reporting etc. are interlinked (Nieuwenhuis 2007:99; Rubin & Babbie, 2011:159) and in two of the cases the researcher clarified some aspects telephonically.

## **Ethical aspects**

As a social worker, the researcher is bound by the Code of Ethics set out by the South African Council for Social Service Professions. Ethical clearance was secured from the university under whose auspices the research was conducted. Other ethical considerations were to do no harm to participants (Padgett, 2008:69); making sure there was informed consent (Padgett, 2008:65) by means of explaining the consent form and emphasising the fact that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were assured of confidentiality. Their anonymity was protected by separating their names from the data and giving them numbers.

## **Trustworthiness**

Several authors refer to the four factors to ensure trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:290), namely credibility/truth value; transferability/applicability; reliability/consistency and neutrality/confirmability (Krefting, 1991:215; Lietz & Zayas, 2010:190; Nieuwenhuis,

2007:113; Padgett, 2008:181). The researcher kept these factors in mind during the research process.

Padgett (2008:181) talks about the "degree of fit" between the views of participants and the researcher's descriptions thereof. In this study the words of participants were used adding to the **credibility** of the study. A way in which qualitative studies could be made **transferable** is to use it in another setting or in future research (Lietz & Zayas, 2010: 195; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:115). This study could be used in future research with home schooling families in other provinces and the results could be compared.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) explain that **neutrality** is achieved when the results of the study are not based on biases or perspectives and motivations of the researcher, but based firmly on the collected data. The literature study was the start of the process of neutrality as the researcher tried to include as many different perspectives on home schooling and participation as she could find, and not only limit it to perspectives which the researcher feels comfortable with (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:115).

## **Research findings**

The following themes emerged from the transcriptions:

- Adolescents' participation in the decision to home school
- Decision-making in curriculum and subject choices
- Study times/roster
- Social and extra-mural activities
- Home school and psycho-social aspects

## **Theme one: Adolescents participation in the decision to home school**

In literature it is found that the decision to home school is based on various reasons such as social, familial, religious and academic (Anthony & Burroughs, 2010:4; Carson, 2009:2; Mills 2009:24). Morton (2010:47) used three broad reason groupings, namely “natural” choice, “social” choice and “last resort”. Most literature about the reasons to home school focuses on the parents’ perspectives and do not include those of the home schooled child (Carson, 2009:6; Van Schalkwyk & Bouwer, 2011:179). In this study about participation it was important to get the perspectives of the parent as well as the child, because the researcher wanted to get a clear picture of how participation is viewed in the context of home schooling.

### **Natural choice**

Families who home school because of the natural choice typically are unhappy with a formal education system due to various reasons or view education as a natural extension of everyday life (Morton, 2010:49). Two of the families who were interviewed viewed home schooling as a natural choice. *“I started in 1997 before P was born, because I was home schooling my stepdaughter at that stage. So she’s been home schooled all the way from birth.”* (Family 6 (m) O)

*“I have been home schooling since the beginning.”* (Family 1 (m) A)

In both these families, the adolescents did not participate in the decision to home school. The mother (O) in family 6 said that even though her daughter was now a teenager, she would not allow her to go to a mainstream school even if she chose to. *“... we are the parents, we know what school is like because we have been there and we think it is our decision to decide what is best for you with our wisdom and all because of age and experience, it is our decision, so the*

*answer would be no*". The daughter (P) said that *"I never really wanted to go to school, but I also wanted to go to school for like a week, to see what it is like because it is a different environment."* This authoritative parenting style (Baumrind, 2013:423; Smetana, 1995:299) did not seem to have a negative influence on the parent-child relationship because the children were of the opinion that their parents' decision was to protect them.

In family 1, the mother said that she would allow the children to go to a mainstream school if they chose to. *"I gave them a choice – they could have returned to school."* Both the children said that they would not want to go to a mainstream school and although their mother had said that they could make that decision, they preferred to be home schooled. *"Very seldom. I think there was maybe one week when I was very little, when we once went to school for fun, when we did not know what it was like, and everyone was very nice and friendly. And I did not realise that it was just because we were new, so it was a little bit nice, but not really. Then I realised it was nicer to home school."* (Family 1 C)

Where home schooling is a natural choice, home schooling typically starts when the children are young. In the families interviewed, the children had no choice in participation in the decision to home school because they were too young. Even though the participants were in the adolescent life stage, only some of the parents indicated that they would consider allowing their adolescent children a choice in the matter of continuing home schooling or going to a mainstream school.

### **Social choice**

The decision to home school because of social choices was made when parents felt that they wanted more control over the moral and social upbringing of their children, or were worried

about social issues such as bullying in schools (Merry & Howell, 2010:364; Morton, 2010:50; Spiegler, 2010:65).

Most of the families who were interviewed fell into this group. In some of the families, the choice to home school was initiated by the children and after a discussion with the parents, a final decision was made by the parents as to whether they would “allow” their children to be home schooled.

*“I was in boarding school at “O” and I wanted to leave the boarding school, but my dad said I could not travel to school and back every day, because it was too expensive, so it was better to stay in the hostel. I then decided that I would rather home school and I then asked my mother if she would be willing and then we went on with it.”* (Family 3, G) The mother said that they as parents would also allow their children to make the decision to return to school if they felt that home schooling was not working for them anymore.

In family 6, the family had home schooled their children for a short period when they were in primary school. The family lives a nomadic life because they like to travel and see the world. When they lived in Spain for three years, home schooling was not legal and the children returned to a mainstream school. When they returned to South Africa, the children went on with mainstream schooling, but then the daughter decided that she wanted to return to home schooling.

*I don't know, I didn't like drama and complications and I just - it's my future, and I'm putting my future in those people's hands, and most of the time they spend reprimanding the class, and then the rest of the time we're trying to do work, but then most of the time talking. It's a huge waste of*

*time, and, yes, it's just, I do my work, and then I'm off for the rest of the day. I don't have homework; it's all homework. So it's so much easier.*" (P, Family 6)

In other families where social choice was the reason for home schooling, the parents made the decision to home school the children without allowing the children to be actively involved in the decision. *"They were part of the whole thing, but they didn't have a very big say in it. I must admit we were a little bit autocratic with regards to that, but we did consult them in every process, every step of the way. We know that they both actually wanted to go to High School."*

(Family 4 (m) I) In this family, the children were already adolescents when the parents decided to home school them. Both the children said that they sometimes wished they could go back to a mainstream school, but knew their parents would not allow it. *"My Mom will, my Dad will say no we already made the decision, it is only a few more years then I am out of school anyway."*

(Family 4, K) Her brother, J, answered "no" when asked whether he would be allowed to return to a traditional school.

In family 5 the parents also made the decision without consulting the children or allowing them to participate, because the children were very young at the time. The decision was made mainly due to religious convictions, which is one of the social reasons mentioned in literature (Anthony & Burroughs, 2010:6; Carson, 2009:2; Howell, 2009:373). *"You know, mainly out of religious convictions. We felt like raising our children absolutely according to the Word and to prevent the influence of the world as much as possible but gradually expose them to it as they grow spiritually. Academically it has an advantage, but to me that was secondary."* (Family 5 (m) L)

When asked whether their children would be allowed to return to a traditional school, this mother said that they would consider it if they thought that the children were emotionally ready. The child would however not really have a say in the matter. *"No, you know, I think if he was*

*spiritually and emotionally ready and he shows it and says for instance in Grade 10 that he would really like to return to school, we would consider it. I am not saying we will say yes or no, but I think we would really try and open our hearts and genuinely consider it for him.”* The parents in this family could be seen as authoritarian, because they have very strict rules for the children in every aspect of their lives. The children are not allowed opportunity to take responsibility for their lives (Dornbusch et.al, 1987:1245; Fan &Zhang:2014).

In family 7, the decision to start with home schooling was initiated by the parents and then discussed with the children and because all were in agreement, a trial period of one year was decided on. *You know, when we moved here from Pretoria, we thought it would be the ideal time to start, because we were moving away from all our social structures. So it was partly a new beginning for us and we thought that it was the ideal time to start home schooling. But I also felt that they would perform better with individual attention, because the classes were starting to get very big in school, and I also wanted to control what they were exposed to. I still want that control. And yes, we discussed it with them, and they were very excited and they themselves wanted to home school. So we said we would give it a year, and so far it is working well”.* (m) Q

The families, who decided to home school because of social reasons, were mixed with regard to the role their children played in the participation in the decision. It was noticeable that in the families where the children were too young when the decision was first made to home school, the parents seemed to be reluctant to allow them to make the decision to return to a mainstream school, even though the children are adolescents.

## **Last resort**

The families for whom home schooling was a last resort, often do not actively choose to home school their children but are “forced” to make that decision because it is in the best interest of their children. These reasons include children with special needs and children with physical or mental health issues (McDowell, 2000:197; Moran, 2011:1064; Morton, 2010:52).

Only one family fitted somewhat into this category and it was because the child himself was feeling that he needed to start with home schooling because he was feeling overwhelmed by his school work, as well as unhappy about the children whom he felt were disrespectful. *“Aunty, the school work became too much for me and the children in the school were not proper, or most of them and it just felt more comfortable to be on the farm. And they don’t have respect for themselves, for other people, for teachers and most importantly, not for the Lord.”* (Family 3, H)

For some families, the decision to home school, will be a combination of factors and is sometimes only planned as a temporary measure (Aasen, 2010:12; Morton, 2010:52). Most families who took part in the research had more than one reason for their decision and the children’s participation in the decision-making process varied from initiating the process to none at all.

## **Theme two: Decision-making in curriculum and subject choices**

In South Africa, the Education Department determines the Curriculum and subjects which are taught in public schools (Section 6A of the SA Schools Act nr 84 of 1996). Umalusi is the statutory body responsible for the standards quality assurance for school and adult assessments. Some independent and private schools will use the National Curriculum, but their examining body is the Independent Examinations Board, accredited by Umalusi. The other option for

private schools in South Africa is to make use of the curriculums of the USA or UK. The examinations are then accredited by either SAQA or HESA who will convert the qualification to a South African equivalent.

Home schoolers are more flexible in terms of the curriculum and subjects which they use (Mills, 2009:59) because they can make use of either formal curriculums which will lead them to write the NCS through an examination body accredited by Umalusi, follow the UK or US curriculum or follow a combination of curriculums which best fit the learning style of the child (SA Home School Curriculum).

The families who were interviewed all varied in the curriculums they used. Some used boxed/formal curriculums while others used a combination of curriculums with subjects chosen from providers whom they deemed most appropriate for their children.

Two of the families are using an accredited curriculum which would allow them to write the NCS. The parents chose the curriculums for the children, because the children had been in a mainstream school and had just carried on with doing the same subjects which they were doing at the time they left school.

*“Yes, we listened around for a while. [Name] is doing curriculum X and we had trouble with curriculum Y because there were problems with the papers and memorandums which were full of mistakes. Yes there were a few problems. And what we like about curriculum X is that you are not bound by time to say that you have to hand in the term’s work on a specific date. You get the whole year’s work, where with the other one, you only get the term’s work. With the other one you had to pay once off, but you only receive a term’s work. With this curriculum you can pay it off but you get all the work from the beginning.” (Family 7 (m) Q)*

From the interviews it did not seem as though the adolescents had a problem with the chosen curriculums and subjects. In some of the families, the parents would give the adolescent children a choice in subjects, but would also have subjects which they felt were not negotiable. In other families, the parents made all the subject choices for their children, but would allow the children to determine which service provider to choose.

*“I had choice, my parents did encourage us to take accounting for instance, well science is basically obvious as it is in our house and economic. I choose out of the others which seem interesting.”* (Family 4 J)

*“I am just going to do three ([subjects]) because Mommy doesn’t want to put too much pressure on me, so to give me a bit of a gap in the first year so that I can do music because I am very into music. [Name and Name] is more into art and I am more into music, so I am going to take up another instrument and also piano and music theory. I am now taking guitar and then next year Maths, English, Afrikaans and French.”* (Family 1 B)

*“I mean I [mother] have the final say, but she will say I want to do this science programme or that biology course.”* (Family 6 (m) O)

*“My mother chooses the subjects, she doesn’t think we should and then she chooses it.”* (Family 5 M)

The adolescents seemed to be satisfied with their parents’ role in the choice of their subjects and curriculums. Most of them reported that they believe that their parents have the experience to make the decisions and have their best interests at heart. According to Jamieson *et al.* (2011:23), children are individuals with rights and it is therefore important that, when decisions are made, it should be done in consultation with the children to ensure that the decisions are in their best

interests. Mniki and Rosa (2013:188) state that it is important to actively involve children in decision-making by referring to the models of Hart (ladder of participation) and Lansdown, who said that “children’s meaningful participation can be categorized into consultative processes, participative initiatives and those promoting self-advocacy”.

### **Theme 3: Study times/roster**

Mainstream schools have set starting and closing times and they have daily rosters which allocate specific times to specific subjects. When children are home schooled, the school hours can be determined by the families. Sometimes the families will choose to work according to school terms, while others work around their family’s needs. The families can also decide if they do all the subjects every day or if the children work according to themes and focus on one subject until it is completed.

Only two of the families interviewed, did not have a set starting time for school. The families who had a set starting time in the morning, did however admit to be somewhat flexible, especially in winter.

The mother of family 3 (F) allows her children to determine their own working hours, even though it does not fit in with her idea of what those hours should be. *“When she found her own way of doing the home schooling, it worked for her. H is the same; I want to put pressure on him to start at 9 o’clock but he want to start at 10am. He says at 9 am he is not as fresh and can’t work properly. He starts at 10 am and then he works quickly. Between 12pm-1pm he watches MacGyver and then he works again in the evening from 8 pm to 11pm. So he has his own times when he wants to work and those times don’t fit in with my times – it frustrates me- but he does his thing in his own time.”* This mother’s understanding of the difference in her children’s

temperament and motivation is a good example of what Tudge et al. (2009:5) calls force characteristics.

Participant K (Family 4) stressed the flexibility of home schooling by explaining that he had a specific way of working, but as his circumstances changed, it was possible for him to change his way of doing his schoolwork. *“When I first started home schooling at stages I liked to work in the night, so I start at eight o’clock at night and you work all the way through to one o’clock or two o’clock and then sleep late the next morning, but it didn’t last very long until the schedule got rearranged and then I had to do it differently. Now it is just wake up normally, finish when I am done, no finish time for me to stop working.”*

Although participant R (Family 7) mentioned that one of the things she enjoys most about home schooling is the fact that they can decide what time to start in the morning, her mother added that they try to start by 08h30 at the latest. *“And you can also start as late as you want to, but then you have to finish all your work for the day or week.”* In this family, the children are responsible for working out the study roster by dividing the number of pages for each subject into the days of the term. If they choose to skip a day of school, they can make provision for that as well. *“For every term, they will look how many pages, e.g. in Afrikaans there is 180 pages. They then work out how many school days there are and then it gets divided into the pages. Then they decide how many days per week they want to work and then plan how many pages per day.”* (Family 7, (m) Q)

Family 5 distinguishes between formal and informal school, with reading, discussions around different topics, and religious instruction seen as informal school. Formal school is the chosen

subjects and curriculums. *“I start with my formal school only at about 9 am or 10 am, but we have more informal school before the time, like from 8am to 10am or 11 am.”*

In this family the time spent on the formal school work, depends on the pace of the child. He needs to finish a specific amount of work each day, rather than work a set amount of hours per day. *“I have to do a certain amount of work... there are some children who only have to work a specific number of hours, but then they sit and do nothing the whole day. The quicker I work, the quicker I am finished with school”* (Family 5, M)

Family 1 has a set routine, although there is some room for flexibility. *“We must get up at 7am but if it is winter, then it is very cold and then it is a bit more difficult to get up, so mom understands a bit. So then we only start at about 08h15 am or something. And from 7am-8am we must get up, dress, eat breakfast and do chores. And we are supposed to be there at 8 am and usually we are.”*

Although the mother of Family 6 sets her daughter’s schedule, it is the child’s decision to work according to her own pace and then renegotiate for the following weeks. *“She normally schedules for me, I have a weekly schedule that she schedules and then if it is too easy I will simply work ahead and then the next time she schedules I tell her but no I did extra so it was too little and if it is too much then I say no I am going to go slower.”* (Family 6, P)

In Family 4, the mother and children work together to set a working schedule. *“I give them weekly goals and then they break it down into daily goals and they have to complete their goals. If they don’t complete it in the week then the challenge is on for them to finish it over the weekend and we’ve worked it out that they have about five to six hours, that is the plan each day, but it does take them longer. I see my goals are a bit optimistic, but they work very, very hard,*

*although they start late.” (Family 4, (m) I) Her daughter sometimes experiences pressure, although she claims that the reason for the pressure is more due to her own process rather than her mother pressurising her. “But they also just look at how I progress or they don’t set quite unrealistic goals, sometimes it doesn’t feel like it, but it is. I am always under pressure though. Yes. It is not my parents that really put me under pressure, but somehow I just force myself, I don’t know.” (Family 4, J) Added to this the mother in Family 4 said: “Ja we try not to force them with them kicking and screaming, but with reasoning. I’ve always, my mom actually she was a very big influence in my life with that when my kids were still babies. She said it doesn’t help you just say to them no, she said, sit them down, look them in the eye and explain to them why and that has worked tremendously right up until now. As long as you explain why, then they can make an informed decision.” (Family 4, (m) I)*

In all the families but one, the adolescents participated in decision-making relating to the study times and roster to some extent, but with boundaries set by the parents. In the remaining family, the adolescents set their own times even when it did not suit the mother’s schedule. The researcher did not find any literature which focused on the decisions pertaining to study times and the study roster.

#### **Theme 4: Social and extra-mural activities**

When home schooling is mentioned, one of the first questions that is asked is about the socialisation of the children (Medlin, 2000:107; Mills, 2009:69). Socialisation can have two meanings, namely the teaching of children how to live according to the norms and values of society or the action of playing as well as interacting with others (Dillen, 2006:239; Maccoby, 1992:1006; Medlin, 2000:107). In the home schooling context, socialisation can be either a

positive or negative aspect, depending on how it is managed by the individual families (Brynard, 2007:95; Medlin, 2000:109; Moran, 2011:1065). Socialisation can either take place on an organised and formal level, e.g. through sport, youth gatherings, etc., or on an informal level where visits and play dates are arranged by parents and/or their children.

The home schooling families who were involved in this study, made an effort to ensure that their children take part in some form of organised social interaction. Some of the activities were decided on by the parents, because they saw it as an important life skill and they required their children to take part in that activity for a specific period. Other activities were chosen by the children because of their interests and/or talents.

The mother of Family 5 enrolled one of her sons at a drama academy, because he is an introvert and she wanted him to learn to be more confident, even though he did not really want to take part in it. He however loves sport and chooses which sport he takes part in. *“We started with drama this year; he doesn’t like it, although I think he does sometimes enjoy it. And as I am always telling him – there are certain things that you can choose, but there are certain things that mom and dad chooses, where you don’t have a choice. So he will do drama for maybe a year or three and other sport he can choose and do what he wants, and he loves his sport.”* (Family 5, (m) L)

The parents of family 5 also make decisions around some activities which they require the children to take part in. *“So we have educational objectives for the year and like saying that dad feels that this is a life skill which is important and therefore you will all learn how to swim, whether you like it or not.”* (Family 1, (m) A)

The adolescent children of this family mentioned that they are sometimes not given enough space to make their own decisions, although they said they knew that the decisions their parents

make are always because they want to protect the children. *“I think I would like a bit more leverage on certain things like how long I want to practice; how long I want to spend on a specific book or how much time I want to... I know this is going to sound bad”* (Participant B).

In the same vein participant C, her sister, added that their parents decided: *“How much time I am allowed to talk with my friends, what clothes I may wear and with whom I may communicate, because it is my parents’ interest to protect me.”* (Family 1, C)

Both children from Family 1 felt that they sometimes miss having very close friends. They feel that they do not have a lot in common with mainstream school children. *“...it’s not nice for me if they exclude us when they discuss some things such as school and totally ignore us, because we are only home schoolers. I would like to have some older friends [same age]. I have a lot of younger friends and they are all mad about me.”* (Family 1, C)

Her sister added that she would like to have friends with whom she can have deep and meaningful relationships. *“But I would enjoy it when we could have deeper relationships, because we are all busy and I am the newcomer in the area. Yes, the school children [children in mainstream schools] don’t have that depth at all. It’s all about boys... about their school work and how difficult their lives are and as if they are not really living.”* (Family 1, B)

The children of family 4 are allowed to make their own decisions regarding their extra-mural activities. Both the adolescents and their mother are happy with the level of social interaction that comes from the formal activities, but they identified a gap in their informal interaction. The mother sees her son’s involvement in the soccer club as a positive influence on his communication skills, because he is learning to interact with people of all age groups on their respective levels. This positive interaction between the adolescent and the environment is

described by Rosa & Tudge (2013:253) and Tudge *et al.* (2009:6) as demand characteristics. *“J also plays soccer and he is very involved in the club, at the soccer club and he has got his own team that he coaches and then he plays for the under seventeen’s as well and then because of the time factor he ends up playing with the seniors as well. So he has got a very wide range of age groups that he interacts with, which I think is a nice good balance. He is not just focused on the age group that he is in which would typically happen at a High School. You just know how to interact with your own age group. You don’t know how to speak to adults; you don’t know how to relate to little ones. So I think it is a better option that he has been exposed to both.... K is also very involved in her ballet, so she has the ballet three times a week and there she also has a bit of social interaction with the ballet, so it is not like she is isolated completely, but unfortunately there are no nearby friends, it is always quite an issue to arrange a social gathering of sorts. (Family 4, (m) I) The son who plays soccer added to this: “Yes sometimes, weeks get long when I don’t have any social interactions, but it is a weekly thing when I play soccer I communicate with people there and there is well, I don’t think there is really much to miss out from.” (Family 4, J) The girl in the family who did ballet said: “But I do feel a little bit too limited. Say a girl from ballet invites me to the movies, they would go and ... well they just want to be good parents, they go and research what movie we want to watch, see if it is a good enough movie, but if they haven’t met the girl or even seen her then they won’t let me go.” (Family 4 K) From the information gained from this family it seems as if there are advantages such as mingling with a diverse age group of people, although this can obviously also be true for children in mainstream schools. Furthermore it seems as if the parents are quite involved in decision-making regarding the socialization of participant K, who voiced that she felt somewhat restricted.*

Family 3's children are also allowed to choose their own activities. Their mother said that she has on a few occasions felt that her children have a talent for specific sport but then the children are not interested to take part in it. She does not force them to take part then. *"A child has his own personality and you must determine what a child's talents or interests are and I feel you have to force a child in the direction of his interest. Not force him, support."* (Family 3, (m) F)

Participant P (Family 6) said that she is forced to take piano lessons and even though she has discussed stopping the lessons with her parents, she is not allowed to. *"There is only one thing, I would like to stop piano lessons and that I have already tried to say and they say no."* Her mother's reason for not allowing her daughter to stop the lessons is that: *"It is not a hectic amount of practicing, so I don't think it is excessive to require them just to persevere at something that they don't like, I think it builds character because sometimes in life you have to just do things you don't really want to do."*

The parents and adolescents agreed that it was important to take part in social activities, whether formal or informal. In some of the families the parents were too involved in the decision-making and not allowing their adolescent children to participate enough in the decision of what activities they wanted to be involved in. In one family, the adolescents even felt stifled in the informal social activities they took part in.

### **Theme 5: Home school and psycho-social aspects**

When families are home schooling, they tend to spend more time together because the hours normally spent in school are also now spent at home and this has an impact on their emotional needs as well as the interpersonal relationships between family members.

## **Personality and emotional needs**

Bosisio (2012:142) says that children's "personal, relational and emotional competences" are necessary for the building of their identity. Children's emotional well-being is also one of the reasons cited as playing a role in the decision to home school (Morton 2010:52).

Both children of Family 3 said that they were less stressed about everything since they started home schooling. *"Auntie, in a way I was stressed when I was in school and I never had the chance to become calm and I built up stress the whole time and at home it is not like that for me; I don't have as much stress. I am calmer"* (G)

In contrast, Participant U (Family 8) says that she feels more stressed at home because when she was in school, her parents were not as involved in her work. *"Because that's what I loved about being at school, was that my parents, they didn't bother me. They didn't put pressure on me. I hate; [I mean] I don't like stressing. I'm a stress-free person, really. I take life as it comes, and I just hate stress. So now that I'm home schooling, my mom, well, not my dad, my mom is putting stress on me, and I really don't like that because I never - I think it was two months ago, I stressed because my mom put pressure on me, and then I decided, "No, I don't want to stress." It's just, whatever."* She did say that the other big difference between school and home school is a big positive factor for her, namely that she can be herself. *"What I like about home schooling is, you can be an individual."*

## **Interpersonal relationships**

In adolescence, the relationship between parents and children changes (Merry & Howell, 2009:366; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991:49). In this study, most participants were of the opinion that their family relationships were strengthened through home schooling and the

adolescents felt that they had a more open and honest relationship with their parents than their school going peers. Literature on home schooling confirms that when home schoolers are asked about the nature of family relationships, they tend to report that stronger relationships are one of the positive outcomes of home schooling (Merry & Howell, 2009:369; Mills, 2009:81; Spiegler, 2010:59).

Family 3's mother explained that home schooling caused her husband and herself to look at their children with different eyes. *"I think our personal relationships have improved, our family relationships have improved. Yes I really think so. I think our children's personality has grown and my husband and I have learnt to treat these children as persons in their own right."*

The mother of Family 7 seemed to agree that home schooling changed their outlook, but expanded even further. *"I think we were so used to accept the abnormal as normal, and when the situation changed, it took a while... and now that you look back, you realise how bad it actually was, because when they were in school, they basically lived their own lives. It was as if everyone was on his own island, do you understand? And I don't think that that is the idea of what a family should look like. So now it is as it should be. I actually regret the fact that we did not start home schooling earlier.* Her daughter was nodding her head the whole time in agreement with the mother's statement and added: *"We are now more...close to each other, communicate more... because we are together the whole day.*

The daughter in Family 8 described her relationship with her parents as a close one. She said that it had gotten closer since she started home schooling. *"But I have a very good relationship with my parents in general. I tell them everything. I hide nothing from them.* (Family 8, U)

The mother in family 6 is of the opinion that the relationships between family members are dependent on setting boundaries and allowing choices within the agreed boundaries. *“So there are boundaries, but there is freedom within those boundaries for her to make her own choices and as I said I don’t agree with all her choices but she is a big girl now, she can choose. But that is the thing, there are some battles that we are not going to give in on and then ones that we can give in on; we are willing to negotiate ...and I think that keeps the relationship good, otherwise ja they feel like they got no say in their life, I can imagine you know.”* (Family 6, (m) Q)

The mother of Family 1 (A) stated that there needs to be a balance between allowing children the right to participate in decision-making and not allowing them too much freedom. *“I grew up in a very autocratic home, so I try to give my children more say [in matters] ...but it is a very difficult balance between giving your children enough guidance without overpowering them.*

The adolescents of Family 1 described their closeness as a family by very specific examples. *To do it [home school] with Mommy and to be here when Daddy comes back [from work] and you are the first one to see him and to then feel you are a family and there for each other. And to sit together and read a book and to talk about things and to be there for each other and then have quality time together and to play board games and things like that. I enjoy that very much.* (B) Her sister (C) agreed. *“All those things [my sister said] and it also looks as though home schoolers are the only children at the moment who love their brothers and sisters. If I look at the school children that I know – they don’t have good relationships with their brothers and sisters. For home schoolers it is easy. It’s like – are you younger? Then I must protect you and I must help you; it’s the same if you are in a friendship. If you are older, I must respect you and listen to what you say.”*

It seems as though the families who were interviewed, experienced closeness in their interpersonal family relationships which they thought were lacking in children who attended mainstream schools. In the families where the children had been at school and then home schooled at a later stage, the parents reported that they started seeing their children in a different light and that influenced the interpersonal relationships positively (Hall-Lande *et al.*, 2007:268; McDowell, 2000:198; Merry and Howell, 2009:372).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The families who were interviewed all made the decision to home school for different reasons, but the one factor which was present in all the cases, was that the decision to home school was made because it was seen to be in the best interest of the children. Where the decision to home school was made by the children, the parents indicated that they would also allow the children to make the decision to return to mainstream schooling if they should wish to do so. Parents who decided that home schooling was the best option for the children without giving their children an active say in the matter, also said that they were doubtful whether they would allow their children to return to a mainstream school, because the reason for home schooling were not likely to change.

Where the children were too young to take part in the decision to home school, the parents were more open to the possibility to allow their children to return to a mainstream school.

The flexibility in the home school context makes it possible for families to choose a structure and routine which suits their individual family needs. The families can make curriculum and subject choices to suit the learning styles of the children and it enables them to progress at their own

pace. In most families the decision on which material to use is made by the parents, although there are allowances made for the children to make some of the choices.

Parents get involved in their children's social and extra-mural activities mainly where they feel that there is a life skill that their children can only learn by taking part in a specific activity, whether the children enjoy it or not. It seems as though informal socialisation is a problem for some families, mainly because the home schooled children feel that their interests and mindsets differ from their school going peers. Children in the home schooling context are often interacting with children in other age groups than their own, because their "classroom" is not divided according to age. This could have a positive influence on their socialisation because they are used to, and comfortable with interaction on all levels.

Nearly all the families mentioned that their family relationships strengthened when they started home schooling. The families who were home schooling since the beginning reported that they could see a difference in the parent-child relationships between themselves and school going peers.

Where parents did not include the children in the decision-making, the adolescents said that they were able to reflect to their parents that they were not always happy with the decisions made on their behalf, but they accepted it because they knew that their parents only acted in their best interest and for their own protection. This view of the adolescents is not completely in line with literature or with the problems identified by clients in the researcher's private practice, where it is more often the case that adolescents become rebellious or frustrated when they feel their views are not taken into consideration. The reason for the discrepancy could be that in most of the interviews the parents were present and the adolescents may not have been completely honest.

The objective and aim of the study was exploring the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home schooling context by listening of the views of the parents and adolescents. The biggest limitation experienced is that most of the parents preferred to be present when their children were interviewed.

The information about the way in which adolescents and their parents view and experience the participation of the children in decision-making, could be used to develop workshops around life stages and participation of children in decision-making. This could be presented to home schooling support groups or at home schooling expos to encourage parents to allow more participation in decision-making by their children as they grow older. Bronfenbrenner's "proximal processes" in the bioecological model could be used as an outline to illustrate how children are able to initiate and share responsibility in all areas as their skills and competence grows (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000:118).

Research could be done about participation in decision-making by children in mainstream schools to determine whether there is a difference in the role children are allowed to play in the different educational set ups, as it would not be scientific to generalize the result in settings other than home schooling.

The relationship, if any, between the parent-child relationship and the degree of participation in decision-making, is a further aspect which could be explored through more in-depth research.

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## **SECTION C**

### **EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Sections A and B described and discussed the orientation and findings of the research project. In this section, the findings are evaluated and recommendations made for home schooled families with regard to the adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context.

#### **1. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The right that children have to participate in matters which directly involve them has become such an important matter that it is spelt out in international and national law. Despite this fact, there are many children that still do not participate in decision-making. The research was conducted to explore and describe how home schooled adolescents participate in decision-making in various aspects of the home school context.

#### **2. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The following research question was formulated to address the research problem: "How do adolescents participate in decision-making in the home school context? This question was answered by the views expressed by home schooled adolescents and their parents through the use of semi-structured interviews. The exploratory and descriptive nature of the research led the researcher to identify themes relating to different areas of home schooling where children and parents make decisions which impact the children. The themes will be discussed in detail later in this section.

#### **3. AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The research aim was to explore the views of home schooling families on the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home schooling context. The views of both parents and adolescents were explored. The aim was achieved by using an interview guide for semi-structured interviews.

#### **4. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review was done to theoretically ground the study. The literature review focused on children's participation, home schooling, developmental theories and the parent-child relationship. The gap which was identified was that little research could be found on the participation in decision-making in the home schooling context.

The literature review on children's participation revealed an increase in the importance afforded to this matter by governments around the world. In South Africa it has also become an important matter and it is specifically referred to in the Children's Act. Despite the fact that it is theoretically seen as an important issue, the practical implementation is still lacking. There is still some resistance from parents with regard to allowing their children to participate in decision-making in general because parents are of the opinion that they as parents know what is in their children's best interest.

Hart's "Ladder of participation" (Mniki and Rosa, 2013:188) as well as Lansdowne's (2010:20) three levels of participation (Section A Part II) provide a good framework against which participation can be measured to some extent. The researcher used this as a guideline to gauge the participation of the home schooling families. It seemed as though most of the families allowed their children to participate in decision-making to some extent. In some families the children were allowed to actively participate in most of the decisions. In other families the children were sometimes allowed to participate and sometimes not and in these cases it was the parents who made the decision of when participation would be allowed.

The "evolving capacities" of children is linked closely with their right to participation. One of the problems which the researcher identified was that in practice, the term "evolving capacities" is a subjective matter. In some of the interviews, adolescents reported that they do not agree with decisions their parents made on their behalf, and feel that they can make those decisions. Their parents on the other hand reported that they have more life experience and know what is best for their children. It seems as though, in these cases, the parents are not always taking note of their adolescent children's evolving capacities, but merely making decisions on their children's behalf because they are used to doing it.

Literature around reasons for home schooling and methods of home schooling were easily available. The researcher included this in the literature review, because these are the main areas in the home schooling context about which decisions are made, and it was important to see to what extent the adolescents were allowed to take part in the decision-making. The empirical study confirmed what was found in literature regarding the reasons for home schooling and the methods of home schooling used.

The researcher included developmental theories about adolescence as well as literature about parent-child relationships in the research because the children included in the research were in this life stage. Some of the participants in the empirical study were of the opinion that they are not allowed as much freedom as their school going peers, which links with the literature that adolescents in this phase are looking to be more independent and separate more from their parents.

Parenting styles were included because the parenting style could have an impact not only on the parent-child relationship, but also on the degree to which children are allowed to participate in decision-making. The empirical study found that some of the parents had more than one parenting style depending on the decision to be made.

## **5. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of qualitative research is not to generalise findings. In this study the interest was to illuminate one part of home schooling, namely adolescents' participation in decision-making. This was merely exploratory and should be expanded in further research. It is for these reasons that the case study design was chosen, with home schooling as the case and the participants the unit of study. The researcher is of the opinion that the use of another research method would not necessarily have yielded a better understanding of the phenomenon. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to gain a rich understanding of the participants' views on adolescent children's participation in the decision-making in the home schooling context. Data saturation were reached after the 21 participants were interviewed and for the purpose of this study the researcher had no reason to believe that any new information would be forthcoming if more participants were included in the study.

This research project is seen as trustworthy because the researcher kept four factors in mind to ensure trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, reliability and neutrality. Ethical guidelines as set out by the Professional Council, to which the researcher belongs, as well as ethical guidelines by the university, were followed to ensure that the study adhered to ethical research principles at all times.

## **6 RESEARCH SUMMARY**

The findings of the study revealed five themes pertaining to the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home school context. The themes were as follows

- Participation in the decision to home school
- Decision-making in curriculum and subject choices
- Study times/roster
- Social and extra-mural activities
- Home school and psycho-social aspects

Some of the participants never attended mainstream school, while others left school for various reasons to be home schooled. Where the children were home schooled from the start, they did not have an opportunity to participate in the decision, as they were too young. In some of these families, the parents were hesitant to allow their children to return to a mainstream school if the children should choose to do so, while others said that they would allow it because the children were now adolescents and were able to make informed decisions. Where the children left a mainstream school to be home schooled, the parents who made the decisions without allowing the children to participate in the decision, were also the parents who said that they would not allow their children to return to school. In some of the families, the decision to leave school to be home schooled, was made by the children and in these families, the parents indicated that they would allow the children to make the decision to return to school if they so wished. It is possible that the extent to which the parents allowed their children to participate in the decision to return to school is linked to parenting styles. This is an aspect which could be explored in further research.

When it came to deciding on a curriculum and subjects, most of the parents took the decision as to which curriculum to use. None of the parents allowed their children to make the decision with regard to which curriculum to use, although the children were allowed to choose some of their own subjects. Most parents were adamant that their children should take subjects such as mathematics and science, because they were of the opinion that those subjects were the most important for tertiary studies. Although not all children agreed with the necessity of the subjects chosen by their parents, they accepted the choices of their parents because they felt that there was nothing they could do to change their parents' minds, and they believed that their parents acted in their best interests. This particular emphasis on mathematics and science might also be a pattern in mainstream schools and warrants further research.

Most of the children were allowed to participate in the way in which they divided their study roster but with regards to the study times most parents decide which time school should start in the morning. In the one family where the parents allowed the children to choose their own study time, although it did not suit the parent, it was reported that the children worked well because it was on the level which fitted best with their learning style. It could be interesting to investigate the relationship between motivation and participation in decision-making.

The home schooling families indicated that it was important for the adolescents to participate in social activities on a formal and informal level, as they did not want to become isolated. These findings correspond with findings with regard to socialisation in the literature review. Despite these efforts, some adolescents were "forced" to take part in activities that they did not enjoy because their parents saw it as a character building opportunity.

Even though the adolescents sometimes disagreed with their parents with regard to their participation in decision-making in various areas of the home schooling context, most of them did not experience this as having a negative impact on their relationships with their parents. The participants reported that they could see a closer relationship between them and their parents than between parents and children of families whose children were in mainstream schools.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS STUDY**

A similar study should be undertaken with a larger number of participants and it could be conducted in all the provinces to ascertain whether there are any differences between the participation of home schooled adolescents in decision-making in the different provinces.

The study could be repeated with adolescents in mainstream schools to determine whether there is a difference between participation in decision-making of home schooled children and children in schools pertaining to issues such as subject choices, choice of schools, study times/homework and social interaction.

A workshop could be developed which focuses on children's participation in decision-making in the home schooling context. The workshop could be developed to coincide with children's developmental phases, to create awareness with parents that as their children grow older, their children's participation in decision-making has to change in order to keep up with their evolving capacities. This workshop could be presented at home schooling expos or monthly home school gatherings.

A further aspect which could be explored through research is the relationship between the parenting styles and the degree of participation in decision-making.

## **8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Most of the interviews with the children were conducted in the presence of their mothers. This could have influenced their honesty with regard to their true feelings about their participation in decision-making. In one interview specifically, the child did not participate well. When the mother left the room after the interview, because she was called away, the participant started talking about his frustrations about home schooling and the subjects he had to take. This revelation was in complete contrast with his answers while the formal interview was taking place.

The boys were more reluctant to answer the questions than the girls and when asked why they thought that was the case, the boys said that they did not enjoy this probing into their lives while the girls said that they enjoyed being asked their opinion. Although the boys were reluctant to

answer, all of them were made aware of the fact that they did not have to answer any question they did not want to answer and that they could withdraw from the interview altogether at any stage. None of them expressed a wish to withdraw from the study.

## **9. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study showed that parents of home schooled families differed in the extent to which their adolescent children are allowed to participate in decision-making. The adolescents were also aware of their participation, and not all were completely satisfied with the level at which they were allowed to participate.

The findings with regard to the adolescents' dissatisfaction with their participation in decision-making, could be used to educate parents to allow their children's participation to increase as the children grow older. This could be applied not only to home schooling parents, but to parents in general.

Home school support groups could use the information to support new home schooling families by increasing their knowledge as to the importance of children's participation in decision-making in areas which directly affects the children in the home schooling context.

Social workers and other professionals could use the findings to strengthen family relationships where conflict arises in the adolescent phase because the adolescent children feel that they are not being included and heard in decision-making in the home school context.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

Parents who home school their children, often made the decision because they were unhappy with mainstream schooling for various reasons such as academic standards, curriculum content or social aspects such as bullying. Although the decisions are made with good intentions and seen by the parents to be in the best interest of their children, their needs and their children's needs are not always the same, especially in the adolescent phase.

It is important that parents should be aware that adolescents need to feel that they are included in decisions which directly impact their lives because they are in a life stage where it is important for them to gain a sense of independence from their parents. Family relationships can be

strengthened through communication, and allowing children to actively participate in decision-making leads to better communication because children feel listened to.

## SECTION D

### ANNEXURE 1:

#### Informed Consent Form



**Faculty of Health Sciences**

Participation in research study for Magister Artium in Social Work by Aloïse van der Merwe, student at the North-West University

Informed consent for parent(s) and assent for minor child participants

#### **Exploring adolescents' participation in decision-making in the home schooling context**

##### **Purpose of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore the participation of adolescents in decision-making in the home schooling context. The research is aimed at home schoolers between the ages of 13 and 18, in the Western Cape. The results may be used in future to create awareness in the home schooling community about child participation in this context and how the parent-child relationship can improve when there is a mutual understanding about the discrepancies which may arise in the adolescent stage.

##### **Participation and risks**

- Participation is voluntary and the participants may at any stage withdraw from the study.
- Emotional risk may be involved in this study. It may happen that questions asked may trigger negative emotions. The researcher will attempt to minimise these risks by listening with sensitivity and allow the participants to decline answering a question with which they feel uncomfortable.

### **Information gathering and confidentiality**

- Information will be gathered by means of recorded interviews. These recordings will only be used for the purpose of this study and will only be viewed by the researcher. It will not be made public at any stage.
- The information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and will not be made public, except in the case of a court order. No identifying information will be used in the research report.

### **Feedback**

A meeting will be held and verbal and written feedback will be given after completion of the study.

### **General**

You are welcome to contact the researcher at any stage for the duration of the study on her cell number 082 952 4458 or email her at aloisevandermerwe@yahoo.com. You can also contact her study leader, Dr Mariette van der Merwe, on her cell number 082 964 6697. If you have any concerns about the ethics of this research you can contact the secretary of the Human Research Committee responsible for ethics at North-West University, Mrs Carolien van Zyl, on 018 299 2094.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare that I have read and understood the abovementioned information. I agree to take part in the research study. I also give my consent that my child/children, \_\_\_\_\_ may take part in this study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare that I have read and understood the abovementioned information and that I agree to take part in the research.

\_\_\_\_\_

Father's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's signature

Date

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Child's signature

Date

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Child's signature

Date

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Researcher's signature

Date

## **ANNEXURE 2: Interview Guide**

### **Interview questions for adolescents**

- What do you understand as children's participation in the home schooling context?
- Tell me about your experience of participation in your context of home schooling.
- How was the decision made to home school you?
- Did you have a choice with regard to being home schooled/curriculum chosen/subjects chosen for grade 10 and up?
- Will you be allowed to return to school if you wish to?
- In what areas of the home schooling context are you allowed to participate actively in the decision-making? Are you satisfied with that or would you want to change it?

### **Interview questions for parents**

- What do you understand as children's participation in the home schooling context?
- Tell me about your experience of your children's participation in the home schooling context?
- How was the decision made to home school your children?
- Did your children have a choice with regard to being home schooled/curriculum chosen/subjects chosen for grade 10 and up?
- Will you allow your children to return to school if they want to?
- In what areas of the home schooling context are your children allowed to actively participate in the decision-making? Are you satisfied with that or would you want to change it?
- Do you think your children are satisfied with this level of participation or would they want to change anything?

### ANNEXURE 3: Thematic analysis of interview

The transcription was used to identify relevant information pertaining to the research question and aims and objectives of the study. A colour was assigned to new information and [ ] used to specify theme. The colour coding can be seen in table 2 below.

#### Key to thematic colour coding

Table 2

Theme	Subtheme
Reasons for decision to home school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social choice</li><li>• Natural choice</li><li>• Last resort</li></ul>
Choice of curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning preferences</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Study program</li><li>• Responsibility</li></ul>
Study time/roster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study program</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Own interests</li></ul>
Social and extra-mural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isolation</li><li>• Cliques</li><li>• Age groups</li><li>• Own interests</li></ul>
Home schooling and psycho-social aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpersonal relationships</li><li>• Stress</li></ul>

#### Extract from interview and thematic analysis of interview

**INTERVIEWER:** Alright how long have you been home schooling?

**INTERVIEWEE:** Okay it is now three years, ja two and a half years.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your kids are how old.

**INTERVIEWEE:** [Name] is fifteen and [name] is sixteen.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay and what made you decide to take them out of school.

**INTERVIEWEE:** Well they were both at school until the end of Grade 7, they only differ obviously a year. [Name] was Head boy at the Primary School and then the year after [Name] was Head girl, but we decided that we are going to take them out because firstly we, well there is a number of factors. Firstly we were in [Name] which means that there is **the travelling issue every** [family needs] day so the traveling finances, but the **major reason was that we were not happy with the Education Department's circus.** [standard of education –social choice]

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**INTERVIEWEE:** **You know the way that the curriculum keeps changing every year and the standard of the education** [standard of education] and we had spoken to one of the lecturers at Wits University, it's friends of our son and he was saying that the Matric meant nothing and that they actually have to write other exams as entry exams to Universities and when he said that we realised but then what is the point of doing all of that and then also the other **reason is at High Schools there is so much peer pressure and the activities** [pressure in mainstream school] that are, okay there is a lot of **social activities which** [positives in mainstream schools] is good. Everybody nails the thing at the social interactions, but I speak about that just now. **But the other thing was all these extracurricular activities that detract from the academic side of things and how much work do they actually get done in a day at school. [reason to home school] Not much and then they sit with** homework until who knows what time at night and weekends and they don't really, they are so bound by the **school activities and the school rules your life** and we don't like that. [pressure in mainstream school also linked to extracurricular activities] We want

to basically be our own boss and decide for ourselves what we want to do and ja [need more flexibility] so I think the major decision to come back to that was firstly the standard of education in South Africa [standard of education] and then the negative aspects of going to High School. I know there are a lot of positive aspects as well, but now you have to weigh the positive of each against the negative of each and decide which is the lesser of the two evils and we decided that the home schooling is more for us. The other thing is we had it on our hearts for a long, long time that maybe home schooling is for us. When I was pregnant with [name], my first child, already then it felt like we just want the best for this child and we bought the Practica System, I don't know if you know Practica. [natural choice - reason to home school]

Coming back to the question of having a say in the home schooling, they didn't have very much of a say. They were intrigued with the idea, but all their friends are going to go to High School, so they were very worried about losing friends, not being able to do the social things [socialisation] and that kind of thing. So I think on the one hand he would like to go to school. A lot of it I think has to do with the social interaction. They are both very social children and on the [socialisation] other hand I think he likes the freedom of the home schooling, [flexibility] because what I have done is I did decide that you can either be extremely strict and be an autocratic home school mom and everything has to be precise or you can be completely lackadaisical and not have any systems in place and that also doesn't work, neither of those two work for me. So I decided those positive aspects of home schooling that the kids like or that they have this ideal picture in their mind when people talk about oh you are doing home schooling, I want to do home schooling. Like maybe sleeping late. I let them sleep late. We only get up at about quarter to eight. They start working at about half past eight, but we set goals [study roster]. That is a very positive thing that we learned from [name of curriculum] was the goal setting

strategy and we set the goals. I give them weekly goals and then they break it down into daily goals and they have to complete their goals. [study program] If they don't complete it in the week then the challenge is on for them to finish it over the weekend and we've worked it out that they have about five to six hours, that is the plan each day, but it does take them longer. I see my goals are a bit optimistic, but they work very, very hard, but they start late.

**INTERVIEWEE:** Well that is why I say this thing is, when you are home schooling you have to cater for your own situation, your own personalities that are involved [psycho-social] with the kids and you have got the freedom to do that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWEE** :?There is that aspect and then [Name] also plays soccer and he is very involved in the club, at the soccer club and he has got his own team that he coaches and then he plays for the under seventeen's as well and then because of the time factor he ends up playing with the seniors as well. So he has got a very wide range of age groups that he interacts with which I think is a nice good balance.[socialisation] He is not just focused on the age group that he is in which would typically happen at a High School. You just know how to interact with your own age group. You don't know how to speak to adults, you don't know how to relate to little ones. So I think it is a better option that he has been exposed to both although his time that he has with them...

#### **ANNEXURE4:**

##### **Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk: Editorial policy/Redaksionele beleid**

The Journal publishes articles, book reviews and commentary on articles already published from any field of social work. Contributions may be written in English or Afrikaans. All articles should include an abstract in English of not more than 100 words. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the Journal practice. Articles of less than 2,000 words or more than 10,000 words are normally not considered for publication. Submit the manuscript as a Microsoft Word document. in 12 pt Times New Roman, double line spacing. Use font Arial in charts and diagrams. The manuscript should be sent electronically to [hsu@sun.ac.za](mailto:hsu@sun.ac.za). Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. "... (Berger, 1967:12). More details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. Note the use of capitals and punctuation marks in the following examples. In terms of SANSO-014 our journal is classified as an approved research journal for the purpose of subsidy by the State. The Editorial Board has therefore decided that an amount of R100.00 (hundred Rand) per page is to be paid for published articles by authors who are lecturing or doing research at Universities in the RSA.

Die Tydskrif publiseer artikels, boekbesprekings en kommentaar op reeds gepubliseerde artikels uit enige gebied van die maatskaplike werk. Bydraes mag in Afrikaans of Engels geskryf word. Alle artikels moet vergesel wees van 'n Engelse opsomming van nie meer as 100 woorde nie. Alle bydraes sal krities deur ten minste twee keurders beoordeel word. Beoordeling is streng vertroulik. Manuskripte sal na die outeurs teruggestuur word indien ingrypende hersiening vereis word of indien die styl nie ooreenstem met die tydskrif se standaard nie. Artikels van minder as 2,000 woorde of meer as 10,000 woorde sal normaalweg nie oorweeg word vir publikasie. Stuur die manuskrip in 12 pt "Times Roman", dubbelspasiëring as 'n

Microsoft Word dokument, elektronies aan hsu@sun.ac.za. Verwysings moet volgens die Harvard-stelsel geskied. Verwysings in die teks: Wanneer woordelike sitate, feite of argumente uit ander bronne gesitater word, moet die van(ne) van die outeur(s), jaar van publikasie, en bladsynommers tussen hakies in die teks verskyn, bv. "... (Berger, 1967:12). Meer besonderhede omtrent bronne moet alfabeties volgens die vanne van die outeurs aan die einde van die manuskrip onder die opskrif "Bibliografie" verskyn. Let op die gebruik van hoofletters en leestekens by die volgende voorbeelde. Volgens Sanso-014 is **Maatskaplike Werk/- Social Work** 'n goedgekeurde navorsingstydskrif en ontvang universiteite 'n subsidie ten opsigte van artikels van personele wat daarin gepubliseer word. In die lig hiervan is besluit dat bladgelde van R100-00 (honderd Rand) per bladsy vir gepubliseerde artikels van die betrokke universiteit gehef word.

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## **Annexure 5: Newspaper articles (City Press)**

### **4 teens held for school bus stabbing**

12 April 2014 13:34

Four high school pupils aged between 16 and 19 have been arrested for allegedly stabbing four others on a school bus in Cedara, outside Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal police said.

“Two accused were released into the care of their parents since they were minors,” Captain Thulani Zwane said today.

Four pupils were yesterday stabbed during a fight on a school bus.

Two were stabbed in the chest, a third had severe facial injuries and the fourth was stabbed in the arm, ER24 spokeswoman Luyanda Majija said earlier.

“Paramedics were told that the incident occurred when some 12 males arrived at the school and some jumped on the bus and started stabbing the learners on the bus.”

Zwane said that one of those arrested was an accused in a case of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm dating back to August. The pupils who were stabbed were witnesses in that case.

“[The] arrested suspects will be charged with attempted murder and will appear in Pietermaritzburg Magistrates’ Court soon,” he said.

- Sapa

## Teacher recovering well after being shot by pupil

25 September 2013 13:30



Violence against teachers must stop, the SA Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) has declared. Picture: Khaya Ngwenya/City Press

A Sasolburg high school teacher who was shot and wounded by a pupil is recovering well after surgery.

“He is recovering really well and has been moved to a general surgical ward,” Emfuleni MediClinic spokesperson Retha Behr said today.

On Saturday, the man was in high care after undergoing surgery to have the bullet removed from his leg.

A 15-year-old shot the teacher at a Sasolburg high school on Friday, Free State police said.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said the boy appeared in the Child Justice Court in Sasolburg on Monday.

“He was released into the custody of his father. I believe ... he will be appearing in court again next month,” NPA spokesperson Phaladi Shuping said.

The boy faces a charge of attempted murder.

Sergeant Sellwane Mapamela said on Friday that the teenager was chasing three other pupils at the school when the deputy principal stopped and questioned him.

“During this questioning, the boy pulled a pistol from behind his back but a shot did not go off,” Mapamela said.

The boy ran off and two teachers followed to try and disarm him. During a scuffle a shot went off, hitting one of the teachers in the right lower leg.

The boy ran off again and police found him in DF Malan Street in Sasolburg. The firearm, believed to be his grandfather’s, was found in his possession.

The boy was sent for psychological assessment.

- Sapa

### **School death: Dad hands teen over to cops**

9 October 2013 12:24

The father of a boy who allegedly stabbed a fellow pupil to death in Bekkersdal, Randfontein, on Gauteng's West Rand, has handed his son over to authorities.

“He was arrested with the assistance of his father who brought him to the police yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon,” Lieutenant Colonel Katlego Mogale said.

The 17-year-old was charged with murder and would appear in the Westonaria Magistrates' Court soon.

On Monday, Bongo Soxokashe (16) was stabbed to death during a fight with the 17-year-old at Kgothlang High School in Bekkersdal.

“It is alleged that the fight started in the classroom when the suspect threw an umbrella on the wall and its pieces ricocheted back and hit Soxokashe,” Mogale said.

“An argument erupted leading to both scholars taking out knives and fighting.”

Mogale said Soxokashe was stabbed several times and was declared dead on the scene on Monday afternoon.

The boy fled the scene after the stabbing.

Sapa

## **Boy arrested after primary school pupil (12) stabbed to death**

14 October 2014 8:38

A boy has been arrested after a pupil was stabbed to death at Bula Dikgoro Primary School in Mamelodi, Gauteng police said.

“Mamelodi police are investigating a case of murder and a suspect was arrested and kept at a place of safety, as he is a minor,” Captain Doniah Mothutsane said today.

“He is appearing at the Mamelodi Magistrates’ Court later today.”

The boy was arrested after he allegedly stabbed a 12-year-old Grade 6 pupil at the school yesterday morning.

The Gauteng education department said the school immediately called an ambulance and the police. Paramedics certified the 12-year-old pupil dead on the scene.

Spokesperson Phumla Sekhonyane said it was difficult for the department to comment on the incident, as it was running an investigation parallel to that of the police.

“We are looking at the circumstances of the incident ... how it happened,” she said.

Trauma counselling would be provided by the department to the 12-year-old’s family and pupils at the school.

“We would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of the learner who passed away, educators and fellow learners,” she said.

- Sapa

## Annexure 6

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