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Home Education Voices: Does it Really Matter Where We Learn?

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Abstract

This research explores Home Education (HE) as a form of alternative education outside the traditional UK educational system. By examining the perceptions of families involved in HE, we set out to understand the value they place on this educational choice and how it facilitates unique learning interactions between children and significant adults. Utilising a mixed-method approach that combines online surveys and Photovoiceⁱ—a method where participants use photographs to express their views and represent their lived experiences—the research engages with 27 families representing 52 children. The findings from the surveys and thematic analysisⁱⁱ of the Photovoice interviews reveal that HE allows for significant educational capital gainsⁱⁱⁱ, not just in academic terms but also in fostering personal growth and family bonding. Children and young adults in HE demonstrate a keen awareness of their educational journey's significance, advocating for autonomy and creativity over traditional academic achievements. We highlight and make space for, the crucial voices of children and young adults in HE, through the research method Photovoice, providing insights that could influence educational policies and societal views towards alternative education forms. The research underscores the need for educational frameworks that respect and incorporate the preferences and aspirations of home-educated students, pointing towards future research avenues in educational policy and home education practices.

Keywords: Alternative Education, Children's Voices, Education Capital, Bourdieu, Photovoice

ⁱ Photovoice.org accessed [01.05.24]

ⁱⁱ Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2023. Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and being a knowing researcher. *International journal of transgender health*, 24(1), pp.1-6.

ⁱⁱⁱ Oldham, C., 2021. Reviewing home education literature: does it matter where we learn?. *European Journal of Alternative Education Studies*, 6(2).