Analysis on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Home-Schooling

Xingyan Wen[1,a,*]

[1]*University of York, York, YO105NA, United Kingdom*
a. wenxingyanxa@163.com
*corresponding author

Abstract: Due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2019, a large number of students could not receive regular education in schools. Therefore, many forms of alternative education emerged, the most common one is home-schooling, in which students learn under the supervision of their parents rather than teachers. However, home-schooling is controversial. In this paper, the author studies and analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of home-schooling, and conclusions can be drawn that homeschooling can prevent students from being bullied on campus and help students carry out one-on-one efficient education, but there are also inconsistent education systems, incorrect education methods, and imbalances existing in home-schooling.

Keywords: home-schooling, education, alternative education, parents and teachers

1. Introduction

The biggest difference between education and schooling is that education is a purposeful activity, which means that learners can learn in different ways and in different places, while schooling refers to the form that students learn at school. In the 19th century, home education was the norm for children in most countries. But by the 1970s, perhaps as few as 13,000 schoolchildren were home-schooling [1]. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the proportion of students receiving home-schooling has increased significantly, and the ratio of households with at least one child home-schooling has increased from 5.4% in spring 2020 to 19.5% in May 2021. About 3 percent of black students were home-schooling before the pandemic, a number that had more than quintupled to 16 percent in October 2020 [2]. However, there are very few studies on home-schooling, and many parents are very unfamiliar with this educational model, which is controversial among the public. Some people argue that this form of education is contrary to the mainstream school education model, which can lead to the emergence of educational inequality. However, some people believe that this way can improve the existing problems in education. This paper mainly focuses on the idea of home-schooling by exploring its advantages and disadvantages as well as the perceptions of students about home-schooling. The significance of this research is to help parents realize the advantages and disadvantages of home-schooling, and provide some data and analysis on this aspect for educators to consider whether home-schooling can be applied as a future education model.

2. Advantages of Home-schooling

2.1. Avoiding School Bullying and Racial Discrimination

First of all, some parents believe that the negative environment in some schools will affect children's learning and growth. One of their biggest concerns is school bullying. According to the Global Bullying Report, which was conducted in 126 countries and territories in 2020, bullying rates were 32% for boys and 36% for girls [3]. For students who have been bullied, school is not a safe place, and the experience of being bullied at school may even cause some psychological harm to them. Therefore, parents believe that learning at home can resist the emergence of school bullying. Another concern of some parents is racial discrimination. White men hold twice as many senior positions as black and minority men, according to school workforce data [4]. Therefore, some parents believe that schools lack a sense of racial and ethnic belonging, which will lead to racial discrimination and children will be harmed in schools. For example, according to the research of Lundy and Mazama [5], it is found that African-American families are more willing to let their sons receive education at home so that they can establish healthy black masculinity. What is more, through home-schooling, these parents believe that they can educate their children more effectively, helping them get rid of the special care and stereotypes of some school teachers for black children. Therefore, many parents intend to let their children study at home because of the negative school environment.

2.2. Receiving One-on-one Guidance

Another advantage of home-schooling is that children studying at home can receive one-on-one guidance, thereby greatly improving their learning efficiency. To keep education fair, all students learn the same in schools. However, due to different students' abilities in receiving knowledge, some students may not be able to keep up with the teacher's teaching speed, resulting in unsatisfactory grades. Besides, some students think that the knowledge taught at school is not saturated enough to improve their abilities. Therefore, some parents think that teaching at home and providing one-on-one tutoring for their children are conducive to enhancing learning efficiency. For example, when it comes to literature teaching, by applying home-schooling, parents can use a variety of formal and informal educational settings to provide educational opportunities for their children, such as traditional lectures, online classes, and excursions to museums, some of which cannot be provided in schools. When conducting STEM courses, which stand for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, parents can conduct targeted exercises according to their children's weak points, and purchase corresponding exercises [6]. Therefore, parents have a good understanding of their children's learning effects and can observe their children's learning status at any time to improve their learning efficiency.

3. Disadvantages of Home-schooling

3.1. A lack of Systematic Teaching Contents

First of all, learning at home lacks systematic learning objectives and content. At present, almost all mainstream schools offer courses based on the teaching content provided by the government, so there are systematic teaching materials and teaching objectives for school education. Many parents who choose to educate their children at home believe that home learning can provide children with one-on-one tutoring to improve learning efficiency of students. However, according to Petrie from the United Kingdom [7], the government does not provide parents who teach at home with the same systematic curriculum content as mainstream schools. Instead, parents conduct voluntary teaching.

If parents do not have a comprehensive understanding of the current national curriculum system, it may lead to a situation where their children are taught to a knowledge level that is too deep or too shallow, thus being unable to maintain the country's educational equality and even cause their children to lag behind their peers. To address this issue, governments can publish the syllabus of the learning materials of mainstream schools on the website to ensure that all parents can download and view the content of school education. What is more, the content should be specific to the corresponding age group, and strive to achieve consistency and equality of education [8], since the teaching effect of unstructured home education will be worse than that of school education.

3.2. Inappropriate Teaching Methods

Secondly, home-schooling will have a certain impact on society. First of all, some parents choose home-schooling because the negative atmosphere of schools will affect the healthy growth of their children. But according to Dwyer [9], it can be found that some families may abuse children during home-schooling. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, the rates of parental stress, abuse, developing mental illness requiring hospitalization, domestic violence, and murder have increased substantially, which shows that home is not a protective place for all children. If some parents abuse their children at home on the grounds of tutoring, and there is no one for these children to chat with, more children will suffer from mental illnesses and develop exclusionary psychology [10]. These children cannot normally participate in social production and affect labour resources, which is not conducive to the development of the country. Moreover, Apple [11] pointed out that some families cannot connect social status with education, so many old ideas will be propagated and new inequalities will be exacerbated. For instance, some religious families are dissatisfied with public education's delivery of religious teaching, thinking they will do it the right way. But according to Kunzman [12], conservative Christian parents tend to see home education as an opportunity to shape the minds of their children through religious teachings. They just want to consistently export religious teachings and let children accept religion unconsciously, which will cause them to be unable to develop their critical thinking. This behaviour is just a form of indoctrination rather than education. Moreover, if some parents themselves hold objections to certain religious beliefs, it will virtually destroy social harmony when being passed on to the next generation. Therefore, the government should first determine whether parents who choose to educate their children at home have extreme ideas or forcibly instil religious ideas, and secondly, the child protection law should be applied to regularly check the psychological status of children receiving education at home to ensure healthy growth of children, or in other words, to ensure the safety of children through legal means.

3.3. Imbalance Between Family and Career

Thirdly, due to the need to tutor their children at home, parents must consider careers and family at the same time. Parents may face the situation of taking care of their children while going to work, but this is not an easy task for some parents. Studies of Vigilant et al. have shown that mothers are more affected by home-schooling [13]. First of all, the task of home education is often undertaken by mothers, which will increase their fear of educational failure. Most mothers will blame themselves for unsuccessful education which affects their mental health. In addition, many women cannot receive encouragement and support from their spouses or the people around them. According to Baker [14], conservative Christian families tend to identify the husband as the head of the household, while for most home-schooling families, mothers emerge as the teachers. In terms of educating children, most of the time, mothers pay unilaterally and fathers do not have a lot of sense of participation. Therefore, to solve these problems, the government can hold regular lectures across

the country, so that mothers can share their time solutions, and this can also provide some help for mothers who play the role of teachers. Besides, some community support can be set up to alleviate the psychological pressure of mothers and teachers [15], and spouses should be called on to pay attention to the state of their wives and actively participate in tutoring their children.

4. Students' Attitudes Toward Home-schooling

Most of the people who choose home-schooling are parents rather than children themselves, and most children are denied the right to choose the form of education. In addition, few people have studied children's thoughts and attitudes towards home-schooling. Therefore, the following research can be regarded as an illustration of children's attitudes toward home-schooling. From Neuman's research, it can be found that, on the one hand, children who are educated at home think that, first of all, school education suppresses their interest in learning [16]. They said that they are free to choose the areas of interest to study, and will not be forced to study by others, which improves their desire to learn and helps them understand themselves. Second, they can arrange their time at home according to their own learning rhythm and efficiency. Third, they believe that this kind of education strengthens the connection between themselves and their families, and everyone can draw knowledge and inspiration from the areas of interest of their siblings. On the other hand, they also found that they could not be recognized by society without a diploma to prove their strengths and abilities, and it is not easy for them to find a satisfactory job.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly explains the reasons for choosing home-schooling as well as its shortcomings and suggestions. In addition, it also shows students' views on home-schooling. Although home-schooling has advantages such as one-on-one tutoring and flexible study time, its disadvantages such as a lack of systematic teaching contents, inappropriate teaching methods, and imbalance between family and career will affect students, mothers, and society. Therefore, some relevant data can be collected in the future for more in-depth discussion and research on a smoother implementation of home-schooling.

References

[1] Ray, B. D. (2011). 2.04 Million Homeschool Students in the United States in 2010. National Home Education Research Institute. https://www.nheri.org/HomeschoolPopulationReport2010.pdf.
[2] Anderson, C. (2022). Homeschooling Black Students During the Pandemic. In R. J. Ceglie, D. F. Abernathy, & A. W. Thornburg (Eds.), Schoolchildren of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact and Opportunities, 83–97. Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80262-741-120221005.
[3] Long, R., Roberts, N. and Loft, P. (2020). Bullying in UK Schools. House of Commons Library.
[4] Runnymede/NASUWT. (2017). Visible Minorities, Invisible Teachers. BAMEed Network. https://www.bameednetwork.com/resources/article/visible-minorities-invisible-teachers/.
[5] Lundy, G. and Mazama, A. (2014). I'm Keeping My Son Home: African American Males and the Motivation to Homeschool. Journal of African American Males in Education (JAAME), 5(1), 53–74.
[6] Gann, C. and Carpenter, D. (2018). STEM Teaching and Learning Strategies of High School Parents With Homeschool Students. Education and Urban Society, 50(5), 461–482. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517713250.
[7] Petrie, A. (2001). Home Education in Europe and the Implementation of Changes to the Law. International Review of Education, 47(5), 477–500. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1012260228356.
[8] Neuman, A. and Guterman, O. (2016). Academic achievements and homeschooling—It all depends on the goals. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 51, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.08.005.
[9] Dwyer, J. (2022). Homeschooling Reconsidered. Philosophical Inquiry in Education, 29(1), 36–41. https://doi.org/10.7202/1088379ar.

[10] Forrester, D., Maxwell, N., Slater, T. and Doughty, J. (2017). An evidence based review of the risks to children and young people who are educated at home [Monograph]. National Independent Safeguarding Board. http://safeguardingboard.wales/2017/11/23/home-education-children-report-2/.

[11] Apple, M. W. (2000). Away with all teachers: The cultural politics of home schooling. International Studies in Sociology of Education, 10(1), 61–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210000200049.

[12] Kunzman, R. (2009). Write These Laws on Your Children: Inside the World of Conservative Christian Homeschooling. Beacon Press.

[13] Vigilant, L. G., Anderson, T. C. and Trefethren, L. W. (2014). I'm Sorry You Had a Bad Day, but Tomorrow will be Better: Stratagems of Interpersonal Emotional Management in Narratives of Fathers in Christian Homeschooling Households. Sociological Spectrum, 34(4), 293–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2014.917577.

[14] Baker, E. E. (2019). Motherhood, homeschooling, and mental health. Sociology Compass, 13(9), e12725. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12725.

[15] Goldsteen, K. and Ross, C. E. (1989). The Perceived Burden of Children. Journal of Family Issues, 10(4), 504–526. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251389010004005.

[16] Neuman, A. (2020). Ask the Young: What Homeschooled Adolescents Think About Homeschooling. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 34(4), 566–582. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2019.1710628.