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A Group of Home Educating Mothers in Turkey:

*Their Reasons, Pedagogic Approaches and
Use of Digital Resources*



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Durham University, School of Education

2019

This thesis has been submitted to The School of Education in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Ustinov College

Abstract

Introduction and background. Home education is not regulated in Turkey; it is a relatively new concept, gaining popularity in recent years among parents who are not satisfied with the national education system. I came across the term home education on Turkish parents' blogs and I found a discussion group in an online social network site. For this study, a sample of home educating mothers were recruited from this discussion group, and interviewed to examine the current situation of home education in Turkey. Aims and research questions. This research investigates home educating mothers' values and beliefs, pedagogic approaches and environments, and their use of digital resources for home education. The research questions that emerged from preliminary observations and the literature review were: (i) to establish whether/how a sample of home-educating mothers in Turkey differ in crucial respects in their values and beliefs. (ii) To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home-educating mothers in Turkey adopt for their children's education. (iii) To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet the educational needs of a sample of Turkish home-educating mothers' children. Design, methodology and methods. A cross sectional, descriptive and explanatory design was used. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 44 home educating mothers in Turkey. Symbolic interactionism was the theoretical framework adopted and thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data with the help of a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software package- Nvivo. Results. In this sample, home educating families in Turkey were found to be small families with children mainly at preschool and primary school level. These home educating mothers were found to have strong views about an ideal education and how the current education system was failing to meet their expectations. They indicated that they were aware of alternatives for educating their children, including home education, but they tended to send their children to school when they reached secondary school age. This may have been due to the unregulated situation of home education in Turkey. The

decision to home educate was taken mostly by mothers and most teaching at home was done by mothers. Their approaches to home education were varied but fell into four groups which they described as flexi-schooling, homeschooling, deschooling and unschooling. However, not only did these groups overlap, but as the parents became more experienced in home education, they could move in each direction along a continuum from less structured to more structured teaching approaches. While all mothers in this study used digital resources for their own personal development as parents, only about one quarter employed digital resources as a tool in their children's home education. Discussion. The discussion considers how the Results contribute to the literature reviewed in earlier chapters and identifies priorities for future research.

Keywords: Home Education, homeschooling, unschooling, flexi-schooling, deschooling, education, Turkey.

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Dedicated to my future children and children of the world...

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Abbreviations

ACSS	Academy of Social Sciences
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBOM	The Another School is Possible Association (Başka Bir Okul Mümkün in Turkish)
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BLoNE	Basic Law of National Education No. 1739
DLR	Digital learning resources
FATİH	Movement of enhancing opportunities and improving technology (Fırsatları Arttırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi in Turkish)
FUEM	Education Model that Fits the Nature of Child (Fıtrata Uygun Eğitim Modeli in Turkish)
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
HE	Home Education
ICT	Information and communications technology
IT	Information technology
IWB	Interactive white board
LAs	Local authorities
LUI	Law of Unification of Instruction
MEB	Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı in Turkish)

NACE	National Centre for Education Statistics
NAEP	The US's National Assessment of Educational Progress
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSNS	Online Social Networking Site
PC	Personal computer
PDA	Portable data collector
PEaTL	Primary Education and Training Law No. 222
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TPACK	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO-IBE	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - International Bureau of Education
USA	United States of America
WWW	World Wide Web

Part - 1 Introduction

- Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This research investigates the ideas, experiences and perspectives of home educating parents. It seeks to examine homeeducating Turkish parents' approachesto home education (HE), their reasons for adopting it and what HE actually means to them.

To set the scene briefly, Turkey is a country which lies between east and west not only geographically but also culturally. The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire which had lasted for almost 600 years. It has a population of 81 million people, 24.26 % of whom are between zero-fourteen years old (The World Factbook, 2019). Its territory lies in Europe and Asia with long borders with Middle Eastern countries and it is surrounded by the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Seas. While the population is predominantly Muslim, the republic was founded as, and remains, a secular state. The balance between the Islamic heritage of the society and the strict secular nature of the regime has been tough to maintain and therefore has at times caused frictions and divisions within the fabric of the society.

Basic education is compulsory for all children for twelve years, studied in threephases of four years. There are close to 16.5 million students in total, divided almost equally between primary, secondary and high schools (Tuik, 2017).The current national education system of Turkey does not allow HE. Therefore, access to research data in this field in Turkey is limited and it is difficult to contact the homeschooling community

in the country. Not only are there a relatively small number of homeschooling families, but they are also rather reserved as the practice is not regulated in Turkey. (The many ethical issues that had to be considered while conducting this research are discussed in section 1.1.2.) Before any data gathering could start, a process of familiarisation with the subject and this closed community had to be undertaken. As a single woman with no children at the start of the research, and therefore no possibility of home educating my own children, I was an outsider and it was therefore difficult initially for home educating families to become friendly and talk about the subject. This is discussed further in section 1.5.

The purpose of this study was to investigate a group of Turkish home education (HE) families' reasons for choosing HE, and their methods, including their use of technology. After my preliminary observations of Turkish HE families, my broad research aims were:

1. To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ between each other in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.
2. To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.
3. To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This thesis is the first of its kind examining HE families in Turkey. HE has not been widely practised in Turkish society until recently. Consequently, there has been little public discussion of it very little research has been conducted on HE in Turkey. Most research on HE has been carried out in other countries, with limited applicability to Turkey. Nevertheless, with easy on-line communication, HE appears to be growing

in popularity and merits further study. The opportunity to study at Durham University, in a country where HE is legally permitted, gave me access to the relevant international literature. This stimulated my interest in the rather closed community of HE parents in my own country. I also realised that as a woman I might be able to gain access to a community in which mothers were mostly the parent responsible for educating their children.

In choosing this topic the first factor was that although HE appears to be gaining popularity, it is still uncharted territory academically in Turkey. By studying HE practices I hoped to contribute to a debate that might lead to establishment of a legal framework similar to those that exist in other countries. This might enable a larger segment of the population to choose this option. The Ministry of Education had sponsored my doctoral research with a condition that I teach distance learning at a state university after graduating. I hope to make a positive contribution to the academic study of HE as well as raising awareness of an apparently growing area of educational practice which has been largely overlooked in my own country by politicians and professional educators.

1.3 Definition of Terms

Home Educating Parents

Although all interviewees were home educating mothers, the information gathered from them includes the HE practices of the family as 40 out of 44 subject families consisted of cohabiting parents. Therefore, while the title indicates that the interviewees were mothers, the terms 'parents' or 'home educating parents' are used within the text since the study reports the HE practices of the family. If and when interviewees claimed that the ideas or practices of the mother and father differed, these cases are highlighted without using the umbrella term HE parents.

Home Education

While the concept and term became popular internationally in the 1970's, HE has been the common British term and homeschool the common American term explaining the same concept (Rothermel, 2015). In Turkey the Turkish term used by home educating families is *evde eğitim* which is home education in English and it is used as the generic term to include different forms and methods of HE.

HE covers all forms of alternative out of school education carried out by parents or teachers selected by parents, at home or around home (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014; Petrie, 1995; Safran, 2010). Although the term implies home as the place of education, it does not necessarily take place at home but anywhere out of school environment, for example in a playground, museum, with friends or within an online environment (Harding & Farrell, 2003; Petrie, 2001). The terms used for different types or methods of HE can be overlapping or confusing. Some home educating parents do not formally teach their children, allowing children to follow their natural instinct to learn (Rothermel & Fiddy, 2001).

In this thesis home education is used as the umbrella term covering all terms and forms of HE. I group the approaches to HE in four main categories, in the order of their distance from the thought and practice of a traditional schooling system. In this order, at one end of the list there is flexi-schooling, which is the first step away from schooling, and at the opposite end there is "unschooling" which is argued to be the exact opposite of schooling. In the middle, homeschooling and deschooling come after flexi-schooling.

Flexi-schooling

Flexi Schooling which can also be called part-time-schooling is the first step away from full time schooling. Although the children are enrolled at school full time their parents decide not to send them full time in order to give the children a chance to develop other skills and interests out of school and/or heal the

negative effects of an unsatisfactory national school education. If unauthorised, flexi-schooling can create a school attendance problem for the children (Rothermel, 2002).

Homeschooling

Homeschooling can also be called Elective Home Education especially in countries where it is legally allowed, like in the UK. In homeschooling, parents follow some sort of curriculum but they decide on the pace and approach to the teaching based on their own values, beliefs and experiences rather than those of the national school system (Lyman, 1998; Neuman & Guterman, 2016). In institutionalised homeschooling, children can be enrolled into institutions that supply distance learning curricula and exams based on those subjects.

Deschooling

The term deschooling was first coined by Ivan Illich (1971) in his book “Deschooling Society”. He argued that the education system is neither effective nor fair. Illich (1971) and Holt (1977) dreamed of a society where every person can decide if they go to school or not (Routray, 2012). Illich opposed institutionalised education and argued that efforts to develop or modernise the school system could not change his belief that the schools should be disestablished and society should be deschooled (Illich, 1971). He had the foresight to envisage how people might use technology to form networks where people could share their skills and/or find peers with whom to exchange learning experiences. Thus, in the 1970s he could be said to have anticipated today’s digital communication technology. However, in this thesis, based on how it was understood by the research subjects and applied by the practising HE families in Turkey, deschooling refers to the process of healing the adverse effects of schooling on children whose parents remove them from schools due to negative experiences.

Unschooling

Unschooling, first introduced and discussed by John Holt (1977), is the educational idea that supports learning through life experiences, rather than following any curriculum. In this approach children are expected to initiate their own learning by showing interest in a subject that arouses their natural curiosity. They are said to learn through social interaction, spontaneous real-life experiences, playing with friends and family, asking questions, reading books. Unschooling is based on the idea that learning is a unique process that has to be personal for each individual. Because it is purely a child-centred and learner-driven process, and initiated naturally by curiosity, need and personal interest, advocates of unschooling believe that this type of learning can be more meaningful and useful to the individual.

1.4 Positioning as a Researcher

While I was studying at a School of Education in Turkey for my bachelor's degree, I became aware of the alternative education methods and I developed an interest in HE. In the following years I followed blogs and news about HE globally and in Turkey. My interest was aroused both as an educator and, possibly, as a parent. Therefore, when I started to consider topics for my post graduate studies HE was a possible choice. To my surprise I found that there had been no study on the practice of HE in Turkey. While browsing the international literature, some broad aims started to emerge in my mind. Reading further, these broad aims became precise and the way I should review the literature fell into three parts. First, I realised that HE in Turkey today could not be seen in isolation from the nation's history and development. Second, I had to consider the influence of international experts on the educational system today and the reasons for an apparently growing number of parents adopting HE. Third, my own professional interest in digital learning resources (DLR) led me to want to find out more about their use in HE. I explain these further in the next section.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in thirteen chapters, which are grouped in five parts.

Part-1 consists of Chapter 0, the introduction, and provides an overview of the thesis by introducing the research topic and its significance. It includes definitions of terms and research aims to introduce the subject of the research to the reader.

Part-2 consists of the literature review Chapters 0 - 0 and in Chapter 0 the questions arising out of literature review. Chapter 0 sets out the historical perspective of education in Turkey and explains the evolution of education from the Ottoman Empire era to the modern Turkish Republic. It sets the scene for the current situation by explaining how some parents decide to opt out of the school system. Chapter 0 provides an insight into selected scholars' views on education and their critiques of the school education. The chapter then provides an overview of the history of education out of school and examines models, definitions and approaches of alternative education in other countries. Moreover, the history of education out of school in Turkey is explained starting from the Ottoman period. Beliefs and cultural choices of parents are explored, along with the problems encountered by home educators. It finally examines the legality of education out of school in Turkey and globally. Chapter 0 gives an overview of educational technology and DLRs, their usage at schools and at home. Starting with the definitions and history of technology and DLRs for education, it provides an evaluation of use of technology at schools internationally and in Turkey. The FATİH project, a major Turkish initiative in the use of DLRs is examined, including its application, results, and critiques of the project. Finally, uses of technology at home, globally and in Turkey, are explained, along with use of technology by HE families for educational purposes. Chapter 5 provides an outline of the research questions that emerge from the literature review, with their broad aims, and specific objectives set by the researcher.

Part-3 explains the design of the research and methods selected to meet the aims and objectives of the research. This is in Chapter 0 and Chapter 0. Chapter 0 outlines the research design and research methods. It sets the background and discusses the design and explains the methodology for this design. Research methods are further explained in Chapter 0, covering the sampling, data collection and their analysis and discussion of ethical issues in section 1.1.2.

Part-4 reports the results in Chapters 0 -0. Chapter 0 presents the demographic data gathered about the interviewees and their family members. Chapter 0 provides information about the educational background of the children of the interviewees. It also reports the parents' reasons for home educating their children. Chapter 0 examines the pedagogic approaches and curricula used by the interviewees for HE. Chapter 0 reports the digital resources that the interviewed parents used with their children, both for recreational and educational purposes, and how they used them.

Part-5 covers the discussion and conclusions chapters in Chapter 0 and Chapter 0.

Part - 2 Literature Review

- Chapter 2 - A Review of Education in Turkey
- Chapter 3 - International Research on Home Education
- Chapter 4 - Use of Digital Technology in Home Education
- Chapter 5 - Questions Arising out of Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

In order to understand the decision of a minority of parents to educate their children at home it is necessary to understand the evolution of the public education system in Turkey. Beginning with the Ottoman Empire era, this chapter covers the history of education in Turkey. It reviews the influence of the Ottoman Empire on the modern Turkish education system and discusses the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and its educational reforms. The chapter considers the reports of foreign scholars on the early Republic of Turkey's education system and the actions which were, and were not taken, with regard to those suggestions. The evolution of the Turkish educational system and critiques of this system are evaluated. In preparation for the next chapter, where parental beliefs are discussed along with the critiques of education in schools and the history of education out of school, Chapter 0 concludes by highlighting the reasons why some parents opt out of the school system in Turkey and seek alternative methods to the traditional schooling.

1.2 Historical Background to the Current Education System in Turkey and Education in the Ottoman Empire

Modern Turkey (Republic of Turkey) was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on October 29, 1923 after the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), which was opened on April 23, 1920, abolished the Ottoman Sultanate on November 1, 1922. The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 and lasted until 1922. There is

undoubtedly a cultural connection between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. In addition, the stance of intellectuals and educators in early modern Turkey stemmed from that of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, if one needs to conduct research on the education system of Turkey, the study should cover at least the late Ottoman period as well (Akyüz, 2008). Moreover, the generation of intellectuals that lived through the transition from the collapsed empire to the modern republic were influenced by the thinkers of Western Europe and this generation play the crucial role not only during the Second Constitutional Period (1908 – 1918) of the Ottoman Empire but also while the education reforms of the new Turkish republic were being planned and put into practice. Taking all of this into account, and in order to examine it thoroughly, we need not only to look at the education system in Turkey, beginning from late Ottoman Empire, but also to take into account the European influences on that system (Gündüz, 2009).

Up until the 17th century, education within the Ottoman Empire was a privilege of the higher-classes. Prior to the 19th century, education aimed to enrich religious knowledge and to reinforce devotion to the sultan (Gündüz, 2009; Turan, 2000). The *medrese* (called *madrassa* in the West) was the school where higher knowledge in religious sciences was taught in Islamic countries. In the Ottoman era, *medreses* provided religious studies as well as philosophy, languages, natural and political sciences, and so on. These schools' curriculum was based on a Muslim individual's needs in terms of religious and worldly matters (Cicek, 2012; Ihsanoglu, 2004; Khuluq, 2005).

Around the 17th century, the quality of medreses gradually deteriorated and the earlier scientific and scholarly abilities of their graduates eventually declined. By then, problems in teaching methods and the quality of teachers had emerged. Literacy was not the primary objective of these schools and so industrial and technological needs were underrated (Ihsanoglu, 2004; Khuluq, 2005).

Following the 1789 French Revolution, new schools opened. Military schools and schools of medicine were the first to open (Gündüz, 2009). Sultan II. Mahmud, who reigned from July 1808 to July 1839, oversaw the renovation process that had begun 100 years before him and carried it into newer areas. The improvements he wanted to make were not limited to military areas, as had happened previously. In 1824, Sultan II. Mahmud enacted the very first rescript, which was the first legislation about educational issues. Within a few years, a new educational system had been established. However, in terms of their quality and quantity, the new schools could not meet public expectations (Akyüz, 2008). The *Tanzimat* (Reorganisation) period which began in 1839 included reformation in government administration and social life. Although the education system was one of the main areas targeted in this modernisation period, the traditional educational institutions continued as they had been and conflict between the old and the new types of education continued until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (Gündüz, 2009). As requested by the European countries to give non-Muslim minorities more liberty, Sultan II. Mahmud agreed to establish non-Muslim schools (Khuluq, 2005; Somel, 1997). This step reduced the religious pressure on the public as well. These schools followed a European curriculum and became popular in the country. According to some scholars, the spread of schools that were exposing their students to Western knowledge and its implementation sped up the deconstruction of the Ottoman Empire and, hence, led to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey (Khuluq, 2005). The new Western-style schools created a new social class that adopted a Western life-style (Karpas, 1973). In line with the desire of Turkey's elite, the schools began to exclude teachers who came from the medrese system (Cicek, 2012). This change opened the pathway for the creation of modern Turkey's secular education system (Öztürk & Nurdoğan, 2011).

Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi (Ordinance of General Education) is an act which dates back to the Ottoman period and it is accepted as the basis of modern education in Turkey. It was enacted in 1869 and began to be enforced in 1879 (Karpas, 2001). The levels of the Ottoman education system decreed then are very similar to the levels found in the current system (Provost, 2016). The main institutes were:

- *sıbyan mektepleri* (kindergardens): They were the first stage of education. Students learned basic maths, literacy, and recitation of the Quran in these schools. Sıbyan mektepleri were largely financed and administrated by local communities. In 1879, they were taken over and became *ibtida’i* schools (primary schools) that were controlled by the government (Karpas, 2001; Provost, 2016).
- *enderun mektebi*: This was the palace school for the children who lived in palace; the enderun mektebi also recruited students via the *devshirme* system. This was a system for the recruitment and Islamisation of Christian teenage boys. These boys were to be educated according to their talents, in order to serve later in the army, bureaucracy or government. The school had religious, academic, and military purposes. Although its graduates were free to work in lower social jobs, they were expected to serve in the government administration (Karpas, 1973).
- *rüşdiye* (middle schools): In these schools, girls and boys followed different curricula. Middle schools represented the most advanced level that girls could attain. While boys learned advanced geometry, bookkeeping and were expected to memorise the Quran as a whole, the girls learned household economics, sewing, and drawing. At the end of four years of education, the boys needed to pass an exam to advance further (Karpas, 2001; Provost, 2016).
- *Idadi schools* (high schools): Boys followed three years of a secular curriculum that included economics, French, geography, mathematics, and so on. At this level, students specialised in advanced humanities or advanced sciences. In 1903, rüşdiye schools (middle schools) and idadi schools (high schools) were merged; these schools offered seven years of continuous education (Karpas, 2001; Provost, 2016).
- After graduating from idadi schools, students could continue to *Sultaniye* schools (universities), *Darülmualimin* (teachers’ colleges), medical and law schools, military school, and trade and agriculture schools.

1.3 Education in Modern Turkey

1.3.1 Foundation of Republic of Turkey and educational reforms.

The intellectuals and the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Atatürk), had been working on education even before the foundation of the Republic. At the request of Atatürk, an educational congress, called the *Maarif Kongresi* (Education Congress), convened on July 15, 1921 in Ankara; this congress took place in the middle of the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922). During this time, many Turkish cities along with, but not limited to, the geographical districts of Thrace and Marmara and the Aegean and Mediterranean regions were under enemy occupation. The fact that the founders of the republic had managed to organise a congress on education in such circumstances illustrates the importance they placed on the education system and gives clues to the reforms that will come after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. Atatürk stated the importance he gave to education by saying: *“Regardless of what we have to do in order to succeed in education, this is the only way to advance”* (Atatürk, 2006).

The following statements—along with many more—from the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk underline both this point of view and his expectations regarding education: *“Education either enables a nation to be free, glorious and advanced or causes captivity, corruption and misery”* and *“To be able to use knowledge in daily life, education has to be used as a practical and useful tool”* (Atatürk, 2006, p. 46).

Atatürk argued that a nationalist approach is also crucial for improvement, stating that *“A non-national education system was the reason behind the failure of the previous education system”* (Atatürk, 2006). The

Maarif Kongresi was a response to the secular and neo-nationalist educational ideas that were thought to have developed before Tanzimat. The congress was seen as a turning point in the Turkish education system. During the congress, the primary and middle schools' systems in the main were evaluated and a new curriculum was developed. These changes aimed to set up a more simplified and applicable form of education which would be compatible with the needs of the public. Those who attended the congress also worked on resolutions to reinvigorate the economy with the help of education (Özdil, 2015; Sarıhan, 2011).

Turkey's republican regime was established under secular and democratic rules; however, a part of the society thought that the change towards secularism meant losing Turkey's traditional and cultural identity (Karpas, 2002). According to its founder and parliament, in order to develop a new, modern country out of a country with a literacy rate of less than ten per cent, reforms in education and the adopting of new ideologies were two of the country's most crucial needs. However, changing the structure and social life of the country received little support from the people at that time (Turan, 2000).

Many changes were enacted shortly after the Republic of Turkey was founded; these included the Law of Unification of Instruction (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*), the Alphabet Reforms, the foundation of Public Schools, the founding of the Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Language Society, and the reformation of public life through taking scholars' reports into consideration (Gündüz, 2009). Before the Law of Unification of Instruction (LUI) (passed on March 3, 1924), educational institutions were administrated by different ministries. This law brought all the institutions under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. The LUI was crucial in eliminating the dual secular and religious systems of education and, with the help of the LUI, a new national system of free, secular, and universal schools was established (Büyükdüvenci, 1994).

Zürcher (2004) argues that the Kemalist reforms (i.e., those instituted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) had three main elements: the secularisation of the state, education, and the law. Those elements had begun to

emerge even before the foundation of the Republic when, in 1913, girls were given the right to higher education. The secularist drive in education took place most dramatically between 1924 and 1928. In 1924, the medreses and religious colleges were closed and theological studies were integrated into a faculty at the Istanbul University. In 1926, the Western clock and calendar were adopted and, in 1928, Western numerals were adopted. In 1928, the most fundamental change, the adoption of the Latin alphabet, took place. This reform ended the confusion between written and spoken communication. For writing, Ottoman Turkish had used a version of Arabic and Persian alphabets which was unsuitable for expressing vowels in the Turkish language (Zürcher, 2004). This reform also fired a nationwide literacy campaign. *Nation schools* were the first to open in 1928, followed by *public reading rooms* (1930) and *people's houses* (1932) in order to promote literacy and public education (OECD, 2005). Education programmes on Turkish language, literature and history, in addition to organised cultural, sports, and art activities were produced and taught in people's homes to help with the modernisation of the society and the education of the public on the new ideology of the modern Turkish Republic (Karaömerlioğlu, 1999).

1.3.2 Foreign scholars' reports on the early Republic of Turkey education system.

Although Atatürk gave utmost importance to teaching of national consciousness in education, he also emphasised the importance of universal values and the need to bridge the gap between national and universal values (Umuñç, 1991). Right after the foundation of the new republic (1923), foreign scholars were invited to evaluate Turkey's education system and make recommendations for its development (Büyükdüvenci, 1994; ESKICUMALI, 1994; Turan, 2000). In 1924, the American, John Dewey prepared a report on Turkish education. His report is explained in detail next.

Dewey (1939) argued for a democratic localism whereby local interests could be kept alive, allowing the locals to take the initiative and responsibilities for education. On the other hand, Atatürk's aim—and, thus,

the national education policy—which was to educate almost all of the population from scratch in a war-torn country in order to turn them into modern, secular members of the international society— required a highly centralised system with a strong Ministry of Education. From the bureaucratic point of view in the new republic, Dewey’s suggestions to place the initiative to shape its democracy into local hands was dangerous, or at least premature, given the responsibility to keep the nation together with a common education system for all (Dorn & Santoro, 2011). Dewey thought that the Ministry of Education could collaborate with foreign schools in Turkey while allowing them more autonomy in their practices and curriculum. However, during the late Ottoman period most foreign schools acted as centres of ethnic indoctrination and animosity and, thus, the unification of education act in 1924 brought them under one roof with all other schools in Turkey (Büyükdüvenci, 1994). Although the population was made up of predominantly Turkish-speaking Muslims, in the cultural sense such an education policy was a nation-building process designed to reform the social remnants of a failed multicultural empire. Although Dewey found that the centralised system was nondemocratic, he agreed that using government enforcement to develop a public education system was necessary for a country such as Turkey where most communities were ignorant about the new system (Dorn & Santoro, 2011).

In 1926, a report on curriculum was prepared by the German, Dr. Kuhne. This report stated that the Turkish educational system should first focus on teacher education by having currently successful teachers teach their successful practices to other teachers. It should then focus on providing quality equipment to the teacher training institutes to train teachers to become skilled technicians so that more experimental courses could be provided (Kühne, 1939). In 1927, a report on technical education was prepared by a Belgian, Omer Buyse. He stated that there was a need for networking between vocational schools in Turkey, with better staffing and funding (Buyse, 1939). During 1933-34, the Kemerrer Group from the US examined the general education system in Turkey and reported that the educational problems were

caused by economic problems. The group suggested that, in order to contribute to the national economy, technical education should be delivered partly in classrooms and partly in industry (Maarif Vekilliği, 1939).

During the 1920s and 1930s, despite the help from these reports, the nation's educational problems could not be solved, since their foreign authors had no background information on Turkey and its problems. Eskicumali (1994) argued that although the authors were some of the leading experts on education in that era, their suggestions were mostly not applicable to Turkey's situation at that period. However, when the literature is examined, it can be seen that Dewey's report on the curriculum, the school system, and teacher training did have a lot of impact on the Turkish education system and many studies of his report have been conducted (Büyükdüvenci, 1994; Dorn & Santoro, 2011; Gündüz, 2009; Kirby, 2010; Turan, 2000). Some scholars claim that Dewey had little to no influence on the Turkish education system because his suggestions were not realistic for the conditions at that time (Kirby, 2010; Özdil, 2015), while others argue that even though Dewey's and Atatürk's educational views could not be mapped onto one another, Dewey's recommendations did in the long term influence the Turkish educational system more than any of the other reports which had been prepared (Büyükdüvenci, 1994; Dorn & Santoro, 2011). For example, Mustafa Necati, the Minister of Education¹ at the time, put most of Dewey's recommendations into practice, especially those about teacher training and the physical conditions of schools (Büyükdüvenci, 1994; Özdil, 2015).

Up until 1982 the Ministry of National Education was the only institution that employed and trained teachers. Although the Ministry of Education was charged with training teachers, it not only adopted

¹ Mustafa Necati was assigned as the Minister of Education on the December 20, 1925 and occupied his position until the January 1, 1929.

mostly temporary and hurried solutions, but also imposed massive changes from time to time. In those times, there was no certainty about how the training should be done or which specialities the training should give to the teachers. Therefore, it was impossible not to make mistakes in this process (Akyüz, 2008; Aydın, 2011). As Aydın (2011) notes, changing teacher-training policy continuously prevents the coherent and consistent application of a national curriculum.

As mentioned earlier, due to the political and social conditions at the time, Dewey's recommendation to avoid a centralised system could not be applied. He foresaw the danger of the education system becoming too bureaucratic. However, Turkey's centralised system now presents a huge problem, which cannot be undone easily. According to Dewey, the Ministry of Education should have an inspirational and leadership role. He suggested that if the ministry were to try to take on every responsibility, lack of control would arise. This has proved to be the case (Büyükdüvenci, 1994; Dorn & Santoro, 2011; Turan, 2000). For example, in a recent study, Kartal and Kocabas (2014) asked educational stakeholders about the problems they had encountered in the Turkish education system. These stakeholders included *"30 teachers working in the province of Bartın, four school administrators, five maarif inspectors, 38 students and 29 parents"* (p. 59). Teachers and parents most frequently cited centralised planning and policies as problems; for administrators, these were the second most cited problem (Kartal & Kocabas, 2014).

1.3.3 Evolution of the Turkish education systems.

With the new republican regime (in 1924), two primary school curricula were set: a three-year curriculum in the rural areas and a five-year curriculum in the urban areas. This dual curriculum was enforced by 1926. The 1924 curriculum aimed to raise a young generation who would be 'good residents'. They were expected to contribute to the local and national society (Aslan, 2011; Meb, 1926; Tarman, 2011). In 1939, both curricula were extended to five years. In 1930, 1932, 1936, 1948, 1962, 1968, 1989, 1993, 1999, and

2005, improvements and additions to the curricula were made in order to develop the best mental and physical habits in Turkish students (Tarman, 2011)

All educational services in Turkey come under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education (MEB in Turkish) in accordance with the Basic Law of National Education (1973). The laws and regulations concerning education were compiled by UNESCO-IBE (2012) as follows:

*The **Primary Education and Training Law No. 222 (PEaTL)** (of 1961) regulates primary education as a complete system. The **Basic Law of National Education No. 1739 (BLoNE)** of 1973, as amended by the **Law No. 2842** of June 18, 1989 and by the **Law No. 4306** of August 16, 1997, covers the following aspects of the education system: general and specific objectives; basic principles; general structure; institutions and establishments of all types and levels; teaching staff; school buildings and facilities; educational materials and equipment; and duties and responsibilities in the field of education and training. (p. 2)*

Pre-primary education is included within the formal education system. It is the level of no compulsory education for children aged between 36 and 72 months set out in BLoNE. This level prepares children for primary education by ensuring that children develop physically, mentally, and emotionally in a healthy manner. Pre-primary level education is offered in day-care centres, kindergartens, and practice classes. In addition, state and private primary schools have reception (preparation) classes for children aged from 60 to 72 months.

From the 1997-1998 academic year, eight-years of uninterrupted compulsory schooling was implemented. This legislation was first discussed in 1946 and was enacted in 1973 as a pilot project for a few primary

schools. The implementation of this law dated August 16, 1997 (right after the postmodern coup² in February, 1997) was extended to all primary schools. In the three-year period following the new policy, the number of students in the first eight years of school increased by 15% (Meb, 2011). Kirdar Tayfur & Koç (2011) and Dayioğlu (2005) report that teenage marriage and birth rates and child-labour rates decreased with the new regulation.

The 1997 reform prevented children from enrolling in religious schools before high school age and the religious schools known as *İmam-Hatip* schools had their middle schools closed (Gün & Baskan, 2014; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014). Moreover, the national university entrance exam rules were changed to make it difficult for İmam-Hatip graduates to enrol in non theological degree programmes. This measure caused a significant decrease in İmam-Hatip schools' enrolments (Cornell, 2015). Although the law was enacted to also prevent İmam-Hatip school (vocational theological school) graduates from studying non-theological subjects at universities, when put into practice, the law had similar adverse effects for other vocational school graduates as well. This situation created national unrest, because a lot of children, not only those in the religious school but also all students in the vocational schools, were affected. This unrest opened a way for politicians to use this unrest to their advantage and to portray themselves to the public as the only people able to fix the problem (Cornell, 2015; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014). The İmam-Hatips almost became a winning tool for both the conservatives and liberals, and led all ruling political parties to change the regulations about vocational schools when they came to power. According to Gün & Baskan

² Postmodern coup (Postmodern *darbe* in Turkish) was first dubbed by Cengiz Çandar in his newspaper article in *Sabah*(Istanbul), June 28, 1997; it then became the popular term for the intervention of the military on February 28, 1997, also known as "28 February Process" (p.130) (Candar, 1999). The army gave a list of recommendations to the government that was actually a must-to-do list (Al Jazeera, 2016).

(2014), constant changes influence and confuse the stakeholders in education and cause fluctuations in both the success rate of the country and also the trust of parents in the education system of the country.

Aksoy (2008) argued that the implementation of eight years of compulsory education in Turkey without detailed planning caused teacher quality to decrease, since the policy makers did not calculate how many more teachers would be needed when extending compulsory basic education from five to eight years. To cover the sudden need for extra teachers, many undergraduate degree holders (who did not come from education faculties) were given only 40 days of teacher training before becoming qualified teachers.

In 2012, a new system called the '4+4+4' law was suddenly introduced and the mandatory schooling period was extended to twelve years. Although the effectiveness of the previous system was increasing, implementation of a new system without any piloting engendered a lot of arguments (Gün & Baskan, 2014; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014). However, the Minister of National Education at the time said that it was normal to get complaints at this stage as he defined the change as a 'paradigm shift', suggesting that the ministry was moving towards a personalised education model (Gençdal, 2012).

The new law has been criticised because of its elective courses, schooling age, and the fact that it interrupts children's schooling and forces them to select their future occupation at an early age. With the new system, the age for starting school was reduced from 69-80 months to 60-66 months of age. There is, however, an option for families that prefer their children to start school later; they can use a medical report to postpone schooling of children who are over 66 months old. This option allows 60-80-month-old children to start school at the same time; however, this option has led to problems in both classroom management and implementation of the curriculum. Moreover, starting school at the age of 5.5 forces children to decide their future occupation as early as the age of 9-10 with vocational guidance; in many countries, children do not make that important decision until their final years of high school. It is argued

that making the wrong choices at an early age can cause bad results in the future (Gün & Baskan, 2014; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014). Furthermore, many families think that children are not ready for literacy education. The system was introduced back in the 1982-1983 academic year but failed as a result of the children's lack of readiness in learning literacy, increases in school phobia, adaptation problems, failing at school and behavioural disorders (Yavuzer, 1996). Fourteen years of eight years of compulsory schooling have resulted in increased schooling rates; as a result, the marriage rates for young girls in rural areas have also decreased. However, irregular attendance has always been a problem (Cornell, 2015; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014). The statistics show that in the first year following the introduction of the new system (2012-2013), the total number of first-year students was 1,884,243, but gradually decreased to 1,291,633 in 2016-2017. This decrease has been interpreted as either families having stopped enrolling their children in school at the age of 5.5 or as a decrease in the population of children in this age group (Dinçer, 2017).

This new arrangement has enabled the return of second-stage İmam-Hatip schools. The separation of primary and middle schools meant that some students were obliged to go to a school which was far away, since some schools were designated as primary and others as middle schools. A lot of schools were, therefore, converted to İmam-Hatip middle schools and some students were forced to attend them because they were automatically assigned to the closest middle school to their home address, even when the school happened to be an İmam-Hatip school (Cornell, 2015; Küçükoğlu & Karabacak, 2014)

In addition, the elective courses are not elective in practice. Since the schools have limited teachers and/or bad physical conditions, they can offer only a limited number of elective courses. School authorities direct parents and children towards specific courses. In effect, many school authorities just offer religion courses like 'Quran and Mohammed's Life'; while such courses are elective on paper, they are de facto a compulsory elective course (Gün & Baskan, 2014). According to a study conducted by EGİTİM-BİR-SEN (2013), the vocational schools are overcrowded because, under the new system, all the general high

schools became Anatolian High Schools. These schools accept a limited number of children on the basis of a national exam and children who cannot meet their entrance conditions are forced to choose between vocational schools and İmam-Hatips. In addition to the problems stemming from the school population, according to the EGİTİM-BİR-SEN report, school administrators have indicated that students who are unable to meet the demands of a vocational education are not motivated. This situation has led to an increased opt-out-rate (Cornell, 2015; Gün & Baskan, 2014; 2013).

The law has been criticised primarily because it was implemented without any groundwork and resulted in more than 500,000 students not being placed in a high school. A situation such as this had never been heard of or seen in the history of Ministry of Education. As a result, students are forced to enrol in either İmam-Hatips, private (fee-paying) high schools or open high schools (Soner, 2013). Open high schools are subject to the same curricula same as the formal high schools. Open high school students are provided with learning materials through books sent via mail, state TV channels and websites. End-of-term examinations of open high schools are taken in particular test sites several times in a year (Meb, 2017a). According to the Ministry of National Education's 2017 report, there has been a 26.90 per cent increase in enrolment to open high schools in the last five years (Dinçer, 2017). According to Aktaş' report (2018), the ratio of the total number of students who are enrolled in a formal high school to the total number of students who are enrolled to an open high school increased from 24 per cent to 36 per cent between 2012 and 2017.

1.4 Public Unrest about the Education System and the Development of Interest in Home Education (HE)

Although HE is not yet regulated in Turkey, (the legal situation will be covered in the next chapter), people have increasingly started to talk about the idea over the past few years. HE families have been writing

blogs, forming groups on social media, and giving interviews to newspapers; people have also started to discuss HE and all issues regarding the subject (Aksoy, 2015a; Cokbilmis, 2013; Demirhüyük, 2013; Doğan, 2014; Evokulumuz, 2017; Hatisaru, 2015). At this point it is necessary to look at these discussions and ideas. It should be noted, however, that while some online critiques argue that although some parents want to have the choice to homeschool their children, homeschooling seems like a utopian wish in a country with serious infrastructure problems in its education system (Aksoy, 2015c; Demirhüyük, 2013).

Home educating families (i.e., families that withdraw their children from school and families whose children have never gone to school) mention a number of reasons for opting out of the school system. They can be listed as follows:

- Critics cite regular changes in the Turkish education system and exams; politicisation of the education system; and, the incompetence of the decision makers in the education system (Doğan, 2014; Evokulumuz, 2017). (A 2014 blog article mentioned that the Minister of Education had changed five times in the last eleven years and that each new minister had introduced a totally new system (Doğan, 2014)).
- The 4+4+4 year education system has reduced the age for starting school (Doğan, 2014).
- The curriculum is outdated (Cokbilmis, 2013; Evokulumuz, 2017), for example, teachers are teaching handwriting to children in the age of computers (Evokulumuz, 2017).
- The curriculum is overloaded (Evokulumuz, 2017).
- National exams put pressure on the children (Evokulumuz, 2017; Hatisaru, 2015).

The striking comment from a Turkish family shown below indicates some of the concerns and unrest about the Turkish education system:

“We are thinking really seriously with my spouse about home education. Sometimes it looks like it would be better to migrate to another country than sending our children to school in this system” (Aksoy, 2015b) .

The reviewed blogs also reveal that parents’ decisions not to send their children to school are based on their beliefs. (Parental beliefs will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.) For instance:

- The parents do not want their children to go through the same experiences that they had during their education as these made them feel worthless and ordinary, and taught them not to question the system (Evokulumuz, 2017; Hatisaru, 2015).
- Schools do not meet the expectations of the parents (Cokbilmis, 2013; Doğan, 2014). The following examples show the ways in which schools failed to meet expectations. One family whose children were attending a private school had discovered that the school was focusing on marketing its brand and maximising its income (Cokbilmis, 2013); in another case, parents whose children were going to a state school experienced their children’s teachers being changed many times within the same year (Doğan, 2014).
- Schools serve industrial society by raising robot-like citizens through standardised education (Doğan, 2014).
- Children become unhappy when they start going to school (Demirhüyük, 2013).
- Just reaching the chronological age to start school does not necessarily mean that the child is ready to start school (Aksoy, 2015a).
- The children attending school are expected to spend time indoors without any physical activity (Cokbilmis, 2013; Demirhüyük, 2013).
- Parents believe that their children can also learn from their experiences, just as adults do (Cokbilmis, 2013).

- There is a belief that the self-directed learning is more effective (Cokbilmis, 2013; Demirhüyük, 2013).
- Schools are killing the children's natural creativity and desire to learn (Doğan, 2014).

1.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the evolution of the education system in Turkey from the beginning of the late Ottoman Empire period onwards; in so doing, it has shown that this period had an inevitable influence on education in modern-day Turkey. Education was the most crucial tool employed during the new republic's nation-building process. The system had to follow a single curriculum which emphasised common national values, as the system was designed to help the nation to achieve a common national target. That target was to reach the level of Western civilisation, so that after enduring a series of hostilities, forced migrations, and wars since 1802, the Turkish people could regain trust in themselves. The new republic's founder, Atatürk took education very seriously and wanted foreign scholars to recommend educational reforms. However, the reports they produced had limited impact on the reforms, since they did not contain any applicable plans that could urgently solve the country's problems. Moreover, their suggestions lacked the understanding and respect for the evolution of education in a country, Turkey, with an Islamic culture that was trying to form a strictly secular state system including national education.

Following the foundation years, we see developments in education that attempt to reach each and every student and adult in the country. The two main problems which the foreign scholars highlighted in their reports on the education system related to the training of teachers and the centralised organisational structure of the Turkish educational system. Although these problems were noticed and raised, it is apparent that when the very first education policies of the new republic were introduced these issues were not properly addressed over the years to align with society's changing and growing needs. Thus,

these problems remain today. The principles of the new republic continued to be emphasised (especially secularism) in the curriculum, although at most times without teaching essential moral and political aspirations. The introduction of eight years of compulsory, continuous education in 1997 was an important step in raising the minimum schooling years of the population. It was also intended to curtail the growing popularity of the Imam-Hatip schools and was successful in that respect. Another system of compulsory education—with its 4+4+4 year format—was introduced in 2012. This system proposed a longer compulsory education period, but, in practice, was a solution to the restriction of the previous law on Imam-Hatip schools. With the rise of blogging and the internet, the public can now speak (or write) freely and the spreading of ideas, including critical comments, has become easier. The continuous changes in the education system have created public unrest about the education system and helped to develop interest in HE. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of this topic.

The previous chapter traced the course of education in Turkey from the period of the Ottoman Empire onwards and argued that this history has inevitably had an influence on the current situation. The chapter then concluded with a summary of the reasons why some Turkish parents may be opting out of the school system. This chapter now covers arguments and parental beliefs for doing so in more detail.

The chapter provides an overview of the major scholars' critiques of education in schools. These are important in this dissertation because of the influence they have had on parents who home educate. The chapter examines the main arguments of the most influential thinkers, the similarities and differences between them, and the suggestions they have made. The chapter then discusses the history of education out of school and examines models of alternative education, definitions of this form of education, and approaches to it globally. The history of education out of school in Turkey is evaluated and examples of education out of school during the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic of Turkey era, which have an influence on the current situation, are cited. Parental beliefs and cultural choices are explored, along with the problems that home educators encounter. Lastly, the legality of education out of school globally, and in Turkey in particular, is covered.

1.1 Critiques of Education in Schools

1.1.1 Major scholarly critiques of education and the roots of education out of school.

Up until the Industrial Revolution, parents were responsible for educating their children and, for those who were not in the upper echelons of society, education took place mainly at home (Neuman & Guterman, 2017b). Education, therefore, was mainly a matter for parents. Moreover, because it was mainly a matter for parents a central concern was about how best to bring up children

Plato's *Republic*(2013), which was written in the form of dialogues, describes the ideal state as living in a world of justice, which contains both inner (a human being's psychological harmony) and external (between individuals and communities) justices. Book I debates whether humans are born 'good' or are neither 'good' nor 'bad'. In the further books in the series, while claiming that we cannot exactly know what 'Good' is, Plato argues that wisdom is knowledge about the 'Good' and the idea of 'the state of Good'. According to his doctrine, education should bring justice for everyone and is beneficial only if it leads to 'the state of Good'. Accordingly, education should change the direction of the human soul from bad to good. The art of teaching lies in making education enjoyable and motivating, since no knowledge will be long-lasting if the learner is forced learn (Plato, 2013).

At the beginning of the 19th century, with the rise of the industrial society, the scope and purpose of schooling became a matter for active debate in Western countries. Governments took legal responsibility for education. At the same time, the view that children were not simply young adults, as had previously been argued, began to emerge. A new pedagogical approach fired a new approach to education (Dündar, 2007). Some pedagogues and scientists criticised the system and argued for alternative forms of education.

An early example of a critical analysis of education is found in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 novel '*Émile*' (Gündüz, 2009).

Rousseau's humanist approach to education can also be found in Plato's ideas. Therefore, we may say that Rousseau was influenced by Plato's ideas on both the State and education. Both Plato and Rousseau believed that children are good in nature and that education should make children good citizens, in order to make communities and eventually the whole State 'good'.

Because Rousseau's educational view put nature at the centre and developed children's understanding through experiencing the environment and through reflection (Rousseau, 1953, 1979), *Émile* (1979) made a strong contribution to the term 'childhood'. According to Gutek and Kale (1997), the 18th century viewed childhood as a bad state of human life that needed to be gotten over as soon as possible; furthermore, children were expected to behave like adults. Notwithstanding, Pollock (1996) suggested that childhood as a construct existed in 17th and 18th centuries, and that childhood was not seen simply as preparation for adult life. The emphasis of education was on educating children for their future roles, while preserving their social distinctions. The personality of each child was important not because there was a desire to provide children with a personalised education according to their needs, but because it was necessary to find the right method for each child to mould them into the shape that would ensure that they conformed to the system (Pollock, 1996). By contrast, Rousseau saw children as being important in their own right, needing to be dealt with as children, and not as young adults. *Émile* focuses on the individual education of a boy by means of natural education. *Émile* complements the following key points: 1) that different forms of education are needed in each state of a human-being's education (Rousseau divides the boy's development into five stages by devoting a book to each.), 2) that the nature of the child should be preserved from the beginning of his life, 3) that children need to make sense of the world but only in their own way, 4) that the trainer's duty is no more than restraining a child from getting hurt, and 5) that the

purpose of education is to develop senses through experiencing the things in nature and developing children's own ideas through reasoning that enables them to draw their own conclusions. Only when their bodies are strong enough can children make mental activities. Moreover, Rousseau maintained that education in moral issues and religious doctrine should be postponed until the age when a child's reason is fully developed and he/she is ready to deal with his/her emotions (Rousseau, 1979). He also suggested that there should be a fine equilibrium between freedom and control in education.

Pestalozzi was a Swiss educator. Like Rousseau, he was known as a humanist educator and his educational view was also based on the belief that human nature is essentially good (Ornstein & Levine, 2008). He used Rousseau's novel *Emile* to educate his son, whom he named after Rousseau, and published a book in 1774 about this experience. While acknowledging that Rousseau's ideas on natural education were essentially valid, Pestalozzi believed that they called for some refinement in that they required the inclusion of a psychologically based strategy to guide child development (Chambliss, 1996). He mentioned that, notwithstanding their enduring validity, Rousseau's ideas on natural education needed some revision with psychological insight to guide child development (Chambliss, 1996). The years he spent in schools as a teacher and manager added more aspects to his educational views and these can be seen in his books and essays. The essays, which were published in the journal *Ephemerides*, reflected his experiences and developed ideas on child-centred education that Pestalozzi called 'simultaneous education', where children were taught individually in a group (Chambliss, 1996; Ornstein & Levine, 2008). The four volumes of stories that were named *Leonard and Gertrude* were published in 1781, 1783, 1785, and 1787. The series systematically expressed his views that successful social reform could be accomplished only by educating children in an environment in which they felt they were cared for and safe (Pestalozzi, 1801b). *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children (1801a)*, provides the most systematic and famous reflection of his educational views. He introduced the concept of 'object learning'. Here he suggests that teachers should teach children everything, beginning with objects and direct experiences that occurred naturally and were

found in their emotionally secure home environment (Pestalozzi, 1801a). His object learning instruction method influenced Froebel, one of the students he mentored. Froebel was a German education pioneer who introduced kindergartens (Ornstein & Levine, 2008).

Froebel was influenced by Pestalozzi and Rousseau in terms of natural education, the homelike environment of a school, and, especially, the idea of object learning (Chambliss, 1996; Ornstein & Levine, 2008). However, he thought not only that Rousseau's ideas on natural education needed some revision, but also that "*Pestalozzi's object teaching was philosophically insufficient*" (Chambliss, 1996, p. 130). Froebel's philosophical insights, therefore, led him to emphasise the symbolic meanings of objects in object learning, something which had not been done by Pestalozzi (Chambliss, 1996). In addition, unlike Rousseau, Froebel was seen more as an idealist than as a romantic, even though his most famous book *The Education of Man* (1905) includes both romantic and idealist aspects, because his educational philosophy and world view were based on spiritual mysticism. He thought that the core of early childhood education was the 'spiritual mechanism'; he argued that a human's adult character already existed in the embryo and that educational philosophy should, therefore, consider children's characters and allow them to express themselves freely and trigger self-activated learning. According to Froebel, if children are given an emotionally secure environment, they can see the relations between the objects given by God. Froebel believed that the early-years curriculum should include games, fairy-tales, and songs which have aspects taken from children's natural environment in order to stimulate learning rather than, as Rousseau argued, that young children should be protected from facing society directly, in order to stimulate their learning. Beginning from objects they already knew, children would externalise their inner creativity. In turn, that creativity would help them to shape materials like clay, sand etc. into real-life objects, which would make children conscious of the surrounding world.

The spiritual aspects of Froebel's educational view and the humanist approach of Rousseau can also be seen in Rudolf Steiner's views. Steiner was an Austrian philosopher who founded anthroposophy, which is a philosophy that claims the existence of a spiritual world which is accessible via inner development of human imagination and inspiration (McDermott, 1988). Steiner believed education would occur naturally if the hidden nature of the child was considered. According to Steiner, the early development of a child would be completed in the first three years of the life through gaining experience of the physical, social, and cognitive worlds. Steiner divides childhood into three stages each of which lasts seven years. He argues that only if teachers work on all aspects -the physical body, the etheric body (inner power), and the sentient body (perception and sensation) - of a human's nature will they be successful. These all develop at different ages in a human and so teachers have to watch children carefully, be aware of the laws of human nature, and have the right methods to treat every aspect of the child's hidden nature. The method was named 'head, heart, hands'. For example, in early childhood children can learn through imitation (hands) and this is why examples are so important. The second phase of education should include inner perception (heart) with the third being the time of intellectual understanding (head) (Steiner, 1965). In 1919, Steiner was invited by the owner of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company to open the first comprehensive school in Germany. The school was to serve the employees' children. In a short period of time, the school, however, grew to serve children from all social classes and abilities and not necessarily just those connected with the company. The Waldorf name became a trademark (Awsna, no date) and schools that follow Steiner's educational philosophy have now spread to 70 countries (Freunde Der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners, no date). Steiner criticised education by saying it had been shaped for 300 years by a traditional approach (Steiner, 2003). By contrast, the Waldorf schools' curriculum is close to modern education theories in terms of theory of child development and its main educational philosophy has been preserved since the first Waldorf School was opened. Waldorf teachers accept the individualism of each child; they allow each child to learn how she/he can learn by giving them a controlled freedom.

Alexander Sutherland Neill was a Scottish educator who shared similar thoughts to Rousseau on human nature, as he too thought that children were essentially good. Their thoughts differ mainly in terms of what they actually mean by 'freedom' during the child's education. For instance, Rousseau had a fixed idea as regards what a child should become and he dreamed about an educational system that would shape that child in the way he imagined. His views on child-innocence were not as romantic as Froebel's ideas; he saw children as having animalistic traits which they outgrew in time when they were allowed to be free and provided with emotional support from adults (Bailey, 2013). A. S. Neill thought that children would be happy and grow into self-regulating adults if their personal freedom was supported and if they were allowed to grow freely without adult pressure on them. He argued that if something were forcibly taught it would be a waste of time, because a child would not learn anything without interest (Neill, 1960). In 1921, he founded an independent school—Summerhill—in the belief that education should adapt to children's needs. Summerhill is an example of both a democratic and an alternative education institution. All classes are optional; children choose which (if any) classes to attend and they are free to take control of their own time. The adults (specialists) are there to support the children's learning when they are wanted and to deal with issues to ensure all the children are equal and free.

The Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire seems to have come up with ideas that are similar to those of Rousseau as regards their ideas on pedagogy, even though they examined different sets of students and education systems in different cultures. They both value children's self-awareness and experiences which will help them to develop their abilities and creativity and keep their curiosity. Freire puts dialogue at the heart of education. He argues that dialogue is an absolute must for learning at the perception level, because dialogue removes the authority of the teacher; without that authority, the student and the teacher become critical research peers. According to Freire, the teacher's duty is not to answer questions raised by children. Instead, teachers should teach children to gain and maintain a habit of thinking critically, or the skill of "conscientization" (Freire, 1973). Therefore, Freire's approach is student-centred

and against the incumbent practices of teaching/learning which he called the 'banking approach' in education (Freire, 1970). According to Freire, the "*banking*" concept of education relies on the assumption that students cannot know anything but their own existence and consider themselves as "*detached from reality and disconnected from the totality*" (p.1). He, therefore, suggests a new model—'problem-posing education'—where the teacher and student form a research team together to solve communication problems between people and the surrounding world (Freire, 1970).

Similar to Rousseau and Freire, the Austrian-born philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend (1975) criticises both the idea that adults are introduced to children as experts on nature and society and that children are guided to mimic adults and obey the rules they set. Teachers are seen in the same way as other adults, but are placed on a pedestal. When faced with such glorified teachers, who are introduced as the smartest and wisest, children become withdrawn and unable to use their actual capacity. Feyerabend criticised the way science education is taught as being almost unquestionable. Moreover, those that make science education systematically unquestionable are the same people who criticise religious education for being unquestionable. According to Feyerabend, this approach has caused a generation to be raised without questioning skills and so society has to be defended from science/scientists. With this defence, Feyerabend (1975) maintains that we could save the next generation by not extinguishing children's natural learning-understanding abilities through exposing them to incompetent teaching at an early age.

The Croatian-Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich believes, as did Freire, that the schooling system serves the capitalist system by raising children to be automatically obedient. Thus, Illich has been seen as a radical anarchist theoretician of freedom in learning (Martin, 2000). He criticises the relationship between the schooling system and society. He argues that trainers and trainees have to adapt to the demands of the school system, whereas the school system should adapt to the needs of trainers, or teachers, and trainees, or pupils. In addition, the assessment systems used in schools open the way to inequality and

discrimination, since an individual's personal development cannot be measured through mass measuring methods. By the end of the 1960s, people had started to speak up against school and education (Erdoğan, 2002) and the deschooling trend in education began with Ivan Illich's famous book *Deschooling Society* (Illich, 1971). He argued that when the public thinks about educational rights its thinking is limited simply to the right to attend a school. However, Illich did not believe that universal education goals could be met merely by attending school. Because the institutionalisation of education is not only a cause but also an effect, the institutionalisation of society causes polarisation and psychological breakdown within a society. However, Illich did not just criticise the system; he also suggested reinventing learning by offering self-directed education methods that should be supported by social relations and society resources. It is also important that, in 1971, he proposed 'learning-webs' supported by advanced technology (Hart, 2001).

All of the educators mentioned in this section were critical of the current education systems of their time. Although they lived in different times and cultures, they believed that schools are limited by teaching only fixed sets of knowledge. With regard to their attitudes to learning, they opposed the concept of a separation between school and daily life and suggested ways to decrease that gap in some way. They valued development of practical skills and experience, and of feelings rather than the academic skills that the education systems of their times aimed to teach (Barrow, 1978). The educational systems they proposed put children at the centre and freed children from the barriers that were put up by adults (parents, teachers, and the other educational stakeholders). If the mandatory strings between school buildings, textbooks, teachers and students were loosened, the children could learn better and achieve more lasting learning outcomes. The thinking of educators such as those mentioned above has spread among families who believe learning is not possible in artificial learning environments like schools. Consequently, they have turned towards alternative education movements in the form of either alternative education institutions or HE (Miller, 2004).

Illich's book (1971) fired a critique of the school system and other books and critiques followed. Non-educational specialists started to say that they were also not satisfied with schools and well-informed parents developed their own critiques of schools which were, in turn, delivered to and spread among other parents. The introduction of IT and the widespread use of the internet made these critiques available to everybody via emails, blogs, social media, and so on. The web brought parents together and the internet helped ideas and critiques to spread faster. So, the rapid growth of HE has likely been facilitated by the internet. Educational specialists brought forward the idea that the school system was no longer a given and that people were challenging it. According to Basham, Merrifield, and Hepburn(2001), the wide availability of the internet has over the past two decades brought the HE movement, which had been almost completely ignored before, to the attention of families. HE awareness has propelled the popularity of HE and IT has revolutionised its potential (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). As part of their research into HE families Parsons and Lewis (2010) asked how they had heard about HE and realised that it was an option for them; 50% of the families replied that they had learnt about HE via the internet. The role of technology among HE families will be discussed in the next chapter, as the role of technology, along with increased access to PCs and the internet, has undoubtedly contributed to the growth in HE (Basham et al., 2001).

1.2 Education out of School

In the new era, the base elements of education and training (knowledge and understanding of knowledge concepts) have been changed. With the emergence of new knowledge sources, knowledge is no longer considered to be as trustworthy as it was previously, because, in the new era, knowledge serves as evidence for a society's values and beliefs (Erdoğan, 2002). According to Webber (2017), learning outside of the classroom is often advertised and seen as extra-curricular activities. For instance, 'non-formal education' is perceived as adult education and lifelong education, whereas the term 'informal education'

refers to all experiences through which we learn something, for example, reading a newspaper, going for a walk, or having a conversation with someone. The distinction between non-formal and informal education relates to intentionality (Webber, 2017). According to Illich (1971), schools in the industrial era have lost their function because access to knowledge is no longer limited to schools. A person can gain knowledge from everywhere at every step of his/her education (primary, secondary, and higher education).

The early roots of education out of school lie in outdoor education (OE). Sharp (1943) first described OE and termed it 'camping education'. He offered it as an addition to classroom education. He advocated adding some outdoor time to the school curriculum in the belief that the best way to gain knowledge about nature was through experience (Sharp, 1943). As shown in Webber's literature review, some researchers think that OE is also important for the environment itself. From earliest times, mankind has learned through experience and the environment has been improved by those experiences (Webber, 2017).

Experiential learning (EL) has always been an important part of education, since there is a strong connection between learning something and experiencing it. How children learn, how they handle knowledge, and how they process knowledge have long been debated. Observing, forming concepts, testing new situations are concrete steps that lead to meaningful learning. Although EL is considered part of school curricula for certain classes in particular, some scholars see it as a major type of out of school education, because a particular group requires an individualised 'programme' in terms of their personal curiosity, ideals, and freedom (Webber, 2017).

Woodhouse and Knapp(2000) listed environmental approaches that cover outdoor education and place-based education:

“... place-based education has been referred to as ‘community-oriented schooling,’ ‘ecological education,’ and ‘bioregional education’” (p. 2). Place-based education is multidisciplinary and experimental in nature. It emerges from the fundamental characteristics of a place and includes features such as topography, bionetwork, sociology, legislation, and other dynamics of a place. For instance, while learning about the economy is only one area of study within the curriculum, placed-based educational philosophy is designed to be broader than the ‘learn to earn’ perspective (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000).

In 2008, Lainie Liberti, the mother of a nine-year-old son coined a term for unschooling while travelling. She called it ‘Worldschooling’ and in 2011 she started an educational movement called Project World School (Liberti, 2009). Worldschooling is an HE practice whereby the whole world is a classroom to experience (Riley, 2017). Lainie and her son Miro refer to themselves as ‘natural learners’ and turn everything they do while they travel into an opportunity to learn (Liberti & Siegel, 2016). She calls Worldschooling ‘real time learning’ and, drawing on her own experiences, states that the system covers all academic aspects of learning. Moreover, many other important aspects of education are involved in Liberti and Siegel’s system, for instance, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, social interactions etc (Riley, 2017).

HE approaches are commonly categorised into two types: holistic pedagogy and experimental pedagogy. While holistic pedagogy supports an education model that refrains from shaping the personality, experimental pedagogy thinks of schools as institutions where living environments and processes are arranged. Sociology sees the school as a tool to reform society; the economic approach thinks that a school is a company. The differences between these points of view have helped to develop various models of schools. The process, which started with major scholars who were critical of the schools in their times, began with the opening of schools that were based on their pedagogic views and continues to this day. For

example, nowadays not only Waldorf and Montessori schools, free schools, and democratic schools, but also schools with ecologic approaches are also becoming popular (Dündar, 2007; Hesapçioğlu, 2004).

Aydin (2002) suggested that the root of the differences between alternative schools and traditional schools, in terms of their ideological, structural, and curricular properties, stems from the differences in the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic conditions within a country. For instance, the term 'alternative education' is used within the American Education literature particularly in relation to students with behavioural problems and to families with ideological and religious sensitivities. Dündar(2007) noted, this distinction was especially evident after the end of the 1970s. Although alternative schools in the US use different educational philosophies, alternative education is thought to address a problematic segment; nevertheless, there is no one view of alternative education and the conflict of understanding between different thoughts about alternative education is also criticised among alternative educators themselves (The Alternative Education Resource Organization, 1991). While alternative education tends to be associated in US with the educating of 'problem' children, alternative education is accepted elsewhere as a field of practice that embraces different, alternative educational philosophies(Dündar, 2007).

HE researchers approach the subject from two main points of view:

1. **A purely pedagogical** stance: here the concern is with educational aspects including the curriculum, learning process, role of the child, academic achievements, methods and materials. Parents with pedagogical concerns usually think that the current education systems perpetuate inequality and find the entire system unsatisfactory (Koons, 2010; Nemer, 2002).
2. **A holistic/ideological** stance is concerned with the effects of education on the practicer's life. This view takes education as a whole and the key point is not to destroy the integral elements

of life. According to this view, education should not be separated from life itself, nor should it be fragmented within itself (Dündar, 2007). This point of view is concerned with the effects of education on the family and children, their life routine, attitudes etc. According to Koons, some scholars state that this approach places more emphasis on social experience than does the pedagogical approach, since it depends on the life routine of the family and their surrounding environment (Koons, 2010).

Nemer (2002) visualised two views which were explained as follows:

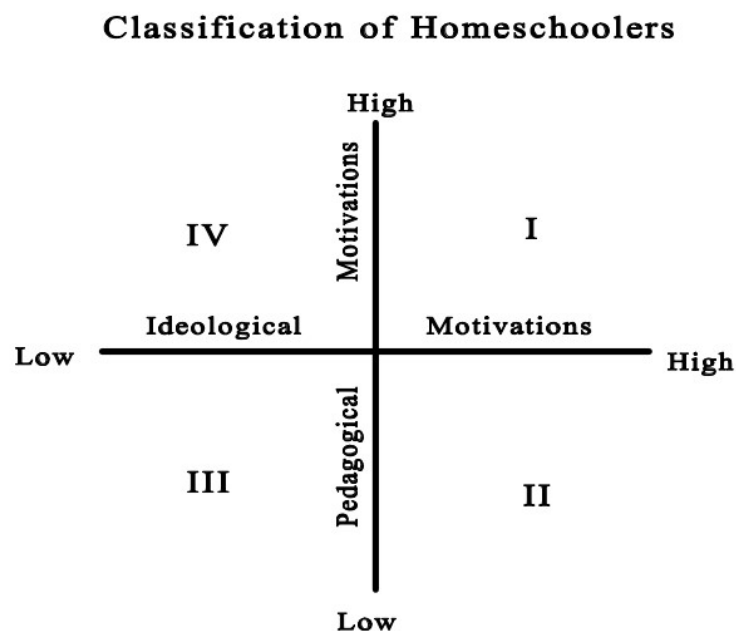


Figure 0-1 Nemer's Classification of homeschoolers

(Nemer, 2002, p. 14)

As Nemer (2002) explains:

Figure 1 represents one model of how these two scales could interact. A parent who has both highly pedagogical and highly ideological motivations will be placed in quadrant one. Those who decide to homeschool because of strong ideology, but who have little pedagogical motivation fall in quadrant two. Also (skipping over quadrant three for a moment), those who dislike the pedagogy of traditional schools but have little ideological motivation for homeschooling fall in quadrant four. Finally, homeschoolers who have little pedagogical or ideological motivation fall into quadrant three. This third quadrant contains, among others, those homeschoolers causing the most vocal apprehension from people outside the homeschooling movement. Educators and educational policy makers often express concern about parents keeping their children at home but not helping them learn academically worthwhile skills or knowledge. Such homeschoolers may be parents who essentially allow their children to “drop out” early under the guise of homeschooling. Alternatively (or in addition), they may have a strong desire for their children’s company. They may seek their children’s assistance with household, business, or farm chores. Or they may be parents who simply place little or no importance on academics. (p.13)

1.3 Home Education, Culture and Parental Choice

1.3.1 Prevalence of HE internationally.

An expanding variety of alternatives in both institutional education and instructional education led to the creation of a new term: ‘choice-oriented education’. In the current era, while public and private schools offer a wide array of education programmes, free schools, non-profit alternative education institutions, charter schools, tutoring methods, voucher programmes, distance education programmes, and HE have been emerging. Even its critics state that HE is the most successful and growing movement among the choice-oriented education methods (Andrade, 2008). According to Blok, Merry and Karsten (2017) it should be taken into account while comparing and contrasting different countries in terms of growth of HE that the main question should be whether or not parents have the right to choose school or HE instead. If

they live in a country where they can choose, HE can increase especially with its rising popularity in recent years. Moreover, apart from having the right to choose, the subsections of the legal framework and inspection regulations (high, moderate and low regulation by the authorities) relating to HE also affects the possibility of adopting and applying alternative education methods. This explains its prevalence in each particular country (Blok et al., 2017).

As Ray (2015) notes:

Homeschooling – that is, parent-led home-based education – is an age-old traditional educational practise that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and “alternative” but is now bordering on “mainstream” in the United States. It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States. Home-based education has also been growing around the world in many other nations (e.g., Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Mexico, South Korea, Thailand, and the United Kingdom).(p.1)

According to Neuman and Guterman (2017a), HE gains momentum every other day. According to Ray (2016), the United States contains the largest group of HE families in the world, in terms of both their number and their percentage of school-aged children. The US is wealthier in terms of HE resources and family experiences than other nations and also leads other countries by acting as a pioneer in the HE field. US non-profit organisations and researchers give support to other countries by granting legal aid, holding conferences, providing organisational development support, and setting examples via court cases. As Ray's (2016) brief history and demographics of the United States situation show, both of a child's parents tend to be highly and actively involved in HE; most homeschooled children (about 95%) are in families in which the parents are married and living together, and a larger than average number of children is very common among HE families (Ray, 2005).

According to Neumann and Guterman (2017a) :

The beginning of this trend in the United States appeared in the 1970s; at that time reports indicated that about 13,000 children were being home-schooled. Nowadays, 40 years later, the estimated figure is two million, and in Britain the estimate is about 80,000. In Canada it is about 50,000, in Australia about 30,000, and in France about 2,800. ... in Israel, home-schooling is a relatively recent development; it began only two decades ago. However, it is a growing practise. The number of home-schooling families in Israel is estimated to be about 400, whereas two decades ago it was only about 60. (p. 149)

In 1999, the US had 850,000 HE students; by 2012, the number of HE students had increased to 1,773,000 (Redford, Battle, & Bielick, 2016). The number of HE students as a proportion of the total number of students also increased steadily, from 1.7% in 1999 to 3.1% in 2012 (Redford et al., 2016) and was estimated to be around 2,300,000 by the spring of 2016; this figure shows an average of a 6% increase in homeschooled children every year between 2012 and 2016 (Ray, 2018). Collom and Mitchell (2005) interpreted this change in numbers as indicating increasing dissatisfaction with the traditional schooling system and an acceptance of HE.

According to a survey conducted by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (2018) out of the 177 local authorities (LAs), 164 informed that HE children in the UK has increased 40% in average over the last three years (34000 HE children in 2014-15 academic year, rising to 48.000 in 2016-17). The most cited reasons by the parents to opt out of school are 'mental health issues' and 'avoiding exclusion' (Issimdar, 2018).

1.3.2 Parental involvement and motivations

"Home-schooling then can be examined as part of an on-going debate about who should control the education of America's children—government or parents" (Murphy, 2013, p. 4).

Parents who believe they have the right to control their children's education think the problems in the education system are not caused by the children but come from the system itself and those who created it (Murphy, 2013).

Neuman et al. (2017b) stated that in recent years parental involvement in schooling increased while industrial society was expanding. Families needed different ways to express themselves including, but not limited to, taking part in classroom parties, occasional parental participation in classes, joining school/family communities, and funding schools that appeal to their political/pedagogical principles. Parental involvement has been evolving from activities such as those mentioned above to directing their children's education by choosing elective HE (Neuman & Guterman, 2016).

One of the main differences between believers in traditional education and those who believe in education out of school lies in their views on the primary goal of education. Traditional educators believe that schooling should prepare students to work in a consumer-oriented society. In contrast, alternative educators believe that education should prepare students for a life that conforms to the environment that surrounds them (Webber, 2017; Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). The other reasons that lead HE families to choose this option for their children are varied; they include, but are not limited to, dissatisfaction with conventional formal education systems, the implications of their religious views for their children's education, concern for the curriculum and learning environment, desire to follow specific pedagogical approaches, and fear of violence, drug use, racism etc. in schools (Gaither, 2008; Ray, 2018); in short, they are driven by academic, social, religious, and alternative lifestyle motivations (Beck, 2008). These are discussed below in detail.

Although Collom (2005) claims that the parental motivations for HE can no longer be easily identified through their ideologies only, HE parents' motivations generally fall into two categories: psychological

motivators (parental beliefs and ideas about education) and living conditions (health reasons, being a travelling family, or the physical conditions of the place they live). Parents' beliefs about education are shaped by their ideas on what education their children should be provided with and how it should be provided. When HE parents were surveyed about the reasons for choosing HE, they drew attention to the public school system; they stated that the public school system fails to satisfy their needs and that the national curriculum's methods do not match their approach to education (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Kılıç, 2017).

In the main, HE families do not choose this style of education for one reason only but rather for a combination of reasons (Chapman & O'Donoghue, 2000). Research suggests an array of reasons for the increase in the number of HE families. These include: a specific set of family values; family ideologies, pedagogical concerns; concerns about safety and possibility of picking up bad habits in the traditional school settings; concerns about the curriculum and the quality of education offered; a desire to give personalised instruction to the pupil; alternative lifestyles; popularisation of alternative education systems (what Chapman and O'Donoghue (2000) call "New age influences/thinking" [pp. 24-30]); special educational needs; and, continuous health problems. The reasons given here are consistent with literature, suggesting that 75% of HE parents' in the US are conservative (Cai, Reeve, & Robinson, 2002) and that they want to include their own family's religious values in the curriculum. Several other researchers share this view (Collom, 2005; Dumas, Gates, & Schwarzer, 2010; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Hopwood, O'Neill, Castro, & Hodgson, 2007; Patterson et al., 2007; Petrie, 2001; Princiotta & Bielick, 2006; Ray, 2015). Long and Jackson (2001) have raised the question of how a family's financial problems affect the HE decision. According to their findings, if money were not an issue for their surveyed families, one third of them would choose private schools that are better suited to their view of life.

Dick Kitto³ categorised HE parents into three main categories: '*competitors*' who compete with the national school system and claim that they could better educate their children; '*compensators*' whose first intention was sending their children to public schools and who, after having negative experiences, withdraw their children from school. These parents try to heal their children's wounds at home and want their children to return to school after a while; and, finally the '*rebels*' who are against the system because they have chosen alternative lifestyles and give more importance to freedom than the other families do. However, this categorisation has been criticised by some researchers because it is too simplistic an explanation for the growing number of homeschoolers (Rothermel, 2002; Webb, 1990).

There are some who argue that parents' own past negative experiences of schooling are a factor in choosing HE for their children. Furthermore, parents who were homeschooled some decades ago are adults now and they are solid proof that HE has worked. They are good examples for the new HE families who have concerns about the schools system; those who were homeschooled themselves are also more likely to homeschool their children also because of their lifestyles and family needs (Collom, 2005; Ray, 2016).

While it has been over ten years since Cooper (2005) conducted his HE study, that work might give a general insight into the HE families in the US. HE children have more time to take advantage of extra-curricular activities such as social events, private courses, community work, national competitions. Some families pursue a complete curriculum for their children, while others adopt a more relaxed approach to HE, as they call it a '*lifestyle of learning*'. Although Collom (2005) claims that the earlier religious oriented motivations of HE during 1980's and 1990's are not that strong anymore, the new generation of HE

³Dick Kitto who was a founder member of Education Otherwise. He mentioned these categorisations during an interview for the Open University (Webb, 1990).

families are driven more by academic motivations. However, according to Ray (2005), with regard to religion in HE demographics, most of the HE families consider themselves as religious and the majority are conservative. For this reason, Apple (2000) and Lubienski (2000) have claimed that by directing their children to their perspective and isolating them from other points of view, HE parents are selfish. The discussions become even tougher by arguing that letting parents homeschool their children would lead to the collapse of the current system. Some state that HE is equal to abandoning the youth/next generation to parents who are ignorant and have prejudices against the current system (Apple, 2000; Ravitch, 2000). Furthermore, the 'scientific management' movement insisted on a reform called progressivism (Lagemann, 2000; Ravitch, 2000). The suggested reform proposes an educational system that is administrated by the people who are familiar with the scientific findings, not by the ones who manage based on common sense. Tyack and Cuban (1995) supported that reform by claiming that most of the educational problems of the time could be solved by science-based approaches. This approach was criticised as arrogant (Erickson, 2005) and assaulting parenting rights. This caused alarm among families and forced politicians to take a step back from this movement (Erickson, 2005; Glenn, 2005).

Although many researchers try to categorise HE parents according to their motivations, with the spreading of the movement, it has become more difficult to do so over time. In addition, the motivations for choosing HE can change over time. A parent may, for instance, decide to homeschool a child for one reason at one point in time and then be motivated to continue to homeschool for quite a different reason later on. The field needs an on-going study in order to keep track of it (Olsen, 2008; Rothermel, 2003).

A new taxonomy on parental beliefs that was offered by Rothermel (2003) has four levels; these are:

1. *"a superficially homogenous group"* (p.83) of HE parents who desire to control their children's education, even if there are differences in their motivations for doing so.

2. homeschoolers with *“group differences”* (p.84). There are family value and lifestyle differences between HE families in this group, even if some of them do not need to be included in any network.
3. homeschoolers with *“interfamily differences”* (p.84); this level encompasses the different motivations or ideas within the same network
4. those with *“intrafamily differences”* (p.84) where there are different thoughts on HE within the core and/or extended family.

Having a child-centred and individualised education programme is the most cited reason for choosing HE. Although Cai et al. (2002) stated that conservative HE families described their instructional style as ‘parent-led’, almost all families they surveyed mentioned ‘tailoring [an] educational programme to each child’s needs and interests’ (Patterson et al., 2007; Princiotta & Bielick, 2006) as their reason for opting to homeschool. Bielick (2001) investigated the National Household Educational Surveys Program (1999) in which 48.9% of the respondent families (63% response rate) expressed the idea that they could give their child a better quality education at home.

Chapman and O'Donoghue (2000) stated that HE parents thought that they have more right than the government to decide about their children’s education. The systematic review conducted by Green and Hoover-Dempsey (2007) concluded that both HE parents and public-schooled children’s parents give importance to parental involvement in education. The traditional understanding of parental involvement begins with choosing the school that best suits their educational beliefs and continues with cooperating with the school by supporting children’s out of school activities that are consistent with the school’s practices. HE parents see involvement in a more nontraditional/extreme way whereby they can take more control of their children’s education in terms of what/when/how to teach. The responses they gave on these issues are consistent with research which investigates the validity of these reasons in the 21st century (Green, 2005; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Rothermel, 2003).

Patterson (2007) investigated HE parents who took their children's education seriously and wanted their children to feel the same way. Some of these parents even tried to create a school environment in their homes by using bells to specify lesson times and following the national curriculum at home using parallel timing. However, after gaining some experience, they gave up these habits and adopted more flexible, child-centred plans with a more adaptive and responsive environment. They still believed that children need structure and discipline in their education as well as in their lives. However, the learning activities were self-directed by the pupils. They learned through their teaching experiences that pupils get bored easily and lose their interest in learning. Their experiences led them to consider their children's interests along with the curriculum. When they followed their children's interests, they came to see that pupils learn a lot more easily when the material is more enjoyable for them. These families developed a strategy for constant learning. They set a general curriculum for the year, but they did not set fixed times for learning activities. All the children learned at their own pace, within their daily life, sometimes using resources.

HE parents see learning as an ongoing, dynamic process which cannot emerge in structured lessons or by completing assignments (Chapman & O'donoghue, 2000; Patterson et al., 2007). According to those who believe that HE prevents socialisation, the school environment is an irreplaceable place in which to socialise (Petrie, 1995). However, in normal life, there is no living or working with the same age groups, as happens in schools. Within and across families, in social events pupils gather into multi age groups and HE parents see these groups as an advantage. In multi age groups, the older ones provide caring and tutoring for the younger ones, which is beneficial to all, since it helps the older ones to develop a sense of responsibility (Kılıç, 2017; Patterson et al., 2007). Brainerd, Sobanski, and Winegardner(2002) argued that if children had not been forced to spend long-periods in school, they could have spent their time in libraries, parks etc. and could have socialised more. One Canadian study's (Basham et al., 2001) results supported this idea, suggesting that, compared to their schooled peers, HE children attended more social events and

spent less time watching TV. The same piece of research reported that HE children showed more socially acceptable behaviour while playing together with their peers in a natural setting.

1.3.3 HE families' experiences.

The general public's assumption is that all children should go to school. As HE families do not send their children to school, they are seen in some way as marginal groups or outsiders. Moreover, being affected by this prejudice, HE families tend to portray a more positive picture about their experiences to families of schooled children who question their educational methods. In contrast, if they meet a family that considers HE for their children and sincerely wants to learn about their experiences they are more realistic (Atkinson et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2007). Atkinson et al. (2007) state that, at the beginning, many families do not know about their rights to educate their children and that not only this lack of knowledge, but also an additional lack confidence creates stress for families. In time, this stress fades and is replaced with the confidence that comes from seeing their children's achievements.

Although HE families know before they decide to homeschool that they need to invest more time, energy, knowledge, and skills into educating their children than public-schooling families do, after experiencing HE, they suggest that it really requires a strong desire to educate their children and involves a serious decision-making process, because HE needs not only a desire to homeschool, but also the ability to educate a child and both the emotional and financial means to cover all the commitments it entails. Generally, families who decide to homeschool their children before their children start school find taking this decision easier and evaluate the overall experience as 'easy' more often than do their peers who withdrew their children from school after a problem (Atkinson et al., 2007; Green, 2005).

While HE families do not regret their decisions, they do admit to having limitations and doubts, such as a fear of not being able to cover everything in terms of academic subjects or becoming frustrated by the overwhelming nature of HE parenthood, which requires more dedication and hard work than they could have imagined initially. HE families often feel isolated if they do not contact other HE families and HE support groups at the beginning. Having uncooperative and unmotivated children is a problem that almost every HE family faced at least once, along with the failure of instructional plans (Atkinson et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2007).

Some educational researchers claim that home educated children's lack of social interaction affects their academic improvement, since education cannot be separated from the environment that children are surrounded by. Academic knowledge becomes meaningful mostly through social experiences and the school is the bridge for the social interactions. So, education can only be successful if it is designed towards a certain end. In the UK, those families that choose HE are seen as outliers. However, some researchers argue that home educated children are at no more academic and no more at social risk than those who are educated in traditional schools (Koons, 2010; Webber, 2017). In contrast, there is research that shows HE children have stronger ties with the community that they live in (Webber, 2017). Lindeman states that education cannot be separated from life itself, as "*education is life – not a mere preparation of an unknown kind of future living..., the whole life is learning*" (Lindeman, 2011, p. 8).

In terms of academic achievement, there is consistent evidence that in standardised tests HE children perform as well as, or better than, schooled children (Boulter, 2017; Ray, 2010; Ray & Eagleson, 2008; Watson, 2019). However, Boulter (2017) reported that her research findings suggest a downward trend in academic achievement in some areas with increasing grade level; Wasley (2007) reported that in the university years there was no significant difference between HE children and their traditional schooled

peers in terms of academic or social performance, although the Admissions Commission expected that the HE students would be outperformed by their traditionally schooled parents.

After analysing national test results and Ivy League university acceptance rates, Ray (2005) suggested that the success of average home educated children, when compared with that of their average schooled peers, did not prove an overall superiority for HE over traditional schooling, but he suggested it could stem from many factors such as the dedication of HE families to their children's education. Furthermore, Erickson (2005) claimed that sending children to school for a large part of their day is a way to diminish family relations and undermine the role of parenthood by limiting family influence. According to Erickson (2005), keeping children in buildings with other children is only wasting time that should rather be spent with interacting with those of all ages. He proposed founding local schools and improving family networking as an option for those who do not prefer HE and to enable them to have educational freedom.

Riley (2015) conducted a study to compare young adults who were home educated and those who were not home educated, in terms of their competence, autonomy, and relatedness (to their family and community) satisfactions. They found no difference in relatedness. They did find higher levels of autonomy and competence and these were evaluated as the conditions that lead to successful outcomes.

Moreover, according to Basham et al. (2001), several studies showed that HE decreased the disadvantage of children who had less educated parents compared to their peers who had parents with higher levels of education. Therefore, HE children with less educated parents perform better in standardised tests compared to their schooled peers with parents educated at the same level. Therefore, HE decreases the gap between the success rates of children with less educated parents and children with more educated parents. Overall, home educated children outperform their schooled peers in achievement tests regardless of their parents' education level or income (Ray, 2015).

1.4 Education out of School and HE in Turkey

In 1928, Turkey accepted the Latin alphabet with some adaptation and this change affected the Turkish education system deeply. Teaching the new alphabet was the priority at first; in 1929, education was made compulsory for all children aged seven to twelve. In 1933-34, a commission investigated Turkey's literacy rate and suggested establishing correspondence schools for people who lived in those areas that did not have schools and that were not on the priority list for building new schools. In 1949, the 4th National Education Council decided to find a way, outside of the schools, to train people about democracy. Although the government did not take action on these decisions, it is important that an alternative was evaluated and that people in the education field began to be familiar with the concept of education out of the schools.

The first example of distance learning methods used in Turkish culture was found among the *akhi(ahi)* community. Ahilik culture, which is based on a closely-knit society with strong solidarity among craftsmen, dates back to 11th century Anatolia. Through the education of this society, which operated a master and apprentice relationship, nomadic Turkic tribes migrating to Anatolia became settled artisans endowed with trade skills and work ethics (Keskin & Marşap, 2011). The akhi communities were a form of *futuwwa (fütüvvet)* orders, which were ethical Islamic guilds. These Islamic guilds had published guidebooks named *fütüvvet-nâme*, which were accepted as correspondence school materials. These guidebooks guided the community through a lifelong learning activity. Fütüvvet-nâmeset the boundaries of the Islamic discipline and gave advice on adapting this discipline to their artisans' crafts and trades. Moreover, experienced akhis trained the beginners in terms of their crafts and the discipline (Şeker, 2011).

In the Republic of Turkey, private institutions first used alternative education methods to teach English in the early 1950s and the Ministry of National Education (MEB) then followed suit. The Centre for Educative

Films was established in order to produce educational films, television programmes and radio programmes to reach people who lived in villages (Geray, 2007). In 1961, the MEB established the first formal distance education centre; it provided correspondence education to vocational-high school graduates so that they could get a university diploma (Uses.Gov.Tr, no date). This programme was supported by printed and web-based materials, TV and radio programmes (Geray, 2007).

According to Akyuz (2001), the Turkish education system is very rich; nevertheless, the lack of knowledge about Turkey's own educational history prevents the Turkish government and educational authorities from taking lessons from history. This lack of knowledge creates disorganised and unsuccessful attempts to change the education system (Akyüz, 2001). As previously explained, in the early years of the new republic there was a shortage of educated people. This situation was understandable, since the country had just emerged from a series of wars which had caused a huge loss of life. Education was a priority after the republic was founded and, therefore, training teachers was an urgent need. In order to fulfil that need, correspondence schools were introduced as the first alternative education method. In 1974, 46.000 teacher candidates had been trained via correspondence schools. However, this emergency measure led to professional illiteracy in teachers in that period. These teachers received 15 weeks of training over three years, i.e., five weeks per year, whereas the training institutes had been providing a total of 72 weeks of training for three years, i.e., 24 weeks' training per year (Aydın, 2011).

According to Korkmaz and Duman (2014), although private schools started to use some alternative education methods in 2005, and also they have used the alternative methods as an advertising tool to attract children from high income families, the following problems still remain in the Turkish education system:

- There is little or no movement aimed at changing education policies.

- The research into and practice of alternative education methods are too limited.
- Some methods are too popular and generate private sector attention seeking profit from high-income families.
- There is a lack of control over alternative education institutions and this brings lack of quality.
- Specialised teacher education is too costly (Korkmaz, 2014; Korkmaz & Duman, 2014).

It should be noted that, in Turkey, HE is still unregulated, so the limited number of studies mentioned below argue their assumptions on the premise that HE will be regulated someday.

A recent study classified Turkish parents who would prefer HE for their children (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014). Families interested in HE were divided in terms of their income levels, from starvation level to middle/high income, because the authors found a significant difference according to income for those interested in HE and their reasons for being interested in it. Poverty and starvation levels of income in Turkey are defined as follows.

The starvation level is the total monthly amount of money required to feed a basic family of four people with two parents and two children in a balanced and adequate way. The poverty line is defined as the total monthly amount of money required for basic expenditure on items like food, clothes, rent and utility bills, transport, education, and health for a family of four people with two parents and two children (Www.Saglikis.Org.Tr, 2018). For reference, in 2014, research showed that, in Turkey, the minimum wage was 846 TL per month, while the starvation line was 1225 TL and the poverty line was 3990 TL (Www.Turkis.Org.Tr, 2014).

- Participants from the starvation line group most frequently cited the following reasons (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014):

- Family reasons
- Transportation problems
- Those from the poverty line group mentioned the following reasons the most (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014):
 - School standards and their differing quality according to their location
 - Creativity and freedom of children being limited by schools.
- The participants from the middle- and higher-income social group most frequently mentioned (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014):
 - Ignorance of individual differences
 - Child has special needs and/or disability
 - School does not challenge the child.

According to Kartal (2014), in Turkey, public thinking about HE is based on a fear that the society would become very individualised if HE were legalised, since being part of a community and community values are important in Turkish culture. When freedom is mentioned too much, the public begin to think that the social structure will be broken and the new generation will not have the feeling of national bonding. Since the idea of HE is associated with individualism, the Turkish people are not eager to legalise HE. They accept the existence of problems with the current education system, but they think that government should solve

those problems and find alternatives that safeguard the public interest (Kartal & Kocabas, 2014; Tösten & Elçiçek, 2013).

Kartal (2014) asked educational stakeholders about the positive and negative aspects of HE. The research revealed the lack of ideas and consciousness about the subject. However, the research participants agreed that it had possible advantages, such as a personalised curriculum, a reduction in both the families' and government's financial responsibilities, the removal of stress caused by school and exams. Surprisingly, students and parents were more informed about HE than the other stakeholders were. The families added effective learning, effective time management, healthy communication between family members to the advantages of HE from their point of view. The possible negative aspects of HE mentioned by the stakeholders in the study were: individualised education, social isolation, secession from education, absence of school community, lack of inspection, lack of discipline, pedagogical problems, social-economic effects, and inequality between students. When asked whether HE is feasible or not, education inspectors' thoughts were mostly positive, whereas those of school administrators, teachers, and parents were the opposite. The views of students were almost equally balanced between positive and negative thoughts.

In addition to all the other concerns about HE, in Turkey, most of the critiques of it centre around families who remove their children from school with no academic purpose other than allowing child age marriages and child labour. In the eastern part of Turkey especially this problem is seen with families in the low social-economic class, and the law and fines are used as preventive measures. Most people have concerns that permitting HE would cause an increase in the rates of child-age marriage and child labour (Şad & Akdağ, 2010).

Korkmaz (2014) suggests that parents and nongovernmental organisations need to exert more pressure over government to make alternative education methods applicable in the public schools in order for

education to gain autonomy from a purely centralised governance. In this regard, academic studies on alternative education methods are important if they are to become more widely understood (Korkmaz, 2014; Korkmaz & Duman, 2014).

Şad and Akdağ (2010) in Turkey claim that the public has concerns about the creation of a system designed to serve the wishes of a specific political tendency by allowing some parents to educate their children with ethnic or political bias . According to Küçükoğlu and Karabacak (2014), the sudden change brought up a lack of understanding of the system and would cause too many concerns around it on the part of the public.

1.5 The Legal Situation of HE

1.5.1 The legal situation globally.

Glenn (2005) defines children whose education is institutionalised as ‘unfortunate children’, because he says that when we look throughout history, the original form of education was education which took place at home and, ironically, it is institutional education that is called ‘traditional schooling’ nowadays. According to Glenn, compulsory schooling is the opposite of HE. Within the past decade, interest among parents in HE has been visibly increasing, albeit ignored by government advisors and educational professionals in their written or spoken statements (Petrie, 1995, 2001). Compulsory school attendance was not proposed in any country until the second half of the 19th century when concern was raised over the loyalty of the children of Catholic immigrants to the US (Glenn, 2005). On the other hand, the right of a child to education is recognised internationally through both the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (1950). Both of these were

ratified by the Turkish parliament; UNDHR was signed on 04.11.1950 and ratified on 10.03.1954 (Öndül, 2011) and ECHR was ratified on 06.04.1949 (Human Rights Law Research Center, no date). Neither ECHR nor UNDHR mentions compulsory schooling. In both, the decision of how children should be educated is left to the children's families. Compulsory education does not necessarily mean compulsory schooling and some countries are aware of that. A few countries including Turkey, however, remain confused about the right of a child to education in terms of compulsory schooling (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014).

An earlier study (Petrie, 1995) gave a detailed report of the law around HE in Western European countries; the key findings of this study are summarised as follows:

- *... accommodate home educators and always have done so (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, most of Switzerland, United Kingdom).*
- *have not permitted HE sometime in the past, but now do so (Austria).*
- *... now no longer permit HE in the word of the law but would appear to permit individual instances (Spain, Greece, two Swiss cantons, the Netherlands)*
- *... have compulsory schooling (Germany). (p. 287)*

Glenn (2005) stated that the countries that allow HE and also monitor the process in same way are: Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Ireland, France, Norway, Portugal, UK, Austria, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Russia, and Chile. Although HE is allowed in Iceland and the Netherlands—mostly in special circumstances rather than as an alternative method of education—the way HE is legally regulated suggests that it is discouraged. In Estonia and the Philippines, HE is mostly understood as school at home, because the child remains on the school list; the child gets textbooks regularly, but the parents are in charge of teaching the child. In Spain, Greece, South Africa, Luxemburg, Israel, and Uruguay, HE is forbidden by law. However, a

very few exceptions are made in special circumstances, for example, for children with special needs, or children that follow a very specific religious practice. In Sweden, Bulgaria, Malta, El Salvador, and Germany, HE is allowed only under certain medical circumstances. In Argentina, some state schools use alternative education methods and parents may choose those instead of traditional schools. In Cuba, neither HE nor private schools are permitted. In Finland, there is no supervision of HE; compulsory education covers alternative education methods. The following figure represents the legality of HE around the world. Red indicates illegal; blue indicates legal; purple indicates that there are certain restrictions, and the grey area is used for those countries where the situation is unclear (Wikipedia, 2018).

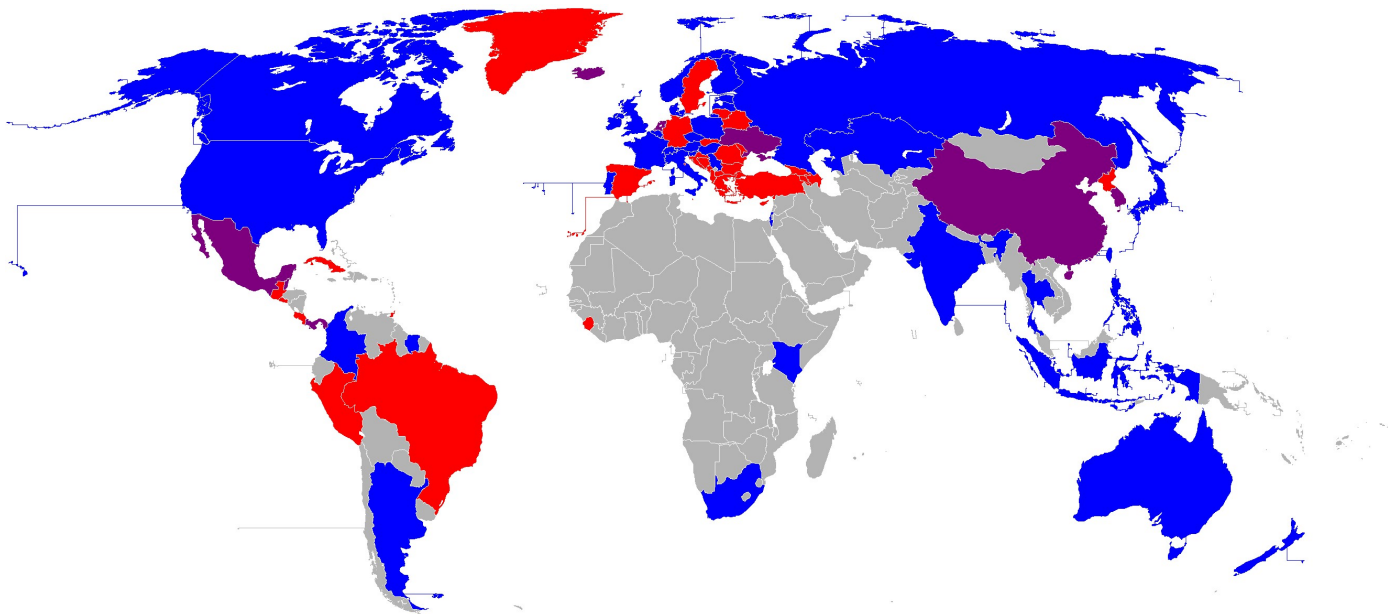


Figure 0-2 Legality of HE in the world

(Wikipedia, 2018)

In the UK, there is an obligation to educate a child after s/he reaches the age of five, but education does not have to be in the school setting. Parents or caregivers have the right to reject following the national curriculum. The legal requirement (originally in the 1944 Education Act) was that children must be

educated according to their age, ability, and aptitude (and, added later, special educational needs) through enrolment in a school or otherwise. The 'or otherwise' was included in the 1944 Act to allow wealthy parents to employ private tutors as an alternative to schooling. The law relating to HE in the UK is found in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and sections 436A to 443 of the same Act.

- As Section 7 states, “the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—
- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.
- In other words, the law is clear that the responsibility for educating a child belongs to the parent, and that the parent may delegate this responsibility to a school.
- Children with special educational needs have an equal right to be educated at home.

Some scholars argue that restricting HE is not possible in practice and doing so may even be harmful. For example Petrie (2001) argues that enforcement methods to ensure that children have an adequate education are limited to fines, imprisonment of parents, and placement of the children in government care. These methods are either not deterrent or inconsistent with fining the parents. Most parents simply pay the fine and continue to act in the way they wish. The other measures break up the unity of the family and cause severe psychological issues. According to Koons (2010) as long as the children's right to receive education has not been impeded by the family in a negative manner, banning HE is a violation of parents' right to choose their own children's education method, since international law makes clear that according

to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), it is the parent's duty to ensure that the child gets a suitable education.

1.5.2 The legal situation in Turkey.

In Turkey, the law states that all children except those with chronic illnesses have to be educated in the national school system (Çiftçi, 2016). Homeschooling in Turkey refers to education that is given at least ten hours/week to children who are of compulsory schooling age (at any stage including preschool, primary school, secondary school, or high school), need special education, and are not able to attend any special education institutes due to health problems (Meb, 2010). In order for a child to be schooled at home by the teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education of Turkey, the child should be enrolled to a school already, have a medical report stating that he/she cannot attend school for at least 4 months and a petition is to be signed by the parents asking for this service from the ministry (Meb, 2015). After consideration of the application by the local authorities of the ministry, teacher(s) are appointed to teach at least ten hours a week, in subjects decided by the special education services council of the city or town, after taking the situation with all aspects into account (Meb, 2015). This is a service given by the ministry for students with special needs and long-term inability to go to school and even if the education is given at home, it is provided by state teachers according to national curriculum.

Although many institutions and organisations after 2000 discussed alternative education methods because of the problems that have been experienced in the national schooling system (Özsoy, 2014), alternative education methods in Turkey are limited to open secondary school, open high school, and the Open University (Kartal & Kocabas, 2014). The MEB established an open secondary school programme in 1992 and an open primary school programme in 1998; the system provides a diploma for adults and teenagers who are over the mandatory primary education age (Geray, 2007; "MEB Açık Öğretim Ortaokulu

Yönetmeliği ", 2001; Uses.Gov.Tr, no date). These open schools follow the same curricula as the formal schools and provide books and digital materials through national state TV channels and websites; their students need to go to particular test sites to take centralised examinations (Meb, 2017a).

In February 2010, a directive was issued to regulate the continuation of the education of preschool and primary school aged children with special educational needs while they are hospitalised or at home. A teacher appointed by the Ministry of Education provides this type of education. These teachers are either appointed to a specific hospital/health centre or they may be peripatetic teachers. Children receive at least ten hours per week of pre-planned lessons or an individualised education programme. These teachers are also responsible for the parental training programme. The parents are responsible for preparing a suitable environment, collaborating with teachers to develop and sustain the child's education at home, and also informing the school administration about which of their children are enrolled (TaşDemir & Bulut, 2015).

According to Şad and Akdağ (2010) the legalisation of HE in Turkey would cause deviation from the general purpose of the National Education Policy and the Principle of Unity of Education in Turkey. One of the main reasons for choosing HE is religious beliefs. This reason also goes against the secular state principle, which is one of the core principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. It seems that, to be able to regulate HE, lawmakers have to secure an amendment to the constitution first.

Preprimary education is included within the formal education system at the level of non-compulsory education for children aged between 36-72 months, as laid down by BLoNE, to prepare children for primary education, while ensuring that they develop in a physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy manner. The pre-primary level is offered in day-cares, kindergartens, and practice classes. In addition, state and private primary schools have reception (preparation) classes for children aged 60-72 months.

Primary (basic) education which lasts for eight years (four years of primary school + four years of lower-secondary/middle school) is compulsory and provided free of charge in public schools for all Turkish citizens within the age group of six-thirteen. This period starts from the first September after the child reaches five years of age and ends at the end of the school year in which the child reaches thirteen years of age. The law states that all Turkish citizens, with no exception for dual citizens, have to send their child(ren) to school. Violation of PEaTL is punishable by an administrative fine for each working day the child(ren) is kept out of school. In each term, there are 90 working days; in each year, there are two school terms, so there is a total of 180 days in a school year. If a Turkish citizen does not send his/her child(ren) to school for all 180 days, there is an additional administrative fine. If the child(ren) is kept out of school after those fines, the parent/caregiver may face a punishment in the form of 15 days preventive detention, which can be enforced only once. This situation is very rare and has not been heard of among the HE families I have met in Turkey, although this punishment has been used in some cases involving child abuse (keeping the child out of school for child marriage or child labour). However, even those cases are very rare.

There are some gaps in the PEaTL that are used by families for HE purposes:

- The law indicates that in the first three years of primary education, a child can only fail the class if the child is absent for a whole semester. If the child goes to school once in a semester, this breaks the law's conditions as regards punishment. The child cannot fail the class, but can be forced to repeat the class if the parent/caregiver signs the papers allowing the child to repeat a year. In this case, all the parents/caregivers who take the risk of paying the administrative fines can keep their child(ren) out of school for the first, second, and third levels of primary education without the child(ren) failing these classes. HE families in Turkey use this legal loophole and try to find a school or a teacher that is willing to be

understanding about their decision and to accept this situation without enforcing the law or putting excessive pressure on the HE family.

- For the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth years of primary education, the law indicates that more than twenty days of absence (without a medical report) results in failing the class, but most teachers who accepted HE families for the first three years are not inclined to fail child(ren) for the fourth year as well.
- The law indicates that children have the right to take one or two years 'time off' between the fifth to eight levels to attend religious education (in order to be able to read the Koran in its original scripture and to become a *hafiz* (who can recite the whole book by heart)). At the time of resuming school, children have an option to take a pass exam, which can allow them to continue, not from the level at which they left, but at the higher level where they should have been had their schooling not been interrupted.
- With the 4+4+4 educational system, children are provided with a certificate of completion at the end of high school. Even if they complete the first two steps, they do not receive any certificate (diploma) if they do not complete the third level (high school).
- When a Turkish citizen turns fourteen, there is an option to take middle school exams without attending school and then the child can enrol in an open high school. To be able to take the middle school exams, a Turkish citizen who is older than fourteen needs to get a certificate of literacy, which can be obtained from public education centres that are run by the government for adult/lifelong education.

After primary school (the first step of the 4+4+4) there are two options for HE families in Turkey who want their children to be certificated, just in case their children may want to continue to higher education at some point in their lives:

1. sending their children to middle school after primary school to get on track again for the diploma
2. keeping their children out of school until they are fourteen years old, at the risk of paying administrative fines, then following the way stated above, for enrolling in an open high school.

1.6 Summary and Conclusion

The literature suggests that educational thinkers became critical of the prevailing education system or practices in their era regardless of time and location. They suggested a student-centred education and defined the ideal education goals and role of teachers. Scholars have handled the concept of education out-of-school, or HE, by classifying the motivations of parents. They also consider the ineffectiveness of schools and development in technologies that has made access to knowledge easier over time. Since the very earliest examples, education out of school has involved nature, and experiencing and experimenting in nature.

Alternative forms of out-of-school education are a rarely spoken about subject in Turkish education. Although one of the first established examples of lifelong learning out of school was developed in Turkey in the 11th century, this tradition did not continue in such an institutionalised form in the ages that followed. During the Turkish Republic, education out of school was only an emergency option, whereby the required training was encapsulated in a nutshell in a short time for a large group of people. Only recently, due to a rising dissatisfaction and sensitivity in religious and anti-establishment elements of Turkish society, have alternative education methods and out of school practices become popular with certain segments of the public.

Though with different degrees of freedom and in differing ways, most developed and developing countries allow HE in some form. Turkey is part of the group of countries where HE is illegal except for students with

special needs; that provision involves following the same curriculum but not necessarily at school. The strictness of the compulsory basic education and reluctance to allow alternative and out-of-school methods have always been seen as detrimental to the national education principles, especially to secularism. In a society which is predominantly Muslim by tradition, especially in rural areas, compulsory continuous education and its duration were deemed to be, potentially, a way to indoctrinate young generations into a secular society. Moreover, ensuring that children attended school was a practical way to reduce the number of child marriages and child labour, something which is still an issue in some areas of Turkey. In the last decade, the strictness of the system has eased and the punishments have actually only been used in a few individual cases.

With the development of industrialisation, especially in developed liberal environments and then through their transformation into an information society, HE became more popular as access to knowledge and ways to share knowledge became easier. The reasons why parents were choosing HE all stemmed from their dissatisfaction with the common education system. Despite having reservations about HE and different motivations for adopting it before making the decision, and having concerns and complaints after making the decision, HE parents who participated in research believed that they could not only offer their children a better choice of education, but also had an affirmative belief that their children could be better educated according to their wishes and interests and also be free and happy.

1.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters gave an overview of the Turkish education system, with background information and discussion of parental beliefs and motivations. It explained why the history of education out of school should be seen in light of influential scholars' critiques of the schooling system. The previous chapter then covered the legality of HE globally and in Turkey in particular.

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on educational technology and digital learning resources (DLRs), how they have been used in schools and at home, globally and in Turkey, by both parents and children. This is seen as important for two reasons: First, digital communication and resources have facilitated discussion of HE among parents who have concerns about the school system; second, although these resources are potentially transformative in HE parents' educational work with their children at home, little is known about their actual impact on the practise of HE. The chapter starts by examining the definitions and history of technology and DLRs for education. Use of technology in schools is evaluated. A review of the debates around technology in schools and learning around the world is followed by the use of technology in Turkey in particular. The FATİH project is examined in detail in terms of its application, results, and critiques of it. This project was the biggest project in Turkish education history; its aim was to create 'Smart Classes' by providing every student and teacher with a tablet computer and installing LCD Smart Boards in classrooms all around the country. Finally, uses of technology at home, globally and in Turkey, are explained. Here, statistics for children's use of the media are discussed in the context of family

dimensions that affect children's technology use at home and the research into how HE families and HE children use technology for educational purposes.

1.2 Definition of Terms

The US's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) defines technology as *"any modification of the natural world done to fulfil human needs or desires"* (The National Assessment Governing Board, 2014, p. 15). Providing a definition of technology will enable us to evaluate its pros and cons with regard to education. Melvin Kranzberg (1986), a well-known scholar in the history of technology, defines technology as *"neither good, nor bad, nor neutral"* (p. 5). Technology describes a broad and yet a focused concept covering all acts of human beings aimed at changing the natural world around them in order to reach their needs and desires, making their ideas real. Although this definition does not say anything about computers, the internet, software, or applications, it covers a much wider and more complex concept than a certain set of tools or devices (Levinson, 2013; The National Assessment Governing Board, 2014).

According to research, children use a wide range of technologies in their daily life, for example, mobile devices, technological toys, cameras, television, and social media software, where they can actively engage (Dron, 2007; Plowman, Mcpake, & Stephen, 2010). Digital-age children want a personalised and active learning process that is enriched with the media (Mcloughlin & Lee, 2010).

In order to discuss technology in education, we first need to define educational technology, which does not have a single accepted definition, not because of a disagreement, but because it means different things to different people. The descriptions of educational technology include, but are not limited to, computer-aided education, distance education, instructional technology, multimedia, classroom-management systems, and web-based learning systems. While some researchers take technology to mean everything

electronic and mainly computer-based technology, others argue that technology can include many other learning technologies that are not computer-based, for example, laser pointers, TVs, sound systems etc. They even consider the chalkboard and chalk as technologic innovations (Moersch, 1995).

Technology acts as a tool for students to gain access to information, to share that information, and to cooperate with their peers (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2016). Moreover, Kozma (2003) reported that

...when teachers use technology to plan and prepare instruction and collaborate with outside actors; and when students also use technology to conduct research projects, analyse data, solve problems, design products and assess their own work, students are more likely to develop new ICT, problem solving, information management, collaboration and communication skills. (p. 13)

In this research, educational technology will be limited to DLRs that are used to aid the learning process. According to Churchill (2017), *“Digital resources for learning are best described as technology-based multimedia content specifically designed for educational (and training) purposes”* (p. 2). DLRs are produced with the aid of technology and are to be utilised in learning activities in order to encourage learners to construct and use knowledge. In many of our everyday tasks, using DLRs has become a necessity and this intensive use of technology has forced educators to use technology in education (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2016; Durak & Saritepeci, 2017). In education, this technology includes computer-based technologies, TV content, web-based learning, radio content, mobile-learning. Specific DLRs other than these may also be mentioned in this study’s interviews (in the results and discussion sections) and in the literature. The term ‘digital learning resources’ (DLRs) will be used as a catch-all term covering all the technologies mentioned above.

1.2.1 Evolution of DLRs.

Books are seen as the first mobile learning agents because, with the invention of the printing press, books became available to common people and allowed them to learn wherever and whenever they wanted to learn (Miller & Doering, 2014). Since every piece of research builds on previous research and is a stepping stone for future research (Richardson, 2017), it is important to look historically at the early developments that helped DLRs to reach their current level of usage.

In the 1980s, the first personal computers (PCs) came onto the market; however, the rapid growth in their usage began with the arrival of multimedia computers with advanced sound and graphics (Leinonen, 2005; Murdock, no date). As they became smaller and lighter and more powerful, computers eventually evolved into mobile devices. Mobile technologies and computers evolved in parallel as companies developed telecommunications technologies, ICT, and other mobile devices at the same time. The first mobile phone was introduced back in the 1970s and came to market in the early 1980s, while the rapid increase in internet usage came with the introduction of PDAs and more customisable devices (Crompton, 2013). Between 2000 and 2010 mobile device usage achieved its peak rates. In 2010, Apple introduced the iPad. This device was a game changer as it was not based on existing computer structures but was developed especially for tablets. However, according to recent statistics from NCES, demand for tablets has not outstripped demand for PCs, as sales of smartphones account for more than the total sales for tablets and PCs put together. Demand for tablets declined to 136 million-unit shipments in 2017 from a peak of 233 million in 2014 (Statista, 2018b); demand for PCs declined to 259.4 million-unit shipments in 2017 from a peak of 364 million in 2011 (Statista, 2018c), while demand for smartphones has gradually increased from 173.5 million-unit shipments in 2009 to 1465 million-units in 2017 (Statista, 2018a).

There is an ongoing debate around the definition of mobile-learning (m-learning). Scholars argue that there is confusion about the term 'mobile' (Hockly, 2013; Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Traxler (2009) emphasises this confusion saying

Some advocates of mobile learning attempt to define and conceptualize it in terms of devices and technologies; other advocates do so in terms of the mobility of learners and the mobility of learning, and in terms of the learners' experience of learning with mobile devices. (p. 10)

In addition, the fast-growing field of mobile technologies and m-learning increase the confusion by making it harder to conduct longitudinal studies (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009; Traxler, 2009). While some scholars define m-learning from a 'techno-centric' (Traxler, 2010b) point of view that suggests a simple definition—'learning through mobile devices'—(Peters, 2007; Traxler, 2005; Wang, Wiesemes, & Gibbons, 2012; Winters, 2006), others propose a definition from the learners' point of view and define m-learning as “Any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies” (O'Malley et al., 2005, p. 7). According to these definitions, m-learning is a wide concept that refers to a learning model in which learning both takes place away from learners' usual learning place, but not necessarily using mobile technologies, and uses mobile technology, but not necessarily away from the place where learners usually learn (O'Malley et al., 2005). It can be concluded that m-learning comprises mobility of technology, learning, and learner, as visualised by Mutlu (2016):

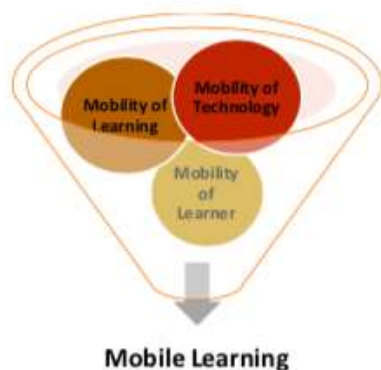


Figure 0-1 Three concepts of Mobile Learning

(Mutlu, 2016, p. 20)

In the meantime, the World Wide Web (WWW) was also advancing. The web evolved from being read-only to a space in which everybody could create and share. As a result, changes in the web had direct effects on ICT usage both in general and in education. The Web 1.0 (the original web) was static and was associated with traditional teaching methods where the teacher was the source of information, like the read-only web, and the student was the user, like the receivers in traditional education settings. Web 2.0, however, can be considered as filling the gap of interaction by being bi-directional (Mutlu, 2016). The development of the web still continues, although there are some debates around the name; the new versions are called 'semantic' and 'symbiotic', whilst the previous versions were "*web of data*" (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh, & Farsani, 2012, p. 5). The web cannot be separated from mobile devices, since web devices are actually mobile. Therefore, any changes in technology change the way people use ICT not only in general, but also in education. The next section discusses the use of technology in schools and homes.

1.3 Use of Technology in Schools

1.3.1 History

Early research in education technology, just like the roots of a plant, still has an influence on educational technology research today (Roschelle, Martin, Ahn, & Schank, 2017).

At this point, it is, therefore, necessary to look again at the definitions of educational technology to see how far these roots take us back. According to Reiser (2010), the definitions that have been offered might be classified under one of the two terms which were issued by the Commission on Instructional Technology, i.e., as either *“audio-visual devices”* or a *“systems approach process”* (Reiser, 2010, p. 11). The roots of those terms go back to earlier decades according to this classification (Tickton, 1970). The audio-visual movement idea dates back to the 1600s, with its first applications starting in the 1800s. As inventions continue, every new technology, tool, and application such as film, radio, simulator, television, projector finds its way into education. The systems approach in education assumes that basic components of the system such as laws, aims, applications, evaluations, values, and beliefs are connected to each other and, therefore, affect each other (Gupta & Gupta, 2013). Both terms can be detailed, with their historic background, as follows:

The earliest examples of the audio-visual movement can be traced back to 1650 when Johann Comenius suggested that real objects and illustrations should be used to supplement oral and written instruction. The application of such ideas starts with Johann Pestalozzi in the 1800s. His instructional approach, called object learning, became popular in 1860 in the US and Europe, especially in Germany (Reiser, 2010; Saettler, 1967).

Using ICT for educational purposes has a long history but the integration of technology in schools started with audio-visual tools. The first examples of the usage of audio and visual tools are found in the early 1900s. For instance, school museums equipped with slides, films, and stereographs were founded in the US. Moving picture projectors became the first widely used tool in schools in the US by 1910 (Reiser, 2010; Saettler, 1967). Overhead projectors, slide projectors, audio equipment, and simulators were used extensively by the army and industry during WWII (Olsen & Bass, 1982; Saettler, 1967). The use of instructional technology is accepted as having started with the radio in the 1920s and was followed by overhead projectors in 1930, videotapes in 1951, and the photocopier in 1959 (Purdue University Online). During the 1950s, we see the tremendous growth of instructional television. Although problems and shortcomings prevented instructional television from having its envisioned effect on education, it continued to be used in many school systems (Riccobono, 1985). Large-scale projects like *Sesame Street* and the instructional Open University programmes in Britain are among television's successful and favourable applications. DLRs came to classrooms in the form of handheld digital calculators during the 1970s (Purdue University Online, no date).

The systems approach was developed as a systematic tool for decision makers to check all the components in an organisational structure. A systems approach can also check the results of a decision against another and utilise the tools and solutions at hand, in order to find a solution to issues arising in the organisation. Managers can also estimate the effect of their decisions and make changes to alter any unwanted results. The systems approach is based on the assumption that each and every component in the system is interconnected and affected by each other's status and changes in that. Likewise, in an education environment, legislature, targets, practices, assessments, belief, or values are all interconnected components of that system (Gupta & Gupta, 2013).

The earliest examples of the systems approach can be traced back to the 1600s when Comenius proposed that instruction should be improved by the analysis of inductive methods. In the 1800s, Johann Herbart proposed using scientific research to guide instructional practise. During the 1920s, using empirical research to solve educational problems was popular. The systems movement continued to grow through research programmes and models for the design of instruction such as task analysis, behavioural objectives, criterionreferenced testing, and so on (Reiser, 2010).

The Cyberlearning Community Report (2017) gathered research studies together, in order to illustrate the roots of recent research projects and innovation trends and mentioned the following:

- The University of Illinois: It developed the first general-purpose computer-assisted learning system—Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations—known as PLATO in the 1960s and the system began to be used widely in the 1970s. By taking advantage of the data analysis methodstoday’s learning-at-scale research still depends upon this system.
- Douglas Engelbart: His research (1969) demonstrated what is now referred to as ‘The Mother of All Demos’. This research was seen as the factor that enabled human computer interaction to emerge and to make collaboration and learning the core of the design research.
- Alan Kay: His research produced the ‘Dynabook’ (1972). He is seen as the leader of mobile learning and also the influencer of ‘computational thinking’ in education.
- Allen Newell and Herbert Simon: These computer science pioneers are known for their ‘Human Problem Solving’ (1972) study. They became leaders of ‘intelligent tutoring systems’ through implementing artificial intelligence and the human cognition connection. Their research is still referred to in adaptive learning system research.

- Semour Papert: With his 'Mindstorms' (1980) research and other works in technology-rich environments, Semour Papert became the founder of many robotic applications that are built on exploratory research.

While advances in technology allow researchers and innovators to recognise opportunities in learning approaches, advances in learning theory help them to develop their innovations (Roschelle et al., 2017). Emerging technologies, learning theories, and research projects include, but are not limited to, those mentioned below:

- With the help of location-aware technology, the concern that technologies cause young populations to be isolated is being countered with community-based projects. The target of these research projects is to get young people involved in the community using their skills with mobile technology. One goal is to ensure that they engage with the community productively so that the research can bring forward evidence-based arguments and recommendations. While encouraging young people to participate in community-level problem-solving, the researchers make contributions to computer science by giving learners a vision about how to build a map rather than simply use one. In this way, learning sciences create meaningful opportunities for researchers to realise the role of context and larger education communities by giving an insight into the relationship between community resources and learning (Taylor & Pinkard, 2017).
- Interest-driven activities enable people to express and share their ideas publicly and also enable educational research to use them as pathways. The question of whether or not constructive activities are deep learning activities remains a matter of ongoing debate amongst education experts. While the research projects use expressiveness (creating literacy), representations (supporting learning important ideas) and collaboration (sharing how learners make sense of ideas) to determine ways of using playful environments to develop deeper learning, the dimensions of

time, context, and social interactions still require more investigation. The present research indicates that the relationship and communication between learners, and between teachers and learners, clearly affects the learning. Methodological challenges also emerge from the relationship between people, things, technology in varied contexts, and timescales (Berland, Halverson, Polman, & Wilkerson, 2017; Fusco, Martin, Lane, & Chase, 2017).

- Use of touchscreen interfaces and table-tops to enhance learning and improve collaboration has brought more active participation to the learners' classrooms by encouraging them to collaborate and communicate more with each other while interacting with touchscreens. However, researchers argue that that technology is not being used as effectively as it could be. While the research projects indicated that touchscreen technology contributed more to joint activity than laptop computers did, most teachers use the two technologies in the same way; however, the touchscreen interfaces are less expensive. More research is needed into how teachers use computer-supported collaborative learning and, especially, how they can implement effective use of that technology. Moreover, scholars such as Lane and Mercier (2017) have suggested that there is a need for more research on data logging and analysing.
- Interactive whiteboard (IWB) is a tool that can help with teaching the whole class; in addition, IWBs allow more attractive presentation of the normal course material as well as new presentation content developed for the IWB itself. IWBs make it easy and practical to combine and utilise different audio-visual resources. The most commonly highlighted advantage of IWBs is that they help to motivate students by increasing their attention and, thus, their learning. Their disadvantages are mostly their cost or the value for money they offer compared to other cheaper solutions for display and presentation. Moreover, teachers need more time to prepare for their classes when they use IWBs. The technology can also be seen as teacher-centred; therefore, IWBs are not necessarily interactive at all, even when the teacher prepares well for the class. Although an IWB can increase the class' motivation and attention, this technology did not provide enough

tangible improvements in learning. IWBs were originally designed around 1990 to be used in office environments and very soon after they were introduced they began to be used in higher education institutions and then moved to middle and primary schools. From the early 1990s, new education strategies in literacy and numeracy teaching started to involve more class interaction both between student and teacher and between students. It was suggested that teachers and students should listen to each other, discuss, and build on each other's ideas and that students should learn as a group through this process. Hence, IWB use was supported widely as a tool to enhance teaching and/or support learning. Potential benefits of IWBs are thought to be that they are interactive, versatile, efficient in terms of multimedia presentation, and useful for the planning and development of resources and ICT skills. With the use of IWBs, the traditional class setting started to change. Students discovered the opportunity to learn from some source other than the teacher, while also using modern tools when presenting in front of their peers and sharing knowledge with them. Such activities help students to articulate thoughts, interact, and comment about each other's work. Nonetheless, more work and emphasis should still be put, not on the existence and number of IWBs in schools, but on the way they are used by teachers and students to change the traditional mode of teacher instruction into a class forum where the ideas of students are presented and discussed with their peers. In order to make IWBs the transforming tool of education they were initially seen to be, further research has to be conducted and different approaches to their use need to be examined. Examples where IWBs are really used as the tool to change the learning environment through dialogic interaction between the teacher and student and the physical interaction of the students with the board should be studied and best practices and applications should be duplicated (Higgins, Beauchamp, & Miller, 2007; Smith, Hardman, & Higgins, 2006; Smith, Higgins, Wall, & Miller, 2005).

1.3.2 Debates around technology in schools and learning.

The role of technology in learning is based on asking: 'What is learning?' and 'Where and how does learning happen?' While learning has many definitions, the core elements are 'gaining knowledge' and 'causing change' (emotional, mental, or physiological) as a result of a clarifying process of 'experiences' and 'interactions' with other things and people. Bingham and Conner (2015) offer a helpful definition. They define learning:

as the transformative process of taking in information that—when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced—changes what we know and builds on what we do. It's based on input, process, and reflection. It is what changes us. (p. 57)

Moreover, Siemens (2014), while emphasising connections, adds external factors and states that

Learning is a process that occurs within nebulous environments of shifting core elements – not entirely under the control of the individual. Learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organization or a database), is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing. (p. 5)

Thus, it is important to evaluate how DLRs support learning and how they can be used to enhance learning by making at least one of the steps of the learning process easier and/or faster. Consequently, the presence of technology, without pedagogy to support it at school, in the home or wherever the learning occurs, is not likely to be useful.

Beginning from the 1980s, educational policy makers gave priority to creating more efficient and productive schools by providing more access to new technologies in schools such as computers, software

applications, and internet access (Cuban, 2003). At that time, some research and educational stakeholders suggested that the idea of learner-centred technology-enhanced learning was making traditional pedagogies outdated (Leadbeater, 2008). Some researchers argued that technology was expected to help to develop a new model of education that would prepare children for their future workplaces where people work and interact in both the digital world and the real world (Cuban, 2003; Moeller & Reitzes, 2011; Ribble & Bailey, 2011); however, as yet, no big change has happened (Dede, 1995; Vourloumi, 2015). Defining and teaching the appropriate use of technology and the appropriate behaviour when there are no physical boundaries between people and children is the responsibility of adults: i.e., care-givers, teachers, and school communities (Ribble & Bailey, 2011).

There is an ongoing debate between theorists and researchers about the effectiveness of the use of technology. This argument has two sides in the main and there are strong supporters for each (Achacoso, 2003). Ehrmann (1995) argues that technology cannot improve learning simply through its presence. He said that if technology is used in the same way as previously in the teaching process, it cannot be effective in improving the learning outcomes. Thus Richard Clark argues that the media itself is a vehicle that delivers the instructional content but is not the influencer. He expressed his thoughts in a very sharp way by suggesting that the media cannot help the learning process in any circumstances. He believes that the instructional method is the important concept and that technology is merely the tool (Clark, 1983, 1994a, 1994b).

In contrast to Clark, Kozma (1994) argues that the main point should not be concentrated around whether or not the media has an influence on learning but, rather, whether or not the media will influence learning. According to Clark, the research that suggests that there is no link between learning and the media may have been caused by our theories of learning. Moreover, the lack of a solid foundation that provides a

consistent connection between a school district's vision of the uses of technology and the teachers' lack of confidence in their technology skills have effects on these failures (Ribble & Bailey, 2011).

Clark thinks that media are simply 'mere vehicles' or conduits for an instructional method (stimulus) that elicit a response (learning). In contrast, Kozma (1994) stated that learning is a much more complex process than just a series of stimulus-response connections. Therefore, as the description of learning has evolved to include a more constructive process, the way we measure that process must also change. Zhao and Frank (2003) suggested adapting opportunities through social process in order not to overload the system. They offer the following conclusion from their findings: *"... we suggest an evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach to change in school computer use"* (p. 833).

Other researchers such as Jonassen, Campbell, and Davidson (1994) suggest that the Clark vs. Kozma debate was mainly about instruction and media, rather than about attributes of the learner. Hence, Jonassen et al. (1994) argue that the focus of the debate should be the learner rather than on the effects that either the methods or the media attributes have on learning.

Similarly Jonassen et al. (1994) propose that researchers should examine how media can support the learning process. According to them, learning should be treated as situationally dependent and, therefore, the context in which knowledge is constructed should be examined. According to learning theory, learning is most effective when it is constructed in a context which is based on a meaningful, daily life activity or task (Jonassen et al., 1994). Moreover, the authors suggested that research should also focus on maximising the human information processing system. Technology can be used to reduce the cognitive load on a learner and, by freeing the brain functions, to allow higher-level thinking (Jonassen et al., 1994).

Shavinina and Loarer (1999) suggest that the student's psychological make-up, cognitive psychology, technology, and the larger context are interrelated. Future research should, therefore, incorporate these factors when making evaluations about technology in education. Shavinina and Loarer (1999) point out that developers of educational technology should consider exploring five particular aspects: 1) the individual (character, skills, motivation); 2) the learning approach or model; 3) technology with its specific characteristics; 4) the environment (context); and, 5) the relationships between these five.

Some examples show that efforts to use technology in schools have failed and suggestions on how to solve these failures have been offered by practitioners and technology-use policy makers (Cuban, 2003; Moeller & Reitzes, 2011; Zhao & Frank, 2003). For instance, Ribble (2011) suggests asking: *"How can technology be used beyond typing papers and researching on the Internet?"* (p. 61) and *"What resources do teachers need to successfully use technology in their classroom?"* (p. 61), in order to integrate the technology in the curriculum effectively so as to adapt the education to the *digital citizenship* era. While the results of Fay et al.'s (2006) research did not indicate a failure, they did show no change in teachers' underlying pedagogy while using technology in the classroom, compared to their use of traditional teaching methods. This no-change-status of pedagogy diminishes the chances for technology to assist in the process of education in schools becoming more collective, reciprocal, and cumulative. As a result, Fay et al. (2006) suggest that in-service teacher training and development materials should be developed to ensure that opportunities to create a more interactive learning process are not missed.

1.3.3 Pedagogical changes in learning and TPACK.

Research findings suggest that encouraging learner control over the learning process is a growing need (Dron, 2007; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). Because education is inevitably affected by social changes, pedagogy is also expected to change over time and in line with the changes in society and the public's

needs and expectations. Since technology is one of the driving factors of social change, scholars argue about the pedagogical changes required in the technology era. McLoughlin and Lee (2010), for example, argue that even if the teacher tries to control the learning process, the student may choose not to pay attention. Similarly, when a student wants to learn something, s/he needs a source of knowledge such as a teacher, a book, or digital content.

The traditional pedagogies were evolved to become learner-centered pedagogies with technological influences (Crompton, 2013; Sharples, 2005). Moreover, as Traxler (2010a) puts it, the ‘epistemological revolution’ that advances ICT and mobile technologies defines “*what we know and how we know it*” and “*what we learn and how we can learn it*” (p. 153).

As discussed earlier, opportunities to keep up with the technology and to allow new technologies to transform pedagogy have not always been taken up by teachers. The new technology in the classrooms has been used to reproduce the traditional practices. As expressed by Davies and Merchant (2009), the new technology has been used to produce “*polished performances of conventional practices*” (p. 2). Thus, in order to help teachers to remove the barriers between 19th century pedagogy and 21st century technology (Magid, 2015), TPACK was introduced.

TPACK—technological pedagogical content knowledge—is a concept that is derived from the interactions of its three main components: technology, pedagogy, and content. TPACK is based on the fact that, within the teaching and learning process, pedagogy, technology, content all have individual and intersecting roles to play. Enhancing the teaching and learning necessitates establishing and maintaining a fine balance between these components. Using technology in teaching has always been a challenge for teachers when new tools and technologies are first introduced. After some time, teachers and students get used to the new technology and it comes to be seen as specific (for a certain benefit), stable (not changing over the

years), and transparent (inner workings are related to its function). Therefore, over time, a new technology gains a common perception and starts to be seen as ordinary and not even as technological. By contrast, digital technologies like computer hardware and software, handheld devices or applications are considered to be protean (can be used in different ways), unstable (changing rapidly), and opaque (their inner workings are not visible to the end user). Academically speaking both pencils and software are seen as technologies for education. The difference between them can be described as follows: the software is more opaque and less stable than a pencil. Because of those qualities, the new technologies are harder for teachers to learn and use. Moreover, as teachers are initially not very well trained, they find it difficult to apply the new technological skills in different teaching-learning environments when they are introduced. As already mentioned, the TPACK framework highlights the three main components of teaching using technology as: technology, pedagogy, and content and so the framework shows the wide spectrum of different levels and qualities of technology integration in education (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

1.3.4 Use of technology in schools in Turkey.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the education tools and materials in Turkish schools were basic educational items like maps and laboratory equipment, although some schools did have still film projectors. Instructional materials were mainly printed. In 1961, the Teaching Materials Centre and in 1962 the Centre of Educational Radio—where educational programmes for radio broadcasting were produced—were founded in Ankara (Alkan, 1998).

From the 1950s to the 1970s, schools were given new teaching materials including audio cassettes and overhead projectors as learning materials. During the 1970s video players and video cassettes were introduced as learning tools. The first applications of distance education were started in higher education

in 1974 (Akkoyunlu, 2002; Akkoyunlu & Orhan, 2001). Although some universities started offering graduate courses in the field of educational technology back in the 1970s, there were actually very few teachers who knew how to use computers, let alone teach with them (Hizal, 1991).

Between 1984 and 2013, 32 projects were implemented by the Ministry of National Education in order to promote effective use of technology in education in Turkey (Topuz & Göktaş, 2015). The largest of these are summarised below.

Computer-based instruction was introduced into secondary education in 1984 (Akbaba-Altun, 2006). Between 1985 and 1986, 1100 computers were given to secondary schools as part of a pilot project. As a continuation of the project, 2400 more computers were introduced to secondary and vocational schools in the following years. At that stage, computers were used only for teaching students how to use computers. They were not used as a tool to learn other subjects (Fidan, 1988).

In 1989, the Ministry of Education invited private IT contractors to develop course materials to be used with computers in schools. This development made it more obvious that the teachers needed to be trained in computer-aided teaching so that the computers could be used as a tool for conveying teaching material (Akkoyunlu & Orhan, 2001).

Internet usage was first developed within Turkey between some universities and science institutes. In 1991, the first intra-country connection was set up (Tonta & Kurbanoglu, 1995). The first internet connection, as we know it today, was established on April 12, 1993 between the Middle East Technical University and the National Science Foundation in the US (Merc, 2015; Tonta & Kurbanoglu, 1995).

In 1998, Turkey's Ministry of National Education initiated a large-scale investment programme. It had a one billion USD budget (Uluyol, 2012), with finance coming from the Turkish Government's contribution and

funds from the World Bank (\$600 million USD) and the European Union. This educational investment programme ran until 2008 and aimed to improve the quality of Turkish education to that of other developed nations (Kurt, 2010; Tezci, 2011) by increasing the computer literacy of students and teachers (Akbaba-Altun, 2006). Between 1998 and 2003 schools were provided with computers, printers, scanners, televisions, videos, multimedia software and slides, and overhead projectors. Teachers and computer coordinators were trained to use them (Akbaba-Altun, 2006). By 2002, 3000 computer labs with 25000 computers in them had been built at 2481 schools (Akkoyunlu, 2002).

In the meantime, progress was seen on the teacher training side. Some universities opened Computer Education and Instructional Technology departments; they aimed to produce graduate computer and education technology teachers for primary and secondary schools. Moreover, all existing teacher education departments incorporated new compulsory courses in computer literacy and instructional technologies and material development (Akkoyunlu, 2002).

After 2002, the investment programme was extended to cover a greater number of schools and this time it also covered preschool and special education. According to Uluyol (2012), by 2008, 98% of all Turkish secondary schools and 93% of all primary schools had personal computers, printers, notebooks, projectors, and scanners. Usun (2006) states that during the development of this project some companies provided free internet for a year; some residences near the schools could even also use the internet at the weekends. Internet penetration to Turkish households reached 69.5% in 2015 (Merc, 2015). The research conducted by Topuz and Göktaş (2015) revealed, however, that the results of these projects were not logged and analysed properly; therefore, the results of these projects remain unclear, despite the fact that substantial amounts of investment were made in them.

The study conducted by Yalın, Karadeniz, & Şahin (2007) in Turkey reveals that although teachers had positive attitudes towards ICT methods and materials in education, they believed that ICT methods were limited to visual materials and that the limited usage of ICT opportunities created no fundamental changes in teaching practices. The study concluded that the participant teachers were not knowledgeable enough about ICT-based instructional methods and that, as a result, ICT had little to no impact on their traditional teaching methods (Yalın et al., 2007). These results were consistent with those of other studies in the area that revealed that teachers' use of ICT in their classrooms was limited to presentation and word processor software and that they rarely used the innovative ICT-based materials (Kazu & Yavuzalp, 2010; Seferoğlu, Akbıyık, & Bulut, 2008). Kazu and Yavuzalp's (2010) study reveals that a noticeable percentage of participants (26.8 %) did not know about the software that the government had provided for use in their classrooms. All the aforementioned studies suggested offering courses on the use of ICT-based materials and the methods to help the teachers to adopt ICT-based innovations more effectively. The suggested courses were for both working teachers (through in-service training centres) and teacher candidates (via teacher training institutes). However, more recent studies reveal that teacher training problems still exist. Even those teachers who received in-service trainings about ICT use do not use ICT-based materials and see themselves as inadequate when it comes to technology (Saritepeci, Durak, & Seferoğlu, 2016).

FATİH project.

In 2008, the Turkish Government started another project called FATİH. This project aimed to create 'Smart Classes' by providing every student and teacher with a tablet computer and by installing LCD smart boards in classrooms all around the country (Fatihprojesi.Meb.Gov.Tr, no date). The term FATİH stands for 'movement of enhancing opportunities and improving technology'. It is one of the biggest projects of its kind in the world in terms of its budget and coverage (Hemphill, Caliskan, & Hemphill, 2015; Tamim, Borokhovski, Pickup, & Bernard, 2015).

The project had a five-year term and aimed to help students to engage their sensory organs in the learning process by using IWB and other ICT devices. Approximately 85,000 IWBs were installed in classrooms in the initial stage. Interactive usage of ICTs was the key in this decision to allow measurable and controllable teaching (Akçay, Arslan, & Guven, 2015). According to Türel and Johnson (2012), at that period European countries such as Denmark had a 50% and the US had a 35% rate of IWB usage in their classrooms, while Turkey was installing one in each and every classroom.

FATİH aimed to provide IWBs, tablet computers, and internet network infrastructure to all schools providing basic education. IWBs were given to pre-primary and primary level schools and IWBs and tablets were provided for all lower and upper secondary school students. The project intended to set up ICT hardware in 40,000 schools and 620,000 classrooms across Turkey. Although initially launched in secondary schools, it was planned to expand to all grade levels. The scale of the project covered the delivery of about 570,000 IWBs and 10,600,000 tablet computers in the first three years (Pouezevara, Dinçer, Kipp, & Sarışık, 2013). The project was aimed to be completed in five years, ending on December 31, 2015 as announced in the latest government regulations. Despite what was aimed at and announced in the government regulations, with seven months to the finish date remaining, only 8% of the targets had been met (Nebil, 2015). In 2016, the situation was not too different; however, the commentators argued that it was a good sign that the government was still working on the project, and thus, that it would not become a total failure (Nebil, 2016).

According to the plan, 680,000 teachers would receive training to implement the project nationwide. Two training modules were involved. ICT use in education was a 30-hour-long course and the second module, called preparatory education, provided 25 hours of training. By April 2013, according to the Ministry of Education, more than 120,000 teachers had received training at 110 distance learning centres in Turkey's 81 cities. Although the usage of computers, IWBs, and the computer classroom was initiated at least ten

years ago, only a few pilot state school and some private schools could finance these technologies from their own funds (Pouezevara et al., 2013).

Despite the large and ambitious scale of the project, the Ministry of Education of Turkey was not successful in training the teachers to use the new technology. Although teachers were meant to receive professional development via the FATİH project (Akkoyunlu & Baskan, 2015), Turkey did not have the required infrastructure to educate teachers through distance learning. The teachers had to travel to training centres in each province and sometimes they had to travel long distances for the training. Moreover, there was no solid plan for how to train teachers to use the technology so that these technologies could be incorporated into the existing curriculum (Uluyol, 2012).

Furthermore, teachers were not given any incentives to use the technology, or for trying to improve teaching through this technology. Additionally, there were no penalties if they did not use the technology, or if they did not look after the technological tools and keep them in working order (Durak & Saritepeci, 2017; Pouezevara et al., 2013). Vatanartiran and Karadeniz (2015) carried out a large-scale research project to examine the challenges and needs of teachers during the FATİH project. From this study, it became apparent that teachers need to have a technology integration plan that includes leadership strategies to solve the problems encountered by the teachers. These problems were grouped under three main headings: executive issues, infrastructural issues, and instructional issues. The teachers not only sought managerial, financial, and technical support from their principals, but also demanded effective training programmes to prepare them prior to and during the project. In order to improve teacher autonomy within the centralised education system, the teachers focused mostly on TPACK, (Karadeniz & Vatanartiran, 2013; Vatanartiran & Karadeniz, 2015).

As reported by Wilson & Gielniak (2012) :

... using technology in schools to improve learning performance ... outcomes (include) personalize(d) learning for all students through frequent, appropriate use of technology integrated with curriculum and instruction in all classrooms and other learning places. Technology cannot be viewed as a supplement. It must be an integral part of students' lives in the classroom and must be integrated in meaningful ways into the core curriculum. (p. 14)

Moreover, Moher and Enyedy (2017) discussed the changes required in the physical properties and interior design of the classroom in an era where technology is being adopted for everyday use in more and more classrooms. In the traditional classroom setting, the physical space is arranged to enhance the engagement of students with the teacher. The traditional setting, therefore, has to change in accordance with advances in technology such as interactive whiteboards and touch-tables. In order to engage more actively with the technology in their classrooms, students need to move around an interior space that was originally designed to keep them in a fixed place.

FATİH started as a huge investment with high hopes to evolve education in Turkey and, unfortunately, ended up with thousands of interactive boards and tablets that could never be used for the purpose for which they were designed. Indeed, most of these devices are now outdated, if not broken and lost altogether. Moreover, the media brought public attention to the fact that some students had sold the tablet computers given to them and the public was informed that disciplinary action would be taken against those who were advertising stolen computers on the internet (Www.Shiftdelete.Net, 2016). As part of the FATİH project, many tablet computers have been delivered to students since 2011; however, no research has been conducted to study how they were used. Nevertheless, despite a lack of information, new tablets continued to be given to the next set of students (Topuz & Göktaş, 2015).

As a result of not learning from past experiences in implementing technology into education, for example, providing overhead projectors but not overhead transparencies, or computers without the required

software or teaching content (World Bank, 2008) due to bad planning or insufficient coordination between the government bodies, the FATİH project too faced many problems of a similar nature (Pouezevara et al., 2013). Between 1984 and 2013, the same mistakes were repeated for each of the 32 projects that were instigated, since all these projects share similar patterns in terms of their execution: they were focused on the purchase and delivery of technological hardware without enough planning as to how the technology would be utilised to change the way education is carried out (Topuz & Göktaş, 2015). It seems that a habit of indifference on the part of the authorities to the results of IT-related education projects that were implemented in the past resulted in a failure to monitor them through research. This time, for the FATİH project, several research projects (cited above) were conducted. However, the government did not act on the research findings.

In 2016, the Minister of National Education was hopeful, saying that in the coming year, it would proceed as far as it had done in the last six years. However, according to the Ministry of Education Report (2017b) that promise did not materialise. Only 20% of the FATİH project was completed by then (Çepni, 2018; Odatv.Com, 2018). This report was seen as the acknowledgement of the failure of the project (Bildircin, 2018; Odatv.Com, 2018; Wwww.Cumhuriyet.Com.Tr, 2018).

In 2018, the Ministry of Education stated that it had not given up on the FATİH project as a whole but added that it would change the structure of the project, open a new tender for purchases and, in the new system, would provide laptop computers instead of tablets (Bildircin, 2018 ; Çepni, 2018; Wwww.Shiftdelete.Net, 2018; Wwww.Teknolojioku.Com, 2018). Nevertheless, despite the fact that technological devices age and quickly become outdated, the bulk of the budget allocated to the FATİH project was spent on tablets that became out-dated in a very short period of time. However, according to (Topuz & Göktaş, 2015) investment in such large-scale projects should be focused on the development of

content and structural reforms in education rather than on supplying the end users with technological hardware.

1.4 Use of Technology at Home

The opportunities to access new computer and communication technologies have increased every year. For example, by 1984, 8% of all households in the US had a computer. That figure had grown to about 51% by 2000 (Kinsella & Velkoff, 2001). According to a recent OECD report (2018a), computer access in US homes had increased to 78.9% by 2012. However, it is interesting to see the computer access from home decreased from 78.9% to 72% between 2012 and 2013 (the latest data from the US is for 2013 on this report). According to the OECD (2018a), the Netherlands had the highest rate of computer access from home at 97.6%, while Colombia had the lowest rate at 44.3 in 2018. In the same year, 91.7% of homes in the UK and 50% of homes in Turkey had computer access (OECD, 2018a).

In 1998, 57% of homes with school-aged children had computers, while 51% of classrooms had a computer in the US (Becker, 2000). However, in that year the rate of internet-connected classrooms was much higher than that for households with school-aged children (NCES, 2000). By 2007, home internet access had increased to 61.8% and to 73.4% by 2015 (OECD, 2018b) (the latest data from the US is for 2015 in this report). According to a recent OECD report (2018b), Korea has the highest household rates of internet access at 99.5%, while Colombia had the lowest rate (50%) in 2018. In the same year, 94% of households in the UK and 80.7% of households in Turkey had internet access; beginning from 2005, that represents an increase from 60% for the UK and 7.7% for Turkey (OECD, 2018b). The gap between having a computer (50% of homes in Turkey had computer access in 2018) and the subsequent internet access rates (80.7% of households in Turkey had internet access in 2018) might be interpreted as reflecting the rise in access to mobile devices.

As technology develops rapidly, more technological tools offer more media options to keep children occupied for longer hours (Curtice, 2014). For example, children are now exposed to digital media from the age of four months of age, while in 1970 children encountered TV at four years of age (Chassiakos, Radesky, Christakis, Moreno, & Cross, 2016). According to recent data collected and published by Common Sense Media (2017), children aged between zero and eight years spend an average of two hours and nineteen minutes per day with screen media. While that figure is about the same as found in previous reports, where they spent that time had changed. TV was the media that children engaged with the most at 58 minutes per day and showed a decrease of just eleven minutes from 2011. The decrease in TV screen time may have been brought about by parents following expert recommendations on TV watching. Many experts, including the American Academy of Paediatrics, recommend that parents manage their children's screen time. In a poll conducted by the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases most parents indicated that they agreed with the recommendations. However, they struggled to apply them (Chear, 2014). Therefore, the decrease in TV viewing suggests that TV has been replaced in today's emerging and quickly evolving media environment (Chassiakos et al., 2016). For instance, the use of mobile devices rose from five minutes per day in 2011 to fifteen minutes per day in 2013 and to 48 minutes per day in 2017 (Common Sense Media, 2017).

Many initiatives and projects related to the introduction of new technologies into schools start with the assumption that giving equal access to ICTs will solve the inequality between rich and poor students. However, according to OECD reports, inequality is not only about having access to the technology, but also about having the ability to use these technologies. Those students who are from underprivileged backgrounds cannot always fill this gap by simply getting access to ICTs. Those from advantaged groups can further increase their skills and benefit from ICTs by having more access to them (Noster, 2015). According to a small-scale study conducted by Kabali et al. (2015) and data collected from a paediatric clinic within a low-income area, 96.6% of zero to four year-old children had used mobile devices and 75% of them had

their own devices. However, these numbers do not say anything about the quality of content, the reliability of wi-fi or the digital divide (Chassiakos et al., 2016). According to Common Sense Media's Zero to Eight Report (2017), the digital divide has become a lot narrower in terms of mobile device ownership and downloading apps for children. While 99% (73% in 2011 and 91% of 2013) of higher income families have a mobile device, the rate is 96% (34% in 2011 and 61% of 2013) for lower income families. Similarly, 73% (47% in 2011 and 79% of 2013) of higher income families have downloaded apps for their children's use, while 67% (14% in 2011 and 41% of 2013) of lower income families have done so. However, there is no information about whether these applications are considered as educational or not. Previous research that was conducted by Rideout (2014) indicates interesting differences between educational media use by low and high income families. For example, 12% of children from lower-income families use educational apps on mobile devices on a daily basis while only 5% of higher-income children do so. However, it is important to state that no specific definition for the term 'educational media' was given in the survey; therefore, the difference may be caused by the types of media that these two groups of children use or different views of high- and low-income families on which specific media were rated as 'educational'.

Some research has investigated whether there is a correlation between the use of technology at school and home. Over time, more and more assignments and homework have required the use of computers and the internet; thus, access to such technology at home has become an increasingly important aspect that effects the success of a student at school (Penuel et al., 2002). Additionally, research indicates that there is no connection between what and how children practise with technology at home and their use of technology at school (Jack & Higgins, 2018). According to Rideout's (2014) research findings, 40% of surveyed parents who have children of preschool age indicated that their children's teachers suggested the use of media at home for the children.

Research on the frequency and type of technology used by students suggests that they spend more time at home using technology than they do at school. In their study, Gronn et al. (2013) found that students spend twice as much time using technology at home compared to school. For students, the most used technology is the internet and, regardless of the age, gender, or ethnicity of the students, the most popular activity is playing games both at school and home. By contrast, when they are at home children in all age groups use technology for enjoying themselves (Landerholm, 1994; Mckenney & Voogt, 2010). Students say that, when they are out of school, searching the internet is their second most frequent activity after playing games (Vourloumi, 2015). Video gaming is also the main activity that children engage in at home. It is also the activity that takes up the most time and bandwidth and is, therefore, the primary factor that makes families alarmed about their children's excessive technology use (Curtice, 2014). According to a 2014 study, children aged between two to ten in the US spend 56 minutes a day with educational media; that includes 42 minutes of TV or watching DVDs, five minutes engaging with educational software on a computer, five minutes with educational applications on mobile devices, and three minutes with educational video games. The time children spend with educational media in a day drops as the child gets older (Rideout, 2014).

After 2006, we see that parents became even more concerned about their children's media use. Nevertheless, when asked, most parents seem to also believe that their children have a balanced life in terms of technology use and non-technological activities (Curtice, 2014). Technology, however, can also offer solutions to children's excessive use of technology and so address parental concerns. There are tools that parents can use to limit the use of technology as well as simply talking to children about browsing safely, spending less time online and in front of a PC, and engaging in other activities (Curtice, 2014).

According to Rideout's (2014) findings, 80% of 1577 surveyed parents of children aged from two to ten indicated that their children use educational media. All of the families whose children use educational

media at least once a week think that their children have benefitted from educational media, namely from educational TV the most and from educational apps on mobile devices the least. A more recent (2017) report that surveyed 1400 parents suggests that 74% per cent of parents think their children benefit more from screen media in terms of learning (67%), creativity (57%), social skills (33%), ability to focus (33%), and behaviour (26%) than they suffer from its potential harms. Additionally 80% of the surveyed parents were satisfied with the educational media that their children can access in terms of amount and quality, although most think that less screen time is better for their children (Common Sense Media, 2017).

According to Curtice (2014), the attitudes of parents with regard to their children's use of technology at home fall into two main groups: they either allow an almost infinite amount of time to use technology or they try to control and limit the time spent with technology and to spend some quality time with sports, socialising, or playing games together. A Child Health Evaluation and Research Center (CHEAR) poll report (2014) adds another dimension of limitation which is the location where children can use media devices. Figure 0-2 represents parents' rules for screen time.

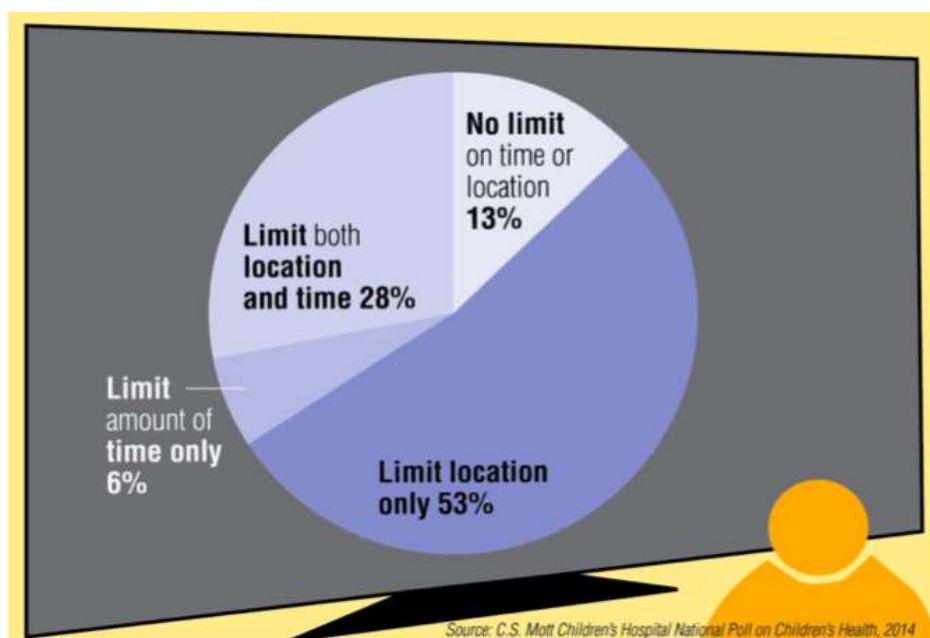


Figure 0-2 Parents' rules for screen time for young children.

Plowman et al.'s (2010) project suggests that certain dimensions in the family environment effect the children's use of technology at home. These are: the family's perspectives on the efficacy and ways of using educational technology to support children's learning; family interaction relationship types; the personal characteristics of both children and other family members that affect the children's preferences; and, other demands on both children's and parents' time at home. At the same time, use of technology at home becomes a factor that forms and enhances family relations for the children (Curtice, 2014).

Joint media engagement (JME) is the term used to explain multiple people experiencing media (digital or traditional) together, anywhere, and anytime. For many years physiological experts have suggested that co-viewing is a way to decrease negative effects of the media; additionally, co-viewing enhances the likelihood of learning from media. Several studies have found that JME can enhance learning both in school and in the home setting by helping to make sense, albeit that co-viewing needs more attention from researchers (Stevens & Penuel, 2010). While cooperative learning helps children to stay engaged (Solomon, 2016), it gives families an opportunity for observing their children, pointing out their confusions or questions, stepping in and providing information, and encouraging their children to value specific activities (Takeuchi & Stevens, 2011)

In fact, when technology is carefully designed to be applied thoughtfully, the impact of learning can be enhanced in terms of speed, strength, and breadth (Thomas, 2016). Each new technology brings new opportunities to improve the education as a whole. Every new information technology resource allows students to engage more with their classes, teachers to develop new teaching methods, and parents to deal more with their children's education (Penuel et al., 2002). For example, with technology-enabled education it is possible to use: virtual labs, simulations, serious games, applications that connect the

tangible and the abstract to enhance interaction, software that uses 3D imaging to create transformational learning, and augmented reality to support learning through a critical inquiry process (Thomas, 2016).

Collins and Halverson (2018) listed incompatibilities between schooling and technology by arguing that schooling fails to address issues including, but not limited to, customisation, diversity, specialisation, and the interactivity opportunities of technology. The advances in technology-enhanced learning enable the learners to go beyond the walls of the school that they have access to and beyond the only resources that can be found locally by allowing the student to use a wide range of resources and collaborate with peers anywhere in the world. With the spread of online academic courses, resources, and rich multimedia, it is easier for learning to become personalised and 'right on time', meaning that it is accessible wherever and whenever needed. Furthermore, less experienced learners have access to specialised communities where they can get expert advice on their personal interest and participate more deeply in a subject and so to be able to do more complex activities in order to pursue their passions (Curtice, 2014; Sharples, Lonsdale, Meek, Rudman, & Vavoula, 2007; Thomas, 2016).

Jack and Higgins (2018) draw on Stephen and Plowman's (2013) taxonomy on technology-enhanced learning. According to that taxonomy, there are three kinds of learning opportunities with ICT. These are: 'operational' (how to use ICT), 'curricular knowledge and understanding' (learning a content and new skills), and 'developing positive dispositions to learn' (developing independence, confidence and willingness). Similar to Collins and Halverson's (2018), Stephen and Plowman's research suggested that home settings for children's ICT experiences are more likely to cover all these types of learnings, whereas school settings are limited to basic operational skills.

Sefton-Green (2004) adds the key learning theories that were applied to children's informal learning with ICTs by defining ICT use out of the school as a "*complex educational experience*" (p. 30) and outlines these as follows:

- Constructivism in which every learner constructs their own way of understanding by developing principles and thought patterns to evaluate their experiences. As ICT's can be used to show likely outcomes of given conditions of a problem in a learning situation, they can also be useful in the learning process of the children in a constructivist way.
- Experimental learning in which learning through playing has a place and the learners construct their understanding in a similar way to constructivism, but through experimenting. ICT can be used to support informal learning through interactive activities for children in non-school settings.
- Situated learning in which the learning is accepted as a social process. While the learner's social practices are strongly attached to their learning (according to this approach), computer games can play a role as a community of practice.

1.4.1 Use of technology at home by HE parents

According to Solomon (2016), reliable research on the use of technology by homeschoolers is an area that is attracting the attention of academic research. Neil, Bonner, and Boner (2014) indicated the state of this undiscovered research territory when they said: "*Home school populations have been studied for socialization and academic preparedness, but there are few studies on the use of technology among home schooled families*" (p. 1). The limited amount of research on how homeschoolers use technology suggests that unschooling parents have been supportive of the use of computers (Curtice, 2014; Solomon, 2016).

Andrade (2008) researched the role of technology in homeschooling and he lists the technologies that research participants use to support their homeschooling. Educational software and the internet were the most cited technologies that were used to enhance the participants' homeschooling experiences and were used for things such as communicating with other homeschooling families, researching instructional resources, and supporting instruction. This study's participants did not initially list technology as an influence on their decision to homeschool when they were surveyed, but they did comment in discussions that technology makes homeschooling easier. Gann and Carpenter (2018) mentioned a couple of studies whose results showed that the accessibility of resources via the internet has helped homeschooling families to broaden the instructional methods they use. Research conducted in Malaysia indicated that social media and mobile learning are the most popular ways in which HE families support their teaching and their children's learning, followed by blogs and wikis, digital story-based learning activities, and accessing information via the internet. According to their findings, usage of web-portals and interactive video games were ranked least popular (Alias, Rahman, Siraj, & Ruslina, 2013).

According to Andrade (2008), the technology most trusted by unschooling parents is the internet. The rich and dynamic content that is available through the internet is the essence of their trust. Homeschooling families take advantage of the educational content on the internet, especially for subjects that they are not familiar with (Andrade, 2008). A wide variety of homeschooling websites offer curriculum, teaching materials, and techniques (Heller, 2013; Skelton, 2016). Nevertheless, internet usage also entailed a great deal of browsing through rich and yet unrelated information content (Curtice, 2014).

Skelton (2016) surveyed the parents of 89 elementary grade children, 61 of whom were being home educated, to find out their beliefs about using technology with educational purposes. Their findings suggest that HE children use mobile devices for educational purposes almost twice as much as formal-

schooled children do. Interestingly, the study also found that formal-schooled children were more likely to be encouraged to use technology than HE children were.

Unschooling parents believe that the skills that can be gained from and practised with a computer constitute a better learning experience than, for example, watching videos and playing video games. However, contrary to the wishes of their parents, children use computers for playing video games 80% of the time instead of creating presentations or photo albums (Curtice, 2014). Ever since their earliest development, this interest in computer games has presented researchers with a great opportunity to consider that games can be a useful tool to enable some children to learn easily (Sefton-Green, 2004).

Using games in education has a long history; however, using digital games in education is relatively new and has come only with advances in technology like broadband, the internet, and mobile devices. Games that are being played with educational purposes are defined as 'serious games' (Beavis, 2017). A new learning method called 'gameschooling' was initiated for use by families, children, and the communities in all types of learning environments such as schooling, homeschooling, afterschooling (where children use games with educational purposes after school), or virtual schooling (Www.Gameschooling.Org, no date). The rise of homeschoolers, especially in the US, has caught the attention of game developers, since homeschoolers increasingly use the digital games for entertainment and education (Solomon, 2016). In their research, Marino, Basham, and Beecher (2011) concluded that videogames helped at-risk learners and children with SEN when they were used not as a replacement for other educational materials but as a substitute. In another study, families of gifted children were encouraged to use games for educational purposes by inviting the families to be 'creative' with their methods (Rivero, 2002). HE families are mostly criticised for restraining their children from socialising; however, this is not the case and most HE families are rich in terms of social networks (Murphy, 2012). Moreover, digital games that act as an additional tool for homeschoolers' socialisation can be played online with friends (Solomon, 2016). While the use of

technology by HE families is an understudied area, as mentioned earlier, research into the use they make of games is even more limited. Solomon (2016) adds another point of view when pointing out that, although HE families might not differ from other families in terms of using digital games, these families may have different expectations and expectations that current games cannot fully fulfil.

Although the TPACK framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) was proposed for the classroom environment, it can be broadened to the home environment, especially for those homeschooling families who have their own learning goals and methods for their children (Vourloumi, 2015). Gann and Carpenter (2018) supported this idea by citing literature that reported homeschooling parents' seeking guidance on how to use technological resources effectively for their children's education. Gann and Carpenter concluded that homeschooling parents often use individualised instruction methods for their children's personalised education and encourage their children to engage in self-directed learning; this approach leads parents to adopt STEM strategies to enhance their children's learning through collaboration.

1.4.2 Use of technology at home in Turkey

According to the EU Kids online report (2016), the age at which children access technology has decreased from five to two (Izci, Yalcin, Bahcekapili, & Jones, 2017). Turkish parents think that technology use is necessary in the digital era and ICT enhances the academic skills of their children. They also think that parents who are familiar with computers have higher expectations of the benefits of the internet and DLRs (Odabasi, 2005).

Drawing on data collected on 4942 students from 160 schools in Turkey, PISA 2006 found that, when asked about the frequency of computer use at home, 39% of students said they used a computer almost every day and 41% said they never used one. With regard to the gender of the students, 37% of female students

said they used computers at home every day; 29% said they never used them; 17% used a computer 1-2 times a week; and, 6% said they used computers a few times per month or even less than that. The findings for the use of computers by boys at home revealed that 41% said they used one every day; 41% said they never used a computer; and, 13% indicated they used a computer 1-2 times per week (Aypay, 2010).

As shown earlier, more recent data suggest that 50% of Turkish households have a computer and 80.7% of households have home internet access (OECD, 2018a, 2018b). The difference between the computer ownership rates and internet access rates in Turkey suggests that 30% of Turkish people tend to use only mobile devices to access the internet. This figure is in line with global trends.

Genç (2014), which focused on 85 parents of three-six-year-olds (preschoolers) in Turkey, reported that 37.65% of parents said that their children spent two hours watching TV and/or DVDs/videos on weekdays, with 41.18% of parents reporting that this time increases to three to four hours at the weekends. The time parents spent reading with preschool children is lower than that spent watching TV together. Children whose mothers are housewives spend more time watching TV than do the children of mothers who are employed. According to Genç (2014), 70.31% of parents reported that they had mobile phone applications on their smartphones and that they allowed their children to use these apps. When asked about games, 28.86% of the respondents said that their children use smartphones for playing games and 20.13% said their children watched videos on the phone. Only 18.79% of parents reported that their children used a smartphone for learning (Genç, 2014).

Izci et al. (2017) compared the tablet use of children in Turkey and the US. Their study found children use mobile devices for an hour or less on weekdays and for at least an hour on weekends in both Turkey and the US. The Turkish parents commented on the lack of high quality digital content for their children and

they were concerned about their children's safety (Izci et al., 2017). Therefore, they believed that allowing their children to use the internet only at home under their control was safer (Odabasi, 2005). The same study showed that 56.8% of the children use a tablet with their parents and they used it mostly for video watching (71.6%), playing games (62.1%), drawing/colouring (59.2%), and educational purposes (41.6%). Turkish parents are more likely to allow their children to choose which applications to download than the parents from the US (Izci et al., 2017). As regards the mobile applications downloaded in Turkey for children, 58.82% are classified as games for entertainment, 26.47% as educational applications, and 14.70% as games for learning (puzzles, maths games, and storytelling applications). Furthermore, 31.37% of the surveyed parents reported that their children used smartphones one to two hours every day. Only a few parents reported three-four hours' use per day. According to Izci et al. (2017), reading to children has been replaced by giving children access to digital technological tools nowadays and echoes the findings of research done on similar age groups in the US (Common Sense Media, 2013; Genc, 2014).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, homeschooling is unregulated in Turkey, with the exception of children with SEN whose education is provided by government-appointed teachers. Consequently, HE in Turkey is a very new concept and opportunities for research are limited for that reason. Although only a few studies have been conducted on the subject of HE in Turkey, and these were also mentioned in the previous chapter, as yet, no study has been conducted in the subject of home educators' use of technology in Turkey. Taşdan and Demir (2010) suggest that amongst other reasons, the lack of material and instructional technology make it even harder to implement HE as an alternative education method in Turkey. Aymen-Peker and Taş (2017) examined a sample case to determine the positive aspects and the difficulties that children with SEN in Turkey faced in the practice of HE. Their findings suggest not only that the HE interaction is often one-sided, but also that the experiments that are included in the curriculum cannot be carried out most of the time, because it is either not practical to carry the materials to the child's house or incompatible with health and safety rules. Therefore, they recommended use of

technology to make the practice of HE more effective. The current study will, therefore, be the first in Turkey which examines unregulated Turkish home educators and as such it will fill the gap in our understanding in terms of both their approach to HE and their use of resources, including DLRs, in their children's HE.

1.5 Conclusion

The literature proposes a rather wide definition of technology and what technology means in education without pointing to any specific technology in particular. A wide range of technologies ranging from basic technologies like a blackboard and chalk to the most advanced computer-based technologies have been considered as educational technology. Nevertheless in recent years discussion of digital technologies, definitions and practices has centred mainly on information technology hardware, software, and applications. Therefore, in this research the term 'technology' is used as an umbrella term covering all digital software, hardware, and applications.

As technology has developed over time, DLRs have become a necessity in education rather than just an add-on. The more technology became a part of our everyday life at home and work, the more it was brought into education. Moreover, as internet speed and content increased and their accessibility and popularity grew, the use of personal computers, tablets, smartphones also affected the ways in which they are used in education. While the particular technology employed in education varies from country to country mostly in terms of their level of economic development, discussions were often about whether or not the technology actually changed the way education was conducted, rather than simply adding an extra dimension. Changes in the web had direct effects on ICT usage both in general and in education. Mobile learning is examined from two points of view depending on the mobility of the learner or the learning

device. Moreover, as scholars have pointed out, the World Wide Web is turning into an interactive zone where end-users are creating, sharing, and receiving content at the same time.

The FATİH project has been the biggest project in Turkish education history in terms not only of its budget, but also of its scale and the ambition of its intended outcomes. It is one of the largest examples of its kind in the world and has set a precedent for those wondering how a developing country can, or perhaps cannot, catch up with developed countries through such large-scale projects. The broad conclusion was that if the required infrastructure and teacher training is not in place, the traditional pedagogy and mind-set about education is unlikely to change. Göğüş, Nistor, Riley, and Lerche (2012) noted a significant difference in the way such projects unfold, stating that while it is typical for underdeveloped countries to attempt such large-scale projects, it is typical for developed countries to conduct research on the acceptance of technology in education where technology infrastructure also allows higher penetration and better acceptance of technology use. Consequently, further in-depth research into the experiences from projects like FATİH should be useful for other developing countries which plan large-scale technology-assisted education reforms.

With the availability of new technologies and device technology use at home has increased over time both globally and in Turkey. Previous technologies have given way to newer ones and this trend continues as new technologies are supplied to the market. We can see that the time children spend watching television has declined, not particularly as the result of the advice of experts, but merely because newer media like smart mobile phones are becoming popular and children are spending their time using them.

The reasons why children are being allowed to use technology, especially the smartphone, are that parents use the smartphone as a tool to distract their children. It can be said that smartphones are the carrot and also the stick of modern times in terms of stick and carrot discipline. Parents download more game apps

than education apps and give or take the tool away from the children to persuade them to do something or refrain from a certain behaviour. When questioned, many parents voice negative concerns about preschool-aged children's of technology and especially smartphone use; however, they do not take any measures to curtail the time such devices are used and the way in which they are used by their children (Genc, 2014).

HE families have been supportive of the use of computers and trusted a wide variety of homeschooling websites offering curriculum, teaching materials, and techniques as a way to get educational content. According to research, HE children use mobile devices for educational intentions about twice as much as their schooled peers, even though schooling parents encourage their children to use technology more than unschooled ones.

In Section 1.4 I explained my positioning as a researcher, and how it shaped the way I reviewed the literature. Since, to my knowledge, there had been no previous study of its kind I decided to focus on the HE community in Turkey in terms of demographics, their pedagogic approaches and their use of digital resources. Therefore, in Chapter 5 I constructed my aims and objectives under these three broad headings.

The purpose of the research was to establish a picture of Turkish home educating families and to develop an awareness of HE experiences in a country in which HE is unregulated. To explore and characterize the resources that parents report using to support children's education at home, this study investigated the motivations and pedagogic stances of Turkish HE families.

The literature review showed that parents around the world opt out of school with several different motivations. The families that opt out of school evaluate the alternatives and decide a way to educate their children or allow their children to educate themselves. This chapter identifies the research gaps that emerged out of the literature review, which then enabled me to clarify the broad aims and more detailed objectives for my research.

The literature review was divided into three parts. The first part (Chapter 0) gave an overview of the Turkish educational system (section 1.3) and its historical background (section 1.2)) to offer a better understanding of the public unrest about the education system in Turkey and the development of interest in HE (section 1.4). The second part (Chapter 0) gave a critical overview of HE researches around the world. The review of literature argued that education out of school has its roots in major scholars' critiques of the

education systems and their suggestions/proposals (section 1.1). These critiques encouraged debate about education both among professional educators and also among the public. Families became interested in alternative approaches to education. The critiques of influential scholars led parents to develop their own critiques, and these formed the basis of their motivations to home educate their own children (section 1.3).). Researchers around the world have tried to define and categorise parents' motivations in home educating their children (section 1.3.2). However, there is little information on how parental background beliefs influence the decision to home educate, particularly in a country where HE is unregulated. This research is, to my knowledge, the first that focusses on current or former HE families in Turkey and is based on their real experiences (section 1.4). It therefore aims to contribute to the literature by defining and categorising a group of Turkish HE families' motivations. Based on the first two parts of the literature review following broad aims and specific objectives were drawn up:

Broad aim: To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ between each other in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.

Specific objectives:

1. Whether/How parents' own experience of school influenced their decision to home educate their own children.
2. Home educating parents' experience of the current school system, and knowledge of it. And how this influenced their decision to home educate their own children.
3. Home educating parents' beliefs about childhood, bringing up children and how children learn.

Broad aim: To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.

Specific objectives:

1. Where the approaches that a sample of Turkish home educating parents adopt for their children's education fell within the home education spectrum (unschooling, homeschooling, flexi-schooling)?
2. Whether/How the pedagogic approaches of a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differed by the broadly.

There has been a dramatic growth in the use of digital resources in the last decade. The effects of technology and digital resources on spreading the HE concept and the educational use of these resources at home needed to be investigated in the light of technology use in schools. So, the last part of the literature review (Chapter 0) began by reviewing empirical and theoretical data on use of digital resources and their applications in the schools (section 1.3). The potential applications of digital resources in HE (section 1.4) in other countries were investigated and the availability of technology to families in Turkey suggested the need for research that investigates their uses by HE families in Turkey. Therefore, based on the last part of the literature review, the following broad aim and specific objectives were drawn up:

Broad aim: To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

Specific Objectives:

1. How does a sample of Turkish home educating parents see digital resources? (distraction, useless, useful, entertainment tool, educational tool etc.)
2. Which digital resources did a sample of Turkish home educating parents use in their children's education, and how did they use them?

3. How did a sample of home educating families in Turkey use digital resources in teaching and learning?
4. Did the use of digital resources pedagogically differ in systematic ways between different groups of parents in the sample?

Part - 3 Design and Methods

- Chapter 6 - Methodology 1
 - Design
 - Choice of Methodology
 - Theoretical Framework
- Chapter 7 - Methodology 2
 - Data Collection Procedure
 - Data Analysis

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to outline the design and methods for the research. The background to the study and its design are discussed, followed by the methodology, or rationale for the design, including the warrant for the interpretation of the study's results. Thereafter, the methods used are outlined, including the sampling approach, procedure and implementation, construction of the instrument and data collection process, and analysis.

1.2 Background

Before discussing design and methodology, as background to the design I elaborate on how I came up with this research topic considering the controversial nature of the subject, issues regarding the physical conditions of the research and how I could collect data in this challenging environment, where HE is not regulated in Turkey and HE families interact with other HE parents online and offline. I explain the evolution of my research interest to study home educating parents in Turkey and the ways in which I tried to make myself an insider to the closed HE communities to collect information. This process also allowed me to test the feasibility of actually doing the research in this environment.

1.2.1 Research setting – The online social media community

As a researcher, although I always had an interest in HE, I did not have any in-depth knowledge in this field. I have never personally engaged with HE. Moreover, I was neither a home educated child nor a home educator parent. It was the rise of HE both globally and in Turkey which caught my attention and the absence of in-depth research in Turkey on this topic that excited me to do research in this area. An early review of the global literature implied that home educating parents' perceptions of education were influenced in crucial respects by their values and beliefs. While trying to find out whether/how that was the case for Turkish home educating parents, I read the blogs of some parents, and their discussions on the subject led me to an online social networking site (OSNS).

In this specific OSNS, people are directly linked to their 'friends' and have access to virtual communities named 'groups' where people can meet others who share their interests. This feature makes it easy for researchers to reach populations with different interests through existing groups or by creating new ones (Brickman Bhutta, 2012). The OSNS allows users to create three types of groups; these are listed and defined below:

- **Open groups:** these allow everyone to find the group by searching. All the members and posts are 'public', which means anyone can see them even if they are not a member of that group and/or the OSNS. If a person wants to be a member of that group (to see the group posts in his/her 'newsfeed' without needing to go to the group's wall), they are free to send a membership request if they have an account in that OSNS. The membership requests may require administrative approval or be done automatically (This is an option in the group settings which are visible only to the group administrator.).

- **Closed groups:** these groups allow everyone to find the group by searching and sending a membership request. The membership requests may require only an administrator's approval or completion of a questionnaire by the person who submits a membership request before administrative approval is given. (Giving approval is an option in the group settings which are visible to group administrators only.) Although all the names of the group members are public—which means anyone can see them even if they are not a member of that group and/or the social media platform—the posts are visible only to the members of that group.
- **Private groups:** these groups do not allow anyone to reach the group through searching. Neither the group members nor the posts are visible to the public. These groups can be joined only by invitation/recommendation from a member of that specific group. In order to be able to send an invitation, the member has to be a friend (which is the connection method used by that social media group) with the person who wishes to be invited.

Within the OSNS specified here, there was one closed group that was formed by a group of parents that were either practising or interested in HE. As mentioned before, in order to join that group, an administrator had to approve your request, because it was a closed group. At that time, there was no other requirement apart from being a woman. I was curious about this rule when I first joined and I created a post to ask why men are not accepted into the group by indicating in the post that a child's education should also be a concern of fathers as well as mothers. One of the group administrators commented on my post as follows:

... I personally do not support that kind of public pressure about gender roles. The concerns of this OSNS group are different. The group members think that they are more comfortable in their conversations if they are among women only. This OSNS group is very large in terms of population and made up of people from a variety of backgrounds and life styles.

Many of the group members share photographs of their house, children and their home education activities on the group wall. They indicate that they would be reluctant to share such private information. I respect their preferences. They may feel more comfortable interacting in a women-only environment. I can tell you briefly that it is for this feeling of comfort that we limited the membership to mothers-only.

Traditional gender roles in the Turkish society is that men are responsible for earning money and women are responsible for housework and taking care of children including educational responsibilities. These responsibilities include but are not limited to, attending school-family meetings, helping with homework and studying for exams throughout the education life (Cüceloğlu, no date; Yavuzer, 2014). Such a conditioning for the stereotypical gender roles can be seen within the messages given to the children and teenagers by the family, school and TV in the 1980's and 1990's. Course books at school portray children in gender specific roles and activities, i.e. boys helping their fathers and girls helping their mothers (Müftüler-Bac, 1999)

Reflections of the traditional gender roles find their way into Turkish laws as well and the usual suspect duality between western and eastern influence is valid in jurisdiction as well. According to the Turkish civic code, the husband is the head of family. Although Turkish civic code was the most modern and innovative of its kind when enacted in 1926, some articles that stemmed from the traditional social life such as women needing their husband's permission to work was not abrogated until 1990 (Hortaçsu, Kalaycıoğlu, & Rittersberger-Tiliç, 2003).

However, as migration from rural to urban continued and education allowed more women to become economically active, inevitably the traditional gender roles eroded and evolved in Turkey. Aycan and Eskin (2005) stated that expansionist theory also envisaged such a transition in gender roles. As society in the western world evolved into one with a larger middle class living mainly in cities, a similar transformation

was seen in Turkish society's gender roles, from traditional to modern. Although this transformation started by the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923, its progress was affected not only by developments in the economy, and hence in social life and gender roles, but also by Turkey's traditional establishment which resisted such influences (Aycan & Eskin, 2005). Therefore, when examining Turkish society, it can both resemble a western European culture while retaining patterns specific to its traditional roots.

According to Cüceloğlu (no date), a psychologist and writer who has been practising family therapy since 1980's, although more men do get involved with their children's upbringing, it is still the mothers who are responsible for the day-to-day education and upbringing of the children. Moreover, Yavuzer (2014) also supports the same argument and adds that while traditional gender roles in Turkey are gradually evolving to resemble a western European society, the roles still prevail in most segments of the Turkish society.

When I first joined the closed OSNS group, it had about 4000 members. After a while, the number of members increased to over 15000 and the newcomers' questions occupied the group wall more than the posts from practising mothers who shared their actual experiences and ideas. The initial group members expressed frustration about answering the same questions repeatedly and established a new closed OSNS group which was open to both genders, unlike the old closed OSNS group.

One of the group administrators shared a post in the first group to explain why they needed a new closed OSNS group and what was required to become a member of the newly established group. This time, in order to be a member of the new group, people were asked to: (i) send a brief explanation of their interest in home education, and wish to join the new group, to one of the moderators of the group and/or: (ii) sign two petitions on change.org. One of the petitions (Likoğlu, 2017b) was about objecting to the compulsory preschool education that was proposed at that time by Turkey's Prime Minister, given compulsory

preschool education was currently being piloted in 22 cities. The second petition(Likoğlu, 2017a)was about supporting the legalisation of HE in Turkey. Both petitions have now closed.

Currently, the new closed group has 1500 group members and the original closed group's wall has now terminated, meaning that, with the exception of some important announcements from the administrators, no one can post anything new.

Accessing home education families in Turkey

As an outsider, accessing home educator families was a problem in terms of both finding practising families and gaining their trust before starting to collect data.

When I first joined the initial closed OSNS group (i.e., the one that has now terminated), for a while, I just observed and read as many past posts as possible to get an in-depth understanding of the field and determine what issues were concerning members and might, therefore, be worthy of further research. After a while, I started to comment on the posts and share posts (internet articles, web pages, comics about education), even though these were not necessarily directly related to my research. I also waited for members' questions about me instead of introducing myself right at the beginning, in order to eliminate the stereotypical resistance to share information with an outsider, especially with a researcher into a legally unregulated subject.

As I had expected, seeing my name on the posts frequently drew the members' interest in who I was. For example, one of the members asked the group members what comes to mind when they hear the word 'Montessori'. I commented on that post by explaining my personal opinions and concerns about the popularisation of that specific educational method in Turkey. The post owner and I replied to each other's

comments three times within the post. After the third comment, she asked me whether I had a child or not. Another example is that I shared a link (Seyler.Eksisozluk.Com, 2016) to an internet article about '*Sesame Street* and its use as a social experiment' on the group wall; ten comments were posted about the article, then a member of the group asked my age and whether I watched *Sesame Street* and/or whether I allow my children to watch it. With this question, I had a chance to introduce myself to the members who had commented on that post. Whenever I was asked a question about myself, I gave them a full explanation of my interest and my plans to do further research on HE in Turkey.

While taking part in the discussions and sharing comments, members of the group started to invite me to their meetings. I first met seven of the home educator mothers, one of whom was an administrator of the closed OSNS group. They invited me to join them for a cup of coffee in my hometown (Izmir). I thought that their first intention would be 'to check' on me and so I explained my intentions regarding my participation in the group. The meeting, however, had an amicable atmosphere. When the second group mentioned earlier was established to include only practising home educator parents, I sent a brief explanation of my interest in the topic as a researcher. My explanation was found to be sufficient by the administrator (whom I had met in the first meeting) and I was warmly welcomed by her to the new group.

After the first meeting (well before the second group was established), one of the group members who is one the mothers I had met in Izmir mentioned that a camp meeting would be held in the near future. She directed me to the person who was in charge of organising that camp meeting. I sent a message on the OSNS and briefly introduced myself, my intentions, and my desire to attend that camp with my father and mother. She warmly invited us to attend their camp, which was for practising or interested home educating parents from the closed OSNS group. The camp was organised so that the families could get together and, while the parents were sharing their experiences, the children had an opportunity to socialise with each other.

It was an excellent opportunity for me to have face-to-face interactions with the participating families and to clarify the concept of HE in Turkey, and questions arising from it. Therefore, I shared two days with the group talking about HE, personal experiences, and my education and research. Through sharing intensive time together, we became personally attached. I gained their trust and ensured that they understood my intentions; I explained that I was not assessing them on their ability to teach or on parenting their children and was interested only in learning about their HE experiences in order to conduct research on this topic. After the camp, we became friends on the OSNS, exchanged messages from time to time, and those I had met on the camp invited me to two other meetings that I could not attend because I was in the UK. After those meetings, they sent me pictures of themselves, saying that they would have loved to have seen me there as well. Those personal interactions showed me that they no longer saw me as an outsider.

It gradually became clear that the closed OSNS group functioned as a support group for Turkish home educating families. They shared their narratives, concerns, and hopes about HE. Moreover, they shared and asked for resources for their children's education and their own self-improvement as home educators. They also used the group for getting opinions on their pedagogic approaches and methods.

1.3 Design and Methodology Overview

This research investigates the ideas, experiences, and points of view of a sample of home educating parents, and therefore I selected a cross-sectional descriptive/explanatory design which enables the collection of in-depth data which describes and explains the phenomenon of interest. The nature of the descriptive data collected in a cross-sectional design can address a research question about perceptions and experiences. The need for such an in-depth descriptive and explanatory design leads to data collection methods such as interviews which are a potentially rich source of information by enabling multisensory

channels to be used, i.e., those that are verbal, nonverbal, spoken, and heard (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Punch, 2013).

From my preliminary observations, it became apparent that homeschooling parents in my sample in Turkey differed in two crucial respects: firstly, in terms of their values and beliefs and secondly, in terms of their pedagogical approaches.

By preliminary observations stage of my research, I had had two face-to-face interactions with the group members. At the first meeting with the home educating mothers in Izmir, there was no talk related to religion. However, at the second meeting (the camp), there were families who had a religious way of dressing and their conversations included pedagogy and curriculum that involved the teaching of religious values to their children. Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore's (1992) found that, although the ideological motivations of parents to opt out of school might be different, they end up choosing HE for their children, whether they are liberal or religious. Looking to the HE parents in two different meetings I had been present, I also concluded that the OSNS group that I had been observing, was formed by both religious and liberal parents. I observed that, in the OSNS group, while all parents were commenting on various subjects about HE, when it came to the inclusion of religious values and beliefs in the teaching of their children, only religious parents had been commenting on that subject and nonreligious ones had not been interested in it. Moreover, this dichotomy appeared to have implications not only for pedagogy—or how they taught their children—but also for the content of the homeschooling curriculum. My observations led me to conclude that it would be worth investigating whether a sample of home educating parents in Turkey fell into two groups in terms of their values and beliefs: one group that appeared not to be concerned about the role of religion in the upbringing of their children and a second which regarded religion as highly important. Moreover, did these groupings appear to be associated with different approaches to the homeschool curriculum and to pedagogy?

After reading their blogs and social media posts, and having had discussions during the meetings, it appeared that the sample of Turkish home educating parents might possibly fall into four broader groups according to their pedagogic approaches: **unschoolers**, who are totally against the school system and reject any formal curriculum in their HE; **homeschoolers**, who do not send their children to school, but think that a curriculum and educational goals for specific ages are needed; **flexi-schoolers**, who do send their children to school either part-time or full-time, but also have another curriculum and/or pedagogic approach out of school to enhance their children's education; and, lastly, **deschoolers** who opt out of school because of the problems their children have encountered; these parents are trying to erase the negative memories of school to help their children to 'learn' again. In my research I, therefore, aimed to find ten to fifteen parents from each group to interview, in order to discover whether this initial impression was supported by empirical data from the in-depth interviews.

1.3.1 Design

For my research, a cross-sectional (at one point in time) descriptive design was considered as the most suitable and effective, because exploring the sample parents' reasons, perceptions, and use of digital resources was my research objective, as indicated in Chapter 0. Descriptive approaches using in-depth interviews allow the researcher to be innovative about a personal interest in marginalised people and creating a better culture for everyone (Creswell, 2013). I wanted to ensure that my participants felt that they were a part of the research process, not subjects who were being studied. In this study, participants in the sample of home educating families in Turkey were able to provide rich data by emphasising the details that they perceived to be important. The richness and depth of the data were provided through the semi-structured interviews.

Descriptive research describes the nature of society by providing perceptions about existing or past phenomena upon which to create a basis for limited generalisation and/or to provoke the 'why questions' of explanatory research. In other words, descriptive research is the fundamental basis for leading into experimental research in which researchers create or manipulate the research variables (Best & Kahn, 2006; De Vaus, 2001; Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004).

Although educational researchers have adopted descriptive research approaches enthusiastically, descriptive research has its roots in sociology and anthropology (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive/explanatory research is used to understand a particular event or social situation and, particularly, to make sense of an interaction between people or within a group by contrasting, comparing, and classifying (Creswell, 2013; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Since the data emerging from descriptive research are reported in words rather than numbers, the data are descriptive in nature (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Descriptive studies set out existing relationships and conditions, points of view, beliefs, or trending topics (Best & Kahn, 2006; Cohen et al., 2013). This study too is descriptive in nature and is concerned with a sample of parents' perceptions of HE, approaches to HE, and their points of view on digital resources used in HE.

A longitudinal descriptive study would have been too time-consuming as a means of gathering data, since that approach requires the researcher to measure the same variables at different points using the same subjects over a period of time (Cohen et al., 2013). Its ability to obtain relatively quicker results not only makes cross-sectional design widely used by social researchers (De Vaus, 2001), but also makes it more appropriate for the current study in that this study is confined to perspectives on HE in Turkey at one point in time. Therefore, a cross-sectional research design that systematically explores the naturally occurring conditions and develops knowledge around home educating families' perceptions was chosen as a means to obtain the in-depth data needed to achieve the current study's research aims.

The broad aims that arose from the preliminary observations of the Turkish home educating families were:

- To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ between each other in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.
- To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.
- To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

1.3.2 Choice of methods

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design that employed semi-structured interviews as the method to obtain in-depth data to reach its research aims. When deciding which research approach to choose, I needed to consider the procedures that were going to be adopted in the advanced stages, because, as Creswell (2013) points out, each approach offered different directions with regard to the methods in the overall research design.

A descriptive approach sees the researcher as the key instrument through which to gain in-depth understanding. Researchers may use a protocol for data collection; however, making sense of and organising the data relies on the researcher. After building an organised data set, the researcher works back and forth between the themes to ensure that coherence is developed in the research (Creswell, 2013).

Observations are widely used in educational research, most particularly in ethnographic studies (Spradley, 2016). The distinctiveness of using observations comes from the opportunity to collect live data (Cohen et al., 2013). In this study, observations were used to comment on the research scene and observational data were used as preliminary data, thus, enabling the researcher to look beyond the things that might be inadvertently missed from the interview data (Cohen et al., 2013).

In recent years, due to technologic developments, computer/mobile device-assisted interviews have been growing (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Internet-based data collection methods generally involve internet surveys and their response rate is generally better than that for mail surveys. However, in contrast, internet interviews have been found to be less effective in terms of their response rate (Cohen et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the technology which has been developed allows people to talk face-to-face on the internet and this capability eliminates not only bias, but also takes advantage of both face-to-face interviews and the speediness and cost-effectiveness of the internet (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Additionally, given the nature the subject matter, the interviews for this study needed to take place in a relatively private area. Since the sample families lived in different cities and had different time schedules, arranging an interview that could be conducted on Skype and which could take place in their home or private office looked like the most convenient solution.

There are three main kinds of interviews and, as research tools, they differ in terms of their degree of structure. The three types are:

- (i) **the structured interview:** this is characterised as a closed situation where all the questions and the procedure are specified in advance. The interviewee is left little freedom to expand on the subject under investigation. The aim of this kind of interview is to give exactly the

same interview stimulus to each interviewee. Structured interviews are used primarily in survey research (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).

- (ii) **the unstructured interview:** this is an open situation where freedom and flexibility are given to both the interviewer and the interviewee. Although planning is involved, the wording, content, and sequence of the questions all remain flexible (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).
- (iii) **the semi-structured interview:** this technique involves minimum direction and control on the part of the interviewer as semi-structured interviews allow the interviewee to feel free to express his/her subjective feelings as fully and spontaneously as s/he chooses (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Fontana & Frey, 1994). The researcher may ask further questions in response to significant replies from the interviewee. The sequence of the questions may also be varied (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).

The following paragraphs explain why a semi-structured interview technique was selected for my research.

Semi-structured interviews involve a set of motifs/questions that arise from repeatedly reviewing of literature and consideration of preliminary observations (Cohen et al., 2013; Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Through the choice of this method, I aimed to get in-depth data about the sample parents' previous educational experiences, their current values and beliefs, their approach to planning an HE curriculum, and the pedagogy they favoured in home educating their children. Moreover, since semi-structured interviewing encourages the interviewees to take the lead and introduce the topics that they think important (Cohen et al., 2013; Lewis-Beck et al., 2004), adopting this method allowed a wide range of aspects of the subject under discussion to be covered (if the interviewee wished to explore ideas more fully) and, thus, enabled a deep and up-to-date set of data to be collected.

In writing interview questions, I tried to be impartial yet clear and simple as my aim was to gather data that addressed my research aims. The interview schedule, therefore, contained predetermined questions; these were designed to allow the interviewees enough room and opportunities to talk about relevant issues during the course of the interviews. Since my research aim was to look at how interviewees viewed the world of HE, the capacity of semi-structured interviews to provide insights was found helpful (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). When conducting the interviews, I also made sure that I listened carefully and offered prompts and probes to the parents in order to gain greater insight from their answers.

In brief, I chose the semi-structured interview method on the basis that it offered the best fit with my topic, research aims, and the nature of the data to be collected.

An individual's perception of a concept builds on his or her past experiences; thus, in just the same way, practising Turkish parents' perceptions of HE may change over time. However, the design of my study relied on data that was collected at one point in time from a particular part of the HE population. A cross-sectional design, therefore, fitted perfectly with the current research since cross-sectional studies produce a snapshot of existing variances (*"reliance on existing differences"* (De Vaus, 2001, p. 171)) within pre-existing groups (*"reliance on existing groups"* (De Vaus, 2001, p. 172)) of a sample of home educating families in Turkey at a particular point in time (*"no time dimension"* (De Vaus, 2001, p. 170))(Cohen et al., 2013).

1.4 Theoretical Framework for Data Collection and Analysis

Symbolic interactionism is an empirical perspective in social sciences which studies human group life and human conduct (Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, & Usher, 2013). The term was coined by Herbert Blumer. Interestingly, while Blumer considered his coining of the term as offhand, it has been widely adopted

(Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism is premised on the idea that people act in accordance with their understanding of the world around them and that their understanding is derived through the meanings of words, objects, and acts of others (Best & Kahn, 2006; Manis & Meltzer, 1978) i.e., through social interaction and interpretation.

Through interaction, people socially create the meanings that enable them to understand their environment (Manis & Meltzer, 1978). They categorise their environment by isolating a piece from it, distinguishing it from all other parts, giving it a name, and associating it with the existing ideas that the person already holds (Charon, 2012).

Blumer (1969) claims that symbolic interactionism differs from the other social scientific approaches that explore human beings' understanding of life as follows:

Symbolic interactionism rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have on them. ... The second premise refers to the source of meaning... It (symbolic interactionism) sees meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people. The third premise ... the use of meaning by a person in his action involves an interpretative process. (pp. 2-5)

He claims that researchers in the social sciences ignore or play down the meanings held by people and that this factor leads to the falsification of research studies, since the meanings of people's words are the central part of their own thoughts. In addition, he states that meanings are the products that were created as people interacted; however, according to Blumer, meaning-making involves a two-step interpretative process. In the first step, the human being is interacting with himself/herself as an internalised social process to point out the meaning of a word; in the second step, s/he decides how to handle this meaning, since the interpretation is not an automatic application but a formative process (Blumer, 1969).

There is, therefore, an appropriate fit between symbolic interactionism and this study since the sample of home educating families' interactions constituted a presentation of self in terms of home educator identity. According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), the researcher enters the interviewees' worlds by engaging with their everyday life in the chosen research scene through interaction to seek their meanings from their perspectives. Using symbolic interactionism allowed me to investigate how different home educators from different backgrounds and with different values and beliefs perceived and comprehended HE. Consequently, while interviewing the study participants, the personal meanings attached to the expression of their reasons for choosing HE, their teaching methods, and use they made of technology were considered, evaluated, and interpreted in order to group them into broad categories.

Symbolic interactionism was adopted as the theoretical framework for the research and thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview data. Using a theoretical lens in descriptive research orients the study by shaping the types of questions asked, informing the data collection method, and providing a 'call for action' (Creswell, 2013). The importance of understanding the role that people play in building knowledge, exploring, and establishing symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework for understanding the reasons, perceptions, and use of digital resources by a sample of home educating families in Turkey situates the research in the wider research field. Self-perspectives will be used to accompany the epistemology and ontology of symbolic interactionism's three main themes of meaning, action, and interaction (Chamberlain-Salaun et al., 2013).

1.5 Limitations

As a multilingual researcher studying a sample of Turkish home-educating parents, the three-part process of developing researcher competence in the practice of researching multilingually (RM-ly) conceptualised by Holmes, Fay, Andrews, and Attia (2015) was adopted to decide my research design. The three-part

process, which they called as “*vis-à-vis RM-ly practice*” (Holmes et al., 2015, p. 89), consisted of “*realisation, consideration, informed and purposeful decision-making*” (Holmes et al., 2015, p. 89). I considered a number of aspects including taking advantage of reviewing literature in Turkish besides English and deciding which language was to be used for data generation, data analysis, and reporting. I purposely decided to use Turkish as the data collection and analysis language, while English was selected for reporting and representing the data. Both languages were used to browse the literature; however, English was used when writing the literature review, since the thesis was written in English. Engaging with Turkish literature is nevertheless seen as a strength of this study. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, as it is the native language of both the researcher and the interviewees. As the interview data for this study were gathered in Turkish, it was not appropriate to analyse the interview data in English. Translating the Turkish data into English and analysing it in English was rejected for two reasons: first, because translation opens up the possibility that the meaning of some of the interview data may suffer a semantic shift and, secondly, because the translating of a large amount of data is not a mandatory technical research stage in most cases (Holmes et al., 2015).

As Marshall and Rossman (2014) noted, “*No proposed research is without limitations; there is no such thing as a perfectly designed study*” (p.42). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four aspects of trustworthiness that can be used to assess descriptive research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).

The credibility of the research has been ensured through voice recording of all interviews and word-for-word transcribing and translating of the study’s pilot interviews. I considered my analysis of the pilot interviews to determine whether or not more interviews might need to be translated after the pilot stage. Moreover, although the analyses of the research were reported in English, the original analyses and

transcripts in Turkish will be available for any future research projects of a similar nature that may act as confirmative studies for this research.

Transferability can be a limitation of cross-sectional designs where the research orientation is around unique and intensive groups (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). This research's transferability has been ensured by comparing and contrasting the data collected from a total of 40-60 interviewees. By drawing on my preliminary observations, I was able to ascertain four distinct groups within the sample of Turkish home educating families and so between ten to fifteen parents from each of these pre-identified distinct groups of Turkish home educating families were planned to be interviewed.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Bryman (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004), research can ensure confirmability by showing how the analyses rely on the data. Thus, to ensure confirmability, I have directly translated representative exemplars of the interviews and referred directly to that translation whenever it was necessary to show that I had not allowed myself to be influenced by my personal views.

All research has limitations, so I do not claim that my conclusions and generalisations are valid for every home educating family in Turkey. The research, therefore, required a theoretical framework that recognises the distinctions in world views that are unique and particular to the research subjects. Representativeness is not claimed. This research is descriptive in nature and has a cross-sectional design. It involves collection of data on the approach of a sample of Turkish parents to HE, their reasons for adopting it, and the meanings that HE holds for them. It is recognised, for instance, that the meaning of HE for deschooling parents may differ substantially from that of unschoolers.

1.1 Research Procedure for Data Collection

1.1.1 Design of interview schedule

The interview schedule (Appendix D) contains seven key questions that address the nub of the research focus. Following each key question, the areas that were expected to be covered by the participants are listed. In cases where any of these were not covered, I asked the interviewees prompt questions.

For example, in the first question in my interview schedule I asked for information about the interviewees and their household in order to collect demographic information about the study sample. Moreover, the second question in my interview schedule was “Could you please tell me about your own experience of education and what you think is important in education?” which sought to collect information on the sample parents’ experiences about education pedagogic stances of the family, parents’ beliefs about childhood, the ideal education from parents’ points of view and thoughts about the Turkish education system. This information addressed the first broad aim of my research which was “To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differed in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.”

While recruiting participants, I piloted the interview schedule with two to three parents from each group that the preliminary data suggested. After piloting, the necessary amendments were made and the schedule took its final shape.

1.1.2 Ethical Issues

In social sciences both the nature of the research itself and the methods employed during the research process can raise ethical issues for the researchers (Cohen et al., 2013). In my research the nature of the study -home education- itself is an unregulated practice in Turkey. Moreover, the selected setting for observation and sampling is a social media platform. According to Elgesem(2015) there is no major difference in the requirements of ethical considerations whether a study is conducted via social media or not. In this chapter I explain how I considered the ethical issues that might arise from my research.

I went through the process of applying for and being granted ethical approval from the School of Education of Durham University prior to data collection. I submitted the School's Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form (Appendix F) before starting to conduct my research. The Ethics Sub-Committee of the School of Education assessed my research against the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Ethical Research (2011), and gave me approval on 20.10.2017 (Appendix A).

While planning the research, I went through the five principles of ethics in social sciences of the Academy of Social Sciences ACSS(2015). I decided to employ the ethical guidelines of BERA – British Educational Research Association(2018) which were a set of suggestions derived from those main principles, to make sure that none of the ethical issues expected to be encountered in my research was missed.

Although the research was carried out in Turkey, I employed BERA guidelines as a UK researcher in UK would do. Moreover, considering the unregulated nature of the home education subject in Turkey I took measures to ensure that the participating interviewees and their families were not adversely affected by their involvement in this research.

While carefully designing my research, obtaining the necessary ethical approval and following BERA guidelines, I also thought about whether or not non-participants in my research could be affected by its results, and if so in what sense and to what extent. Moreover, a further threat to be assessed was the threat to the researcher as I was conducting research with subjects who chose to follow an educational practice which is unregulated and technically illegal in Turkey. Since my research was sponsored by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, I had to submit my research topic for approval before starting the research. As the Ministry gave permission to continue with this topic it was apparent that my research did not contravene current legislation or policy in Turkey.

While discussing research ethics in social sciences, Israel and Hay (2006) stated *“Researchers should try to avoid imposing even the risk of harm on others.”*(p. 97) Moreover, Gorard (2002) states that a researcher’s first duty must be to conduct are search with quality and rigour, which is required to ensure that the research is ethical as well. The researchers should maintain a balance between the quality and the risks (Israel & Hay, 2006) so they should try to justify the need for the research (and thus the use of public or charitable funds) vis a vis any potential risk to non-participants (Gorard, 2002).

Although non-participants were not direct subjects of this research, they were the majority of the society, who might or might not benefit from its findings. Moreover, the public in Turkey was the indirect sponsor of my studies, as my PhD was supported by state scholarship in exchange for teaching at a state university. Therefore, I had a further ethical concern at this point, to make sure that my research was reliable and

valid. So, ideally my thesis would become a useful source of information for the public and for government in relation to Home Education, Distance Learning and Technology Use by students in Turkey.

The research is divided into two parts. The first, preliminary part involved observing online communities, blogs and pages on home educating in Turkey. Although there is no major difference in the ethical considerations, there are essential differences between internet communication and the other communication channels. Postings on the internet are logged automatically and even if the owner of the post deletes the posting, it still may be reachable; the posting can be replicated with no cost and we cannot control the audience of a public post (Boyd, 2008). However, for the closed OSNS groups as the one I used for observing, the audience for the postings was limited clearly by the privacy settings of the group. The members of these groups, shared their posts and comments freely within their comfort zone which was a protected framework that was created to encourage communication with other group members (Zimmer, 2010). In this case using their posts and comments – would certainly need their consent. In this OSNS, when a post was shared, all the members could comment so if I had wanted to use a post as data in my research I would have had to obtain consents from all the members who commented on the post along with the sharer of the post. Therefore, I decided to use the observation data only as preliminary and background information. Townsend and Wallace (2016) state that in such cases the data needs to be considered private and consents from all commentators are needed. I considered the data from the closed OSNS group as private data and decided to use the observation data only as preliminary and background information for which I did not need to seek consent from each and every commentator.

In order to learn more about HE in Turkey, to examine the prospective research topics and do preliminary observations, I had joined a closed OSNS group, which required an approval from the group administrator. I was not asked about my profession or particular interest in joining the group. If I had been asked I would have replied that I was a researcher and my aim was to gather information about the field, not any

particular personal information from the group members. While I was participating in the discussions on the group wall, the members started to ask me questions, such as if I had a child, or if I also practised home education. While answering them, I also gave a full explanation of my interest and my plans to do further research on home education in Turkey. After some time, I attended the meetings organised by the group and explained my intentions, and my background, so that they could trust me and feel comfortable to share information for my study.

As noted above, the observation data were only used as preliminary and background information. No consent from the members of the aforementioned OSNS group was needed since the group administrators and the members that I communicated with knew my research interest in home-education and no discomfort had been raised about my existence and participation in the group. I used the group wall to approach the prospective participants. The process was explained in detail in the section 1.1.3. The post I shared on the group wall (Appendix E) explained that I was a researcher and I received informed consents via e-mail from every member of this group who joined my research as interviewees.

I recognised that during the interviews some families might have felt discomfort due to the unregulated situation of home educating in Turkey. While home educating is not illegal, not sending children to school is unlawful and families might potentially face a fine if convicted. However, in practice no family has been fined due to not sending their children to school, apart from some extreme cases where forced marriage or child labour was the main issue in the conviction.

The group of informants in this research were all home educating parents who did not have child labour or forced marriage intentions. I showed maximum effort to make them feel comfortable and safe to share information. Moreover, participants were not concerned that they might be convicted for not sending their children to school as no such case of conviction had been heard of in the community. However,

despite the lack of concern about conviction, they opted for schools or teachers that were less strict with regards to non-attendance and refrained from sending written warnings.

The second part of the research was the main data collection exercise. It involved interviews with the participants. Interviews were conducted on the phone (41 out of 44) and via e-mail as written (3 out of 44). I reassured the interviewees that they were not being assessed on their ability to teach or on parenting their children. They were informed that I was only interested in their homeeducating experiences and their use of digital resources in this journey(Appendix B). This was sent to interviewees as part of the procedure for seeking informed consent. They were then given an e-mail consent form to be signed and returned electronically (Appendix C).

During the course of the interviews, I checked whether the participants were still happy to continue. I made sure that the participants knew that they could tell me if they wished to withdraw at any time. I remained alert to my participants' reactions when I talked to them especially about their values and beliefs to be sure that they were not feeling distressed by the topic. I assuredthe interviewees that their answers would be anonymous.

To make sure that the confidentiality and anonymity was preserved,I recorded and presented the results by using pseudo names instead of the real names of the participants. No personal information was asked or collected from the participants other than demographic data. As I explained in the previous chapter, I had noticed during the pilot interviews that the participants were sometimes hesitant to give information about their occupation or education, in order not to be identified or be judged; therefore, if they refrained from giving such information I used prompts to inform them that their education and occupation data would be used only for statistical purposes in the demographics section of the thesis and to reassure them about their privacy. Names of the participants and their children were not recorded. Additional personal

data, i.e. names of the places where they lived, number of their children, and their occupations were not recorded. (If in case any of the participants mentioned some personal data by mistake, those parts of the recordings were deleted immediately after interviews to prevent any possibility of unauthorised use, in case the records were lost or stolen). Interview recordings were not shared with anyone outside of the study and they were kept under password protected files and folders.

1.1.3 Sampling frame

My preliminary observations suggested that home educating families in Turkey could be placed within four distinct groups in terms of their values and beliefs. My aim was to compare these groups according to their existing differences by conducting interviews at one point in time. The use of semi-structured interviews proved not only to be an advantage in terms of enabling the participants to express their subjective views freely in whatever way they chose, but also helped me to describe their existing differences and, thus, to establish broader descriptive groups for comparison.

Choosing a study sample is important in all research studies. The aim of all representative sampling methods is to get a representative sample from the selected population (Marshall, 1996). As a cross-sectional study, the first intention of this study was to obtain a representative sample of parents from home educating families in Turkey. Although I aimed to get a cross section of parents who are home educating their children, I could not guarantee that those who took part in this research were representative of all home educating families in Turkey.

I decided that the social media group with which I was involved offered a useful starting point because some of the parents had already shown an interest in participating in my research. Parents were selected from a closed group in a social media platform. My aim was to recruit equal numbers from each of the

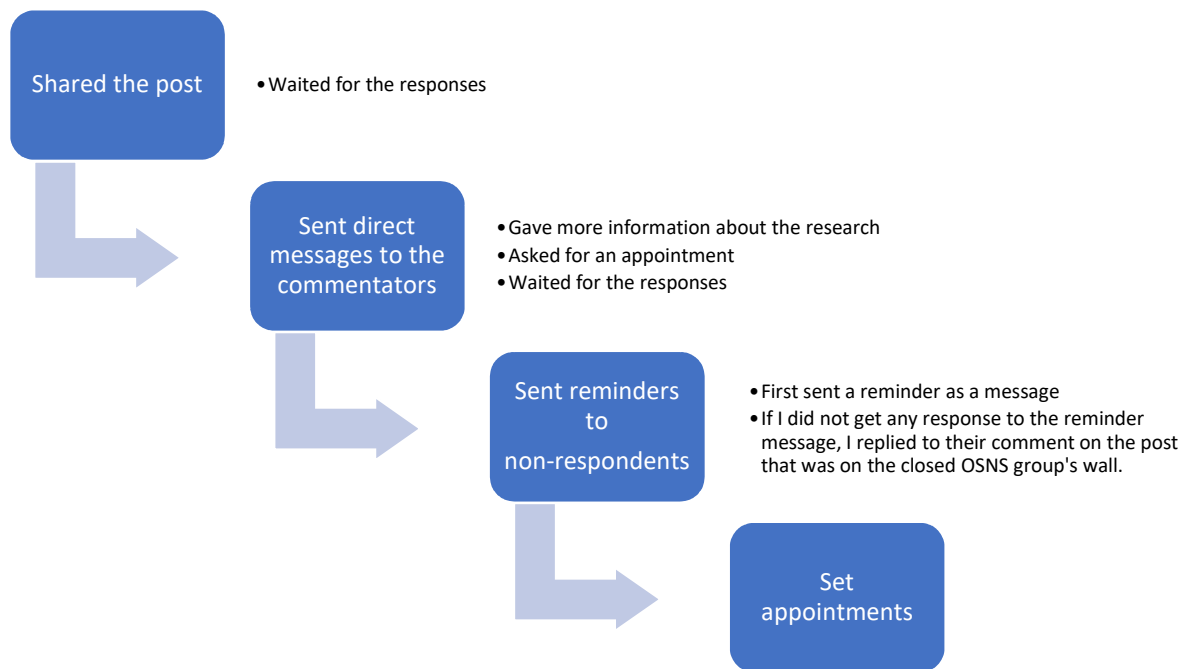
groups that I had identified through my preliminary observations and to get snapshots of the motivational orientations and pedagogic approaches of all of these families.

I decided to use a variety of approaches for sampling; first of all, opportunistic sampling was adopted. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic in Turkey, HE families are sceptical about almost everyone who tries to contact them. Since I had gained the trust of the members of the closed group, I used the digital world, as that allowed me to post a brief synopsis of my research on the social media group's wall and seek voluntary participants. Furthermore, the snowball technique was also employed to gain more potential participants, as I asked those who had agreed to an interview if they could suggest other home educator parents who might be willing to share their experiences and ideas for this research in Turkey.

1.1.4 Sampling

As indicated, I published a post (Appendix E) on the closed OSNS group's wall to briefly explain my research and my intentions and to seek help with it. I asked parents who were willing to help me when responding to the post by indicating which of the broad groups I had identified that they felt closest to. These broad groups were identified and were classified according to how much structure their practice included, as noted in my preliminary observations. The following groups were classified as: unschooling (no structure at all), homeschooling (a curriculum is included), flexi-schooling (child goes to school either part-time or full-time), and deschooling (the child was either withdrawn from school or the parents were thinking about withdrawing their child from school because the child's school experience was or had been problematical).

While parents continued to comment on my post, I started to direct messages to the respondents one by one to give them more details about my research and to request a Skype interview. The sampling procedure is explained on the diagram below.



At the end of the sampling, there were 67 commentators on the post. Of these 67, 32 indicated that they felt closest to unschooling, fifteen indicated they felt closest to homeschooling, seventeen identified themselves as being closest to flexi-schooling, and three opted for the deschooling description. I allowed the parents who commented on the post on the group wall about one month to respond to my direct messages. I reminded the non-respondents twice, as explained in the diagram. If no responses were received after two reminders, I did not pursue these commentators and marked them as 'no response' on my list.

By the end of the one-month period for responses from the 67 commentators to whom I had sent direct messages, 38 had agreed to appointments for an interview, six of the commentators were excluded because their children were below preschool age, two told me that they decided not to participate, 21 of them did not respond. During each interview, I asked each interviewee if they could suggest someone else who might be willing to participate in this research. None of the respondents directly suggested anyone else. However, one interviewee did share my direct message about my research and my telephone number on their local HE community's emailing list. As a result of that email, six people contacted me and indicated

that they were willing to participate in my research. As it happened, I had already met those six people during the camp meeting that I mentioned in the section on the research setting (1.2p.117). They told me that they had not been following the closed OSNS group for a while and, therefore, had not seen my post. However, they were keen to be part of this research because we had previously met face-to-face and they had already got to know me and were aware of my research. At the end of the data collection, I was able to carry out 44 interviews in total, of whom 38 were recruited by opportunistic sampling and six with the snowball sampling method.

1.1.5 Conducting interviews

I chose the semi-structured interview method, as that provided the best fit with my topic, research aims, and the nature of the data to be collected. Although I had initially planned to carry out the interviews on Skype, while recruiting subjects, the interview method had to be changed in accordance with the prospective interviewees' preferences. When I asked them for an appointment to conduct a Skype interview, almost all of them asked if it was possible to do the interview on the phone. They told me that they could be more flexible in terms of both the place and the time. Based on the large majority's preference, I changed the interview method and continued to ask prospective new subjects for an appointment for a phone interview. In addition, three respondents agreed to take part in the research only if I could do a written interview with them. I did conduct written interviews with them and left open the option to include or reject their data in the research once all the available data had been collected.

Due to the danger of data loss, I set up two different recording methods. I used one handheld voice recorder and one piece of software that records all calls digitally. Initially, I had installed a digital recording application on my PC to be able to record Skype calls; however, due to the change in the interview method from Skype interviews to phone interviews, I installed another application on my phone in order to record

the voice calls. After every interview, I put the two voice record files onto two different portable password-protected hard disks. The recordings were placed in folders that were named with the interviewees' pseudonyms. The data management methods and procedure employed to ensure the privacy of the subjects is explained in detail in the study's Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and the 1.1.2 Ethical Issues section of this chapter above.

The procedure that I adopted for administering the interviews was as follows: After asking two or three icebreaker questions before each and every interview, I explained the purpose of my research and how I would use the data gathered from the interviewees. I followed this procedure in order not to be misunderstood or perceived as asking for information without informing the interviewees how it was to be used and obtaining their consent for that purpose. I began the interviews only after I had made sure that the interviewees did not have any concerns about what I was doing and were comfortable about sharing their opinions and experiences.

1.2 Pilot Interviews

1.2.1 Amendments to the Interview Schedule

The first two interviews were chosen as pilot interviews. I was aiming to conduct the pilots with interviewees from the different broad groups that the preliminary data suggested. According to their comments on the post that I had published on the closed OSNS group's wall about which broad groups home educators fall into, one interviewee identified most with homeschooling and the second with unschooling. After conducting the two pilot interviews, I checked if the questions were understandable and

to the point, in order to ascertain if they would yield the type and amount of information that I was expecting. I also checked if all the expected areas could be covered with this interview schedule.

When I posed the first question—“Could you please tell me about yourself and your household?”—I noticed that the interviewees did not give any information about their education and/or occupation unless they were prompted to do so. Two thoughts occurred to me: 1) that they might be refraining from giving that information in order not to be identified after the research was published, or 2) that I might judge them based on their level of education or type of occupation. Therefore, for the following interviews I decided that, if the interviewees did not provide this information, I would use prompts to inform them that their education and occupation data would be used only for statistical purposes in the demographics section of the thesis and to reassure them about their privacy.

From the pilot interviews I learned that the last (seventh) question in the interview schedule which asked: “Do you think home education is working well for you and your child(ren)?” might not be needed, as one interviewee had already covered the expected areas while answering the previous questions. Therefore, for the subsequent interviews, I decided to use prompts only for areas that had not been covered by the interviewees when answering the previous questions.

Consequently, I decided to continue with the interview schedule as planned, with the exception of the amendments explained above.

1.2.2 Translating the pilot interviews from Turkish to English

On completion of the pilot interviews, I transcribed and translated the data that were collected from them. Two other translators assisted with the translation to ensure accuracy. One of them had studied and lived

in the UK for over ten years. The other had been a Turkish PhD student in the UK for more than four years. Both of them were, therefore, familiar not only with both cultures, but also with the Turkish education system since they received their educations in Turkey before taking up their postgraduate studies in the UK. Separately, they cross-checked every part of the translated data with the original Turkish transcription. In the case of disagreements, the transcription and translation were discussed together and the original voice records were referred to as needed. This process allowed the data from both interviewees to be thoroughly checked. Had there been too many disagreements, the translation would have been redone; however, that was not necessary since there were no significant disagreements over the interviewees' intended meanings.

The translated pilot interviews were found to be consistent and accurate; moreover, the cover and depth of the data that were collected with the interview schedule proved to be sufficiently rich. So, I decided that I could continue interviewing after making the amendments mentioned above. Therefore, I adopted the final version of the interview schedule and after every interview, I noted the points that I had found interesting about the interview and I began the transcription between interviews.

1.3 Research Procedure for Data Analysis

Some researchers argue that using computer-assisted software while analysing descriptive data can possibly lead researchers down a particular path (Seidel, 1991). However, others claim that using descriptive data analysis software helps to provide an impartial view of the data, because it approaches descriptive findings through a systematic process and, thus, allows the researcher to count the findings from the interviews and so to be able to see the patterns in the data (Welsh, 2002). Nvivo is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software package that empowers the researcher to deal with the findings

of qualitative research by providing the tools to form categories from the data, group the findings, link the ideas, and browse within those virtually (Richards, 1999).

My research required an examination of the social environments and daily lives of the participants and also what drove and motivated them to select home education for their children. I, therefore, systematically grouped the raw interview data according to the categories that I formed using symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework (see section 1.4). The course of action for the analysis of the interview data is explained through the five stages below:

1. Reading through the transcription of each interview to list the main themes (tree nodes).
2. Rereading repeatedly to identify subthemes associated with each main theme.
3. Coding the transcriptions line by line to identify key phrases (free nodes).
4. Grouping free nodes under tree nodes based on their conceptual similarities.
5. Amending the original figure continuously to show the pattern for all the interview findings, until all the interviews had been analysed.

As noted in Section 6.5, I decided to use Turkish as the language for data collection and analysis. All the data was transcribed in Turkish. However, it was coded in English using Nvivo in order to make it easier to present the findings in English, using the themes and subthemes created in Nvivo. Moreover, I used translated extracts of the interviews while representing my findings. In order to make sure the translations were accurate, I received assistance from two other translators as explained in section 7.2.2 and the same procedure was followed for the translated extracts as for the pilot interviews.

Nvivo has tools integrated in the software for transcribing the voice records, which makes it easier to get to the coding stage. The coding process started with reading and rereading the transcriptions to identify

themes. While following the steps shown above, I noticed that some of the main themes had more than one subtheme and that some main themes had none. I, therefore, concluded that some subthemes had to become main themes and that two of the subthemes should be joined under one subtheme. At the end of the coding and categorising process, I chose to represent my findings in three different chapters, each of which answers one research question. Therefore, I divided the themes into those that matched with my three research questions (see Chapter 0 “Questions Arising out of Literature Review”).

Part - 4 Results

- Chapter 8 - Parents' Backgrounds and Beliefs
- Chapter 9 - Children's Backgrounds and the Reasons for their Home Education
- Chapter 10 - Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Chapter 11 - Use of Digital Resources in Home Education

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reports data gathered from 44 interviews conducted between November 2017 and December 2017. The sampling and interviewing procedures can be found in Chapter 0. This chapter provides demographic information about the interviewees and the members of their households and has the following aims and objectives. One of the broad aims of the study (see Chapter 0 for all) was:

To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ between each other in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.

A specific objective associated with this broad aim was to collect information on:

(1) Home educating parents' beliefs about childhood, bringing up children and how children learn.

This chapter provides background information about the families themselves before going on to report information in subsequent chapters about their children, their children's experiences, the interviewees' pedagogic approaches, and their use of digital resources. Whether parents' own educational experiences influenced their decision to home educate their children or not is considered in the next chapter in the section on parents' reasons for choosing or considering HE.

The chapter begins with an overview of the sample including data not only on the parents' educational background and employment status, but also data on those who dropped out of traditional education at some point in their own lives and on those who were themselves home educated.

Next, in order to answer the broad aim and the specific objective noted above, the chapter reports the parents' beliefs about HE and their beliefs about the legal situation of HE, as these beliefs underpin the decision made by the parents to home educate their children in a country such as Turkey where HE is unregulated. Information about the values and beliefs among the HE families is then reported and, finally, information on how the parents heard about HE and the networks between the HE families, including how they were led to the online social media group.

At some points in the extracts from the interviews, the reader will find some comments in square brackets. These are researcher notes and aim to make the translated data clearer.

1.2 Demographics

1.2.1 Number of children of parents in the sample.

As explained in section 1.1.3, access to the study sample was via a social media group. The invitation to participate in this research was posted on the wall of the online social media group where HE parents gathered. Although the group was a mixed gender group, it was dominated by women in terms of membership and being active in the group. All 44 interviewees were the mother of one or more children who were being home educated currently or who had been home educated in the past. Table 0-1 provides the numerical data on the interviewees and their children.

Table 0-1 Numerical Data on the Interviewees and their Children

<i>Number of subjects interviewed</i>	44
<i>The total number of children of the interviewed mothers</i>	89
<i>The number who were being home educated or had been in the past</i>	70
<i>Number of children who had never been home educated and were attending school fulltime</i>	4
<i>Number of children who were under three years old</i>	15
<i>Total</i>	89

Between them, the 44 interviewees had 89 children; at the time of this study, 70 were current or former HE children. However, nineteen out of the 89 children were not included in the HE group, as fifteen were below three years of age and four were attending school full-time and had no HE history.

Why was a very small number of parents were home educating some children but not others?

It is important to mention that the four children who had no HE history were from two families which had younger children who were being homeeducated. It can, therefore, be seen that, in these two cases, there were children in the same family who were being homeeducated and children who had never been homeeducated. When asked about this situation one of the mothers indicated that her full-time-schooled children were happy at school and that, even when they were given the opportunity to transfer to HE, they had preferred school. The mother (S22) had four children; the two older ones went to school full-time and one of the four children attended preschool part-time (flexi-schooling) at the suggestion of a pedagogue because of a speech problem; her youngest child was below three years of age. She explained:

The institutes that my older two children attend are not bad at all, the children do not feel suffocated by going to school, they have a good circle of friends, they are pretty happy, and they do not have to go if they do not want, but on the contrary, they get bored at home over the summer breaks. (S22)

The other interviewee (S25) had four children; two older ones go to school full-time, one of the four children is being home educated, and the youngest is below three-years of age. The mother indicated that she felt that it was too late for the ones who had always attended school to transfer to HE, since they had already lost their desire to learn in the school system and, therefore, without it, would not learn at home.

My older children are going to school full-time, unfortunately. ... I had not heard anything about home education before I joined the social media group. I knew it existed abroad, but when I saw that it is feasible in Turkey as well, it gave me confidence. My older children's negative attitude towards school led me to the decision to keep my younger child out of school as long as I can. ... The longer the curiosity to learn continues, the better it will be for the child because I have seen how others change.... It is really sad to see your children become dull over time; the current education system is not feasible for us, but we could not create an alternative yet. ... Maybe it would be easier before starting school in the first place. However, now the children have lost their desire to learn, they are keen on the technological devices like TV, smartphones, computer etc. ... I wish I could have been awakened much sooner and could have given home education to my older children as well. ... My older son had difficulty adjusting to school ... the first child means lack of experience. ... At that time, I had two children, and school attendance loomed largely. Now I have four children, and even though everybody insists on it, I do not send my younger child to preschool; therefore, it is feasible. (S25)

Having older children in the family who attended school, and always had, allowed these families to compare and contrast the education experiences of the children who were schooled with those of their HE children. This point was highlighted by S25 who said:

... If a person has curiosity and loves to learn, the age of that person does not matter. I want my children to keep those traits but I witnessed that the school kills them. At some age, children ask really hard questions that we [the adults/parents] do not know how to answer [brainteasers]. They question almost everything, they are interested in the reasoning; for example, my younger child asked me today “How the figure for number 3 had been found and decided?”. But somehow with the school, this curiosity to learn gets lost. It may be because of the teaching techniques [at the schools] or the diminishing level of curiosity over time, but the children lose all their interest to learn. (S25)

1.2.2 The gender and age group of the HE children.

Among the interviewed families, there were more boys than girls. The genders and age group of the interviewees’ HE children are presented in Table 0-2 below. Although Table 0-2 indicates that there were more boys than girls receiving HE among the interviewed families, a chi-square test was not conducted on this data, because it simply refers to the number of children the interviewed parents had and because there was no way of knowing whether there was any association between the child’s gender and the decision to home educate.

Table 0-2 The HE Children of the Interviewees categorised by Gender and Age Group

	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	10	21	31
<i>Primary school</i>	14	19	33
<i>Secondary and high school combined</i>	3	3	6
<i>Total</i>	27	43	70

Almost all of the interviewees expressed their thoughts about HE and education in general for all of their children, without reference to gender. Only one parent mentioned gender as a factor in her decision to home educate. This mother's son, who was the older child in the family, transferred to an open high school and her daughter, who was her younger child, was removed from school very early and was being home educated. She explained why the family's approach to HE might be different for the two children as follows:

Our daughter is important for my husband, as all girls are to their daddies. Especially because she was upset at school, he absolutely does not want her to go to school; but when it comes to our son, he gets angry when he sees him at home while doing nothing about his education. He is in two minds about education; I am in a similar situation. I do not know if it is because our son is older or we do not have the heart to see our girl upset. The reason might be that she is the younger one and we think there are many years ahead of us to decide and worry about her future. We think that we will have a chance to support [her education and certification] in the future. (S18)

1.2.3 Parents' employment status

The employment status of the interviewees and their spouses is illustrated in Table 0-3. Four interviewees mentioned that they were single mothers. So, in each table, there are at least four fathers in the 'no info' section. In addition to the single mothers, there were other interviewees who were not keen on giving some specific pieces of information. The researcher respected that decision as she did not want to force the interviewees to provide information, if she felt that they were reluctant to do so.

Most of the interviewed mothers were housewives, as indicated in Table 0-3. Ten of the mothers indicated that they had stopped working when they got married or had a child(ren) in order to take care of their

house and family. Two of the mothers mentioned that they had changed their job to work from home in order to take care of their children. The following extract summarises their thoughts:

I was working full-time before I had children. After my first child was born, I began to work from home in order to take care of my children. (S43)

Table 0-3 Parents' Employment Status

	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Not working	25	0	25
Part-time	5	0	5
Full-time	7	34	41
Home office	7	6	13
No info	0	4	4
Total	44	44	88

Although one family decided to home educate their children because they wanted to move to another city that had no school that appealed to their family values, this was not always the case. Four mothers mentioned that they had quit their jobs, moved to a smaller place, and adopted a new lifestyle in order to have the time to educate their children at home. The following extracts summarise some of the comments on this theme:

... we moved to a small town by the sea to get away from the city life and feel free. we saw that one-to-one, face-to-face education is better for the development of children. ...if I cannot study with my child and spend time with my child, if I cannot teach my child, neither a private school nor a private teacher can teach my child either. (S17)

... we were living at a city before; we thought that the working hours would be less if we worked in rural areas and moved to a rural area in order to have more time for our children's education at home... we have more free time for our children now; we will be here until our children get older. (S29)

Four of the mothers who stopped working when their children were born indicated that they were considering returning to their jobs when their children start primary school, although they intended to home educate their preschool-aged children.

I may return to full-time after my children start to go to school. (S43)

My son is not going to school now, but if I start to work again, HE for my son will be impossible. The fact [is] that being schooled [when parents have] an unschooling mind [set] is not possible but [if he does go to school] at least we can support him [to decrease the harm by school]. (S11)

I am not working at the moment but can start to work again in the near future. ... I am searching for a new line of business. ...last year all our children were registered to a foreign distance learning school [the children are dual citizens]. This year due to family reasons, because the youngest one takes so much of my time, and I would also like to start working, I don't have so much time for the older children. So, we started to send the older children to school. (S37)

The extracts above reveal that these interviewees thought that, if the mother worked, HE would be impossible (at least for their family). However, one interviewee highlighted that, with some arrangements, HE was possible while working, even if it was scary at the beginning.

There were question marks when I was starting, especially because I was working; the social media group helped me a lot there and then. I started many posts and learned a lot

from the discussions and that increased my courage. Now I am working for the lowest number of hours that are required by law as a state school teacher. While I am working, an activity-nanny helps us out by doing activities with my daughter, which are not necessarily academic unless my daughter wants otherwise. It works for now. (S19)

1.2.4 Parent's educational backgrounds.

The educational backgrounds of the interviewees and their spouses are illustrated in Table 0-4. Some parents who already had a degree were studying for their second or even third undergraduate degree. The data contained in Table 0-4 includes only the highest degrees that the parents held. Only one of the parents had no diploma, since she dropped out of the school before completing the last year of primary school and continued to undergo intensive religious education out of school. The highest degrees that the parents held. Only one of the parents had no diploma (the diploma is awarded on completing basic education in Turkey), since she dropped out of the school before completing the last year of primary school and continued to undergo intensive religious education out of school.

As indicated in Table 0-4, the majority of the parents had undergraduate or higher degrees. While none of the parents who had a university degree mentioned whether their degrees gave them self-confidence about HE or not, one of the mothers without a university degree said that she felt inadequate to home educate her child, although she did not specify her education level as the reason for that feeling:

Home education is not legal in our country, but even if it was legal, I would send my children to school, I suppose. Because, even though I do not appreciate the education system [in Turkey], I don't feel that I am able to give such an education to my children at home. (S22 has four children; the two older ones go to school full-time, one of her four children attends preschool part-time (flexi-schooled) at the suggestion of an educator because of a speech problem, and the youngest is below three years of age.)

Table 0-4 Parent's Educational Backgrounds

	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>No diploma</i>	1	0	1
<i>Basic Education</i>	0	1	1
<i>High school</i>	11	6	17
<i>Vocational School</i>	2	1	3
<i>University</i>	22	26	48
<i>Postgraduate</i>	8	6	14
<i>No Info</i>	0	4	4
<i>Total</i>	44	44	88

The parents who dropped out of school and/or home educated at some point in their lives are discussed below. Whether these parents' educational experiences are relevant to their pedagogic approach to HE for their children will be discussed in Chapter 0.

The parents who dropped out of education.

The data on parents who had dropped out of school at some stage is represented in Table 0-5. Twelve of the parents had dropped out of school at some point in their life. Five of them continued with their education after a while and/or went in a different direction.

Table 0-5 Parents who Dropped out of School at Some Stage

	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Did not drop out of school</i>	34	36	70
<i>Dropped out of school and did not return</i>	6	1	7
<i>Dropped out of school and returned</i>	5	1	5
<i>No Info</i>	0	6	6
<i>Total</i>	44	44	

As illustrated in Table 0-5, seven parents had dropped out of school and did not return to school. In addition:

- One of the mothers dropped out during basic education, because her father wanted her to continue religious education (out of school). One of the fathers also dropped out during basic education, because his father wanted him to work as an apprentice to learn a skill.
- Four of the parents had dropped out during university; three of those four had taken that decision because of the headscarves ban at Turkish universities.⁴
- One of the mothers dropped out during her postgraduate studies and did not go back to her studies later on.

⁴A regulation in July 16, 1982 specified that: *the clothing and appearances of personnel working at public institutions; the rule [is] that female civil servants' head must be uncovered*. An interpretation of this law in 1997 extended the ban to the wearing of headscarves in all universities in Turkey. (<https://goo.gl/QbBdBV>)

As indicated in Table 0-5, six of the parents who had dropped out of school did resume their studies. One of the mothers dropped out of university because of the headscarves ban but resumed her university education when the ban was removed and graduated. The remaining five had HE backgrounds and they are discussed in next section.

Home educated parents.

In total, five parents had themselves been home educated at some point in their life. Table 0-6 shows the number of parents homeschooled at some point. The numbers include those who returned to formal education after a while and those who did not. However, the data excludes the parents who are taking second and third undergraduate degrees.

Table 0-6 Parents who were homeschooled at some stage

<i>N:44 x 2</i>	<i>Homeschooled</i>	<i>Not homeschooled</i>	<i>No Info</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Mothers</i>	4	38	1	44
<i>Fathers</i>	1	37	6	44
<i>Total</i>	5			

- Two of those three parents registered with an open high school after completing their basic education and one of those two continued to an open university.
- One of those three parents who had transferred to HE after completing primary school attended a boarding facility (a madrasah, see literature review, section 1.2) for six years where she studied

traditional religious courses. After this period, she registered with an open high school and continued to Open University.

Two of the five HE parents had returned to formal education after a period of home education.

One of these parents was home educated when she was at primary school level, because her parents' teaching duties required them to teach in an area with a high level of terrorist activity. The school they were sent to teach in had two multigrade classes; one was taught by her mother and the other one by her father. This woman's parents had not wanted their children to be confused by being taught in the multigrade classes, so while her parents were teaching, she stayed in their flat, which was located in the school building, and after their school duties finished, her parents taught her at home. She resumed formal education when they returned from the area.

The other parent who had dropped out after completing primary school had received intensive religious education out of school. He returned to formal education at the high school level, continued on to vocational school, and then on to the Open University.

None of the homeschooling parents said that having been home educated had an effect on their decision to home educate their own children. As a matter of fact, one parent said that she would have preferred formal education for herself during the years she, as the extract below shows:

I was not questioning the concept of school on the contrary, I was saying "I wish I had gone to school" when I was 15-16 years-old. Then, during my 20's when I noticed the value that people give to the 'title', I found it weird. So, I thought that the important thing was not to learn but to have a diploma [or a title] for them. Since then, I have been giving more value to learning than to have a diploma. (S15)

1.3 Parental Beliefs

This section explores the interview findings on the parents' beliefs. As described in detail in section 1.3, NVivo assisted with the analysis of the interview data and, by developing the main ideas (free nodes) and grouping those free nodes into main categories (tree nodes), allowed me to identify three broad themes. These were:

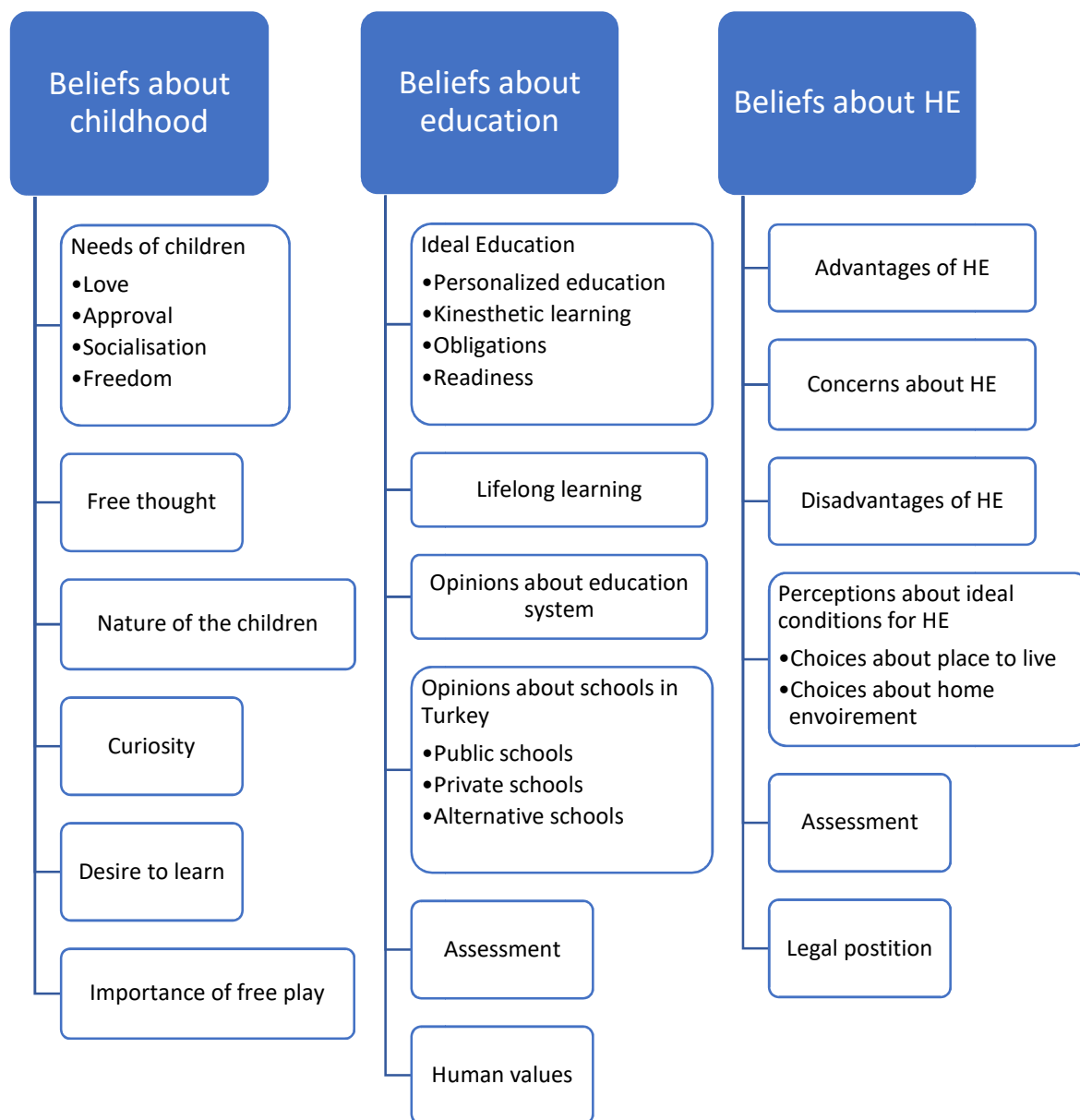
1. Beliefs about childhood
2. Beliefs about education
3. Beliefs about HE

The three themes and subthemes (i.e., the tree nodes and free nodes that were retrieved from the Nvivo-assisted analysis) are illustrated in Figure 0-1.

The nodes represent the interviewees' beliefs about childhood, education and HE. Parental beliefs have a significant impact on the decision to home educate their children, and so that impact is discussed in the next chapter (see section 1.2). As the Nvivo-assisted data analysis revealed, parental beliefs that are visualised in Figure 0-1, overlapped with their reasons for HE, which are reported in Chapter 0. The overlapping nodes that are related to the reasons why the interviewees decided to home educate their children and their own school experiences and those of their children are discussed in the next chapter.

The descriptions of each theme and subtheme are provided under each respective subheading. The descriptions also include illustrative extracts which summarise the data and highlight findings of particular interest.

Figure 0-1 Parental Beliefs



1.3.1 Beliefs about childhood.

This node in the NVivo-assisted analysis was concerned with the interviewees' interpretation of childhood. Parents' beliefs about childhood are important, as it was those beliefs that led the parents to think about

their children's educational needs. Seventeen interviewees mentioned that their ultimate aim was to raise independent and happy children who were sensitive to human values. The parents' thoughts about their children's natural needs such as love, approval, socialisation, and freedom permeated their thoughts about their children's educational needs. This point was highlighted by one respondent who said:

I did not start with an aim to give their education at home. I rather had a thought that I should serve their need to be loved. (S43)

It is noteworthy that one parent indicated being disrespectful to a child's nature does not start at school but in the family. This idea was highlighted by that interviewee as follows:

We start to do this from when the child is a little baby, by telling them what to eat, when to learn to walk, just because we want it that way. Is it what the child needs, is the child ready or not, that is not the matter. What does the child feel, need, wonder is not important? We tell them what they need, how much they should eat, how much they should learn. We start to interfere with the nature of the children when they are babies and then we do not want the schools to interfere. Actually, children are born with the ability to know what they need; by forcing them to do something else, we make them forget to listen to themselves. (S36)

Socialisation was mentioned by ten interviewees. One parent argued that if young human beings had more chances to socialise in places other than schools that would change society's view that school is the only place in which children can socialise.

I wish there were other environments that children can experience these. It may be late for our own childhood, but at least for them I wish there was a life that is more organic, with small spaces of their own where they can interact naturally with their peers and other children. I wish we could organise our societies according to those conditions. (S21)

In addition, the parents thought children's free thinking should be preserved. Children had a great imagination and they express themselves freely; these special qualities of children reinforce each other.

Children can tell what they want and that should not be restricted... the imaginary world of children is very wide; we as adults have lots of things that we can learn from them. (S42)

Parent's beliefs about childhood including the importance of free play, curiosity, desire to learn and the nature of children are explained in detail in the next chapter, as they were also amongst the reasons why the parents in this study chose to home educate their children.

1.3.2 Beliefs about education.

This node was concerned with the interviewees' interpretation of education. Parents' beliefs about what constitutes an ideal education are, therefore, addressed and explained in the next chapter. The parents' thoughts about education include their opinions about the education system and schools in Turkey.

One parent highlighted the idea that, in her opinion, school as a concept has already reached the end of its life. She expressed her thoughts as follows:

I do not approve of school as a system. The reason for that is not religious or political; I just believe that the school as a concept has already finished its lifetime. However, these are the current conditions that we have and it is not possible to totally spare children from going to school altogether since this system is still prevailing. (S5)

Also, another parent expressed her ideas on the fact that, although parents around the world are tending towards alternative methods of education, HE is not very popular in Turkey:

Lots of other things are being spoken of and done in the other parts of the world. Parents are somehow taking a side in these discussions and creating new choices for themselves. (S13)

The interviewees believe that the public schools in Turkey are too crowded to take care of every child's individual educational needs. By law, private schools have to follow the national curriculum even though they offer luxuries psychical conditions and excellent resources. Sending their children to a private school seemed to be something that was seen as a first priority among Turkish parents, as was highlighted by one mother who said:

Our two children whom we HE now were studying at a private school last year. We were thinking that we should work very hard and do whatever we can to be able to send these children to private schools like a usual Turkish family. (S17)

However, according to the interviewees, private schools started by giving parents negative feedback about their children but became more positive in order to show parents that the schooling was worth the money. This idea was poignantly highlighted by one mother as follows:

I noticed something that it was what we used to do [as a teacher] as well. [She is a teacher herself]. It was just to show off. We were giving the first marks and feedback a little more negative, then getting a little better marks and positive remarks, so as to prove how useful the kindergarten is for their children. The fact that our child was seen as their customer was making us very sad. (S1)

Although one interviewee had chosen an alternative school for her children, the interviewees generally saw alternative schools, such as those following the curriculum of Montessori or Waldorf, as using popular educational movements to attract customers. However, the interviewees argued that the promises these schools made were empty.

Village schools were popular among the social media group members, because these schools had lower numbers of children; moreover, some parents in the online community group whose children were going to a village school as a flexi-schooling arrangement claimed that the teachers at the village primary schools were more accommodating about flexi-schooling. One interviewee said that she had tried a village school for this reason. She had wanted to send her children to that school from time to time to allow them to socialise there; however, when she saw the environment and conditions at that school, she changed her opinion. She encapsulated what she saw there as follows:

We decided to send him to the school in this village and let him socialise and get to know new people. There were two teachers at the school, and 25 kids in one classroom. These were very difficult conditions but the people in the village could not afford to hire an assistant teacher. Generally, at state schools, the parents' union can decide to sponsor assistant teachers, but the parents here have no choice or income to do that. These conditions can be accepted. However, I heard that the teachers lock the door of the classroom when they have to leave; that scared us a bit. Since there are two teachers only, each teacher has 25 children to deal with in their class, so if one teacher leaves, he cannot ask for help from the other one; therefore, he locks the classroom door when he has to leave for something like, at least, going to the toilet. If something wrong happens during that time, no one would be able to get in or out of the classroom. (S1)

The interviewees expressed the opinion that education was very important for them. They saw themselves as lifelong learners and they wanted their children to see education as they saw it. They believed that human beings come with an inner consciousness and that they would eventually want to learn whatever they need, even more than they would learn at school, when they were ready. Nine interviewees called this inner consciousness the 'natural rhythm of a human being' and my preliminary observations indicated that this was a jargon term used by that specific social media group. According to fifteen interviewees, if adults did not break the natural rhythm of children and did not interfere with children's nature, they would be lifelong learners as well. They believed the education system broke that rhythm.

The current education system in Turkey, and the fact that the education system has been changing almost every two years, was another issue for the interviewed parents. Three interviewees argued that a centralised education system and curriculum could not be useful for every-child and that changing the education system this frequently made the children, the parents, and the teachers confused. Eight teacher parents argued that teachers could not easily change their teaching practices in response to new government directives and that this inability to change quickly made everything even more confusing. This constant change resulted in people mistrusting the country's educational planners. The following extract captures those thoughts:

The ones who prepare it also know it is unrealistic and this shows me, the educational planners of this country are not concerned about education in reality. (S38)

Although twelve parents thought assessment was an important way to follow their children's development, there were other parents who thought assessment was not natural, since every child had a different readiness for learning. All the interviewees agreed that the examinations in the education system – both in the schools and the national exams – caused stress. In particular, the national exams were mentioned a lot during the interviews. In Turkey, there are national selection exams at every step when entering a higher institution (from basic education to high school and from high school to university). Children are categorised according to the combined scores they achieve in standardised national tests, and schools' scores, based on their GPA, are used in school admissions. If a child's score is too low to allow him/her to be admitted to a high-end public school, the child can register for a regular or religious high school. As for university entrance exams, there is a minimum exam score that a child must attain to be eligible to go a university. Within the Turkish education system, the only way to enter a university is through this exam, as the universities follow a centralised system.

1.3.3 Beliefs about HE.

This node was concerned with the interviewees' interpretation of HE. Parents' beliefs about HE can be grouped into three subthemes: advantages of HE, disadvantages of HE, and concerns about HE. The HE parents' thoughts on the ideal conditions for HE will also be covered.

Freedom was the most cited advantage of HE. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of interviewees who specified freedom as important. They saw flexible timing (14), having no boundaries (10), having the chance to personalise their children's education (12), their children's socialising with other age groups instead of only those in their classroom (4), and strengthened communication between family members (2) as advantages. The following extract captures some of the comments that were made:

We had started to try this for a year and then to decide what to do afterwards, but it looks like we will continue this because it gives so much freedom. ... Within the remaining time, we discover nature, go for sightseeing, doing other activities or going for a holiday is a great freedom. Moreover, you can live in wherever way you want, there is nothing that binds you to school, and it is a great economic advantage in Turkey's current condition.
(S23)

The most cited disadvantage of HE was opportunities for the child to socialise. Because all the neighbouring children were at school, HE children did not have a chance to socialise with other children if the parents were not part of an HE community. Even parents who regularly gathered either with other HE families or their friends who had children saw this style of socialising as a problem, because it took place only a couple of hours a week at most. This issue was explained by a parent as follows:

There are no friends for my child because all the children are at school till 6 pm. They come in the evening; we ask if my child can meet them for an hour or so, [but] their parents say

that they have homework to do. Therefore, children at the age of 7-8 go to school all day, do their homework in the evening, and go to bed. We face this difficulty not only for my children but for ourselves too. For example, I have a cousin who lives half an hour's drive away; we cannot meet because her children are at school all day. She has to wait for their school buses. One child is in kindergarten and one is at some other school, so she cannot leave her house; she can only go to very near areas. We propose meeting on Saturdays so that the children can meet as well, but one of her children goes to theatre and another goes to basketball training. We cannot socialise with them at all. If our children were going to school, we would also have the same problem; we would not be able to socialise and spend time with each other, and we would live the same rat race. (S31)

Another disadvantage of HE, according to four respondents, was that the child's learning was dependent on the parent. Teaching was tiring for parents and also created some authority issues, as the parent had to be a parent and an instructor at the same time. Two of the parents argued that HE placed more responsibility on mothers:

I think HE puts more responsibilities on the mothers' shoulders than on the fathers'. In both cases, mothers get tired physically and psychologically. But the type of responsibility changes when there is no stress about school like time, transportation, homework. For example, the mother of a schooled child can pass the responsibility for answering some of the children's questions to the teacher, but I cannot. A mother of a schooled child has to wake up and go to bed at the same times, but we can decide to live as we want to. A schooled child's mother is helping her child by an exterior pressure and leaves the development of the child to school; this can be easy, but mostly I can support the interests of my child according to his motivation. (S6)

I should almost act like a teacher myself, I do not think I can continue doing this. (S8)

Ten of the interviewed parents had concerns about diplomas and issues related to a diploma being required for future jobs. This will be discussed in the next chapter (see section 1.2.3).

According to the HE families, there have to be some prerequisite conditions to be able to home educate their children properly. They, therefore, had developed some stereotypes for what they perceived as “ideal conditions for HE”. From their perspective, the first and most popular condition was being close to nature. It was mentioned by 25 interviewees. The idealised view about nature being a condition for better HE may have been promulgated by some popular members of the social media group, as they all lived in the countryside or close to nature. Some of these popular parents even quit their jobs to be able to live in rural areas and were designing a self-sufficient and sustainable form of living. This subject was argued about in the social media group during the preliminary observations. Some members were not current HE families but were thinking about HE. They argued that the popularisation of self-sufficient living among the group discouraged some families interested in HE, because they currently lived in cities and moving close to nature would be difficult for them. The idealised view of nature as the best environment for HE alarmed some interested families, as it might involve them in moving to a new place in a rural area away from their jobs.

Both the preliminary observations and the data collected indicated that HE families perceived having a lot of books and learning resources to be another prerequisite for HE. According to them, an HE family has to have books, activity materials and tools, a bookshelf for children and living places that were designed for children to enable the families to home educate their children. The following extract summarises some of the comments made:

I am not teaching anything academically like geography or mathematics. When I see an HE family's house, I feel like we are the same; for example, in the middle of the living room there is a big world map. Normally no one would hang a big world map on their living room wall but in our houses, we try to create an atmosphere there, a learning environment. (S31)

This section concerns communication between the HE families and the education authorities. First of all, no mother in the sample had heard of legal action being taken against HE families in Turkey, except in cases related to child marriage or children working, even though HE is unregulated (as was explained in section 1.5.2). Consequently, all those interviewed said that they had no concerns about the legal situation. The following topics summarise the thoughts and experiences of the interviewees in relation to possible legal action against HE.

1. Being in a large city is an advantage (because it is more likely to stand out with a HE practice in a small town than a crowded city.)
2. Not updating police registration after moving to a new place was a way of not being obliged to face the authorities.
3. Some teachers and school authorities were helpful and understanding about the decision of the families, so no legal action is taken.
4. Some government officers did not know anything about the families' rights, (for example the rules about attendance, or suspending school attendance for a period,) so they avoided dealing with the families.

One interviewee who was a legal expert summarised the situation in Turkey. Interestingly, she was the only one among the interviewed parents who had faced legal pressure from the authorities:

Education is compulsory but the real meaning under that is being liable for an administrative fine like the traffic fine. Just as you get fined when you pass the speed limit, that also has a fine of fifteen Turkish Liras for a day. However, in the group no one had paid a fine yet. The civil servant mentality which is protective of the system is trying to sicken us. They are not prone to understand us and compromise. They are trying to force us saying

that there is a rule like that and you have to obey. They are telling us that we should not be around to bother them if we do not comply and play by the rules. They are not sympathetic to us at state schools. The only state schools that are a bit understanding towards us are the ones, for example, in gypsy neighbourhoods. Half of the students do not go to school there anyway; therefore, they do not care about our absence either. However, in a school where all students are going regularly, they do not want to be bothered with your absence and try to persuade to give up and comply. For example, one teacher told my daughter that the police will come to our house and take her father. I could have complained if I'd wanted to, that is not a legal behaviour, unless there is child abuse involved. However, they do not want to interfere ... the case as a private family matter. So, their only concern is not to be bothered with the fact that we do not send our kids to school while the rest are sending theirs. (S31)

The place of religious values and beliefs amongst the home educating families.

My preliminary observations gave me the impression that the HE families in Turkey might fall into two groups with regard to their religious sensitivity and some parents did mention that they had a religion-related educational and/or occupational background.

Only one interviewee mentioned religion while talking about their decision to home educate their children. Although that interviewee was an exception, the following extract echoes the interviewee's response with regard to the reason for the decision:

... before marriage my husband had even put that as a condition not to send our children to school, and I had accepted. The reason not to send our children to school is, of course, a bit about our religious concerns.... (S14)

Seventeen mothers said that family values were important in selecting the education type or institution; however, this statement did not indicate an explicit difference between the parents who had a religious

educational and/or occupational background and the parents who did not. The parents with a religious educational background are represented in Table 0-7 and those parents who have an occupation related to religion are represented in Table 0-8.

Table 0-7 Parents who had a Religion-related Education

<i>N:44 x 2</i>	<i>Have religion-related education</i>	<i>Do not have religion-related education</i>	<i>No Info</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Mothers</i>	9	34	1	44
<i>Fathers</i>	2	37	5	44
<i>Total</i>	11	71	6	88

Table 0-8 Parents who had a Religion-related Occupation

<i>N:44 x 2</i>	<i>Have a religious occupation</i>	<i>Do not have a religious occupation</i>	<i>No Info</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Mothers</i>	5	39	0	44
<i>Fathers</i>	0	39	5	44
<i>Total</i>	5	78	5	88

Seven of the parents mentioned they taught Arabic and/or English to their children as foreign languages when talking about what they did at home. Apart from the fact that the Qur'an's original language is a form of Arabic, the interviewees did not mention they taught Arabic to their children with religious sensitivities. Only one interviewee told me that her daughter had wanted to study the Qur'an and that

after a while she had given up. The family did not force her to continue. The following extract echoed the interviewee's response with regard to her daughter's experience of learning the Qur'an:

Our daughter was flexi-schooled in primary school and at the first year of secondary school she wanted to have a break of one year. We paused school; she did not do anything about school; she was unschooled all year. She wanted to do many other things and did them. Went to swimming course, became a good swimmer. I'm an instructor at a Qur'an course, she was coming to my workplace with me because I could not leave her alone at home. She was not following the course but wandered about the classes. Then she got curious about another instructor's discipline and turned her steps forwards [that]. She became skilled in that discipline, became an informal assistant of that course instructor. It was a spontaneous curiosity and after a while she got bored; we did not stop her decision or force her to continue; she gave up. (S4)

1.4 How did the Parents Hear about HE?

As described in sections 1.2 and 1.1 all the interviewees in this study's sample came from a social media group and during the interviews they all mentioned that group as an influence on their decision about HE. They had come across the group, whether by chance or while they were looking for information about HE in Turkey, either because the parents had reservations about school or their children/they themselves had experienced problems at school.

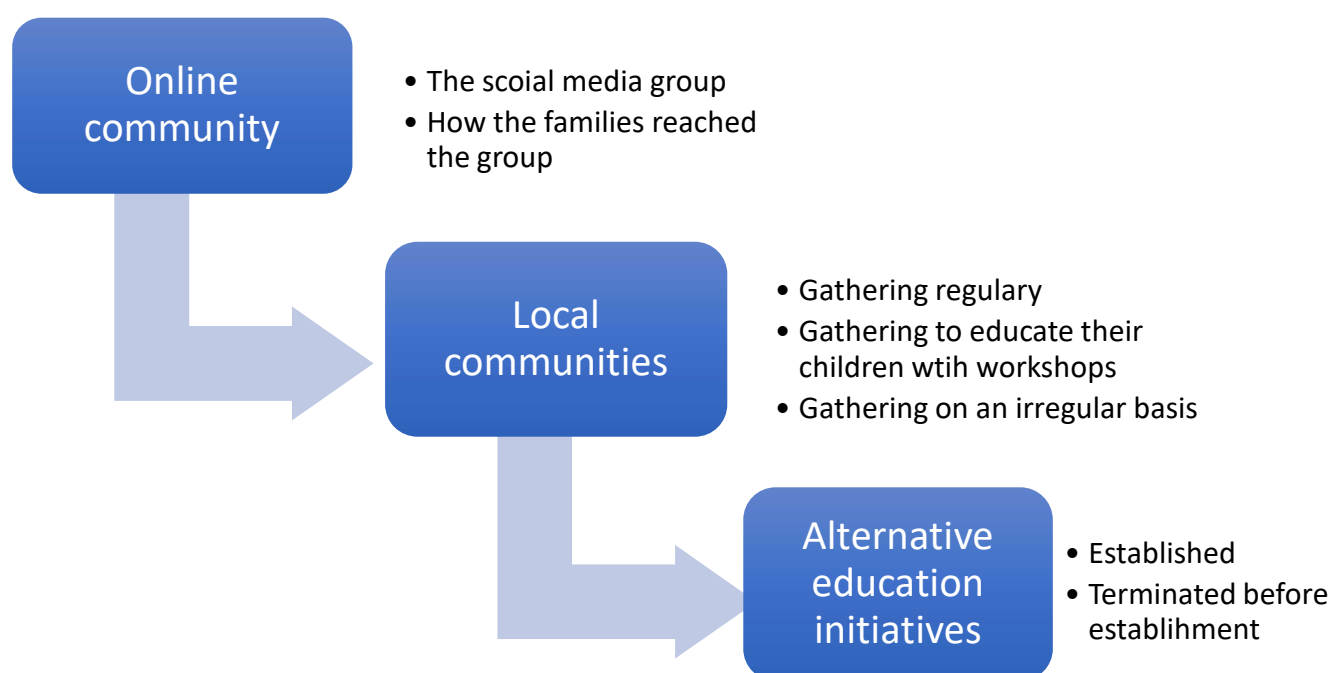
The factors that led the interviewees to the social media group, are explained in detail in the next section where the networks between families, including the online community, are discussed.

1.5 Networks between Home educating Families

This section explores the networks between HE families. All the families belonged to the same social media group. In addition, some of the families had local communities with which they gathered either regularly or irregularly. Some of these families had tried to establish alternative education initiatives, which are also defined and explained in this section.

Figure 0-2 sets out the themes and subthemes introduced in this section. Each subtheme will then be explained under its respective subheading.

Figure 0-2 Networks between HE families

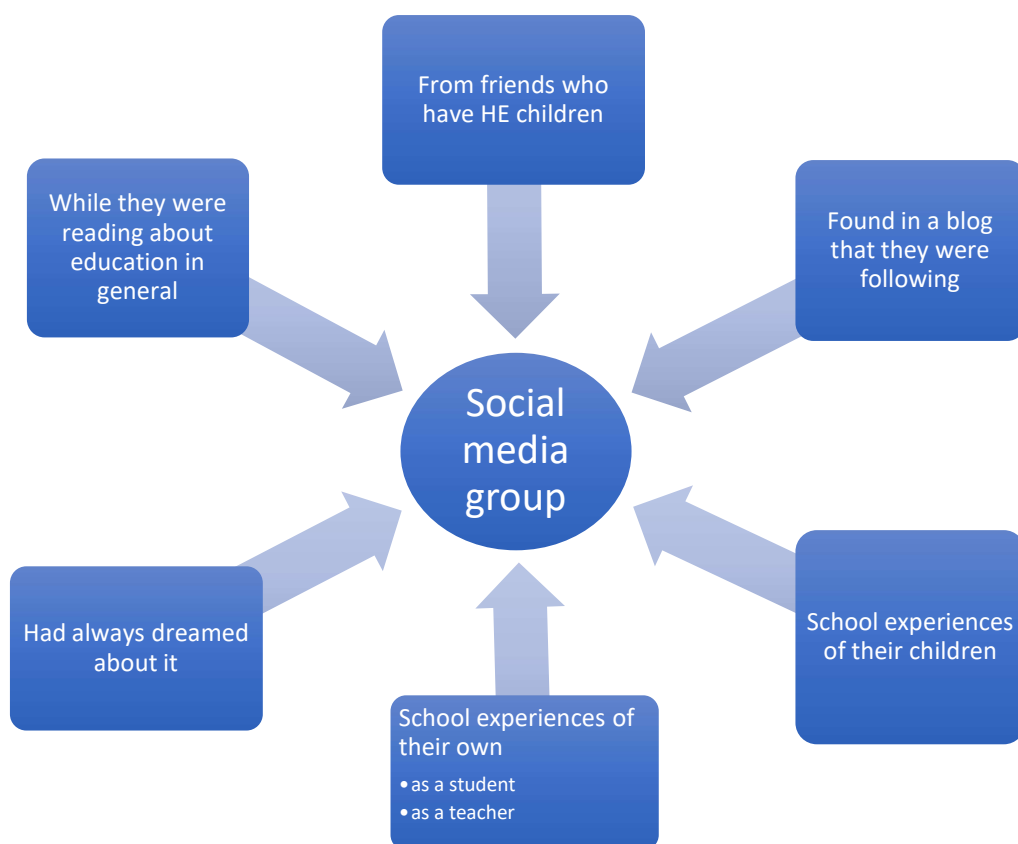


1.5.1 The online community.

The interviewees came across the group either by chance or while they were looking for information about HE in Turkey because their children had experienced problems at school. These two groups of parents were, therefore, interviewed in terms of their social media experience.

1. Joining the social media group by chance led some parents to think about HE.
2. Some parents were seeking an alternative to traditional education either because of a problem at their children's school or because their point of view about education led them to the social media group and the group reinforced their thoughts about HE.

Figure 0-3 What Led the Interviewees to the Social Media Group?



The factors that led the interviewees to the social media group, are illustrated in Figure 0-3. The first group of factors has been placed in the upper part of the diagram and the second group of factors appears in the lower half.

The parents who came across the group by chance.

Twelve interviewees mentioned they had come across the HE idea by chance and they realised this approach was suitable for them and/or they became more open to the idea as they read through the social media group posts. The following extract summarises the comments made:

In fact, I came across the HE concepts when my child was 2 ½ years old. It was just a term I discovered on the internet, but when I think about it, in my whole life, I was thinking about it even [though] I did not name it HE. ...I watched a few videos from abroad, then I discovered that there are Turks as well [practising HE]. The first one I discovered was a family where the husband was German, then I found other families where both parents were Turkish, and I discovered the HE social media group. (S9)

The interviewees fell into three groups according to their stories of joining the HE social media group. Illustrative extracts are provided under each of the subheadings below.

The parents who came across the term HE while they were thinking/reading about education in general.

Six parents were thinking about education and the concept of school while their children were growing up. They had been researching and reading about how to support a better education for their children. Those thoughts led them to the social media group. The following extracts summarise some of the comments made:

I think I can say that the process started with the birth of my son. As I also saw in many families from the social media group, when our first child is born, we look for opportunities to make things better, how can we make a better environment. Firstly, I searched for a better quality of education, alternative education etc. I was the one mostly interested in such things, when I found anything interesting, I shared it with my husband. I was interested in alternative types of educations for a while like Montessori, Reggio, Waldorf etc. While searching for these to learn more, I found the social media group and learned about the concept of HE. (S16)

While my children were growing up, I started to search about the subject of “school”, I began reading about education and the new ideas followed that. Then I started to say that my child does not need to go to school, I was thinking for him that not going at all was better. ... The things that I was reading and university level researches and what teachers used to say within the generic education system that was followed at the day-cares, were in complete contrast. Moreover, what I saw as a mother based on my child as an example, this child does not feel any need for this [education system]. I examined the posts in the social media group; they were also supporting my ideas. (S31)

The parents who came across the term HE in a blog or another group or through someone in social media that they had been following.

Four interviewees mentioned they joined the social media group after hearing about it from a blog or another social media group, but not necessarily one about education.

I got to know about the social media group in a very unexpected way. I was a member of a social media group about natural nutrition. A friend there told that they had a group on HE; then I also joined. I was not on a search to not send my child to school ever. If I had been aware of that [possibility], I would not have forced my child to go to school during the first four years, especially as the first year was very difficult. My son got very tired at school and he made me tired too... (S7)

There was someone I was following on the social media. I saw the social media group when she mentioned it and I joined, read the posts and comments underneath. Especially the comments of some members were very useful. I discovered a quite a different world. My children were not happy with school and they were going unwillingly. I did not know what sort of way I should follow. Actually, I had not heard anything about HE in Turkey, before the social media group. I knew there was HE abroad. Once one finds out that it can be practised in Turkey as well, you develop a self-trust. (S25)

The parents who heard the term HE from their friends who had HE experiences.

Two parents indicated that they heard about HE from their friends and that those friends introduced them to the social media group.

While I was thinking that every child had different specialties, by chance, I started to meet more frequently with a friend, who was around me but we would not meet that often before. That friend had never sent her two children to school, ever. They have never gone to school and learned to read and write without going. They are both studying at open high school at the moment. I started to share some thoughts with that friend. I noticed that the education (at school) is not sufficient, and is enforced on us with pressure from rulers, and is based on memorising. Therefore, I started to dream about HE and I got to know about the social media group and saw that I could realise my dreams. (S10)

The parents who came across the group while they were looking for an alternative because of negative school experiences.

The experience of parents who joined the social media group while they were searching for an alternative for their children because the children had problems at school will be reported in detail in section 1.2.

Twenty parents mentioned that they had had negative experiences in their own educational life, but only six of them mentioned that they had come across the group while they had been searching for an alternative for their children because of their own negative schooling experiences. The following extracts illustrate some of the comments they made:

I think my viewpoint to HE is based on my own experiences as well. I never went to school willingly, I was introvert and the loser kid of the class. I think because of my family I did not have self- trust. I did not have a happy childhood, not only in my family but also at school. While I was thinking about what to do for my child, I came across the HE social media group. (S35)

I was an introverted child. I was good in verbal subjects; I was not good at numeric subjects at all. That is also a bit about adverse experiences, being verbally abused by the teacher for fifteen minutes at the blackboard. ...it was that bad, my school life was full of things like that, including peer pressure. I do not want my children to have these kinds of experiences. (S35)

Seven parents mentioned that, while they had not had negative experiences in their own educational life specifically, they had always dreamed about another kind of education. The following extract sums up those parents' thoughts:

I always had this thought about a different type of school. I was thinking, like, it should not be like this, that should not be like that but I was not thinking in detail about what or how to do. ...the fact that I had a very bad education life has to have an effect for sure. (S41)

1.5.2 The local communities.

The interviewees who lived in big cities mentioned three local communities (see section 1.5.3 aşağıda). Those families that had not as yet found any other HE family in their city mentioned that they feel the absence of being in a circle where they feel understood and being part of a community that could fill the gap in socialisation created by not being in a school.

By being in close cooperation with like-minded people, we could find ways to fill the gap [created by unschooling], but unfortunately, we could not meet any of them yet. (S38)

There are no HE families within my circle of friends; they still find what I do, odd. It would be nice if I had some. (S42)

One respondent mentioned that the families that she met had HE children at preschool age and they transferred their children to school for basic education. She expressed that idea as follows:

I met many people who have preschool aged children, but not of school age. Those people who are keen to home educate chose schooling when their child got to school age; some of them sent their kids to alternative schools. (S23)

Almost all of the parents indicated that they had a circle of friends who frequently came together with their children to allow their children to socialise and play with the other families' children. In particular, nine interviewees from big cities mentioned they met with other HE families to attend some activities together or just to share thoughts. Also, within the online community, they organised some camp gatherings for a couple of days; some of these were just to socialise and some included workshops for children and talks for the adults. For the parents who could not find

local communities, these camping meetings were a chance to socialise with people with the same attitude towards education. One respondent expressed herself as follows:

We participated in the camping gatherings of the social media group; as I can remember, we went to five camps. We still have communication with the families from the gatherings but there are no HE families close to us. (S4)

With the exception of the alternative education initiatives that the interviewed HE families created and/or joined (discussed in section 1.5.3 aşağıda), only two respondents mentioned a small community that they had formed in their neighbourhood; they summarised their communities as follows:

When my daughter was five years old, we made a home school for her. We rented a flat with three friends and we did not send our children to school but educated them at home for the first year without sending them to school. In fact, it went very well and it was successful. We fed the kids, took them on short trips; without spending too much time on teaching, we had great time together. (S10) [They had to terminate their home school for economic reasons when one of the families gave up.]

There is a play group that we go together with my son. We are not very professional, or expert in this field but we are working to learn as much as we can. I took Montessori and Game Therapy training as well. This play group is also a system that we created and tried to apply among each other. (S27)

1.5.3 Alternative education initiatives.

Both the preliminary observations in the social media group and the interviews indicated there were three popular initiatives among the HE families in Turkey. These were:

1. The Another School is Possible Association (BBOM in Turkish)

BBOM was established in 2010 as a school cooperative model⁵ and currently has eight cooperatives, two initiatives, and four functioning schools.

Four interviewees were volunteers on the cooperatives and initiatives. However, there was only one parent whose child had attended BBOM in the past. Additionally, she had been a teacher at the same BBOM school, but she quit her job there and removed her child from the school. The comment below summarises why she thought that BBOM was not a helpful education system in reality:

During the workshops that I had organised, I had the chance to see how children behave when they are left alone. I thought that it would be the same at BBOM. ...I left there with very clear reasons ... I do not want a school or in fact a company, created by white collar workers for their own children only. I think the concept of education is meaningless unless it includes all children. (S41)

2. Earth School (Yeryüzü Okulu in Turkish)

Earth School is an informal initiative of HE families. They came together and created a space for their children where they had fixed days for workshops given by the parents according to their profession or interests. They also had trips and attended different events together. Five interviewed parents were in that initiative and they mentioned that they were pretty satisfied with it. Also, they did some activities within their initiative, for example “a day in the woods with the fathers” or “mothers gathering at night time” etc.

⁵Community Schools: BBOM is proposing an alternative to financial duality and facilitating parents and volunteers to open up and run their non-profit making/affordable schools under education cooperatives. (<https://goo.gl/h8Zun6>)

3. Education Model that Fits the Nature of Child (FUEM in Turkish)

FUEM was an initiative which was working on an educational model, but it had been terminated before establishment because of in-group conflicts and some political difficulties about opening a school. One of the respondents explained the process as follows:

We tried to create an education model that is suitable to human nature but we could not. One group of our friends suggested that we are not in a hurry; we better design the model thoroughly first. I am in the second group that suggested to open the school first and fine tune the model with experience as we go along the new system. We started to have financial difficulties. With the announcement of a state of emergency by the government, the procedure to open a private school became stricter and we all got split up. (S12)

1.6 Discussion

As shown in Table 0-2 and argued in section 1.2.2 those I interviewed had more sons than daughters receiving HE. However, no conclusions can be drawn, because the data refers only to the children of the parents who took part in this study. These families simply had more boys than girls and so there was point in generating chi-square statistics.

Although it was predicted that there might be a relationship between religion-related values and beliefs of the parents and their reasons for deciding to home-educate their children, after data collection and analysis there was not enough evidence to support this prediction.

Although it was predicted that there might be a relationship between religion-related values and beliefs of the parents and their reasons for deciding to home-educate their children, after data collection and analysis there was not enough evidence to support this prediction.

Among the interviewees six parents who had suspended their schooling at some time or had dropped out of school when the ban on headscarves was applied in Turkey during their schooling years. There were also three mothers who did not drop out of school but had had problems with the teachers because of their families' political views. However, even those parents did not mention political or religious views as a reason to home educate their children. The reason could be the change in the political climate in Turkey and the fact that the current conservative government is in favour of religious families⁶, however, the interviewees did not cite this fact either during the interviews.

The idealised view of nature as if it is a prerequisite of HE was promulgated by the popular members of the OSNS group. Examining how such an idea like living in nature or close to nature, gained popularity and acceptance within an OSNS group, as a given condition for HE, shows how members' perceptions can be moulded by the discussions in that group, which are dominated by experienced/influential home educating parents. As 38 out of 44 interviewees of this research were recruited from this OSNS group, it also demonstrates that the interviewees were affected by each other's views about HE.

As noted in section 1.3.1 the parents frequently expressed the idea that their children's happiness was the most important thing for them. As Table 0-2 shows, while the interviewees had 31 preschool-aged children ages and 33 children of primary school ages (i.e., the first four years of basic education in Turkey), the number of children who were of secondary-school age (i.e., the second four years of basic education in Turkey) and high school age dramatically decreased to six. Most probably, responses from parents about

⁶ The current ruling party in Turkey had changed the public education policy that was introduced by the previous government in 1997, which had 8 years of compulsory primary secondary period, and having discouraging regulations for students to study at schools with intensive religious curriculum. In 2012 the system was turned into a 4+4+4 years system in order to give religious families more options to enrol their children in such schools as well as allowing students to wear headscarves which was forbidden before (Cornell, 2015).

their children's happiness was due to the fact that most of the parents in this study had children in the younger age groups. This finding is consistent with the international literature which indicates that parents particularly emphasise their children's happiness in the early years of education, that is, at the preschool and the first years of basic education levels (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007; Shoshani & Slone, 2017). However, in the later years there is a shift in perception, as concerns start to emerge about the children's future in terms of gaining qualifications and finding jobs.

International literature suggests that parents use laws that state that children must attend school as a means to make their children go to school when they are unwilling to do so (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). It is evident that using the law in such a way was not the case for the HE families who were interviewed for this study. On the contrary, they did not follow the law and tried to use the loopholes in it in order not to send their children to school, as HE is not regulated in Turkey. As was illustrated in Table 0-4, there were a high number of university graduates among the interviewees. Presumably, parents who are university graduates are more likely to understand and know the limits of the law and the ways of getting around it. Less educated parents are more likely to come under pressure from the authorities than the well-educated parents who may actually be more educated than some of those working in the authorities that are exist to enforce school attendance.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information about the children's educational background and the reasons behind their parents' decision to home educate their children. The chapter sets out the information collected on the following topics (see Chapter 0 for all):

- (1) Whether/How parents' own experience of school influenced their decision to home educate their own children.*
- (2) Home educating parents' experience of the current school system, and knowledge of it. And how this influenced their decision to home educate their own children.*

Consideration of the children's educational backgrounds includes the reasons why some children attended school and then transferred to HE and why some of the children who had been home educated in the past subsequently transferred to school. The flexi-schooling of children is also explained in detail. The section that deals with parents' reasons for adopting HE provides insights into the thinking of parents about their children's future, agreement between parents, and the decision-making process within the families.

In some quotations from the interviews, notes have been added in square brackets, in order to make the translations clearer.

1.2 The Decision to Home Education

This part of the thesis outlines the parents' decision making regarding their children's HE and addresses the following questions:

- What reasons led the interviewees to decide on HE?
- How was the parents' decision affected by their own educational experiences?
- Was there agreement about the decision between the parents and between them and their extended family and friends?
- How long did the parents think they would continue to home educate their children?

The descriptions of each theme and subtheme are provided under each subheading. A brief discussion that highlights the most important findings is located at the end of this chapter.

1.2.1 Why did the parents choose HE for their children?

Four broad themes were identified from the interviews in terms of the main reasons the interviewees gave for choosing HE. These are:

1. Beliefs about childhood
2. Concerns about school
3. The current education system
4. Other reasons.

Figure 0-1 Parents' Reasons for Choosing HE for their Children

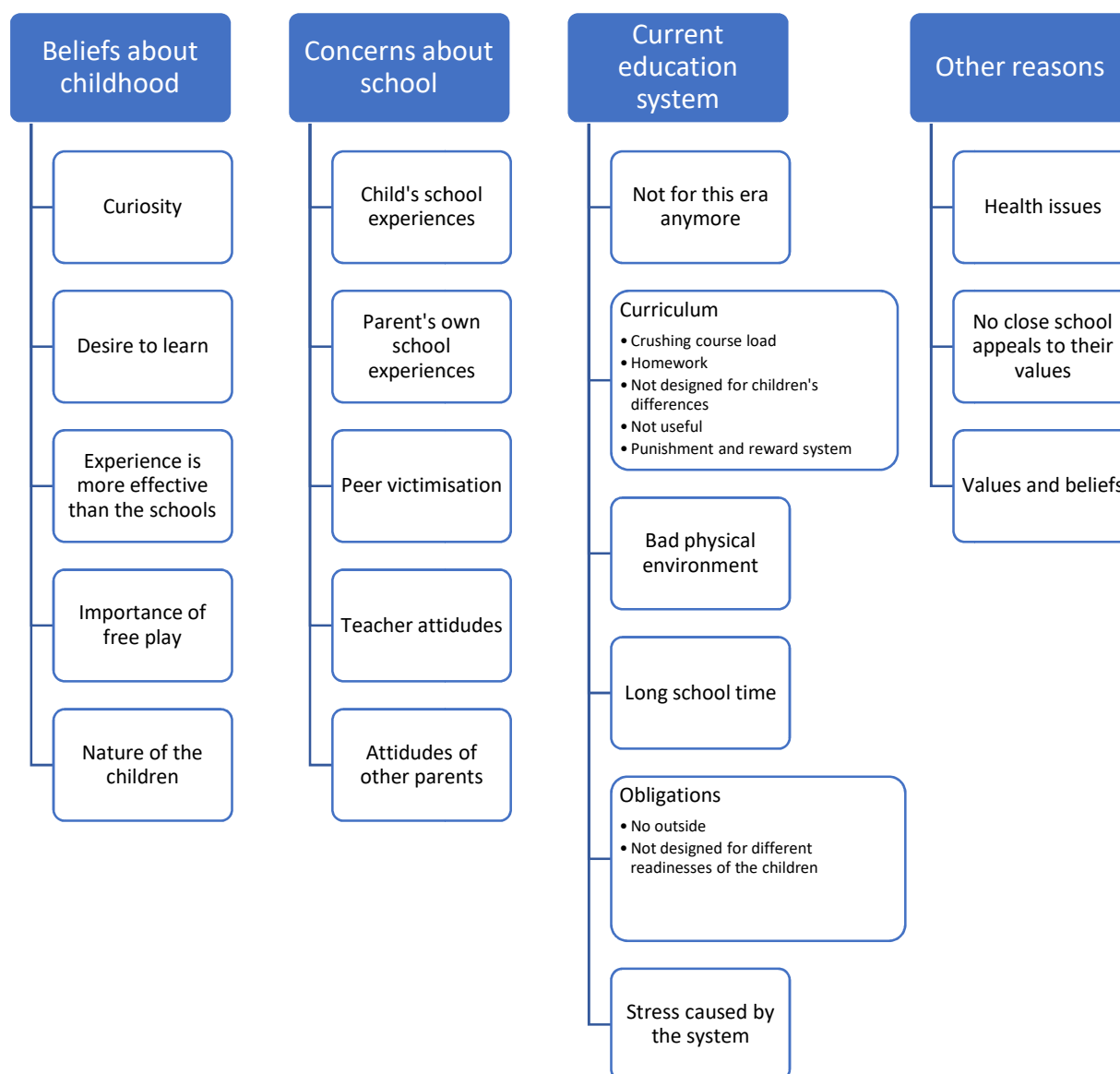


Figure 0-1 illustrates the four themes and subthemes that emerged from the interview data during NVivo-assisted analysis. Extracts from that are then provided and discussed.

Beliefs about childhood.

This theme is concerned with the interviewees' beliefs about childhood including what they thought was important at that stage of a human-being's life and what they wanted to preserve by not sending their children to school.

The interviewees frequently commented that they wanted to preserve their children's 'desire to learn' and 'curiosity'. The following extracts highlight some of the comments made by the interviewees:

I value the eagerness to learn of a child and aim at preserving this as much as I can. (S38)

The fact that having a child, learning and discovering, all of them are very entertaining but in our system, the school system that we are forced to get into makes them horrible. Homework and memorising, what a nightmare they have become. (S13)

The ideal education life should be somewhat like having that curiosity and interest to learn for a lifetime and keeping that desire alive and not to let it fade away. (S31)

The following extracts highlight that six of the interviewed parents valued the 'nature' of their children and did not want to force them to change it. They believed that not all children have the same characteristics.

The following extract reveals what the parents meant by the term the 'nature of the child':

My older son was very quiet and peaceful. I was studying at university when he was a baby. While I was studying at my desk he used to play with his paints. My second son was just the opposite, he was roaming around the house when he was 3 ½ months old. My older son was forming sentences when he was 21 months old, whereas the younger still cannot speak. Maybe because we could not read to the younger as he never sits down to listen. Think about how these two children could study in the same class, assuming that they are

at the same age even. Two sons of the same family can be that different in nature. How can all those children in the same class be expected to be the same, since they try to teach the same way to all kids at school. (S32)

The extract above reveals that this HE parent thought the school system forces children into a stereotype.

The following extract summarises the comments the interviewees made:

If we want to enumerate our priorities for education, firstly they should be education for behaviour, character and values. We intend to allow their development without interfering with their nature. (S26)

Seven of the parents commented that learning through experiences is more effective than learning through books, videos, pictures etc. One parent said:

They learned by trying and living. For example, there in the geography book Cappadocia is being taught; we have gone to Cappadocia and they saw it there themselves. I think it is better for them to learn by experiencing and trying like that. (S17)

The parents mostly thought that their children's desire to learn was being nourished by experience. This idea was highlighted by one respondent:

For example, if my child wants to investigate something, like playing with an electric plug, he can but the precautions should be taken together with me. I pushed the barriers as much as I could in that sense and his desire to learn already took him to a higher level by himself. (S12)

Concerns about school.

This theme deals with the interviewees' concerns about school. These concerns are caused by either their children's or their own school experiences, or by things they heard and their beliefs about an ideal education.

The parents argued that the teacher and the attitudes of other parents were important contributing factors in their decision to home educate, and especially for those who removed their children from school, as explained in section 1.3 aşağıda.

It was interesting that one of the parents was uncomfortable because the teacher praised her daughter a lot, as highlighted in the extract below:

The most negative thing about my daughter was that her teacher was comparing her to other children and complementing her a lot. That was disturbing me; I was also thinking that it was an over excessive ego boost for my daughter. I did not like her to be compared to others anyway, although nice things were said about her; even that I did not like and we had to deal with the consequences of that problem with my daughter. ...it took a while to overcome that period really. ...I had to explain to her that she should not describe herself through comparison with others. (S30)

Peer victimisation was mentioned by four interviewees as a concern about schools. The comments of one parent sum up this point:

Instead of putting my child in this kind of environment where her abilities would not be recognised or she could be bullied, her time would be wasted, thinking that there are not

any other alternatives which could provide what is required, I thought that I could and should find a way myself. (S38)

Also, three interviewees mentioned peer victimisation as negative experiences of their children, as illustrated below:

My child had faced bullying from other pupils; he started to wet his bed, then I started to think, like, should I try HE? (S19)

The concerns caused by the school experiences of their children are discussed in detail in section 1.3 aşağıda.

While I was thinking how to save my child from a teacher with nonsense behaviour, I fell into the weird teacher-parent relations trap. I was thinking that I was struggling in a vicious circle and wasting my energy for nonsensical things. Anyway, we took our daughter from school after a short while. (S30)

The parents are over-ambitious. Yesterday at the parents' meeting one parent was complaining that her child was doing the homework but not studying further afterwards. Poor children! The system has a bad effect but parents can be a worse effect than the system sometimes. (S25)

The extracts above reveal that not only the teachers, but also the other parents' attitudes at the school were seen as a problem by some interviewees.

Although the parents' negative experiences about their own school life were mentioned in the first results chapter in section 1.2.4, some more details can to be added about the experiences of the parents both as students and as teachers.

Twenty-one interviewees indicated that school was the only option that they had had to be educated and socialise. The following extracts highlight the main comments made:

...school did act as an opportunity for my spouse, he could escape from the family a bit; he had a problematic family. Looking from that angle, we cannot say that HE is for everyone, but we think it is right for children whose families are supportive and for families that can create a convenient environment. (S16)

I did not have another alternative; going to school was my only choice. If I had the chance, I would choose to go not to school but other places. I evaluated when I grew up and saw the different possibilities. I was from a disadvantaged family, socioeconomically. I could only go to school, I did not have alternatives like going on a trip, or to a library, or to be given treats (??) by my family. I would either go to school or watch TV. (S40)

Also, it is noteworthy that six parents mentioned that thinking about HE for their children led them to re-evaluate their own educational life. They mentioned that they saw problems they encountered in their school years that they had never noticed before. The following extracts echo some of their utterances about this enlightening realisation:

I had a good education life overall. However, since I started to search and think about HE for the last two-three years, I could see the missing parts in myself better. At that time I was not too concerned about them. (S9)

Actually, I liked to learn, but because I was a student that could not sit at his desk, I would get bored a lot. That 40 minutes would not pass at all; all those things were a torture for me altogether. I was getting into the classroom, I would not understand so much about what the teacher was saying, I was studying myself and I could understand at once and learn quickly. In fact, I was learning by myself but I was not aware of it. I must have been

giving all the credit to school. When I joined the HE social media group, I can say that it opened many different viewpoints and some things finally began to make sense. (S34)

A parent who had negative experiences at school mentioned that she did not want her children to have similar experiences; she expressed her feelings as follows:

I had some reports given by some experts while I was at primary school, some claiming that I have a low IQ. I have learning difficulty but once I learn I do not forget. There are different learning speeds and methods for every child, but those also are related to the teacher and the system. Until the sixth year at school, I did not have a mark above three, [out of five] but at year six none was below 100 [out of 100]. That was the success of the teacher. It is difficult for children who had the same conditions as me to be able to proceed in this system. If someone could deal with me earlier maybe I could have been at a different position right now. ...I did not want my child to be wasted in the system due to a possible difference he might have. (S27)

The teacher parents.

A number of parents I interviewed were either current teachers or had past teaching experience. The numbers for those teacher interviewees are illustrated in Table 0-1.

Table 0-1 The Teacher Parents

	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Current Teacher</i>	8	5	13
<i>Former Teacher</i>	8	0	8
<i>Not a Teacher</i>	28	34	
<i>No Info</i>	0	5	
<i>Total</i>	44	44	

Six mothers who had teaching experience mentioned that their decision to home educate their children was affected by the things they saw at schools and/or the education system they had experienced as a teacher. As one teacher parent put it:

...maybe this questioning is also about being very much into this education system. We are looking at the education life of our child, and since we are quite familiar with it as well, since I was working as a teacher at the preparation courses for university exams, seeing what students had to go through, and seeing at the university that the education I took until that time had no use. Becoming aware of that and while preparing students for university exams, finding out that what I was teaching was not useful for them, all of these have been a process of questioning. ...It is also trying to be aware of all these; it would be much easier if I was living something I do not know much about. (S1)

The teacher interviewees mentioned that it was a process for them; while they were learning about HE they were comparing what they were learning to the things they experienced in the education system as a teacher. Two mothers expressed themselves as follows:

...it does not happen in one day, I mean discovering HE and or getting familiar with that idea. Some things happen, your mind gets attached to the idea, thinking like what is it, why is this like that, there are lots of aspects to think about. My graduate degree was on preschool children. I was working for four years at a high school, before that I was working for seven years at a primary school. Currently for the last few months I am working at a primary school again. I have seen children from different age groups, different levels of education and different problems. I noticed that we kill the curiosity and creativity of children along the years. The only things they can think of is their marks, and the next school they will be qualified to study at. What to learn or the excitement of learning new things does not interest them a bit at all. Even if some of them may keep that excitement in themselves, which is very rare, still the learning process is a nightmare for children. In fact, it is an inner process, curiosity to learn is a need like eating or drinking, a need that has to be fulfilled. (S34)

My experiences as a teacher led me to think about unschooling. I cannot remember how, but I came across the social media group, that is, the terminated old one and then I came to the new group. I read the group documents and posts. As I read, I opened more to unschooling. ... I don't want my children to attend school especially because the negative things I had seen in the schools as an educator. ... I did not make the decision of unschooling my children because of my own educational life as a student but if I had not been a teacher, I would believe my children would be as successful as myself at school. I would support them within the bounds of possibility. (S38)

Current education system.

The parents argued that the current education system has a lot of problems in terms of curriculum, bad physical environment, obligations, long school hours, and stress caused by the education system.

Nine parents spoke about the bad physical conditions of the schools, crowded classrooms, and the fact that children were not allowed to be outside of the classroom simply because it is easier to control them that way. Some illustrative extracts are:

The children remain shut out of the grounds for safety. There is a large schoolyard but the school authorities said that they do not allow children to be outside because they are concerned about controlling all of them and the danger that may go outside of the school. This made us upset. (S1)

I do not think that the ideal education can be maintained with a Turkish way of conduct in crowded schools. (S9)

Kindergartens are very unhealthy environments. We went to investigate with my son at the first day of school, if we liked it maybe I could send him. Interiors are extremely unventilated, smelling like plastic, because of many plastic toys in a low ceiling room with fifteen kids inside. (S21)

Ten interviewees saw the rules imposed on schools as a problem. The extract below echoes the thoughts of one respondent with regard to the idea that the education system is not designed to take children's readiness into consideration:

I think we should not be very insistent about school and education. We the adults should not rush to teach something to children. We should not talk like "it is your turn now; your time has come to learn this". The flow of a child's personal time runs in such a natural rhythm that if we try to adapt the kid to the school in the first years, we would be restricting the energy of the child, narrowing the potential and focusing on one thing only. (S21)

Fourteen interviewees mentioned the long school hours as a concern. Some of them thought that the current education system's curriculum, especially for basic education, is overloaded with unnecessary subjects that have to be covered just to extend schooling times to serve parents working in industry. This point was highlighted by one parent when she said:

When you think about it, if you are working, your child's school is decided based on that, not according to the unique needs and learning pace of that particular kid. Since parents work until 5pm, school is also arranged to be between eight and five. In fact two-three hours daily education is enough for the child. The rest of the time is to be filled somehow so that the parents can work, it is not about the child at all. I don't think it is right for children to stay at school the whole day.(S23)

The curriculum-related concerns of the interviewees were: crushing course load, homework, not being designed for children's differences, and punishment and reward systems. The parents argued that a lot of content in the curriculum is unnecessary and rote-learning based. Even though giving homework to children is unlawful in the system for the first three years, the teachers do it either because they have got used to it or because the parents ask for it, thinking that it is the only way that a child can learn. The following extract summarises some of the comments made on curriculum concerns:

... crushing course load on the students, every class's curriculum is like it is the only class that matters. Additionally, the curriculum has no flexibility for unforeseen circumstances. For example, the government decides to make a holiday longer suddenly in the middle of an academic year but this unplanned holiday's curriculum has to be covered in that academic year. And so on. (S38)

Punishment and reward systems were also commented on by five interviewees. One respondent said poignantly:

we tried school for a while; although he made me surprised by getting used to it very fast, he could not accept the praise and penalty system. Eating or not fighting with friends or siblings are ordinary things for him; therefore, he found it weird to be praised for such behaviour. To praise one child for a behaviour which he/she does anyhow in the classroom, or be complemented a lot for a reason, can be understood as a penalty by other children. He had difficulty in understanding such things. (S43)

Other reasons.

The interviewed parents offered other reasons for choosing HE. These included health issues, values and beliefs, and the fact that no school that appealed to their educational needs could be found nearby. Two parents whose children had allergies kept them out of school. They said that they had first intended to home educate their children only because of their allergies, but that, as time went by, they had wanted to extend their decision to their other children. This reason for choosing HE was highlighted poignantly by an interviewee:

My son had health problems. Since he was genetically allergic to many things, he had to be careful about what to eat and should not stay with children who had infections. His lungs would not develop as much as they should because of the many children with infections he would be around at school and kindergarten. Now at this point in time, he grew up to be a healthy child who does not get sick that much. We consulted with the medical doctors specialised in infectious diseases and allergies when we were deciding to take that action. When my younger son came to the schooling age, we decided that the HE is going well and we did not register him in school either. (S42)

Moving to a new place was also a factor in deciding to home educate their children, as mentioned in Figure 0-3 below.

Although only one parent mentioned that her reason to home educate her children was for religious concerns (as reported in detail in the previous chapter in section 1.3.3), some parents also indicated that they had searched for a school that had a teacher who had similar values to their family values, but that when they could not find one, they turned towards HE. The following captures her thinking:

Since it will be the first step after the family, we looked for a teacher and school that would suit best to our lifestyle, upbringing, family and social life, and that would make the child happy but we could not find one; for that reason, we postponed school at least for a year.
(S43)

1.2.2 Agreement between mother and father and between other family members regarding HE.

The following paragraphs report the study's findings on agreement between parents regarding the HE decision. Here, however, it should be borne in mind that all the information collected from the interviews came from mothers and so may count as a limitation. The data summarise what mothers said about what fathers feel about their children's HE along the following lines:

- Both parents agreed about HE
- The mother convinced the father
- The father was not yet convinced.

The following extract is illustrative of instances where the home educating of their children was a joint decision by both parents.

My husband was supportive from the beginning since he had studied in private schools and could not succeed at university, could not do what he wanted. We study for a long period

of time and at the end it may end up in disaster; therefore, we thought that [school] was a risky system and chose to opt out of the system. (S15)

For some parents, it was not a decision about HE only. Over time, their parenthood experiences took them towards HE together. One interviewee highlighted this situation poignantly:

It was a questioning that started with the birth of our child. We questioned our life, our relations with nature, our professions, and everything else, then we evolved together. We took the decision to raise our daughter without intervention when she was very small and that brought the HE along with it. We had already transformed our life totally within this process.(S36)

The extracts below capture some of the comments made by the mothers who believed in and researched HE and convinced their spouses that they should HE.

My husband did not agree at the beginning. He told me to search until our child is 6-7 years old but he was against [HE]. Then while talking about a subject unrelated to education, while I was explaining how colours are formed while mixing with different colours in a story format, he somehow got enlightened and he told me one day "if school could not give me such a viewpoint then I am completely supportive of HE from now on: we can search together and learn together". From that day onwards, we are proceeding together and he now even has a broader and comfortable mind-set. (S9)

The last group, the unconvinced fathers, was mentioned by five interviewees. These were either the fathers of flexi-schooling children whose mothers wanted their children to be removed from school completely or the fathers of children who allowed the children's mother to keep them out of school only for a specified period of time. Examples of this period of time include allowing the child to stay out of only preschool, or allowing the child to stay out of only preschool and primary school, so that the child's absence from school would not affect the later stages of the child's future education.

My husband thinks that actually our child does not need to go to any school and we are legally not in any difficulty. However, he thinks that our child has to be in connection with the school somehow, and he is concerned about, after all, how our child can go to university without going through the compulsory education. (S1)

Three of those five parents mentioned concerns about their children's possible future. One parent highlighted her husband's concerns as follows:

HE looks like a utopian dream to my husband. He does not think that it is possible to have a profession with HE, and a job without a university diploma, in Turkey's conditions. He is also concerned that HE is not a common practice. (S25)

Although it is an exception, it is worth mentioning that the spouse of one interviewee agreed that one child should have HE while he did not think that his other child should be home educated, as the extract below explains:

I have two sons. The older one who is 5 ½ is allergic to many things and does not go to school for that reason. I am working in shifts. I am three days at home and work one full day and a night shift. On those days, my in-laws look after him. I'm also thinking about not sending my 3 ½ old little son to school but his father thinks that he should go. Since he thinks that our two sons cannot get along with each other at home, the younger is going to school but I am about to convince my husband, I hope we will take him from school as well. (S29)

The following illustrates the level of agreement between the interviewees and their extended family in terms of their HE decision, ranging from:

- Respectful of it
- Have concerns about it

- Reject it
- Support it
- Are not aware that the child is being home educated.

The following extracts summarise some of the comments made regarding agreement between the interviewees and their extended family.

No one from our extended family supports us. Especially my parents were quite against us. The first year they were not worried that much about our children's not going to school. However, at the beginning of this year they created a big scene about it. Anyway, I am explaining the situation to them firstly saying that the school has just started and we are going to school two-three days a week, and then I say that the children did not want to go to school at all. In fact, my son is really resisting to go to school. (S16)

My in-laws are open-minded and respectful of our decisions. But they still tried to direct us to schools very kindly. They had concerns about socialisation, falling behind, national exams, and so on. We wanted to relieve them by talking to the schools that they suggested. But after a while they were convinced that in our daughter's special case, that it is better to continue with homeschooling. (S23)

1.2.3 Future plans of the parents for their HE children.

This section reports the study's findings on the parents' thoughts about their children's future education.

Here, five broad themes were identified from the interviews:

1. The idea that HE is structureless in nature
2. Concerns about school, especially in early childhood
3. Not wanting to exclude child(ren) from the system

4. Being unconcerned about getting a diploma
5. A belief that schooling is the child's decision.

Figure 0-2 Parents' Thoughts about Future of their HE Children.

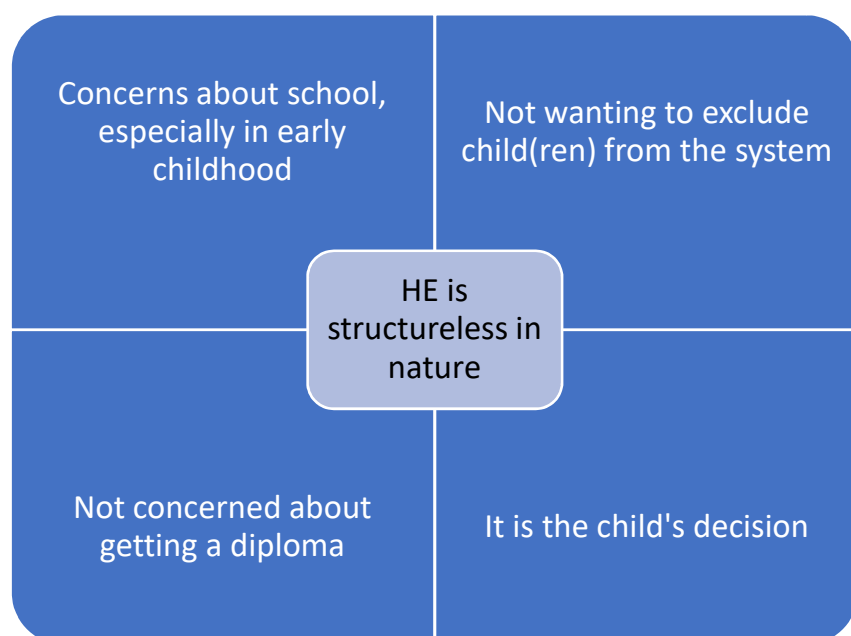


Figure 0-2 outlines the parents' thoughts about their children's future education. The descriptions of each group are provided under the subheadings and each subheading contains illustrative extracts which summarise the findings and highlight relevant findings.

HE is structureless in nature.

Although not all parents were keen to talk about their future plans, some parents did indicate that HE is structureless in nature. The extracts that follow are illustrative of some of the comments made:

We are at the beginning of this path anyway; we do not yet know what we are doing or who we will become; perhaps the most I like about this method is that it does not have any certainty. Therefore, it continues in a way specific to itself. (S1)

He is not going to school at the moment. In the first year of primary school he was automatically registered [as explained in section 1.3.3]. I am not planning anything about the future, I think that is within the HE, I do not have definite boundaries, I do not form sentences like “he will not go to school”, or “he will adopt this idea”. I can name a plan at most for three years; roughly I can say “let’s pass this primary school period”, then we will decide based on my son’s wishes. (S3)

Concerns about school especially for early childhood.

Some parents practised HE for the preschool years of education only. The following extract illustrates the comments they made:

My son is at home, he had never been to school before and he will definitely not go to school during his pre-school years. Since legalization of HE does not seem possible in the near future, I want him to go to school for socializing at least during the primary school period. I plan to talk to his future teacher to ask her not to force him to learn anything. (S39)

Some families indicated HE was particularly suitable for the childhood years, that is, the primary school level.

We think that the childhood period has to be lived to the full, without too many limitations set according to the needs of each age and with adequate support. (S6)

According to the readings I have done about education, it is suggested that the child should be let go without interference until the age of twelve. The important things to learn are human relations, relations with friends, and relations with the society. It is said that once the child develops these relations and gets the self-motivation to learn by himself then he can do everything by himself. I believe and hope that it becomes that way too. (S31)

The extracts reveal that some parents had concerns about their child's early-childhood schooling especially. This concern explains the higher numbers of unschooling at the preschool level (The data relating to the interviewees' approach to HE is represented in the third results chapter)

Not wanting to exclude child(ren) from the system.

The legal situation and how the HE families by-pass the law were covered in section 1.5.2. There are two options after primary school (the first step of 4+4+4) for Turkish HE families who want their children to be certificated just in case their children may want to continue higher education at some point of their life.

The first option involves sending the child to middle school after primary school to get on track again for the diploma. One parent explained this position as follows:

Our child is going to school enough times in each semester in order not to fail because of absence, with the least damage to his school life, until my child gets to fourteen years of age, when he/she will be able to continue in open high school. So, we are using our legal rights. (S6)

The second option involves keeping children out of school until they are fourteen years old, at the risk of paying administrative fines, then following the process described in section 1.5.2 for enrolling in an open high school. One parent explained how her decision to follow this option would work in the future:

I will try to carry on this process without getting into the system. If my child wants, she can get the certificate from a public education centre and the diploma later on. (S3)

Both the preliminary observations from the social media group and the interviews indicated that most of the HE families in the sample chose the first option, that is, sending children to middle school after keeping them out of school during their preschool and primary school years.

Eight interviewees talked about the fact they did not want their children to be removed from the system for too long; they thought that after primary school, fighting the system would be pointless. One parent made this point when she said:

I do not accept the schools as a system at all; the reason for this is not religious or political, I just think that in today's society schools have finished their mission. However, we are still in this system and conditions, so we cannot totally keep our children away from the schools as this system is still the current one. (S5)

while another commented:

There is not a legalised HE system in Turkey yet. Therefore, we aim to continue by being both schooled but not getting involved too deeply into the system. For this reason, we started this path firstly by selecting teachers from the schools that are close to our neighbourhood. (S26)

Also, one parent mentioned that she did not want her children to be excluded from the system for too long since she wanted them to have a university degree:

I do not want my children to fall behind the competition between the students when they are close to entering the national exams. ... Neither I nor my husband have university

degrees, we are high school graduates. We started working after high school and learned our profession on the job. ...we felt the absence of a university degree in our professional life; we do not want our son to feel the same; he should do the job he likes but with a diploma. (S18)

Not concerned about getting a diploma.

Four HE families chose the second option noted above, that is, keeping children out of school until they were fourteen years old at the risk of paying administrative fines. They indicated that they were not concerned about their children getting a diploma. They thought that if the child wanted to continue his/her life in a way that required a diploma, he/she could get it easily after fourteen years of age. The following extracts summarise some of the comments made:

...alternatives can be found, if one really needs a diploma. He can apply and get it at the age of fifteen. When my child gets to the high school level, the necessary courses can also be taken as distant learning and somehow that diploma can be taken. I feel the necessary power to face those difficulties. (S25)

It is the child's decision.

Most mothers indicated that if children wanted to go to school they would go, a view that was highlighted by one parent as follows:

In HE, things are learned on the way, and differ according to the child. Therefore, I cannot say that "I think this or that is the right way" or "that is the way it should be done". (S31)

However, it is important to mention that not all parents thought the decision on schooling should be left to children. In some cases, the opposite was true, as the extracts below show (although these were exceptions mentioned by two parents):

... before marriage my husband had even put that as a condition not to send our children to school, and I had accepted. The reason not to send our children to school is, of course, a bit about our religious concerns... our circle of friends suggested us to select the teacher but it is difficult to find the one who will be sensitive to our concerns, and just for that reason I do not want to put our children into that environment (S14)

My child wanted to go to school but I did not give permission because I think it takes away more from the child than what it brings. It is something like smoking cigarettes, so I also decided myself about whether or not my child is mature enough to decide about this. I told my child that he/she cannot decide about this yet. Once I decide that my child has got to the right age to be able to make his/her own choice, he/she can decide. I do not know when though, everybody matures at a different age. (S31)

1.3 Children's Educational Background and Experiences

The HE children of the interviewees could be grouped into four with regard to their school attendance.

1. The children who had never attended school
2. The children who had been home educated in the past and then transferred to school; these children were attending school full-time at the time of the data collection.
3. The flexi-schooling children who were currently attending school. The children who were attending an alternative school are included in this number.

4. The children who had attended school in the past and transferred to HE (This group excludes the flexi-schoolers.).

The numbers for those four groups of children are given in Table 0-2:

Table 0-2 Breakdown of HE Children with regard to their School Attendance

<i>School attendance</i>	<i>boy</i>	<i>girl</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>Have never attended</i>	18	11	29
<i>Attended to school in the past and transferred to HE</i>	10	5	15
<i>The flexi-schooling children</i>	8	12	20
<i>Had been HE in the past and transferred to school full-time</i>	3	3	6
<i>Total</i>	39	31	70

As indicated in Table 0-2, twenty flexi-schooling children were attending school at the time of data collection. Two siblings were attending an alternative school where their mother had a non-teaching job.

The following extract provides her thoughts about alternative schooling:

In the classic schools the thing they enforce on us is a curriculum that has nothing to do with surviving in real life; none of it is something that one can use or experience in real life. Nothing I was taught at school was of use to me ever. ... both of my children are going to school but we preferred an alternative school; also, because I am working at that school, I have control of them. I am not sure if I would send them to that school if I was not actually working there. (S28)

Also, as explained in section 1.5.3 alternative schools were chosen by the families mostly because they were more flexible in terms of school days and the hours spent in the classroom.

1.3.1 The children who have never attended to school.

In Table 0-3, the children who have never attended school are grouped by their age and gender.

Table 0-3 Age Groups of the HE Children who never Attended School

<i>Age group of the HE children</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	16	7	23
<i>Primary school</i>	2	4	6
<i>Total</i>	18	11	29

It is worth noting that the interviewed parents' children who have never been to school are either of preschool or primary school age. The reason why only preschoolers and primary school aged children had never attended school may be explained by the fact that the absence from the school of a child from preschool and primary school will not affect the later phases of the child's education phases and so HE is especially for the early childhood stages. The interviewed parents' plans for their children's future were explained in section 1.2.3 of this chapter.

1.3.2 The children who had been home educated in the past and transferred to school full-time.

As Table 0-4 illustrates, six children who had been home educated had then returned to school.

Table 0-4 The Children who Returned to School, Categorised by their Current Level of Schooling

<i>The children who returned to school</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	0	0	0
<i>Primary school</i>	3	2	5
<i>Secondary school</i>	0	1	1
<i>High school</i>	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	3	3	6

A child returned to school with two older siblings because of domestic circumstances after they had been homeschooled for one year. They were dual-citizens and the institution was in the country of origin of one parent. They started school full-time but the youngest of three children in this family who returned to school continued part-time because the child could not get used to school:

They are continuing [at school] at the moment; we faced many difficulties during the first two weeks, we are still facing those with the third child, that's why we reduced the time they go to school, ...The first two kids faced a lot of hardship at the beginning, then we met with their teachers, head teacher and school counsellor, we explained to them what education means for our children and what kind of an educational approach they come from. Now it is much better, as their teachers have adapted a little, according to the children; that's why it is going better at the moment. (S37)

As the extracts in section 1.3.3 reveal, the need for socialisation along with the legal situation of HE had the most effect on the flexi-schooling children's families' decision in terms of their approach to HE. The extracts below, which are taken from the interviews of the parents of the children who returned to school full-time, show the influence that wanting to socialise with other children had on children who had previously been home educated.

I wanted her to go to school so that she can develop relations with her peers. There are not even cousins of hers in close proximity to us. As we live in a nuclear family, and do not live close to our relatives either, we don't have neighbours who have children that we can be friends with; if they have children, they are at school anyway. (S12)

My elder daughter was home educated last year but she started school this year. She started because she did not have friends. She got lonely because her friends were all at school during certain hours. Since she wanted to stay in that social environment, she started to go to school. (S4)

Although I was not happy with his choice, as we have been travelling constantly over the years, he was uncomfortable with not being attached to somewhere and not being able to develop long-term friendships. He told that he will start school and he stuck to this decision. We live in an abandoned village, he is going to another village for school but he is not bothered about the journey, he wants to be with his friends. He is older than his friends, and despite that he cannot read and write, that was a problem for the other children to take him into their group at the beginning, but my son is trying to be part of them somehow. Even if I do not want him to go to school, I am happy that this effort develops his social skills. (S41)

It is important to mention that not all children returned to school because of the legal situation or the socialisation issue. Some did so because of the financial and emotional obligations that HE brings.

In fact, it went very well and it was successful. ... Then we had to close our homeschool since it became economically difficult to support and also, we the mothers, had to spend the whole time on it without doing anything else. As one of our friends had to send her child to school due to the pressure from extended family, we were left with just two of us and, not being able to continue, we also sent our children to school. (S10)

1.3.3 The flexi-schooling children.

As Table 0-5 shows, twenty children had never been home educated through any approach other than flexi-schooling .

Table 0-5 Flexi-schooling Children who are Categorised by their Current Level of Schooling

<i>Flexi-schooling children</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	4	3	7
<i>Primary school</i>	8	3	11
<i>Secondary school</i>	0	2	2
<i>High school</i>	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	12	8	20

Seven of the flexi-schooling children were preschoolers. The following extracts illustrate some of the comments made by the parents whose children started preschool as flexi-schooling from the outset.

I was thinking not to send my younger son to school either but his father wants him to go. He is going to school because his father thinks that he cannot get along with his elder brother but I am about to convince my husband, I hope we will take him from school as well. (S29) (S29 has two children; the older one is not going to school because of health issues but the younger one does attend school.)

We moved to a new city. Our daughter wanted to go to a new kindergarten which was recently opened. She is spending three-four hours a day there; she felt lonely when we moved here. (S44)

The extracts below echo the comments made by the parents of the other children:

I want my child to have balanced life. Because my daughter is someone who gives importance to socialising, wanting to have friends and a social environment of her own. ... we started to hesitate when she started school. ...but it seems like in fact it was suiting to her needs, also because it is less hours, not the whole day but half (due to school timing) she is not disturbed by going school. School adds things to the children but is harmful in some respects too. So, I am trying to balance those adverse effects. (S13)

...my elder son went to school for two months for the most of last year, and he is going two-three days a week this year. We have a workshop with their friends on Tuesdays; that's why we go there. ... but the children want to go there to socialise. My children do not have friends in our neighbourhood; they are going there to play together. Going there was better than staying at home, they wanted that. At home, we never tell them that they should do homework or they should go to school; therefore, there is no pressure on them, the school is always the second priority. (S15, mother of two primary school age children)

Another child started preschool part-time on the recommendation of a specialist because of a speech problem.

My five-year-old child is going to kindergarten for half a semester in order to socialise. He has difficulty in speaking, I think something genetically inherited from his father, my elder son had the same. Our specialist suggested we do this in order for the child to get used to the environment. ...this year he is going for four hours a day. He loves it; if there was a problem, I would not send him but after all he wants to continue. He could not speak clearly until this age, but started speaking after going to the kindergarten. (S22)

Although an exception, there was one child who had been diagnosed with Asperger's disorder among the children who were being home educated using the flexi-schooling approach. The approach was chosen in accordance with the doctors' advice.

Our child is in fourth grade. He has been registered since kindergarten; he is going to school more regularly this year. Because of his condition, he is going to school three days and he is at home for two days. Usually our teacher does not mind absences but my son preferred to go more often. When he was in the second year of primary school he was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome; he was reported to be of high ability and a high IQ. ...as I have been suspicious that he might have autism, I was hesitant about school, but they did not mind about absences during the first three years at all. Last year as per our teacher's suggestion we went to the school counsellor, and who did an IQ test. Now he is going to third grade primary school for mainstreaming. (S33)

Officially, the legal situation in Turkey does not allow children to attend school as part-time students. However, the extract below reveals that, even at the secondary school level, some schools do not make an issue about absenteeism if the child is successful in terms of academic achievement.

For example, everybody says their children should not even miss one day. I am just the opposite, if they want to read a book at home, I tell them to stay; we are using the allowed time of absence. My daughter is twelve and my son is nine years old; since my children are successful at school their teachers do not mind their absences. (S40 has two children, one of primary school age and one of secondary school age.)

During the first years my daughter did not do her homework. She was good in the subjects that she was interested in but after some time her friends started to make fun of her, I think. Sometimes she did not want to go to school and she did not need to have a reason because she would do another thing that she wants that day. Teachers are more tolerant about absence during the first years.... the pressure from her peers encouraged her to do her homework at the beginning. I was telling her that she looks tired and exhausted and she can stop but she was insisting ... saying that her friends are all doing it and they complain about me if I do not. So rather than the teachers it was due to the need to feel belonging to a social environment, some kind of consciousness that developed inside her, or her school friend was making her do that. That was the expectation from her peers to accept her among them. In fact, the most basic need of a person is to be accepted. (S21)

The extract above reveals that peer pressure and a need to be accepted may force children to fulfil the school's obligations even when their parents encourage them to be more flexible.

Also, some parents think that being flexible about school may cause children to become confused. This was highlighted by one interviewee:

If the state forces me, flexi-schooling is not my style. My child can get confused when he enters that environment. I would try to struggle but if the conditions lead to a point where the child would be worried, I would not do flexi-schooling. I don't want to confuse the child altogether after putting him into that environment and taking [him] out of that environment. ...let's assume that I sent him there just because the state enforces such a thing, there would be things that the child will experience there, there are feelings he might feel, then all the things we are trying to do for him will be wasted.(S18)

1.3.4 The children who had attended school in the past and transferred to HE.

The numbers for those children who had attended school in the past and transferred to HE (excluding the flexi-schoolers) are illustrated in Table 0-6. They are recorded according to the highest level of the school attended.

Table 0-6 The Highest Level of Schooling that the HE Child had Attended.

<i>School attendance (Highest Level)</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	3	3	6
<i>Primary school</i>	6	2	8
<i>Secondary school</i>	0	0	0
<i>High school</i>	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>	10	5	15

Why did the parents send their children to school in the first place?

Concerns about socialisation.

In some cases, the parents saw preschool as a chance for socialisation and a place for their children to have fun, as the extracts below explain:

... we had just moved to a new place and I noticed that our son could not interact with small children. He was willing to interact with older people. His behaviour was like being scared of and escaping from his peers and younger children. His speech development was a factor in this behaviour. He was ahead of his peers and he was able to explain that little kids cannot talk to him and he cannot interact with them. We noticed that this situation was pushing him away from his peers and if he interacts and gets to know more friends from his closer age group, we can stop this. He can then play with them, share things together. As there were not many children around us and they were all going to day-care anyway, to be able to give him more chance to interact with his peers, not feel isolated and at least see more people, we also sent him to day-care. (S1)

Initial expectations of parents that their child should go to school.

The following extracts reveal that most of the parents whose children were transferred to HE indicated that they had not planned to home educate nor even knew about HE before their children had problems at school:

Until we met with the unschooling group, we were a family with the schooling mind-set anyway. I discovered that while searching for a solution after my daughter was reactive and unwilling to go to kindergarten. According to our family values, we were thinking that

if a child does not want to go to school there must be a reason, we better solve that problem and send the child to school anyway. (S18)

The thought of HE did not even pass through my mind. I did not even know that such a thing exists, I have never heard of that... We selected good quality private schools for preschooling but there were never matching what they have advertised, they keep saying that they teach by practice but it was not the case; we learned that in a bad way.(S19)

Our children are at the second year of primary school. They were studying at a private school during the first year. We were thinking that we should do whatever we can to be able to provide them a private school education like any other Turkish family wishes to do. However, we sent them to school because we were working very hard. We were assuming that there would not be any homework to be done and children would be very successful there; we did have such kind of an illusion. (S17)

The reasons that led the parents to transfer their children to HE.

The reasons that led the interviewed parents to remove their children from school and transfer to HE are shown in Figure 0-3.

Figure 0-3 The Reasons that Led the Parents to Transfer their Children to HE

School experiences of the children who transferred to HE	Other reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's preference • Problems about the national curriculum • Problems about teacher attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to a new place and no close institution that appeals to parent's educational interests • Taking this decision for a younger child of the family which led to the elder one's desire to be removed from school.

School experiences of the children who transferred to HE.

Children's preference.

The following extracts exemplify the difficulties encountered by interviewees with regard to their children's school experiences and which led them to transfer their children to HE:

Three interviewees mentioned that the 'no-outside' policy at schools was a problem for their children.

We planned for school when my child was at four years old. My child went to kindergarten for one week and all my thoughts about schools had changed... there was a garden and playground at the kindergarten; my child told us that they do not allow them to go and play there; they could only be inside the class and my child was saying it was not enough. My child started to talk at a very early age and can explain himself/herself very well. I am thankful that I have a child like that. If my child was not like that, we would not be aware of the situation. (S2)

Ten interviewees stated that their children did not like their schools, a view that was poignantly expressed by one mother as follows:

... that was very important in that sense, the children could not do what they wanted when they wanted. The day-care had a playground but they could not even play there once. They do not spend time outdoors; they are in a building and one room in that building. The children will meet their peers, they said at the beginning, but that was not the case. There were so many problems like that and we noticed that we try so hard to send them to school.... The way we had to interact with them there tired us so much so that maybe we went out of the city many times, travelled many places during the last year, my child was at school only a few times, kind of between going and not going. My child was in HE more times and happier at those times. We could plan for us to travel more during the summer vacation and even after then. And I noticed something, that living in outer world or maybe I should say, living outside such kind of a school mentality gives more to the child than a school can give. I wish we could socialise more in such a social environment. (S1)

The bad physical environment of the schools was mentioned by six interviewees as their concerns.

Not only in academic sense but because the child will be at school all day, with a teacher who has to deal with twenty students at the same time, without a parent who would understand the needs of the child just by looking, I was sending my child to school but getting distanced from school every day (S19)

Moreover, one parent mentioned her child did not want to go to school when he saw the school building.

My child did not go to school by his wish, in fact I wanted my child to go to school and leave school, based on his/her own wish after visiting the school. I knew that my child would not like the school anyway. At the beginning, he wanted very much to go to school. I also wanted him to see the school, I did not want my child to be affected by my talk or by the complaints of other children at the apartment about their homework. I wanted my child to experience the school atmosphere. After the first day, my child said, "there is no need to go to school, I got my books, I can study these at home as well" (HE-SCH-3). My child already knew how to read and write since last year. Although he was very interested at first, his idea changed as soon as he got in and out of the school for one day. The school that he

was registered in automatically had a small garden, with an L shaped big dark building. The directors of the school were not friendly. My child did not want to go there, I wanted him to go and have a look so that he does not think that we do not want him to go. (S3)

Problems about national curriculum and teacher attitudes.

The crushing course load of the national curriculum and homework were cited by thirteen interviewees.

The following extract epitomises some of the comments made:

I did not have the quest for HE for my child. I was not even aware of HE. Had I known I would not force my child during the first four years. Especially the first year was very hard, my son got very tired at school and tired me as well. The homework was compulsory and we were very stressed. As he was coming to the middle school years, we were thinking like we should never put him into such an environment, the examination stress would destroy the child, and we should take him out of the public school and find an alternative. While considering private schools we thought that we will be paying for the education and they will be pushing the children to be able to advertise with their success. While considering the alternatives we got totally away from the school system. (S7)

The extracts below reveal that, according to sixteen interviewees, the national curriculum and teacher attitudes contributed to their decision to transfer their children to HE.

...My child started to talk at a very early age and can explain himself/herself very well. I am thankful that I have a child like that. If my child was not like that, we would not be aware of the situation. When my child went to kindergarten, he/she did not use the word authoritarian but said that "the teacher looks very scary, he is shouting at us and I hide under the desk so that the teacher does not see me, he is aggressive, although I do not want to do drawing, he says that I should do". (HE-SCH-1) ... My child was saying "I am

speaking but they do not hear m; my teacher does not hear what I am saying". (HE-SCH-1) (S2)

...actually, we have experienced all the problems that people talk about when they get together and complain to each other I mean this excessive ambition, extreme focus on the success, comparing children with each other, not allowing the children to learn in their own pace, making them feel incompetent and inadequate. Therefore, when we sent our child to school (although it was only for a few months), we faced all the problems that people [in the OSNS group] experienced when they kept talking about problems they faced at school. (S30)

Other reasons.

A less frequent reason why parents opt for HE is moving to a new place and the lack of schools that appeal to the family's educational interests for their children; only one interviewee mentioned this situation:

... since I grew up in France, I did not have any stereotype or ideas against the Turkish education system. ... I preferred her to follow a familiar system [to her parent's own educational history]. ...There are French schools only in İstanbul and Ankara [They wanted to move to another city]. ...this year we heard from our friends and acquaintances about distance learning. I searched about it for months, close to one year how it can be done. ...Moving to the city (the city name was removed by researcher for ethical considerations) was too attractive that we could not resist and took that decision. (S23)

Only one child was removed from school at high school after attending school for all the previous stages (preschool, primary school, secondary-school). Although this instance is an exception, it is important to mention that the parents indicated that if they had known about HE earlier, they would have allowed their older child to quit school earlier, as their younger child did. The following extract summarises the decision process of that family:

I found the HE [social media group] group and joined afterwards while searching about the subject in social media after my daughter showed some reaction and did not want to go to kindergarten. ...after I met with the people from the HE group, I decided that it was possible and I took my daughter from school. ... my son asked why he went to school. I told him that he never reacted to school; we had a period to get used to school when he was going to kindergarten but he never said that he did not want to go or he was bored at school. ... my son was going to first year of high school, he said if there is an alternative for my daughter like this then I also want to go to open high school. He is following open high school for two years now. (S18)

1.4 Discussion

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the parents in this study had more sons than daughters receiving HE. Although boys are far more likely than girls to be reported (by teachers) as having adjustment problems at school; yet, in contrast, the parents in this research reported that they had far more concerns about their daughters than sons. Literature suggests that when boys are unhappy or bored at school they tend to externalise their emotions through their disturbing behaviours (Peterson, 1961). Moreover, boys are more likely to bring their problems home when they are unhappy at school (Duke, 1978). Consistently, as shown in Table 0-2, more boys than girls transfer to HE. However, this research does not allow any conclusions being reached about the role of gender parents' decision on home education, not only because there was a gender imbalance of the number of home educated children, but also none of the parents mentioned gender as a relevant factor for them to decide to home educate their children or not.

In terms of agreement between mother and father, as discussed in section 1.2.2 yukarıda, it was found that twelve of the parents made the decision to home educate their children together. Such joint agreement was not, however, the case for all the families as, at the time of the interviews, five fathers still did not agree with their wives about HE for their children.

It is important to mention that some interviewees regarded the woman as the parent responsible for the children's education. The finding is consistent with the gender roles that were discussed in section 1.2. As the following extracts indicate:

I think the mothers are in charge with the decision since they spend more time with their children and can determine their children's needs in more detail than the fathers. (S38)

Also, three of the parents mentioned that the fathers were concerned about the economics of HE:

My husband agrees with me but he does not think that it is possible; he thinks too much money is needed for that. ...Therefore, it is down to money for my husband and he has a point. I now think that we can register our child to open secondary school and we can continue the studies with extra private lessons and swimming courses. (S11)

We do not have an obsession to make them professors, we just want them to have qualified jobs, so as they do not try to make ends meet with a minimum wage as my husband says. Therefore, they should study at university, he says. (S22)

This concern may also result from the gender roles in Turkish society. Traditionally, men in Turkey are mainly responsible for the maintenance of the household and women are the ones who are mainly responsible for housework and raising children.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the curriculum and pedagogic approaches that the interviewed parents adopted for their children. As stated in Chapter 0 the broad aim and specific objectives in this chapter are:

To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.

(1) Where the approaches that a sample of Turkish home educating parents adopt for their children's education fell within the home education spectrum (unschooling, homeschooling, flexi-schooling)?

(2) Whether/How the pedagogic approaches of a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differed by the broadly.

The chapter also reports on whether or not the approaches of the three particular groups of parents noted below differed from those of the rest of other parents who were interviewed:

- the teacher-parents
- the parents who dropped out of school at some point of their life
- the parents who had religion-related educational and/or occupational backgrounds.

Interestingly, the Nvivo-assisted analyses of the data gathered through the interviews with the HE parents indicated that their different approaches to HE actually demonstrated many overlapping practices. As a result, the initial categorisation of HE types that had been used with the parents at the pre-interview stage needed to be reconsidered in light of the interview data. The problems that arose with the initially intended categorisation of the HE families according to the approaches they take are reported first, and then a new system is proposed which categorises approaches to HE, based on the interview findings.

The themes and subthemes that were retrieved from the Nvivo-assisted analyses are used to explore whether and how the curriculum, pedagogy, and resources differ in line with the different approaches of the HE parents.

1.2 Different Approaches to Home Education in Turkey

1.2.1 Problems in categorization

As explained in the section 1.1.3, I posted a message to the social media group's wall asking people who were willing to participate in the study to indicate their approach to HE. They were asked to choose just one of the following four options: deschooling, unschooling, homeschooling, and flexi-schooling. At that stage, seven of those who were later interviewed opted for homeschooling, nineteen for unschooling, and eighteen for flexi-schooling. At that stage, none of the 44 parents who agreed to be interviewed chose the deschooling option.

As the families had been asked at the pre-interview stage to select the option that they identified with most closely, I tried to match the initial choices they had made with the data gathered from their

interviews. However, matching the interview data with the interviewees' initial descriptor of their approaches to HE in their family proved problematic. Table 0-1 demonstrates, there was, first, a mismatch between the interviewees' perception of their approach to HE and my perception of that approach. Second, eleven interviewees' approaches could not be classified according to the study's initial four classifications, because their interview data revealed that those eleven families chose a different form of education for different children in the same family, these families are illustrated in Figure 0-1.

As an example, to the first point above, one interviewee claimed that her approach to HE is unschooling when she was asked at the pre-interview stage; however, the interview data demonstrated that her approach to HE is closer to homeschooling by including an apparent structure. The following extract summarises their approach:

I am [mother] the planner of home education. The programme we follow is designed in order to allow the children to gain life skills appropriate for their different stages of development. ...Teaching letters and numbers so that the children can write them freely on their notebooks to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Learning ten new words a day at least and using them in different sentences and contexts. Practicing calculus with visual and tangible tools to learn basic addition, subtraction. ...We plan the monthly programme including the activities, materials and books to be used. Moreover, for language teaching we study with English and Arabic alphabets and vocabulary. We make sure that there are visits with a learning purpose. (S43)

As an example, to the second point above; when the older child was removed from a school by the family because of the problems encountered there, the extended family got very concerned about the future of both children and with their pressure the younger child started to attend (primary) school after home educated in preschool years. The extended family did not want the parents to be affected by the adverse

experiences of the older child while deciding about the schooling of the younger one, as the following extract indicates:

Our son went to school once in a while, but the extended family does not accept that. They keep telling tragic stories like he will be very ignorant, will not be able to get a job and will be unhappy if he does not go to school. Slightly because of them and also with the promises given to him that they will buy this and that to motivate him, my son said OK and started to go to school. Now he is going once in a while but does not go if he does not want to. (S20)

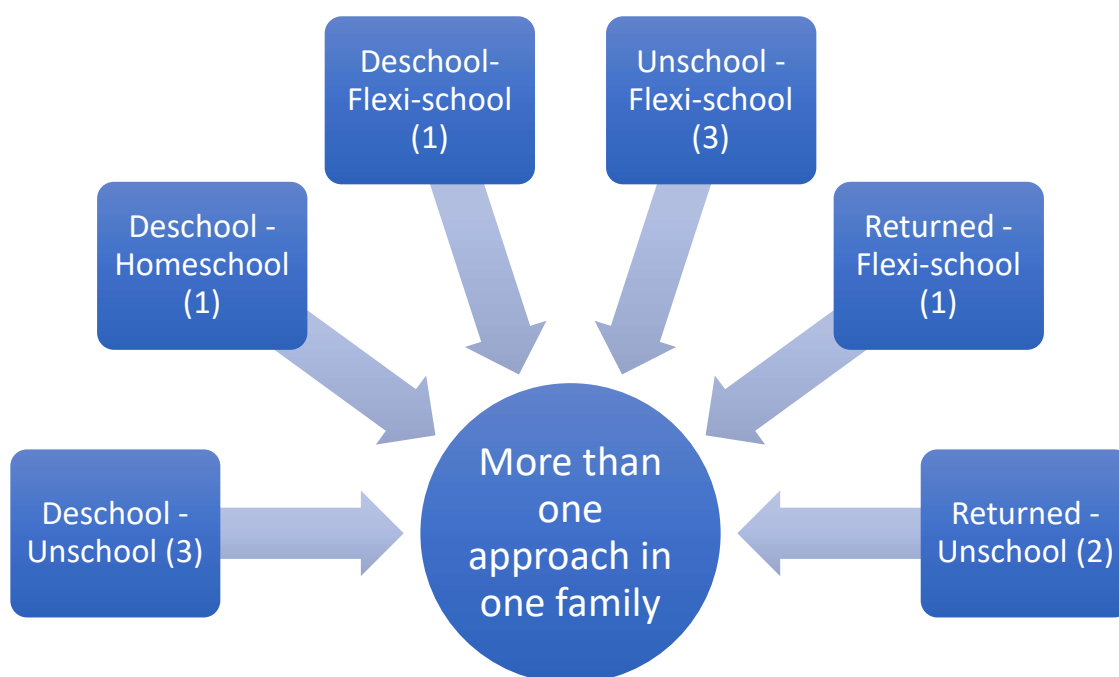
Table 0-1 Categorisation of the Families According to their Approach to HE

	<i>Unschooling</i>	<i>Homeschooling</i>	<i>Flexi- schooling</i>	<i>Deschooling</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>What the families thought their approach was</i>	14	6	13	0	33
<i>What I thought their approach was</i>	8	11	12	2	
<i>Mixed –approach in same family</i>					11
					44

Mixed approach families

The various approaches that the eleven mixed-approach families took to educating their children are shown in Figure 0-1.

Figure 0-1 Mixed-approach Families.



These mixed-approach families were either:

- Families who had had to deschool their older children. The problems that led them to remove their older children from school then led them to home educate their younger children. Or:

- Families whose older children were flexi-schooled or returned to school, while the younger children were home educated.

The only exception to the above groups was a family that decided to transfer their three children to school, because the mother was thinking about returning to work and thought she would not have enough time to home educate her three children. However, one of the children had a lot of problems with adapting to school and so that child was transferred to flexi-schooling. The following extract explains the situation:

The first two weeks we had major difficulties, we still face some problems with the third child. Therefore, we reduced the number of school days. That is why she is going to school three days a week, rather than five. Our two older kids had difficulties too, but after talking to their teachers and the head teacher ... things got better and easier for them at school.
(S37)

Uncovering the mixed-approach families led me to reconsider the way in which I had initially categorised the interviewees. In the analysis period of the thesis, a second approach to categorisation was, therefore, established, as it became clear that it was more logical to categorise the HE children of the interviewed parents rather than to categorise the parents themselves.

Categorization of children by their parent's approach to HE

As indicated in section 1.2.1, the 44 interviewees had 70 HE children between them, Table 0-2 provides an overview of the data by bringing together the descriptors for HE approaches, the child's gender, the stage of the child's education, and the age of the child. The six children who were home educated in the past and then transferred to school full-time are marked as 'returned to school' in the Table.

It is important to note that, the data on the descriptors for HE approaches of interviewees in subsequent tables are based on my interpretation of interview data about their approach with each child. They are not based on what the interviewees claimed during the pre-interview phase when they were asked which approach they felt closer to (see 1.1.4 for more information).

Table 0-2 Categorisation of the HE Children by Age Group, Gender, and their Parents' Choice of Approach to their Schooling

	<i>Pre-school</i>			<i>Primary School</i>			<i>Middle/High School</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>Homeschooling</i>	1	7	8	5	3	8	0	0	0	16
<i>Unschooling</i>	6	9	15	3	3	6	0	0	0	21
<i>Deschooling</i>	0	1	1	1	2	3	0	3	3	7
<i>Flexi-school</i>	3	4	7	3	8	11	2	0	2	20
<i>Returned to school</i>	0	0	0	2	3	5	1	0	1	6
<i>TOTAL</i>	10	21	31	14	19	33	3	3	6	70

It was argued previously in section 1.2.3 that the legal situation in Turkey causes many parents to think that HE is mainly suitable in early childhood. The data in Table 0-2 supports that finding, as the views of the families tended to shift from house-or family- based approaches to flexi-schooling as the age of the child considered for HE rises. While a total of 23 children were being unschooled and homeschooled in the preschool age group, the number decreased to fourteen for children of primary school age. Seven children were being flexi-schooled at the preschool age; that number increased to eleven for those of primary school age, and five children transferred to school after being homeschooled at the preschool age.

At the middle and high school ages only three of the children who were currently being home educated were removed from school and two were being flexi-schooled. Flexi-schooling in middle and high school is very rare because of the legal situation; in contrast to primary school, where part-time-schooling can be tolerated by the authorities, part-time-schooling is more difficult in middle school.

Gender of the HE children in each HE approaches

As indicated in the previous chapter there was no point in comparing and discussing the gender of the HE children of the interviewees, first, because the interviewed parents had more sons than daughters, and, secondly, because there was no indication in the interview data that gender was a factor in the parents' decisions to HE. In Table 0-3, parents' approaches to HE by their children's gender are presented. The data indicated similar findings, that is, the approach to HE did not show a remarkable difference between genders, except in the case of deschooling.

Table 0-3 Parents' Approaches to HE, by their Children's Gender

	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Homeschooling</i>	6	10	16
<i>Unschooling</i>	9	12	21
<i>Deschooling</i>	1	6	7
<i>Flexi-school</i>	8	12	20
<i>Returned to school</i>	3	3	6
<i>TOTAL</i>	27	43	70

As shown in Table 0-2 more boys than girls transferred to HE. It was argued that the boys were more likely than the girls to externalise their emotions and bring home their problems about their negative experiences about school. The finding is consistent with the previous discussion that there are more deschooling boys than girls.

The teacher parents' approach to their children's HE

As already mentioned, the study sample contained 21 teacher-parents: sixteen mothers and five fathers. Three of the teacher fathers' spouses were also teachers. The 21 teacher-parents had 25 HE children between them and Table 0-4 indicates the approach the teacher-parents took to the HE of their children.

Table 0-4 Choice of HE Approach by Parents who were Teachers.

	<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Middle/High School</i>	<i>N:25</i>
<i>Homeschooling</i>	2	1	0	3
<i>Unschooling</i>	6	1	0	7
<i>Deschooling</i>	1	3	0	4
<i>Flexi-school</i>	2	5	1	8
<i>Returned to school</i>	0	2	1	3
<i>TOTAL</i>	11	12	2	25

The table above reveals that, although the approaches of the interviewed parents who dropped out of school did not differ substantially from those of the other parents, the numbers of children in the unschooling category are slightly higher than they are for the other groups. It may be concluded that the

parents in this sample who had dropped out of school themselves slightly tended to adopt a less structured approach to their children's education.

The approach for the HE children whose parents dropped out of school at some point of their life

As noted in section 1.2.4 and Table 0-5, there were twelve parents (ten mothers and two fathers) in the study sample who had dropped out of school at some stage. These twelve parents had seventeen HE children between them; Table 0-5 indicates the HE approaches that these parents took to their children's education.

Table 0-5 Choice of HE Approaches by Parents who Dropped out of School

	<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Middle/High School</i>	<i>N:17</i>
<i>Homeschooling</i>	1	3	0	4
<i>Unschooling</i>	2	4	0	6
<i>Deschooling</i>	0	1	1	2
<i>Flexi-school</i>	1	2	0	3
<i>Returned</i>	0	2	0	2
<i>TOTAL</i>	4	12	1	17

The table above reveals that, although the approaches of the interviewed parents who dropped out of school did not differ significantly from those of the other parents, the numbers of children in the unschooling category are slightly higher than they are for the other parent groups. It may be concluded

that the parents who dropped out of school themselves tended to adopt a less structured approach to their children's education.

The home educated parents' approach to their children's HE

As noted in section 1.2.4 and Table 0-6, five parents had been home educated themselves. These five parents had nine HE children; Table 0-6 indicates these parents' approach to HE for their children's education.

Table 0-6 Choice of HE Approaches by Parents who were home educated

	<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Middle/High School</i>	<i>N: 9</i>
<i>Homeschooling</i>	2	2	0	4
<i>Unschooling</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>Deschooling</i>	0	0	1	1
<i>Flexi-school</i>	1	2	0	3
<i>Returned</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>TOTAL</i>	3	5	1	9

Although slightly more children were being home educated by their home-educated parents through the homeschooling approach, the sample size (N = 9) is very small and so it would not be justified to reach any tentative conclusions arguments from it.

The choice of approaches for the HE children whose parents have a religion-related educational and/or occupational background

As noted in Chapter 0 (p. 176) eleven parents in the study sample had a religion-related educational and/or occupational background. These eleven parents had nineteen HE children between them and Table 0-7 indicates the approach these parents took to their children's HE.

Table 0-7 HE Approaches chosen by parents that have a religion-related educational and/or occupational background

	<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Middle/High School</i>	<i>N: 19</i>
<i>Homeschooling</i>	1	1	0	2
<i>Unschooling</i>	4	4	0	8
<i>Deschooling</i>	0	1	2	3
<i>Flexi-school</i>	1	2	0	3
<i>Returned</i>	0	2	1	3
<i>TOTAL</i>	6	10	3	19

The table above reveals that there were more children following the unschooling approach. This could be seen as limited evidence that the parents who had a religion-related educational and/or occupational background may have tended to adopt a less structured approach to HE.

The data on the six children who had attended preschool and then transferred to HE is provided in Table 0-8 and the data on the eight children who had attended primary school and then transferred to HE is given in Table 0-9.

Table 0-8 The Children who Attended Preschool Stage of School and Transferred to HE

Current Level of the HE child	Approach to HE	Subject
Pre-school	Deschooling	S1
Primary school	Deschooling	S2
Primary school	Unschooling	S3
Primary school	Homeschooling	S18
Primary school	Homeschooling	S19
Primary school	Deschooling	S20

Table 0-9 The Children who Attended Primary-School and transferred to HE

Current Level of the HE child	Approach to HE	Subject
Primary school	Homeschooling	S6
Secondary school	Deschooling	S7
Primary school	Deschooling	S11
Primary school	Homeschooling	S17
Primary school	Homeschooling	S17
Primary school	Homeschooling	S23
Primary school	Deschooling	S24
Primary school	Homeschooling	S30

Although Table 0-8 and Table 0-9 contain information on the fourteen children who experienced school and then transferred to HE because of the problems they encountered at school, I did not classify all families as deschooling families, because eight interviewees did not mention any on-going effects arising from their children's school experiences.

In addition, although one boy had attended all the earlier stages of school before transferring to HE at the high school level (see section 1.3.4) he was also excluded from Table 0-8 and Table 0-9 because he was the only student at the high school stage of schooling in my sample. He had finished secondary school and was going into the first year of high school when he transferred to HE. This boy was not taken out of school

because he was experiencing problems there, but because he wanted transfer to an open high school after seeing that his younger sister had dropped out of school and started HE.

The younger child of the same family was at primary school level when she had problems at school and dropped out. Interestingly she was not being deschooled at the time of the interviews, but her older-brother was. The family was a member of Earth School, an alternative education initiative in Turkey that was mentioned in 1.5.3. The younger child was attending the initiative's workshops and was wanting to do educational activities at home; the older-brother, however, did not want to do anything. His attitude towards education created tension between him and his parents, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The following extract summarises this family's approach for their children:

We have been attending workshops regularly with my daughter since last year. She did not have any inclination to refuse to go to workshops since she stopped going to school. We have a group of HE parents; now we organise workshops for our children. We are designing the workshops to be more educational, while last year they were mainly game-oriented. We are trying to do a science experiment every week, for example, but since every family has two-three children each from different ages, it is different to set up a system that would fit all. ...My son does not want to do anything about school; our extended family started to accuse us, saying that he will not be able to study university and get a profession. We also get worried as his parents and try to force him to study but he refuses to do anything at all. (S18)

The other children represented in Table 0-8 and Table 0-9 were, and still are, in the deschooling stage where the parents try to make their children forget about such problems.

...my child was saying, for example, "there was soup at the meal, I did not want to eat but I felt like I had to" (HE-PRE-1). When he felt the pressure, like "your friends are all eating and you better eat as well", he threw up after eating because of that pressure. Now he is still

unwilling to eat soup because of that adverse experience. ...we are feeling the peace of mind that there is no school tomorrow, both myself and my child. (S1)

The extract reveals that the regimes imposed in some schools affected not only the children's attitude towards learning, but towards other basic activities like meal times.

The deschooling approach is simply the removing of the child from school because of a problem and leaving it up to the child to decide when to start learning again. Deschooling is very close to the unschooling approach where the child decides the curriculum. Seeing that the deschooling and unschooling approaches were actually not that different in practice, I decided to adopt a new way of expressing these different approaches. The next section first explains the proposed categorisation and then its implications.

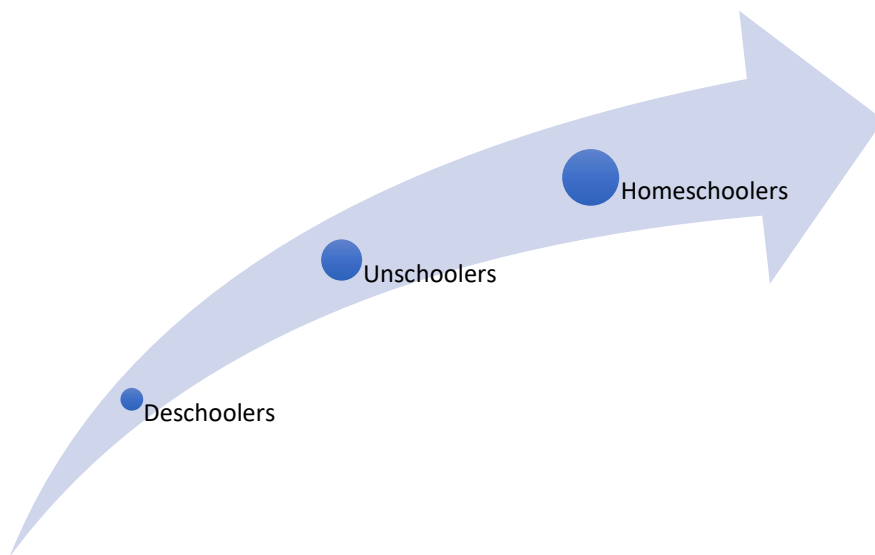
1.3 HE Continuum

The first categorisation of the HE approaches was arrived at through consideration of the structure of each approach. However, upon discovering that some of the approaches overlapped, it became clear during the analysis phase that the original categorisation was too restrictive and, therefore, did not offer the best way to describe the parents' approaches to HE. As a result, the approaches were reconceptualised as a continuum at that point in the analysis of the data. Figure 0-2 illustrates the new proposed model.

One extreme on the proposed continuum is the deschoolers who do nothing about education consciously, but, rather, put their emphasis on hoping that the child will overcome the trauma of schooling.

Unschoolers do not claim that they do nothing about education; instead they claim that no structure is involved in their approach. However, the unschooling approach is not completely unstructured. While the parents do not provide a formal education, they do consciously engage in educational activities. The homeschoolers are conscious of the fact that they do follow a defined curriculum, whereas the unschoolers are probably unaware of how much structure they include. The third element in the figure's continuum, homeschooling, follows a much more structured form of HE.

Figure 0-2 The HE Continuum

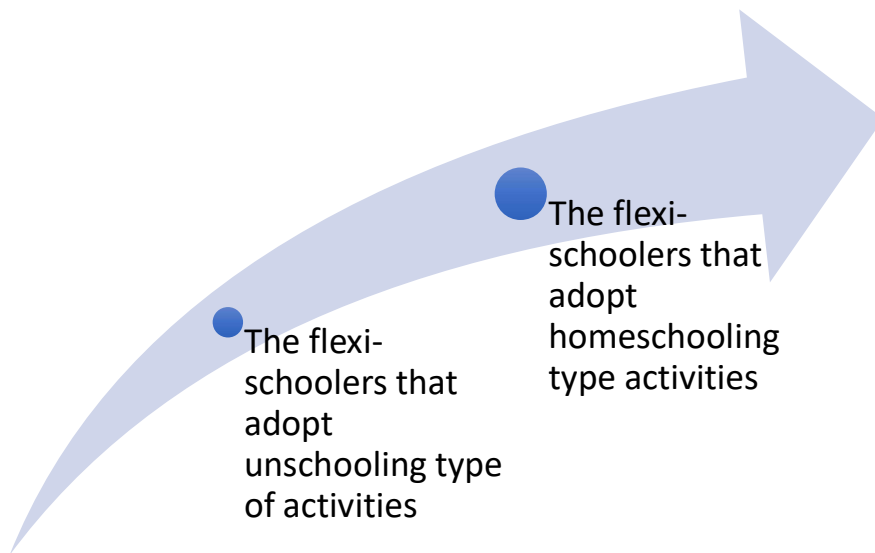


Flexi-schoolers are exempted from the continuum illustrated in Figure 0-2, because, while the flexi-schooling children's learning is partly at school and partly at home, their learning activities at home range from unschooling types of activities to homeschooling types of activities.

While some flexi-schooling families said that they engaged in activities to entertain their children at home, since academic learning had been taking place at school, others mentioned that they went through what was taught at school and did experiments at home to support school education as a way of flexi-schooling.

Whether the HE for each approach complemented the children's education in school or not is covered in section 1.3.4 of this chapter.

Figure 0-3 The flexi-schooling Continuum



1.3.1 Deschooling

This section reports what the deschooling children's families said about overcoming negative school experiences. They explained what they did, what they did not do, and their pedagogic approaches.

As already indicated, there were seven deschooling children in the sample.

All the deschooling children's families indicated that, when they were removed from school, the children had stopped doing what they had been doing before going to school. The following extracts highlight the similarities in the situation for both younger children (preschool-aged) and those who were older.

.... I can say that before my son started day-care, between the ages of two to three, we had an activity-oriented approach at home; it was exactly like a homeschool. We were doing what would be done at a school, or even more than that, but at home. As soon as he started to go to day-care, his interest in such activities diminished ...He does not want to do any of the activities we used to do before. (S1)

My son went to school until fourth grade without any problems. We had to change the school since we moved to a different place and my son started to have many problems with his teacher. He used to read a lot of books and learn with passion but since he dropped out of school, he does not want to read anything. Only when his younger brother asks something that he knows, he answers his brother but they are interested in different subjects, in fact. We are not forcing him to read books and learn something either. (S7)

Parents believed that forcing children to do something that they did not want to do later on caused them to reject activities that other children in their age group are expected to do. The following extract conveys one parent's thoughts about this issue:

There were books given by the school that he was using at school. When I am checking those books, he also opens one, but, for example, there is a development level that is expected from his age group, called painting within boundaries. My son never wanted to do that. ...maybe because he was forced to do that at school and that caused a negative perception towards that activity. (S1)

Although the deschooling parents indicated that they were not purposely doing something educational, they did still believe that their children were learning through the daily activities in which they were involved. One interviewee made that point when she said:

On the one hand, we do not do anything at all in terms of education and, on the other hand, education occurs naturally during daily life. For example, we discovered that my daughter can count in twos; she was not even aware that she could; she was surprised. (S7)

According to the families of deschooling children, deschooling does not involve any curriculum. However, when the interviewees were asked what they did in a regular day, they answered by naming particular activities. The families might be unaware of it but, they did, in fact, make decisions. The activities that the deschooling children's parents enumerated during the interviews are presented in Figure 0-4 and are followed by illustrative examples taken from the interviews.

Deschooling children's parents try to overcome the negative school experiences of their children by giving weight to fun-related activities instead of academic ones.

She can draw very well and likes to draw pictures about the fairy tales. I think she even can pursue a drawing career; anyhow one does not need to go to school for that. (S20)

Figure 0-4 The Deschooling Curriculum



One of the deschooling children was taking private courses that appealed to his interests, for example, swimming, playing football etc. His mother said that they were planning to hire private teachers when they felt their son was ready to learn and to register their son in an open high school when he turned fourteen.

All the interviewees of deschooling children mentioned free playing while explaining what they did at home in a regular day. They also valued free play because it strengthened the relationship between the siblings and helped the children's imagination.

Three of the deschooling children's parents indicated their children were overcoming the perceived trauma caused by school by doing activities that appealed to their interests, for example, learning carpet weaving or watching videos to learn origami. One interviewee summarised their deschooling phase as follows:

Before my child started to go to school, we used to go out or read books, but after he dropped out of school, he started to expect us to sit down and play together. If I am unable to do that, he immediately goes to watch TV. He did not start to read books as yet, but we are buying magazines; he likes to go through them and sometimes does the experiments explained in the magazines. (S24)

Three interviewees who had deschooling children indicated that their children were participating in daily life activities like housework and shopping. Also, three deschooling parents mentioned they went out whenever possible. The following extracts illustrate their approach:

There are all sorts of natural beauties like the mountains and sea around where we live. There are not any historical places but pure nature. We go out regularly to discover and appreciate the beauty of nature. We even learned about what plants grow where and in which season. My children learned to swim in the sea without taking any lessons. (S2)

Three interviewees indicated their deschooling children liked physical activities, not necessarily because of their negative experiences at school, but as part of their natural development. One interviewee said:

He became a physical activity-oriented child as he grew up to the age of four. He wanted to run around, ride a bicycle, climb, play with the cat at home. (S1)

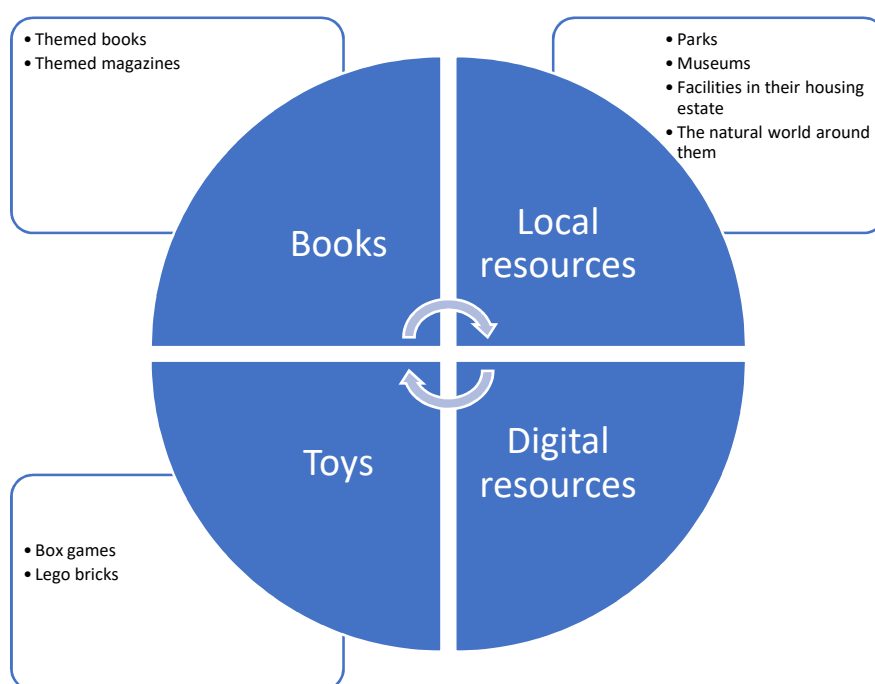
Two of the deschooling interviewees indicated that their children began to reject their parent's assessment of their development after they had been removed from school. The following extract indicates the comments made:

Whenever I tried to teach something or whenever I tried to test his learning level he resisted, reacted and did not want to answer me. For example, my son does adding and subtracting in daily life, but when I ask him to do so he is getting angry and telling me not to ask such questions. (S2)

Resources

The resources that deschooling children's families indicated they had been using for their children are represented in Figure 0-5.

Figure 0-5 Deschooling Resources



Four of the deschooling children's parents mentioned books and themed magazines as their resources; however, it is important to point out that all four indicated that their children read only those books that appealed to their interests. In the main, after starting deschooling the child engaged with one subject at a time for a while. One interviewee summarised the comments made:

Before he started the preschool, I had bought the preschool activity books; we used to follow them together at home, now he is not interested. He likes to read books, but reads in the subjects that he is interested in like space. He chooses the books himself. Sometimes I buy books that are suggested for his age group; he does not read them. Instead, he prefers to read the books he likes again and again. (S24)

As mentioned earlier, three of the deschooling parents indicated that they liked to have time outside and to use the local resources. The previous extracts from S2 and S3 revealed that the natural world that surrounds them was a great resource and another interviewee explained how she used local resources:

We travel by bus and trams; they learn the names of stops. There is a botanical garden here; they spend time there. There is a swimming pool in our housing estate. We try to spend more time outdoors doing physical activities. (S1)

Although all the deschooling families mentioned free playing, two of them mentioned Lego bricks especially and one of them said that they all played board games together as a family.

Four of the deschooling families mentioned digital resources off their own bat before I asked whether and how they used digital resources. (The data and findings on the families' use of digital materials is presented in the next chapter).

1.3.2 Unschooling

This section reports on what the parents of unschooling children said about their pedagogic approaches, the resources they used, and the curriculum they applied. As indicated in Table 0-2, the interviewees had 21 unschooling students in all. Fifteen were preschool-aged and six were at the primary school level. The parents of unschooling children claimed that it was the children themselves, and not their parents, who were the decision makers about the child's education. However, the parents did, in fact, provide stimuli, opportunities, and resources. The following extract encapsulates the unschooling parents' comments about their approach:

There is not a certain structure or curriculum to learn for us. The child determines the process and progress of learning. When the child shows interest to learn how to read and write, without waiting for the child to go to school, we are trying to help him to learn how to read and write, to the extent of the level of the child's willingness. This approach applies to the other subjects; we try to allow the child to think further while doing basic calculations with the fruit around. This way learning emerges and develops naturally. (S26)

Although the unschooling families saw their approach and curriculum as child-centred, they did, in fact, provide stimuli, opportunities, and resources. Only two of them said that they did not motivate or lead their children into something. Most of them mentioned or implied during the interview that they provided stimuli to see whether their children were ready to learn a specific thing or whether they were interested in a topic. One interviewee illustrated that approach when she said:

I think firstly the child should demand the knowledge that he is interested in and then that knowledge should be given to the child. However, to be able to demand something, he needs to be aware of it first. Therefore, the family can let the child get interested in something, for example, by keeping some books or the alphabet or any other tool to bring out the attention naturally. If my child gets interested in something after browsing and discovering some things, only then I give information about what he asks about. (S9)

The activities that the unschooling children's parents mentioned during the interviews as being covering in their daily routine are represented in Figure 0-6. As already noted in this chapter, the reason for proposing the HE continuum was based on the finding that the boundaries between the HE approaches were not as strict as had been thought before the data analysis. The fluidity between the various forms of HE becomes more apparent when the data in Figure 0-4 and Figure 0-6 is compared. As the comparison reveals, all of the activities that are included in the deschooling curriculum also form part of the unschooling curriculum.

Figure 0-6 The Unschooling Curriculum



The unschooling families valued encouraging their children to participate in their daily activities and free play. One interviewee highlighted this as:

We started to build a house in our land; it is not finished completely but we've moved in already. We are trying farming and beekeeping at the same time. Our daughter is growing up in this environment with us. We do not teach her any academic subject but she is learning a lot of things in fact. I have a graduate degree but I did not know anything about beekeeping; she learned that at the age of five. (S36)

Two unschooling children were attending private courses. One interviewee saw these courses as also very important for her child's socialisation. She expressed her thoughts as follows:

Since she is interested in music, she joined a choir. I think it is important for her to share an environment with like-minded peers, who all share the same interest, and continue an ongoing social relationship year after year within that chorus. I want her to experience that social bond with her friends from the chorus. Such an experience would not be possible in a school classroom where all pupils might have different interests. (S31)

Interestingly the same interviewee pointed out that some private courses were treated as kindergartens for older children, that is, just as somewhere for children to spend their after-school time while their parents were working. The following extract summarises her observations about her daughter and her daughter's friends at a private course:

The other children go to the private course to spend time until their mothers finish working and come to pick them up. They see the classes at school the same way, just to memorise what they learned till their performance, just like memorising something just to pass the exam. However, it is not the case for my daughter. She does not have to go there; she goes willingly by her own choice to pursue her own interest and she tries to gain something from there. (S31)

Some families' approaches lie somewhere between unschooling and homeschooling on the HE continuum. For example, although one interviewee defined her approach as unschooling and I also defined her approach unschooling, the interviewee indicated that her approach is changeable according to her child's interest. She explained their situation:

We do not have a routine. Sometimes we do not do anything in terms of education for weeks. There are always materials for activities at home but there are times when my son is not interested at all. There are times when he wants to do activities or experiments continuously every day. Then suddenly he becomes unwilling to do anything of that sort. I do not force him to do anything until his interest comes back. (S39)

Five interviewees who had unschooling children indicated that they held local group meetings on either a regular or irregular basis. Two of them indicated that they had been meeting simply to allow their children to engage in free play and socialise while their mothers could have a chance to socialise with parents who had similar educational values. Three mothers mentioned that they held regular meetings and workshops for their children and that these meeting days included a semi-structured curriculum. However, they also said that they did nothing structured on the other days of a week when they did not meet with their local group.

For one day of the week we arranged a place that we can all fit in to do activities altogether. Some days there is only free playing; we do not introduce anything else to the kids that time. Sometimes we prepare different activity corners. They choose where to play, either individually or in a group. They can do experiments together; some of them can do sewing. There are short workshops like English speaking practise which is like a game; kids can join that as well. Some of our kids are sometimes not interested in any of these activities; they do something else by themselves. One day of a week passes like that. There is a forest day for sure every week. We go to the same place usually; our children play freely there, sometimes one of the fathers shows them how to light a fire; sometimes they play rope pulling. We do not plan the forest days; activities are done spontaneously, in the most enjoyable way they can find. (S3)

Spontaneous activities were mentioned by two of the unschooling children's parents. They indicated that sometimes they had done activities that neither the parents nor the children had planned ahead. Instead, something had led to an unplanned activity and this activity had led the children to learn something.

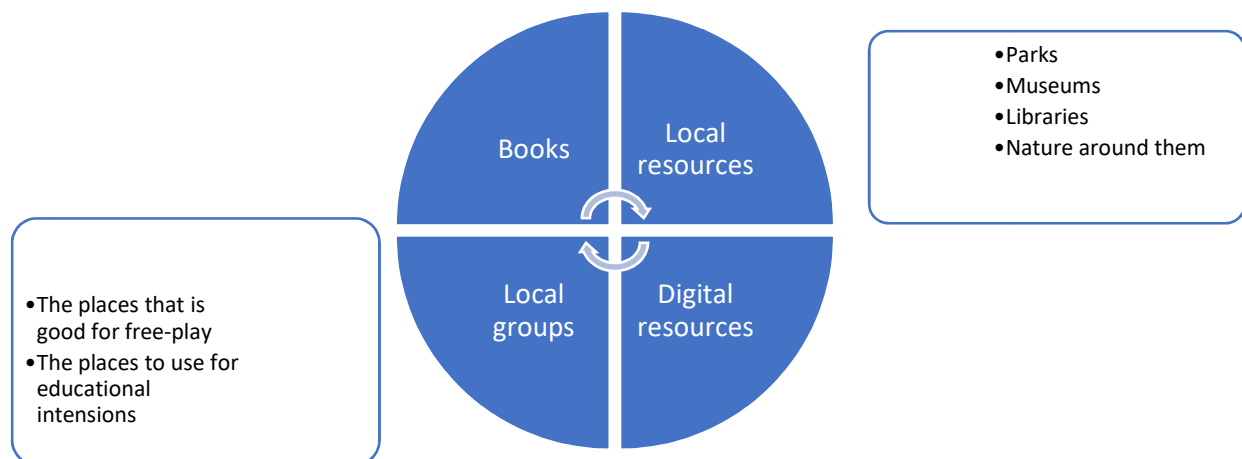
Our activities are decided spontaneously. I stop doing whatever I am doing and leave the decision to my children to pick what to do. We are like three people at home; our age difference does not matter there. We start doing something together, usually inspired by

music and then dance; we stop talking and start to entertain together and our activities emerge from there. (S21)

Resources

The resources that unschooling children's families indicated they had been using with their children are represented in Figure 0-7.

Figure 0-7 Unschooling Resources



The situation pertaining to the curriculum is the same as that for the resources that these two groups of parents draw upon. Because the curriculum is very similar for these two approaches, i.e., deschooling and unschooling approaches, the resources that the families in each category use with their children are almost identical. The only difference is that the unschooling families held local group meetings and they used some places as local resources.

Moreover, all the unschooling families indicated that they use books (where four out of seven deschooling families mentioned books) and 15 of them mentioned going to libraries regularly (none of the deschooling families mentioned libraries).

1.3.3 Homeschooling

This section reports on what was said by the parents of homeschooling children about their pedagogic approaches, the resources they use, and the curriculum they applied.

As shown in Table 0-2, there were sixteen homeschooling students. Eight were preschoolers and eight were at the primary school level. The pedagogic approaches of the homeschooling children's parents were more structured than those followed by the deschooling and unschooling groups in terms of approaches to HE. As explained earlier, I categorised the children according to the structure involved in their family's approach. The homeschooling children's families either indicated that they had a curriculum or they implied during the interviews that they had one. The institutional homeschoolers lie at the end of the homeschooling HE continuum. The approach they take is the most structured one because these children are registered with a distance education institution that provides a curriculum to follow, assesses the children on the basis of the curriculum, and certifies the children with a diploma. Only two of the families had institutional homeschooling experience.

One of those homeschooling children was registered to a distance education institution in France at the time of interview. The family had been using the curriculum that the institution provided. The interviewee indicated that the curriculum was the main factor in choosing that specific institution from amongst the other (French) government-approved private institutions. This mother looked at the curriculum for each distance learning school and found the one most applicable for her family. She said that she and her child

usually followed a daily 'school at home' schedule, which means the family had a defined programme that both the child and parent understood. Although it might not be like a school programme, there was a recognisable programme. The interviewee did, however, indicate that she and her child were open to bending the programme for casual vacations or joining an attractive event. The following extract summarises her comments about their curriculum:

We get up 8-9 am; we have a long and nice breakfast. After breakfast, she has free time till 1 pm. At that time, we study mathematics or French (changes day by day) for one hour, then she eats her lunch and we study two more hours. Sometimes she wants to study outside, we go to nearby woods. ...The institute (that we are enrolled with) send us a weekly programme which is designed for four days a week; it is a suggestion. We cover the educational attainments within the week but we decide when to study according to our daily schedule. For example, if we want to go to the cinema on Tuesday, we don't postpone the event, we just postpone studying. (S23)

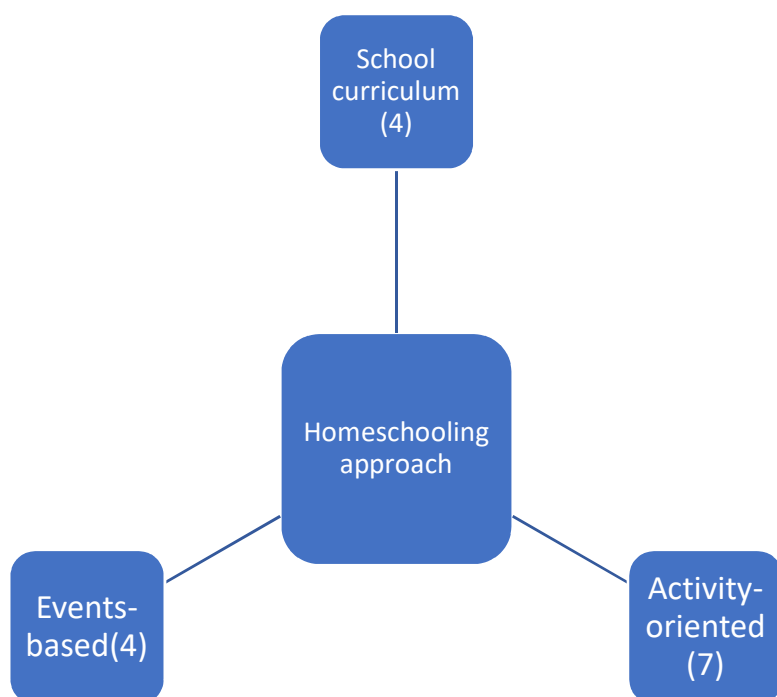
Another dual-citizen family had three children who had been registered with a distance learning institution a year before the interviews. However, that family decided to transfer their children to school after one year of distance learning. The interviewee said that the education systems of Turkey and Sri Lanka were very different and, therefore, their children had problems adjusting to school in Turkey. The difference between the systems was not, however, mentioned as a reason for transferring the children into school.

Homeschoolers' approach to HE

Homeschooling children's parents mentioned that they planned their children's curriculum on the basis of either the national curriculum, or activities that were suggested for their children's age group, or on local resources and activities. The only child who was registered with the French online school was excluded as the family had decided to use the resources provided in its curriculum. Figure 0-8 represents the data

provided by the interviewees; illustrative examples of each of the HE approaches in the figure are then provided under each respective subheading.

Figure 0-8 Homeschoolers' Approach



The families that follows the national curriculum

In addition to the child who was being homeschooled via the curriculum provided by the French institution with which she was enrolled, four of the interviewed homeschooling parents mentioned that they followed Turkey's national school curriculum at home. Two of these families had a structured daily schedule at home. The following extracts illustrate their approach:

We teach the school curriculum to our children with games, drawing, and activities. Every day we read books for two hours and play games about mathematics for sure. We do not

have a break at the weekends because we want them to learn that learning is not something that is enforced on us but it is rather an ongoing natural part of our daily lives.
(S17)

He is not going to school but he is registered within a school. We take the daily homework tasks from other children in his class and we teach him by making him do this homework.
(S1)

Two interviewees mentioned that they checked the national curriculum every year in order to have an idea what to cover for their children's HE, but they did not have a strict schedule. The next extracts indicate some of the comments made by the parents:

I examined the school curriculum both the private and the public schools' [curriculum]. I guide my children according to learning outcomes of their age group. (S42)

Because my daughter is registered with a government school, the school books are provided by the government at the beginning of every academic year. We cover the curriculum in those books but do not exert a strict schedule for her. She is able to read all books for that given year by reading when she wants, on average for two hours per day. So, it is fair to say that the time spent in the school is unnecessarily long for children, considering that a child can easily cover all those subjects by reading the books for two hours a day at most. (S30)

The families that have an activity-oriented approach

The homeschooling parents of, in particular, preschool-aged children indicated that they had an activity-oriented approach to their children's education. Six of them mentioned popular social media accounts they obtained activity ideas from. The following extract was typical of the comments made:

I am a member of a social media group where people share the Montessori activities for one-four year-olds. We do these activities with my son. It is like trying to teach the kid with play-like activities. I feel myself closer to the Montessori approach rather than HE, which is more like not interfering with the child and not teaching anything, from my point of view.
(S27)

Three of the homeschoolers mentioned that their activity-oriented approach had evolved into more subject-specific activities and that their approach was based on the changing interests of their children as they grew up. One interviewee who was a computer teacher herself indicated that while she had been doing various activities with her daughter, she realised that her child was interested in robotics and that she led her into programming. At the time when the interviews were conducted, the girl had a social media group herself where she shared her educational videos with other children who were interested in programming and robotics. Her mother's comments were:

While doing different activities with my daughter, I noticed that she is more interested in the technology-related ones. I started to teach her coding and robotics. Since then she just wants to learn only these subjects. There is a group where she shares what she learned and practises it. Through this she gets the chance to meet and interact with like-minded children. (S19)

The families that have events-based approach

Four homeschooling interviewees indicated that they had a local group which got together twice a week to home educate their children. The group enabled the children to do activities, attend workshops, engage in events together, and to socialise. The following extracts sum up the comments of these parents:

We are organising activities with the children; moreover, we go to institutions that organise hourly activities for kids. There is a play group that we go to with my son. We are not professional or experts in this field but we are trying to enhance our abilities in this subject as much as we can. (S27)

We are doing science experiments with the children. Sometimes we ask them what they would like us to do this week. We are trying to set a more structured way this year. We are looking for activities and events suitable for the children and we go there together. (S18)

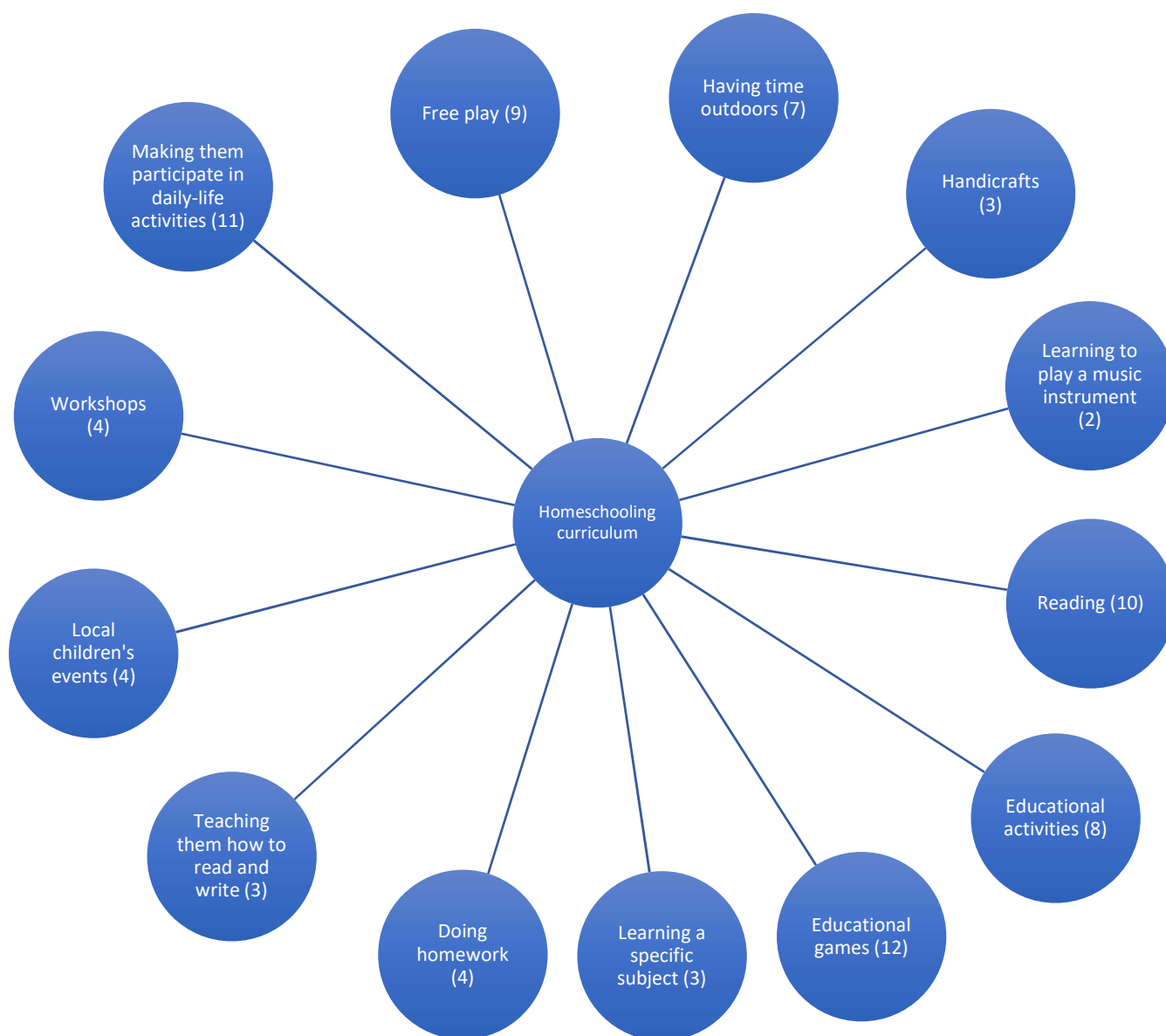
Curriculum

The activities that the homeschooling children's parents mentioned they covered in their daily routine are presented in Figure 0-9.

The homeschooler interviewees mentioned a wide range of activities. The following extract is representative of the activities that the HE parents used in addition to those already noted yukarıda.

To teach reading and writing, I allow my child to write freely on his notebook after teaching the letters and numbers. I try to teach at least ten new words a day, so that he can practise using them in different sentences. For basic calculation skills, we practise with physical materials the basic calculations like addition, subtraction. In order to develop a sensitivity towards the environment, we set up a mini nature museum for each child so that they develop an empathy towards other living things. They are learning to play an instrument of their choice. (S43)

Figure 0-9 Homeschooling Curriculum.



Assessment

With two exceptions, all the interviewed homeschooling children's families mentioned that they assessed their children's development by asking them questions occasionally or getting them to do something they had learned to do previously. One interviewee mentioned that when she questioned her child in an

attempt to assess his development, he became unhappy. She, therefore, ceased doing that; however, she observed her child and mentally compared him to other children in the same age group. One interviewee said that she did not assess her children's development when she was asked about learning outcomes. Nonetheless, when she was asked whether the children are happy with HE, she implied that she did, in fact, assess them. Her comments are provided below:

I don't compare her with her age group ... I don't do anything to motivate them in order for them to gain a certain skill.

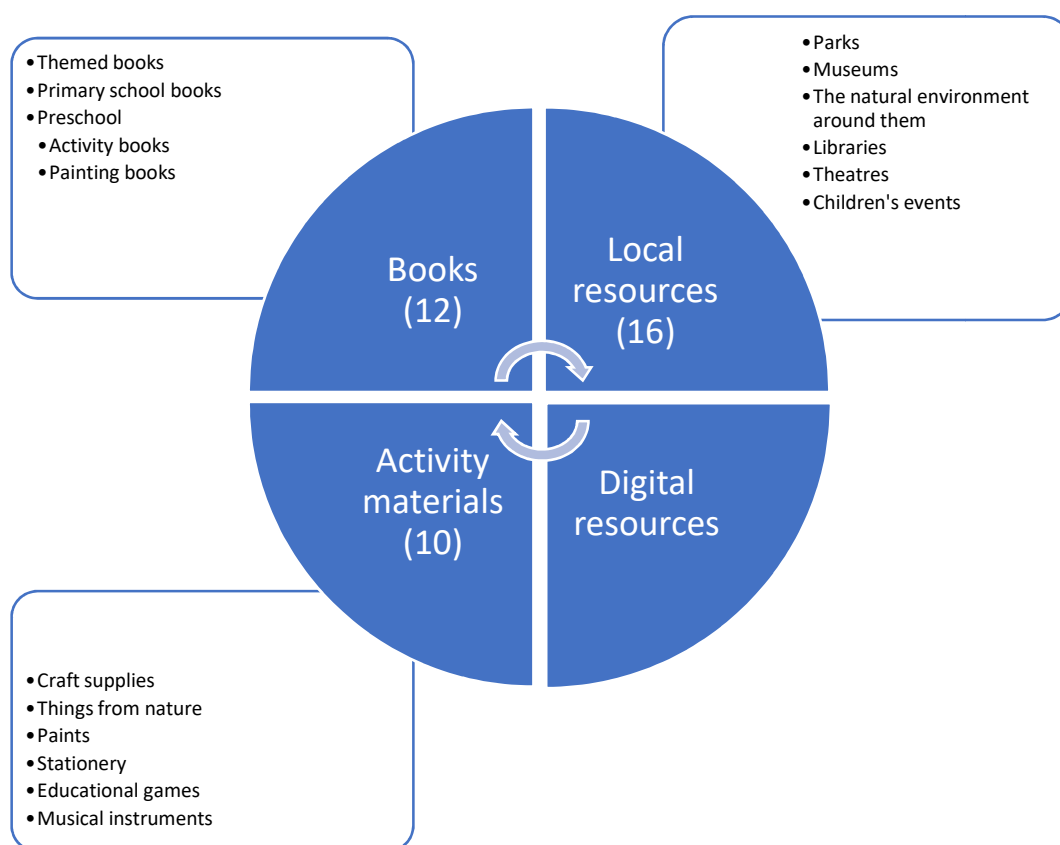
...

I think she is already able to do things that are expected from her age. They were better in terms of verbal skills, language. She started to talk very early and the way she tries to form a sentence correctly by repeating the sentence to correct a few times is very nice. I think that is suitable to her age as well. (S38)

Resources

The resources that homeschooling children's families indicated they used with their children are shown in Figure 0-10.

Figure 0-10 Homeschooling Resources



The main difference between the resources that the homeschooling group uses and those used by the other groups lies in the fact that these parents use activity materials and school books. The interviewed homeschoolers placed importance on crafts and activities that helped to improve their children's motor skills. The following extract is a good example of the resources the homeschoolers provide for their children.

While going to trips in nature they get accustomed to using materials in the area like wood, stone, soil to set up games and develop their imagination. We provide stationery materials like scissors, pencils for them to play with so that they can develop their motor skills. They are learning to play an instrument of their choice. Each child is given a recycling box; they design a new thing from the materials in that box each day. (S43)

Six of the homeschooling families voluntarily mentioned digital resources before being asked whether and how they used digital resources. The use of digital resources is dealt with in the next chapter.

1.3.4 Flexi-schooling

This section reports on what the parents of flexi-schooling children said about their pedagogic approaches, the resources they used and the curriculum they applied.

As shown in Table 0-2, twenty students were being flexi-schooled. Seven were preschool age and eleven were at the primary school level. There were two middle school-aged children in the sample families. As already explained, the Turkish legal situation does not allow children to attend middle school part-time. Nevertheless, one interviewee mentioned that, because her daughter was very successful at school, her teachers let her have more absent days than the legal allowance.

The other interviewee who had a flexi-schooling child of middle school age indicated that she encouraged her child not to do the homework. She thought there was more than enough time at school for a child to learn academic skills. She believed the time out of school was for relaxing and learning other things that the child was interested in. Yet, she indicated that day by day her daughter was doing more homework. She summarised the situation:

At first, she was not doing her homework as I advised, but over time she started to say that her friends were making fun of her if she did not do as everyone else was doing. She started to force herself although she does not want to do it. I try my best to explain to her that she does not have to but the need to be accepted by her friends is becoming stronger and she does her homework. I am not happy about this situation. I've started thinking to send her to open high school when she turns to fourteen years of age. (S21)

The extract above reveals that the inner motivation of children tends to change towards conforming to the behaviours of the majority of those around them. This finding echoes the decision of the two families that indicated that even though they home educated their younger children, they thought it was too late to home educate their older children who had already started school.

One interviewee had a flexi-schooling child who had been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome two years previously (when in the second class of primary school age group). Before diagnosis, his mother was sceptical about autism and so did not want her children to go to school. At that time, he was being homeschooled. After being diagnosed, he started school part-time, as the doctors suggested. In the second year of part-time school attendance, he was more eager to attend, so her mother increased the days that he attended school from two to three days a week.

Curriculum

The children who were being flexi-schooled by their parents formed two broad groups in terms of their activities out of school. The first group was the children who were doing unschooling type activities and second was those who were doing homeschooling activities. As proposed in section 1.3 and presented in Figure 0-3, the flexi-schooling continuum was based on those approaches.

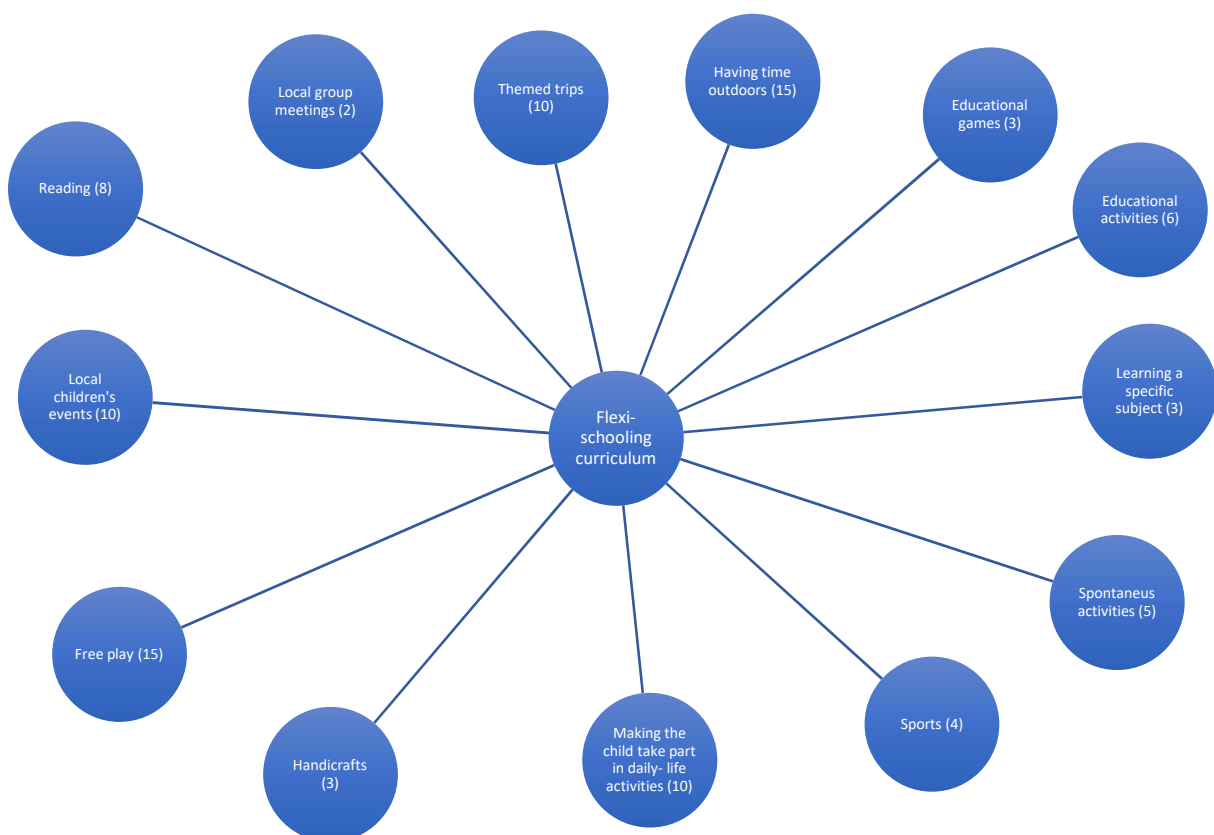
The preschool aged flexi-schoolers' families indicated that they tried mostly to take their children outside in their out of school time. They allowed their children to play freely and have time with their siblings. None of them mentioned any educational activities; they just emphasised free-play. One interviewee told me that she had allowed her daughter to experience things at home. The following extract explains her point of view:

At school they are trying hard to strictly follow the curriculum and to control the children at the same time. They do not let the child experience something. However, it is different at home, for example, in the kitchen they can try to break the eggs, eggs may fall on the floor or the shells can get into the plate a few times but, in the end, they learn how to do it properly. I would not tell them that they cannot do it because I should do it in order to keep the kitchen clean. (S12)

It may be concluded that the approach taken by flexi-schooler parents of preschool age children tends to lie at the unschooling end of the flexi-schooling continuum in Figure 0-3.

The activities that the flexi-schooling children's parents mentioned that they covered in their daily routine are presented in Figure 0-11.

Figure 0-11 Flexi-schooling Curriculum



Most of the interviewees suggested that the approach they take to their children's home-based education is close to unschooling. The following extract represents some of the comments made:

There is not a set plan. Since they do educational studies at school, at home we do things that they like and they learn while doing them. Sometimes we go fishing; sometimes we write poetry or learn cross-stitching etc. (S5)

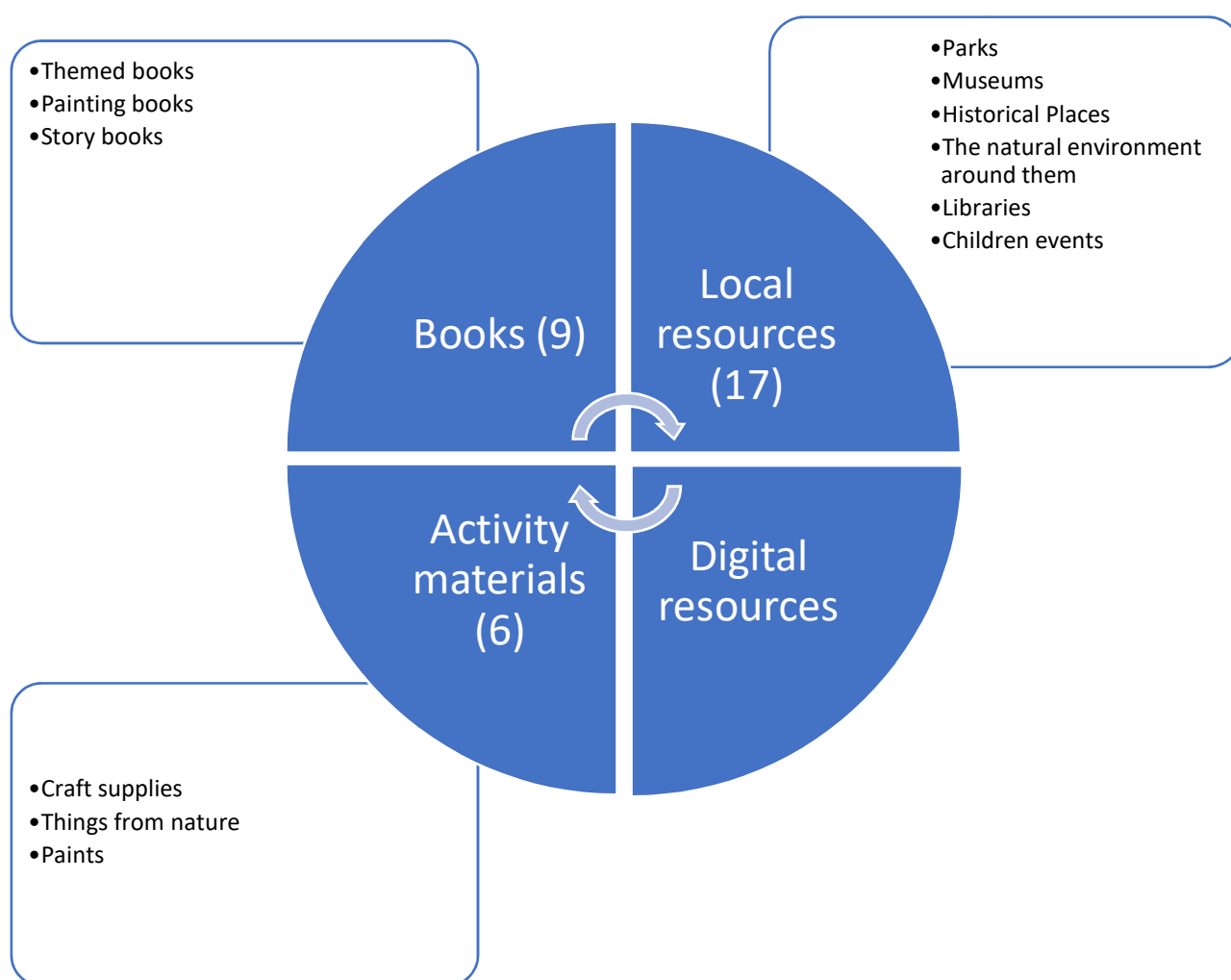
As with those at the other end of the flexi-schooling continuum, some of the interviewees complement their children's HE with homeschooling-type activities. The following extract reveals that the interviewees who were at the homeschooling end of the flexi-schooling spectrum had set plans for their children, albeit leaving room for the unschooling type of activities:

We have a fortnightly meeting in the forest with the parents. Those meetings we have at the library, workshop, and forest are regular. We do not have any other systematic activity apart from them. When we do not send them to school, we do not want to create a school like environment at home. For example, one day we feel like doing something; another day we do not do anything. We go to parks; the children play there freely. We try not to rush from one activity to another; that is tiring for me too. Sometimes at home they find something interesting to do. If they cannot find something, they start to protest that it is boring. It is normal for a human being, sometimes one gets bored; but school cannot tolerate this. (S15)

Resources

The resources that flexi-schooling children's families indicated they had been using with their children are represented in Figure 0-12.

Figure 0-12 Flexi-schooling Resources



As mentioned before, the flexi-schooling children's families indicated that they preferred outdoor resources.

We go camping, they climb trees, rocks, they learn about trees with their friends. When my daughter was younger, I organised activities such as camps, trips so that she could get together with other children, but now we are going to places that she likes. She likes climbing and goes swimming. It is a great opportunity that we have these facilities around where we live. (S13)

The following extract summarises some of the comments made about the resources the children themselves choose to use:

They developed a system of their own in their room. They have an education corner with books and learning equipment. Sometimes they ask questions of each other, like addition, subtraction. They sometimes watch a documentary from YouTube like the most interesting architecture of the world and they try to make that with paper. We do not only resort to books to learn; for example, they make tangible things to practise something, but only they define what they will do. (S15)

1.4 Discussion

As indicated in Table 0-1, none of the interviewees categorised themselves as a deschooling family, which may be because deschooling was not a popular term among the social media group and because the group's name is actually "unschooling-homeschooling Turkey". Moreover, even those who removed their children from school because of a problem did not consider themselves to be helping their children to forget about the bad experiences at school. Instead, they thought that they had changed their lifestyle to unschooling, which was more popular among the group. The popularity of unschooling also caused an interviewee to change their approach to HE. A homeschooling parent said that they stopped doing homeschool activities at home because they wanted to try noninvasive education (unschooling) after seeing other parents' approach in the social media group.

Every day we were doing activities with my daughter until she got to 5-6 years of age, something different each day. We were following Montessori activities, we were outdoors every day. For the last year I gave up doing that a little.it became tiring after all, now I want them to set up games themselves rather us setting activities for them. While reading about HE I wanted to try this as well. ...I also gave up putting limits on technology use; they

were allowed to watch TV only for a limited time during the day, but now I let them decide about that. They switch it off when they get bored. (S14)

The choice of approaches for the HE children whose parents had a religion-related educational and/or occupational background, discussed in the section 'Categorization of children by their parent's approach to HE', was interesting. According to the results of this study, these families lean towards the more unstructured approaches on the HE continuum, although the international literature suggests the contrary (Cai et al., 2002).

The deschooling parents claim that they carry on with their lives without any teaching or learning activities being involved. However, it is questionable how they can carry on with their usual routine after having a child, since after having a child the family life changes drastically and likewise the family life shapes and moulds the child even though no education in the scholarly sense is taking place. Although the deschoolers claimed that they do not do anything about education, in reality doing nothing is not possible. Even if they do not deliberately create learning opportunities for their children, daily life cannot be separated from learning because even the basic operations of daily life include basic calculations, using expressions and interactions with family members.

Similarly, the unschoolers claimed that no structure was involved in their approach. However, even the radical unschoolers created opportunities which the children might or might not take, and/or provided stimuli which the children might or might not respond to.

Even though the unschooling and deschooling families may not have been aware of their decision to provide stimuli, opportunities, and resources, they did, in fact, make decisions. They were not entirely reactive; however, they did rely on reacting to their children's interests a lot more than homeschoolers who follow a more structured programme.

As Figure 0-11 and Figure 0-12 demonstrate, the flexi-schooling curriculum and resources included fewer education-related activities and resources than the other groups. The flexi-schooling families tended to retain unschooling approaches to their HE. They tended to leave academic learning to the schools and to spend their out of school time on other activities. The following extract summarises the comments of the interviewees:

We always tried our best to do different activities as much as we can without talking about school or taught subjects there. ...school ended up being only one of the many things they do within a day. (S5)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to answer the following broad aim and specific objectives as stated in Chapter 0:

To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

- (1) How does a sample of Turkish home educating parents see digital resources? (distraction, useless, useful, entertainment tool, educational tool etc.)*
- (2) Which digital resources did a sample of Turkish home educating parents use in their children's education, and how did they use them?*
- (3) How did a sample of home educating families in Turkey use digital resources in teaching and learning?*
- (4) Did the use of digital resources pedagogically differ in systematic ways between different groups of parents in the sample?*

This chapter reports information from the interviews that shows whether parents used digital resources with their children and, if they did use digital resources, how they used them. The problems with the first intended categorisation of the HE families according to their approaches are reported and a new categorisation based on the findings is proposed.

In the previous chapter a new way to categorise the findings was proposed. I decided to base the categories on the children of the interviewees instead of the parents that I interviewed. This decision was taken in order to consider the 'mixed approach families'. However, with regards to the parents' preferences in using digital resources, Nvivo assisted analyses of the data gathered through the interviews with the 'mixed approach families' did not indicate that they had different policies for their children's use of digital resources, even when different approaches to home education were being used for different children in the same family. I therefore decided to represent the findings in this chapter based on the number of the interviewees not their children. Moreover, I did not categorise the answers according to the broad groups that were suggested by the preliminary observations there was no evidence that use of digital resources varied according to whether parents regarded themselves as unschoolers, homeschoolers, flexi-schoolers or deschoolers.

As the usefulness of these categories in understanding use of digital resources was not supported by the interview data, the themes and sub-themes that I retrieved from NVivo assisted analyses of the interviews explored whether and how my sample of Turkish HE families, regardless of their approach to HE, used digital resources for their children's education; and whether and how the families encouraged or allowed their children to use digital resources.

1.2 Use of Digital Resources

All the interviewees mentioned that they used digital resources for parental education to support their children. They shared ideas via the OSNS group, followed blogs and OSNS accounts, and obtained ideas and materials for their children. The evidence that all the parents mentioned their use of digital resources is likely to have resulted from the sampling method. I used an OSNS group to recruit most of the sample (38

out of 44 subjects) as explained in Chapter 0. The following extract highlights the place of digital resources in the parents' lives to support their children's education:

We use the digital resources especially the internet for our self-improvement as a parent and as a human-being. Why shouldn't we? There is a huge database of resources in front of us. My husband loves to read about everything, especially Wikipedia; he could read for hours. I use it to learn new languages, to learn about what the HE families do, I follow blogs and OSNS accounts from Turkey and abroad, to reach resources in different languages as well. (S9)

Although the interviewees used digital resources themselves, a remarkable number of parents (eleven out of 44) said they did not allow their children to use the digital resources or they limited their use (see Figure 0-1 below for more detail). The parents who had more than one child did not mention any difference between children of different ages in their use of digital resources; however, in practice some families indicated that they had difficulties in exerting the same policy with all their children. The following extracts echo some of the difficulties encountered by interviewees with regards to their preferences on their different aged children's use of digital resources:

I did not introduce my older child to screens before he got three years-old and even after three years old, I did not allow him to use digital resources more than one hour in a day. However, after my younger child turned one years old, my older was four by then, I could not manage to limit them separately so my younger-child watched TV with the older one. (S14)

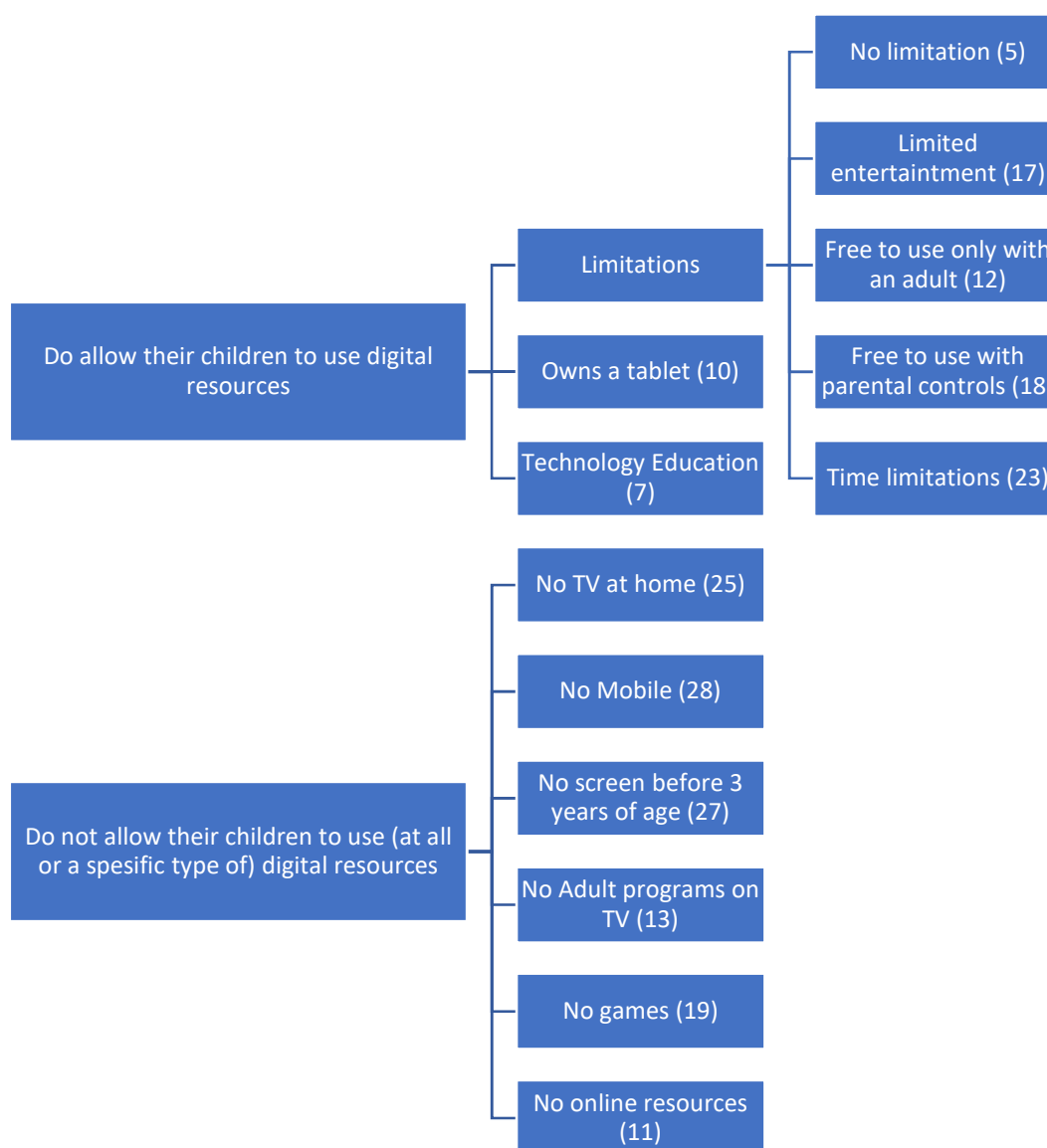
My daughter who is our older child did not watch any TV or use mobile phone to access digital content until she was three years old. However, my husband gives his phone to our two years-old son this year to listen to music and watch music clips. I'm not sure if my husband allows our son to watch digital content because he is a boy or he has recently

been influenced by other parents around us who allow their children to use their phone.

(S10)

The following figure represents the parents' preferences on their children's use of digital resources. The numbers on the figure represent the number of interviewees who mentioned that information.

Figure 0-1 Parents' preferences on their children's use of digital resources



Five interviewees mentioned that they placed no limitations on their children's use of digital resources. However, they mentioned that if they felt their children were using digital resources excessively, so that they were becoming a habit, they would restrict their children's usage. Seventeen interviewees mentioned that their children were allowed to use DLRs whenever they wanted, but the digital entertainment content

was limited. For example, the children were allowed to use digital resources for entertainment purposes only at weekends, or only for a limited period of time in a day.

Eighteen parents used parental control features provided by internet service provider or software that limited specific content or restricted their children's access to unwanted content, or they kept an eye on their children while they used digital resources. Twelve interviewees mentioned that their children were allowed to use digital resources only if a parent or adult was present. The following extracts reveal the most frequently stated reasons:

We want to make sure our child had an adult present every time he watched a movie or a cartoon. Because even in the movies or cartoons for children there might be times when he could not make sense of what he saw on the screen or something we want him not to code, as when he saw for example a speaking dog. (S9)

I do not want my children to get in front of a computer and make an internet search on their own for two reasons. Firstly, I cannot control the internet, it is very likely for them to face very inappropriate content as an advertisement or an irrelevant search result. Secondly, even if they do not see anything inappropriate I do not want them to spend their time on empty content. I want to make sure the content they will spend their time on will be quality content. (S2)

For the same reasons indicated by S2 in the extract above eleven interviewees did not allow their children to use the internet but they did download digital content for their children to use offline such as movies, radio programs, music, games etc. While ten of the parents indicated that their children had their own tablet, three of these parents added that the children's tablet did not have internet access.

1.2.1 What resources families prefer

As indicated in the previous chapter, when the interviewees were asked about which resources they used to support their children's education at home, ten interviewees mentioned digital resources. The following extracts reveal that some families supported using digital resources:

We cannot know everything they asked us, so we motivate them to use internet search, it is a limitless source of knowledge. It is not possible or feasible to go to a library whenever they want, even if they could go to library, there are no more resources in libraries than the internet. (S22)

We support digital resources, we have TV, PC and internet at our home. Not only children, we all try to use technology consciously. (S26)

Nevertheless, the following extracts reveal that a minority of parents (nine out of 44) were keen on motivating their children to use digital resources, either for their education or as an entertainment tool:

We try not to use technology at home too much because we want our children to value family time more than any other things. (S42)

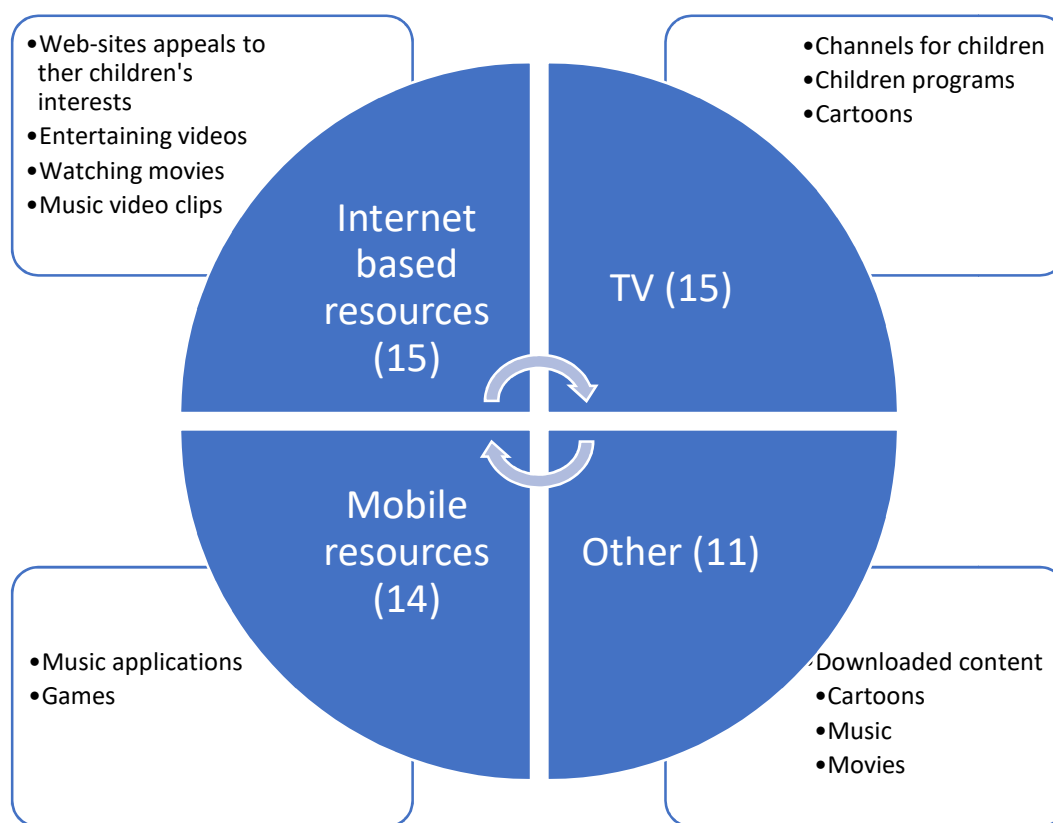
If the things that the children want to learn are the things that we can find in the books at our home or in the library, we prefer to explore books. But some things are easier to learn if they see. For example, how to make a glass, how a factory works etc. If there is opportunity to see what they are curious about around us, we take them to show them; if not we watch a video. So, using digital content is our last option. (S2)

1.3 The Digital Resources that are used by a sample of HE families in Turkey

This section outlines the digital resources that are used by the interviewees with their children at home. The interviewees that did not allow their children to use digital resources at all, even as an entertainment tool are covered in the previous section of this chapter. Twenty two parents indicated they allowed their children to use digital resources for entertainment purposes, mostly with some restrictions, as represented in Figure 0-1. Only five mothers indicated they did not limit their children's use of technology. However, these five interviewees added that their children's use of technology had not caused them concern until now; if they became concerned in the future, they would consider setting limitations.

Figure 0-2 represents the digital resources that the interviewees allowed their children to use for entertainment:

Figure 0-2 Digital Resources that are used for entertainment purposes



While eleven interviewees indicated that they strictly did not allow their children to use digital resources the rest mentioned that they made some use of them. Seven interviewees mentioned that they had been giving their children technology education, for example teaching them how to type on a PC, robotics, programming and how to conduct an internet search. The child that received robotics and programming education from her mother had a video sharing group in an OSNS that aimed to share her projects with the other children that were interested in the same subjects.

Five of the interviewees mentioned that they downloaded educational applications to their mobile devices for their children to use. The applications were mentioned were as follows: mathematical games, game-based applications that complemented children's learning how to read and write, language applications,

drawing applications. Considering that mobile applications for entertainment were mentioned by fourteen interviewees (Figure 0-2) while only five interviewees (Figure 0-3) mentioned using mobile applications for educational purposes, the evidence suggests that mobile applications were seen predominantly as an entertainment tool by Turkish HE families.

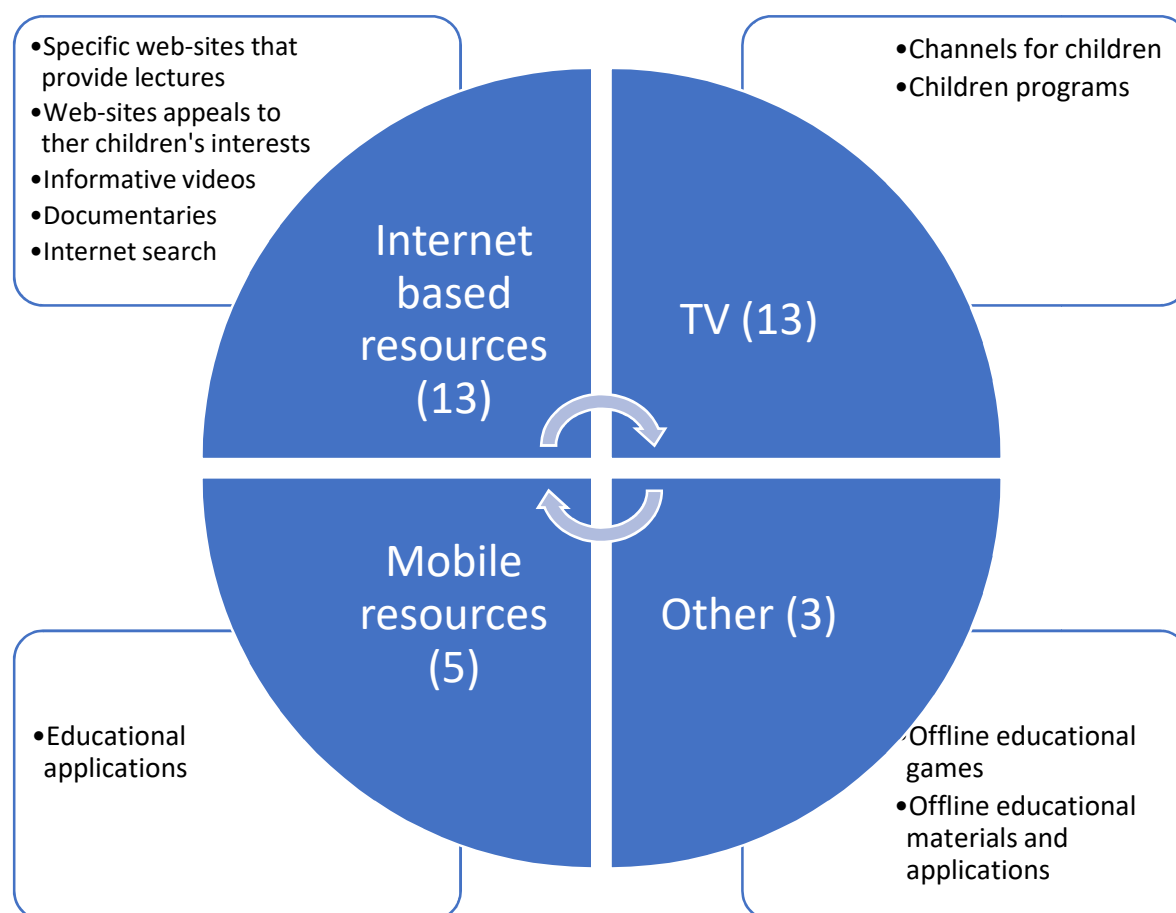
Considering TV as a digital resource, 25 of the interviewees mentioned that they did not have TV at home and thirteen of the remaining nineteen interviewees mentioned they did not allow their children to watch adult programs. For the interviewed HE families, in most cases there was no clear-cut distinction whether or not their children's use of TV was for education or entertainment purposes. Fifteen parents indicated that they allowed their children to watch TV for entertainment. Moreover, later on during the interviews, thirteen parents indicated that they regarded cartoons and children's programs that their children watched as an educational tool.

Apart from technology education, the interviewees that allowed and supported their children's use of digital resources thought their children did not spend too much time with technology. The interviewees commented that their children used digital resources as a starter point for inspiration or as a resource. The following extract summarizes some of the comments made:

Technology is very much into our educational activities. Despite having a central role, it takes so little time of our time in fact. For example, in summer we wanted to learn painting, so we watched informative videos on video sharing sites. We only opened the videos that my daughter liked. She did not watch some parts of the video, she fast forwarded or skipped some parts, re-watched other parts when she was interested to learn. When you look at the time spent there, to learn something like this, she may watch something once and maybe for only 1-2 minutes, but she practises what she saw there for days. The video becomes the base for learning but takes very little of her time. (S19)

The digital resources that are used by the interviewees to support their children’s education at home are represented in Figure 0-3 :

Figure 0-3 Digital Resources that are used for educational purposes



One interviewee mentioned that she used digital resources, especially informative videos, to learn how she could support her children’s education at home. She indicated that she watched how-to videos, read blogs to learn how to prepare educational games for her children, and she even prepared how-to videos and shared them in her blog with other parents. But she did not allow her children to use digital resources at all. When she was asked about technology she commented as follows:

I use technology for every stage of my children's education but I do not want them to use it. They will be technology slaves as we are now for the rest of their lives. So, I will try to keep them far away from technology as long as I can. (S3)

1.4 Discussion

Digital resources have a big potential in HE as reviewed in Chapter 0, and there is evidence of their use by HE families around the world. However, in my research a majority of the Turkish HE families that I interviewed did not use technology specifically to support their children's education at home. Only ten interviewees mentioned that their children were using digital learning resources before they were asked a specific question and most of the rest recalled digital entertainment when they were asked about technology. Although we are considered to be living in a digital age, only seven interviewees mentioned that they had been teaching their HE children about the use of digital resources such as programming, typing, browsing. Apart from those seven, other interviewees did not mention using digital resources in the education of their children at home. In the light of those findings, I conclude that a majority of the Turkish HE parents that I interviewed, saw digital resources mainly as an entertainment tool. In contrast with the international literature (Farris & Woodruff, 2000; Ray, 2000), only a minority of the interviewees commented that the children needed to learn how to use digital resources to keep up with the era they were born into.

A possible reason for the low rates of using digital resources in HE in my sample may be the negative attitude towards children using technology among the OSNS group members that the subjects were recruited from. My preliminary observations suggested that the popular members of the OSNS group shared their ideas that children should be kept away from technology on several occasions. Moreover, some posts that included references to children's use of technology received some negative reactions and

caused members to be critical of children's use of technology. This attitude was consistent with the reactions of the parents when I asked them about technology and digital resources. Interestingly, most interviewees (75%,) answered as if I had asked whether or not they used it as an entertainment tool and started to talk about how they banned or limited their children's technology use. While they were talking about limitations they gave clues about resources that their children used for entertainment purposes. Additionally, I felt that they were trying to prove themselves to me by saying their children's use of technology was under control and they were not bad parents just because they allowed their children to use technology for entertainment purposes. Some of the common sentences that the interviewees made were: 'We do not allow them to watch TV more than an hour in a day.', 'We limit their gaming on our mobile phones to 3 times a day.', 'We allow them to watch YouTube videos only half an hour in a day.'

Part - 5 Discussion and Concusions

- Chapter 12 - Discussion
- Chapter 13 - Conclusions

1.1 Introduction

This study investigated HE in Turkey by examining a group of home educating parents, their values, beliefs, pedagogic approaches and use of digital resources for home educating their children. In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the research by comparing and contrasting the results of the study with the literature review. The sequence of the discussion chapter follows the order of research aims as stated in Chapter 0, namely:

1. To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ between each other in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.
2. To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.
3. To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

As can be seen again with the aims above, this research investigated the ideas, experiences, and points of view of a sample of home educating parents. A cross-sectional descriptive design was employed, as it seemed a suitable methodology for gathering rich data to answer the questions. Research data were collected from 44 interviews conducted with a group of current or former home educating parents in Turkey.

1.2 Home Educating Parents in Turkey

This section discusses the first research question, gathering the findings and literature review about this area of study together.

1.2.1 Demographics.

This study was conducted with 44 HE parents (mothers) in Turkey. As illustrated in Table 0-1, they had 89 children in total, 70 of whom were being Home educated. Apart from four, all interviewees were married. Literature also suggests that 95% of the HE children in the US have married and cohabiting parents (Ray, 2005). Ray also suggested that HE families are mostly large families. However, the findings in this research do not unambiguously support that for my group of interviewees, as the average family size was 3.93 people, while an average household has 3.4 persons in Turkey (Tuik, 2018). As the number given by TUIK includes single person households as well as cohabiting three generation families, it is better to crosscheck with another statistic. The average births per woman was 2.07 in 2017 (Tuik, 2018) in Turkey while my 44 interviewees (all women) had 2.02 children in average. Therefore, the data collected in this study suggest that HE families in my sample in Turkey were not large families.

1.2.2 Prevalence of HE.

Prevalence of HE, as discussed in section 1.3.1, increases in an environment where HE is regulated/legal. Likewise to what extent and in what sense HE can be practised can differ from country to country and as it gets harder to home educate, HE prevalence decreases (Blok et al., 2017). HE is not regulated in Turkey, although anecdotal evidence and comments in blogs and the press suggest that it may be increasing in

popularity. Nevertheless there are no reliable statistics to suggest an increase (or a decrease) in the number or percentage of children that are Home educated.

In contrast in the US the number of home educated children increased by 6% annually between 2012-2016 (Ray, 2018), and according to Collom & Mitchell (2005) this might show the increasing dissatisfaction of US parents with the traditional school system that causes them to choose alternative education methods. Similarly in the UK, the rate of increase in home educated children was 40% in three years between 2014-2017 with the most popular reasons given by the parents as 'mental health issues' and 'avoiding exclusion' (Issimdar, 2018).

According to recent data in Turkey, dissatisfaction with the national education system causes families with high school level children to opt out of school and seek alternatives, as enrolment to open high schools has increased by 26.90% between 2012-2017 (Dinçer, 2017) and the rate of open school students within the total number of high school students increased from 24% in 2012 to 36% in 2017 (Aktaş, 2018). As there was only one student in high school level in this study, it is not possible to compare my research findings to the empirical data collected in Turkey by Dinçer and Aktaş. Still, consistent with the increase in the open school enrolments, when the blogs written by my sample of Turkish home educating families were examined, their reasons for opting out of school point to dissatisfaction with the school system in Turkey.

The literature review (see Chapter 0) also suggested that it is beliefs of the parents, particularly about the ideal education for their children, that make them choose a traditional or an alternative system of education.

1.2.3 Parental beliefs about childhood and education.

When beliefs of home educating parents about childhood, education and HE were investigated (section 1.3) I found that seventeen out of 44 mothers stated explicitly that they wanted their children to be independent and happy people, who were sensitive to human values. In this sense these parents' beliefs about childhood were close to Plato's humanistic ideas which were also evident in Rousseau's (1979) and Pestalozzi's (1801b) approach to education, reviewed in section 1.1.1. The parents in my study believed that their children needed love, approval, socialisation and freedom and that was what their education should offer them. Similarly, writers as diverse as Pestalozzi, Rousseau and Neill (1960) had shared Plato's view that teaching could be successful only if it was enjoyable and motivating. Neill based the regime at his school, Summerhill, on the importance of freedom, arguing that if children are provided adult-pressure-free environments, they will become self-regulating adults. In contrast, other humanist thinkers such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel (1905) and Steiner (1965) argued for controlled freedom to make children feel safe, and so ready to learn. International literature also suggests that parents are keener on maintaining the happiness of their children in the first years of their education life, during preschool and primary school (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007; Shoshani & Slone, 2017). This is consistent with happiness being mentioned by seventeen of 44 interviewees; the interviewed parents had 31 preschool and 33 primary school aged children (out of 70 HE children in total). However, literature suggests that as children grow older, during the later years of their education life, parents' views shift a little and the importance that they put on happiness starts to be modified by their children's future, and whether or not they gain qualifications, and hence jobs, when they graduate.

As portrayed in section 1.3.2, HE parents think traditional schooling with lessons, exams and assignments cannot satisfy the requirements of learning, which they consider to be a dynamic and continuous process

that lasts for life (Chapman & O'Donoghue, 2000; Patterson et al., 2007). Similarly, in this research (see section 1.3), subjects mentioned that they saw learning as a lifelong activity and they would like to infuse that mentality in their children. Most subjects reiterated that in each person there was a natural desire to learn, which seeks answers for what they need to know and when. Nine mothers even used the same term “natural rhythm of a human being” indicating that they had found the term within their own community of HE parents. Similarly fifteen parents in this research suggested that if adults did not interfere with the natural rhythm of children, by forcing them to go through the education system, they could stay as lifelong natural learners. The parents thought that children had great imagination and free-thinking capability and that they should not be suppressed but nurtured instead by the education system. Moreover, the natural habits of children such as free play, curiosity, and desire to discover were very valuable traits and should be preserved.

Some interviewees stated that it was the women who were responsible for the education of their children; moreover, three interviewees added that their husbands regarded HE as a matter for concern about the child's economic future. Considering the fact that all interviewees were women, such remarks represent the stereotypical beliefs about gender roles in Turkish society (see section 1.2), where traditionally men are mainly responsible for the maintenance of the household, while women are expected to raise the children. As suggested in the literature, Turkish society still holds a traditional view on gender roles; education at school and home, as well as the media, have portrayed and reiterated these gender roles to new generations. The subjects of this study were children and teenagers during 1980s and 1990s and grew up receiving those messages directly and indirectly and therefore it is expected that the effects of such indoctrinations would be seen in their ideas through adult life.

According to Ray (2016), in HE families in the US, both husbands and wives are likely to be interested and involved actively in HE. However, Collom (2005) stated that his research in the US supported his literature

review as usually it was the mothers who were in charge of home educating their children. In this research, also in parallel to the gender roles that were discussed above and Collom's (2005) findings, it is found (see section 1.2.2) that while twelve interviewees jointly took the decision with their spouses, 27 of the mothers in the sample had to convince their spouses about HE. Five of fathers were still against the decision of their wives to home educate their child(ren) at the time of the research.

1.2.4 Reasons for HE.

There are a number of reasons that lead families to decide to home educate their children, though it is said that they roughly fall into two categories: psychological and physical reasons (Collom & Mitchell, 2005). How they each affect the decision of the parents to HE is probably determined by the jurisdiction in which they live, their social status, belief system and income level. Moreover, the data in this and other studies show that the motivations of the parents change over time and the weight given to different reasons for home education vary as they continue the experience of HE and as the child grows up (Olsen, 2008; Rothermel, 2003). Consistently, subjects in this research did not cite solely physical or psychological reasons for HE.

The main reasons for interviewees (see section 1.2.1) deciding to home educate their children can be grouped into four as follows: firstly, their beliefs about childhood, that this period in life is valuable; children are empowered with natural properties like curiosity, creativity, spontaneity and these should be preserved and not demolished by forcing children to go to school secondly, their concerns about school, stemming from their children's or their own negative experiences and hearsay about schooling, in opposition to their ideas about what schools should be like in an ideal world; thirdly, the current education system, with its accumulating and interacting problems of the school curriculum, long hours, high stress

put on students with regular national exams, and inadequate physical conditions for education. In addition to the parents who felt uneasy about the education system because of their own or children's experiences as students, there were 21 parents (in total, 16 mothers and 5 fathers) who had worked/were working as teachers in schools; they had insider views of the schools and the current education system. Lastly, reasons related to issues, values and beliefs of parents and lack of schools close to them that satisfy their educational needs led some of the interviewees to decide on HE.

The classification provided by Dick Kitto (see footnote 3 on p.49) gives more scope to group the interviewees into sections by their determining motivations at the very beginning of their HE adventures (see section 1.3.2 for more information). According to Kitto's categorisation: six of the interviewees of this study were rebels because they preferred an alternative lifestyle and they HE their children as a part of that lifestyle; fifteen were compensators, who initially sent their children to school and after having negative experiences removed their children from school and tried to heal the adverse effects of school in the hope of sending them to school again. However, Kitto's categorisation fails to cover the change in the ways in which HE is conducted and with what motivation. The evidence suggests that as time goes by, compensators start to evolve into competitors who believe that they can educate their children better than the schools and compete with the methods, practices and curriculum of the national education system of their country.

1.2.5 Parental beliefs about HE and experiences of HE families.

The interviewees' beliefs about HE were reported in 8.3. Although one of the first arguments against HE is that it deprives children of the social interaction they need, literature suggests that HE children are not less social than their schooled peers, as argued in section 1.3.3. However, in this research (section 1.3.3) lack of socialising opportunities was the main concern of HE parents. Even if they were forming groups with other HE parents to allow their children to socialise, they were not satisfied that their children had enough socialisation, as all other children were at school and after school continued to socialise only with their friends from school.

Another disadvantage of HE that was mentioned by the interviewees is the fact that the children were dependent on their parent(s) for education. To what extent and in what sense a parent can be both a parent and a full-time teacher at the same time teaching many subjects was the main concern of the parents and they thought that too much responsibility was on their shoulders. This is consistent with the literature reviewed in section 1.3.3.

Twenty-five interviewees cited being close to nature as an essential necessity for practising HE. They talked a lot about this in the blogs, and some intending HE parents left their jobs and moved to rural areas. On the other hand, this perceived prerequisite may have discouraged some parents from HE as it would have been a big shift of lifestyle for them. In this respect, my research reveals that Turkish HE families in my sample felt close to Sharp's (1943) outdoor-education instead of Woodhouse and Knapp's (2000)'s place-based education.

Out of the 88 parents in this study five were home educated themselves; however, they did not mention that being home educated themselves was a factor in their decision to home educate their own children. During their own formal education, six parents had had to suspend their schooling or drop out of school during the headscarf ban in Turkey. Moreover, three more parents had had problems at school due to the political views of their families. Nevertheless, they did not cite problems due to clashing views as a factor in their decision to home educate their own children. It was predicted after preliminary research that there might be a correlation between the parents' decision to home educate their children and their religious views. However, this research did not find evidence to support that prediction since the interviewees neither cited their affiliation to, nor alienation from, religion as a factor in their decision to home educate their children.

1.3 Pedagogy.

During the preliminary research (see section 1.2) it appeared that the pedagogical approaches of Turkish HE parents might be grouped into four categories as unschoolers, homeschoolers, flexi-schoolers and deschoolers. As explained in section 1.2, I classified the interviewees according to how structured their pedagogical approaches were. After the interviews, the pedagogical approaches of some of the parents were found to be different from what they had initially claimed (Table 0-1).

The initial thoughts of flexi-schooling children's parents with regards to their approach to HE, were mostly consistent with my findings. Homeschooling children's parents said they felt closer to the unschooling approach when they were asked about their approach to HE at the sampling stage (see section 1.1.4 for more information). After the interviews, however, it appeared that some of those parents' approaches to HE were more structured than unschooling. This may be because the term unschooling in Turkish was a popular term within the OSNS group. Some parents might have used the term not necessarily to mean

unschooling per se, but used a term popular in the group which they thought of as an umbrella term for HE. Moreover, I noticed that eleven HE parents who had more than one child applied different approaches to their children (see Chapter 0's section entitled "Mixed approach families."). Therefore, I decided to classify the HE children rather than their parents who were my interviewees. Although the parents (and their values and beliefs) were the same, different pedagogic approaches could be employed with children in the same HE families (see Table 0-2).

In section 1.2, I grouped the HE parents according to their educational and occupational backgrounds. In the next chapter I examined if the pedagogical approaches of these families differed according to whether they were teachers, had dropped out of school, were Home educated, had a religion related educational and/or occupational background and according to the gender of their child. The results are reported in Chapter 0 in the section entitled "Categorization of children by their parent's approach to HE".

Literature suggests that HE parents that are religious prefer a strictly structured learning experience (Mayberry & Knowles, 1989), and the style they use to motivate the children is more controlling in comparison to the school teachers (Cai et al., 2002). In contrast, this research found that home educated children whose parents had a religious related educational and/or occupational background were mostly being unschooled (Table 0-7). That shows that religious HE parents who participated in this study tended to choose a less structured educational approach. According to Collom's research (2005) nearly one third and according to Rudner's research (1999) nearly one fourth of the parents who participated in their research were certified teachers. Similarly, in my research, sixteen interviewees out of 44 had teaching experience, (this number excludes 5 teacher fathers who were spouses of the interviewees). I cannot compare my findings on the structure of the teacher-parents' approach to HE with the above-mentioned studies, not only because neither of them reported how structured the HE approaches of the teacher participants of their studies were; but also, because they were conducted in countries where HE is

regulated. I found that, although teacher parents employed less structured approaches for their children of preschool age, they tended to obey the rules about sending their children to school when their children reached school-age.

Literature suggests that while the instruction methods and pedagogic approaches of parents practising HE do vary, Clements (2002) and Huber (2002) located them on a continuum, where on one end there were HE parents who acted as the teachers at home with a structured approach and on the other end parents that respected and followed the natural learning desire of the child, which turns their HE practice into a totally child centred style. Having said that, the steps on this continuum are not separated with clear cut boundaries. According to Huber (2002) at the beginning parents wished to shape the learning environment, and as they continued their experience of HE their approaches might evolve and they might adopt different instruction styles. Clements (2002) suggests that the choice by HE parents of a particular HE approach is determined by how much time they themselves are ready to spend on teaching the child. He argues that during the HE process, the point on the scale at which the HE approach lies is based on the age, educational needs and targets of the child and also the amount of time that the parent can spend on teaching.

While analysing the research findings, it became apparent that my initial categorization of the HE approaches was not as clear cut as I had thought at the preliminary stage of this research. The more nuanced approach was consistent with findings of the above-mentioned research. Therefore, a new model of HE continuum was proposed at the analysis stage (see 1.3 for more information). However, my continuum included, on one hand, deschoolers who claimed that they consciously avoiding all activities that might remind the child of school to help their children overcome traumas arising from experiences at school and, on the other hand, homeschoolers who consciously followed a structured programme for their

children's HE. Unschoolers who probably were unaware of having a structure, are located between these two ends (Figure 0-2). The findings showing that whether/how the pedagogic approaches of HE parents differ in crucial respects are discussed in detail in sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3. The flexi-schoolers are not included in the continuum since the children's learning activity partly takes place in school. However, during the time the HE children were at home, the approaches of their families did also vary with a continuum of their own, ranging from homeschooling-like activities to unschooling-like activities (see section 1.3.4 for more information).

1.4 Online Network Between HE Parents.

As described in section 6.2.1 and 8.5.1, the Turkish HE parents in this study used internet and online social networks efficiently to communicate and share ideas. The way they used digital networks reminded me of the networks proposed by Illich (1971). As explained in section 3.1.1, he proposed a four step network system to stimulate self-motivated learning to achieve personal, creative and autonomous inner-action. Illich's four networking systems can be summarised as follows:

1. The first network would coordinate learning materials and aids to learning. All available resources and tools should be provided for the learners without limiting them to school buildings, age groups etc.
2. The second network would allow exchange of skills between the skilled and unskilled.
3. The third network would group skilled people by their similar interests and allow them to share new ideas and methods and learn from each other.
4. The fourth network would basically be a directory of educators, the cost of their services and possible places to meet.

In today's digital era, setting up these networks is much easier. For example search engines can list almost endless numbers of web-sites or OSNS groups with resources grouped according to academic subjects, interest groups and age groups. Similarly, there are forums⁷⁸ and OSNS groups⁹ for skilled people to share their ideas and experiences. These forums serve as the second network that Illich described, where skilled and unskilled people can meet virtually to share ideas and skills. All these networking sites can serve as a directory that enables skilled people to contact each other. Also there are special websites¹⁰ that provide a directory to enable users to find private tutors in any subject.

The OSNS group of which the Turkish HE parents in this study were members, served as a combined learning web for the parents. The group did not serve the children of the group as learners. Nevertheless, the parents themselves used the group as Illich's learning-webs. As noted in section 8.4, 32 of the mothers in this study mentioned that they learned about HE and were motivated to consider it by the OSNS group. In this sense, the OSNS group served as the second network that Illich mentioned where experienced HE parents shared their skills and experiences with the new comers.

The parents in this study mentioned several times that they used this particular OSNS group as well as other groups and blogs to find and share materials, and share ideas, after they had started to home-educate their children. They learned about meeting places and education experts that had been needed by other HE parents. So OSNSs, web-sites, forums and blogs fulfil the functions of the first, third and fourth networks as well as the second one of the model that Illich proposed many years before the recent developments in technology.

⁷ eg. <https://stackoverflow.com/questions> (A forum for developers in English.)

⁸ eg. <https://forum.donanimhaber.com/> (A blog and forum in Turkish.)

⁹ eg. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/researchtips/> (An OSNS group to share research ideas.)

¹⁰ eg. <https://armut.com/> (A Turkish web site on which you can find and communicate with experts of any kind.)

1.5 Digital Resources.

Curtice (2014) suggests that parents can be grouped into two in terms of their policy for their children's technology use. The first group allows their children to use technology without any limits or restrictions. The second group tries to put limits and control technology use in order to spend quality time with their children.

In this research whether the HE parents limited the use of digital resources or not, and in what sense they placed limits, are shown in Figure 0-1. It was found that 11.3% of HE parents placed no limitations, 38.6% limited their use to entertainment only, and 52.2% applied time limitations on the use of digital resources. According to CHEAR poll report (2014) the location is another factor in determining the limitations (for example, not in bathroom or lunchtime); however, in this research the interviewees did not mention any limitation based on the place of the use of digital resources.

Andrade (2008) states that internet and educational software are the most popular technologies used by HE parents, whereas for Alias, Rahman, Siraj, Ruslina (2013) the most used ones are social media and mobile learning. The difference may perhaps be due to changing tools and applications in digital technologies. Section 1.4.1 examines how parents use digital resources to develop themselves. All interviewees in this research used digital resources for their own education as a parent and to become a better parent/teacher to home educate their children. The reason for every interviewee reporting the use of digital resources might be that I used an OSNS group for recruiting 38 of the 44 interviewees, and this also complements the findings of Neil et al. (2014) that *"... technology is used for networking with other homeschoolers and for accessing educational materials."* (p.118)

Neil et al. (2014) suggests that the perceived usefulness of a particular technology affects the actual use of that technology. When I asked about the use of digital resources, as reported in Chapter 0, one quarter of interviewees strictly forbade the use of digital resources by their children, whereas just above half allowed their use mostly for entertainment purposes and with limitations. Only about one quarter of the sample perceived that digital resources could be used for education purposes. This may be because most HE parents in my sample in Turkey had a generally negative prejudice about the use of digital resources by their children. As three quarters did not see the use of digital resources as a useful education tool for HE, their actual usage was low.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises and reiterates the findings of the research and conclusions derived from them. It starts with stating the key findings as for each research question. Moreover, limitations and strengths of this research are explained. Finally, areas of possible further research, my own learning curve during this study and expected contribution of this thesis to home education in Turkey are discussed.

1.2 Overview

I will present here the key findings of this study as per my research questions. The three broad aims of this research were as follows:

1. To establish whether/how a sample of home educating parents in Turkey differ in crucial respects in their values and beliefs.
2. To explore and examine which pedagogic approaches and environments a sample of home educating parents in Turkey adopted for their children's education.
3. To explore and examine the pedagogic use of digital resources to meet educational needs of a sample of Turkish home educating parents' children.

My sample of home educating families in Turkey was mostly nuclear families with married cohabiting parents having two children in average, mostly at preschool and primary school ages. The decision maker of HE in the family was predominantly the mothers and they were also responsible for home education.

They thought that children possess valuable properties as free thinking, curious, playful individuals with great imagination and a natural desire to learn. However, according to the HE parents that I interviewed, these traits could be protected and nurtured by the current education system while forcing the children to go through a school system which made them unhappy.

My sample parents were not happy with the current national education system. With their values and beliefs about what an ideal education for their children should be like, they sought, found and applied alternative education methods. However, as their children grew up the main concern of the parents changed from a focus on the happiness of their children to thoughts about educational qualifications and job prospects. While they did not care that much about the monetary fine for not sending their children to school, they did care if their children were not able to get good results in university entrance exams and hence might be kept away from a university degree and graduate jobs. Therefore, HE in Turkey, as seen from the scope of this research, is mainly a preschool – primary school level method of education.

Preliminary observations implied that my sample of HE parents in Turkey had different pedagogic approaches to HE that could be gathered in four main groups; as deschoolers, flexi-schoolers, unschoolers and homeschoolers. However, the results showed that distinctions between the groups were not strictly as clear as predicted; the groups could intersect many times and the attitudes of parents could change and their mix of applications could lie on a different point along the home education continuum, with ever changing conditions in their home education experience.

All of the parents in the study reported using digital resources to enhance their ability to teach; however only 25% of them utilised digital resources for HE of their children.

1.3 Limitations and Strengths of the Research

Home education is not regulated in Turkey and it is still a criminal offence not to send a school aged child to school. Although very few families have so far been charged or required to pay the fine, the legal status of the subject brought ethical issues and limitations for me as a researcher while finding a sample and gathering data. While I believe that I considered all ethical issues and addressed them appropriately, the difficulty of finding samples and getting them to accept an interview remained a challenge.

Working in two languages, in Turkish and English may be seen as a limitation, since gathering data in one and presenting in another language is an extra time-consuming effort. Nonetheless, it was in fact one of the main strengths of this study, as not only is it the first research to be conducted with home educating parents in Turkey, it is conducted with international empirical standards of a British university using both Turkish and English literature in this field.

This research is descriptive in nature and has a cross-sectional design. It involves collection of data on the approach of a sample of Turkish parents to HE, their reasons for adopting it, and the meanings that HE holds for them. However, the size and population of this research was limited. As home education in Turkey is not a regulated practice and home educating parents want to talk to other practising parents only to share experiences and information. It was difficult to find interviewees and careful preparation was needed to persuade them that they could talk freely. By the end of the data collection, I had carried out 44 interviews in total where 38 of them were recruited by opportunistic sampling and 6 of them with snowball sampling method.

Kunzman (2017) and Snyder(2017) suggest that many studies on homeschooling appear to have similar limitations as: firstly, most participants are selected from small groups, and samples are correspondingly

small; secondly, findings are based mostly on what the homeschooling parents and children say; thirdly, there seems to be an oversimplification for the sake of grouping the children as homeschooled and schooled, which fails to examine many ways and forms of different flexi-schooling practices and samples. These three limitations, seen in many studies in this field, are also evident in this research. Due to the difficulties of recruiting a sample, I had to use opportunistic sampling. Moreover, the data gathered through semi-structured interviews with home educating parents are considered as self-reported data. Finally, in order not to put aside, but to take into account instead, different practices which I grouped under flexi-schooling I placed them on the home education continuum between unschooling and homeschooling; however, I still had the limitation not being able to use the duration of different home education practices as a variable.

Consequently, as the research involved working in two languages, conducted with a rather unique and intensive group of subjects with the limitations explained above, the methods to maintain the four aspects of trustworthiness, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), were used to make sure that the findings of this research are as trustable, applicable, consistent and neutral as possible. However, I cannot claim that the findings of this study can be safely extrapolated to be perfectly representative of the whole HE population in Turkey.

Areas of Further Research

In order to do better, wider and more thorough research, the limitations of this study should first be surmounted. Firstly, the size and population of the study should be extended to collect data that are more representative of the home education community in Turkey. Secondly, a cross examination of what the parents say that they are doing should be included in the design. Moreover, some families from each segment of the home education community could be observed for a period of time to see whether or not

they actually practise home education in the ways they describe it in interviews. A similar method could be used to see how home educated children feel and behave in comparison to their schooled peers. Research is also needed to observe and document children's ideas about home education in Turkey. Using the tools and methods available with the latest technology, it should be possible to observe subjects without physically being in the teaching environment, provided that necessary permissions and consent are obtained.

Several parents in this study mentioned their own development as parents. A future study may be conducted on parental self-development, how they understand the need for it, which resources they prefer to use and the role of technology in parental self-development. The role of mothers in HE in Turkey was discussed in sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 and is consistent with culturally influenced gender-roles in Turkey; a future study on empowerment of the mothers and its effects on the HE of children in Turkey could be useful.

If and when a less restrictive environment for home education is maintained in Turkey, some statistics comparable to the schooling community could be collected, such as the national examination results of home educated children, with more representative data gathered from more subjects being compared with their schooled peers. However, one needs to consider again what should be compared to get a useful and trustable finding. It would not be useful to compare a relatively small group of potentially unrepresentative homeschooling parents or students with their millions of schooled counterparts. A more meaningful comparison might be between home educated and schooled children both of which groups have responsible, caring and passionate parents.

Expected Effects of this Study

Revisiting my personal positioning, my past experiences as a human being, as an educator and as a future parent shaped my interest in HE. Reading the international literature helped me to refine my research interests. I now plan to contribute to the subject through publications which start to provide empirical literature directly examining samples of home educating families in Turkey. By sharing the findings of this research and suggesting further research, I hope that more researchers will become interested in this rather uncharted territory. With the gradually increasing popularity of homeschooling, I anticipate that this study could kick-start a development to establish home education practices within a legal framework which would allow parents the right to choose HE for their children's education, with the government supporting families in making that choice.

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval



Shaped by the past, creating the future

20/10/2017

Hatice Buber-Kaya
hatice.buber@durham.ac.uk

Dear Hatice,

A group of home-schooling parents in Turkey: Their reasons, methods and use of technology (Provisional title) (2852)

I am pleased to inform you that your ethics application for the above research project has been approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee.

May we take this opportunity to wish you good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nadin Beckmann".

Dr Nadin Beckmann
School of Education Ethics Committee Chair

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

NB: This form was translated into Turkish

19.10.2017

Participant Information Sheet

(Provisional title) A group of homeschooling parents in Turkey: Their reasons, methods and use of technology.

You are invited to take part in a research study of “Turkish homeschooling parents’ reasons, methods and use of technology”. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

The study is conducted by Hatice Buber Kaya as part of her PhD studies at Durham University. This research project is supervised by Dr. Andrew Joyce-Gibbons (andrew.joyce-gibbons@durham.ac.uk) from the School of Education at Durham University.

The purpose of this study is to examine the families’ reasons for choosing homeschooling, pedagogic approaches to homeschooling and point of views on the use of

technology for their children's learning. Simply, this study will try to answer why you decided to home educate your children, how you do it and what makes you use or not use technology for your children's learning.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to give an appointment for an interview; the interview will be conducted via Skype or on the phone.

Your participation in this study will take approximately 45 minutes for a semi-structured interview. With your agreement, I will make a digital recording of the interviews. This is solely for the purposes of research and helps me in remembering what you and other people tell me. The recordings will be destroyed on completion of the research.

You are free to decide whether or not to participate. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for you.

Everything you say will be kept confidential. The records of this study will be kept secure and private. All files containing any information you provide are password protected. In any research report that may be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you individually. There will be no way to connect your name to your responses at any time during or after the study.

* This study is not funded/sponsored by any organization; however, I'm supported by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education to pursue a doctoral degree in the School of Education at Durham University, UK, and will take up a post at Kırklareli University,

Turkey, on completion.

If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at Hatice BUBER KAYA, hatice.buber@durham.ac.uk or by telephone.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee at Durham University (20th October 2017).

Hatice

BUBER

KAYA

Appendix C: Declaration of Informed Consent

NB: This form was translated into Turkish

Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to look into Turkish homeschooling parents' reasons, methods and use of technology.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that data collection will involve the use of recording devices.
- I have been informed that all of my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.

- I have been informed that the investigator will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. Hatice BUBER KAYA, School of Education, Durham University can be contacted via email: hatice.buber@durham.ac.uk or telephone.
- I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee, Durham University via email to ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

Date	Participant Name (please print)	Participant Signature
------	---------------------------------	-----------------------

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

Date	Signature of Investigator
------	---------------------------

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

NB: This schedule was translated into Turkish

After having two or three icebreaker questions, the researcher will explain the purpose of the interview, consent and permissions. The following five key questions are addressing the heart of the research focus. Following each key question, the areas expected to be covered by the participants are listed. In case any of them are not covered, the researcher will give a prompt.

1. Could you please tell me about yourself and your household?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Number of child(ren), number of child(ren) those are home educated.

- Educational and occupational background of the family.
- Place/importance of values and beliefs in the family's daily life.

2. Could you please tell me about your own experience of education and what you think is important in education?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Parents' experiences about education
- Pedagogic stances of the family
- Parents' beliefs about childhood
- The ideal education from parents' point of view

- Thoughts about Turkish education system

3. Could you please tell me how you and your family made the decision to home educate your child(ren)?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Reasons
 - Values and beliefs
 - Social concerns
 - Where they live (transportation problems, no close institutions that appeal to their values)
 - Concerns about the current educational system

- Parental beliefs about childhood
- The results they hoped to achieve
- Thoughts about home education
- The opportunities and the obstacles they evaluated at the process of decision
- Popularisation of home education idea in Turkey
- Parent's own educational experiences
- The sort of home education they practice (Flexi-schooling, homeschooling, school at home, unschooling)
- Was it a joint decision or did one parent need to persuade other parent to home educate their child(ren)?

- Reactions of extended family

4. Could you please tell me about the legal position on home education in Turkey as a current home educator?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Whether the family encountered any problems?
- How the family coped with the legal position in Turkey?
- Does the child(ren) or family have any contact with school or educational authorities?
 - If yes, what has been the school's and/or authorities' attitude to home education?

5. If I come to your house and see home education in action, what would it be like?

Could you please tell me what you do at home and/or out of home with your children on a regular day in terms of education?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Relationship with the (child)ren
- The family's experiences of home education
- Who is the primary education planner?
- Who is the primary teacher for their children?
- The sort of home education they practice (Flexi-schooling, homeschooling, school at home, unschooling)

- Place of values and beliefs in the household and curriculum.
- Structure of home education
- Curriculum
 - How they decide
 - Do they adopt from national schools or abroad?
- Resources
- Any particular educational theory that is followed by family.
- Does the family belong to a network of other home educating parents?

If so,

- Are there activities that they create or attend together?
- Child(ren)'s socialisation

6. In what sense and to what extent your family use digital resources?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- Which digital resources they use
- Purposes of their use
- What hopes and concerns they have about use of digital resources?
- How digital resources meet their expectations in terms of addressing their hopes and concerns.

- How they use digital resources
 - How parents use them to support themselves as home educators
 - How parents use them to support their children's home education
 - How children use them to learn

7. Do you think home education is working well for you and your child(ren)?

The areas expected to be covered by the participants:

- How the child(ren) feel(s)
- The child(ren)'s educational progress

- How family assesses it?
- The child(ren)'s social skills
- The opportunities and the obstacles they encountered
- The family's experiences of home education

Appendix E: The post that was shared to seek samples

NB: This post was translated into Turkish

Hello! It is a post for seeking help!

Some of you already know me, but for the ones who don't, I'm a PhD student whose study is on home educating families in Turkey. I learned a lot from you! So thank you!

I'm in the last year of my studies (hopefully!) and need your help for my research! Hopefully, it will be the first study in home education in Turkey and will be a good reference for others!

The purpose of this study is to examine the families' reasons for choosing homeschooling, pedagogic approaches to homeschooling and point of views on the use of technology for their children's learning. Simply, this study will try to answer why you decided to home educate your children, how you do it and what makes you use or not use technology for your children's learning.

If you agree to help me and willing to allow 45 minutes for a Skype (or Facebook messenger call) interview, please respond to this post, I will send you a private message to ask for an appointment and give more detail about the structure.

When commenting if you could indicate whether you practice unschooling (no structure at all), homeschooling (a curriculum is included), flexi-schooling) child goes to school either part-time or full-time) or deschooling (the child was withdrawn from school (or you think to withdraw your child from school) because the school experience was problematical), it will be beneficial.

Appendix F: Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form

Please note that the application form is a locked document and I could not change the appendix names that were provided in the first section of the form. The appendix A in the form below which is a summary of the research proposal is placed below the following form. However, please refer the appendixes above for the participant information sheet (Appendix B above) and the consent form (Appendix C above)

Durham University

School of Education

Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form

Research conducted by Staff and Students in the Department is subject to the standards set out in the Department Code of Practice on Research Ethics. The School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee will assess the research against the British Educational Research Association's *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011).

Before the commencement of all research this form should be completed, submitted to the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee, and their response received. No research can be conducted until ethical approval has been obtained. The Committee will be responsible for issuing certification that the research

meets ethical standards and will, if necessary, require changes to the research methodology or reporting strategy.

Appeals against the decision made by the School of Education Ethics Sub-committee should be made by email to ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk. Appeals will be heard by the Faculty Ethics sub-committee.

The application should contain:

- a. This completed (and signed) application form;
- b. Completed **appendix A**:
 - a. A summary of the research proposal. This should be no longer than one A4 page that details:
 - i. objectives of the study,
 - ii. description of the target cohort / sample,
 - iii. methods and procedure of data collection,
 - iv. data management, and

v. reporting strategies;

b. Outline of the interview schedule / survey / questionnaire / observation protocol or other data collection tools (if applicable depending on the methodology you plan to employ);

c. Completed **appendix B**: the participant information sheet (if applicable), and

d. Completed **appendix C**: the consent form (if applicable).

Templates for the summary of the research proposal, the participant information sheet and the consent form are provided as **appendices A-C** and can be amended as appropriate for the particular application.

Please include all the relevant documents above within one combined document (applications can be accepted in MS Word .doc or .docx format only).

Notes:

- **For non-empirical work** please complete your details on page 2, answer Question 1 and provide further details at Question 11 only. None of the appendices are required.

- **As all applications should be submitted electronically in MS Word format.** Electronic (scanned) signatures should be used (please paste an image of your signature into the declaration section).
- There is a **deadline of 15th of each month** for Ethics applications. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be processed within a 2 week turnaround time i.e. approval letters sent out by the end of the month assuming no queries. Applications received after the deadline will go into the next month.
- **No research should be conducted until ethical approval is obtained.**
- Incomplete applications will be returned without consideration.
- **Please send all documents to ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk, School of Education Research Office, tel: (0191) 334 8403.**

Application for Ethics Approval

Name of applicant	Hatice Buber Kaya
-------------------	-------------------

Email address	hatice.buber @durham.ac.uk
Category <i>[choose from list]</i>	Postgraduate student - Research programme
If "Other" please specify	
Student ID number	000226548
Programme <i>[students only – choose from list]</i>	PhD
If "Other" please specify	
Module code <i>[students only]</i>	XGA001

Name of supervisor <i>[students only]</i>	Andrew Joyce-Gibbons
Title of research project	(Provisional title) A group of homeschooling parents in Turkey: Their reasons, methods and use of technology
Date of start of data collection phase of the research <i>[must be a future date – no research to be conducted until ethical approval obtained]</i>	25/10/2017
Is the research funded <i>[staff only – choose from list]</i>	No
Name of funder <i>[staff only]</i>	

Name of Co-Is if applicable <i>[staff only]</i>	
Is this application subject to external ethical review? <i>[choose from list]</i>	No
If “yes” please specify who	

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY – Please do not delete this box

Please can reviewers enter the date and select the outcome from the drop-down outcome list

below? To open the drop-down list, please select “click here to choose from list”. To enter a comment, please click on the yellow highlighted area below and start typing.

Please note that as the review process is anonymous there is no requirement to include initials or signatures in this section.

REVIEWER RESPONSE

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Date:



Click here to choose from list



1) a. Does the proposed research project involve data from human participants (including secondary data)?	Yes
b. Is the research project <i>only</i> concerned with the analysis of secondary data (e.g. pre-existing data or information records). If yes, please continue with Q6-13	No
c. Is the work non-empirical (e.g. literature review, opinion piece, systematic literature review)	No

If yes, please complete Q11	
2) Will you provide your informants – prior to their participation – with a participant information sheet containing information about the following: a. The purpose of your research?	Yes
b. The voluntary nature of their participation?	Yes
c. Their right to withdraw from the study at any time?	Yes
d. What their participation entails?	Yes
e. How anonymity is achieved?	Yes
f. How confidentiality is secured?	Yes

<p>g. Whom to contact in case of questions or concerns?</p> <p><i>Please attach a copy of the information sheet (template available at appendix B) or provide details of alternative approach at Q13 of this form.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>3) Will you ask your informants to sign an informed consent form?</p> <p><i>Please attach a copy of the consent form (template available at appendix C) or provide details of alternative approach at Q13 of this form.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>4)</p> <p>a. Does your research involve covert surveillance?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>b. If yes, will you seek signed consent post hoc?</p>	<p>Click here to choose from list</p>

5)	Yes (if yes, please answer Q5b and Q5c below)
a. Will your data collection involve the use of sound or image recording devices?	
b. If yes, will you seek signed consent?	Yes
c. Please specify the type of recording	Audio
6) Will your research report be available to informants and the general public without restrictions placed by sponsoring authorities?	Yes
7)	
a. Does the research involve unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults within an activity that is deemed as regulated and would therefore require DBS clearance?	No

<p>b. If yes, can you confirm that DBS clearance is in place or will be in place prior to commencing your research?</p>	<p>Click here to choose from list</p>
<p>8) How will you guarantee confidentiality and anonymity?</p> <p>No personal information will be asked or collected from the participants other than demographic data. Names of the participants and their children will not be recorded. Additional personal data, i.e. names of the places they live, number of their children, their occupation will not be recorded. (Even if the participants mention some data by mistake, those parts of the recordings will be deleted immediately after interviews to prevent unauthorised use, in case the record may get lost or stolen).</p> <p>Interview recordings will not be shared with anyone outside of the study. If any images are needed to be used, they will only be taken with permission, and if done so, faces will not be revealed.</p>	
<p>9) What are the implications of your research for your informants?</p>	

Even though there is not any expected harm to the participants, the families may feel discomfort due to the unregulated situation of home educating in Turkey. While home educating is not illegal, not sending the kids to school is unlawful and families may face a fine if convicted. In practice, no family has been fined apart from some cases where forced marriage or child labour was the main concern.

The group of informants in this research is only home educating parents who do not have child labour or forced marriage intentions. I will show maximum effort to make them feel comfortable and safe to share information.

I read the blogs of some home educating parents and their discussions on the subject led me to a social media platform, formed by a group of home educating and interested parents. In order to join that group, an administrator had to approve your request, but at that time there was no other requirement but being a woman. After becoming a member of their closed social media group, I attended their meetings and introduced my intentions and myself so that they can trust me and feel able to share information for my study.

10) Are there any other ethical issues arising from your research?

The research is divided into two parts. The first, preliminary part involves observing online communities, blogs and pages on home educating in Turkey. The observation data will be only used as preliminary and background information.

When I first joined the aforementioned social media group the number of members was about

4000. After a while the number of members increased to over 15000 and the newcomers' questions occupied the group wall more than the practising mothers' posts to share their actual experiences and ideas. The initial group members expressed frustration about answering the same questions repeatedly and established a new closed group which is open to both genders. This time in order to be a member of the new group, people were asked to answer a couple of questions about their intention for being a part of this group. When the second aforementioned group was established to include only practising home educator parents, I sent a brief explanation of my interest in the topic as a researcher. My explanation was found to be sufficient by the administrator (whom I had met face-to-face before). I was kindly welcomed by her to the new group.

As it was mentioned before, the observation data will be only used as preliminary and background information so no consent from the members of the aforementioned social media group will be needed since the group administrators knew my research interest in home education and accepted me in the closed group with that knowledge. If any of the comments or posts from the online communities (the ones that are closed groups in social media platform) are needed for use in the research, the commenters' or posters' (whose pre-existing comments are related to research) e-mail consent will be sought for the use of their data. If a member does not give consent, their information will not be used.

The second part of the research is the main data collection exercise. It involves interviews with the participants. Interviews will be conducted via Skype or on the phone. I will reassure the interviewees that they are not being assessed on their ability to teach or on parenting their children. They will be informed that I am only interested in their home educating experiences and their use of

digital resources in this journey. Please see Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B). After they have been informed they will be given an e-mail consent form to be signed and returned electronically. Please see Declaration of Informed Consent (Appendix C).

As pilot observations and preliminary data suggest, political or religious concerns may be a factor in participants' decisions about home educating. I am aware that "political opinions and religious and other beliefs of a similar nature" are considered as sensitive information according to Data Protection Act 1998. I will ensure that such sensitive data is handled with the following principles enumerated in the aforementioned law, as the data to be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for specified purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure from unauthorised access or alteration
- not transferred to countries without adequate data protection.

11) ***For non-empirical projects only***, please provide a brief overview of your project, approx.150 words max. Please include the research aims and objectives and your research approach (*Appendices A to*

C are not required).

12) Will your research either

- Involve the study of an organisation which is proscribed under the terms of the Terrorism Act, or require accessing materials produced by or in support of such an organisation (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>)

Or

- Involve the study of any other current organisation which, as part of its agreed programme, advocates the use of violence to achieve its aims, or require accessing materials produced by or in support of such an organisation.

If you answer yes to either of the above then please contact ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk for an additional appendix to complete.

For further information please refer to the University policy <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/research.office/local/policy/Security-sensitivematerialsFINAL1.0.pdf>

13) Please provide any additional information relevant to your application

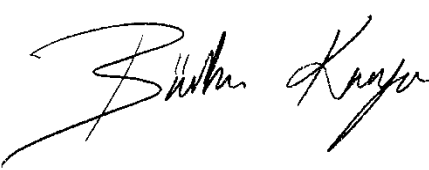
During the course of the project, I will check whether the participants are still happy to continue. I will make sure that the participants know that they can tell me if they wish to withdraw at any time. I will remain alert to my participants' reactions when I talk to them especially about their values and beliefs to make sure that they are not feeling distressed by the topic. I will assure people that their answers will be anonymous.

Declaration

I have read the Department's Code of Practice on Research Ethics and believe that my research complies fully with its precepts.

I will not deviate from the methodology or reporting strategy without further permission from the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee.

I am aware that it is my responsibility to inform the organisation in which data collection takes place (e.g., school) that ethical approval from the School of Education Ethics Committee has been given, prior to commencing data collection.

<p>Applicant signature*</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>19/10/2017</p>
---	-------------------------------

<p>Application discussed and agreed by supervisor <i>[students only]</i></p> <p>Supervisor signature*</p>	<p>Date</p>
---	-------------

**To enable electronic submission of applications, please use electronic (scanned) signatures.*

Please note that typed signatures cannot be accepted.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A - Summary of the research proposal

This project aims to look into Turkish homeschooling parents' reasons, methods and use of technology. I intend to examine the families' reasons for choosing homeschooling, pedagogic approaches to homeschooling and point of views on the use of technology for their children's learning.

The study is descriptive in nature and is concerned with parents' perceptions of home education, approaches to home education and points of view on digital resources. The study is confined to perspectives on home education in Turkey at one point in time. A longitudinal study would have been too time-consuming, and the lack of any systematic information on home education in Turkey meant that a descriptive rather than experimental design was needed. Therefore, a cross-sectional research design that employs semi-structured interview technique is used to obtain in-depth data to reach the research aims.

The Turkish home educating parents' blogs and social media groups (which are the narrative of experiences) will be used as background preliminary information. In order to collect data, interviews will be conducted.

The project's first part will consist of preliminary observation of group posts from a social media platform and blogs. In terms of observations, I will be only observing selected past posts about the use of digital resources and will not take any active role. If any observation or blog is worth considering for inclusion in my thesis, I will ask the commenters for their e-mail consent.

I will be using the digital world that allows me to post a brief synopsis of my research on the social media group's wall and seek voluntary participants. Furthermore, snowball technique will be utilised to gain more possible participants by asking the ones who agreed to an interview with if they can suggest another home educator parent who might be willing to share their experiences and ideas for this unique research in Turkey.

Due to the nature of the subject the interviews would have to take place in a relatively private area. Since the families live in different cities and have different time schedules, arranging with them an interview to be conducted on Skype that can take place in their home or private offices looked like the most convenient solution.

Prior to the interview the research participants will be provided with consent form and an information sheet explaining the details of the study. I will also provide verbal explanation and answers to any questions. To take part in the research will be entirely voluntary. I will check with the participants before I proceed to the next step at the key stages in the interview.

Symbolic interactionism is proposed as the theoretical framework for data analysis. This is an approach to social qualitative research, which aims to elicit and examine the meanings held by the participants, for example in relation to aspects of their decision to home educate and curriculum and pedagogies they use in home education.

The interviews will be done in Turkish and as a multilingual research due to constraints of time and also potential for interpretive era, I am not going to translate all data collected. I am going to translate the pilot interviews for description and approval with supervisors, and also going to translate exempla parts to show the conclusion based around these themes are justified by the data collected.

NVivo will be used in data analysis. This software analysis of qualitative data enables the researcher to generate 'Tree nodes' and 'Free nodes' which can be seen as themes and sub themes which emerge from repeatedly reading the interview transcripts and/or literature review. NVivo will be used to define a set of codes based on my literature review which will enable me to answer my research questions.

Appendix G:Pseudo names for the subjects and their children

SUBJECTS	# of CHILDREN	HE CHILDREN
S1	1	HE-PRE-1
S2	3	HE-SCH-1 HE-SCH-2
S3	2	HE-PRE-2 HE-SCH-3
S4	3	HE-PRE-3 HE-PRE-4 HE-SCH-4
S5	2	HE-SCH-5 HE-SCH-6
S6	2	HE-SCH-7
S7	3	HE-SCH-8 HE-SCH-9

S8	2	HE-PRE-5
S9	1	HE-PRE-6
S10	3	HE-PRE-7 HE-SCH-10
S11	2	HE-PRE-8 HE-SCH-11
S12	2	HE-PRE-9
S13	1	HE-SCH-12
S14	2	HE-PRE-10 HE-SCH-13
S15	3	HE-SCH-14 HE-SCH-15
S16	3	HE-SCH-16 HE-SCH-17
S17	2	HE-SCH-18 HE-SCH-19

S18	2	HE-SCH-20 HE-SCH-21
S19	1	HE-SCH-22
S20	3	HE-SCH-23 HE-SCH-24
S21	2	HE-PRE-11 HE-SCH-25
S22	4	HE-PRE-12
S23	1	HE-SCH-26
S24	1	HE-SCH-27
S25	4	HE-PRE-13
S26	3	HE-SCH-28 HE-SCH-29 HE-PRE-14
S27	1	HE-PRE-15

S28	2	HE-SCH-30 HE-SCH-31
S29	2	HE-PRE-16 HE-PRE-17
S30	2	HE-PRE-18 HE-SCH-32
S31	3	HE-PRE-19 HE-SCH-33
S32	2	HE-SCH-34
S33	1	HE-SCH-35
S34	1	HE-PRE-20
S35	1	HE-PRE-21
S36	1	HE-PRE-22
S37	4	HE-SCH-36 HE-SCH-37 HE-PRE-23

S38	2	HE-PRE-24
S39	1	HE-PRE-25
S40	2	HE-SCH-38 HE-SCH-39
S41	1	HE-SCH-40
S42	2	HE-PRE-26 HE-SCH-41
S43	2	HE-PRE-27 HE-PRE-28
S44	1	HE-PRE-29

