The demographic profile, wellbeing, and motivations of families who home educate in Australia

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Monash University in 2017

Faculty of Education

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Abstract

There is very little information available about parents who home educate their children in Australia. This study sought to empirically investigate the demographic profile, wellbeing and motivations of parents who home educate in Australia. The participants of this study were 231 parents who home educate their children and a comparison group of 289 parents who use schools as their primary education method. The demographic profile and wellbeing levels of parents who home educate were investigated and compared to the comparison group and to published reports of parents who home educate in America. Using moderation and mediation, the relationships between sources of stress and wellbeing constructs were examined to consider whether there were differences between the home educating group and the comparison group. It was found that there were a number of significant differences between the home education group and the comparison group. Broadly the results indicated that parents who home educate reported high levels of wellbeing and the negative impact of stress on wellbeing was reduced in these parents. However, there were some divergent results, especially in the area of physical quality of life. In addition, the primary and contributing motivations of parents who home educate were investigated. Historically the primary motivations to home educate were related to ideology and religion. However, this study found that supporting a child with an impairment or disability and building family bonds were also important primary motivations. The investigation of contributing motivations highlighted that there were distinct patterns which had not been reported previously. Although replication is needed, the results of this study are important for education service providers and policy makers as they provide an empirical foundation for understanding this population in Australia.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.
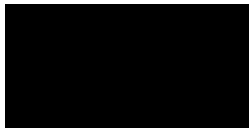
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Date: 1st of May 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank the parents who took part in this research project. Without their time and effort the study would not have been possible. To the parents who home educate their children, I owe a special debt of gratitude. Despite my own concerns about your desire to be involved in this research, your willing involvement is greatly appreciated. I only hope that the findings of this paper and the research that may flow from it, help you as much as you have helped me.

To my supervisors Dr. Louise McLean and Prof. Dennis Moore thank you for your help, support, guidance, and perspectives over this fascinating, if lengthy, journey. At times I am sure you did not think I would get here, and without you I most certainly would not have. Louise, who would have thought when we started this journey in 2005 we would have ended up here?

To my fellow students thank you for just being there. Having someone to talk to who is going through the same stressful experience is so valuable. To those of you still writing, or current students flicking though this for ideas, keep track of your references!! Zoe, this thesis is partly your fault, thank you!

To my Mother and Sister, thank you! So much of this thesis was only made possible because of you. You are responsible for not only the genesis of this research but for keeping me in one piece to finish it. I am not sure how to repay the time and effort you have both put in to helping me finish this, but perhaps finishing it is reward enough for us all.

In loving memory of Les and Kit Watts,

without you none of this was possible.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This study was designed to provide the first large scale empirical exploration of parents who home educate in Australia. More specifically it aimed to address three key questions: Who are they, how are they, and why do they home educate? A final overarching question was, do they differ from parents who do not home educate in terms of their demographic profile and wellbeing? Specific issues to be investigated included the parent's levels of education and income. Family demographics, such as the number of children in the family and the parent's relationship status were also investigated. The study also considered the wellbeing of parents who home educate by collecting data in a wide range of wellbeing domains and comparing them to parents who did not home educate. This was further probed by examining the pattern of relationships between stress and wellbeing in the parent groups. Finally the motivations parents have for home educating were considered. Through the exploration of these key questions it was hoped that a foundation for developing a comprehensive understanding of parents who home educate in Australia could be achieved. This would then provide parents, educators, and policy makers with an empirical basis for their engagement in the practice of home education.

Study rationale

In the recent Parliamentary review of home education in New South Wales (New South Wales Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014), it was estimated that there were between 16,400 and 20,000 children being home educated in NSW. This is despite the fact that there were only 3,238 actually registered. This illustrates the lack of even the most

basic of information available to policy makers and researchers in the area of home

education in Australia.

The aim of this thesis was to empirically investigate the demographic profile, the

psychological wellbeing, and the motivations of parents who home educate in Australia.

Although there is often media, educator, policy maker, and community interest in home

education, there is very little empirical information regarding home education in the

psychological or educational literature. Through a large scale data collection and statistical

analysis this thesis allows for the first major empirical study of the wellbeing, motivations,

and demographic profile of parents who home educate in Australia. This will provide future

researchers and policy makers with a sound empirical base and will supplement the current

information from anecdotal conclusions, small samples, and individual reports that currently

exist. It was also expected that this information would provide home educating parents with

additional insights into the broader home educating community in Australia.

The need for the study

Home education is a poorly understood educational choice. Very little is known about

parents who engage in this practices. The academic outcomes, wellbeing, and cognitive

development of children who are home educated are also of importance. However, there is

a need to understand the parents involved in home education before comprehensive

understanding of child outcomes can be achieved. This study aimed to achieve this

understanding of home educating parents by comparing a large sample of parents who

home educate with their non-home educating peers. Through this process it was possible to

see the unique aspects, as well as the similarities, of parents who home educate and those

who do not.

The scope of the study

This research aimed to provide the first large scale empirical report of parents who home educate in Australia. It specifically considered their demographic characteristics, their wellbeing and their motivations to home educate. This study collected data from 231 Australian parents who home educate. Data were also collected from 289 Australian parents who use schools as their primary education tool. All parents completed a questionnaire that had a range of demographic questions, lists of motivations, and psychological wellbeing scales. Parents who home educated also responded to a series of questions regarding their motivations to home educate.

In order to address the study aims, a pool of parents who do not home educate, were used as a comparison group. There were a number of analyses completed which compared the demographic profile, level of wellbeing, and the relationships between stress and wellbeing in parents who home educate to parents who did not. Australian parents who home educate were also compared to their American counterparts in a limited number of demographic areas. The America data were obtained from published reports.

Definition of Key Terms

Home education

The terminology used in the home education literature, in part because research in the area is in its infancy is still to be clearly defined. In this study "home education" refers to parents who take on the primary responsibility for overseeing and implementing the education of their children (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2015). Internationally, and increasingly in Australia, this is referred to as home schooling or homeschooling (Donnelly, 2012). However, the term home education was selected to be

used in this study as it is more inclusive. Many parents who have removed their children

from schools dislike the term 'schooling' attached to their educational activities and the

term home education is still commonly used in Australia (e.g., Jackson, 2010). Although it is

inclusive of a wide range of educational practices, for the purposes of this research it does

not include parents using a formal school curriculum in a correspondence format with

external teachers monitoring progress or tailoring content. As part of the data collection

parents were offered the opportunity to detail their use of such programs.

Parents using highly structure school at home programs were not included in this

research project as, although parents are still highly involved in their child's education, there

is a reduced workload. These parents contribute a substantial amount of time to the

education of their children, however a third party is responsible for the development of

materials and monitoring progress. Although some studies in Australia have included

parents using correspondence tools (e.g., Harding, 2011), it was decided that inclusion of

this group of parents in this study would present an unnecessary confounding variable.

Therefore, in this study the term, "parents who home educate" specifically relates to

parents who implement, provide, manage, and monitor the education of their child.

Methods of home education

There is a diverse range of educational practices employed in home education. These

typically range from essentially a school structure being implemented at home (structured)

to child led learning with few if any formal lessons (unstructured). Structured home

education environments can be highly formalised with set times and activities that form

part of a larger curriculum. In contrast, unstructured home education environments may

include no formal classes or activities at all. Most Australian families who home educate lie

somewhere on a continuum between the two extremes and may often use elements of

each and over time shift along the continuum (Barratt-Peacock, 2003; Jackson, 2009:

Thomas, 1998). Many parents report beginning to home educate with a structured

approach before moving to a more child centred and informal method of home education as

they become more experienced (Thomas & Pattison, 2007). For the purposes of comparison

this study has used the three classifications of structured, eclectic, and unstructured.

As part of the data collection for this research, parents were asked what method of

home education they used. Parents could respond structured, unstructured, or eclectic and

were given a brief overview of each to allow for the best match possible. Parents who

selected eclectic were then offered the opportunity to select where on the continuum, from

unstructured to structured, best represented their practices. Participants who rated

themselves in the lower 25% (unstructured) were allocated to the unstructured group and

those in the top 25% (structured) of the continuum were allocated to the structured group

for all analyses in this study. The remaining parents were classified as using an eclectic

approach. It is important to consider how this allocation may impact on the results. Using

this method of allocation the structured and unstructured groups represent those parents

who reported using a particular method (structure or unstructured) or those who reported

using an eclectic approach which heavily relied on one of the methods. The eclectic group

used educational tools and relied on philosophies which drew heavily from both the

structured and unstructured method. This means that the structured and unstructured

groups did not only represent the parents who report using structure or unstructured

methods, but was inclusive of those parents who self-reported employing these educational

philosophies extensively. Given the current under-investigation of home education

populations a clear empirical delineation in grouping educational practices is not possible.

However, Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse (2011), used a somewhat similar method in grouping the educational practices in their study. The current study used this method to gain insights into the parents who extensively used either structured or unstructured approaches as well as those using broadly eclectic approaches.

Motivations to home educate

Parents who home educate have a wide range of motivations. This research sought to gain an understanding of why parents chose to home educate their children. To do this in a way that allowed for statistical comparison, the data collection questionnaire listed a range of motivations that parents could select as their primary and contributing motivations in their decision to home educate. These were derived from the literature in the area but also expanded to capture a wide range of motivations.

Van Galen (1988) in her seminal work, was the first to publish the conceptual separation of religious and ideological motivations for parents who home educate. She used the terms ideologues (to represent religious motivations) and pedagogues (to represent ideological motivations). Although Spiegler (2010) has highlighted that any classification of motivations of parent to home education is problematic, many studies have reported a dichotomy of religion and ideology as the key motivations for parents to home educate (e.g., Mayberry, 1988). However, more recent investigations (e.g., Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Van Pelt, 2003) have also highlighted that educating a child with a disability or impairment is also an important third motivation category. For this reason the following potential motivations were developed and included in the questionnaire:

- Allow the child to gain a religious education

- Allow the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure

- Allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment

- Dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools

- Dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools

- Dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability

- Desire to build stronger family bonds

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties

- Other (with the opportunity to write a response)

This array of motivational options encompasses both pull and push factors (Patrick, 1999), the religion and ideological concepts of Van Galen (1988), issues related to parenting children with a disability or impairment (e.g., Reilly, Chapman, & O'Donoghue, 2002), as well as providing parents the opportunity to list their own specific motivations.

Stress and wellbeing

There are a wide range of measures of stress and wellbeing. This study has selected a diverse range of variables to capture a broad range of stress sources and measures of wellbeing. The primary measures of stress that are used throughout this research are family

functioning, parenting practice, and perceived stress. These variables all have the potential

to negatively impact on parental wellbeing. The primary measures of wellbeing used were

life satisfaction, anxiety, depressive symptoms, four aspects of quality of life (physical,

psychological, environmental, and social), and optimism. The study also used measures of

optimism, social support, and family functioning as resistance factors. Resistance factors are

variables that may protect or increase the vulnerability of an individual to the negative

impact of stress on wellbeing. As is discussed in the following section and Chapter 3 a

comprehensive model of wellbeing was used. Within this model, using separate analyses,

variables such as family functioning can be utilised as resistance factors and measures of

stress. This allowed for complex analysis of indirect relationships between the variables in

the home educating and non-home educating groups. It is acknowledged that these

variables do not cover the entire spectrum of wellbeing. As with Norlin and Broberg's (2012)

comparative study of parenting groups, this study focused on measures such as mood, child

behaviour, stress, and family dynamics. However, the current study also included quality of

life factors and specific variables such as worldview which were relevant to the study area.

This broad collection of selected variables represents a wide variety of factors commonly

investigated in the field.

Models of wellbeing

The investigation of parental wellbeing is a complex endeavour. To facilitate this, the

current research employed Wallander and Varni's (1998) risk and resistance model (RRM).

While this is not the only model to consider the interactions of stress and adjustment in

families (see Burlew, Telfair, Colangelo, & Wright, 2000) it was utilised as it is commonly

used in the literature (e.g., McLean, Harvey, & Mutimer , 2014), including work with diverse

cultures (e.g. Guðmundsdóttir, Guðmundsdóttir, & Elklit, 2006). In particular the RRM has previously been utilised in the investigation of parental wellbeing in parents of children who are typically developing (e.g. Moore, Gordon, & McLean, 2011). The conceptual model is suited to investigating the relationship between stress and wellbeing with a focus on additional variables that may influence these relationships. Using a well-established model also allows for comparison in the literature and for a broad understanding amongst a range of professionals, academics, and parent groups.
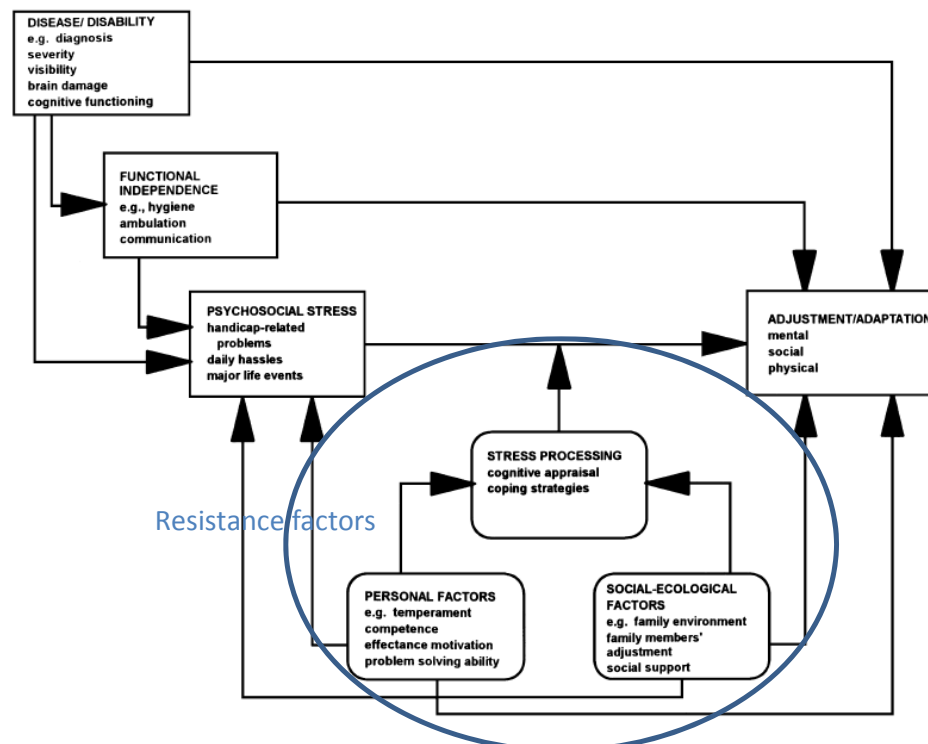
Figure 1.1. Effects of pediatric chronic physical disorders on child and family well-being
Note: From "Effects of pediatric chronic physical disorders on child and family well-being" by Wallander and Varni (1998). Reprinted with permission: 3542781459978.

As can be seen in Figure 1.1, the RRM considers a range of stress and adjustment pathways as well as resistance mechanisms. This study considered the relationship between psychological stress and wellbeing for parents who home educate and those who do not.

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Through the use of moderation analysis it was possible to determine if there was a significantly different relationship between stress and wellbeing for the two parent groups.

This study also considered the potential role of resistance factors in the relationship between stress and wellbeing. This analysis relied on the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualisations of stress, within the RRM, which highlighted that individual characteristics and cognitive appraisals could influence the relationship between stress and adjustment. This study used mediation analysis to compare resistance pathways. This allowed an analysis to be conducted which compared the resistance factors in parents who home educate and those who do not. It is important to note that this study is not exploring wellbeing in the traditional manner (e.g., Moore, et al., 2011), rather it used wellbeing as a tool for the comparison of home educating parents and their non-home educating peers. This has provided a comprehensive investigation of similarities and differences in the relationships between stress and wellbeing in parents who home educate and those that do not.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis maintained a traditional reporting structure: introduction, method, results and discussion. The following section briefly details the content of each the 10 chapters that make up the thesis.

Chapter 1 is an *Introduction* to the Thesis on the demographic profile, wellbeing, and motivations of parents who home educate their children in Australia. It details the rationale, need, and scope of the study. It also defines key terms and provided a brief overview of the wellbeing model used.

Chapter 2 provides an introduction to home education and the foundations of the practice. It also provides a review of the early studies into home education in Australia.

Chapter 3 contains the literature review of the stress and wellbeing variables that underpin the comparison of the home educating and non-home educating parent groups. This chapter reviews the literature on the psychological constructs which are included in the research questionnaire. Given the number of constructs, the review focuses on the literature that is most relevant to parents who have children of school age or are engaging in non-school based educational frameworks. This chapter also outlines the framework within which the wellbeing of parents who home educate will be considered.

Chapter 4 provides a review of the limited research literature that was available regarding parents who home educate, with a particular focus on their motivations, wellbeing, and demographic profile. The Australian and international literature and academic comment on these topics within the home education field was considered.

Chapter 5 details the research *aims and hypothesis.* The primary aim of this research was to empirically investigate the demographic characteristics, wellbeing, and motivations of parents who home educate in Australia and compare them to parents who do not home educate.

Chapter 6 is the *method* for the entire study. It details the samples and the scales used in data collection. It also contains the preliminary data analysis required to create structural equivalence in the three samples.

Chapter 7 covers the *analysis and comparison of demographic characteristics and wellbeing* between the home education sample and the non-home education sample. Where there was sufficient available data, parents who home educate in Australia were compared to parents who home educate in America.

Chapter 8 details the *development and comparison of risk and resistance models* between home educating and comparison groups. Utilising moderation and mediational analyses, a comparison was made between models produced for each of the groups.

Chapter 9 details the *analyses of parental motivations to home educate.* This chapter investigates the primary and contributing motivations of parents to home educate. It also examines patterns of primary and contributing motivations. Finally the differences in motivation between parents using different home education methodologies were considered.

Chapter 10 is the *discussion*. The focus of this chapter was to evaluate the hypotheses and to link the results of the current study to past research. It also contains the limitations of the study, future research directions and concluding findings.

Chapter Two: Home Education, a Brief History and the Australian Origins

This chapter will provide an overview of home education and parents who home educate. It will also consider the origins of home education in Australia. The following chapter will review the literature in regards to the stress and wellbeing in parents. Chapter 4 will consider the demographic characteristics of home educators, their motivations, and the impact on parental wellbeing of home education. It is important to note that there is very limited published literature on home educators in an Australian context, therefore international material will also be presented to provide the most comprehensive overview of this group.

What is home education?

There is a relatively small group of parents who have decided to undertake the educational instruction of the children in the family rather than utilising the schools offered by governments, religious organisations and private entities. These families are said to be engaging in home schooling, home education, unschooling or deschooling (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). The global term that will be used throughout this thesis to describe this group is home educators, as it is the most inclusive. Although broad, it does not include families engaged in government/independent schooling at home (e.g. distance education or school of the air). Home education specifically relates to parents who have actively decided to monitor and provide for the educational needs of their school aged children. There is no formal national definition of home education in Australia, each State and level of government has its own definition (Allan & Jackson, 2010). Each of these State definitions

revolve around parents taking the primary responsibility for the educational needs of the child that a school would typically provide. In the context of this study, the term home education relates to the concept of parents being the driving force in their child's education rather than any specific learning philosophies, teaching techniques, or structures used in child education. As this review chapter will highlight, families who choose to home educate do so for a range of reasons and utilise different tools and techniques in attempting to meet the needs of the child.

It is important to note that although some parents are staunch supporters of home education or passionate anti school advocates, there are many who are using home education as a tool for a specific child in their family. In America up to 50% of families who home educate a child also have a child attending school and 21% of home educated children also attended some school (Isenberg, 2006). In Australia, Jackson and Allan (2010), report that children move between home education and formal education institutions with little difficulty and gain access to tertiary education. Therefore, it is important to consider these varied parental perspectives on education when critically evaluating the literature on home education.

The quality of scholarship in the area of home education is diverse; it is yet to develop into a comprehensive body of knowledge that exists for other educational contexts. According to Kunzman and Gaither (2013), much of the research is qualitative and the few quantitative studies that do exist suffer from methodological or philosophical flaws. Therefore the generalisability of these findings is limited. This review will cover the key findings in relation to home education. It will focus on peer reviewed published material, but will include governmental reports, state government reviews into home education, and

research theses to provide the most comprehensive review of the current research and theoretical findings in the area of home education in Australia.

A brief history of home education

There has been a long history of non-school based education. In Australia and elsewhere in the developed world, schools as they currently exist are relatively new entities and there is a far longer tradition of families, experts, and tutors educating children in their home or communities (Gaither, 2008a). Throughout the world parents and skilled locals trained future generations in the skills needed to survive and thrive in their environment. However, cultures dating back to the first century have had a requirement of formal schooling for their young people. As cities, states, and nations rose to dominance they implemented their own requirements for compulsory schooling or abolished schools. According to Davis (2011), compulsory education in America began in Massachusetts in 1647, before this all schooling had been carried out in the home or in church and private schools. In Europe the first national enacted compulsory primary schools for children of all socioeconomic groups began in 19th and 20th century in Prussia and Denmark (Soysal & Strang, 1989). This form of schooling together with religious and private schools continued to dominate the educational landscape in America. By the beginning of the Second World War almost all children in America were receiving at least a primary school education (Gaither, 2008b). However, after the turbulent social developments and the rise of a larger government by the 1970s, young parents from both the conservative political right and the activist on the left were looking for an educational option that better met the needs of their children (Gaither, 2008a). Parents on the activist left were looking for an escape from the structure and rigidity of the school system that they had rebelled against. Those on the

conservative right were looking for an option that offered the religious instruction they felt

was necessary in their children's lives and was not provided by government schools. It is also

possible that both groups were looking for an education system which was free from the

influence of each other.

It is unclear what proportion of home educators in America in the early years were

religious. Due to the influence of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA),

which was established in 1983, the power and influence of religious home educators rose

quickly (Kunzman, 2010). This power was clearly in evidence when a major campaign was

launched against US Legislation that HSLDA believed would negatively impact on home

educators (Stevens, 2001). In response HSLDA and other home education groups flooded US

Senators with thousands of telephone calls and amendments were made to the legislation

which clearly excluded home educators from the Bill (See Stevens for a comprehensive

discussion of the issue). There are a range of motivations for home education that will be

covered in chapter 4. However, broadly, very little is known about parental motivations in

Australia as an entity or as they relate to aspects of parental wellbeing.

The core aspect of home education is that parents take on the primary responsibility

for the education of their children (Thomas & Pattison, 2007). The tools, techniques,

methods and institutions used within home education varies greatly across families (See

Kunzman, 2009). In the popular media, home educating families are often portrayed as

engaging in a highly structured "homeschooling" system while others are described as using

an unstructured "unschooling" approach (e.g., Whigham, 2015). Homeschooling is

essentially a formalised school setting in the home, typically run by a parent or occasionally

a teacher (or multiple teachers). In this format, teaching takes place at home but is

organised in much the same way as it is in traditional schools, with formalised materials and

specific times for each subject area (For an insight into this format of home education see

Kunzman, 2009). However, due to the low teacher-child ratio (often 1:1 or 1:2) many

families complete the formal teaching activities in the morning and allow free play or extra

curricula activities in the afternoon (Barratt-Peacock, 1997). A second method of home

education is unschooling. This method of education allows a student to direct his or her own

learning goals and is based on the work of John Holt (1964). For these families learning takes

place through tailoring educational experiences to contrived or naturally occurring real

world stimuli. For example, learning mathematics through family budgeting, geography

through planning a holiday, or history though visiting a museum. Activities such as these are

the predominant educational context for unschooling families. While these dyadic

conceptualisations are useful for the media (and occasionally academic) discussion, most

Australian families who home educate lie somewhere on a continuum between the two

extremes and may often use elements of each and over time shift along the continuum

(Barratt-Peacock, 2003; Jackson, 2009: Thomas, 1998). Many parents report beginning to

home educate with a structured approach before moving to a more child centred and

informal method of home education (Thomas & Pattison, 2007). There have been similar

findings in international contexts such as China (Sheng, 2014). This shift in method and

philosophy highlights the complexity of conducting research with parents who home

educate. Barratt-Peacock (1997) reported that some families focus on building on the

strengths of their children rather than trying to remedy the areas they were having difficulty

with. Home educating families have a strong focus on maximising the education of their

children, within their cultural context, but do so in a highly flexible and evolving manner

(Thomas, 1998). However, studies into the motivations of parents to home educate can

provide further insights.

According to the early research on the motivations for home education in America,

parents were seeking to reduce the modernisation and urbanisation of their families and

their child's education (Mayberry & Knowles, 1989). More recent research in Australia

suggests there is a great deal of diversity in the characteristics of individuals involved in

home based education (Barratt-Peacock, 1997). There had been agreement, although not

universal, that the motivation for families to home educate falls into two broad categories:

religious/moral or idealistic/systematic. It has been suggested that there was a transitioning

phase in America and Canada in the early 1980s from a dominance, if not an actual

numerical majority, of parents home educating their children due to a counter cultural

idealism to a majority of home educating parents making the decision for religious reasons

(Arai, 2000; Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992).

The most recent data from the Institute on Education Sciences' (IES:2013) American

National Household Education Surveys Program revealed that concern about environment

of schools (91%), a dissatisfaction with academic instruction at schools (77%) and a desire to

provide religious instruction (74%) were the most important reasons for parents to home

educate their children. In contrast, in Australia the QLD governmental review of home

education (McHugh, 2003) reported that of the 351 parents who were registered home

educators and responded to a questionnaire, the most common reasons for home educating

were that of peer pressure/influence/distraction (29.6%). This was followed by more

personal/one-on-one [teaching] (25.6%), no faith in education system teaching (21.3%) and

religious beliefs (20.7). However, as Spiegler (2010) details there is often a lack of

consistency in the use of these categories and there is little evidence to support their use.

The contrast between the American and the Australian data highlights this issue. In both the

American and Australian surveys parents could select more than one response, yet the most

popular response in the Australian data was less than a third as popular as the American top response. The American questionnaire had seven possible responses with two options relating to special needs or health problems whereas the Australian question had 14 options, one of which related to child health. Further the Australian version had three questions relating to security/bullying and the American version only had one question relating to a concern about the school environment. This makes comparisons between findings very difficult. It is encouraging that the more recent IES American data does ask for the parents' single most important reason as well as their contributing reasons which the older Australian data does not. This allows for a more complex understanding of contributing reason as well as the most important. The most important single reason in the American data was concern about environment of other schools and other. The other category was not specifically defined, however, the report's notes reveal that this included issues such as family time, finances, and travel. This information would seem to indicate that home educators are reporting diverse reasons for choosing to home educate.

Although there are a range of motivations, home education has again entered the spotlight with a strong religious undertone. American and international media have been focused on two key religious figures in home education, the National Football League (Gridiron) figure Tim Tebow and Rick Santorum, a candidate for the 2012 Republican Party American Presidential Nomination. There have been efforts by supporters of home education to have "Tim Tebow" legislation passed in some States in America allowing home educated children to participate in school sports (Rotherham, 2012). Rick Santorum stated that he would home educate his children in the White House if he won the Republican Party Primaries and the Presidential Election (Hibbered, 2012). The rise in media coverage of these two individuals has continued to elevate the public perception of home educating

families as being highly religious. Both Tebow and Santorum are openly religious. Tebow

kneels in prayer after scoring and Santorum has indicated that he does not believe in a

separation of Church and State (Goodman, 2012). Despite the reduced rates of home

educators reporting that religion was the most important motivation, the media attention of

parents who home educate for religious reasons has increased.

Although there has been a predominance of the binary ideological and religious

motivations for home educating, there has recently been an increase in the research into

parents home educating their child with a disability (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Parsons &

Lewis, 2010). It is not clear from this research if there has been an increase in parents home

educating children with special needs or if there has simply been an increase in the level of

interest by researchers in these families. The 10 parents in Kidd and Kaczmarek's qualitative

study reported that they home educated out of dissatisfaction with the support the

traditional school system provided, rather than a specific religious/moral or

idealistic/systematic perspective. Examining nationally representative education data, Cook,

Bennett, Lane, and Mataras, (2013) report that up to 2.6% of American children with a

disability in 2007 were being home educated and that increasingly parents who have a child

with a disability are viewing home education as an option. The limited information available

from these parents suggests that they undertake home education not from any form of

philosophical reasoning, but from what they believe is a pragmatic necessity. In some states

in America the federal government provides education support funding for families who

have a child with a disability who is home educated (Cook et al., 2013). Australian families

who home educate a child with a disability are not entitled to any educational funding

(Reilly, Chapman, & O'Donoghue, 2002). Parents of children with a disability who choose to

home educate take on the management of their child's particular medical, emotional, and

social needs as well as their education. When considering the demographics, motivations, and wellbeing of parents who home educate, this group may show meaningful differences from others who choose to undertake home education from an ideological perspective. Parents of children with a disability view home education as a last resort to meet the educational needs of their child (Cook, et al., 2013). While this does not mean that parents do not find the process satisfying and fulfilling (Reilly et al., 2002) nor does it preclude them from holding religious or ideological values, it is an area that requires further investigation.

Home education is becoming more accepted in America and Australia as a genuine, if not well understood, educational option, although there are still some counties such as Germany where the practice is illegal (Martin, 2010). With the rise in acceptance in US, there has been an increased interest in the home education process and what can be learnt from these families. Some of the more philosophical proponents of non-school education (e.g., Hern, 1996), argue that schools devalue the individual and by removing them from a child's life it may allow for greater self-management, self-direction, and self-monitoring. These concepts have been adopted as key reasons for home educating families. Some colleges are actively recruiting home educated students. In a study by Jones and Gloeckner (2004), of 55 American college admissions officers, 75% had specific policies in place for entry of home educated students into their institutions. Almost 78% of the admissions staff in the sample reported that they expected applicants who were home educated to perform as well or better than school educated applicants. Further, some employment advocates are suggesting home educated youths and adults may be highly suited to some fields as they possess vital skills in the context of employment in the twenty first century (Callahan & Callahan, 2004). This section has provided a snapshot of the current literature regarding

home education. The following section will provide an overview of home education in Australia and a review of the first studies into Australian home education.

Parents who home educate in Australia

There has been a long tradition of learning in a home based environment in Australia, predating formal school based education (McHugh, 2003). Formal government education did not begin until 1848 in New South Wales. Previous to this there was only very limited school based education. Turnley (1969) reports that approximately 94% of children in Australia were not receiving formal school education in 1806. The educational experiences for these non-school attending children occurred in the home, community, workplace, and some formal religious education.

Even with the establishment of Government schools many children still received a home based education. Correspondence schools, dating back to early twentieth century, have existed due to the size of the land mass of Australia and the remote location of some school aged children (Symes, 2012). However, the resurgence of a parent driven home education in Australia can be traced back to the political left in the 1970s with further support subsequently coming from authors such as Holt (e.g., 1967), Taylor-Gatto (e.g., 1992), Thomas (1998) and the deschooling ideology of Illich (e.g., 1971). There has been increased media interest in Australia (e.g., Chatfield, 2013) with the home education of Bindi and Robert Irwin (Children of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin), who have a strong media presence themselves. However, relatively little is known about home education families in Australia and much of that information comes from a limited number of studies and government reviews.

In an Australian context, home educating parents focus on a whole family educational process based on explanatory systems with a strong reciprocal relationship between child and parent (Barratt-Peacock, 2003). While the parent assists in the child's education the child assists in developing the parent's world as well. As children develop their knowledge and understanding through self-learning, it is not uncommon for them in turn to educate their parents (Thomas & Pattison, 2007). In his seminal work on Australian home educating families Barratt-Peacock (1997, 2003) found that 6 of his 13 Tasmanian home educating families had one parent born overseas, in comparison to around 10% in the general population in Tasmania at that time. There is a great deal of qualitative (and often unpublished) research into the role of parents in home education (Harding, 2008), children's perceptions of the process (Broadhurst, 1999) and experiences of parenting a child with a disability (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). However, there are very few recent empirical studies that are generalisable to the Australian home education context, especially in relation to the parents.

Given that parents who home educate their children come from an increasingly diverse range of backgrounds (Arai, 2000; Collom, 2005), it may be acceptable to view them as a member of the general community. Therefore the findings regarding parental demographics and wellbeing of general community samples would be relevant to home educating parents. Conversely it could be argued that the findings of research into home educating parents in America, despite the cultural differences, is most relevant to Australian home educating families. Neither of these assumptions are ideal, educational and psychological research needs to be undertaken with home educating families in Australia, to understand this population. This will allow for both the increased parental educational workload and the cultural and societal conditions in Australia to be considered when

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investigating home educating parent's wellbeing. Currently very little information is available about parents who home educate and their wellbeing. Without this information it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the process of home education on parent's wellbeing. Home education is legal in all states and territories in Australia, although each state has differing legislation (Jackson & Allen 2010). Recent media reports suggest that there are up to 85,000 home educated children in Australia, with approximately 10-20% of those registered with their relevant State Education Authority (Townsend, 2012). This is consistent with the reported 83% of home educated children who exist in Queensland but are not registered according to a review of home education in Queensland (McHugh, 2003). However, the Queensland reports were not from the actual number of home educators in Queensland, they were developed from international rates of home education or population statistics and must be viewed cautiously. According to Hunter (1990) the growth in Australian home education in the late 20th Century can be linked to parental concerns regarding Government intervention, a desire to maintain stronger family ties, and a fear that children will be mentally, physically, or spiritually harmed in the formal school environment. However, there is a dearth of literature on home education in an Australian context, especially in relation to the parents involved in this education practice. Chapman and O'Donoghue (2000) conclude their paper on home education research by stating "there is every indication that home schooling will generate a vibrant research field in the next decade..." (p.34-35). However, in the following 16 years there have been only a small number of studies involving Australian home educators and their children. The following section will focus on key papers and theses on the topic of parents who home educate in Australia.

The early home education literature in Australia

Beevers (1981) was one of the first authors to highlight the potential for education outside of the classroom as a positive opportunity in relation to students who reside a great distance from conventional schools. Beevers pointed out that formal education tasks together with activities in the community could lead to equivalent educational experiences for children. Although the study focus was on new directions in distance education, the article clearly highlighted many home education principles. It is relevant to note that according to Jackson's (2014) extensive summary of the home education literature, Beevers' was the first published work to focus on the concepts of home education in Australia. Another early research publication into home education was Kirvanek's (1984), qualitative study of parents who home educated. The study included 13 parents and provided the first published insights into the tools and techniques of parents who home educated and their perspectives on the process. The parents reported many of the common themes in current literature. There was a range in the level of structure in the learning environment but a strong focus on the development of the whole child. All families had a single income with one parent providing the majority of the education, but they were from a range of urban and rural locations and appeared to be from diverse socioeconomic groups. There were also reports of parents and children co-learning new tasks and some situations where children were teaching parents. Broadly this publication gave the research and education community its first insights into home education and made the first, of many, calls for a comprehensive quantitative investigation into home education in Australia.

In what was the first major study of home education in Australia Barratt–Peacock (1997) investigated home education in terms of cultural acquisition. His sample included 173 participants from across Australia who were interviewed once, seven Tasmanian

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families who were interviewed twice and six families who were more thoroughly investigated with three separate interviews and day long observation sessions. The sample of 186 parents was initially one of convenience which was expanded through snowballing techniques. Published material in home education magazines and newsletters was included in the analysis as a comparison and validity check against the information collected in the interviews. Unfortunately apart from some brief information on their home state no demographic information was collected. However, Barratt- Peacock did report that many parents had experienced unusual childhoods themselves and that the parents felt that they had different values (e.g., views on competition, trust, cooperation, and personal responsibility) to their local school. The unusual parental childhood experiences reported were both positive and negative but in all 186 participants involved in the research Barratt-Peacock reported that this had been a factor in their decision to home educate their children. The qualitative nature of this aspect of his work does not lend itself to statistical analysis so it is not possible to determine percentages, but Barratt-Peacock reports that many parents experienced a crisis point with their child's education in the school environment before deciding to home educate. This was reported as being either a traumatic event in the school system (e.g., negative interaction with teachers or bullying), a dissatisfaction with elements of the school system before the child attended school, or concerns about the impact of school on the social, emotional, or religious connectedness of the family.

In a rarely considered aspect of home education, Barratt-Peacock (1997) reported that 50% of his larger sample (n=186) first heard about home education through a friend or personal contact, with a further 29% through radio and 8% seeing it as a natural progression of their child's development. However, it is important to note that there was very little

public internet availability in the mid-1990s. Most State Governments in Australia now provide information about home education and the requirements through their departments of education. There are now also many state and national support and information groups for prospective families. This would suggest that currently different mechanisms may exist for parents becoming aware of home education.

Barratt-Peacock (1997) also investigated how families who home educated actually provided educational content to their children. Although, technology has provided new tools and techniques, Barratt-Peacock's findings do emphasise some important considerations that all home education research should consider. He highlights, with examples from his sample, that a family's decision and reasons for home education will, at least initially, shape their methods of home education. As was detailed previously home education is often, over simply, split into structured home schooling, unstructured unschooling. Barratt-Peacock found a more eclectic mix of these perspectives and also reported some parents who home educated a child with a learning, social, or intellectual issue that made learning at school difficult. It is clear that if a first time home educating parent is aiming to achieve a positive outcome in relation to providing a structured religious education or an education free from the structure of a school, the way that they will consider providing that education will vary. Barratt-Peacock's sample provides some detail on these relationships. He reports some families engaging in an educational environment far more structured and disciplined than a school classroom, but also provides examples of very close-knit families with a child centred focus where the whole family worked as a team in individual activities to build learning. For one of the feature families in his study their motivation to home educate was a lack of religious instruction in the school system. Therefore they set up a high structured learning environment with many aspects of a school

but with a strong religious component. For a second family their concern was that learning was more than what occurred in a school classroom. To meet this need they developed a highly unstructured learning environment including animal care, a focus on agriculture with specific structured material to meet the children's needs in mathematics. These examples highlight not only the differences in parents' motivations to home educate and the different tools and techniques, but also that conceptualising home educators as a single group can lead to inaccurate representations of the unique characteristics.

Barratt-Peacock's (1997) study was important to home education literature in Australia as it provided the first detailed insights into the home education process. It did so with a high level of clarity and insight. However, due to the nature of the study some key information that would now be highly valued was not included. There was only scant demographic information provided for any of the samples. It was unclear as to the number of families using structured learning materials and those using informal methods only. Given the divergent comments of the parents in the sample, underlying motivations to home educate appear to be an important factor. Time and cost factors were evident, the lack of in-depth investigation of the home educating families in non-Tasmanian parts of Australia limits the generalisability of the information to a broader context. However, Barratt-Peacock's research is the foundation of much of the research that has been done in Australia.

This chapter has provided an overview of the history of home education and has examined all of the key early studies in Australia as identified by Jackson's (2014) literature and literature searches undertaken by the researcher. It is apparent from the literature that there are a number of aspects within home education that are under investigated in the literature. Using the framework and foundations discussed Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will

consider three core aspects of home education in more detail. It will review the literature on

home educating parents and address the questions of who are they and how do they

manage? It will consider these topics using current Australian literature where available and

support this with international and historical material to provide the most comprehensive

review possible. The following chapter will consider the relationship between stress and

wellbeing in parents more broadly.

Chapter Three: Stress and Wellbeing in Parents

This chapter will focus on the stress and wellbeing variables used in this study, as they relate to parents of children and adolescents, and the complex relationships that exist between them. The aim of this review chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the constructs to be considered in this study and the relationships between stress and wellbeing that form the basis of this thesis. There is limited amount of information on the stress levels and wellbeing of parents who home educate, what little information there is will be covered in chapter 4. Given the lack of evidence to suggest otherwise, the discussion of parental stress and wellbeing in this chapter is pertinent to all parents, including those who home educate. This chapter aims to provide the reader with a current understanding of the key variables and the relationship between stress and wellbeing in all parent groups.

The variables and the relationships between them to be reviewed in this chapter are well established and have a substantial evidence base. As Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek's (2010) review illustrated, the relationship between stress and wellbeing in parents has been thoroughly investigated and is well supported. It is important to note that this research project is not exploring these relationships specifically, but rather it is considering the differing pattern of relationships that may exist within the groups under investigation. Therefore this review chapter will provide an overview of the core variables and structures within the stress – wellbeing relationship in all parent groups.

The investigation of parental wellbeing is a complex endeavour. The second section of this chapter will consider a theoretical model to explore the relationships between stress and wellbeing. To facilitate the investigation this research project will employ the Wallander and Varni (1998) risk and resistance model (RRM). Although this is not the only

model to consider the interactions of stress and wellbeing in families (Burlew, Telfair, Colangelo, & Wright, 2000) it will be utilised as it is commonly used in the literature and has shown utility in diverse cultural samples (e.g., Guðmundsdóttir, Guðmundsdóttir, & Elklit, 2006). The RRM has been utilised in the investigation of parental wellbeing in parents of children developing typically (e.g. Moore, Gordon, & McLean, 2011). The conceptual model is suited to investigations employing quantitative research methods. Using a well-established model also allows for comparison across the literature and for a broad understanding amongst a range of professionals, academics, and parent groups.

Parental Wellbeing

The relationship between parent and child in the family environment is a very important and is quite complex. One aspect of this relationship is the wellbeing of the parent. Psychological wellbeing is commonly conceptualised as a combination of positive affective states such as happiness, and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and positive social interactions (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Winefield, Gill, Taylor, & Pilkington, 2012). This study considers wellbeing within a very broad focus of an individual's perception of his or her own wellbeing across a range of domains.

The effects of parental wellbeing not only impact on the emotional and social world of individual parents but also on the relationship with their child, partner, extended family, and friends. It has been found that reduced levels of parental wellbeing have a negative impact on marital and social relationships of parents (Glidden & Schoolcraft, 2003; Hughes, 1989). When adults become parents there are new requirements and roles that are, or are perceived to be, required of them (Pearlin, 1989). These additional requirements and roles can lead to situations and perceptions that may positively or negatively impact on

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wellbeing. However, as will be detailed below, the focus of research into parental wellbeing

is often restricted to parents of children with a disability, condition, or impairment. Less

research has been conducted with parents of children who are typically developing. This

chapter will provide a review of the literature regarding the variables used to measure

stress, wellbeing, and potential resistance factor variables. Within the stress section there

will be a strong focus on perceived stress, family functioning, and child temperament as

these are three of the key measures of potential sources of stress in the family context. The

primary measures of wellbeing, and the focus of this review in relation to wellbeing, are:

quality of life, anxiety, depressive symptoms, optimism, and life satisfaction. These broad

constructs of stress and wellbeing will be used throughout this thesis to investigate

wellbeing and the relationships between stress and wellbeing in parents in Australia who

home educate and those that do not.

Stress and Wellbeing in Australia

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) undertakes a yearly research initiative into

the stress and wellbeing of the Australian community. In the most recent study, the sample

consisted of over 1600 participants and was representative of the Australian adult

population for age, gender, geographical location, and employment status (APS, 2014).

Broadly their reports (e.g., APS 2013, 2014) highlight that there are few gender differences

in levels of wellbeing, although women reported higher levels of stress. The APS found that

in 2013 and 2014 over 25% of the sample reported moderate to severe levels of stress and

that older Australians (66-75 years) report higher levels of wellbeing. The report also found

that almost 14% of Australians reported depression and anxiety symptoms in the severe to

extremely severe range.

The 2014 APS report replicated previous findings that financial and family issues were the leading causes of stress in Australia although these stressors decrease in impact if individuals were in older age groups. The report found that over 60% of participants reported that stress was having an impact on their physical and mental health. Homemakers were found to have stress levels consistent with the reported high stress groups of students and the unemployed.

Stress buffering (resistance) factors are variables that can reduce the impact of stress. The APS (2014) highlighted that spending time with friends and family, focusing on the positive aspects of life and recreational activities were all important stress buffering factors in their study. For each of these factors, over 70% of the participants reported finding them to be effective methods of managing stress. The findings of the APS highlight that stress is an issue in the Australian population. Further, their reported findings that parents were one of the groups experiencing the highest level of stress, highlights the levels of stress that parents face. The following sections will explore stress and wellbeing in the parenting population.

Stress

Stress is a topic of universal interest and, while commonly discussed in the media, stress is a difficult construct to define. One approach has been to conceptualise stress as a broad term which refers to stimuli producing stress reactions (Monat & Lazarus, 1991). This generic concept of stress could then be stratified to contain more specific components such systemic, psychological, and social stressors. Alternatively a biological definition of stress would focus on a common physical response (e.g., increased heart rate) to stressful

situations (Jones, Bright, & Clow, 2001). However, more encompassing conceptualisations

involving multiple biosocial aspects of stress may be more clinically useful.

In the late 1980s the most common definition of stress relates to response-stimulus

models. Jex, Beehr, and Roberts (1992) found that of the 51 studies in their review 86% of

them used definitions of stress related to some form of a response-stimulus model. Lazarus

and Folkman's (1984) widely cited response-stimulus definition involves defining stress as a

particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the

person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing.

Lazarus and Folkman's transactional approach differs from the biological view in that it

considers the individual's perception of the event that caused the stress. Lazarus and

Folkman's concept of stress has become the foundation for current understanding of stress

and its impact on wellbeing. The remainder of this chapter will focus on stress and wellbeing

of parents in Australia. The interaction between stress, resistance factors and wellbeing

within the context of a transactional model will be covered the final section of this chapter.

Parents' experience of stress

Parents of school aged children encounter a range of life events, interactions, rewards,

and stressors unique to this period of their life. Parents of children in the early school years

have a changing relationship with their children. Children in this age range are developing

increased independence with peer interaction, learning the basic academic skills, and have

increasingly complex cognitions (Berk, 2010). With development into puberty, a range of

physical and social progresses can lead to increased tensions between a parent and their

child. In the mid to late teen years an adolescent's cognitive, social, and emotional

development continues to progress and this can lead to increased social independence from

parents, but with a continued strong financial dependence that can extend into adulthood

(Kahn, Goldscheider, & García-Manglano, 2013). During these periods, parents face a range

of stressors that may impact their wellbeing. As a child progresses through his/her

development, their behaviour and temperament can impact on the wellbeing of their

parents (Ashbourne & Daly, 2010). Just being part of a family can be a source of stress

(Newman & Grauerholz, 2002). To fully understand the impact of stress on a parent in their

unique environment and family situation, their perceptions of stress need to be considered.

Perceived stress

Perceived stress relates to the degree to which situations in an individual's life are

appraised as stressful (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). The focus of this construct is

the individual's appraisal of the stressful event rather than any third party or objective

appraisal of the stress event or situation. Given its nature this conceptualisation allows

researchers to gain an insight into an individual's personal experiences of stress.

High levels of perceived stress have been linked to negative physical and mental health

outcomes in a range of populations. Ebrecht et al. (2004) found that perceived stress

reduced wound healing in adults and Cohen, Tyrrell, and Smith (1993) found that adults

with high stress levels were more susceptible to infections. Stress has also been found to

have a positive relationship with the psychological constructs of depression (Stroud, Davila,

& Moyer, 2008) and anxiety (McEwen, Eiland, Hunter, & Miller, 2012), and a negative

relationship with life satisfaction (Shi, Wang, Bian, & Wang, 2015) and quality of life (Witt et

al., 2010). These findings highlight the potential impact of stress in all adults, including

parents. When investigating situations as complex as family relationships and parental

experiences of stress, it is important to consider other areas of stress such as family

characteristics. There is very little information relating to stress in parents who home educate. However, the scant information that is available will be considered in the following section.

Family functioning

Family functioning is a broad term that relates to interactions and processes within the immediate and extended family unit. These can often include meeting the demands of the family as a whole and dealing with the specific needs of each member thereof (Treyvaud, et al., 2011). Each will have differing needs and will, in part, be responsible for meeting the needs of other members of the family. The demands of child rearing in a family context, especially of child behaviours that parents find difficult, has been shown to have a negative impact on parental wellbeing (Anthony, et al., 2005; Ostberg & Hagekull, 2000). There can also be specific issues within families, such as marital dissatisfaction, which can impact on family dynamics. These issues can be further negatively impacted by outside issues such as financial strain or workplace issues (Lamond, et al., 2003). This can lead to family functioning being an important measure of the stress parents experience as part of their interactions with their children and family.

Cooper, McLanahan, Meadows, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) in a study of over 4000 American families, found partnership status was an important factor in family dynamics. They reported that the separation of parents or the commencement of new relationships had the potential to negatively impact on mothers' wellbeing. However, education level was also an important factor, with more highly educated mothers reporting reduced negative impacts. This highlights the range of factors which can potentially protect parents from the impact of stress.

In their review of the literature on childhood anxiety, Bögels and Brechman-Toussaint

(2006) report that a range of factors such as discord can negatively impact members of the

family. There can also be situations where stressors that are related to family functioning

can be exacerbated by work roles. For example, Shreffler, Meadows, and Davis (2011) found

that intense workplace stressors negatively impacted on family dynamics. From their

extensive meta-analysis of maternal employment, Goldberg, Prause, Lucas-Thompson, and

Himsel (2008) found that family structure was an important moderator in relationship

between employment status and child outcomes. That is there were differing child

outcomes based on the structure of the family. These findings support the important role of

the interaction between employment and family structure in family functioning. These

studies identify the importance of family factors in parental wellbeing. A further, more

specific, stressor can be a child's temperament.

Child Temperament

The behaviours and the personality characteristics of a child have the potential to act as

a stressor for parents. The wellbeing of parents, who have a child whose temperament does

not fit their expectations or parenting practices, can be negatively impacted (Zetner &

Bates, 2008). In a family context, child temperament can be defined as a style of interaction

and response between a child and their parent (Prior, Sanson, & Oberklaid, 2000). Child

temperament is not a specific behaviour or action, but rather a broader style of how the

child responds and interacts. Temperament is said to be relatively stable over time and if

there is parental dissatisfaction with the child's communication or response style, this can

potentially lead to a source of stress to parents.

Although Prior et al. (2000), emphasise that temperament is not a set of behaviours, there are some behavioural constructs that may be relevant. The founding conceptualisations of temperament included dimensions of mood, level of activity, persistence, adaptability, and sociability (Prior et al. 2000; Thomas & Chess, 1977). Although child temperament is not a disorder, difficult temperament is commonly linked to problematic interactions with parents that can lead to parental stress (Laukkanen, Ojansuu, Tolvanen, Alatupa, & Aunola, 2014; Sanson et al. 2004). The behavioural and interaction style of a child can be a potential source of stress for a parent. This highlights the ongoing and diverse range of variables that can represent stress for parents.

In examining a range of relationships between stressors and parental wellbeing, Suárez and Baker (1997) found that child externalising behaviours had a consistent negative relationship with parental wellbeing. Children who display problematic behaviour patterns can place demands on parents which can be considered a stressor. This has been found in parents of children with disabilities and in children developing typically. Baker, Blacher, Crnic, and Edelbrock (2002) found that 26.1% of the children with developmental delays and 8.3% of children with typical development displayed clinical levels of behavioural problems. In a follow up study Baker, Neece, Fenning, Crnic, and Blacher (2010) found that "54% of typically developing children and 67% of children with developmental delays who had clinical levels of externalizing behaviour problems at age 3 met diagnostic criteria for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder at age 5" (p.49). However, these were in excess of typical child behavioural issues faced by many parents. However, they do highlight the level of child temperament issues that some parents experience.

Children who are developing typically can also display behaviours and negative interaction styles that can impact on parental wellbeing. Stewart, Greene, Lessov-Schlaggar,

Church, and Schlaggar (2015) found significant relationships between problematic child

behaviours and parental stress in children who were typically developing as well as those

diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome. In the typically developing samples, these behaviours

were associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and obsessive compulsive

disorder symptoms, but were not necessarily at clinical levels. In part of a larger study,

Suarez and Baker (1997) found that there was a range of potential stressors related to child

externalising behaviours for parents of children who are developing typically.

Hilliard, Monaghan, Cogen, and Streisand (2011) highlighted that it is important to

consider parental perception of their child's behaviour. From this perspective it is the

parent's perception of the child's behaviour that is the focus rather than an objective

measure. As will be discussed in the following section it is important to understand how a

parent perceives stimuli as it is their perceptions which can lead to a stress response.

Parents of children who are developing typically can face issues such as feeding. Chatoor

and Macaoay (2008) found that 25% of young child who were developing typically had

eating problems. Depending on the severity of the issue, the manifestation of the issue, and

the parent's experiences, these eating issues may lead to parental stress, but only an

investigation of parental perceptions of the situation are likely to reveal this. For this reason

perceived stress, family functioning, and child temperament have been included to provide

a diverse range of potential stressors. This section has highlighted three key variables that

may be considered stressors in parents of children who are developing typically. The

following section will consider some of the key measures of parental wellbeing.

Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing is commonly conceptualised as a combination of positive affective states such as happiness, and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and positive social interactions (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Winefield, Gill, Taylor, & Pilkington, 2012). In its most positive form wellbeing is conceptualised as optimal psychological experience and functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This study considers wellbeing within a very broad focus of an individual's perception of their own wellbeing across a range of domains.

Subjective wellbeing is an individual's self-perception of their wellbeing. According to Diener (2000) there are a number of components of subjective wellbeing. These include satisfaction with life, work, family interactions, moods, and emotions. This can be positive aspects such as an individual being satisfied with his/her family interactions, or negative aspects such as anxiety. When considering the wellbeing of parents, a focus on their perceptions of the situation is important due to variations in different family situations.

Reduced levels of parental wellbeing have a negative impact on the child-parent relationship and on child development (Glidden & Schoolcraft, 2003). Verlaan and Schwartzman (2002) found that parents who had marital difficulties and poor social interactions were more likely to have children with externalising behaviour problems, which indicates the potential negative impact of parental wellbeing on child development. These studies show the importance of parental wellbeing in the broad family context and the need to investigate factors that potentially impact on it. Variables shown to impact on parental wellbeing include child temperament and behaviour.

Much of the research on parental wellbeing has focused on parents of children with a disability (e.g., Cousino & Hazen, 2013; Olsen & Hwang, 2001) or specific issue such as poor sleep (e.g., Giallo, Rose, & Vittorino, 2011), parents who themselves have a disability (Azar,

Robinson, & Proctor, 2012), or specific parent groups (Taylor, Washington, Artinian, &

Lichtenberg, 2007). These studies typically find that the link between child stressor and

reduced parental wellbeing is stronger when a child has a disability or impairment as

compared to children who are typically developing (e.g., Rayner & Moore, 2007), but the

relationship does exist for parents of typically developing children. There are few studies

that set out to specifically explore these relationships in parents of children who are

developing typically.

Although parents of children who are typically developing do not face the stressors

directly related to parenting a child with a disability or impairment, they do experiences

stressors unique to their role as parents and this can impact on their wellbeing (McGue,

Elkins, Walden, & Iacono, 2005). The arrival of the first child has been linked to changes in

family dynamics and harmony (Lawrence, Rothman, Cobb, & Bradbury, 2010) and has been

described as a time of great complexity and full of specific challenges (Mebert, 1991). Given

these circumstances wellbeing becomes a variable of interest.

Musick, Meier, and Flood (2014) report that parents, especially mothers, are prone to

experiencing fluctuations in wellbeing due to their multiple roles in family life. However,

they state that it is the activities that parents engage in rather than simply their status as

parents that should be the focus in relation to their wellbeing. Musick and colleagues found

that there were few differences in wellbeing between parents and non-parents in their

research using the American Time Use Survey (N = 23,282). They found that parents report

much higher levels of wellbeing when actually spending time with their children. However,

this impact was lower for mothers, this was explained through the types of activities parents

engaged in with their children. It was presented that mothers spent more time in structured

household activities (e.g., making breakfast) than fathers and this contributed to the

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differences. Their results also indicated that mothers are happier and find more meaning in their lives than fathers, but also reported more fatigue and negative emotional states. One of the key findings that Musick and colleagues provide is that playing with children and being in the company of a spouse/partner were positively related to wellbeing in all settings. Another aspect of this relationship is the parents' perceptions of these relationships.

Parental perceived quality of life

As defied by the Murphey, Herrman, Hawthorn, Pinzone, and Evert, (2000, p. 1), quality of life is an "…individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and values systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns". Although, as Mugno, Ruta, D'Arrigo, and Mazzone (2007) emphasise, quality of life is a broad concept that encompasses aspects of health, life, and environmental satisfaction. It is therefore a useful construct when considering wellbeing. When investigating quality of life in parents, the exposure to a wide range of stress factors, from disability or broader family stress, is related to lower levels of quality of life (Allik, Larsson, & Smedje, 2006).

When considering quality of life in parents of children with a disability or impairment, research has typically found links between the severity of the impairment and reduced quality of life in parents of children with pervasive developmental disorder (Mugno, et al., 2007), cerebral palsy (Romeo, et al., 2010), and cancer (Engelen, et al., 2011). These parent groups are typically facing additional pressures in comparison to parents of children developing typically. The findings of Kim, et al. (2014), also supported this relationship for parents of children with ADHD, with parents reporting low levels of parental quality of life.

However, after the children with ADHD were prescribed methylphenidate their problematic

behaviours decreased and parents reported significantly higher levels of quality of life. Again

this supports the value of quality of life when investigating parental wellbeing in family

contexts. It would appear that quality of life as a measure of wellbeing is quite sensitive. In

a study of women undergoing treatment for breast cancer, fatigue was found to moderate

the relationships between exercise and wellbeing (Schwartz, 1999). This would suggest that

even in individuals undergoing an extremely stressful experience, fatigue and exercise

involvement significantly impacted on quality of life. This suggests that quality of life is a

responsive and sensitive measure of wellbeing

While there has been little investigation of the quality of life of parents of typically

developing children, some support can be found in studies that use these parents as a

control group. For example, Mugno et al., (2007) found that parents of children who are

developing typically reported lower levels of psychological wellbeing than parents of

children with cerebral palsy. These findings would indicate that parenting a child who is

typically developing can have negative aspects and these impact on parental wellbeing.

Although, quality of life provides an excellent overview of parental wellbeing, more specific

measure can produce additional insight. One such wellbeing measure is anxiety.

Parental anxiety

Parents' anxieties may come from a range of sources and have differing

manifestations. Anxiety is typically operationalised to represent feelings of unease, worry,

or discomfort (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). It is a broad construct and has a range of

descriptions and conceptualisations. Parents can experience anxiety in relation to a specific

child condition such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (Reaven et al., 2015), specific

circumstances such as a child undergoing surgery (Asik, et al., 2015), or becoming a parent

of a preterm infant (Teti, Hess, & O'Connell, 2005). However, parents can also experience

anxiety as a typical part of raising children.

In her early work, Barnett (1986) highlighted that becoming a parent was an anxiety

provoking experience and that most parents experience anxiety about the health of their

child even if there are no appear health concerns. Parental anxiety also focuses on

education attainment, social skills, and meeting developmental milestones as well as long

term issues such as gaining employment. Parents can also face anxiety provoking situations

during transitional periods such as separation anxiety from their young children (Deater-

Deckard, Scarr, McCartney, & Eisenberg, 1994), adolescence develop their independence

(Hock, Eberly, Bartle-Haring, Ellwanger, & Widaman, 2001), and undergoing health

treatments (Wray, Lee, Dearmum, & Franck, 2014). These diverse anxiety provoking

situations highlight the range and impact that anxiety can have in parents' lives.

There can also be less transformative events that parents can find to be anxiety

provoking. Clarke, Cooper, and Creswell (2013) found links between parents' concerns

about their children's wellbeing and parental anxiety. These findings were consistent for

parents of children who were typically developing and children with anxiety disorders. This

suggests that all parents have some anxiety related to their child's wellbeing. Less specific

daily hassles have also been suggested as a source for parental anxiety.

In the context of parental anxiety daily hassles relate to common events arising out

everyday interactions with family, work, and transportation (Serido, Almeida, &

Wethington, 2004). These are regular activities for many parents and Serido, et al. reported

that they were found to be potentially anxiety proving for adults. This parents face a range

of factors that can impact on their wellbeing. This section has highlighted anxiety as an

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important measure of wellbeing to consider. A second negative aspect of wellbeing is depression.

Parental depression

In the area of parental depression, the transition to the role of first time parent has increasingly become a time period that is focused on. There has been an increased concern regarding postpartum depression. Up to 13% of mothers experience this form of depression in the year after giving birth (O'Hara & Swain, 1996). When examining the predictive relationships between postnatal depression and its predictors, Beck (2001) found a number of parenting and family factors. These included childcare issues, daily hassles, marital relationship, and child temperament. This would indicate for mothers suffering from depression family factors can be a significant predictors of the disease. These risk factors also appear to be important in parents of older children.

Britton (2011), found that parents of children who were typically developing reported higher levels of depression predicted by their child's behaviour. Nomaguchi (2012) found that parents of children over five years of age reported less depression than parents of children under five. However, given the complex relationship between parents and their children, the parents' perceptions of their interactions with their child were an important factor.

In their 2014 study of 689 Dutch parents, van Oers and colleagues found that parents, especially mothers, who had a child with a chronic illness reported higher levels of depressive symptomology compared to parents of children who were developing typically. It was argued that parents who were caring for a child with a chronic illness faced additional challenges in daily life such as increased support for the child and additional duties such as

travel. This group of parents also faced difficulties engaging in work and social activities due

to the additional needs of their children. van Oers and colleagues reported it was the

additional needs of their children that was the greatest contributor to the increased

depression symptomology in parent, not the diagnosis itself.

Optimism

Optimism has a range of conceptualisations and definitions in the literature. A recent

review from Carver and Scheier (2014) conceptualised it as "… a cognitive construct

(expectancies regarding future outcomes) that also relates to motivation… (p. 293)". These

early pioneers of optimism research focus on the positive aspects of optimism and its links

to hope, attributional style, and self-efficacy. It has been suggested that even in stressful

conditions, individuals with optimistic outlooks will have the belief that a stressful set of

events will change to a better future outcome (Chang, et al., 2013). Although, optimism is

considered relatively stable overtime, it is malleable. It can be directly manipulated through

therapeutic interventions and can decline in highly stressful situations (Carver & Scheier,

2014). This is of particular interest when considering optimism in the context of parents and

the stresses and positive experiences they may have as parents.

It has been suggested that parents who report high levels of optimism may focus on the

positive aspects of parenthood. Segerstrom (2001) found that individuals who reported

higher levels of optimism displayed a greater focus for positive stimuli. Those participants

with pessimistic (optimism was considered a continuum with low levels being reported as

pessimism) outlooks had greater attentional focus for negative stimuli. This suggests that

parents who report a high level of optimism may focus on the positive aspects of being a

parent whereas those with low levels focus on the negative aspects. This can then have an

influence on the broader family. Jackson, Pratt, Hunsberger, and Pancer (2005) suggest that these relationships between levels of optimism and a focus on the positive or negative aspects of the parental experience can be transferred to the children in the family. This can then have a broader impact on the wellbeing of the parent and the family. Optimism is an important variable to consider in its self, but also for the interrelationships with other aspects of wellbeing.

Life satisfaction

In the literature, the impact on life satisfaction after having children is mixed (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016). There are suggestions that the increased load of parental duties in addition to the existing social, household, and work commitments can decrease a parent's reported satisfaction with life (Hansen, 2012). However, Hansen's investigations related to longitudinal impacts on a very broad measure of wellbeing on an international scale. More specific studies such Clark, Diener, Georgellis, and Lucus (2008) have found that in Western countries there is an increase in life satisfaction in the year preceding a child's birth, but that life satisfaction decreases in the following years. However, married and older parents typically reported a greater increase in life satisfaction than do single and poorer individuals (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016; Myrskyla & Margolis, 2014). This would suggest that a parent's life satisfaction can vary based on the interactions and demands of their child. There are also predisposing parental aspects that need to be considered.

The impact on life satisfaction in response to parenthood is also influenced by the individual's desire to have a children, their perceptions of what it means to be a parent and the congruence of their expectations and actual experiences, as these will relate to their ability to cope with parenthood (Pollmann-Schult, 2014). It would also appear that a child's

life satisfaction is positively related to parental life satisfaction, although the causal

pathways are not clear (Hoy, Suldo, & Mendez, 2013). It is important to consider the age of

the child. As was detailed previously there is an initial boost to life satisfaction when a child

is conceived, this is then eroded by the actual demands of a newborn. There is a similar

potential for parents of adolescents. This is often characterised as a difficult period of

parenthood, and if it is not as difficult as expected there is a boost in life satisfaction. This

section has highlighted a number of variables, including life satisfaction, which appear to be

important measure in considering parental well-being.

Stress and Wellbeing

The previous section of this chapter has identified the key parental stress and wellbeing

variables in the literature. These variables will be used in this thesis to consider the

wellbeing of parents who home educate in comparison to parents who do not. However, to

gain a more comprehensive understanding of these stress and wellbeing factors they, and

the relationships between them, need to be considered in a theoretical framework. In such

a framework the individual variables and the relationships between them can be

conceptualised and explored. The follow section will consider Wallander and Varni's (1998)

Risk and Resistance Model (RRM). The use of the RRM will allow the variables explored in

this chapter to be considered in the broader parental context.

Wallander and Varni's Risk and Resistance Model

Wallander and Varni's (1998) RRM is based on the empirical work of Lazaurus and

Folkman (1984) and previous conceptual models by Wallander, Varni, and Colleagues (e.g.,

Wallander, Varni, Babani, Banis, & Wilcox, 1989). The model was initially developed to

consider the impact of chronic conditions in families. The RRM, see Figure 3.1, considers a

range of risk and resistance factors on the stress wellbeing relationship. For example,

consider the issue of a parent receiving a negative comment about their child's poor

behaviour, from another parent. This situation is like to be stressful for a parent and may

impact on their wellbeing. However, there will be a number of stress processing,

intrapersonal, social and environmental factors (e.g., social support, coping strategies) that

may influence the impact of this stressor on the parent's wellbeing. These resistance factors

can influence the impact of this stress on the parent's wellbeing, but this is a highly

individual process. For example the parent may consider how accurate they consider the

other parent's perspective of the situation, the antecedents to their child's behaviour and

the likely outcome of the behaviour. Using the empirically supported RRM, it is possible to

investigate the direct and indirect impact of these variables. For example, does a parent's

level of social support predict their level of optimism? This can then be further probed to

consider if a parent's level of social support can buffer them from an increase in parental

stress levels that are related to their child's behavioural issues.

More recently the Wallander and Varni model has been used to investigate the

wellbeing of parents and children who are typically developing (e.g., Moore et al., 2011).

The model has been adapted slightly to cater for the everyday family risk and resistance

factors that parents of typically developing children may experience. The adapted model

can be seen in Figure 3.2. This model consists of the same underlying premise that child and

family factors may lead to a stress response and that this response may impact on

wellbeing. However, the impact of the stress on wellbeing may be buffered or exacerbated

by environmental, intrapersonal, or stress processing factors. That is, there will be personal,

cognitive and environmental factors that may impact on the relationship between stress

and wellbeing. This is similar to the original Wallander and Varni model. However, there is

consideration of a range of child factors and differing levels in the model to increase its

relevance for parents of children who are developing typically. The following sections will

consider each aspect of the adapted RRM in more detail.
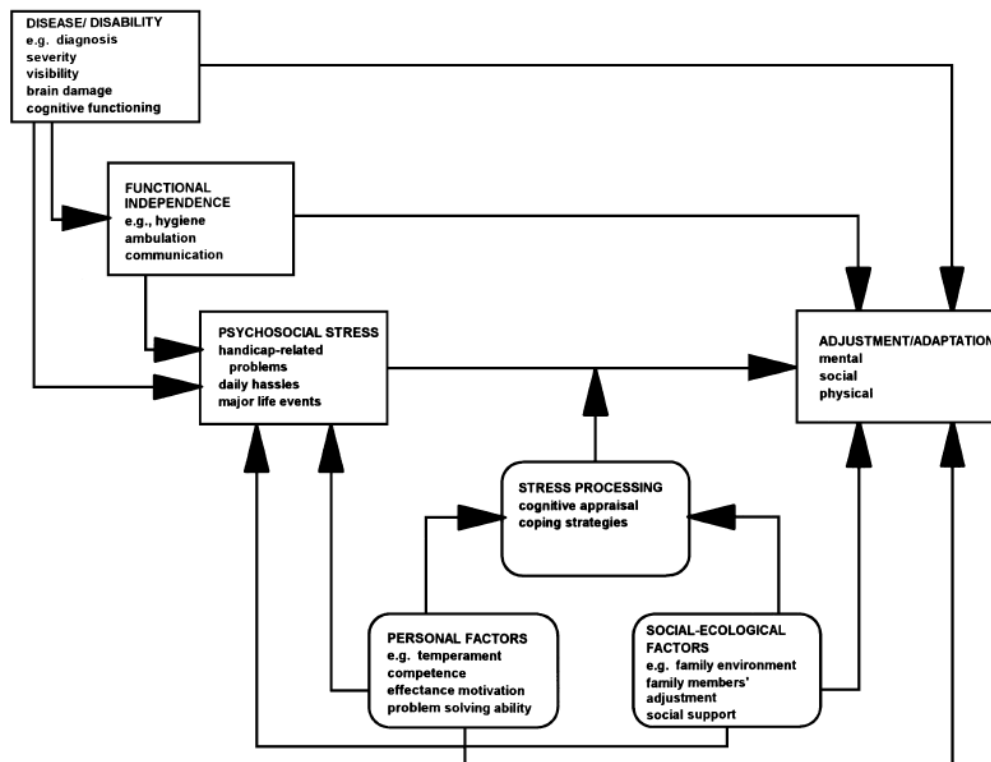
Figure 3.1. Risk and Resistance Model by Wallander and Varni (1998)
Note: Wallander and Varni, (1998) Reprinted with permission: 3542781459978.
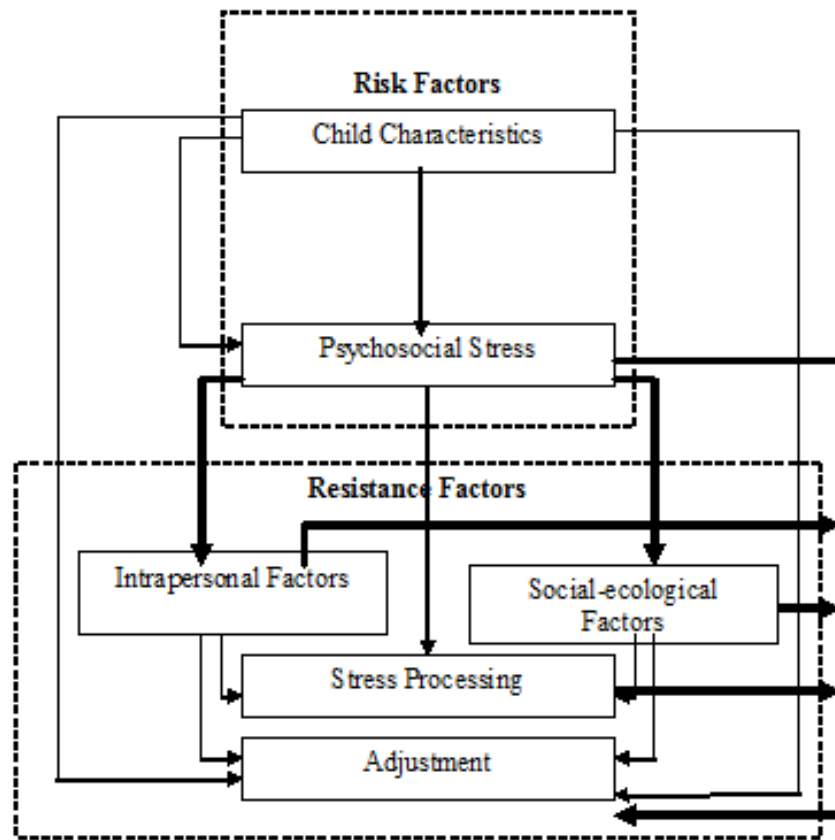
Figure 3.2 Adapted risk and resistance model
Note: Adapted RRM model used in studies such as Moore et al., (2011)

Risk factor: Child Characteristics

The first potential stress inducing element that needs to be considered in the wellbeing

of parents is their interactions with their children. The RRM by Wallander and Varni (1998)

was initially developed to consider the impact of chronic conditions in families. Hence, the

original RRM considered issues such as the degree of disability on physical or cognitive

ability, functional independence of the child and communication ability of the child and the

impact of these on stress. The adapted RMM focuses on broader childhood/family issues

and considerations. Australian children spend up to 56% of weekdays and 70% of weekend

time with their mother (Baxter, 2010). This indicates that the broader childhood/family

issues and considerations are worthy of investigation as potential risk factors for reduced

wellbeing. The family issues that could be considered include the child's temperament,

behaviour, sleep habits, and family interactions. These factors and characteristics all have

the potential to lead to parental stress (e.g., Baker et al., 2003; Jackson, 2000; McBride,

Schoppe, & Rane, 2002; Williford, Calkins, & Keane, 2007). By considering the widest

possible source of parental stress the model can explore the relationships that stem from

parent - child interactions. It is important to note that in this stage of the model the positive

aspects of the parent-child dyad are not considered, as the focus is on the aspects of being a

parent that may lead to stress. However, in the stress processing, intra personal social and

environmental sections of the model the positive and protective aspects of parenting will be

considered as resistance factors.

Risk factor: Parental stress

In Wallander and Varni's (1998) RRM parental stress is considered in terms of the impact

of the child's impairment and the impact this had on parental stress. This was

operationalised as daily hassles (e.g., assisting the child with feeding), concern about the

diagnosis and/or treatment and the child's ongoing wellbeing/quality of life. In the

literature, parental stress is typically investigated in situations of increased child care needs

such as children with high functioning autism (Rao & Beidel, 2009), genetic

disorders/disability (Hall et al., 2012), or considers the influence of parental stress on the

progression of a child's condition (e.g., Anthony, et al. 2005; Sipal, Schuengel, Voorman, Van

Eck, & Becher, 2010). This is consistent with the theoretical constructs of the RRM. In the

adapted RRM the sources of stress are expanded to consider all aspects of parent child

interaction. These still include aspects of the child's behavior, but also consider typical

deviations in childhood behaviour and family functioning and the impact these can have on

parental stress. Very few studies consider the relationship between child behaviour and

family interactions with parental stress when neither the child nor the parent has a

disability, condition, or disorder (e.g., Guajardo, Snyder, & Petersen, 2009). However, Saisto,

Salmela-aro, Nurmi, and Halmesmaki's (2008) longitudinal study of the predictors of

parental stress support the relationship between child characteristics and parental stress in

parents of typically developing children. Research has consistently found a positive

relationship between stressful life events and reduced wellbeing (Zimmerman, Ramires-

Valles, Zapert, & Maton, 2000). The link between child behaviour and parental stress is

further supported through research into the interrelated nature of parenting stress,

adolescent self-perception, and parenting practices (Putnick et al., 2008). Also through child

behaviour and parental stress in children with and without a cognitive impairment (Baker,

Blacher, Crnic, & Edelbrock, 2002). The link between child behaviour and parental stress is

supported through empirical research in a range of contexts. However, the research

evidence in typically developing families is lacking.

Psychological wellbeing in parents

The next aspect of the adjusted RRM initially developed by Wallander and Varni (1998) is

that of wellbeing. Parental wellbeing (referred to as adjustment in the original RRM) is

considered in terms of both negative (e.g., depression, anxiety) and positive terms (e.g.,

optimism, coping). If there are increased levels of stress relating to problematic child

behaviour or family relationship, as was discussed above, there is the potential for this to

impact on parental wellbeing. As Thoits (2010) states "when stressors … are measured

comprehensively, their damaging impacts on physical and mental health are substantial"

(p.S41). However, there may also be positive impacts of personal growth and maturity that may be stimulated through parenthood (Rothrauff, & Cooney, 2008). These factors all contribute to parental wellbeing and can be evaluated within the framework of the RRM. The next section will initially consider the link between sources of stress and wellbeing. The positive and protective aspects of parenting will be considered in the following section.

Findings on the psychological wellbeing of parents have been mixed. Helbig, Lampert, Klose, and Jacobi (2006), using a large German health survey, found that parenting was associated with increased mental health. Using the US *National Survey of Families and Household* data, Evenson and Simon (2005) found that no parent group reports less depression than their non-parenting peers. Further Menaghan, (1989) found a complex relationship between parental status, wellbeing and social expectations. While using data from 1988, Koropeckyj-Cox (1998) found that there were very few differences in wellbeing between parents and non-parents. This complex set of findings highlights the need to systematically consider the impact of family life on parents' wellbeing. As was detailed in the previous section there is evidence to suggest that parents do experience increased levels of stress depending on their family situation and this may impact on their wellbeing. However, due to the mixed findings; the link between stress emanating from family life and parental wellbeing, needs further investigation.

Findings from the Parent Fatigue and Wellbeing Survey (e.g., Kienhuis, Rogers, Giallo, Matthews, & Treyvaud, 2010; Wade, Giallo, & Cooklin, 2012) have highlighted the link between fatigue in parents of young child and parental wellbeing. Within the adapted RRM, these results support the linkage between child behaviour and parental stress which can then lead to decreased parental wellbeing. However, when considering the links between stress and wellbeing, a more complex relationship is likely to exist. This is the key

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underpinning of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model which has shaped much

of the recent research into stress and wellbeing. It is subsequently a key aspect of the RRM.

In terms of the adjusted RRM this is seen in the stress processing component, the social-

ecological factors and the intrapersonal factors, which may influence the relationship

between stress and wellbeing.

Stress processing, social-ecological factors, and intrapersonal factors

The underlying hypothesis that exists within the Lazarus and Folkman's (1984)

conceptualisation of the stress construct and Wallander and Varni (1998) extension of this

into wellbeing, is the dynamic and bidirectional relationships that exist. For example an

individual's optimism may reduce the impact of negative life events on their psychological

wellbeing. Over time repeated negative life events may have a detrimental impact on

psychological wellbeing which in turn may reduce optimism. This may have the effect of

increasing the impact of future negative life events. However, an increased level of social

support (e.g., from a new partner) may have such a positive impact on an individual that

they experience and report higher levels of life satisfaction despite repeated negative life

events and the degradation of their optimism levels. It has been repeatedly found that

social support or perceived social support buffers the impact of stress on mental health

(Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000). It has also been found that adaptive coping strategies

would appear to buffer against reduced wellbeing in stressful situations (Monat & Lazarus,

1984; Wills et al., 2001).This highlights the interaction that can exist between the various

aspects of the adjusted RRM model. Using the adjusted RRM each of these pathways can be

explored. Using tools such as moderation, mediation, and conditional process analysis,

interactions between multiple parts of the RRM can be evaluated simultaneously to gauge

the impact of multiple stressors, protective factors, and outcomes at once (Hayes, 2013).

According to Wallander and Varni (1998) stress processing is the appraisal of

circumstances and events that may impact on an individual's wellbeing. This concept is

derived from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory regarding the behavioural and cognitive

process that individuals engage in when responding to a stressful situation. When faced

with a stress inducing event or circumstance, individuals respond in a variety of ways that

may influence the impact of that event on the individual. Some individuals may have highly

developed adaptive coping strategies (e.g., positive distraction or acceptance) that reduce

the impact of stress on wellbeing. Alternatively if an individual has low levels of social

support or is dissatisfied with their social support this may exacerbate the impact of stress

on wellbeing. It is in these complex relationships that a more detailed understanding of

wellbeing can be discovered. Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey, and Stewart (2001) found that the

processes that are occurring within a family are more important to parental wellbeing than

the structure of the family. Saisto, Salmela-aro, Nurmi, and Halmesmaki (2008) found the

interplay of child behaviour, interpersonal variables, and a lack of support, influenced

parental stress in parents of young children. Johnson, Frenn, Feetham, and Simpson (2011)

reported differing relationships between parenting stress, support from family functioning,

and physical and mental health depending on parent gender. These studies highlight the

complex interactions that exist within typically developing families which may impact on

parental wellbeing.

It is also possible for the intrapersonal factors and social-ecological factors to directly

influence stress and wellbeing. For example individuals who display high levels of self-

esteem typically report high levels of wellbeing (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, &

Schimel, 2004). Further it has been suggested that optimism may not only act as a buffer between stress and wellbeing but may also impact on the perception of stress (e.g., Nes, & Segerstrom, 2006). These relationships highlight the varied and numerous paths of investigation that are possible using the adapted RRM to investigate the wellbeing of parents.

This chapter has defined the key aspects of stress and wellbeing in parents. It has also review the relationships that the literature suggests exist between stress and wellbeing. Using the Wallander and Varni (1998) Risk and Resistance model the role of intrapersonal, stress processing, and social-ecological factors in influencing the relationship between stress and wellbeing has been considered. The variables and relationships set out in this chapter are the underlying structures to be used in this thesis. Given the current literature these variables and structures are relevant to all parent groups including parents who home educate. However, there has been very little research into this parenting group and none of it has considered the relationship between stress and wellbeing in this way. The following chapter will consider the limited stress and wellbeing literature on parents who home educate.

Chapter Four: Parents who Home Educate, Who are They and How do They Manage?

Parents who home educate take on the education needs of their children in addition to the roles that non-home educating parents typically undertake. However, exactly what they do, how they manage these additional roles, and what impact this has on their wellbeing is unclear. This chapter will consider these issues by reviewing the current Australian and international literature in this area. It needs to be emphasised that in many of these aspects of home education there is very limited literature. What little literature is available contains a broad range of definitions and operationalisation of key terms. To better understand the wellbeing of parents who home educate, their demographic characteristics and motivation to home educate will be considered. Reviewing the literature in these two areas will provide context and will highlight two additional domains that may prove to be important when investigating the wellbeing of these parents. The first section of this chapter will consider the demographic characteristics of parents who home educate. This will be followed by a review of why parents choose this education option. Finally the limited information on the wellbeing of parents who home educate will be covered.

The Demographic Characteristics of Parents who Home Educate

Internationally and in Australia, demographic data on home educating parents is difficult to obtain. In the US there are differing registration requirements in each State which makes it difficult to provide a quality estimate of the number of children being home educated, although there is some consensus of the number being around two million in 2013 (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Data from the IES (2013) reveals that home educating parents in the US are predominately white although this trend appears to be declining from 77% in 2007 (IES, 2009) to 68% in 2011 (IES, 2013). In previous years religious and moral

factors had been the key reason that parents home educated. However, in the 2011 data

the most important reason was concerns over the school environment (25%) followed by

other (21%) and dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools (19%). It is also

important to note that 32% of parents reported their child's physical or mental health

problem or other special needs as a contributing factor. In relation to parental education,

39% have a university degree or higher and 11% did not finish high school. While it relied on

a small number of cases Yang and Kayaardi's (2004) analysis revealed that demographic,

religious, socioeconomic, and family structure characteristics were not significant predictors

of home education choice amongst parents. One of the few consistent findings, in relation

to home education, is the very high rate of mothers as the primary educator (Kunzman &

Gaither, 2013). However, much of the discussion around this topic relates to the role of

women and perpetuation of traditional gender roles in relation to work and child care (e.g.,

Joyce, 2009). It is unclear from the literature what positive or negative impact the

dominance of mothers as education providers has had on the wellbeing of the mothers.

The national US findings above are further investigated by Mackey, Reese, and

Mackey (2011) who compared the IES (2007) national demographic information on home

educators to a sample of 130 regional home educators in a large south-western

metropolitan area of the US. The sample was made up of 19% of a 700 member home

education group. The gender and age of participants were not reported, but all were

parents who reported home educating their children. The researchers found no significant

differences between the national home educated sample and the regional home school

sample they collected in the areas of child gender, race, religious affiliation or the number of

two parent families. However, they did find that the regional sample had a higher level of

parental education and that there were higher levels of single child households.

Mackey et al., (2011) considered if there were any significant differences between

their sample of 130 home educators and the national sample of parents who use schools as

their primary education tool. They found that their home educating sample had less ethnic

and religious diversity, had higher rates of two child families and had a much higher parental

education level (60% with college degrees compared to 34.6%). While this is only a small

sample from a local area and was not randomly selected it does provide some insights.

Unfortunately data in the area of parent employment was not collected precluding

conclusions about employment status. Also there appeared not to be a Bonferroni

adjustment applied to the alpha level in the statistical analysis which would typically be

applied when multiple analyses were undertaken. However, these results suggest that home

educators in American are a specific group more likely to be white, Christian, and well

educated. This certainly fits within the stereotypical depiction of home education. Without

more social and socioeconomic information about the regional sample or if the regional

group had a specific purpose (e.g., religious instruction) it is difficult to draw any meaningful

conclusions. Although Mackey's study is the only published research comparing home and

school educating parents available, other studies suggest more diversity in US home

educators.

Mazama and Lundy (2014), considered the role of race and religion in parents who

home educate and have non-white heritage with 93% being of African American descent.

The demographic characteristics of their sample revealed that 80% of mothers and 60% of

fathers had at least a college degree and 91% were two parent households. Field-Smith and

Milliams (2009), qualitatively investigated the motivations, challenges and sacrifices amongst 24 home educators from African American backgrounds. The demographics of the sample again reflect higher than average rates of two parent households and parental education levels and that the mothers were the primary education providers. These studies begin to provide an insight into the demographic characteristics of home educators in America. However, there do appear to be a range of different motivations that shape the demographic picture. In the above studies, the three variables that are consistently higher than statistically expected are rates of two parent families, higher than average parental education levels, and that the mothers are the primary educators.

In Australia, although all parents who home educate are required to register with their State/Territory Government, there is some conjecture about the percentage of parents who are actually registered. In the recent NSW review of home schooling there were 3,238 children registered for home education, however, the report provided details of various submissions that suggested the true number may be as high as 16,400 or even 20,000 (New South Wales [NSW] Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014). The review also reported that there was no mechanism to track or estimate families who were not registered. In the 2003 Queensland Parliamentary review of home schooling (McHugh, 2003) it was reported that there were 1,474 families home educating. However, the report estimated that the true number being home educated was potentially in the range of 2,500-9,000. Unfortunately there is currently no way of extrapolating from census data the number of home educators in Australia. It is clear from these government reviews that the actual number of home educated children is unknown. It is plausible to contend that, with such uncertainly about the number of children involved, the demographic characteristics of parents home

educating is also likely to be currently unknowable. Given this lack of data, the following

section will attempt to provide some demographic information from the parliamentary

reviews and research in the area.

Harding (2011) in his unpublished thesis considered the qualitative differences in the

conceptualisation of parents' perceptions of themselves as educators. It is important to

note that this sample included parents home educating, as well as those engaged in

distance education and did not include any unschooling or families engaging in other

informal home education methodologies. The sample was collected through two Christian

home education service providers in which Harding was a prominent figure. Although the

sample is not representative of all home educators, it does provide an insight into families

engaging in structured schooling in the home. In Harding's sample of 119 parents,

approximately 85% were two parent families with the mother being the primary educator in

all but six of the families. In relation to education, 48.7% of the sample had some post-

secondary education with 14% having a university degree or higher qualification. The

primary educators partner's education level showed a somewhat higher rate with 59% of

partners having some post-secondary education and 32% having a university degree or

higher. The primary educator was working in 30% of families but only 6% were in full time

employment. For partners, 63% were in fulltime employment and a further 14% had part-

time employment. Family size was larger than average in Australia with 32% of families

having three children and 47% of the sample having 4 or more children. Due to the

recruitment process detailed above this was a highly religious sample with 96% of mothers

and 80% of fathers reporting that their religious beliefs were important to them. These

findings show a great deal of similarity with the US findings. However, the highly religious

nature of the population sampled may limit the generalisability of the findings to all Australian home educators.

In 2000 the New South Wales (NSW) Board of Studies (NSWBS) conducted a questionnaire of 337 families registered for home education in NSW which included some demographic information. It reported that 45% of the families were in rural NSW and 26% in the metropolitan area. As is commonly reported, it was the mother (74%) who was the primary educator. There were a range of parental expectations in how long they would home educate. Some viewed it as a short term solution and others expected in to be a permanent choice. Nearly 50% believed that they would be involved in home education for at least six years, but 77% stated that they would continue home educating for as long as it was in their child's best interests.

The 2003 Queensland (QLD) review of home education (McHugh, 2003) provided very little demographic information about the 900 parents who were home educating. Instead they presented information from America. Similarly, the 2014 NSW review (NSW Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014) had few solid information sources for demographic information on the parents who home educate their children. The report stated that there was a disproportionate number of home educators in the non-metropolitan areas and lower socioeconomic areas of NSW. However, the potential link between this and single income families was not covered. The report also found support for the well-established finding that mothers are overwhelmingly the main education provider and that the majority of home educators were two parent families. The report illustrated that for QLD home educators, contrary to public stereotypes regarding larger than average family sizes, 55.2% of home educating families only had one child registered. However,

some consideration needs to be given to Isenberg's (2006) American findings that almost half of home educating families have at least one other child enrolled at school.

Other Australian studies, due mostly to their qualitative design, did not report a great deal of information regarding the demographic characteristics of their participants. Barrat-Peacock's (1997) pioneering study, reported that the vast majority of the education load was carried by the mothers in home educating families with few exceptions. Kidd and Kaczmarek (2010) in their study into mothers of children with an autism spectrum disorder reported that the mothers in their sample were between 37 and 46 years of age and were the primary educational providers. Broadhurst's (1999) study into children's perception of home education revealed that in six families in the study all were two parent household and the mother was the primary educator. Croft (2013) considered the motivations of registered teachers (or formally registered) who choose to home educate one or more of their own children. Given the nature of the population she found that the entire 55 participants had post-secondary training in teaching, she also found that the family size was larger than the national average. None of the sample had full time employment but 11% were still working part time in school settings. Only 16% of the parents reported that they had negative experiences of the process when they were a teacher in a school. English (2012) also found her sample of mothers to be highly educated and the main educational provider. Jackson (2009) explored transitions between formal educational institutions and home education in her sample of 25 families. Her sample had one single parent household and 24 with two parents. Jackson reported that mothers were the primary education providers in all families in her study. Thirteen of the 25 families had four or more children, sixteen of the families had at least one child who had spent some time in school. Three interesting findings were

also reported; 17 of the 25 reported religious beliefs, the mothers although the primary

educators typically reported that their partners were very important to the education

process, and only 10 of the mothers reported that they did not work. These scant studies

capture the majority of the findings in relation to the demographic characteristics of home

educators in Australia. In contrast to the limited literature on demographic characteristics, a

little more is known about why parent choose to home educate.

Motivations to home educate

When parents take the unusual and often highly criticised path of removing their

children from a school to home educate, they are not only violating social norms in regards

to education but also committing to a very high workload. This choice which can lead to

potential stigma, financial stress, and social isolation along with criticism from others does

not appear to be an easy decision. However, almost two million American children are home

educated and this appears to be an increasing trend in Australia and many other developed

countries (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Although, there is little consensus on the percentage

of parents with a particular motivation for choosing to home educate, there is a strong focus

on the religious and ideological motivations. Therefore the motivations for home education

are an important factor to consider when investigating parents who home educate.

Van Galen (1988) was the first to publish the identification of the religious or

ideological philosophies as the divergent primary motivations of home educators. She used

the terms ideologues (to represent religious motivations) and pedagogues (to represent

ideological motivations). However, with the current knowledge in regards to motivation

these terms are perhaps too specific. Parents who home educate for religious reason may

use a range of learning and teaching tools and techniques. The key differences between the

groups are that ideological home educators are removing the children from a situation that

they do not think meets the educational needs of their child, whereas religious educators

are opting to educate their children within a religious system. Although any classification is

problematic, in empirical research some grouping is necessary. The separation of why

parents choose to home educate, from the pedagogical tools, may be helpful in gaining a

better understanding of motivations and methods. This also takes into account the

Australian findings that suggest that parent's educational practices change overtime as they

gain more experience in home educating contexts (e.g., Barrett-Peacock, 1998; Croft, 2013;

Thomas & Pattison, 2007). There is no research to suggest that parents' level of religiosity

fluctuates during the home education process. However, few studies comprehensively

investigate parental motivations for home education. The role of parental motivations in

relation to children with a disability, impairment, or special needs has yet to be clarified.

There are recent reports that a substantial number of parents home educate because of

their child's condition. Given the reports from these parents (e.g., Hurlbutt, 2011; Kidd &

Kaczmarek, 2010; Reilly, et al., 2002) and teachers in the area (Hurlbutt, 2012), these

parents are often using home education as an educational tool of last resort. This pragmatic

motivation appears to be distinct, but may share some broad similarities, with other

motivations. Further investigation of the motivations of all parents who home educate is

needed.

Some Australian researchers (e.g., Jackson & Allan, 2010) have suggested that the

best way to interpret parental motivations is as either a negative view of school or a positive

view of home education. That is, do parents feel that home education is so beneficial that

school is not necessary or do they perceive school so problematic that some other solution,

such as home education, is required? Patrick (1999), considered the pull (positive aspects of

home education) and push factors (negative aspects of school) to be the key parental

motivational categories for home education. Chapman and O'Donoghue (2000) suggest that

there are nine reasons parents choose to home educate: dissatisfaction with traditional

schools, religious motives, the claim that schools cannot provide children with the personal

interest and attention they can get from their family, parental rights and responsibility over

government regulations, protection from unwanted influences, negative schooling

experiences, maintenance of the family unit, views on child development, and New Age

influences. All these Australian authors have made suggestions as to the likely motivations

that underpin parents' decision to home educate. However, very little empirical support is

available.

Representative data from America indicates that 64% of parents list religion as an

important factor (16% say it is the most important) in their decision to home educate, 74%

list concerns about academic instruction (19% the most important) and 32% list mental,

physical or special needs (approximately 5% the most important). These categories are

problematic as parents who are seeking a curriculum based on religious beliefs and parents

who have a child whose specific needs are not being met are likely to report that they are

also concerned with the academic instruction. In the US there is also the prominent

confounding variable of race.

Mazama and Lundy (2014), consider the role of race and religion in parents of non-

white heritage with 93% of the sample being of African American/Black descent. The

parents highlighted quality of education in schools (25%) as their most common reason for

home education. Racism was the next most commonly cited reason at 23.9%, religion was

only 9.5%. Mazama and Lundy conclude that African American parents who home educate

differ from other home educators in regards to their focus on race, culture, and history. This

cross-cultural investigation highlights that different communities have differing reasons for

choosing home education. It is not clear what impact nationality or ethnic heritage has in

Australia. There has been no research examining this variable. The American findings on

race adds further weight to the notion that considering the entire home education group as

a singular entity is likely to lead to mixed findings, especially if the population has a high

level of cultural diversity.

In Australia there has been a limited amount of research into the motivation of

home educators. The NSW Board of Studies (2000) study found that in their sample the

motivations for home educating were that home schooling better suited their child's needs

(74%) and that they felt that it was a parent's responsibility to educate their children (40%).

There were no specific questions regarding religion or child's special needs included

although these types of responses appear to have been elucidated in the "other" category

(33%). In the QLD review (McHugh, 2003) the most common motivation to home educate

(parents could select more than one) was peer pressure (30%), followed by more personal

one-on-one support (26%) and education system/teacher issues (22%). Other reasons of

note were religion (21%), bullying at school (16%) and special needs/medical issues (15%). In

the 2013 NSW Parliamentary Review, information was presented from the NSWBS regarding

the reason for choosing to home educate. There was a very high non response rate (36% no

response and 24% other) which was acknowledged, however, only 5% selected religion, 14%

selected special learning needs and 17% selected philosophical. In a comprehensive

qualitative framework, Barratt-Peacock (1997) reported a four step process that typified the

motivating factors in parents deciding to home educate. These are background factors (e.g., personal beliefs), crisis (often negative experiences in the school system), informant/mentor (a person or source who was involved in the home education process) and confirmation (the benefits of home education for the child and family). Barratt-Peacock, argued that while there was variation within this process, each parent went through these stages in beginning and continuing to home educate. He also found that 78.5% of published personal reports in local newsletters and magazines included statements that parents felt that their family's values were not represented in their school system. Further, many families in his sample highlighted the negative peer influence in schools as a strong factor in their choice to home educate. With the advent of internet communications and a greater awareness of social pressure through these networks, it is not clear how motivations regarding avoidance of peer pressure may have changed since the mid-1990s.

Croft (2013) in her investigations into Australian teachers who decided to home educate their own children, provides a different perspective on motivations. The parents in her study were formerly, and in some cases still, involved in classroom teaching in schools. This group of parents can provide information on their motivating factors from a perspective that includes their experience as classroom teachers in schools. Parents in Crofts sample highlighted that they wanted to remain the "primary influence" in their child's lives rather than delegate that role to a school (p.75). The parents also posited that they were somewhat counter culturists in many aspects of their family lives (e.g., food and lifestyle choices). The parents also discussed negative aspects of school culture and the behaviours and attitudes of other teachers that they had experienced when working as teachers as a motivating factor in their decision to home educate. It is important to note

that these teachers reported having generally positive experience in the school system as a whole, but could highlight specific negative events or situations that encouraged them to home educate.

It is broadly apparent that parents have differing expectations for the outcome of their educational journey with their children (Barratt-Peacock, 1997). Some parents are trying to maximise the educational outcomes for their children, others are trying to develop the whole person and academics only form a small part of this. This makes comparisons between groups in many areas quite difficult. There is ongoing debate in the US regarding the academic achievement of children who are home educated (e.g., Martin-Chang, Gould, & Meuse, 2011; Snyder, 2013). This in part overflows into the consideration of parental motivations. A parent's motivations and educational activities will be in stark contrast if the parent is trying to maximise their children's education to gain entry to a university course as compared to helping their child live a sustainable life in harmony with nature. It is important to consider the parenting motivations in all home education research because until they are understood any knowledge of child educational outcomes will be incomplete.

The difficulty in defining groups within the home education community has been detailed above. While the initial research in developing the two group dichotomy was extremely valuable, future studies need greater context. It is becoming clearer that there are a number of primary motivations, relating to a number of perceptions of home and school education. Most studies conclude that there are a similar set of underlying motivations but attempt to group them in ways that are consistent with the researchers conceptualisations of home education. It is important for any future analysis which attempts to compare groups to provide clear information on how groups were created and rationale

for the group formation. With such information more meaningful analysis and comparison between samples may be possible. To simply group families based on a single spectrum of their primary motivation is unlikely to provide clarity into their true reasons for home educating.

Wellbeing in Parents who Home Educate

Given the limited information their demographic characteristics and their motivations to choose this educational method, it is not surprising that little is known about their psychological wellbeing. It is clear that all parents face a range of challenges in balancing the needs of their children, work, and social commitments. In many western countries parents are increasingly feeling the pressure of meeting the social, academic, and emotional needs of their children (Suldo & Fefer, 2013). However, home educating parents take on the responsibility of managing the entire educational experience as well as supporting their child's social and emotional needs. This is done within an environment that can be un-supporting. Indeed parents may even have doubts about themselves as educators. Gray and Riley (2013) reported that in their sample of 232 US unschooling home educators, 41% had some level of internal conflict between their own views of unschooling and traditional educational practices. That is, they had some level of doubt that they were doing the right thing or that their children's education could be better served using some other form of education.

Parents begin home educating their children for many reasons. Each of these may have distinct links with wellbeing. The stress associated with the decision to home educate and supporting the educational need of a child may be different if the parent has had this as a long term goal as educational best practice as compared to a parent who feels that they

have to home educate their child with autism, as a last resort. Similarly, if a parent feels that

his or her religious beliefs dictate that they should home educate their child this can have an

impact on their wellbeing, through perceived rewards, expectations and obligations. Parents

can also receive a boost to their wellbeing from the activities and interactions which occur

in a home education environment. Some evidence for this position comes from Barratt-

Peacock's (1997) early Australian research. In his study, parents found home education to

be a rewarding and fulfilling endeavour, while a lesser number reported that they felt that

being the primary education provider constrained them in other aspects of the life. Parents

may receive a sense of satisfaction from their interactions with their child and the learning

gains they make together. Home education allows for an increased level of family

interaction and communication which can positively influence parental wellbeing. For

example, Merry and Howell (2009) considered the role of intimacy between child and

parent and its potential benefits. However, with the additional educational responsibility

aspects of a parent's social, emotional, and work life may be negatively impacted. This is

evidenced by Gray and Riley (2013) reporting that in their sample of 232 US unschooling

home educators 20% said that their decision to home educate had a negative impact on

their time for other activities such as their career, personal development, and social

interactions. Dedeaux (2012) considered issues of wellbeing in adults who had been home

educated as well as parents who were home educating. The focus of this thesis was adults

involved in home education as clients in therapeutic settings, but did discuss their wellbeing.

Dedeaux's data are the only empirical findings on the wellbeing of parents who home

educate and are presented below. The following section will review the limited previous

research and academic thought on the positive and negative impacts of home educating and

the activities and pressures associated with it, on parental wellbeing.

Wellbeing in parents

Parents who choose to home educate their children face the additional pressures of social judgement from individuals who are sceptical of home education, balancing time and money with their children's education, maintaining their children's social interactions, and self-doubt (Gray & Riley, 2013). As was detailed above, parents who do home educate are typically one income families who have higher than average levels of education. This typically means that it will be a mother who is at home predominately supervising the educational environment with the father supplementing this in non-paid work time. This can lead to financial strain for home educating families (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Parsons & Lewis, 2010; Reilly et al., 2002). Mothers will often take their child on outings or to everyday activities such as shopping during school hours. This can lead to negative social interactions with the non-home educating community. Family members and friends can also provide negative feedback that can impact on parental wellbeing. Indeed, Gray and Riley report that in their sample of 232 US unschooling home educators that 43% of their participants reported that social pressure through negative comments and judgements from friends and family was a challenge. This is perhaps similar to the stigma reported by some parents of children with a disability (Pimm, 1996). The potential impact of these negative social interactions on home educating parents is not clear.

Psychological wellbeing of parents who home educate a child with a disability in Australia

One of the few studies in Australia to consider parental wellbeing was Kidd and Kaczmarek's (2010) qualitative investigation of 10 mothers who were home educating a child with an autism spectrum disorder. The study considered the broad experiences of these mothers. This included their multiple roles as homemakers, carers, and mothers and

also reported concerns about the educational outcomes for their children. Parents who were seeking social and educational support felt that they were unable to attain it. However, some parents reported that this was at least in part because of their child's behavioural difficulties in interacting with groups. Some parents felt this limited their ability to attend home education support groups. Parents also felt that they needed more free time away from their child, but had difficulty doing this due to a lack of support. Parents who felt that they had no option other than to home educate due to issues with the school system, reported that they needed more support and time away from their child (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). This theme, unsurprisingly, continues in regards to the mother's overall reflections on their decision to home educate. Those who chose to home educate from an idealistic perspective (or who felt that way after feeling forced) generally described a more fulfilling and positive home education experience compared to those that felt that home education was the only option for their child.

The parents in Kidd and Kaczmarek's (2010) study also reported that they had very positive emotional reactions to the improvements in their child's academic and behavioural issues once they were established in a home education framework. They also found that their families had stronger bonds. These two issues were reported to be linked to parents reporting reduced levels of stress. However, there was no specific measurement of stress in the study. It is important to note that the parents in this qualitative study were home educating children on the autism spectrum and have limited generalisability beyond the parent and children involved. Broadly, these results do mirror Reilly's (2002:2004) earlier study of parents home educating their children with disabilities in Australia.

In these studies Reilly (2002; 2004) undertook a qualitative investigation of six parents who home educated children with a range of disabilities (primarily cognitive and language issues). As was the case in Kidd and Kaczmarek's (2010) study parents highlighted that they sometime felt unsupported by government education regulators. They also reported the financial pressures in home educating a child. However, this group of parents did not have any difficulties connecting and engaging with home education support groups in their local area. Reilly also found that the methods of instruction transitioned from structured learning to more flexible learning overtime. Kidd and Kaczmarek, and Riley's studies highlight that for parents of children with disabilities in Australia, there are a range of potentially detrimental and supportive factors in relation to wellbeing. Findings relating to other parenting groups who home educate can be found in the international literature.

International findings on the wellbeing of parents who home educate

In the USA, Dedeaux (2012) investigated the wellbeing of 737 adults who home educated their children. There was also a separate set of 315 participants who were adults who had been home educated. Unfortunately, in some analysis the two groups were not separated. Although this was appropriate for Dedeaux's aim of investigating help seeking behaviour amongst adults involved in home, it makes the interpretation of the findings to other contexts difficult. The study used psychometrically sound assessment tools including the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D: Radloff, & Locke, 1977) and the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI: Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983) the study also measured happiness and character strength. Dedeaux found that 54.7% of the home educated adults and 54.8% of home educating parents had a family member who had received metal health services. It is not clear what level of heath care was

provided although 52.3% of referrals had been through word of mouth or from a friend,

suggesting that the healthcare needs did not require a medical referral. This would appear

to indicate that family groups home educating are experiencing issues relating to their

wellbeing. However, it was not possible to determine the psychological health of just the

parents in the sample.

Dedeaux (2012) further investigated the links between depression and a range of

demographic variables in parents who home educate. There were significant weak negative

correlations between depression and age, education level, and household income. No

significant relationships were found between depression and social support or religious

affiliation. There were significant relationships between depression, anxiety and happiness

in the typical directions. There were no significant differences in depression or anxiety

between mothers and fathers or between methods of home education employed. Anxiety

was also investigated in relation to a range of demographic variables in parents who home

educated their children. There were significant weak negative correlations between anxiety

and age, education level and household income. Dedeaux also found that happiness was

related to social support in home educating parents. These results are the first into

psychological wellbeing of parents who home educate. Unfortunately, comparisons to

norms or other groups were not provided, nor were common statistical adjustments such as

a method to control for Type I error employed in the multiple comparisons (e.g., Bonferroni

adjustment). However, raw scores were provided. Home educating parents had mean score

of 8.61 for depression (CES-D), 30.98 for anxiety (STAI-s) and 3.9 for happiness (OHI). The

depression score was well below the clinical cut-off of 16 (Radloff, & Locke, 1977), and was

below that of parents of children with a disability (15.73: Phetrasuwan & Miles (2009),

parents of children referred for mental health issues (17.8: Swenson, el at., 2016) and adults

who were informal carers of a relative with dementia (14.33; D'Aoust, Brewster, & Rowe,

2015). The anxiety scores of parents who home educate were below the clinical cut-off of

39-40 (Spielberger, et al., 1983) and lower than female carers of people suffering from

dementia (Sansoni, Vellone, & Piras, 2004) but higher than parents of typically developing

children (24.3 for mothers and 21.7 for fathers: Ben-Amita, et al., 2006). Happiness levels

were consistent with non-home educating findings (Dedeaux, 2012). This provides mixed

evidence for the wellbeing of adults in home education settings.

In conducting her research, Dedeaux (2012) found that unschooling parents were

significantly happier than those using more formal methods. It was also reported that length

of time home educating did not influence help seeking behaviour, but higher levels of

education were related to increased help seeking. Higher anxiety and depression levels

were associated with less help seeking behaviour. In regards to social support, it was

reported that 75% of parents who home educate utilise email lists, 68% attend home

education organisation events and 67% are a part of home education support groups.

Dedeaux also explored rankings of character strengths by parent who home educate. She

found that home educating parents ranked gratitude, love of learning and open-mindedness

as top five responses which the US general population did not. This is somewhat counter to

the findings of Essenburg (2004). Her study of 61 parents (30 home educating and 31 using

schools) found no significant differences between the two groups in regards to personality.

Given the very limited number of studies investigating wellbeing and personality using

psychometric tools further investigation is needed before any meaningful conclusions can

be drawn.

Home education and the potential for improved wellbeing

Grey and Riley (2013) found that parents in their study reported a number of

positive aspects of home education that may improve wellbeing. These included the reward

of seeing their child learn, the emotional and social connection within the family, their

child's psychological and social health, and the ability to use time more efficiently and the

opportunities this bought. These aspects of home education can potentially buffer the

parents from the stresses of home education and everyday life. A parent who is part of a

family that has a high level of connection and interaction is less like to experience

reductions in wellbeing (Osborne, Berger, & Magnuson, 2012). In his work in Australia in the

mid-1990s, Barrat-Peacock (1997), found that parents reported strong emotional

connections with their children as a source of support. There were also reports of

satisfaction in the progress of their child's education and the role they had played in this

progress. Parents also report that they gain friendship, support and access to activities that

they would not have if they were not home educating (Knutson, 2007).

Merry and Howell (2009) emphasise the benefits of intimacy, the bond between

parent and child that is potentially increased in the home education environments. Many

parents in Australian studies (e.g., Barratt-Peacock, 1999; Croft, 2013) report that family

cohesion and bonds with children are key benefits of home education. Merry and Howell

consider these benefits in the contexts of the literature supporting the potential benefits of

intimacy. They highlight that while home education does not specifically lead to intimacy,

under the right conditions it can thrive and this can have benefits to parental wellbeing.

They see this as occurring when parents adopt attentive parenting practice. Merry and

Howell characterise this as parenting high in warmth, sensitivity, a clear set of parental

expectations, sincerity and helping children link consequences to their actions. However,

they caution that if using highly authoritarian parenting styles in home education settings, these benefits are unlikely to occur. This is an interesting finding in the way it links differing methods of home education and parental motivations to wellbeing. For example Merry and Howell do not support the use of home education as a tool to restrict children's access to the broader or diverse community, but as a tool to build family intimacy. They do not believe that the improved aspects of wellbeing related to intimacy will exist in these family situations. This is a potentially important consideration if parents are home educating as a means of limiting their child's access to a broad range of influences.

Harding (2011), in his unpublished thesis, considered the qualitative differences in the conceptualisation of Australian parents' perceptions of themselves as home educators. It is important to note that this sample included parents who were home educating, as well as those engaged in distance education and did not include any unschooling or families engaging in other informal methodologies. These parents reported that they had concerns regarding financial strain, their ability as educators and time management. Lois (2012) further considered these issues and the pressure they can place on home educators.

Lois (2012) investigated mother's perceptions of themselves as mothers and educators. Her sample consisted of 24 mothers, 21 of whom identified as Christians. Of those, 14 were highly conservative in their religious and political beliefs. While this group may not be highly representative of home educators in Australia, or the US, the level of investigation undertaken by Lois makes these findings important. Lois' eight year project consisted of field notes from home education support group meetings, reviewing the content of online list servers provided by home educators, attendance at conferences and interviewing parents. The aim was to gain a full understanding of home education. An

important difference in Lois' methodology and perspective was during the initial phases she was not already involved in the home education community and was not a mother. While she reports that this was initially a barrier, it also allowed her a high degree of insight and objectivity. One of Lois' key findings was that mothers suffered from role strain, most reported passing through three stages of role strain "ambiguity, failure, and conflict/overload" (p.93). Some of the mothers in the small sample went on to report that they experience "homeschool burnout" (p.93). That is that the additional role of educator to their already busy role as mother created a load that was too great at times. Parents also reported a lack of time to spend on themselves or relaxing. Mothers also faced challenges in regarding the perceptions of others that home education was an act of parental deviance. Although burnout is common, when considering it specifically in relation to parenting and home education the impact on broader wellbeing is clear. If a parent reaches a point that they feel that they cannot manage in their role of parent and educator, the anxiety, guilt and self-recriminations are in relation to the roles that a home educating mother considers central. Many parents also reported that they had some difficulty believing they could home educate their child. Lois reported that this uncertainty was exacerbated by the range and lack of consistency in suggested practices by experienced home educators and material on how to best home educate. It appeared to be an overload of information, for already time poor mothers. For parents seeking structured learning environments, the advice that children can learn from non-structured activities appeared to add to parent confusion. This was also compounded in some situations when children began to display a poor attitude to doing schoolwork at home. In these situations role confusion began to become an issue with parents attempting to be parent, teacher, curriculum developer, support worker and disciplinarian. Lois also reported that in the communities she was working with there was

often advice that the difficulties the mothers were facing were challenges from God and should be suppressed or blindly overcome. These key variables appeared to be the factors in the participants in Lois' study suffering from burnout when they were interviewed in 2001. It is important to note that most of the participants were highly structured in their home education approach, attempting to run a school at home and had religious motivation for home education. This limits the generalisability of these findings but does link with the suggestions of Merry and Howell (2009) that for parents with these philosophies and structured educational frameworks, burnout and distress are possible.

In a follow up, Lois (2012) reinterviewed 16 of the 24 parents from the 2009 data collection. Of the 16 parents, 75% had home educated continuously since 2001 while three of the remaining five were currently home educating after using schooling for some time. The mothers at this time point, were experiencing different stressors. Many now had other children who placed different time and education requirements on the mothers. They also faced the aging of their parents and themselves which reduced energy levels for home educating. Some parents were also considering future career and study options once they had more time and while it was a positive there were also some regrets that they had not been able to pursue them sooner. For those parents who elected to send their children back to school and them home educate again, the process was reported to be traumatic. They reported that it was a crisis in the child's social, emotional or academic life that drove them to remove their children and home educate once again. The group that did not use schools at all during this period reported less negative events, while they experienced the stressors of home education there were less fluctuations which from their reports seemed to indicate better overall wellbeing. While Louis has illustrated the potential aspects of

home education that can negatively impact on home education she has also provided a clear picture that some parents do enjoy the process and gain wellbeing benefits as well.

The mothers in Lois' (2012) study reported that they were proud of what they had achieved. The parents, especially those who chose to home educate, rather than reacting to negative issues at school, took a great deal of pride in what they and their children had achieved. In terms of their ability to cope with the stresses that home education placed upon them a mother's perception of herself appeared to be the most important aspect. Mothers who perceived their educational role as an extension of the mothering role and chose to home educate from before their child was of school age appeared to report less reduction in wellbeing in the interviews. The group that felt forced to home educate because their child faced issues in the formal schooling appeared to suffer more in relation to their wellbeing. This group of mothers reported being torn between the need to provide for the educational needs of their children and other aspects of the mother's lives such as their career. The mothers in Lois' sample reported differing perspectives on religion as it relates to wellbeing. Some reports highlighted that the mother's religious values and beliefs gave them strength, purpose and focus in their home education journey, not only was it in their child's best interest to home educate, but also the family could be closer to God. However, the mothers also reported that they were unlikely to seek help for their stress or burnout as it was viewed as an expected challenge that needed to be overcome. Although, Lois' study had a small sample size and the participants had a very narrow range of home education philosophies, she does provide the first longitudinal qualitative insights of wellbeing of mothers who home educate.

Physical wellbeing of parents who home educate

There is very little information regarding the physical health of home educators. There has been some research into fitness level (Long, Gaetke, Perry, Abel, & Clasey, 2010) and weight and calorie intake (Cardel, et al., 2014) of children who are home educated. Few significant differences were found. Although there is no research evidence for parents specifically, the results of the studies with children who are home educated would suggest that the health and nutrition of parents who home educate is similar to parents who do not home educate. Meltzer, Shaheed and Ambler (2016), found that home educated children had better sleep habits and woke up later. No such data are available for the parents. It is also important to consider confounding variables when considering parental wellbeing. For example Uecker and Hill (2014) considered the link between education type and age at marriage and birth of first child, which are linked to physical and mental health. They found that graduates from evangelical Protestant schools married younger and were having children significantly earlier than their public school peers. No such significant result was found for home educated students in age at marriage or first birth. However, they did not compare home educated students from religious backgrounds to those from secular backgrounds. This again illustrates that considering parents who home educate as a single group can be problematic. Further research is needed to consider the physical health of parents who home educate and if their health is adversely impacted by the additional roles they fulfil.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the key findings regarding the demographic characteristics, the motivations, and the wellbeing of parents who home educate. The limited literature on these topics was presented and reviewed. The only firm conclusion

from the material presented is that very little is known about these parents despite their additional roles in family and education. There would appear to be some demographic commonalities between parents who use home educating and those who use schools as the primary education tool. Home educating parents, especially in the US, appear to be more highly educated, less culturally diverse, more religious and substantially more likely to be in two parent households. The motivations for home education, while varied between studies, have some commonalities. Broadly, parents do appear to fit within the religious, idealistic or children with an impairment or disorder categorical groupings. There would seem to be much overlap in these categories, but further investigation is needed into the motivations of parents of a child with a disability. These categories are in all likelihood too simplistic yet current investigations have not yet been statistically able to provide more appropriate groupings. The wellbeing of parents who home educate is unclear as there is insufficient empirical data to make any generalisations. Although the home education process has the potential to impact negatively on parental wellbeing, parents also report specific positive aspects. Future research needs to explore what impact these stressors and buffering factors may have on the wellbeing of parents who home educate.

Chapter 5: Aims and Hypotheses

As has been shown in the preceding review of the literature, very little is known about parents who choose to home educate in Australia. The aim of this study was to provide an overview of the demographic characteristics, motivations, and wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. To explore these issues the demographic characteristics of parents who home educate in Australia was compared to published reports of American home educators and a sample of Australian parents who do not home educate. The wellbeing of the Australian parents who home educate was then compared to the parents who do not within the Wallander and Varni (1998) Risk and Resistance Model. Analyses examined if there were differences in the raw scores or relationship between stressor, wellbeing, and stress process for the two groups. This study also investigated the demographic characteristics and the primary and contributing motivations of parents who home educate their children.

Demographic Characteristics and Wellbeing

When considering the current empirical knowledge of home education in Australia little information is available, even the actual number of home educators is not accurately known (McHugh, 2003). Although there is well documented demographic information from representative random samples that include home educators in America (IES, 2013), there is no such information available in Australia or other international contexts. What little information that is available regarding these issues in Australia has to be extracted from qualitative studies which, in many cases, were not focussed on demographic information and were often investigating specific populations within home educating parents (e.g., Croft, 2013; Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). The current level of empirical understanding is

problematic as home education is clearly an area of interest to policy makers (NSW Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014). Parental reports in the existing qualitative literature highlight a range of negative factors that may lead to increased stress and reduced wellbeing in parents who home educate (Grey & Riley, 2013; Lois, 2012). However, parents also report a range of supportive and fulfilling aspects of home education (Barratt-Peacock, 1999; Croft, 2013). It is unclear what the overall impact of these potentially positive and negative aspects of home education may have on parental wellbeing.

Hypothesis 1: Demographics characteristics of parents who home educate

Given the very limited information available, it was difficult to develop meaningful hypotheses in an Australian context. However, research by Mackey, Reese, and Mackey (2011) in America reported that there were few demographic differences between a home educating sample and national representative sample of non-home educating parents. Therefore, it was hypothesised that the Australian home education group and the comparison group who use schools as their primary education tool, will be similar in their demographic characteristics. However, in accordance with the limited Australian findings (e.g., Jackson 2009) it was expected that parents who home educate would have more children than the comparison group. It was also hypothesised that there would be significantly lower levels of maternal paid employment in the home education group as previously reported (e.g., Croft, 2013). Where possible the demographic characteristics of Australian and American home educators were compared. It was expected that there would not be any observable differences in distribution between the home educators in the two locations.

Hypothesis 2: Wellbeing in parents who home educate

There was no empirical Australian literature on the wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. There has been some investigation (e.g., Reilly et. al., 2002; Reilly 2004) into the factors that may influence wellbeing, but there was no Australian evidence to suggest that parents who home educate would have differing levels of wellbeing compared to non-home educating parent groups. Dedeaux (2012) examined the relationship between various wellbeing measures in an American sample and those results do not suggest that there were any major factors that were likely to support differences between wellbeing in home education groups. Therefore it was hypothesised that there would not be any significant differences in wellbeing between Australian parents who home educate and those that do not.

Relationships between Stress and Wellbeing

Although, there is some literature on the wellbeing of parents who home educate, no study has considered these issues in an interactive model. This study explored the relationship between stress and wellbeing within the Wallander and Varni (1998) Risk and Resistance Model. This allows for an understanding of, not only of wellbeing levels, but the relationships between stress and wellbeing, and the use of stress processing factors. Further, this model allows for the comparison of these relationships between parents who home educate and those that do not in Australia. These aspects of the research aim to expand current knowledge about the wellbeing of parents who home educate.

Hypothesis 3: Relationships between stress and wellbeing

Given the lack of empirical evidence, it was hypothesised that there would be no significant differences in the strength and direction of the relationships between stress and

wellbeing for Australian parents who home educate and those that do not. In evaluating

these relationships, it is hypothesised that no moderation effect would be present in the

relationships between stress and wellbeing. That is, the strength of the relationship

between the stress and wellbeing would be the same for both parent groups.

This study also considered the equivalence of the stress processing pathways between

the home education and the comparison groups. That is, the same stress processing

pathways would exist for both parent groups. This is not a common use of mediation in the

broad wellbeing literature; it has never been used in relation to home education. There is no

evidence to suggest that the method of education chosen by parents should alter the stress

processing pathways. For this reason it was hypothesised that the stress processing

pathways would be the same for both groups as indicated by the mediated relationships

being similar for both groups.

Motivations to Home Educate

Spiegler (2010) has emphasised that any classification of parent's motivation to home

education are problematic. However, many studies have reported a dichotomy of religion

and ideology as the key motivations for parents to home educate (Kunzman & Gaither,

2013). Increasingly there are reports of parents home educating their child with a disability

or impairment, often because they feel their child's needs are not being met in the school

system (Lois, 2012; Reilly, et al., 2002). It is unclear if these patterns of motivations are also

reflected in Australia.

Hypothesis 4: Motivations

It was hypothesised that the three motivations of religion, reduced structure (ideological

motivation), and child disability would be the three most common primary motivations to

home educate in this study. However, this study will also consider contributing motivations in addition to the primary motivations explored in most studies. There has been very little investigation into contributing motivations. For this reason there will be no formal hypotheses in relation to the contributing motivations and all analyses will be exploratory in nature.

This study sought to provide the first comprehensive evaluation of the demographic characteristics, wellbeing and motivations of parents who home educate. The above hypotheses set the scope of this study. The follow chapter is the method chapter which will detail the procedure, materials and participants in this study.

Chapter 6: Method

This chapter will set out the research procedure that is utilised in this cross-sectional project into the wellbeing and demographic characteristics of parents who home educate and those who do not and the motivations for parents to home educate. The 520 participants completed a questionnaire relating to their demographic characteristics, wellbeing, and family variables. The parents who home educate also provided information on their motivations to home educate. Regression based mediation and moderation were used to compare and contrast the relationships between the variables and constructs that are part of Wallander and Varni's (1998) Risk and Resistance Model (RRM). This chapter details the purpose of the research, the participants of the research, provides details of the scales used as part of the questionnaire and briefly explains the statistical approach used to investigate wellbeing in these families.

Purpose of the Research

The aim of this research was to examine the demographic characteristics of parents who home educate in Australia. Their demographic characteristics was also compared to parents who home educate in America and to parents who do not home educate in Australia. Information in these areas is lacking for parents who home educate in Australia. While there have been two recent parliamentary reviews of home education (Queensland [QLD] 2003 and New South Wales [NSW], 2014), they revealed little information on demographic characteristics or wellbeing of parents who home educate. In the NSW review only basic information about the families was available and much of this was from anecdotal sources, whist the QLD review did not focus on the topic. A further aim of this research is to compare the demographic characteristics and levels of wellbeing of home educating parents

in comparison to parents who use schools as their primary education tool. It is important that the research and education community has a better understanding of the individuals involved in this growing educational option in Australia so well-informed policy decisions can be made. This cross-sectional research project could not provide comprehensive information about long term causal relationships it is expected that it would provide substantial insights into the relationships between variables given the data collected and the analyses completed. It is important to have a sound understanding of the demographic characteristics and psychological health of the parents of home educating families as these variables may influence other aspects of the educational experience.

This research also investigated the wellbeing of the home educating and non-home educating parent groups within the RRM. This is done by comparing the strength of the relationships that exist between stress and welling in parents who home educate and those that do not. This study also considered the variables that may influence the relationship between stress and wellbeing to examine whether they operate in the same way for parents who home educate and those who do not. This is the first time that a large group of home educators has been compared in relation to their wellbeing and family characteristics to a similar group of parents who do not home educate in Australia. The findings of this study provided the first empirical information in to the ways parents who home educate experience the education process and what impact it has on their wellbeing.

The second area of consideration in the study was to explore the motivations parents have for home educating. Although there has been a historical conceptualisation of home educators as either motivated by religion or idealistic motivations, there are increasingly suggestions in the literature that parents are also home educating due to their

child experiencing difficulty at school or being diagnosed with a disorder (Kunzman &

Gaither, 2013). This study sought to investigate the primary and secondary motivations for

parents to home educate in Australia as there is currently no empirical information

available.

Data in this Project

The data for this study consisted of a group of parents who home educated their

children and a comparison group of parents whose children attended school on a fulltime

basis. The parents in the comparison group were made up of parents of primary school aged

children and parents of high school aged children. This data were collected in three phases.

All three of these data collections were conducted by the author and research team

members.

Participants

The participants in this research consisted of 231 parents who home educated their

children and 289 parents who used schools as the primary method of education. Parents in

both groups had at least one school aged child (4 years 9 months-18 years) and may have

had children of both the primary and secondary school age. All groups were invited to

participate in the research by completing either an online or hardcopy questionnaire. The

parents who home educated their children were approached to participate through the

promotion of the questionnaire through email, social media, online forums, home education

organisations and websites. Many home education support groups and social groups who

were contacted by email made their members and friends aware of the research. These

groups were not active in recruitment but did raise awareness of the research amongst

home educating families. Posts were made on home education forums and social media

pages promoting the existence of the research and providing a link to the explanatory statement and questionnaire.

The data for the non-home educating families was collected as part of two data collections focused on parental wellbeing conducted by the researcher, his primary supervisor, and postgraduate student researchers. Each study used a snowball technique to collect data from either parents of primary school or secondary school aged children, respectively. Therefore the demographic characteristics of each group will be reported separately. Given the snowball method of distribution and the anonymous questionnaire there is no guarantee that there no parents who home educate in the comparison group, but it is not considered likely. Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this research and the use of the comparison data in this study (See Appendix B: CF12/3433 – 2012001672).

Participant demographics

Comparison group.

The comparison group consists of 289 parents of children attending schools. This was made up of two separate samples, parents of primary school aged children and parents of high school age children, which were been combined to form the comparison group for this study. As they were collected separately they are discussed individually in this chapter. However, during the analysis they were combined to create the comparison group. This study involved 181 participants who had children of primary school age (primary group) who did not home educate their children. This data were collected in 2010. There were 137 mothers with an average age of 40.1 (*SD*=4.84) and 34 fathers with an average age of 41.2 (*SD*=5.38), with 10 participants who did not provided gender details. Complete sample

demographics can be seen in Table 6.1. The comparison group also included 108

participants who had children of high school age (secondary group). The data relating to

parents of high school aged children was collected in 2011. There were 72 mothers with an

average age of 47.8 (*SD*=4.10) and 32 fathers with an average age of 48.5 (*SD*=4.52), with 4

participants who did not provided gender details. In the primary group 83% of parents

reported that they were married and it was 86% of the secondary group. In relation to

employment 72% of the primary sample worked at least part time and this was 83% in the

secondary sample. Complete sample demographics can be seen in Table 6.1.

Home education group.

A group of 231 parents who home educate their children in Australia made up the

home education group in this study. This data were collected from late 2013 to early 2014.

There were 226 mothers and 5 fathers. Due to a technical issue in the online questionnaire

age was not recorded as part of the questionnaire distributed to the home education

population. Of the home educating parented 86% reported that they were married or living

with a partner, 81% reported that they worked less than 10 hours per week. All other

demographic information for this group can be seen in Table 6.1 except for ethnic heritage

which is presented in Figure 6.1.

Table 6.1

Demographic characteristics of parents with primary or secondary school aged children who attend school and home educating parents.

Demographic Characteristics	Primary school sample		Secondary school sample		Home educating sample	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Marital Status	11 not specified		2 not specified			
Married/living with partner	150	83	93	86		
Married	-		-		192	85
Living with a partner	-		-		14	6
Sole Parent	20	11	13	12	20	8
Highest Level of Education	10 not specified		1 not specified			
Primary school	2	1	1	1	4	2
Secondary school	32	18	22	20	32	13
Trade/TAFE	32	18	16	15	55	23
University Degree	105	58	68	63	87	37
University Postgraduate Degree	-		-		53	23
Partner's Highest Level of Education						
Primary school	-		-		3	1
Secondary school	-		-		25	10
Trade/TAFE	-		-		74	32
University Degree	-		-		66	28
University Postgraduate Degree	-		-		43	18
Employment status	13 not specified		4 not specified			
Full time	59	33	50	46		
Part time	71	39	40	37		
Unemployed	3	2	5	5		
Full time student	2	1	0	0		
Part time student	3	2	3	3		
Retired	0	0	5	5		
Homemaker	30	16	5	5		
No paid work					158	68
1-10 hours					32	13
11-20 hours					23	10
21-30 hours					9	3
31-38 hours					5	2
39-50 hours					4	1.5
51+ hours					0	
Partner employment status						
No paid work					15	7
1-10 hours					5	2
11-20 hours					2	1
21-30 hours					10	4
31-38 hours					32	15
39-50					116	55
51+					31	15
Household income	15 not specified		4 not specified			
Less than $20,000	8	4	1	1	7	3
$20,000-$40,000	9	5	10	9	34	14
$41,000-$60,000	20	11	7	7	42	18
$61,000-$80,000	25	14	12	11	35	15
$81,000-$100,000	30	17	20	18	36	15
Above $100,000	74	41	54	50	-	
$100,000-$150,000	-		-		43	18
Above $150,000	-		-		27	11
Number of children						
1	21	11	14	13	20	8
2	82	45	47	44	67	29
3	49	27	27	25	60	26
4	16	8	14	13	23	10
5	3	2	3	3	28	12
6			2	2	10	4
7					13	5
8					3	1
8+					4	1

Nationality and ethnic heritage information was collected for the home education group. Most participants reported their nationality as Australian (88%) with New Zealander (3%), British (3%), and American (1%) being the next most common. The participants reported a more diverse ethnic heritage as can be seen in Figure 6.1.
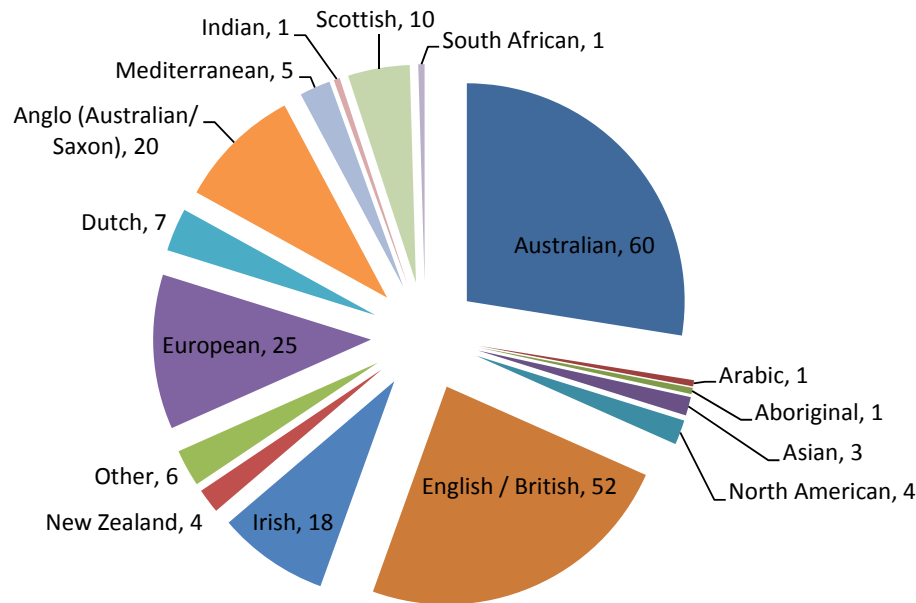

Figure 6.1. Ethic heritage of the home education group as percentages

Materials

A questionnaire collecting demographic information such as sex, income, educational level, marital status, and employment type was used for all groups. The questionnaire booklet also consisted of a battery of self-report scales measuring psychological wellbeing, parental stressors, and family variables (See Appendix A). For parents who home educate their children a section on their motivations for home educating and the educational tools used was also included Table 6.2 below details the measure used in each phase of this study.

Table 6.2

Study variables and scales

Construct	Primary school sample (2010)	High school sample (2011)	Home educating sample (2013)
Child Temperament (STSC)	Yes	No	Yes
Depression, anxiety, and stress (DASS)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Family functioning (FAPGAR)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Optimism (LOT-R)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Life Satisfaction (SLS)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parenting practices (CRQ)	Yes	No	Yes
Perceived control (PCIOSS)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Perceived stress (PSS)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quality of life (BREF WHO-QOL)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Support (SSQ6)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Worldview (WAS)	No	Yes	Yes

Child temperament

The 12-item Short Temperament Scale for Children (STSC: Prior, Sanson, Smart, & Oberklaid, 2000) was used to gauge the behavioural tendencies of the children of the participants. The scale seeks parental responses to questions regarding their child's temperament. This provides some indication as to the potential stress that may arise from interaction with the child. Parents respond on the STSC using a 6-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (Almost never) to 6 (Almost always). Scores range from 12-72, with high scores indicating high levels of the problematic aspects of child temperament. This is an Australian scale that was developed as part of the *Australian Temperament Project 1983-2000* (Prior et al., 2000). The scale contains questions such as "When unknown adults visit our home, my

child is immediately friendly and approaches them", and "When my child starts a project

such as a puzzle or model, he/she works on it without stopping until it is completed, even if

it takes a long time". The scale provides a full scale score indicating the child's global

temperament, however it also provides measures of the child approach (how a child deals

with initial social contact with others), inflexibility (if a child can be distracted or convinced

to change activities easily), and persistence (a child's level of persistency in finishing

activities they start). The Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) for this study were

acceptable with the total scale's alpha being .73 (home education) and .71 (primary), the

approach subscale being .82 (home education) and .76 (primary), inflexibility being .69

(home education) and .68 (primary), and persistence being .75 (home education) and .79

(primary).

Depression, anxiety and stress

The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21: Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995a)

was used to measure levels of stress (Strs), anxiety (Anx), and depression (Depn) in the

participants. The DASS-21 is a short version of the 42-item DASS and both scales measure

negative emotional symptoms and have been validated for use with nonclinical samples

(Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, & Swinson, 1998; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995b). Questions in

the scale included "I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all" and "I felt

scared without any good reason". The participants respond to the 21 questions (7 questions

for each domain) on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (did not apply to me at all), to 3

(applied to me very much, or most of the time). Scores on each domain range from 0-21

with higher scores suggesting greater levels of negative symptomology. According to Antony

et al., the DASS displays good internal consistency for each of the three scales, depression

(.94), anxiety (.87), and stress (.91). In this study Cronbach's alphas for the primary group were (Dpn: .88; Anx: .80; Strs: .92), the secondary group (Dpn: .85; Anx: .79; Strs: .83), and the home education group (Dpn: .79; Anx: .52; Strs: .79). The internal consistency of the anxiety measure for parents who home educate was lower than expected. As there were a number of inter-item correlations of great than 0.3 it was retained. However, it should be interpreted with caution.

Family functioning

The Family APGAR (Adaptation, Partnership, Growth, Affection, Resolve: Smelkstein, Ashworth, & Montano, 1982) is a five-item scale that measures a family member's perception of family function in the five areas of adaptation, partnership, growth, affection, and resolve. Example questions include, "I am satisfied with the way my family and I share time together" and "I am satisfied that my family accepts and supports my wishes to take on new activities or directions." Participants respond on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (Always), possible scores can range from 0 to 20 with higher scores indicating greater family functioning. The FAPGAR has been used with parents reliably (e.g., McLean, Harvey, & Mutimer, 2014). Smelkstein et al., report good internal consistency with an alpha of .80. This study found the internal consistency to be sound with alphas of .92 (primary), .92 (secondary), and .91 (home education).

Optimism

The 6 item version of the LOT-R (Revised Life Orientation Test: Scheier & Carver, 1985; Scheier et al., 1994), was used to measure the extent to which individuals possess favourable expectations concerning life outcomes (e.g., "In uncertain times I usually expect the best" and " I rarely count on good things happening to me."). In this study, responses

are given using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Scores can range from 6 to 30, with higher scores indicating higher levels of optimism in

respondents. Test-retest correlations for the LOT-R range from .56 to .79 for periods from 4

months to 2 years (Scheier et al., 1994; Pallent, 2000). Scores on the LOT-R have been

shown to correlate positively with self-esteem and internal control beliefs and negatively

with alienation, depression, and hopelessness, providing support for its validity (Scheier &

Carver, 1985, 1987). Scheier, et al., report an internal consistency coefficient of .78, the

Cronbach's alpha for this study was .86 for the primary school parents group, .79 for the

secondary school parents group, and .84 for the home educated group.

Life Satisfaction

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS: Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was

utilised to measure participants' levels of global life satisfaction. The 5 item scale was

answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Example items include "In most ways my life is close to ideal" and "If I could live my life

again, I would change almost nothing". It has been used reliably in populations of parents

(Fotiadou, Barlow, Powell, & Langton, 2008). Possible scores range from 5-35 with larger

total scores reflecting higher levels of life satisfaction. Diener et al., report that the internal

consistency of the scale was adequate (α=.87). This was reflected in the sound internal

consistency found in this study, primary (.92), secondary (.88), and home education (.888).

Parenting practices

The 11 item version of the Child Rearing Questionnaire (CRQ: Patterson & Sanson,

1999) was used to gain an understanding of the parenting practices of the participants. The

participants respond to the 11 items using a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (Never / Almost

never) to 5 (Always/ Almost always). Scores can range from 11-55 with high scores indicating what are generally considered more positive parenting practices. Items in the scale include, "How often do you tell your child how happy he/she makes you?" and "How often do you hug or hold your child for no particular reason?"

The scale provides a full scale score indicating the parent's global parenting skills, however it also provides measures of the parent's warmth (positive emotional tone in parent child interactions), explanation (the tendency of parents to discuss and explain their rules and limitations) and obedience (extent to which parents expect unquestioning obedience from their children). The punishment subscale (relating to physical punishment) was not included in this study. For the primary group in this study Cronbach's alphas (full: .76, warmth: .79, obedience: .72 and explanation: .70), and home education group (full: .77, warmth: .76, obedience: .69, and explanation: .64) were found to be comparable to the original alphas of warmth (.81), explanation (.60), and obedience (.69) (Patterson & Sanson, 1999).

Perceived control

Pallant's (2000) perceived control of internal states scale (PCIOSS) was used to assess participants' perceptions of their ability to influence their internal states (i.e., their emotions, thoughts, and reactions). The scale consists of 18 questions which participants respond to on a 5 point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). Questions on the measure include, "I have a number of techniques which I am confident will help me think clearly and rationally in any situation I might find myself." and "If I start to worry about something I can usually distract myself and think about something nicer." Possible scores range from 18-90, with higher scores indicating a higher level of perceived control. The

PCIOSS has been used reliably in samples of parents in previous studies (Lee, et al., 2012). Pallant reported very good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .92. In this study internal consistency was again found to be high with alphas of .94 in the primary group, .93 in the secondary group, and .93 in the home education group.

Perceived stress

The perceived stress scale (PSS: Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983) was used to assess the participants' appraised or perceived stress and is designed to measure how uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The PSS contains 14 items and is scored on a five point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 4 (very often), total scores can range from 0 to 56. High scores on the PSS indicate higher levels of perceived stress. Sample items include, "How often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside your control?" and "How often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?". The PSS has been validated for an Australian sample by Pallant (2000). The two day test retest reliability has been found to be as high as .85 (Cohen et al., 1983). In this study the Cronbach's alpha was found to be .82 in the primary group, .80 in the secondary group, and .84 in the home education group indicating good internal consistency and is consistent with the psychometrically sound alphas of .84-.86 reported by Cohen et al. (1983) and Pallant (2000).

Quality of life

The BRIEF version of the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Scale (WHO-QOL; Murphy, Herrmann, Hawthorn, Pinzone, & Evert, 2000) was used to assess the broad wellbeing domains of physical health, psychological health, social relations, and environment. The self-report questionnaire consists of 24 items measuring the domains

(Psychological health 6 questions, physical 7 questions, social 3 questions, and environmental 8 questions) and two questions measuring general wellbeing. All questions are recorded on a 5 item Likert scale with differing response scales. All domain scores are transformed and can range from 0-100, higher scores indicate a high quality of life. Questions included in the scale include, "To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?", "How healthy is your physical environment?", and "How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?". This scale has been found to be reliable for parents of children with a disability (Mugno, Ruta, D'Arrigo, & Mazzone, 2007) The internal consistency (alpha) of the domains from Murphy et al., and the two groups that completed the WHO-QOL can be seen in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3

Internal consistency for the domains of the WHO-QOL BREF

WHO-QOL BREF	Murphy et al.	Primary	Secondary	Home education
Psychological	.81	.76	.74	.75
Physical	.87	.82	.83	.84
Social	.68	.77	.78	.75
Environmental	.81	.66	.81	.75

Social Support

The short form social support questionnaire (SSQ6: Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, & Pierce, 1987) is a brief questionnaire that measures the number of social supports an individual has and how satisfied he or she is with that support. There are six items in this scale however, satisfaction and number of supports are addressed separately, and therefore it appears to the participant that the scale consists of two six item scales. Participants are asked how many people they can rely on in a given situation and then asked to rate how

satisfied they are with that support. Questions in the scale are broken into two response sections "How many people can you count on for this type of support?" and "How satisfied you are with the support you have?" participants are asked to respond to these two areas on questions such as "To distract you from your worries when you feel under stress" and "To care about you, regardless of what is happening to you.". Total raw scores for the number of supports range from 0 to 60 (any score of greater than 10 is rounded down to 10). Satisfaction is rated on a six item Likert scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied), the total raw score for satisfaction ranges from 6 to 36 with high scores reflecting grater satisfaction with social support. According to Sarason, et al., (1987), the SSQ6 has sound internal consistency with alpha ranging between .90 (number), and .93 (Satisfaction). In this study it was again found to have adequate internal consistency with primary (number: .77; support .96), secondary (.94; .92), and home education (.94; .94) groups all producing satisfactory alphas.

Worldview

The Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS: Obasi, Flores, & James-Myers) is a 45-item questionnaire that assesses the way in which people perceive, think, feel, and experience the world. More specifically it examines seven conceptual dimensions of worldview (Materialistic Universe, Tangible Realism, Communalism, Indigenous Values, Knowledge of Self, Spiritual Immortality, and Spiritualism) and a full scale world view construct. Participants respond to the items using a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree), to 6 strongly agree. Total scores reflect the number of questions in the subscale and the full scale has a possible range of 45-270. Examples of items from the scale include "My humanity is partially defined by my contribution and involvement in a society.", "Being

involved in cultural activities is good for my mental health." and "Knowledge is restricted to the limitations of our 5 senses."

According to Obasi (2004), responses to items with a worldview that is rooted in spiritualism generates higher scores, and responses to items with a worldview that is rooted in materialism generates lower scores. It is important to note that a stronger orientation toward materialistic universe and tangible realism are demonstrated with lower scores and a stronger orientation toward spiritual immortality, communalism, indigenous values, knowledge of self, and spiritualism are demonstrated with higher scores (p.3). In this study these scores were reversed to improve consistency and allow for the creation of a total score. For all subscales and total score, higher scores are reflective of spiritualism.

Obasi and colleagues report that the WAS had a test-retest coefficient of .93 for the full scale and from .79-93 for the subscales. Obasi et al., report that the full scale WAS had an internal reliability coefficient of .92 and the subscales ranged from .71 to .87. This was reflected in the secondary and home education groups of this study with full scale alphas of .92 (Secondary) and .92 (home education) and subscales ranging from .63-.90 (Secondary) and .67-.89 (home educated).

Motivation to home educate choices

To measure the primary and contributing motivations for parents to home educate a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire that was used in this research offered participants the opportunity to provide a single primary reason for home educating their children as well as multiple contributing reasons. In this way parents could highlight their most important motivation as well as all other factors that contributed to the decision. The 13 options were drawn from research (Patrick, 1999; Van Galen, 1988), governmental

reviews (McHugh, 2003; New South Wales Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014), and

international assessment tools (Institute on Education Sciences, 2013). The motivation

categories are presented below:

- Allow the child to gain a religious education

- Allow the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure

- Allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment

- Dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools (Dis: social)

- Dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools (Dis: academic)

- Dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools (Dis: cultural)

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability

- Desire to build stronger family bonds

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties

- Other: write own answers

The above options allowed for a range of responses and contained both pull and

push factors (Patrick, 1999) that let parents specify if they were motivated by inadequacies

in the school system or an underlying desire to home educate.

Procedure

Comparison group

The data that forms the comparison group was previously collected under approval from the Monash University Human Ethics Committee (See Appendix B: CF10/0921–2010000463 & CF11/0882 - 2011000448). Parents in this group were contacted directly by the researcher, postgraduate student researchers, and their supervisors and subsequently via snowballing. For those parents completing a hard copy version of the questionnaire they were provided with an explanatory statement and an anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire was returned via reply paid envelopes to the research supervisor which indicated consent to participate. Also provided was contact information for Lifeline if the participants felt they needed any form of psychological assistance.

To improve the usability of the data, the scales in the questionnaire were counterbalanced. While the questionnaires were anonymous, there was some concern that given that the research groups were recruiting their friends and associates to start the snowball process, that they may recognise them from a unique combination of demographic information. Therefore, to further protect participant confidentiality, the questionnaires were given two different coloured covers and students did not enter data from the version of the questionnaire that they distributed. This information was presented to the participants in the explanatory statements. Data were then entered in to SPSS for analysis. For the parents of high school aged children there was a return rate of approximately 24%, 502 questionnaires distributed and 120 returned. For the parents of primary school aged children data collection, there was a return rate of approximately 28%, 650 questionnaires distributed and 181 returned.

Home education group

The data that forms the home educating group was collected under approval from the Monash University Human Ethics Committee (CF12/3433 - 2012001672). This data were collected from parents who use home education as the primary education method for one or more of their children. Parents self-selected their membership of the home education group. However, according to the directions in the questionnaire, any parent who chose to primarily educate their child at home (excluding distance education schools), rather than the child attending a government, independent or religious school, on a full time basis, is considered to be home educating. Parents who home educate some of their children and have others attending school are included in the home education group. This was done to ensure that all parents who were engaging in home education with any of their children were included in the home education group.

Data were predominantly collected through an online survey tool (www.qualtrics.com), some hardcopy versions of the anonymous questionnaire were distributed. In both formats participants were provided with explanatory statements before attempting the questionnaire.

The existence of the online questionnaire was publicised through email, social media, and internet discussion forums. These communication tools were used to direct potential participants to a website containing more information about the research, explanatory statement and a link to the online questionnaire. The online survey tool displayed the questionnaire and collected participant responses. The hardcopy questionnaires were returned via reply-paid envelopes. For both formats, completion and return of the questionnaire was considered consent.

The return rate for online questionnaires was difficult to calculate. There were 280 questionnaires started and 190 where finalised on the online system (68% completion). However, to finalise a result the participant would only have had to look at all questions and respond to two questions. Participants could have simply looked at the questionnaire and not engaged with it in any way. It is also possible to view the questionnaire multiple times before completing it. There is no way of tracking how many people looked at the informed consent information and then decided not to complete the questionnaire. Therefore it is difficult to estimate a true response rate. There were also 90 individuals who started the questionnaire but did not finalise it. These participants provided a substantial amount of useable data but they did not technically complete the questionnaire. At an individual scale level, the least number of completed results was 130 for the full worldview scale and the most was 211 for the optimism scale.

Statistical analysis

As the data used in the research was from multiple sources it required some preliminary preparation.

Creating the data set

The home education and the two comparison data sets contained a large number of common scales. However, there were some minor differences. In the demographics section there were differing measures of income, education, and marital status groupings. Therefore a new category was created to provide a consistent group for each of these variables while the original groups were also retained as they were relevant for some specific analyses.

The Short Temperament Scale for Children (Prior, et al., 2000) was used to collect information on child behaviour and temperament in the home education and the primary school aged comparison group. However, there were some inconsistencies in the collection process that needed to be resolved. In the primary school sample, separate child temperament information was collected from parents about each of their primary school aged children. In the home education sample parents were only asked to provide information on their oldest home educated child aged 4-12. To increase the validity of the comparison between these groups, only the temperament information pertaining to the oldest primary school aged child in the primary school sample was used. This resulted in the parental ratings of the oldest child in the age range 4-12 in each family being included in analysis relating to child temperament. A similar procedure was undertaken for the parenting practices information.

The Child Rearing Questionnaire (Patterson & Sanson, 1999) was used to collect information regarding parenting practices in the primary school comparison group and the home education group. In the primary school sample separate parenting practices information was collected from parents about their interactions and parenting techniques with each of their children. In the home education sample parents were asked to provide information regarding the parenting practices for only their youngest child aged 4-12. To increase the validity of the comparison between these groups, only parenting practice information pertaining to the youngest primary school aged child in the primary school sample was used. This resulted in the parental ratings of their parenting practices relating to their youngest child aged 4-12 being included when investigating parenting practices. Once

the above adjustments were completed the data from the home education and the two comparison groups were merged into a single data set.

Data cleaning and screening

The data in all three samples was examined for errors such as values out of range and any typographical errors in data coding were corrected. In accordance with Pallant (2013) analysis was conducted on the sample to examine normality. A visual inspection of histograms, normal probability plots, and detrended Normal Q-Q plots revealed the data to be within an acceptably normal type distribution, especially given the sample size. Similarly statistical measures of normality such as comparing the mean to the 5% trimmed mean, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic revealed that the scales were within acceptable limits given statistical techniques to be used and size of the (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

An analysis of the data indicated that a small number of outliers were present. To reduce the impact of these outliers, the extreme values were assigned the score directly preceding it as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). The process of replacing outliers with the next acceptable score was repeated until the analysis showed no outliers in the data. Using the procedures outlined in Pallant (2013) a small number of multivariate outliers were found, checked, and removed if non-correctable errors.

The following chapter considers the demographic characteristics of the parents who home educate and the comparison group. It also investigates the differences in wellbeing between the two groups.

Chapter 7: The Demographic Characteristics and Wellbeing of Parents who Home Educate.

This chapter will analyse the demographic characteristics and wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. These will be compared to a group of parents who do not home educate and to parents who home educate in America. Chapter 8 will consider the relationship between stress and wellbeing in parents who home educate and those that do not. Chapter 9 will analyse parent's motivations to home educate.

Very little is known about the demographic profile, educational tools and psychological wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. This chapter sets out to provide the first comprehensive investigation of the demographic characteristics and psychological wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. It will develop a baseline for the demographic characteristics of home educators in Australia and compare them to international home educators and families using conventional schooling in Australia. The development of the baseline will be completed through a statistical comparison of a group of parents who home educate their children and a group of parents who sent their children to government, independent or religious schools. It is important to note that neither set of Australian data are nationally representative. The data from the two groups, although self-selected, was collected in a substantially similar manner which aids in the ability to compare between the groups. The groups are compared on a range of demographic characteristics, a number of psychological wellbeing measures, and tools that assess family dynamics. It will also be possible to compare the demographic characteristics of Australian with international samples to identify similarities and differences. The international data from America were collected as part of the National Centre for Education (NCE) Statistics' (2013) *Digest of Education Statistics*, a national collection of educational information gathered by the US

Department of Education which includes some limited information on families who home educate in America. The sample is nationally representative. In Australia the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not collect information on home education.

Demographic Characteristics of Parents who Home Educate

The following statistical investigation relies on univariate analysis. While a number of comparisons in this chapter are not conducive to this form of analysis, the research questions to be addressed and the available data necessitate it. Given the differing collection methods of the Australian and international data, the analysis of the demographic variables do not rely heavily on the statistical analysis, rather it is the pattern and distribution of the results that can be visually inspected that is important. However, statistical differences are highlighted where relevant. As is detailed below, more stringent significance levels and gate keeping procedures are employed to reduce the risk of Type I error in the wellbeing section where there is a heavy reliance on the statistical analysis.

The following section will consider the marital status, education, employment, income, number of children, and ethnic heritage of parents who home educate. Where possible the characteristics of the home educating sample are compared to parents who do not home educate and international samples.

Marital Status

Using the Mann-Whitney U test with a significance level of .05 there was no significant difference (U=30826, p=.23) between the marital status of the home education group and the comparison group. It was not possible to statistically compare the USA data, but as can be seen in Figure 7.1 the overwhelming majority of parents reported being in a relationship
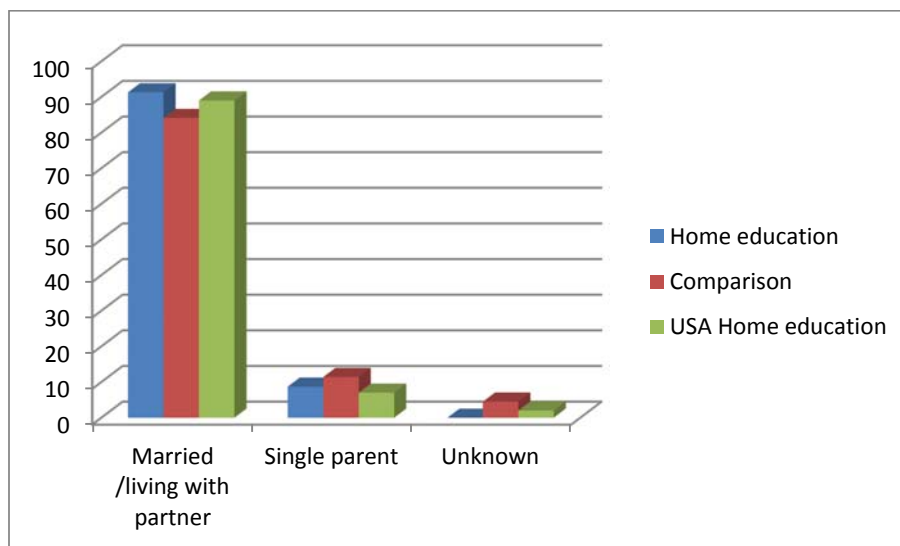
Figure 7.1. Marital status as a percentage for the home education, comparison groups, and USA home education group.

Note: USA home education data taken is from the 2007 National Centre for Education Statistics (2013)

Education Level

No significant difference was found between education levels of the home education group and the comparison group (Figure 7.2). However, a visual inspection of Figure 7.3 would suggest a substantially different distribution, although it was not possible to statistically investigate. Given the number of mothers in the sample the education level for mothers was also compared using the Mann-Whitney U test and no significant differences (U=19438, p=.614) were found between the home education group and the comparison group (Figure 7.3.). There was no international data available for the education level of mothers.
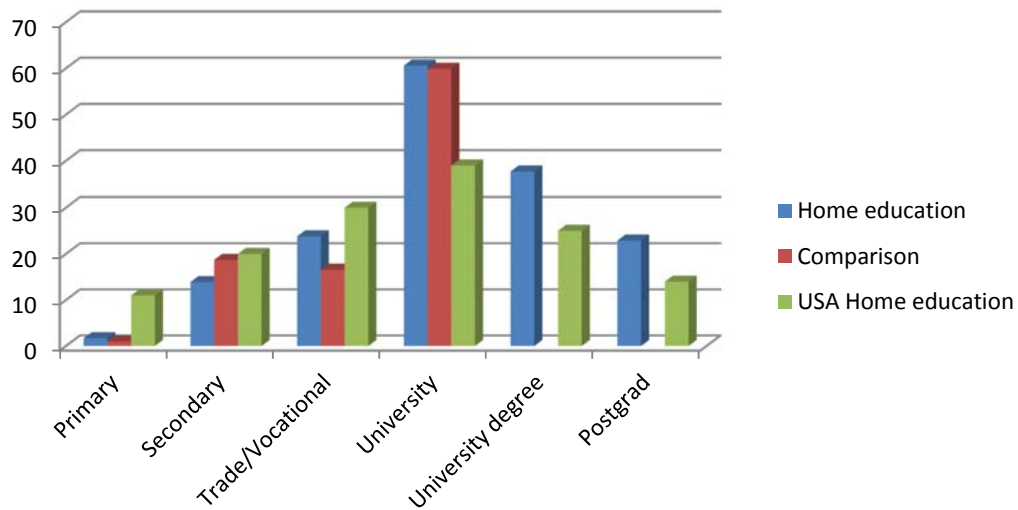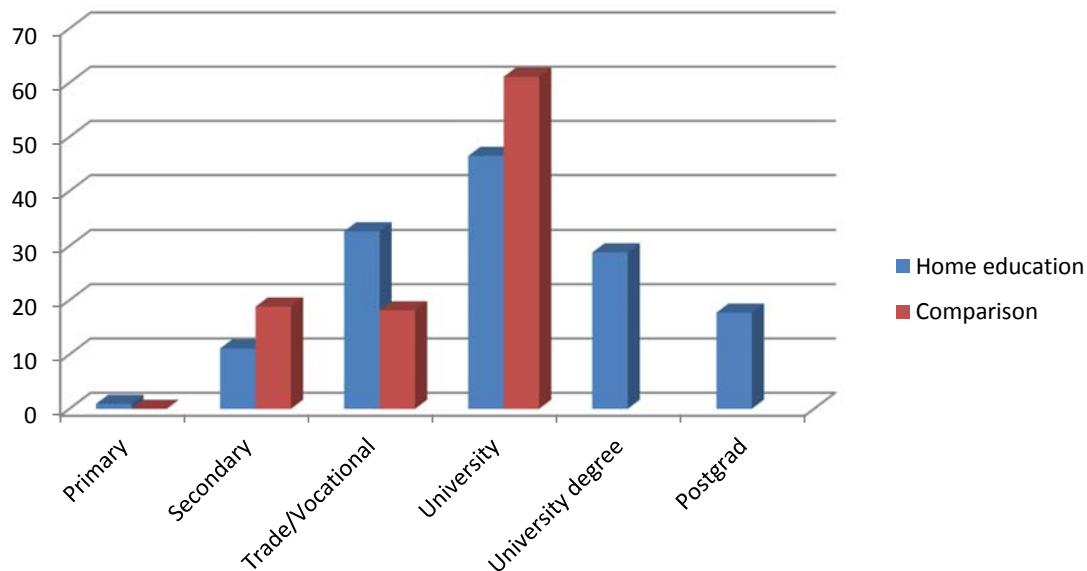
Figure 7.2. Percentage of highest education completed for the home education and comparison group. *Note:* University category for both the home education groups is made up of data from the university degree and postgrad groups. USA Home education data are from Noel, Stark, Redford, and Zukerberg (2013) reporting NCE data.
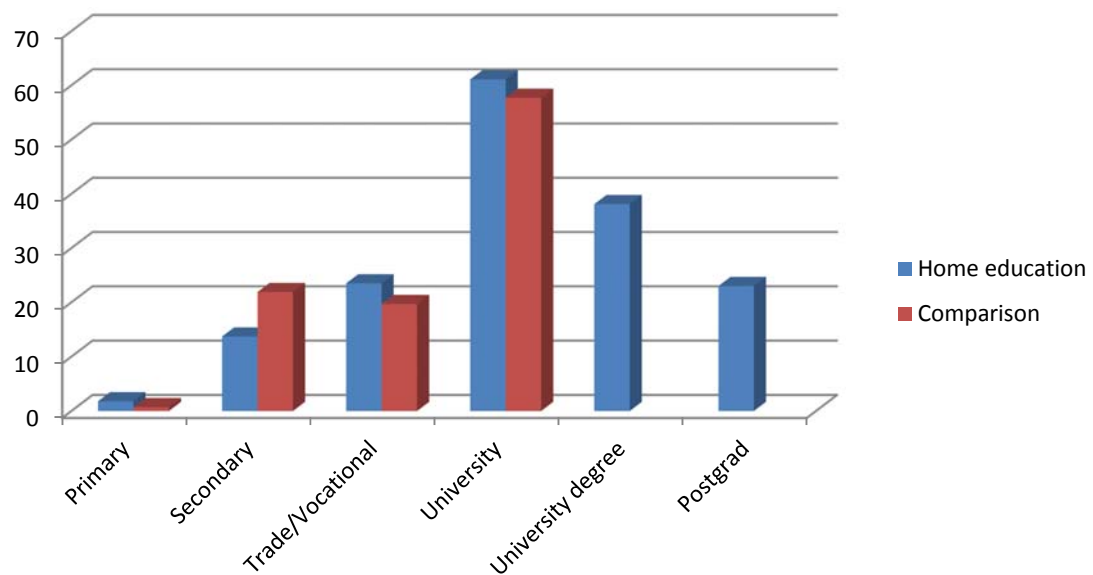
Figure 7.3. Percentage of highest education completed for home education and comparison mothers. *Note:* The University category for the home education group is made up of data from the university degree and postgrad groups. Both are provided for comparison.

Given the small number of fathers in the home education sample the information from mothers about their partners was used for comparison. It is noted that this is not ideal as this information may contain information relating to same sex couples and is reported by the partner rather than the individual. However, it does allow some exploration of the education level and hours worked by the partners of mothers who home educate and the comparison fathers.

Figure7. 4. Percentage of highest education completed for home education and comparison fathers/partners.
Note: The University category for the home education group is made up of data from the university degree and postgrad groups. Both are provided for comparison.

As can be seen in Figure 7.4 there was a difference in the educational experience of fathers/partners in the comparison group and the mothers' partners in the home education group. This was supported by a significant Mann-Whitney U (*U= 5724, p=.027, r=.13*). However, the effect size was in the small range (Cohen, 1992). From Figure 7.4 it can be seen that more partners of home educating mothers have trade and vocational training, whereas the comparison group fathers/partners have higher levels of university and secondary education.

Employment level

The hours of paid work were measured differently in the comparison sample and the home education sample. In the home education sample paid work was measured in hours of paid employment. In the comparison sample it was categorical (employed, unemployed, student, etc.). Therefore, considering the differences in collection it would be inappropriate to statistically compare them. Noting the measurement issues, it is important to highlight that 69.5% of mothers who home educate in this study do not engage in any paid employment. Whereas the rate is about 16.5% of the comparison group amongst mothers.

The US data collected as part of the National Centre for Education Statistics' (2013) *Digest of Education Statistics* on parental employment is not comparable to the information collected as part of this current research. However, it is possible to calculate that in 61% of two parent home educating families in America, only one parent worked. This is similar to the 69.5% of home educating mothers in this study not currently in the workforce.
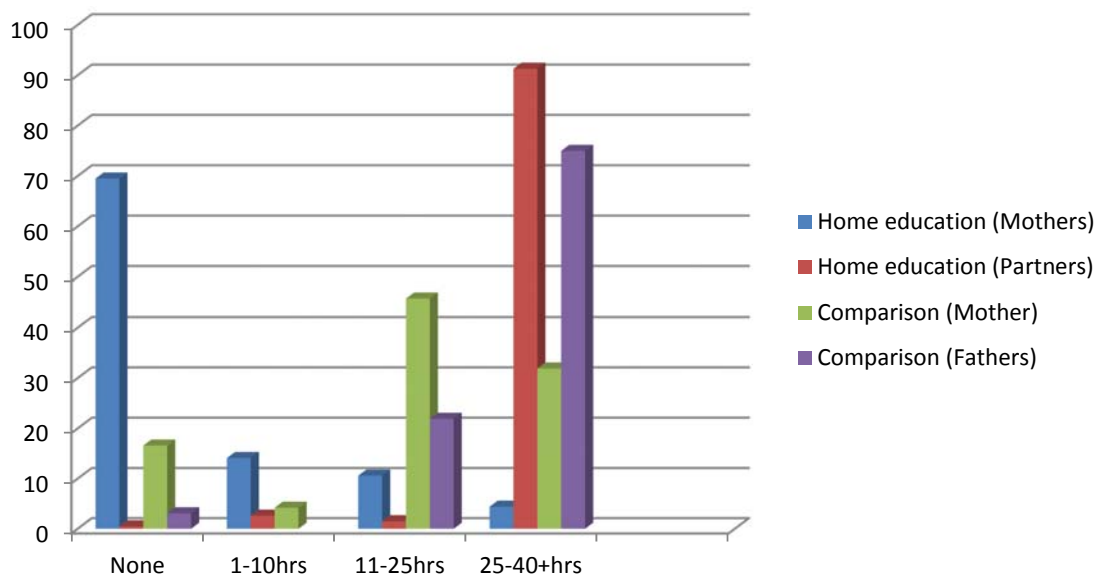
Figure 7.5. Hours worked by parents
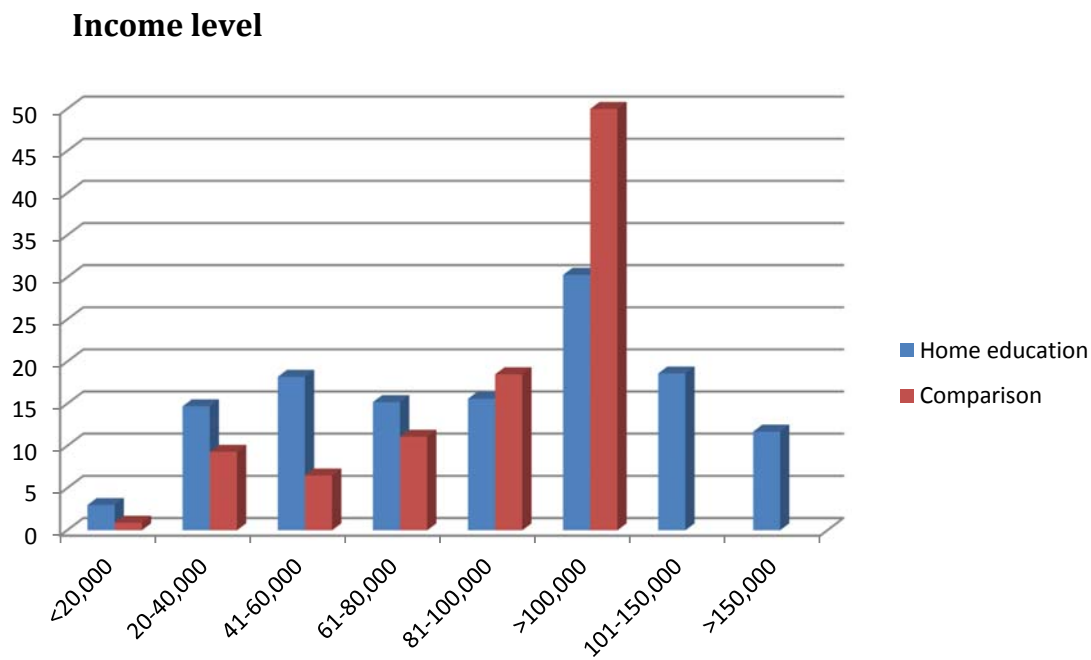
Income level

Figure 7.6. Income level of parents in the comparison and home education group.
Note: >100,000 for the home education group is made up of data from the 101-150,000 and the >150,000.

As can be seen in Figure *7.6*, there was a significant difference in income levels between the home education and comparison groups (*U*=23608, *p*<.0001, *r*=.193). The effect size was in the small to medium range (Cohen, 1992). The comparison group reported higher income levels. The home education group had a more evenly distributed income level. There are inherent difficulties in comparing incomes between nations. To provide some insight a comparison between the income levels of the Australian and US income levels as they relate to median disposable income (MDI) was undertaken using data from the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD: 2014). It was assumed that income levels were evenly distributed across the categorical groups to allow for MDI groupings (e.g. in the US $25,001-50,000 group it was assumed that there was half the

group earning less than $37,500). As can be seen in *Figure 7.7* there were similar rates of MDI in

both the US and Australian samples. While this ad-hoc analysis does not consider purchasing power,

cost of living or cultural differences in consumption, it does highlight that both groups have similar
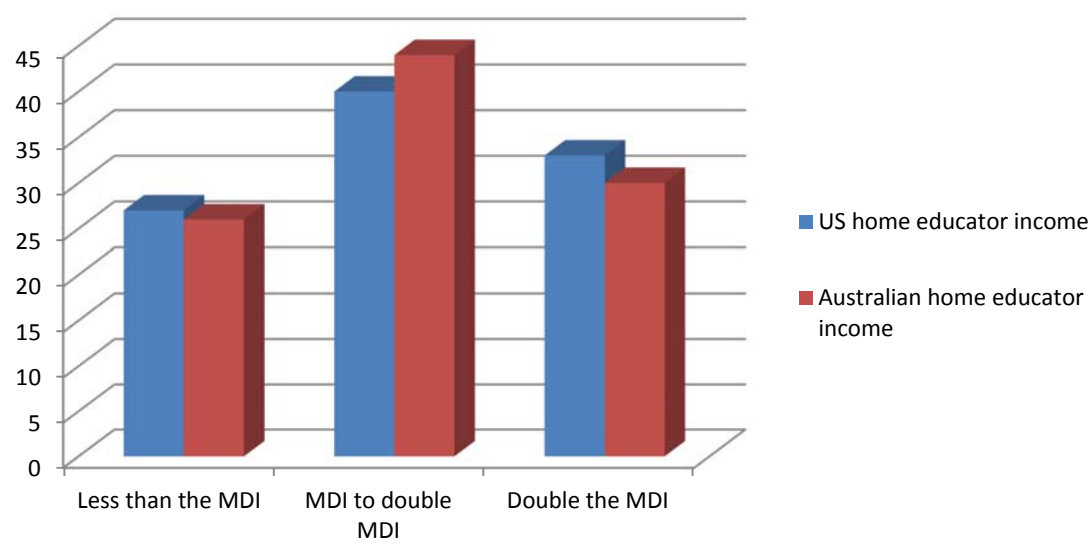
MDI levels.

Figure 7.7. Comparison of income to MDI for the Australian and US home education groups.

Note: US data from National Centre for Education Statistics (2013) MDI (Australia $53,696, US $38,447) data from OECD (2014).
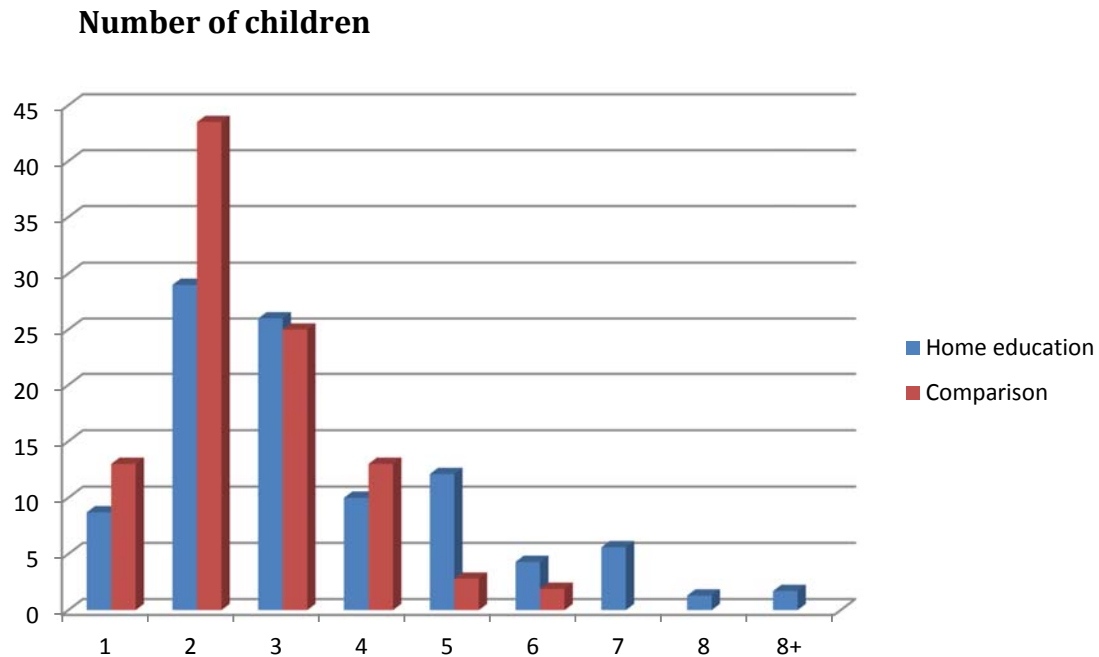
Number of children

Figure 7.8. Number of children in the family

As can be seen in Figure 7.8, there was a significant difference (t=7.44, p<.0001, df 504 95% *CI* =0.71-1.21) in the number of children in home educating families (*M*=3.42, *SD*=1.87) and the comparison (*M*=2.46, *SD*=0.96), with the home educating group having significantly more children. There were four families with between 9-12 children in the home education sample.

Ethnicity and cultural heritage

The home education sample displayed a wide ethic heritage, as can been seen in Figure 7.9. However, when considering the broad heritage of the sample the vast majority came from English/European backgrounds, with very limited representation of cultural groups from other areas.
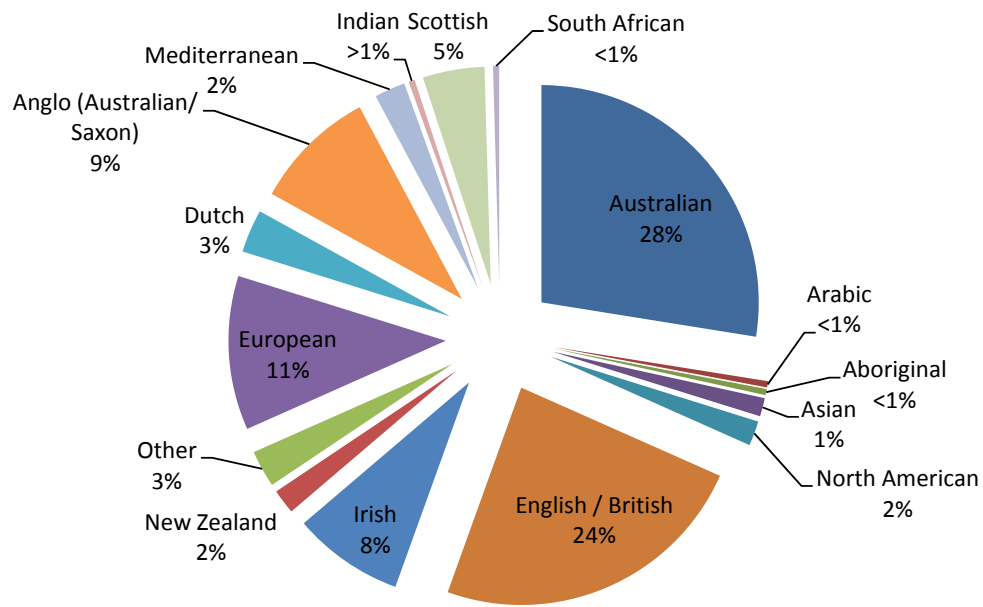
Figure 7.9. Ethnic heritage of the home education group using the participant's self-reported term.

The pattern of ethnic heritage in the comparison group (Figure 7.10) is similar to that found in the home education group. The vast majority of the participants were from European backgrounds although there was a higher frequency of Mediterranean heritage. The home education and comparison groups are quite similar and do, to some extent, reflect population data. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2012) data reveal that British, Australian and Italian are the most commonly reported ancestries. However, China and India are reported to be the third and fourth most frequently reported places of birth for those not born in Australia (ABS, 2012) and individuals for these backgrounds are not well represented in either data set.
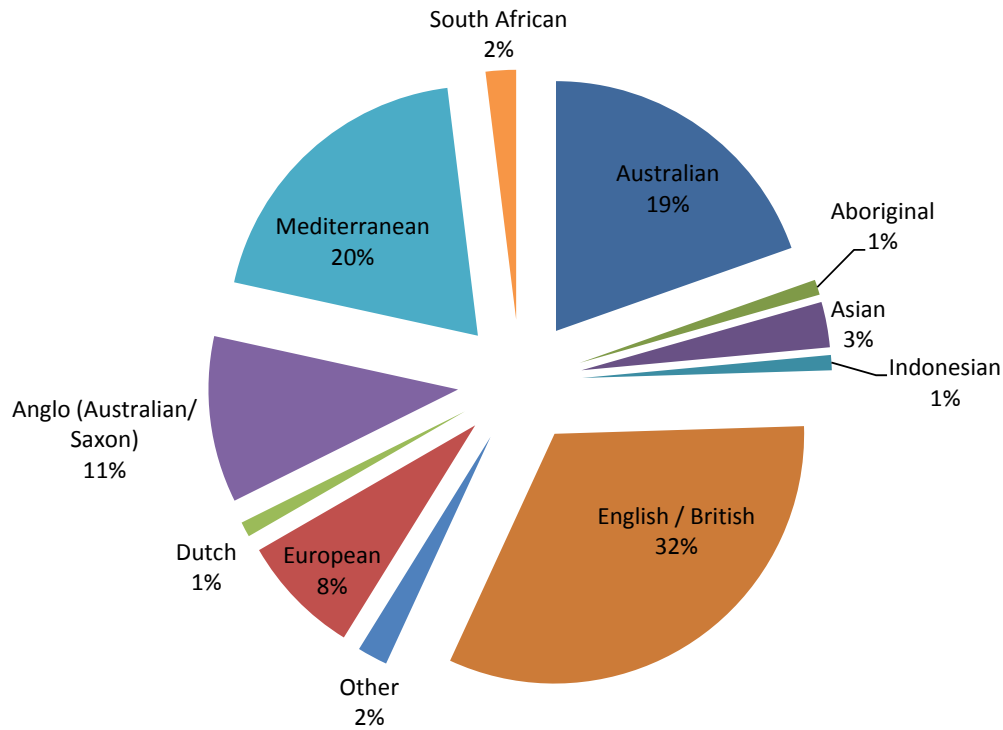
Figure 7.10. Ethnic heritage of the comparison group using the participant's self-reported term.

Wellbeing in Parents who Home Educate

Data from a large number of psychological and family constructs were collected as part of this research. This data are used in Chapter 8 to consider complex interrelationships of risk and resistance factors in parental wellbeing. It also allows for an exploration of the psychological characteristics of the large home education sample and investigation of any differences that may exist between the home education and comparison samples.

Given the large number of comparisons using independent samples *t* tests, some precautions were needed to reduce the risk of type I (false positive) errors (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). A two-step process was undertaken to minimise the risk of type I error. Firstly, a conservative initial confidence interval (CI) was selected (99%) as a gatekeeper. This means that there was only a 1% chance that any difference between the variables included in the group and identified as statistically significant may have occurred by chance. If an individual difference between the two

groups did not meet the 99% CI, it was not considered in the clustered Bonferroni adjusted analysis.

Secondly, for differences that met the CI requirement, the variables were clustered into groupings related to the construct being measured. For example, the wellbeing cluster was comprised of perceived stress, the World Health Organisation's Quality of Life Scales (WHOQOL: Physical, Psychological, Social, and Environmental) and the DAS scales (Stress, Anxiety and Depression). The clustered groups were then considered using an alpha level that had a Bonferroni correction performed to reduce the alpha level for each cluster of comparisons. The process involved dividing a baseline alpha of .05 by the number of variables in the group. This resulted in an alpha of .006 for the wellbeing group, .01 for the protective factors group, .006 for the worldview, and .001 for the family characteristics group.

Comparison of Wellbeing

In considering the wellbeing of parents who home educate and those that do not, the two groups were compared in a number of domains. The scales in this comparison were comprised of perceived stress, the World Health Organisation's Quality of Life Scales (WHOQOL: Physical, Psychological, Social, Environmental) and the DAS scales (Stress, Anxiety and Depression). As can be seen in Table 7.1, using the Bonferroni adjust alpha of .006 there were significant differences between the home education group and the comparison group in all aspects of the DASS, perceived stress, and the physical, psychological, and social subscales of the WHOQOL. It is important to note that most of the effect sizes are in the medium range.

Table 7.1.

Wellbeing of the home education and comparison groups

| | Group | | | | | | CI | |
| | Home Education | | Comparison | | | | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*	Effect Size	Lower	Upper
DASS Stress#	3.77	2.71	5.63	4.26	-5.78***	0.25	-2.49	-1.23
DASS Anxiety#	0.82	1.24	2.21	3.19	-6.61***	0.27	-1.80	-0.97
DASS Depression#	1.65	2.00	3.14	3.91	-5.40***	0.23	-2.02	-0.94
Perceived stress#	21.55	5.45	23.4	6.33	-3.42**	0.15	-2.91	-0.78
WHOQOL Physical^	75.86	15.14	63.19	11.21	10.12***	0.43	10.21	15.13
WHOQOL Psych^	73.42	12.06	67.88	15.75	4.37***	0.19	3.05	8.02
WHOQOL Social^	73.94	18.53	68.29	20.95	3.05*	0.25	2.01	9.28
WHOQOL Environ^	76.20	11.92	74.97	13.26	1.05	0.04	-1.01	3.48

Note: ***<.0001, ** =.001, *=.002, ^= High scores indicate increased wellbeing, #= low scores indicate increased wellbeing

Comparison of resistance factors

In considering the wellbeing of parents who home educate and those that do not, the two groups were compared in a number of domains. To investigate the differences between these groups the areas of life satisfaction, optimism, perceived control, and social support were compared. When considering significant differences in the protective factors group of variables a Bonferroni adjusted alpha value of .01 (.05/5) was adopted. There were significant differences between the home education and comparison groups in life satisfaction, perceived control, and the number of people the participant could rely on for social support (Table 7.2). While the home education group reported that they could rely on an average of 6 people for each of the settings, as compared to just over 5 for the comparison group, there was not a significant difference in the level of satisfaction

with the support. The effect sizes for those variables with significant difference are in the small to medium range.

Table 7.2.

Resistance factors of the home education and comparison

	Home Education		Comparison				CI	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*	Effect Size	Lower	Upper
Optimism^	23.34	3.61	22.55	4.74	1.80	0.09	-.34	1.92
Life Satisfaction^	27.63	5.13	25.25	6.30	4.63**	0.20	1.05	3.71
Perceived Control^	68.01	9.76	63.05	13.00	4.76**	0.21	2.26	7.64
Social support number^	30.95	16.44	26.86	14.69	2.77*	0.13	0.26	7.90
Social support satisfaction ^	29.70	4.98	29.26	6.00	0.84	0.03	-.88	1.75

Note: **<.0001, * =.005, ^= High scores indicate increased wellbeing,

Comparison of family characteristics

In considering the family characteristics of parents who home educate and those that do not, the two groups were compared in a number of domains. To investigate the differences between these groups the areas of family functioning and parenting practices were considered. Table 7.3, details the significant differences between the home education and the comparison groups in the family variables. Using the Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .01 there were significant differences between the groups in two areas of parenting practices. The comparison group reported high levels of obedience requirements and the home education group displayed more explanatory interactions. The warmth aspect of parenting practices met the initial CI requirement but was not significant once

the Bonferroni adjustment was made to the alpha level. Effect sizes for the significant differences were in the small to medium range.

Table 7.3.

Family characteristics of the home education and comparison groups.

| | Group | | | | | | CI | |
| | Home Education | | Comparison | | | | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*	Effect Size	Lower	Upper
Family functioning^	15.56	3.44	14.86	3.87	2.04	.09	-.18	1.58
Parenting practices#	45.92	4.35	45.36	4.66	1.10	.06	-.74	1.85
Warmth (Par practs) #	21.53	2.16	20.88	2.47	2.59~	.13	.00	1.29
Explanation (Par practs) #	12.96	1.51	12.08	1.84	4.82***	.25	.40	1.35
Obedience (Par practs)#	11.55	2.09	12.36	2.30	-3.29**	.18	-1.43	-.17

Note: ***<.0001, ** =.001, * =.01, ~ is not significant when the Bonferroni adjustment is considered.

^= High scores indicate increased wellbeing, #= high scores indicate increased use of this parenting

Comparison of worldview

In considering the worldview of parents who home educate and those that do not, the two groups were compared in a number of aspects of worldview. Table 7.4, details the worldview of the home education and comparison groups. While there was not a significant difference between the groups on the full scale worldview, there were significant difference between the groups in the subscales using the Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .006. The home education group score significantly higher in the Spiritual Immortality, Tangible Realism, and Materialistic Universe subscales and the comparison group scored higher in the Indigenous Values subscales. The Communalism aspect of

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worldview met the initial CI requirement but was not significant once the Bonferroni adjustment was made to the alpha level. Effect sizes for the significant differences were in the small to medium range.

Table 7.4.

Worldview of the home education and comparison groups.

| | Group | | | | | | CI | |
| | Home Education | | Comparison | | | | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*	Effect Size	Lower	Upper
Worldview	167.67	31.54	159.71	34.75	1.67	.11	-3.75	19.68
WV Materialistic Universe	32.20	9.99	27.99	9.53	3.33****	.21	.93	7.48
WV Tangible Realism	35.50	6.09	30.28	6.65	5.98^	.37	2.65	6.70
WV Communalism	25.65	5.50	27.57	5.78	-2.72#	.16	-.374	-.08
WV Indigenous Values	18.92	6.74	21.66	7.54	-3.08**	.18	-5.05	-.43
WV Knowledge of Self	17.49	4.54	17.32	4.39	.30	.01	-1.29	1.63
WV Spiritual Immortality	15.80	5.41	13.41	5.56	3.44****	.21	.59	4.18
WV Spiritualism	24.04	8.37	21.90	8.95	1.94	.12	-.71	5.01

Note: ^<.0001, ****=.001 *** =.007, ***=.002, # not

Summary of Results

According to the NSW Parliamentary Review (2014), there is currently very little known about parents and families involved in home education in Australia. The findings of this research have provided some empirical insights into the demographic characteristics and psychological wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. These results suggest that the home education

and comparison groups in this sample are quite similar in terms of their marital status and mothers education levels. However, there were significant differences in fathers/partners education levels, number of children and household income levels. While it was not possible to statistically compare the two groups the ethnic heritage was quite similar with the vast majority of the participants coming from Australian and Western European backgrounds. In both samples there was an underrepresentation of parents from Asian and Indian backgrounds in comparison with the ABS (2012) data.

It is also important to compare the US demographic characteristics of home educators to Australian home educators. With little Australian data available, it is important to consider how similar the populations are so the relevance of US findings to the Australia setting can be considered. While statistical analyses were not possible due to the method of reporting for the US data, some clear patterns emerged from the available data. In both the Australian and US samples there was a very low rate of single parent families. Noting the assumptions in the data used, the median disposable income rates were similar for both countries. However, the overall education level of home educating parents in Australia was much higher.

In relation to the psychological wellbeing of the sample, it was possible to statistically compare the wellbeing of parents who were home educating and parents using schools. The data revealed that parents who were home educating had lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression and higher levels of life satisfaction and perceived control than the comparison group. They also reported better quality of life except in the area of their psychical environment which was similar to the comparison group. Home educating parents reported have significantly more people to turn to in difficult times (social support), but did not rate their satisfaction with that support any higher than the comparison group. The effect sizes for these comparisons were in the small to medium range.

There were fewer significant differences between the groups in the area of family characteristics. There were no significant differences between the groups in family functioning,

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overall parenting practices, or warmth in parent child interactions. However, home educating

parents reported more explaining behaviour and less obedience requirements. Finally there was no

significant difference in the overall world view of the two groups on the continuum of material to a

spiritual based orientation. However, there were inconsistent significant differences in the subscales

of worldview, with the home education group scoring higher in Materialistic Universe, Tangible

Realism, and Spiritual Immortality. The comparison group scored significantly higher on Indigenous

Values. These results indicate that neither group had extreme worldviews.

When considering the impact of these results it is import to note that these mean

comparison analyses are not investigating the direction of the relationships and a causal path cannot

be determined from these findings. It is possible that the significant differences which exist between

the groups are as a result of the education method used. It is also possible that only parents who are

psychologically healthy consider home education. However, these results do indicate that there are

areas of similarity between the groups and areas of significant difference which need further

investigation. In part this will occur with the investigation of differences in significant relationship

paths through the Wallander and Vani's (1998) Risk and Resistance Model between the home

educating and comparison group which can be seen in the following chapter.

Chapter 8: The Relationships between Stress and Wellbeing in Parents who Home Educate and those Who Do Not.

This chapter focuses on the relationships between stress and wellbeing constructs in parents who home educate and those that do not. Chapter 7 considered the differences between the levels of these psychological constructs in the two groups. This chapter will investigate the differences in the relationships between stress and wellbeing that may exist between these two groups.

In line with the pathways delineated in Wallander and Varni's (1998) Risk and Resistance Model (RRM), this study examined the pattern of relationships between stress and wellbeing in the home education and comparison groups. The RRM also considers a range of resistance variables which may impact on the stress wellbeing relationship. In the context of this study the RRM allowed for the comparison of relationships between the parenting groups. For example it was possible to investigate if the relationship between stress and psychological wellbeing was the same for parents who home educate as it was for parents who do not. In conjunction with the statistical methods developed by Hayes (2013), the RRM allowed for an analysis of the proposed direction, strength, and significance of the relationship and if there were differences between the groups.

This study utilises the statistical procedures of moderation and mediation to investigate the patterns of relationships between stress and wellbeing. In this study the moderator variable was parent group, either home educating or school educating (the comparison group). Using this moderation model, investigation occurs into the possibility that parent group statistically impacts on the strength of the stress and wellbeing relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). That is, an investigation into whether there were significant differences in the

stress and wellbeing relationship that were related to the education methods parents

employed. This would occur if education method was interacting with stress so that the

impact of stress on adjustment varies by education method (Holmbeck, 2002). This study

also focused on whether the same patterns of indirect relationships existed for the home

education group and the comparison group. That is, using mediation, do the same indirect

relationships exist for both groups? The study was not focused on the underlying processes

involved, but rather to provide information on the similarities and differences in these

relationships in parents who home educate and those who do not.

Moderation and Mediation Analysis

To evaluate these relationships, moderation and mediation will be examined using

regression via Hayes' PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). Moderation considers if a third variable

impacts on the relationship between an independent variable and a dependant variable

(Frazier, Barron, & Tix, 2004). In the context of this research, does parent group moderate

the relationship between stress and adjustment? For example, while there is expected to be

a significant relationship between perceived stress and optimism for all parents, moderation

analysis explores whether this relationship is stronger for one group than the other. If

either of the groups does report a stronger relationship this would imply that being a

member of that group brings with it factors that lead to an individual being more

susceptible to the impact of stress. Moderation can also detect if a significant relationship

exists for only one of the two groups.

Mediation examines the potential influence of a third variable on the predictive

relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable (Frazier, et al.,

2004). It considers if a third variable facilitates the observed relationship between two

variables. For example there is evidence (e.g., Moore, Gordon, & McLean, 2012) to suggest

that there is a predictive relationship between child sleep difficulties and parental

depression. However, when a third variable, parental stress, is included in the model it

becomes apparent that the relationship between child sleep and parental depression is

mediated by parental stress This study will consider if these types of indirect relationships

operate in the same way for parents using different education options with their children.

This type of analysis can allow for more complex understandings of the relationships

between stress, stress processing, and wellbeing in the two parenting groups. It will allow

for a greater understanding of the similarities and differences which may exist between the

groups and provide some insights into future psychological interventions for these groups.

In traditional moderation analysis presented in Aiken and West (1991), the predictor

variable in moderation needs to be centred. This process involves the mean being

subtracted from each individual score which reduces the impact of multicollinearity and

leads to each variable having a mean of zero (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As education type is a

dichotomous variable in this study, specific steps needed to be undertaken to allow it to be

entered into the regression equation. As is recommended by Aiken and West (1991) and

Aguinis (2004) a dummy variable can be used. Moderation is said to exist if it is found that

there was a significant interaction between the independent variable and the moderator. To

fully explore the impact of the moderator post hoc analysis is undertaken (Holmbeck, 2002)

to understand how and where the moderation is occurring.

Until recently the above steps needed to be calculated manually in a statistical software

package. However, Hayes (2013) has developed the *Process Macro* add on to the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This macro allows for the entry of the variables

directly into SPSS and the analysis can be conducted in a single process. The use of this

macro as a statistical tool has increased rapidly as it allows for quicker analyses and reduces

the chance of calculation errors (e.g., Woosley, Lichstein, Taylor, Riedel, & Bush, 2014). The

Process Macro was used in the analyses of moderation effects in this study. One area of

interest in the use of this macro, especially in contrast to other utilisations of moderation, is

the reporting on unstandardised regression coefficients. This means that the coefficients

can be larger than 1. Typical regression coefficients are standardised and usually, although

not always, fall between -1 and 1 (Deegan, 1978). Hayes (2013, 2015) recommends

interpreting the unstandardised coefficients when using a categorical moderator. The

unstandardised coefficients can still be compared, as in moderation the same scale of

measurement is used in the independent variables for each of the moderator conditions.

It is generally not advisable to conduct a large series of tests as it increases the

possibility of Type I error. However, in moderation analysis with the loss of power, due to

the inclusion of higher order factors, it is acceptable to undertake a large number of tests

(See Aguinis, 2004). The low power allows a large number of tests without the potential for

an unacceptably large increase in Type I error. The low power of moderation analysis also

leads many researchers to increase α from .05 to 0.1 (Aguinis, 2004; Cascio & Zedeck, 1983;

McLelland & Judd, 1993). Despite the reduced power, given the number of analyses being

conducted in this study the alpha level was held at .05. However, a 95% confidence interval

(CI) was the primary method of assessing statistical significance.

Moderation analysis

The following sections will analyse if parent group was a significant moderator in the

relationship between a number of stressors and measures of wellbeing. For ease of

comparison the group of parents using home education as their primary education method are referred to as the home group and the parents utilising school as the primary education method as referred to as the comparison group.

Relationship between DAS Stress and wellbeing moderated by parent group

Table 8.1 provides the details of the significance level of the interaction terms that were used to evaluate if moderation has occurred. As can be seen in Table 8.1 the independent variable was stress as measured by the stress subscale of the DASS. In the following sections details of the significant moderations are analysed.

Table 8.1.

Moderation effects of parent group on the relationship between stress and wellbeing

IV	DV	t	p	Low CI 95 %	High CI 95 %
DAS Stress	Life satisfaction	-.350	.726	-.438	.305
DAS Stress	DAS Anxiety	4.560	.000 *	.167	.420
DAS Stress	DAS Depression	3.285	.001 *	.101	.404
DAS Stress	QOL Physical	4.351	.000 *	.900	2.382
DAS Stress	QOL Psychological	1.735	.083	-.096	1.535
DAS Stress	QOL Social	.286	.775	-1.075	1.441
DAS Stress	QOL Environmental	.589	.556	-.508	.943
DAS Stress	Optimism	-1.919	.056	-.569	.007

Note: Analyses with a * are considered to display moderation and are explored further below

As is highlighted in Table 8.1 there were a number of significant moderations between stress as measured by the stress subscale of the DASS and the wellbeing variables. These were the relationships between stress and wellbeing that were significantly different between the parent groups. The significant moderations are explored further below. Is it important to note that for analyses involving DAS stress, the high stress condition is on the right hand size of the horizontal axis. Therefore the increase in stress is from left to right along the horizontal axis.

Figure 8.1 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between stress and anxiety. There was a significant relationship between stress and anxiety in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in the comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on anxiety in the comparison group.
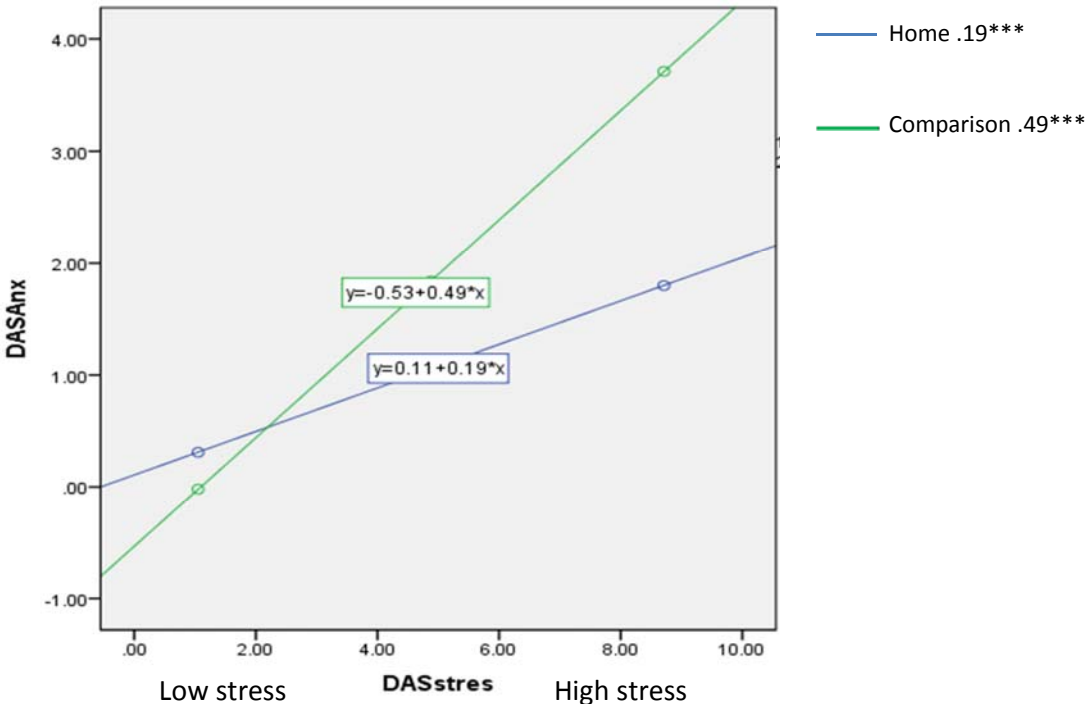
Figure 8.2 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between

stress and depression. There was a significant relationship between stress and depression in

both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in

comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, stress was having a greater

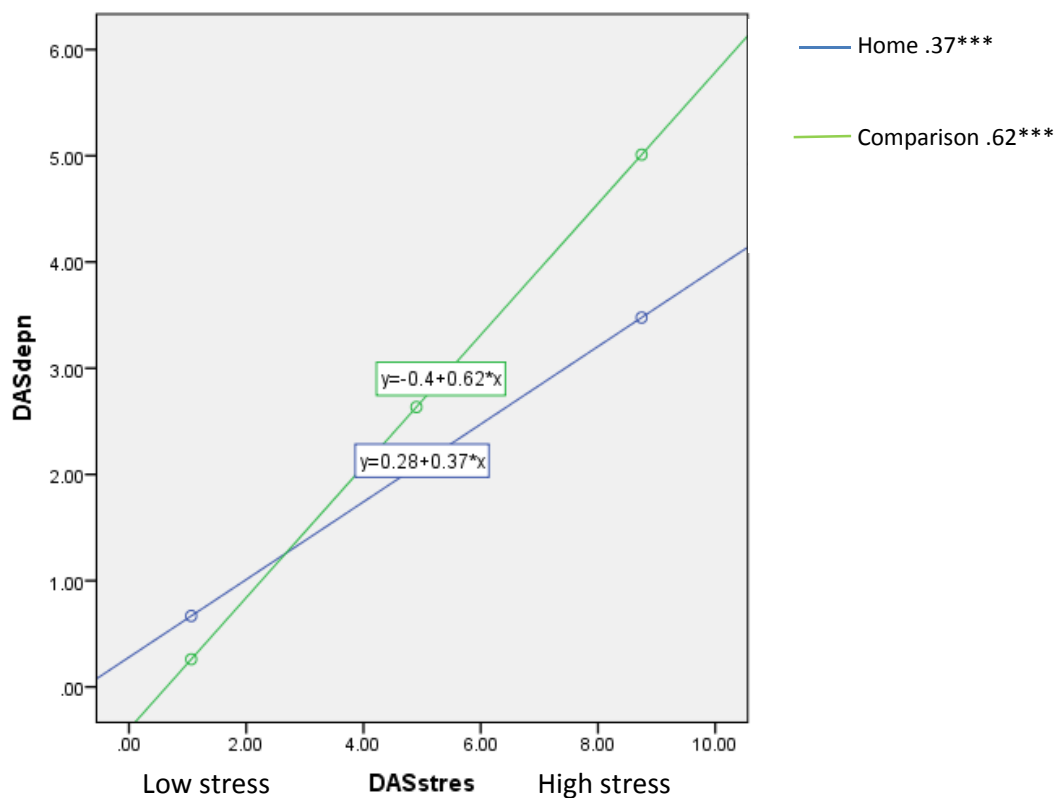negative impact on depression in the comparison group.

Figure 8.2. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between stress and depression. ***<.001, **<.01, *<.05

Figure 8.3 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between stress and physical quality of life. There was a significant relationship between stress and physical quality of life in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in home group as compared to the comparison group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on physical quality of life in the home education group.
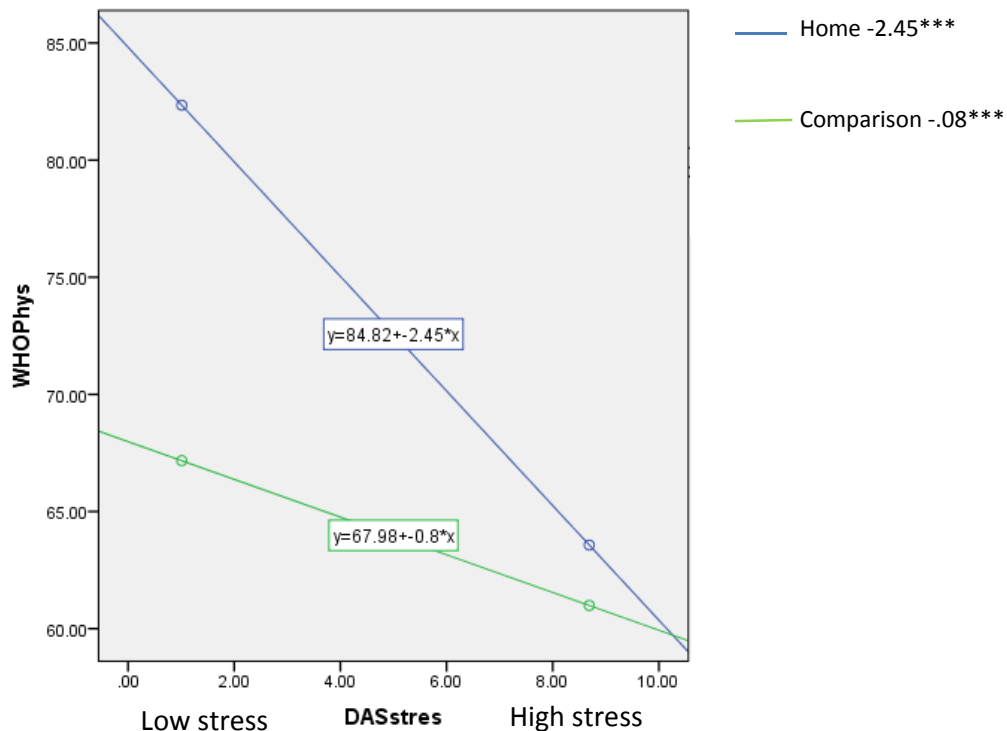
Figure 8.3. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between stress and psychical quality of life. ***<.001, **<.01, *<.05

Relationship between perceived stress and wellbeing moderated by parent group

This section investigated if education group moderated the relationship between global perceived stress and a range of measures of wellbeing.

Table 8.2.

Moderation effects of parent group on the relationship between perceived stress and wellbeing.

IV	DV	t	p	Low CI 95%	High CI 95%
Perceived stress	Life satisfaction	-.654	.514	-.228	.114
Perceived stress	DAS Anxiety	3.838	.000*	.075	.233
Perceived stress	DAS Depression	3.109	.002*	.055	.243
Perceived stress	QOL Physical	3.797	.000*	.369	1.161
Perceived stress	QOL Psychological	-1.934	.054	-.840	.007
Perceived stress	QOL Social	-.581	.561	-.922	.501
Perceived stress	QOL Environmental	-.089	.929	-.409	.373
Perceived stress	Optimism	-3.036	.001*	-.361	-.092

Note: Analyses with a * are considered to display moderation and are explored further below

As is highlighted in Table 8.2 there were a number of significant moderations between perceived stress and the outcome wellbeing variables. These were the relationships between stress and wellbeing that were significantly different between the parent groups. The significant moderations are explored further below. Is it important to note that for the analyses involving perceived stress, the high stress condition is on the right hand size of the horizontal axis. Therefore the increase in stress is from left to right along the horizontal axis.

Figure 8.4 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between perceived stress and anxiety. There was a significant relationship between stress and anxiety in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on anxiety in the comparison group.
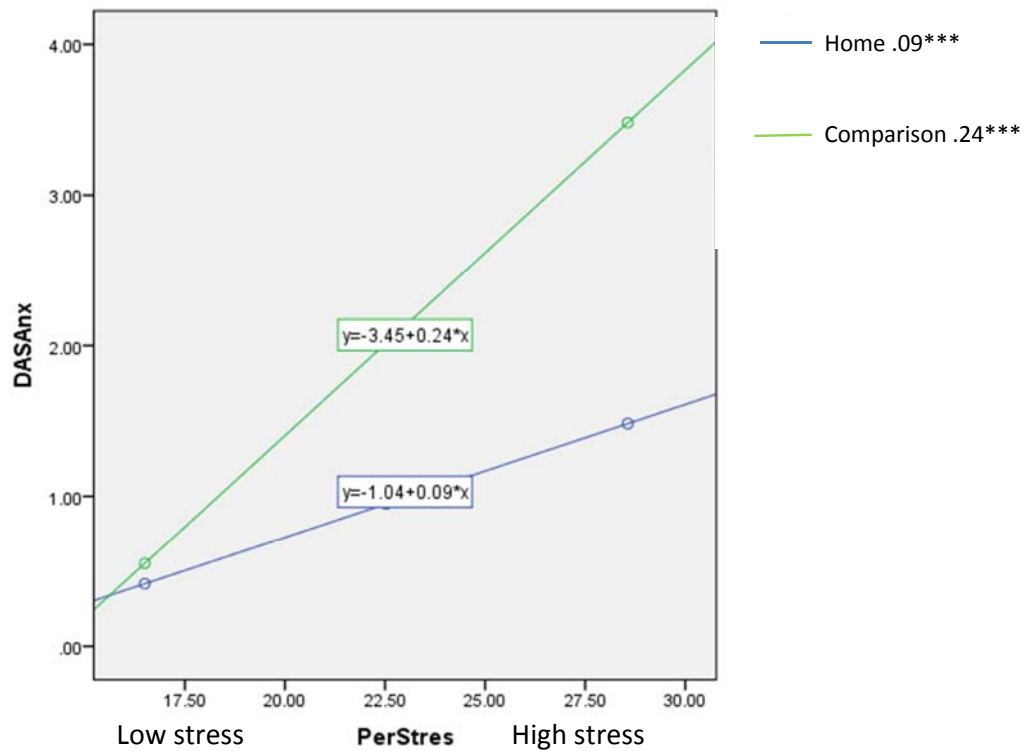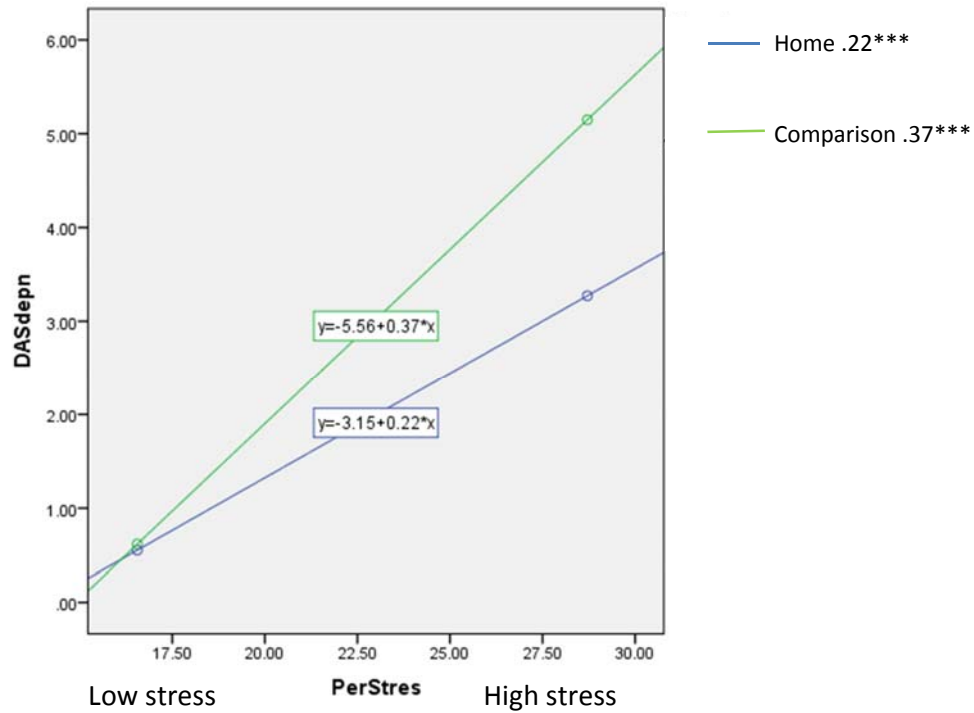
Figure 8.4. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between perceived stress and anxiety. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.5 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between perceived stress and depression. There was a significant relationship between stress and depression in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on depression in the comparison group.
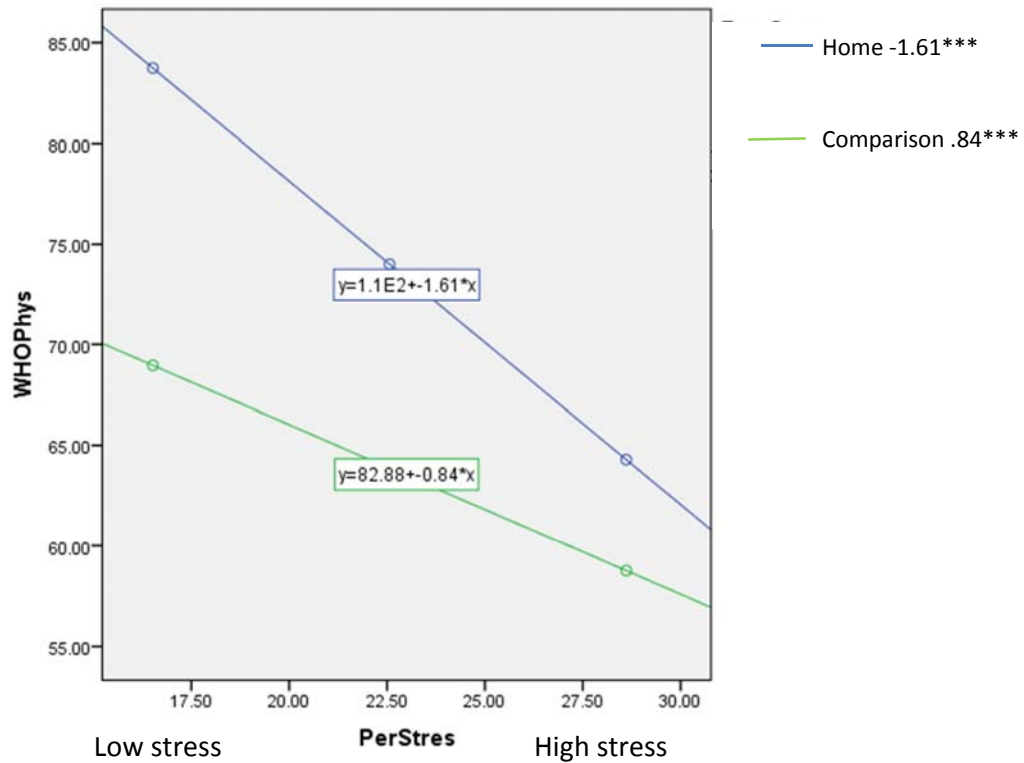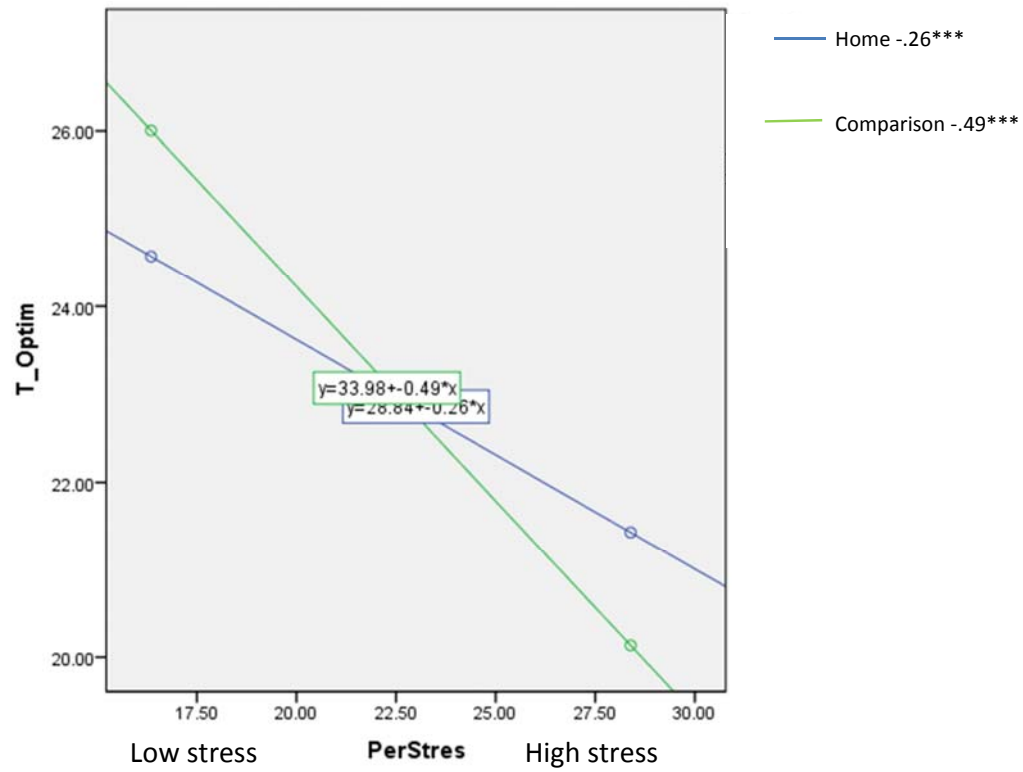
Figure 8.5. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between perceived stress and depression. ***<.001, **<.01, *<.05

Figure 8.6 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between perceived stress and physical quality of life. There was a significant relationship between perceived stress and physical quality of life in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in home group as compared to the comparison group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on physical quality of life in the home education group.

Figure 8.6. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between perceived stress and physical quality of life. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.7 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between perceived stress and optimism. There was a significant relationship between perceived stress and optimism in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, stress was having a greater negative impact on optimism in the comparison group.

Figure 8.7. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between perceived stress and optimism. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Relationship between family functioning and wellbeing moderated by parent group

This section investigated if parent group moderated the relationship between family functioning and a range of measures of wellbeing.

Table 8.3

Moderation effects of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and wellbeing.

IV	DV	t	p	Low CI 95%	High CI 95%
Family Functioning	Life satisfaction	1.443	.150	-.075	.487
Family Functioning	DAS Anxiety	-3.055	.002*	-.349	-.076
Family Functioning	DAS Depression	-3.433	.001*	-.440	-.120
Family Functioning	QOL Physical	-2.113	.035*	-1.645	-.060
Family Functioning	QOL Psychological	2.325	.020*	.126	1.50
Family Functioning	QOL Social	.728	.467	-.598	1.302
Family Functioning	QOL Environmental	-.541	.589	-.858	.488
Family Functioning	Optimism	2.119	.035*	.019	.518

Note: Analyses with a * are considered to display moderation and are explored further below

As is highlighted in Table 8.3 there were a number of significant moderations between family functioning and the outcome wellbeing variables. These were the relationships between family functioning and wellbeing that were significantly different between the parent groups. The significant moderations are explored further below. Is it important to note that for the analyses involving family functioning as a source of stress, the high stress condition is on the left hand size of the horizontal axis. Therefore the increase in stress is from right to left along the horizontal axis.

Figure 8.8 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between family functioning and anxiety. The results indicate that the relationship only existed in the comparison group, in the home group there was no significant relationship between family functioning and anxiety. That is, the as the stress from family sources increased, the negative impact on depression was greater for the comparison group. There was no negative impact for the home education group.
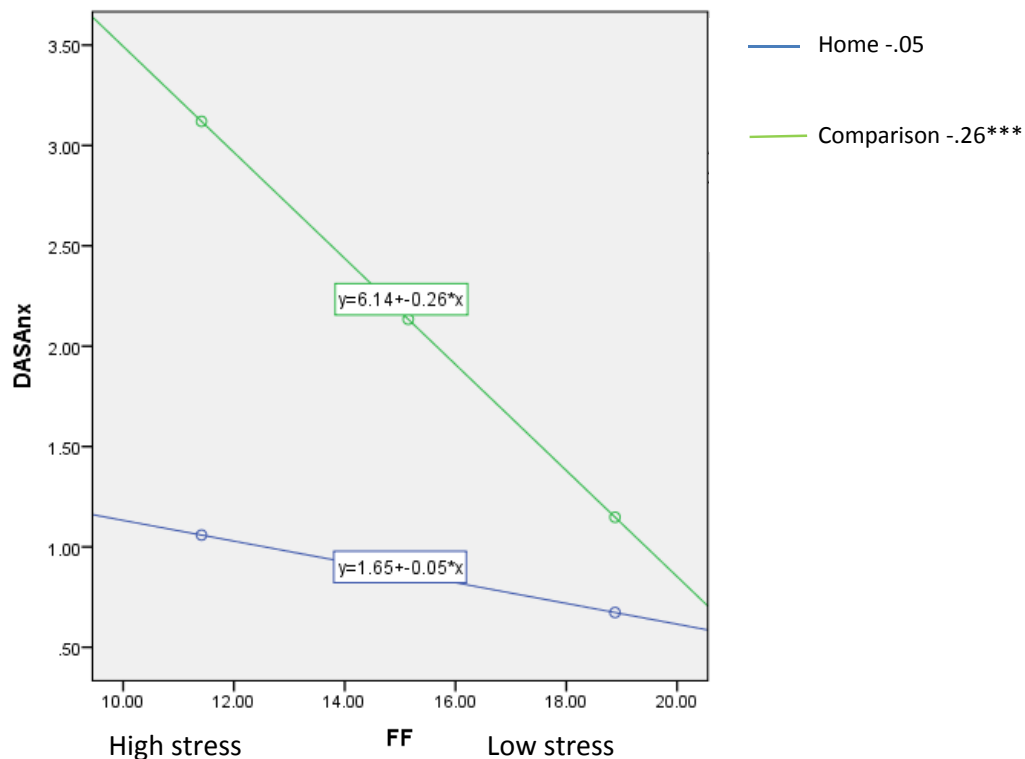

Figure 8.8. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and anxiety. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.9 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between family functioning and depression. There was a significant relationship between family functioning and depression in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, the

stress from family sources increased, the negative impact on depression was greater for the
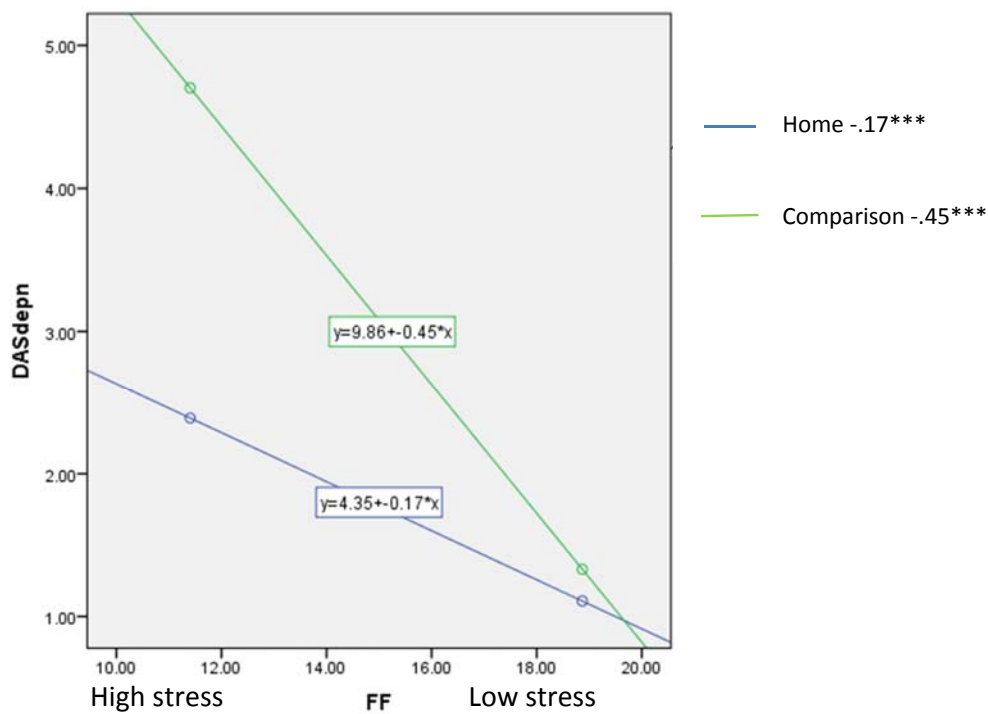
comparison group.

Figure 8.9. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and depression. ***<.001, **<.01, *<.05

Figure 8.10 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship

between family functioning and physical quality of life. There was a significant relationship

between family functioning and physical quality of life in both groups. The results indicate

that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in home group as compared to the

comparison group. That is, as the stress from family functioning increased, the negative

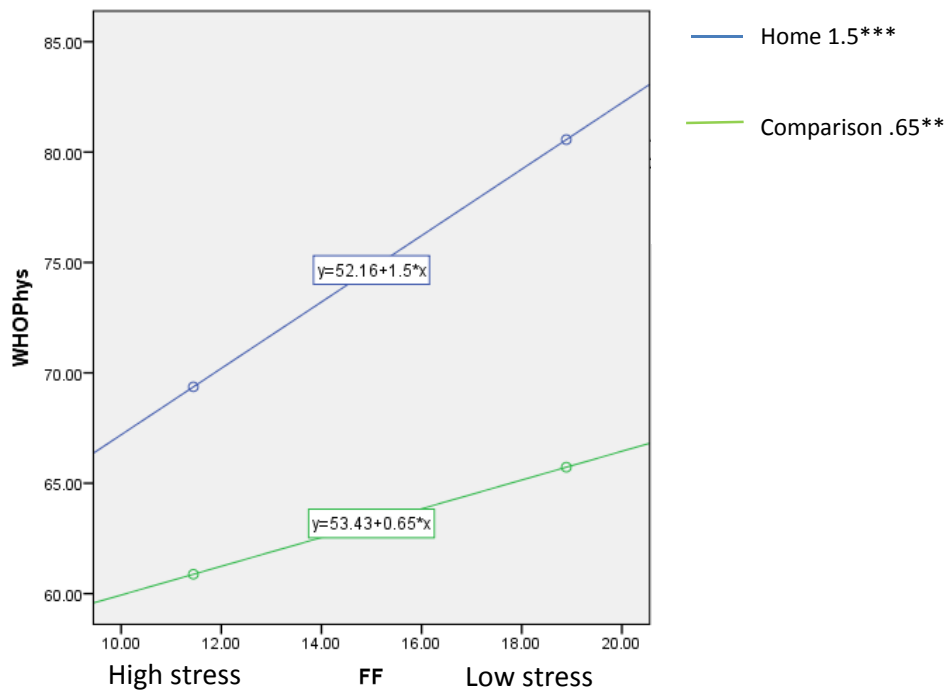impact on physical health was greater for the home education group.

Figure 8.10. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and physical quality of life. ***<.001, **<.01, *<.05

Figure 8.11 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between family functioning and psychological quality of life. There was a significant relationship between family functioning and psychological quality of life in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, as the stress from family functioning increases the negative impact on psychological health was greater for the comparison group.
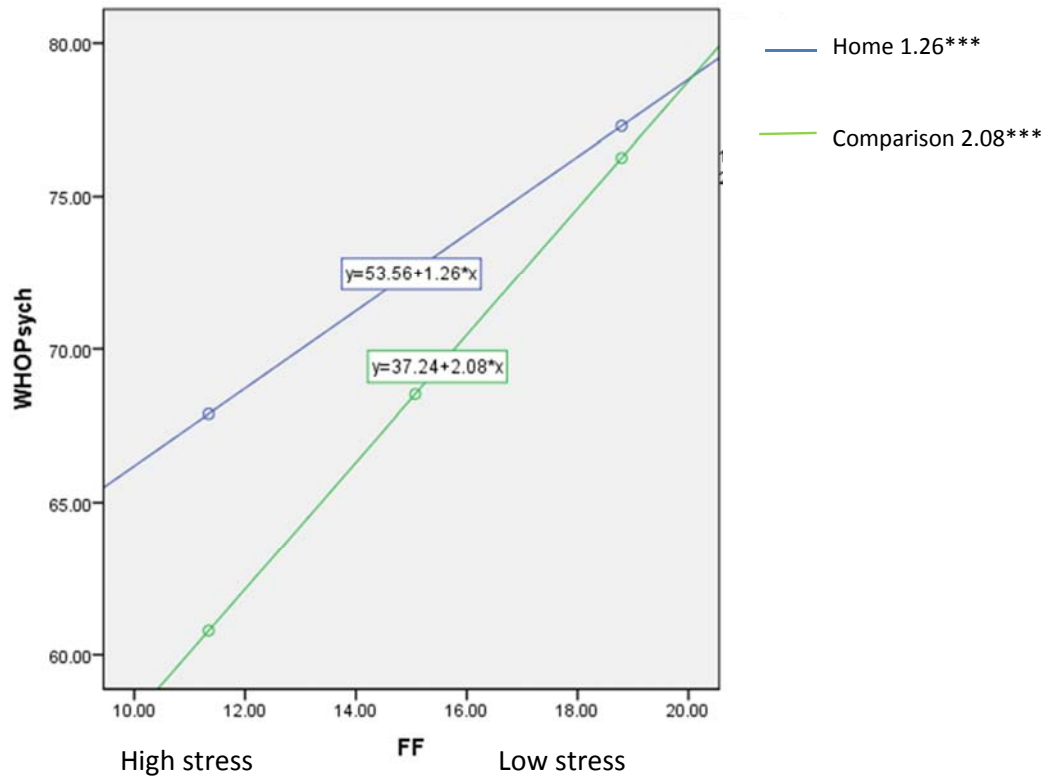
Figure 8.11. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and psychological quality of life. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.12 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between family functioning and optimism. There was a significant relationship between family functioning and optimism in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, as the stress from family functioning increases the negative impact on psychological health was greater for the comparison group.
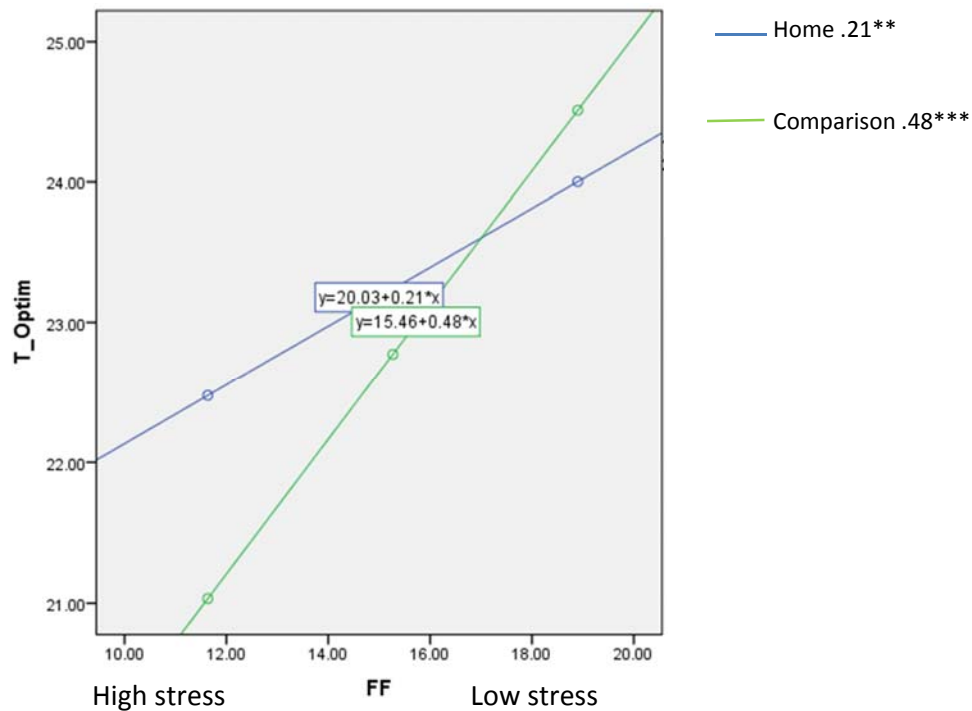
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Figure 8.12. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between family functioning and optimism. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Relationship between child temperament and wellbeing moderated by parent group

This section investigated if parent group moderates the relationship between child temperament and a range of measures of wellbeing. Due to the age range of the assessment tool used to measure child temperament, these analyses investigated home educating parents with a child aged 12 years or less (n=121) being compared to parents of children who attend primary school (n=173).

Table 8.4.

Moderation effects of parent group on the relationship between child temperament and wellbeing

IV	DV	t	p	Low CI 95%	High CI 95%
Child temperament	Life satisfaction	-.386	.700	-.212	.142
Child temperament	DAS Anxiety	2.510	.013 *	.022	.181
Child temperament	DAS Depression	2.319	.021*	.016	.199
Child temperament	QOL Physical	1.478	.140	-.108	.756
Child temperament	QOL Psychological	-1.728	.085	-.816	.053
Child temperament	QOL Social	-1.047	.296	-.955	.292
Child temperament	QOL Environmental	-.036	.972	-.403	.389
Child temperament	Optimism	-2.503	.013*	-.304	-.106

Note: Analyses with a * are considered to display moderation and are explored further below

As is highlighted in Table 8.4 there were three significant moderations between child temperament and the parental outcome wellbeing variables. These were the relationships between child temperament and wellbeing that were significantly different between the parent groups. The significant moderations are explored further below. Is it important to note that for the analysis involving perceived stress, the high stress condition is on the right hand size of the horizontal axis. Therefore the increase in stress is from left to right along the horizontal axis.

Figure 8.13 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between child temperament and anxiety. There was a significant relationship between child

temperament and anxiety in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude of the

relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group. That is, as

the stress from child temperament increases the negative impact on anxiety was greater for
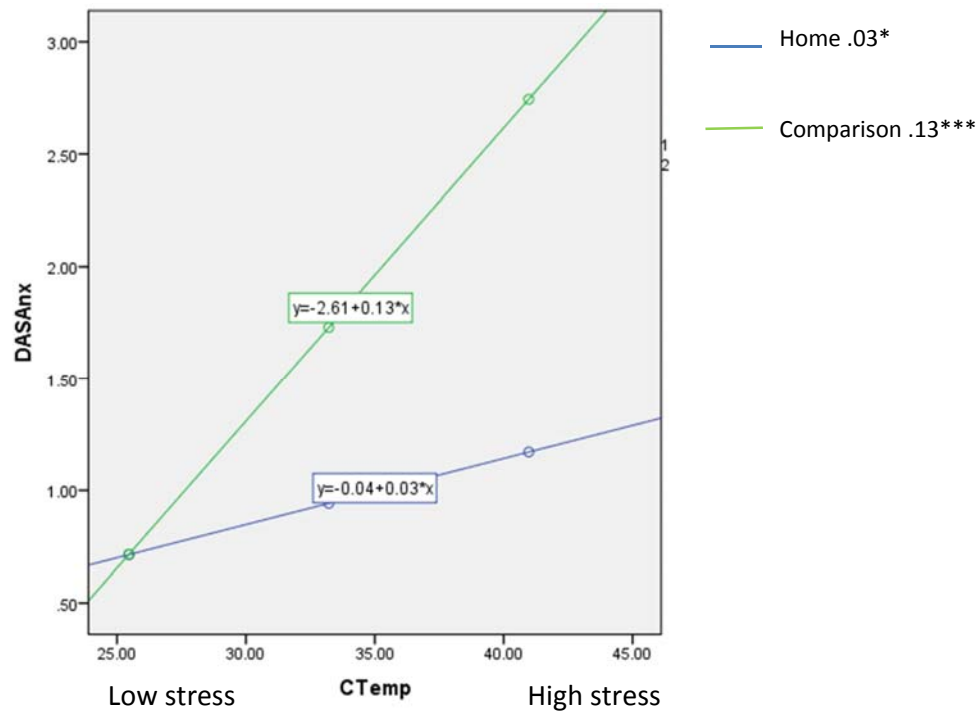
the comparison group.

Figure 8.13. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between child temperament and anxiety. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.14 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between

child temperament and parental depression. There was a significant relationship between

child temperament and depression in both groups. The results indicate that the magnitude

of the relationship was stronger in comparison group as compared to the home group which

only just reached significance. That is, as the stress from child temperament increases the

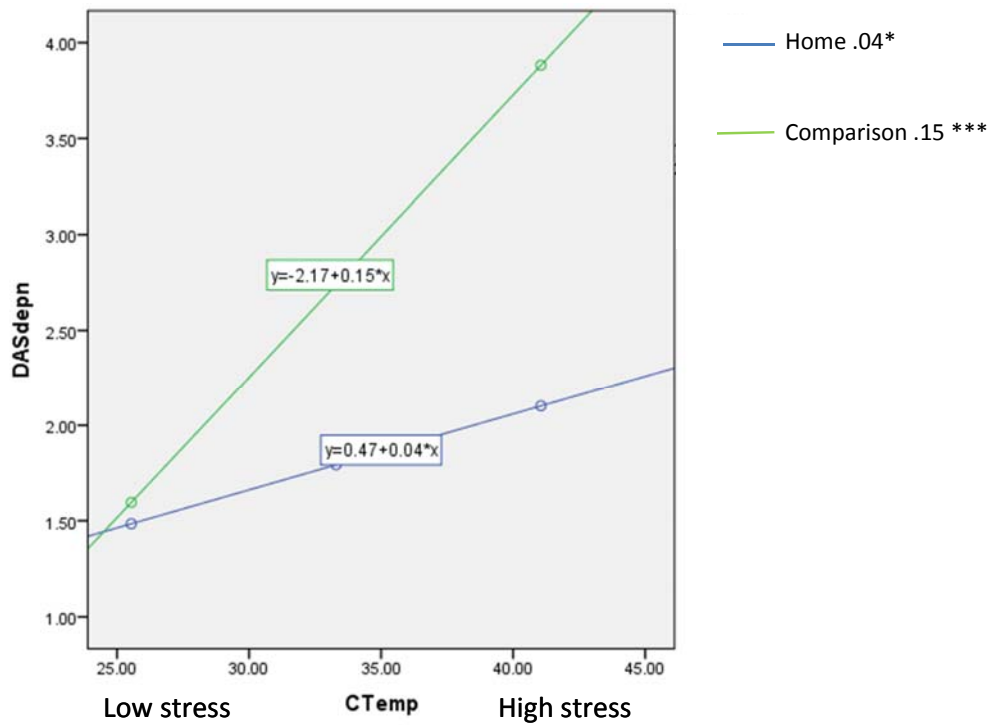negative impact on depression was greater for the comparison group.

Figure 8.14. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between child temperament and depression. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Figure 8.15 shows that parent group significantly moderated the relationship between family functioning and anxiety. The results indicate that the relationship only existed in the comparison group, in the home group there was no significant relationship between child temperament and optimism. That is, as the stress from child temperament increases the negative impact on optimism was greater for the comparison group.
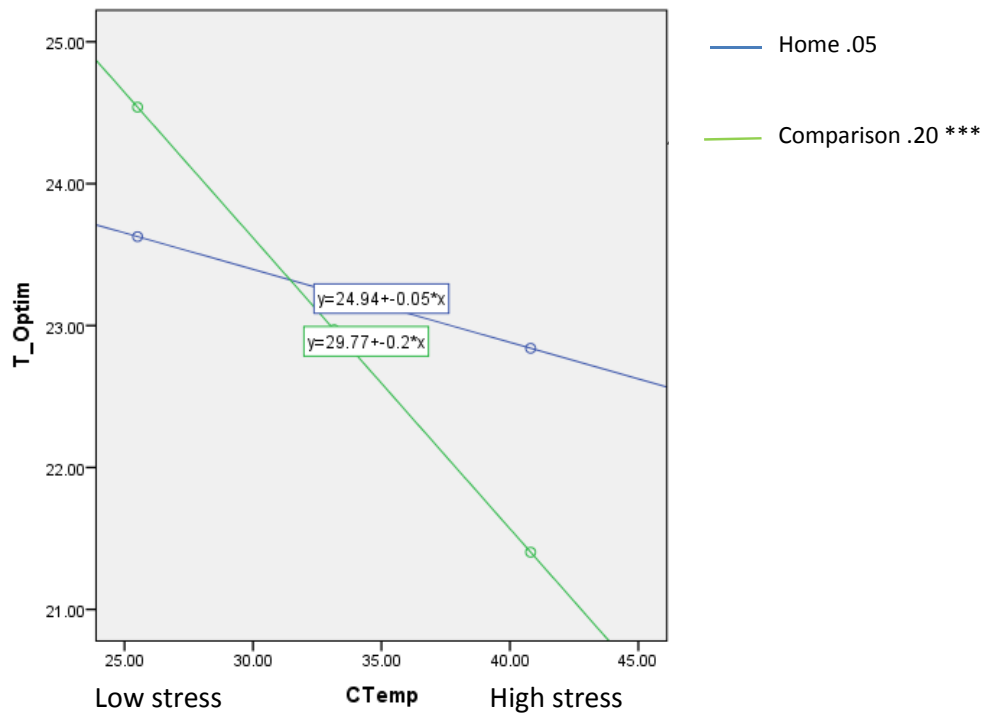
Figure 8.15. The moderating impact of parent group on the relationship between child temperament and optimism. ****<.001, **<.01, *<.05*

Comparison of stress processing pathways

The following analysis will investigate the relationships between stress and wellbeing

taking into account the stress processing factors that were covered in Chapter 3. This will be

undertaken using the construct of mediation, implemented through regression. This will

involve creating two models, one each for the home and comparison groups, and comparing

them. Currently there are no statistical tools to assess if the two models are significantly

different. However, given the information produced in the model it will be possible to

critically evaluate whether the same stress processing factors are involved as mediators. It is

important to note that typically when using mediation the reduction in the relationship

between the independent and the dependant variable was the focus. However, in this study

mediation was being used as a tool to examine if similar indirect relationships exist for the

home and comparison groups.

Mediation analysis

Mediation is the process of examining whether a third variable influences the relationship between an independent variable and a dependant variable. Mediation goes a step further to examine if the third variable (the mediator) is an indirect path between the independent variable and the dependant variable (Field, 2013). Statistically, mediation is said to exist when the strength of the relationship between the independent and the dependant variable is decreased in the presence of the mediator influence through a statistically casual path way. Traditionally this is investigated using Baron and Kenny's (1986), three step regression process where (1) the mediator is regressed on the independent variable, (2) the dependant variable is regressed on the independent variable, and (3) dependent variable is regressed on both the independent variable and the mediator. Finally if the mediator is significant in the final regression Sobels test was conducted to determine if strength of the relationships was high enough to reach significant mediation. As was the case with moderation, Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS has greatly simplified the process of completing a mediation analysis. It can now be completed as a single analysis and the PROCESS macro has added the ability to include confidence interval bootstrapping in addition to the Sobel's test for assessing the significance of the mediated relationship. Significant mediation is indicated when the 95% confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effects does not include zero (Hayes, 2013).

In this study the key area of interest is if the stress processing mediator, influences the relationship between the stress and wellbeing variables in the same way for both parenting groups. The stress processing factors that will be investigated are social support satisfaction, optimism, and family functioning. These were selected as they include external support, cognitive processing, and family aspects in relation to stressing processing. These commonly

cited stress processing constructs, allow for initial insights into the stress processing of parents who home educate. The processing factors were evaluated in the relationship between stress and wellbeing to investigate whether they were operating in the same way.

Relationship between DAS stress and wellbeing mediated by social support

Table 8.5 shows the outcome of using satisfaction with social support as a mediator in the relationship between DASS stress and wellbeing. The models for the comparison and home group were assessed individually and the coefficient of the indirect effect and the confidence intervals are provided below.

Table 8.5.

Social support as a mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing

| IV | DV | Home education | | | | Comparison | | | |
		Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size	Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size
DAS Stress	DAS Anxiety	.015	-.005	.053	.012	.004	-.012	.022	.006
DAS Stress	DAS Depression	.066	.041	.165	.089*	.027	.007	.064	.031*
DAS Stress	Life satisfaction	-.182	-.059	-.015	-.090*	-.109	-.183	-.050	-.075*
DAS Stress	QOL Physical	-.455	-.867	-.208	-.083*	-.072	-.178	.014	-.028
DAS Stress	QOL Psychological	-.477	-.807	-.220	-.105*	-.232	-.437	-.103	-.063*
DAS Stress	QOL Social	-1.27	-2.03	-.717	-.185*	-.559	-.965	-.272	-.114*
DAS Stress	QOL Environmental	-.489	-.854	-.237	-.113*	-.126	-.279	-.032	-.040*

Note: * indicates that effect size was significant using CI. All figures are unstandardised and may have values greater than 1.

As can be seen in Table 8.5, satisfaction with the social support was a significant mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing. Of greatest importance is that in the vast majority of the paths tested the results were similar for both the home and the comparison group. This highlights that the hypothesized pathway existed for both groups. This indicates that both groups have similar stress processing pathways although the effects sizes do differ.

Relationship between DAS stress and wellbeing mediated by optimism

Table 8.6 show optimism as a mediator in the relationship between DASS stress and wellbeing. The models for the comparison and home group were assessed individually and the coefficient of the indirect effect and the confidence intervals are provided below.

Table 8.6.

Optimism as a mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing

IV	DV	Home education				Comparison			
		Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size	Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size
DAS Stress	DAS Anxiety	.007	-.0015	.034	.016	.028	-.011	.072	.043
DAS Stress	DAS Depression	.023	-.002	.071	.036	.120	.059	.191	.130*
DAS Stress	Life satisfaction	-.093	-.239	.034	-.041	-.239	-.384	-.074	-.146*
DAS Stress	QOL Physical	-.203	-.035	.001	-.036	-.332	-.557	-.159	-.129*
DAS Stress	QOL Psychological	-.247	-.580	.052	-.054	-.726	-1.10	-.428	-.196*
DAS Stress	QOL Social	-.258	-.617	-.004	-.037*	-.553	-.984	-.212	-.108*
DAS Stress	QOL Environmental	-.177	-.443	.010	-.041	-.586	-.905	-.310	-.178*

Note: * indicates that effect size was significant using CI. All figures are unstandardised and may have values greater than 1.

As can be seen in Table 8.6, optimism was a significant mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing predominately in the comparison group. It is importance to note that in the vast majority of the paths tested the results were different for the home and the comparison group. This highlights that the hypothesized pathway existed only for the comparison group. This indicates that both groups had differing stress processing pathways in relation to optimism.

Relationship between DAS stress and wellbeing mediated by family functioning

Table 8.7 shows the outcome of using family functioning as a mediator in the relationship between DASS stress and wellbeing. The models for the school and home group were assessed individually and the coefficient of the indirect effect and the confidence intervals are provided below.

Table 8.7.

Family functioning as a mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing

| IV | DV | Home education | | | | Comparison | | | |
		Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size	Coefficient	95% CI Low	95% CI high	Effect size
DAS Stress	DAS Anxiety	.005	-.008	.032	.011	.014	-.022	.053	.019
DAS Stress	DAS Depression	.033	.009	.076	.044*	.069	.032	.131	.076*
DAS Stress	Life satisfaction	-.169	-.331	-.051	-.083*	-.296	-.429	-.197	-.199*
DAS Stress	QOL Physical	-.333	-.731	-.121	-.061*	-.125	-.336	-.057	-.048
DAS Stress	QOL Psychological	-.266	-.546	-.098	-.058*	-.609	-.892	-.389	-.166*
DAS Stress	QOL Social	-.903	-1.61	-.418	-.130*	-1.20	-1.62	-.826	-.245*
DAS Stress	QOL Environmental	-.336	-.715	-.125	-.078	-.317	-.528	-.143	-.102*

As can be seen in Table 8.7, family functioning was a significant mediator in the relationship between stress and wellbeing. Of greatest importance is that in the vast majority of the paths tested the results were similar for both the home and the comparison group. This highlights that the hypothesized pathway existed for both groups. This indicates that both groups have similar stress processing pathways.

The relationship between stress and wellbeing

The analyses in this chapter have highlighted that there are some common aspects in the relationship between stress and wellbeing in the home education and the comparison groups. The results generally indicated that the home education and the comparison groups had similar levels and directions of relationships between stress and wellbeing. However, moderation did occur frequently enough to suggest that there were some differences between the two groups. In the relationships that were moderated by parent, it was the strength of the predictive relationship that differed between the two groups. In most situations it was the comparison group that had the strong association between the negative impact of stress and wellbeing. The two most extreme examples of this were in the relationships between child temperament and optimism and the relationship between family functioning and anxiety. There was a strong relationship for the comparison group but no significant relationship for the home group. However, the home education group had a stronger negative relationship between each of the stress measures (perceived stress, stress, family functioning) and physical quality of life. These results highlight that while in general there were similar relationships between stress and wellbeing between the groups, there were significant differences in the impact of stress on wellbeing.

The mediation analyses of the stress processing factors also provided some unexpected findings amongst broader similarities. The results of the analyses using satisfaction with social support and family functioning as mediators indicate that both groups utilised similar stress processing factors, with a large number of significant mediations occurring for both groups. However, only the comparison group had a large number of significant mediations when optimism was used as a mediator. These mediators were chosen as representing different processing constructs although differences of this nature were not hypothesised. The contrast between internally and externally focused perceptions needs further investigation. However, broadly it would appear that home and comparison groups do display similar relationships between stress and wellbeing, although differing strengths of significantly relationships were observed and that they utilised similar patterns of stress processing at least in the area of perceptions of interactions with others.

Chapter 9: Parental motivation to home educate and methods employed.

The previous chapters have investigated the demographic characteristics and wellbeing of parents who home educate. This chapter focuses on primary and contributing motivations parents have for home educating and the patterns that exist within these motivations. It also considers the links between the demographic characteristics of home educators and their motivations to home educate. As was noted in Chapter 4, there is limited published information available regarding the motivations parents have for home educating their children in Australia. Very broadly there are a range of studies which have followed on from Van Galen's (1988) original work, typically finding the two predominant motivations for home education being religious and alternative learning. There also appears to be an emerging group of parents who are choosing home education because their children have social, emotional, or cognitive difficulties. However, as Spiegler (2010) has discussed, any classification of home educating motivations is problematic and often does not provide a depth of understanding of the underlying motivations of parents. If religious home educators were only perceived to be opting to educate their children within a religious paradigm, or at least removed from a secular classroom, information about their other motivations can be lost. In much the same way, if parents of children with a disability were only considered to be home educating for this reason, information about their religious motivations or their alternative learning practices would not be captured. Given the number of parents home educating, it is important that a more detailed and complex understanding of home educators is developed.

Statistical analysis in this chapter

The analysis in this chapter will consider the motivations for parents to home educate their children and will also probe the relationships that may exist between primary and contributing motivations. As this information was collected as checklists and group allocations, complex statistical analysis was not possible. Initially percentages of parents who home educate was investigated followed by an investigation of the ratio of primary motivations to secondary motivations categories. Finally there was a preliminary exploration of the differences in motivations and group membership using ANOVA. The core assumptions for ANOVA were checked and given the sample size were adequate.

As part of the questionnaire that was used in this research, participants were provided with the opportunity to provide a primary reason for home educating their children as well as other, contributing reasons. In this way parents could highlight their most important motivation as well as other factors that contributed to the decision. Parents could select one primary motivation and multiple contributing motivations. The 13 options were drawn from research (Patrick, 1999; Van Galen, 1988), governmental reviews (McHugh, 2003; New South Wales Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014), and international assessment tools (Institute on Education Sciences, 2013). They can be seen below, together with the abbreviations used in this chapter:

- Allow the child to gain a religious education (Religion)
- Allow the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure (Peer pressure)
- Allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment (Reduced structure)
- Dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools (Dis: social)
- Dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools (Dis: academic)

- Dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools (Dis: cultural)

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability (Dis: social disab)

- Dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability (Dis: academic disab)

- Desire to build stronger family bonds (Family bonds)

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities (Advanced academic)

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties (Learning difficulties)

- Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties (Soc/emot dif)

- Other: write own answers (Other)

These options allowed for a range of responses and contained both pull and push factors (Patrick, 1999) that let parents specify if they were motivated by inadequacies in the school system or an underlying desire to home educate.

Primary Motivations for Home Education

When presented with the motivational options listed above, the most common primary reason for home educating in the current study was a reduced structure followed by other and family bonds (Figure 9.1). Given the number of responses in the "other" category, these responses were investigated further.
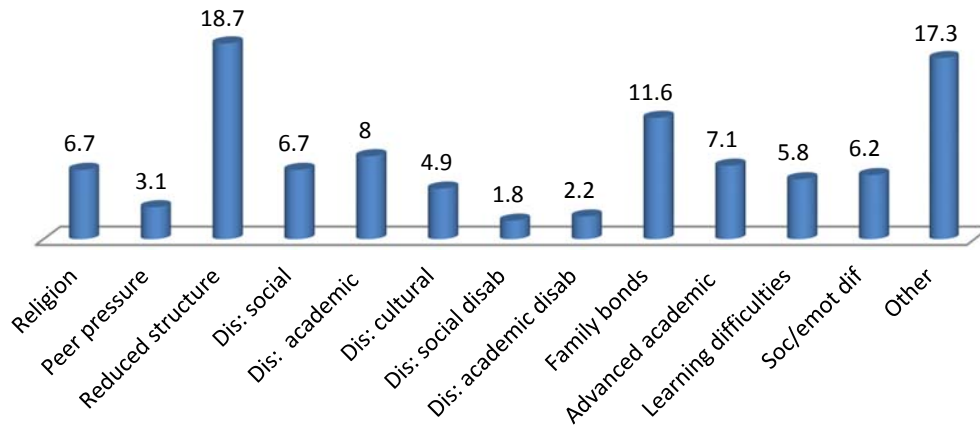
Figure 9.1. Primary motivation to home educate as a percentage.

Upon inspection of the responses in the "other" category it became clear that many of

the parents wanted to provide additional information, perspectives or insights into their

choices. Many of these responses did fall within the predefined categories but parents

wanted to make specific points or clarifications. The researcher and a home education

expert reviewed the responses originally in the "other" category and reallocated them to

the appropriate categories when the participant's response clearly related to an existing

category. However, there were a number of responses (n=18) in the "other" category that

were in relation to individual learning or matching learning style to educational

opportunities. These were grouped into an additional individual learning category. As this

was not an original predefined option for all participants to respond too in the original list, it

needs to be interpreted with caution. Given that 46% of responses in the initial "other"

category were related to individual learning it may have been a category that other

participants would have selected if it was an option. The parental motivations after the

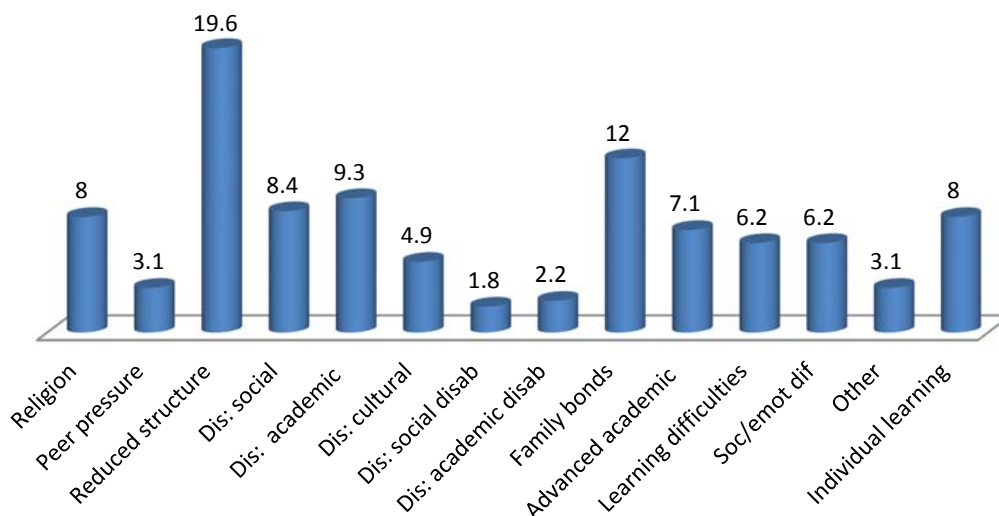redistribution of the other category can be seen in Figure 9.2*.*

Figure 9.2. Primary motivation to home educate as a percentage after the redistributions of "other".

As can be seen in Figure 9.2, allowing a child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment and the desire to build stronger family bonds were the two most common primary motivations. Religion, dissatisfaction with the academic and social aspects of school, providing for the educational needs of an advanced student, and individual learning motivations all were in the 8-10% range. However, this simple classification lacks depth to fully investigate parent motivations. Therefore the contributing motivations were also analysed and can be seen in Figures 9.3 and 9.4.

Contributing Motivations to Home Educate

To investigate the full range of parental motivations to home educate, parents were provided with the opportunity to detail the contributing reasons in their decision to home educate. They were offered the same list of options as in the primary motivations section and could select all that were relevant. The distributions of responses can be seen in Figure 9.3.
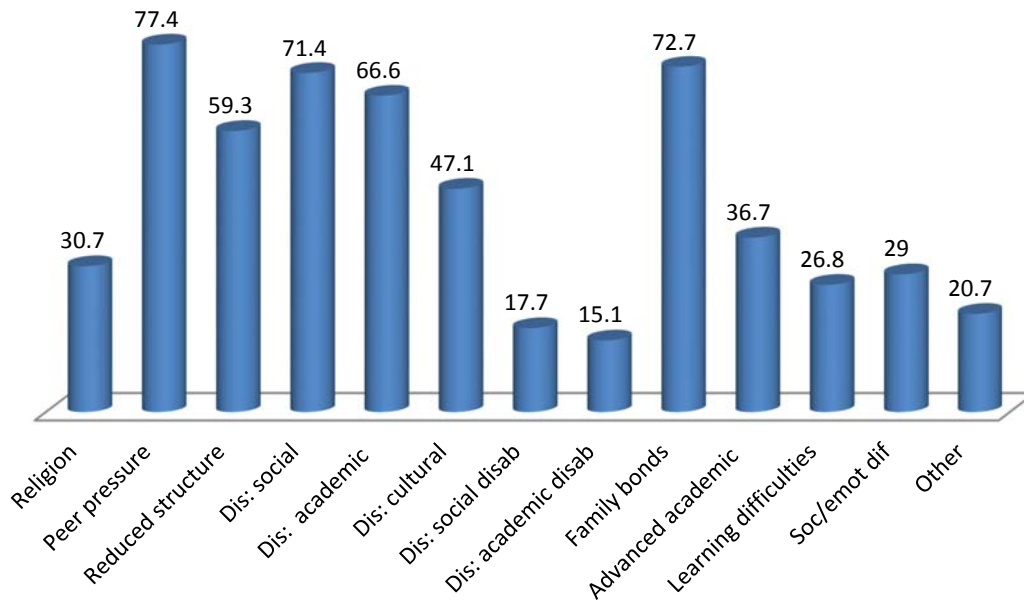
Figure 9.3. Contributing motivations.
Note. All figures are percentages and multiple items could be selected.

As can be seen in Figure 9.3, the most common contributing reasons were allowing the

child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure, dissatisfaction with social

aspect of conventional schools, and desire to build stronger family bonds, all with rates over

70%. There was again a large number of "other" motivations selected. Again, these were

examined and reallocated where appropriate. Once again there was a very high rate of

individual learning related responses in the other category and these were removed to

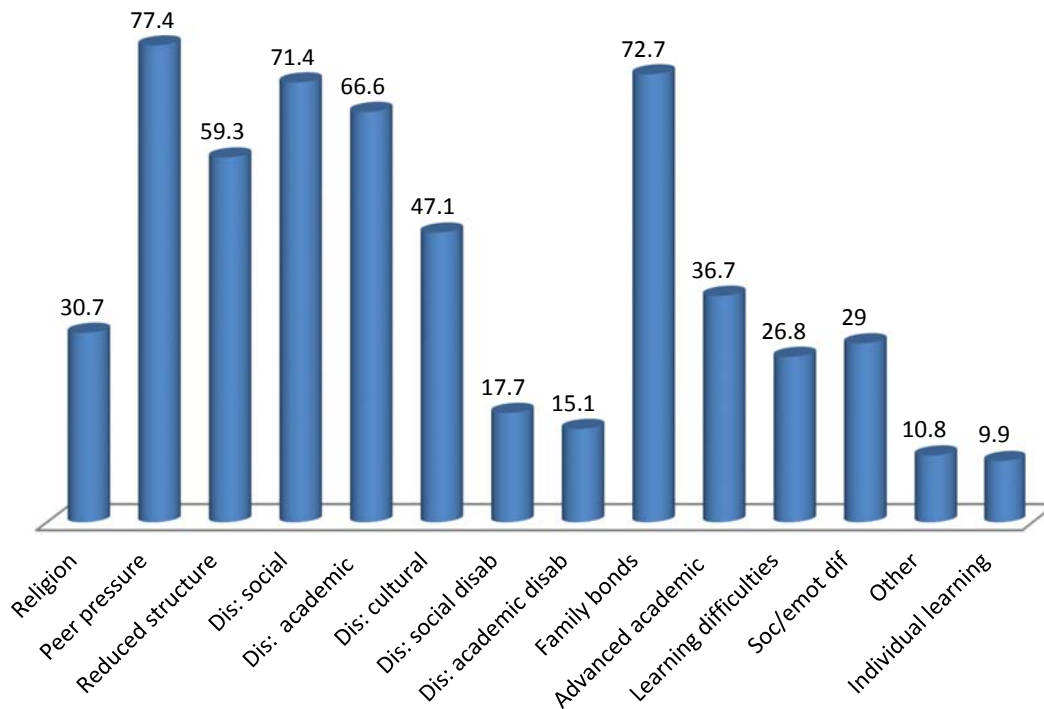create a new category which is displayed in Figure 9.4.

Figure 9.4. Contributing motivations.
Note. All figures are percentages and multiple items could be selected. Responses relating to individual learning have been removed from the "other" category.

Figure 9.4 displays the diverse range of motivations with only the responses related to

dissatisfaction with disability support in schools receiving less than 20% of responses in the

original options. Parents choosing to home educate because of their child's specific

academic or social needs were in the mid twenty percent range. However, as parents could

select multiple contributing motivations there is likely to have been overlapping responses.

When considering the overall pattern it would appear, unsurprisingly, that the responses

that resonate with a wide range of home education philosophies, such as spending time

with family, were most commonly selected. When considering peer pressure, conservative

religious families, those on the counter-culturist left, and parents who have a child with a

disability may all have differing concerns with the peer pressure in school environments. It is

important to note that almost 30% of parents cited desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties and 26% a desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties. Even taking into account a substantial amount of overlap in responding to these categories, this would indicate that there were a substantial number of parents home educating a child with issues in this area. In this sample there were almost as many parents reporting child with a disability as there were citing religious motivations (30%). As was the case with the primary motivations there were a substantial number of responses in the "other" category which could be grouped into an individual learning category. Almost half the responses in this category were relating to individual learning.

Contrast between Primary and Contributing Motivations.

The contrast between the primary and contributing motivations can be seen in Figure 9.5. Comparing these differing motivations can provide insights into the pattern of responses from parents. It can be seen that while allowing the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment was the most popular primary reason (19.6%) it is only the fifth most popular contributing reason. It would appear that for this motivation, the parents who do not select it as their primary motivation are less likely to consider it as a contributing motivation. This would also appear to be the case for religion and individual learning. Conversely peer pressure (3.1%) was not a common primary reason but it was the most highly selected contributing reason. The ratio between a motivational category being selected as a primary and contributing motivation can be seen in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1.

Ratio of primary to secondary motivations

	Primary (%)	Contributing (%)	Ratio (1:)
Religion	8.00	22.70	2.84
Peer pressure	3.10	74.30	23.97
Reduced structure	19.60	39.70	2.03
Dis: social	8.40	63.00	7.50
Dis: academic	9.30	57.30	6.16
Dis: cultural	4.90	42.20	8.61
Dis: social disab	1.80	15.90	8.83
Dis: academic disab	2.20	12.90	5.86
Family bonds	12.00	60.70	5.06
Advanced academic	7.10	29.60	4.17
Learning difficulties	6.20	20.60	3.32
Soc/emot dif	6.20	22.80	3.68
Other	3.10	7.70	2.48
Individual learning	8.00	1.90	0.24

Pattern of primary and contributing motivations to home educate

As can be seen in Table 9.2, there were different patterns of responses when

considering the contributing motivations that were selected for each primary motivation.

For example, the allowing the child to gain a religious education as a contributing

motivation was cited as important for over 40% of the parents who had selected

dissatisfaction with social or academic aspect of conventional schools and desire to build

stronger family bonds as their primary motivation. However, for parents whose primary

motivations were allowing the child to gain an education without the structure of a school

environment, dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools, individual learning,

or dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability

the selection rate of religion as a contributing motivation was less than 15%. This

highlighted that while religion was not a common contributing reason (See Table 9.1), the

selection rate was substantially different when considering the parent's primary motivation. Peer pressure was the first or second most popular contributing motivation for all primary motivations except for parents who selected dissatisfaction with conventional school's social or academic support for a child with a disability, or a desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities as their primary reason. This illustrates that the relationship between primary and contributing motivations is complex.

Parents who were primarily motivated by dissatisfaction with the social aspects of school reported high levels of religious and reduced structure contributing motivations. However, parents whose primary motivation was dissatisfaction with the academic aspects had higher rates of contributing motivations relating to children with advanced academic abilities. This suggests that even parents whose primary motivation is dissatisfaction with the school system can have differing contributing motivations. Those parents with dissatisfaction about the social aspects of school reported higher levels of contributing motivations in relation to children with social/emotional difficulties. Parents who selected reduced peer pressure as a primary motivation had medium levels of motivation related to religion, low levels of motivations relating to reduced structure, and had the highest rates of concerns regarding individual learning. The patterns of relationships in the three key areas of religion, reduced structure, and children with a disability or difficulty are of interest as they form the basis of much of the research into the motivations of parents who home educate. These are considered in the following section.

Parents who selected religion as their primary motivation reported the lowest levels of contributing motivations in the area of reduced structure. They also reported very low levels

of contributing motivations relating to disability or support of a child with a disability and reported high rates in the area of family bonds and reduced peer pressure. This would indicate that parents who home educate for religious reason appear to have a very strong focus on this motivation and do not appear to have other common motivations such as reduced structure or a child with a disability. This theme was broadly supported in the other key areas of children with a disability and reduced structure. Parents who selected reduced structure as their primary motivation had low rates of reporting religion as a contributing motivation. They also reported low rates of contributing motivations relating to disability or support of a child with a disability. Parents who selected desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties as their primary motivation, had very low rates of selecting dissatisfaction with the cultural aspects of school as a contributing motivation. However, they did select peer pressure very frequently as a contributing motivation. This may indicate that while they viewed the school environment quite positively the interactions with other children were an issue for their child with learning difficulties. Parents who selected desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties, also reported very high contributing motivations in the area of peer pressure as a contributing motivation. This would suggest that, as motivation to home educate, reduced structure and religion are quite separate. Similarly the parents who home educate primarily to support a child with a disability or impairment appear distinct from the other two groups. However, there does appear to be some variation depending on the child's specific needs. The other primary motivations, such as dissatisfaction with the social or academic aspects of school and reduced peer pressure appear to be less clearly defined and share some common features with the religion, reduced structure, and children with a disability motivation groups. These

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patterns of responses are a starting point for home education research to develop more

intricate understandings of the motivation of parents who decide to home educate their

children. To further investigate parental motivations a comparison of the motivation of

home education method used is presented in the next section.

Method of Home Education and Parental Motivation

As part of the data collection for this research, parents were asked what method of

home education they used. Parents could respond: structured, unstructured, or eclectic,

and were given a brief overview of each to allow for the best match possible. Parents who

selected eclectic were then offered the opportunity to select where on the continuum from

unstructured to structured they felt best represented their practices. This was done by

selecting the point on a continuum which they believed best described their home

education practices. Participants who rated themselves in the lower 25% (unstructured)

were allocated to unstructured group and those in the top 25% (structured) of the

continuum were allocated to the structured group for the results displayed in Table 9.3 and

9.4. It is important to consider if this allocation meaningfully represents the population of

interest. This method of allocation was used in these results to represent those parents who

reported using a particular method (structure or unstructured) or those who reported using

an eclectic approach which heavily relied on one of the methods. This grouping means that

structured and unstructured groups do not solely represent the parents who report only

using structure or unstructured methods but does provide insights into the parents who

employ these educational philosophies extensively.

When examining the primary motivations in Table 9.3 there appears to be stark

contrasts between the groups in some areas. There were clear progressions from

unstructured to eclectic to structured in the areas of reduced structure, dissatisfaction with

academic aspect of conventional schools, dissatisfaction with the support for children with a

social or emotional difficulty, and individual learning. There were also clear contrasts

between groups in the area of religion, peer pressure, dissatisfaction with the social aspects

of school, learning and social/emotional difficulties, and family bonds. Given the data

collection methods and the type of data, there is not an appropriate statistical tool to

analyse this information. However, from a visual inspection of the data a clear pattern

begins to emerge that requires further specific research. When compared to the

unstructured group, parents who home educate using structured methods were more likely

to have primary motivations relating to religion and concerns regarding peer pressure, and

the social and academic environment at schools. Conversely, parents using unstructured

methods were relatively more likely to have motivations relating to family bonds,

independent learning, dissatisfaction with the academic and social support for a child with a

disability, and providing educational experience without the structure of the school system.

The eclectic group was more complex as they shared commonalities with the structured

group (higher religious motivations, and lower family bonds, dissatisfaction with the

academic and social support for a child with a disability, individual learning, and reduced

structure motivations), and the unstructured group (lower peer pressure and dissatisfaction

with social aspects of schools motivations). Yet the eclectic group has higher dissatisfaction

with cultural aspects of school and appropriate educational opportunities to a child with

learning /social/emotional difficulties motivations than either of the other groups.

When considering the contributing motivations grouped by home education method in

Table 9.4, there were some similarities to the primary motivations. Similarly to the primary

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motivations there were clear progressions from unstructured to eclectic to structured in the

areas of religion, reduced structure, and individual learning. However, there were differing

relationships in other areas. In relation to the dissatisfaction with social aspect of

conventional schools, there was an inverse relationship when compared to the primary

motivation, with declining trend from unstructured to structured. Also, the structured group

was the most likely to select peer pressure as a primary motivation, yet they were the least

likely to select it as contributing motivation. The unstructured group were the least likely to

select the desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with

social/emotional difficulties motivation, yet they were the most likely to select it as a

contributing motivation. These differing patterns of motivation need further investigation

and may be suited to structured equation modelling if a large enough sample could be

gathered.

Table 9.2.

Breakdown of contributing motivations by primary motivation

Primary motivation (prim%)	Contributing motivations													
	Religion	Peer pressure	Reduced structure	Dis: social	Dis: academic	Dis: cultural	Dis: social dis	Dis: academic sup dis	Family bonds	Advanced	Learning dif	Soc/ emot dif	Other	Ind learn
Religion (8%)	x	88.89%	27.78%	66.67%	61.11%	61.11%	11.11%	11.11%	88.89%	38.89%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%
Peer pressure (3%)	28.57%	X	28.57%	100.00%	71.43%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	71.43%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	42.86%
Reduced structure (19%)	15.91%	81.82%	x	79.55%	70.45%	40.91%	6.82%	4.55%	90.91%	29.55%	6.82%	13.64%	15.91%	9.09%
Dis: social (8%)	15.79%	78.95%	47.37%	x	52.63%	47.37%	15.79%	10.53%	57.89%	31.58%	31.58%	42.11%	15.79%	0.00%
Dis: academic (9%)	47.62%	80.95%	66.67%	80.95%	x	47.62%	19.05%	19.05%	80.95%	57.14%	38.10%	23.81%	19.05%	9.52%
Dis: cultural (4%)	45.45%	72.73%	63.64%	72.73%	90.91%	x	9.09%	9.09%	72.73%	54.55%	18.18%	27.27%	18.18%	9.09%
Dis: social disab (1%)	25.00%	50.00%	50.00%	75.00%	50.00%	50.00%	x	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	75.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Dis: academic disab (2%)	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	80.00%	80.00%	40.00%	80.00%	x	40.00%	60.00%	40.00%	80.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Family bonds (12%)	44.44%	88.89%	70.37%	77.78%	51.85%	66.67%	7.41%	0.00%	x	18.52%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%	7.41%
Advanced academic (7%)	25.00%	56.25%	62.50%	62.50%	81.25%	31.25%	12.50%	6.25%	62.50%	x	18.75%	25.00%	25.00%	6.25%
Learning difficulties (6%)	23.08%	84.62%	61.54%	46.15%	53.85%	15.38%	46.15%	61.54%	46.15%	30.77%	x	53.85%	7.69%	0.00%
Soc/emot dif (6%)	21.43%	92.86%	71.43%	64.29%	57.14%	35.71%	42.86%	42.86%	42.86%	42.86%	35.71%	x	21.43%	0.00%
Other (3%)	28.57%	57.14%	42.86%	57.14%	71.43%	57.14%	0.00%	0.00%	85.71%	28.57%	14.29%	42.86%	x	40.00%
Individual learning (8%)*	11.11%	77.78%	61.11%	66.67%	77.78%	61.11%	16.67%	16.67%	77.78%	50.00%	33.33%	22.22%	50.00%	x

Note: Individual learning should be interpreted very cautiously as it was created from parents who had selected other and provided additional information. Not all parents choose to do this so it may be under represented as a response.

Table 9.3.

Primary motivations grouped by education method.

	Religion	Peer pressure	Reduced structure	Dis: social	Dis: academic	Dis: cultural	Dis: social dis	Dis: academic sup dis	Family bonds	Advanced	Learning dif	Soc/emot dif	Other	Ind learn
Unstructured	0.00%	2.10%	34.00%	4.30%	0.00%	0.00%	4.30%	4.30%	19.10%	6.40%	4.30%	0.00%	6.40%	14.90%
Eclectic	10.60%	2.90%	17.30%	5.80%	7.70%	8.70%	1.00%	1.90%	9.60%	6.70%	7.70%	11.50%	1.00%	6.70%
Structured	11.10%	4.80%	12.70%	15.90%	15.90%	3.20%	1.60%	1.60%	9.50%	7.90%	4.80%	1.60%	4.80%	4.80%

Table 9.4.

Contributing motivations grouped by education method.

	Religion	Peer pressure	Reduced structure	Dis: social	Dis: academic	Dis: cultural	Dis: social dis	Dis: academic sup dis	Family bonds	Advanced	Learning dif	Soc/emot dif	Other	Ind learn
Unstructured	19.15%	85.11%	87.23%	82.98%	68.09%	59.57%	23.40%	14.89%	80.85%	31.91%	27.66%	38.30%	25.53%	14.89%
Eclectic	28.85%	84.62%	65.38%	75.96%	63.46%	45.19%	20.19%	16.35%	75.96%	39.42%	27.88%	28.85%	21.15%	11.54%
Structured	42.86%	66.67%	36.51%	56.52%	74.60%	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	65.08%	38.10%	25.40%	26.98%	20.63%	4.76%

Method of Home Education used.

There has been no systematic investigation of the link between income or education level in home educating parents. Nor has there been an investigation into what impact these factors have on the method they use in relation to their children's education. The following section will consider these variables in relation to home education method used.

Education level and income

In relation to parental education level, as can be seen in Figure 9.5, there does not appear to be a clear pattern. However, the eclectic approach was the most popular in all but the lowest and highest income levels. Structured and unstructured methods were jointly the most popular in the lowest income groups but this group was very small. The structured approach was the most popular method in the highest income group.
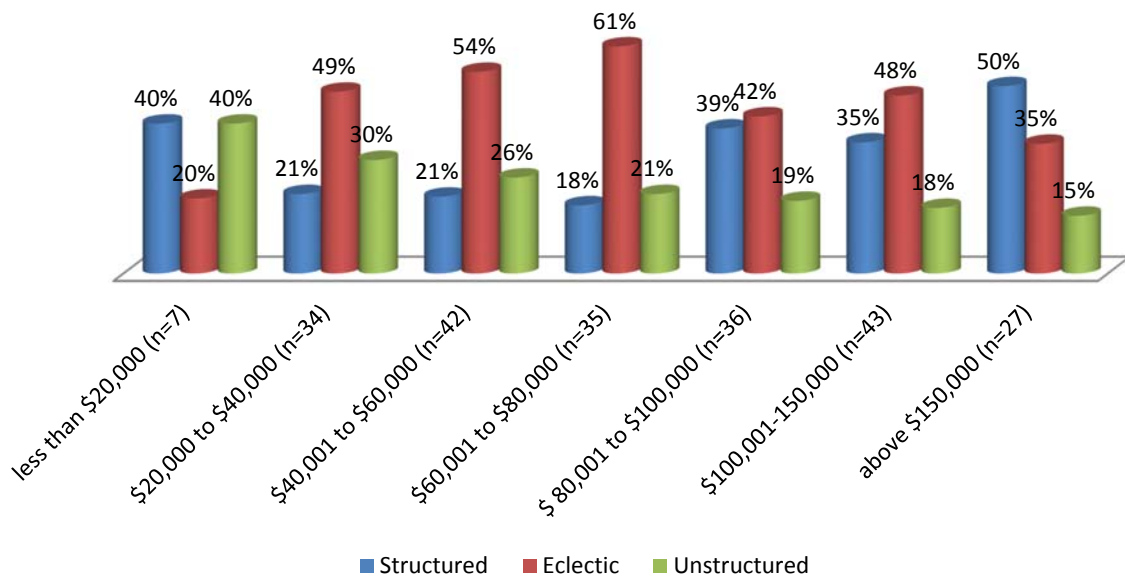

Figure 9.5. Home education method by income level.

While the parents' education level is often an area of concern there is little information regarding the links between parental education and method of home education. Figures 9.6 and 9.7 show the method of home education utilised by the education level of the parent and partner.
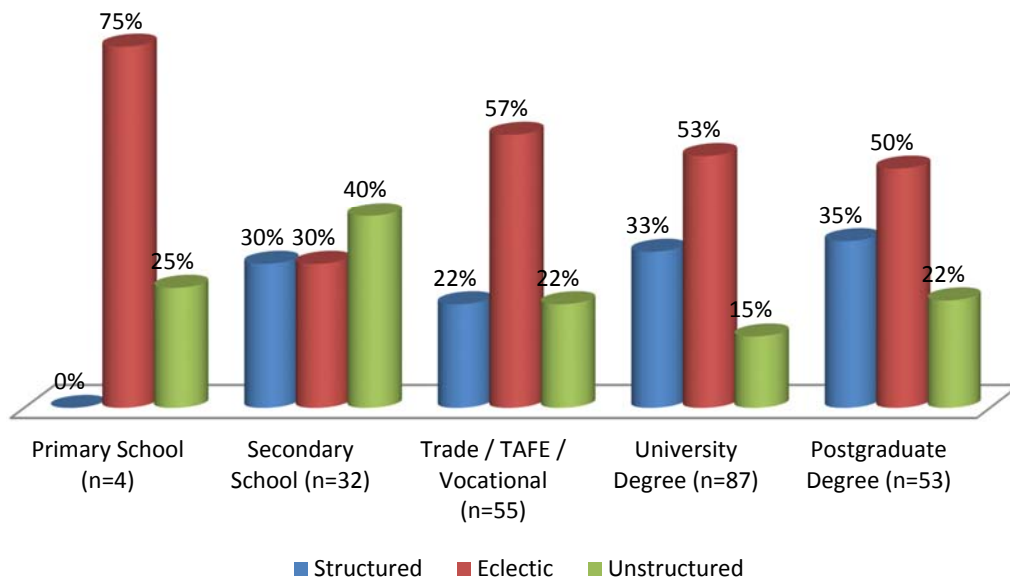

Figure 9.6. Home education method by parent education level.
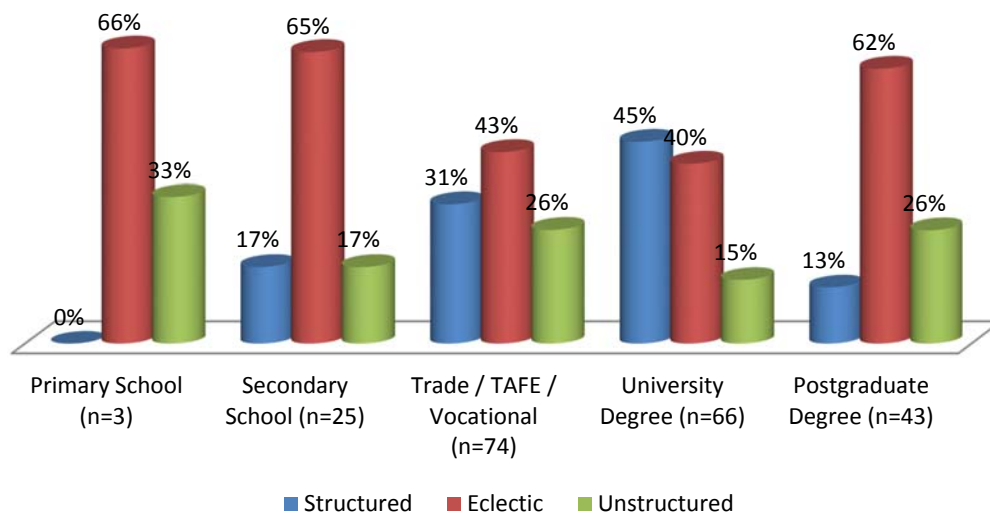

Figure 9.7. Home education method by partner education level.

As can be seen in Figures 9.6 and 9.7 there does not appear to be a clear pattern of responses between education level of parent and partner education and home education method used. Eclectic was the most popular method for all education levels except secondary school in the parents' group and university in the partners' group. One of the only consistent findings, noting the very small number in the group, was that no parents and partners who did not complete secondary school selected the structured method.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the primary and contributing motivations that underpin a parents' decision to home educate their child. This is the basis upon which they engage in this educational practice. The results show that after the distribution of responses which were user defined ("other" category) to their relevant category, the most common primary motivation was a desire to allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment. The second most popular was a desire to build stronger family bonds. Of the predefined categories the least common primary motivation was dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability. However, if all the categories that related to a disability were totalled, 16.2% of the sample reported a form of disability/learning difficulties or dissatisfaction with a traditional schools support for a child with a disability as their primary motivation. Other stereotypical motivations for home education were less frequent primary reasons. Only 8% of the sample reported the desire to allow the child to gain a religious education as their primary motivation. The stereotype of the highly insular family did not appear to be supported with only 3.1% of parents selecting allowing the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure as their primary motivation. Initially 17.3% of the sample selected "other" as their primary motivation. When

these were examined there was a very high rate of responses that could be grouped into an

individual leaning category. This resulted in 8% of the sample selecting independent learning

as their primary motivation, even though it was not one of the available options. This may

suggest that the true number of parents who may have selected individual learning would

have been over 8%. Future studies should consider including this category.

Parents were also asked about their contributing motivations and multiple responses could

be selected. The most reported groupings of parents in the literature (See chapter 4)

appeared to be supported with 30.7% of parents reporting religious motivations, 29%

reporting a desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with

social/emotional difficulties and 59.3% desiring to provide an education without the

structure of a school environment. Other contributing motivations were also highly

selected. Over 50% of parents in all primary motivation groups, with the exception of

dissatisfaction with conventional school's social or academic support for a child with a

disability, selected reduced peer pressure as a contributing reason for home education.

Similar patterns existed for the contributing motivations of family bonds and the

dissatisfaction with the social aspect of conventional schools. This may indicate that for

most primary motivation groups these were beneficial aspects of home education.

When considering the link between primary and contributing motivations, the three key

areas of religion, reduced structure, and children with a disability, highlighted in Chapter 4,

appear to be supported by these findings. These three primary motivations had substantially

different patterns of contributing motivations. If one of the three were selected as the

primary motivations there were low rates of either of the other two being selected as a

contributing motivation. However, other primary motivations such as reduced peer pressure

and dissatisfaction with the academic or social aspects of school show more complex patterns, often having high ratings in a combination of contributing motivations relating to religion, reduced structure, and child with a disability/difficulty. Primary and contributing motivations were also considered in conjunction with the education method used by the parent.

There were clear differences between the structured, eclectic, and unstructured in relation to their primary motivations. The unstructured group showed low levels of most motivations except reduced structure, family bonds, and individual learning. The structured group reported highest levels of religious motivations and concerns with the social and academic aspects of conventional schools and low levels of primary motivations related to disability. The eclectic group showed the highest level of concern of any group in relation to parenting a child with a social/emotional difficulty and dissatisfaction with the cultural aspects of school. This was also supported by the low ratio of primary to contributing motivations in each of these areas. The patterns in relation to the contributing motivations were less clear and required further clarification.

The link between parental education and income were considered in relation to home education method. The eclectic method was the most common method in all but the highest and lowest income levels. Similarly the eclectic method was the most common in most education levels except for parents who had completed high school and partners who had university degree. These areas have not been investigated previously and warrant further investigation with larger sample sizes for all groups.

Chapter 10: The Discussion

The aim of this research was to provide an in-depth analysis of parents who home educate in Australia. This is an under-researched group in the community with very little known about them. These parents have taken on the direct educational responsibility for their children, yet previously it was unclear what impact this had on their wellbeing or what motivated them to home educate. The current study empirically investigated parents who home educate across a number of domains. The study compared 231 parents who home educated their children to a sample of 289 parents who use schools as their primary education tool. The study examined the demographic characteristics, wellbeing, motivations to home educate, and the relationship between sources of stress and levels of wellbeing in parents who home educate their children. In doing this it was hoped that a clearer picture of parents who home educate in Australia would be possible. This research also sought to, for the first time in Australia, to empirically evaluate the primary and contributing motivations parents had for choosing to home educate. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform policy makers, regulators, academics, and parents who home educate, in their efforts to understand home education in Australia. The discussion will provide an overview of each of the findings of this study, consider the implications of findings, and finally consider the limitations and future research directions.

Demographic Characteristics

Given that so little is known about home educating parents in Australian it had previously been difficult to provide an accurate overview of their demographic profile, their levels of wellbeing and their motivations to home educate (Chapman & O'Donoghue, 2000). Therefore, previous research on home education in Australia was informed by international

literature (e.g., Mackey, Reese, & Mackey, 2011) or small sample qualitative studies (e.g.,

Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). The current study adds to the literature by providing the first

comprehensive investigation of the demographic characteristics of home educating parents

in Australia.

Given the sample size obtained and the quality of the data collected this study was able

to provide a demographic overview of parents who home educate in Australia. As

hypothesised, this study found that the majority of parents who home educate in Australia

were married or in a relationship (over 90%) and families were larger than the Australian

average. It was also found that mothers had very low work force participation with over

69% not employed and less than 4.5% working 25 hours or more a week. Families involved

in home education had larger numbers of children on average. This is consistent with Croft's

(2013) findings in relation to teachers who chose to home educate their children.   Parents

who home educated were found to have a diverse range of incomes, although family

median incomes were consistent with average weekly earnings of the broader Australian

population (ABS, 2012b). Just over 60% of mothers and 46% of fathers/partners had

university degrees which supported previous findings (e.g., Harding, 2011) of high levels of

parental education in families who home educate. However, there was a lack of ethnic

diversity with over 80%, from Australian and Western European backgrounds. There were

few (less than 5%) parents of Asian, Mediterranean, or Indian heritage. Approximately 30%

of the families identified religious beliefs as a motivation for home education. Overall these

findings are consistent with international research (e.g., National Centre for Education

Statistics, 2013; Noel, Stark, Redford, & Zukerberg, 2013) and the parental reports in

qualitative studies in Australia (e.g., Broadhurst, 1999; Harding, 2011). In the following

section, the important findings in the comparison between parents who home educate and those that do not in Australia are considered.

Demographic characteristics: An Australian comparison

This study adds to our understanding of parents who home educate in Australia by comparing their demographic makeup with that of a comparison group of non-home educating parents. One of the key strengths of this study was the ability to compare the demographic characteristics of a home educating sample to a comparison sample that was recruited in a similar way. This study has collected information from the two groups using the same questions and scales, and collected the data in a highly consistent manner. This has increased the suitably of these two groups for comparison.

Given the lack of available evidence internationally or in Australia, particularly in relation to comparisons between these groups, it was hypothesised that there would be no significant differences between the home education and the comparison groups in their demographic characteristics. The only exception was that home educating families were hypothesised to have significantly more children and that mothers' involvement in paid employment would be lower in the home education group. These hypotheses were supported in regards to the analyses regarding family size and mothers' employment, which supported Harding's (2011) findings in Australia. In addition to having more children than the Australian average, home educating parents had significantly more children than the comparison group of parents. This supports Croft's (2013) similar finding in her study into registered teachers who opted to home educate their children. However, it is also important to note that 22% of parents were using preschools/schools to educate some of their children. Although this is less than 55% reported by Isenberg's (2006) in America, it does

highlight that some Australian parents who home educate also use formal educational institutions.

Unexpectedly, there were significant differences between the home education and comparison groups in the areas of father/partners' education level and family income level. It was found that although mothers' education levels were similar, the father/partners' involved in home education were significantly more likely to have trade qualifications and less like to have university qualifications then the comparison group. These are the first findings in Australia to suggest such a pattern of educational experience.

The home education group reported significantly lower income levels than the comparison group. This is consistent with the report of the NSW Select Committee on Home Schooling, (2014). Over 70% of the home education group had an income of less than $100,000 while only 50% of the comparison group reported this level. This needs to be considered in the context of the very low rate of home educating mothers working more than 10 hours per week. It may support the past findings that some parents have reported regarding financial strain as part of the home education process (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Parsons & Lewis, 2010; Reilly, Chapman, & O'Donoghue, 2002). The empirical findings of this study support the existing qualitative findings. The reported pattern of employment and income level provides important information for regulators and researchers to consider in future investigations of the financial strain that confronts some parents who home educate.

Overall home educating mothers had higher levels of university education than fathers/partners (61% compared to 46%). This finding is consistent with the highly educated mothers in English's (2012) sample, but contrasts Harding's (2011) results that indicated that it was father/partners who had higher education levels. Given that both these studies

were Australian, the contrasting findings can perhaps be attributed to Harding's sample

being drawn from parents using a Christian based education service. However, results from

this study are consistent with other Australian findings that it is mothers who undertake the

majority of the education provision in home educating families (Barratt -Peacock, 1997;

Select Committee on Home Schooling, 2014). Although it was not possible to statistically

evaluate the differences in mothers' employment, the contrasts were clear. Almost 70% of

the mothers in the home education group did not work compared to 17% in the comparison

group. This study also found that only 4.4% of mothers were working more than 25 hours

per week which is consistent with Harding's finding of 6%. The finding that mothers were

the primary educators supports the existing Australian literature (e.g., Broadhurst, 1999;

Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010).

Given the substantial difference in the percentage of mothers working, it follows that

there is a significant difference in overall family income. This is possibly compounded by the

significantly lower levels of father/partner income in the home education group. These

results had not previously been reported for Australian parents who home educate.

However, in line with the hypotheses no significant differences were found in marital status,

parent education, or mothers' education level.

These findings would indicate that parents who home educate in Australia are well

educated, with one parent primarily focused on education rather than employment. Parents

who home educate had lower levels of income, and international trends of larger than

average families and a single income are also true in Australia, potentially contributing to

the financial pressures reported by many families (NSW Select Committee on Home

Schooling, 2014). It would appear that parents who home educate in Australia are quite

similar to non-home educating parents in Australia when considering their demographic

profile. These results would suggest that parents who home educate in Australian are

demographically a group of fairly typical parents who select a different educational option

for their children. Although, the differences in educational attainment and employment are

in contrast to non-home educating parents. The next section will consider the differences

between parents who home educate in Australia and in America.

International comparison of demographic findings

When considering the demographic characteristics of the home educating parents in this

study, there were a number of similarities with the international sample. The one key

difference is the education level. While parents who home educate their children have

higher rates of tertiary education in America, as compared to parents using school, the rates

are even higher for Australian parents home educating. In this study it was found that over

60% of parents who home educate their children in Australia had at least a bachelor's

degree as compared to 39% of parents (separate mother and father rates were not available

in the internal data) who home educate in Noel, Stark, Redford and Zukerberg's (2013)

representative American sample. However, Mackey, Reese and Mackey (2011), found that

in their sample of 130 home educating parents who lived in rural American locations, 60%

had college degrees, which is consistent with the current study. It is unclear why these two

American samples found such differing rates of parental education levels. Whether this is

due to genuine differences based on location or could have been representing a key

difference in the types of individuals who choose to take part in research in each location is

not known. It is also important to note that the international findings did not separate the

education levels by mother and father. From the data collected in this research it is not

possible to compare parents from different geographical areas in Australia, but this may be

a valuable endeavour in the future given the varying results in the international data.

Using data regarding median disposable income (MDI) from the *Organisation for*

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD: 2014), it was possible to consider the

income levels of Australian and American groups. The MDI takes into account international

differences in income and expenditure levels. It was observed that Australian home

educators and those from America had very similar rates of families in the less than MDI,

MDI to double MDI, and double the MDI groupings. As hypothesised it would appear that

the income data available for the two groups was very similar. Although, it was not possible

to statistically evaluate this data, it does add some support to the notion that home

educating parents in Australia and American have similar financial distributions.

Data from the IES (2013) reveals that home educating parents in America are

predominately white, although this trend appears to be declining from 77% in 2007 (IES,

2009) to 68% in 2011 (IES, 2013). The IES report also highlights that there is greater ethnic

diversity in the non-home educating community. In the current study there was a wide

range of ethnic diversity reported amongst parents who home educate in Australia.

However, they were predominately from Australian, English or European backgrounds, with

very limited representation of parents from Asian and Indian backgrounds despite these

being the third and fourth most frequently reported place of birth for all individuals in

Australia who were born overseas (ABS, 2012a). The responses pattern of this research also

supported Kunzman and Gaither (2013) observation that mothers are typically the

education providers in home educations settings. The pattern of parental marital status in

this sample also mirrored the very high rates of two parent families reported in the

American literature (e.g., Noel et al., 2013). The data from this study also found that, in comparison to the American data, less Australian parents (30% compared to 64%) cited religion as an important factor in their decision to home educate (Noel et al., 2013). This is a substantial difference and should be considered when comparing parents across cultures.

Given the results of this study there would appear to be some commonality in the demographic aspects of income, marital status and education provider between the American and Australian home educators. The differences in the areas of education and religion mean that any generalisations of American findings to Australian parents who home educate should be undertaken with caution. The reports of Kunzman and Gaither (2013) regarding the power of the religious right in the home education movement in America, do not appear relevant in the Australian context. Although, there were some parents who primarily home educated for religious reasons, they were a small minority. Concerns regarding the isolationism of parents who home educate in America and the links to survivalist groups (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013) also appears to be less of a concern in Australia. There are also cultural differences between the American and Australian education systems that make comparisons difficult. The American literature (e.g., Hodge & Vigo-Valentin, 2014) often highlights that there are poorly funded and violent inner city schools, and that some parents are home educating to avoid using this system. This is not the case for the vast majority of Australian parents. For these reasons, although similar in many ways, there are many demographical and cultural differences between parents who home educate in American and Australian to be considered quite distinct.

Psychological Wellbeing in Parents who Home Educate

In the absence of empirical investigation in the area, it was hypothesised that there would be no significant differences between the home education and comparison groups in the area of wellbeing. However, unexpectedly, there were a number of significant differences in a range of psychological domains. Compared to the comparison group, the home education group reported significantly lower levels of general stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and higher levels of quality of life in all areas except environmental. The home education group also reported significantly higher life satisfaction, perceived control and number of people they could rely on for social support. However, there were no significant differences in the areas of satisfaction with social support or optimism. Both groups displayed similar levels of family functioning and parenting practices. However, the home education group reported significantly more explanation and less obedience in their parenting interactions. Broadly, there was no significant difference in the overall worldview of the two groups. There were some differences at the subscale level, but these were not consistent, with each group reporting higher materialistic scores in different domains. The world view findings are interesting as they highlight that although there were some significant differences between the groups, the home education group was not less materialistic.

Wellbeing levels in parents who home educate and those who do not

While there has been some consideration of parental wellbeing in parents who home educate, most of these have been within a qualitative framework (e.g., Barrett-Peacock, 1997) or with specific populations within the broader home education group (e.g., Croft, 2013; Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). This study has considered the psychological wellbeing at a quantitative level with a large sample of home educating parents. Further, this group has

been compared to a group of parents who use schools as their primary educational tool. The key finding is that parents who home educate report significantly higher levels of wellbeing. Given the nature of this research it is not possible to conclude that it is their status as a home educating parent that has led to this result. Although there are differences in the way home educating parents spend their day (e.g., less paid work amongst mothers), longitudinal research is needed to probe this area more deeply. Given the range of significant findings it would appear that some aspect of being a parent who home educates results in reporting an increased level of wellbeing. It could be only parents with high levels of wellbeing decide to home educate, home educating or the activities involved lead to increased wellbeing or an as yet undiscovered indirect relationship. However, Musick et al., (2014) has suggested that a parent interacting with his/her child can lead to increased levels of wellbeing. However, this impact occurs only when the interaction is considered meaningful by the parent. They suggested that onerous tasks such as cooking and basic childcare did not promote increased wellbeing, whereas tasks such as play and leisure with children did. As Louis (2012) reports many mothers who home educate find it a meaningful and rewarding experience. Additionally, Thomas and Pattison (2007) detail how many parents turn "onerous" tasks into learning experiences. These factors may contribute to the finding that parents who home educate report significantly higher levels of wellbeing.

Empirically, little is known about the wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia. In America, Gray and Riley (2013) found that 41% of parents had internal conflicts about their decision to home educate. Louis (2012) reported that some mothers suffered from role strain and burnout due to their additional educational role. However, parents in Australian studies (e.g., Barratt-Peacock, 1999; Croft, 2013) report that family cohesion and

bonds with children are key benefits of home education. The Australian and American

findings would indicate that there are stressors and protective factors that may be specific

to parents who home educate their children. In relation to their reported levels of

wellbeing, parents in this study who home educated had significantly lower levels of stress,

anxiety, depressive symptoms, and perceived stress than the comparison group. They also

reported higher levels of quality of life in all areas except environmental quality of life when

compared to the comparison group. This would support the findings that suggest that it is

the positive aspects of cohesion and family connectedness that overcome parents' negative

aspects of home education (Barratt-Peacock, 1999; Croft, 2013). This is furthered supported

as this study found that the home education group reported higher life satisfaction,

perceived control and number of people they could rely on for social support. These findings

support Dedeaux's (2012) results highlighting the links between social support and

happiness in parents who home educate. It is important to note that in the current study

there was no significant difference in the level of satisfaction with their social support

between the home education and comparison group. The non-significant findings, relating

to differences between the groups in the area of environment quality of life (EQOL) would

suggest that parents in both groups experience a similar level of EQOL, in contrast to all

other areas of QOL investigated. It would appear that there is an important element in this

aspect of QOL that requires further investigation.

While there were a large number of significant differences, the non-significant results

for optimism and EQOL are important. They illustrate that parents who home educate do

not report higher levels of all aspects of wellbeing which might have been suggestive of

responding in a socially desirable manner. These two results may also provide insights into

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the areas that do hold some concern for parents who home educate, especially as they

reported significantly higher levels of other aspects of wellbeing. The EQOL considers

aspects of transport, health and safety in their living environment, financial security, and

time for leisure. This would indicate that the financial concerns that are often raised as an

issue (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Parsons & Lewis, 2010; Reilly et al., 2002), may be a major

worry for the home educating participants in this study. Issues regarding transport and living

arrangements which are linked to income appear to be more problematic than other

aspects of quality of life for parents who home educate. Merry and Howell (2009) suggest

that the types of activities and interactions that parents who home educate engage in may

also influence wellbeing. Further probing of these areas may also provide some insights into

the areas that these parents have decreased wellbeing. The home education and

comparison groups reported similar levels of optimism. This would indicate that despite the

other differences in wellbeing and the additional pressures that they face (Gray & Riley,

2013), parents who home educate have similar levels of positive expectations for the future

(Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994) as parents who do not home educate. These are new

findings in the home education context. Previous research has not examined the quality of

life or optimism of parents who home educate. The next section considers the family

characteristics of the two groups.

In relation to family characteristics the comparison and the home education groups

reported similar levels of family functioning and parenting practices. However, there were

significant differences at the subscale level. Home educating parents reported using

increased explanations in their interactions with their children. Given the amount of time

parents who home educate spend with their children and that these parents are using their

interactions with their children as learning processes these results are expected based on the findings of Barratt-Peacock (1997), and Thomas and Pattison (2007). Parents who home educate also reported less situations where they were having difficulties with their children's behaviour or wanting to improve their child's behaviour. This could be due to the increased interaction with their children or that over 30% of parents listed parenting a child with a social or emotional difficulty as a motivation for home educating. This would be consistent with Lois' (2012) qualitative findings. These results are the first empirical findings in relation to parents who home educate and highlight that these parents do face some additional challenges.

Finally, worldview was investigated to allow for an exploration of the broad life perspectives of the home education group in comparison to non-home educating parents. As has been highlighted, the origins of home education lie in the conservative right and the activist left (Gaither, 2008b). It was hoped that investigating the worldview of the two groups would allow for an exploration of these factors in this sample. This was primarily to observe if the home education samples reported extreme worldviews. The results of this study indicated that there was no significant difference in overall worldview between the comparison group and the home education group. Of the seven subtests, the home education group was found to be of a less materialistic worldview in three subtests. The comparison group was found to be of a less materialistic worldview in one subtest and the others revealed no significant differences. This would indicate that the home education group is a little less materialistic in some areas, but the overall conclusion is that they do not hold extreme worldviews in relation to the materialism – spirituality continuum. This would suggest that the strong views of the conservative right and the activist left highlighted in

Gaither (2008b), were not present in this study. Broadly, their parenting practices, family

functioning and world view do not appear to be significantly different from their non-home

educating peers. These findings illustrate, that as with the demographic findings in this

study, parents who home educate do not appear to be substantially different from their

non-home educating peers. However, longitudinal research is needed to consider the

ongoing levels of wellbeing in the parents who home educate, and if these findings are

sustained over the course of the child's education.

Relationships between stress and wellbeing

Using the Wallander and Varni (1998) model, this study compared the relationships

between sources of stress and wellbeing. This model posits that the impact of stress on

wellbeing is complex and, in addition to the direct relationships between the variables,

there are indirect pathways amongst the risk factors, protective factors, and risk processing

factors. This study has used this model as it allows for a range of simple and complex

relationships to be assessed. The model also allows for the direct predictive relationships

between stress and wellbeing to be compared between two groups. In this study,

moderation analysis was used to investigate if there was a different relationship between

sources of stress and measures of wellbeing. It considered if there was a different

relationship between stress and wellbeing for parents who home educate and those who do

not. In research using Hayes' (2013) moderation techniques (e.g., Grille, Schulte, & Kauffeld,

2015) significant moderations are typically reported as a range in which the moderator

interacts with the relationship between an independent variable and a dependant variable.

These concepts in the wellbeing literature are sometimes referred to as buffering effects

(e.g., Cohen, Janicki-Deverts, Turner, & Doyle, 2015). In the current study with a

dichotomous variable, the moderation analyses considers if there is a different relationship between the independent variable and the dependant variable in each of the conditions (home education or comparison group) (Hayes, 2013). The statistical procedure is the same for this kind of moderation, but it is interpreted differently. If there are significant differences, it is unlikely in the traditional sense, that home educating a child is a protective factor (buffering) in the relationship between stress and wellbeing (or a risk factor in relation to physical quality of life). It is more likely that there are a range of factors associated with being a parent who home educates that are contributing to the difference. It is also possible that only specific types of parents choose to home educate their children and this could also be a contributing factor to any differences between the groups. Taking into account these conditions, a consideration of the moderations found in this study is provided below.

Impact of education method on the relationship between stress and wellbeing

In light of the lack of research in the area it was hypothesised that the relationships between sources of stress and wellbeing would be the same for home educating and non-home educating parents. However, the results of this study found that there were a large number of significant differences in the relationship between stress and wellbeing based on whether the parent home educated or did not. This was indicated by the strength of the relationship between stress and wellbeing being different for the home education and comparison groups. Of the 32 stress and wellbeing moderation models that were tested, 15 revealed significant differences between parents who home educate and those who do not. The study found that there were moderator effects in the relationship between sources of stress and both anxiety and depression for all relationships tested.

This study found significant differences in the relationship between all four sources of stress and the wellbeing measures of anxiety and depressive symptoms. In both these sets of relationships, parents in the comparison group experienced higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms in the high stress condition than the home education group. The relationship between stress and wellbeing was significant for both groups, but it was stronger for the comparison group. As was detailed previously, the home educating group also had significantly lower mean levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. These findings would indicate that parents who home educate are reporting less stress and that the stress that they do experience is not impacting on their wellbeing to the same degree as parents who do not home educate. As expected, the relationships between stresses and wellbeing were in the direction reported by Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek (2010), however, parents who home educate reported less impact on their wellbeing. This may suggest that positive aspects of home education reported by Barrett-Peacock (1997) have a protective role on the negative impact of stress in parents home educating. The wellbeing of home educating parents is still impacted by stress, but to a lesser extent than for parents who do not home educate. This finding has not been reported before and if supported by future research suggests that there are differences in the way parents who home educate report and potentially experience stress.

It was found that the parent group, moderated the relationship between child temperament and the wellbeing variable of optimism and also moderated the relationship between family functioning and optimism. In both these relationships the negative aspects of problematic child behaviour or family functioning had a significantly stronger impact on the optimism of the comparison group. This is the first study to have found differences in

the impact of stress on wellbeing in parents who home educate and those that do not. This finding emphasises that the parents who home educate report less of an impact on their wellbeing from family sources of stress. Despite 30% of parents reporting that their primary or contributing motivation was educating a child with a social or emotional difficulty, it does not appear to be impacting their wellbeing. Further research is needed, especially considering Kidd and Kaczmarek's (2010) reports regarding the differences in outlook of parents who felt they chose to home educate as opposed to those who felt compelled. Future research could consider the differences in the relationship between stress and wellbeing between parents who home educate a child with a disability from an ideological perspective and those that feel that it is their last option.

This study used family functioning as a measure of stress. That is, when family functioning is low it has the potential to negatively impact on parental wellbeing. When using family functioning as a source of stress in the moderation analyses and parent group as a moderator a unique moderation were found. This was in the relationship between family functioning and psychological quality of life. The home education group initially reported that they had a significantly better psychological quality of life. The moderation analysis also revealed that the impact family functioning had on psychological health was significantly less in the home education group. That is, the impact of poor family functioning on wellbeing was stronger in the comparison group. Family functioning was having the negative impact on both groups, as suggested by Bögelsa and Brechman-Toussaintb (2006), but it was a weaker impact in the home education group. As was highlighted in Grey and Riley (2013) and the findings in Chapter 9, family bonds are one of the key motivations for parents to home educate and it has been found to be a positive aspect for many parents.

This may explain why the impact of family functioning is less in home educating parents. As the desire to build connections is part of what motivates parents to home educate, they may be more tolerant of differing forms of family cohesion and this leads to a reduced impact on their psychological health. However, as with many of the findings of this research, further investigation is needed to better understand these relationships, though they do suggest that parents who home educate do report reduce impact of sources of stress.

There were significant differences in the relationship between three measures of stress and physical quality of life. In contrast to the other findings in this study it was the home educating parents who reported an increased negative impact of stress on their physical quality of life. However, they did report higher levels of physical quality of life than the comparison group. There has been very little investigation into areas related to physical health of parents who home educate (e.g., Dedeaux, 2012; Uecker & Hill, 2014), and this does not provide any indication as to why the impact of stress on physical health is stronger in parents who home educate. Nor is it clear why, when in the other moderated relationships parents who home educate report a reduced impact of stress, in this aspect it impacts on them more strongly than the comparison group. Although further investigation is needed to validate the current findings, it is perhaps the heavy load of domestic, parenting, and education duties that leads to an increased physical load that is responsible for this finding. This would be consistent with the findings of Mugno et al., (2007) who reported that parents of children with a disability, who required physical assistance, had lower levels of quality of life. However, this does not clarify why it is only physical quality of life that is operating in this way for parents who home educate. Additional research is

needed as these are the first findings to consider this relationship and it would appear that

physical health is an area of particular importance for parents who home educate.

These findings, together with the differences in levels of psychological health and

wellbeing, indicate that parents who home educate their children self-report to have higher

levels of wellbeing and that the negative impact of stress on wellbeing is reduced when

compared to their non-home educating counterparts. However, in the area of physical

health the findings of this research suggest that it is parents who home educate who are

more susceptible to the impact of stress. In this domain, while reporting significantly higher

levels of quality of life, the parents who home educate report a greater impact of stress on

their wellbeing. From this research it is unclear if there is some aspect of home education

that leads to parents who home educate reporting higher levels of wellbeing, or if only

parents with higher levels of wellbeing decide to home educate. It would appear from the

pattern of results, that it is not a case of socially desirable reporting. This is the first

investigation into the impact of stress on wellbeing in parents who home educate and

replication is required to validate these findings. The current findings do highlight that

parents who home educate and those who do not, have similar relationships between stress

and wellbeing. It does appear from these findings that the strength of the relationship does

significantly differ with parents who home educate reporting a reduced impact of stress in

most domains. To further probe these differences, statistical mediation was used to

investigate patterns of stress processing.

Stress processing factors

The role of stress processing as conceptualised in the Wallander and Varni (1998) model

was also investigated in a number of mediation analyses to consider potential stress

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processing pathways. This form of analysis was used to further consider the differences and similarities in relationships between stress and wellbeing in parents who home educate and those who do not. As this is an exploration of a different set of underlying processes and pathways through the Wallander and Varni model, the variables in this analysis could be used in different ways. For example optimism was used as a measure of wellbeing in the previous model, but used as a mediator in the stress processing models. This is a common usage of optimism in similar models (e.g., Ekas, Lickenbrock & Whitman, 2010; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2003). In the context of this study investigating these relationships was strictly exploratory as no previous research has been undertaken in this area for parents who home educate; all findings are the first in the field. These analyses were conducted to examine if this was an area worthy of future research. In this context, rather than a statistical comparison, a separate mediation analysis is completed for each group and the results compared. If a significant mediated relationship was found in both parent groups, the same stress pathway through the model was said to exist for both groups. It was hypothesised that the stress processing pathways would be the same for the home education and non-home education groups.

Using mediation analysis the stress processing pathways of social support, optimism, and family functioning were explored in the home educating and comparison groups. This was undertaken to examine if both groups used the same stress processing pathways. The mediators were chosen as they involved perception of an external source (social support), an internal process (optimism), and a family variable (family functioning). It was hoped that these three variables would provide a sound basis for an initial exploratory investigation into stress processing of parents who home educate and those who do not.

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Both the family functioning and social support operated similarly as a stress processing factor in both the home education and comparison groups. That is, there were a number of similar significant mediated relationships using family functioning and social support as mediators between a range of stressors and wellbeing outcomes. This supports findings such as Xiaa, Dingc, Hollond, and Wan (2013) who found social support to be a mediating factor in the stress and wellbeing relationship, and Pedro, Ribeiro, and Shelton (2012) who found similar results using family variables in non-home educating populations.

When examining optimism as the mediator it significantly mediated a number of relationships in the comparison group. This is consistent with Black and Reynolds' findings regarding the relationship between perfectionism as a source of stress and wellbeing in non-home educating populations. However, optimism only mediated one relationship in the home education group. This would indicate that there is commonality in family and social domains, but differences in optimism as a stress processing variable in parents who home educate and those that do not. In the home education context, these findings are only exploratory and need substantially more empirical investigation.

These are the first findings to consider stress processing in home educating populations. The number of similar relationships in the family and social domains and the lack of them when considering optimism are important foundations for understanding these relationships in parents who home educate. More research is needed using other stress processors to compare these groups to examine what other variables show differences between home educating parents and those who do not. Further more specific research is needed into the mediating effect of optimism in home educating populations to explore the divergent results in this area.

Motivations to home educate

In addition to the demographic and wellbeing analyses this study also considered the motivations of parents to home educate. One of the few areas in home education that has been investigated in sufficient depth to have consistent findings is parental motivations. Van Galen (1988) was the first to publish the identification of the religious or ideological separation of home educators. She used the terms ideologues (to represent religious motivations) and pedagogues (to represent ideological motivations). Although, Spiegler (2010) has quite rightly suggested that any classification of motivations is potentially problematic, many studies have reported this dichotomy (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Increasingly there are reports of parents home educating their child with a disability or impairment, often because they feel their child's needs are not being met in the school system (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). This would appear to be a third distinct motivational group that is a relatively new in the Australian and international literature. This study investigated parents' primary and contributing motivations for choosing to home educate. Parents could select a single primary motivation and multiple contributing motivations.

Primary motivations

It was hypothesised the three leading primary motivations would be ideological, religious, and parenting children with a disability or impairment. However, there were relatively low levels of religious primary motivations (8%). This is in contrast to the findings of researchers who have highlighted the religious nature of their qualitative samples in Australia (e.g., Jackson, 2009) and America (e.g., Lois, 2012). However, the lower rate is consistent with Mazama and Lundy (2014) study of African American home educators. The most common primary motivation was ideological motivation of allowing a child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment, with almost 20% of participants

selecting this option. A desire to build family bonds the second most common with 12%.

These responses are consistent with the NSW Board of Studies (2000) findings on parental

motivation and support the range of responses provided in McHugh's (2003) report in

Queensland. Although, they were distributed across a number of different response options,

just over 16% of parents selected child disability or social/academic difficulties as their

primary motivation. This supports resent suggestions (e.g., Hurlbutt, 2011; Kidd &

Kaczmarek, 2010; Reilly, et al., 2002) that this is an important group to consider when

investigating home educating populations.

The findings of this study would suggest that the primary motivations of parents to

home educate in Australia are the reduced structure that this educational option provides,

increasing family bonds, and supporting a child with special learning or social needs. It

would appear that in an Australian context religion as the primary motivator for home

education is a relatively low motivator. Broadly these Australia wide findings are consistent

with the reports of previous State based education department research findings. However,

as Spiegler (2010), and Kunzman and Gaither (2013) have observed, using only primary

motivations is potentially problematic. If only the primary motivation is considered the

depth and complexity of a parent's decision to home educate can be lost. For example

parents who are religious and have a child with a learning difficulty cannot accurately report

both of these in a primary response. Therefore, to further investigate these issues, this

study also considered contributing motivations of parents to home educate.

Contributing motivations

Parents could select as many contributing motivations as they deemed relevant to their

situation. The most common contributing motivation was allowing the child to gain an

education with reduced peer group pressure (77%), yet it was the third most infrequently selected primary motivation. The next most popular contributing motivations were dissatisfaction with the social aspect of conventional schools and desire to build stronger family bonds, both of which had selection rates of over 70%. These were followed by dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools (66%), providing and education with reduced structure (59%) and dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools (47%). Religion was a contributing motivation in 23% of responses. When examining all of the motivations that relate to having a child with a disability or impairment, all had selection rates of over 15%. The two highest were desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties (27%) and desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties (29%). Based on these findings regarding contributing motivations it would suggest that in Australia, 23% of parents have some religious motivation to home educate and at least 29% have a child with learning or social/emotional difficulties if it is not their primary motivation.

The findings of this study in relation to primary and contributing motivations broadly support the work of NSW Board of Studies (2000) and McHugh's (2003) report in Queensland. The concern with the negative impact of peer pressure and bullying (46%), special needs/medical issues (15%), and religion (21%) in McHugh's finding are consistent with the findings of this study. However, there were no contributing motivations provided and only seven overall categories in the McHugh report. The findings of this study were less consistent with the NSW Board of Studies (2000). In their study 60% of parents chose not to respond to the motivation question or selected other, with only 5% selecting religion, 14% selecting special learning needs and 17% selecting philosophical motivations. However, as

both of these studies were conducted by, or for, education departments there may have

been some resistance from parents to respond. The current study went to great lengths in

the question phrasing and explanatory documents to detail that individual responses would

not be provided to education authorities. This would suggest that the responses in this

study are parent's genuine primary and contributing motivations.

When looking at the connections between primary and contributing motivations some

patterns began to emerge. Reduced structure, religion, and meeting the educational needs

of a child with a disability/difficulty were among the lowest ratios of primarily to

contributing motivations. This would indicate that if parents did not select them as primary

motivation they were less likely selected as a contributing reason. This supports Van Galen's

(1988) conceptualisation of divergent motivations of home educators. That is, if a parent

was primarily motivated to home educate for one of those three reasons, they were unlikely

to view the others as potential contributing motivations in their decision to home educate.

However, it is important to note that these motivations only made up 43% of primary

motivations, and the motivational patterns of other primary motivations were less clear. For

example, peer pressure was very rarely selected as a primary motivation (3%) but very

highly cited as a contributing motivation (77%). To further explore these patterns of

motivation, contributing motivations were considered in relation to their links to primary

motivations.

The results revealed apparent patterns of contributing motivations linked to primary

motivation. For example parents who selected dissatisfaction with social or academic aspect

of conventional schools and desire to build stronger family bonds as their primary

motivation, selected allowing the child to gain a religious education as a contributing

motivation in over 40% of cases. However, for those parents whose primary motivation was allowing the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment, dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools, individual learning or dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability, the rate for a religious contributing motivation was less than 15%. Conversely, those parents who selected religion or reduced peer pressure had very low rates of selecting reduced structure as a contributing motivation as compared to parents with primary motivations related to family bonds, children with social or emotional difficulties, or individual learning. There were also links between primary motivation of social/emotional difficulties and peer group pressure. Following on from this there were also high rates of selection of the contributing motivation of dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools when peer pressure was the primary motivation. This complex pattern of findings suggests that Spiegler (2010), and Kunzman and Gaither (2013) are correct in suggesting that the motivations for home education are complex. These original Australian findings suggest that educational professionals should carefully investigate parents' primary and contributing motivations. This is especially relevant if there are decision being made regarding the children who are being home educated. If parents have differing patterns of motivations their expectations and planned outcomes for their child's education may also differ.

Although there appears to be some consistency in parents whose primary motivations are religious, having a child with additional needs or desiring less structure, other primary motivations have substantially different motivational patterns. Therefore when working with parents who home educate, educational professionals should consider why parents are

home educating and what their desired outcomes, as reflected in their motivations, are in any service provision.

Distributions of motivations by home education method

In a final examination of parental motivations, this study considered the distribution of primary and secondary motivations by the method of home education employed. Analysis of this type has not been conducted in Australia or internationally previously. Therefore the findings in this area are completely new. Parents using structured home education methods reported the highest primary motivations in the areas of religion and dissatisfaction with the academic and social aspects of schools. The unstructured group reported the highest primary motivations in the areas of family bonds, providing an education without structure and dissatisfaction with a school's academic and social support for a child with a disability. The eclectic group reported the highest primary motivations in dissatisfaction with the cultural aspects of school, learning difficulties, and social and emotional difficulties. There were also clear progressions in selection rates from unstructured to eclectic to structured in the motivational areas of reduced structure, dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools, dissatisfaction with the support for children with a social or emotional difficulty and individual learning. These findings support the historical conceptualisations (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013) of parents on the left of the political spectrum home educating for ideological reasons and those on the right focusing on dissatisfaction and religion. However, they also support the suggestion (e.g., Reilly, 2002; 2004) that parents who home educate a child with a disability or impairment are doing so as an educational method of last resort and use the tools on offer to best meet the needs of their child.

The results of the contributing factors were less straightforward with some results conflicting with the primary motivations. Similar to the primary motivations, there are clear progressions from unstructured to eclectic to structured in the areas of religion, reduced structure and individual learning. However, there are differing relationships in other areas. In relation to the dissatisfaction with the social aspect of conventional schools, there was an inverse relationship when compared to the primary motivation, there was a declining trend from unstructured to structured. Also, the structured group was the most likely to select peer pressure as a primary motivation, yet they were the least likely to select it as contributing motivation. Given that this has been the first investigation of this type, additional research is needed. Not only is confirmatory research needed, but additional consideration and clarification of the motivational categories is warranted. As the first research into this area, these findings lay the foundations for future study in the motivational patterns of parents who home educate in Australia.

Limitations

The fundamental assumption that underlies all quantitative research is that the sample collected reflects the population of interest. The home education and comparison samples in this research reflect the home education population and a group of parents with children who attend schools and were collected in the same way. A large scale online data collection was undertaken with participants sought from every State and Territory in Australia. However, with so little known about parents who home educate in Australia it is difficult to evaluate the representativeness of the sample. The comparison sample was positively skewed for income and education as compared to the general population, which includes non-parents (ABS, 2013). This is not uncommon in questionnaire based research. Given the

range of significant findings in this study the characteristics of the comparison sample do not limit the generalisability of the home education findings. There is very little information in Australia regarding income and education levels for parents who home educate. The NSW Select Committee on Home Schooling (2014) reported that there was a diverse range of education and income levels in home educating parents, and the demographic characteristics of this sample are consistent with these findings.

This was the first time that many of the scales and constructs used in this questionnaire had been employed with a home educating sample. There was little evidence to support their use before the study was undertaken. The reliability of the scales is evident in the similarities of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients in both the home educating and comparison groups. Additionally, given the similarities found in the demographic characteristics and in the overall worldview of the two samples there is now some evidence that these scales are valid for use with parents who home educate.

There were limitations in the design of the questionnaire. Due to a technical error, parent age was not collected as part of the data collection process in the home education sample. Therefore it is unknown if parent age may have been a confounding factor. There were a number of categories in the motivations to home educate relating to dissatisfaction with traditional school and home educating a child with a disability or difficulty, whereas there was only one relating to religion and reduced structure. Many parents used the "other" option and provided their own repost to overcome this. It would have been ideal to have a similar number of responses relating to all options, but to gain insights into specific motivations the list used in the research was chosen. Future studies should consider the use

of additional motivational categories to provide an equal number of options to better capture parents' conceptualisations of their motivations.

There are a range of views in the literature regarding concerns about individual participant's accuracy in their self-report, especially in relation to health or closely held views (e.g., Bauhoff, 2011; Fisher & Katz, 2000). However, given the absence of one group exclusively providing higher scores, broad concerns about socially acceptable responding appear reduced. For example in the area of parenting practices, quality of life and worldview there were differing patterns of highest scores, significant and non-significant results, which highlights that it was not one group constantly reporting higher scores. Additionally the data collection was anonymous the research questions required parental self-perception which can be gleaned from self-reports. However, given the large number of significant differences this is still a potential area of concern and requires replication.

Future Research Directions

As Chapman and O'Donoghue (2000) highlighted 15 years ago, very little is known about parents who home educate in Australia. Through the research efforts of small groups of researchers (e.g., Allan & Jackson, 2010; Barratt-Peacock, 2003; Croft, 2013; English, 2013; Harding, 2011; Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Reilly, 2004), there is now some limited information available on home education in Australia. This study has built on these foundations to provide a comprehensive empirical overview of the demographic characteristics, wellbeing, and motivations of parents who home educate in Australia. However, there is still a great deal to be investigated and replicated, for example, further investigation into the wellbeing of specific groups within the home educating population. Given the significant differences found, additional investigations of pathways through the Wallander and Varni (1998) Risk

and Resistance Model between parents groups are warranted. Given the divergent results of optimism as a stress processor and the unexpected impact of stress on physical wellbeing in parents who home educate, these are areas that should be probed further. There is also need for further study into children who are home educated and whether the wellbeing differences found in parents are mirrored in this group. Further research into the patterns of primary and contributing motivations is also needed. More specific findings such as the non-significant results in the environmental quality of life and the greater influence of stress on reduction in physical wellbeing may provide additional insights. In a field that is of such interest to the public, academics, policy makers, and parents it is vital that the multitude of topics in home education research that have not yet been explored are investigated thoroughly. It is only through this process that appropriate service provision and governance can occur from an empirically informed position. This study has also shown that if appropriate research conditions are in place, parents who home educate will take the time to complete extensive research tasks.

Parents who home educate in Australia

This study found that while there were some significant differences in the demographic characteristics and levels of wellbeing, broadly the home education and comparison groups shared a great deal of similarity. Although they were not significantly different from the comparison group, mothers who home educate were found to be highly educated. They also have very low workforce participation rates. Using the underlying structure of Wallander and Varni (1998) framework to explore the direct and indirect relationships between stress and wellbeing, this study has compared the relationships between sources of stress and wellbeing in a group of parents who home educate and a group who do not.

The results of this study have highlighted that there are significant differences in the psychological wellbeing of the home educating parents when compared to a similar group of non-home educating parents. Given the pattern of these results and the statistical precautions taken, it would appear that these are genuine differences between the groups. However, the causes of these differences could not be established from this cross sectional study. There were also a number of significant differences in the relationships between stress and wellbeing between the comparison and the home education groups. In all comparisons the relationships between stress and wellbeing were in the expected direction for both groups. Except in the area of physical health, parents who home educate reported less of a negative impact of stress on their wellbeing. Both parenting groups displayed similar stress processing pathways in the areas of family functioning and social support. However, there were differences between the groups in the stress processing factor of optimism.

These results need to be considered by researchers, education experts and policy makers. To date, these are the most comprehensive research findings on parents who home educate in Australia. The wellbeing results lead to only three plausible conclusions. Either only extremely psychologically healthy parents choose to home educate (or participate in research), home education has a positive impact on parental wellbeing, or this sample is not representative of the home education population in Australia. The last of these options seems the least likely. Given the available data, the 231 participants in this study represent around 1% of all home educating families in Australia, a far higher representative sample than is typically used in this type of research. Even if it were not considered to be a representative sample, comparing their results to the sample of non-home educating

parents used in this study, who were recruited in the same way, the home educating

parents report significantly higher levels of wellbeing and a reduced negative impact of

stress on wellbeing. Further research is needed to investigate if it is only well adjusted

parents who decide to home educate of if there is some aspect of the home education

process that positively influences wellbeing. Although, even if it is only parents with high

levels of wellbeing who decide to home educate, the results of this study indicate that the

home education process does not erode these high level of wellbeing. However, further

research is needed to support these findings and investigate these areas.

The study has also highlighted that in Australia there appear to be three quite distinct

primary motivations for parents to home educate. However, they only account for 43% of

parents who choose this educational option. These results suggest that while there are

some commonalities, such as concerns about peer pressure, in parental motivations for

home education there are also differences. Parents reporting religious, reduced structure or

child disability/impairment as their primary motivation appear to be clear subsets. The

additional 67% appear to be less rigid in their primary and contributing motivations. Future

research and policy may need to consider what, if any, these differences have on policy,

governance and service provision.

Despite the stereotypes of home education in the media, the empirical evidence from

this study suggests that they are a very broad group with a range of motivations in their

decision to home educate. It would appear from this research that they are well educated,

have one parent focusing of child education, have high-levels of wellbeing, and are more

resilient to stress. For many of these parents home education appears to be a choice that

they make about their child's educational and developmental needs. Given the diversity of

the sample, it is strongly recommended that policy makers, researchers and service

providers do not consider this group as a single entity. Rather they should be considered a

diverse group of typical parents who have decided to take a different approach to their

child's education.

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Appendix A

Ethics approvals and explanatory statements

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research office**:** Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**7 February 2013**
Project Number:	**CF12/3433 - 2012001672**
Project Title:	**The wellbeing of families who home educate in Australia**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Louise McLean**
Approved:	**From 7 February 2013 to 7 February 2018**

Terms of approval

1.   Monash Human Research Ethics Committee approved a waiver of consent for this research under Section 2.3.6 of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.*
2.   The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
3.   Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
4.   It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
5.   You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
6.   The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
7.   **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
8.   **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
9.   **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
10. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
11. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
12. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny Chair, MUHREC

cc: Prof Dennis Moore; Mr Nicholas Gamble

MONASH University

Title: The wellbeing of families who home educate in Australia

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Mr. Nicholas Gamble, a PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr. Louise McLean and Professor Dennis Moore from the Faculty of Education, Monash University, is conducting a research project that explores wellbeing and demographic factors of parents who home educate (homeschool) their children. This research aims to develop a better understanding of home education and the families that are engaging in it throughout Australia. This means that student researcher will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a book and that the research team will write several reports each the length of a magazine article in relation to home education.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are either a parent that home educates your child, or you are the parent of a child who attends regular schooling who will act as a comparison group.

The aim of this research is to identify parental concerns, expectations, perceptions of support, child behaviour and strategies for managing everyday life. Further, to see if there are any differences in wellbeing between parents using different home education methods or differences in wellbeing between parents who home educate their children and those that are involved in school based education. It is hoped that identification of these factors will facilitate the development of programs that improve wellbeing for all parents and to gain an understanding of any differences that exist between the parent groups. It is also hoped that by comparing the wellbeing and demographic details of parents who engage in different methods of education with their children, a better understanding of the relationship between Australian parents and international research on the topic of home education can be established.

Although you will not benefit directly from participation in this research project, it is anticipated that the study findings will help parents by identifying potential targets for services that will assist them. Further, it is hoped that a greater understanding of the demographic profile and wellbeing of parents who home educate their children in Australia can be developed. It is anticipated that through this process both home educating and traditionally educating families will benefit from the information gained about the wellbeing and demographic make-up of families engaging in a wide variety of educational methods in

Australia. Through this greater understanding more efficient and effective interventions can be developed for all parents.

Participation in this research involves completing a self-report questionnaire that asks about your expectations, concerns, support network, child's behaviour and the strategies you use to manage everyday life. The online questionnaire should take about 60 minutes to complete and can be done at a time that is convenient to you.

It is not anticipated that you will experience any inconvenience or discomfort when completing the questionnaire. However, sometimes reflecting upon your experiences can bring up emotions such as sadness and grief. Usually these feelings are transient. If they become overwhelming and you wish to talk about them you may call Lifeline (24 hours) ████████

No payment or reward, financial or otherwise, will be offered for participation in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, please complete the online questionnaire at www.HomeEdResearch.com. The questionnaire is completely anonymous. No responses of any kind will be forwarded to any government agency.

If you feel that taking part in this research would be inappropriate for any reason, whether for cultural or personal reasons, we ask that you decline to take part in the study. You can withdraw from the study at any time by not returning the questionnaire. Your may also choose not to answer some of the questions.

No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. Since data must be stored for at least five years according to university regulations, all questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Krongold Building, Monash University. Only the research team will have access to the files.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Dr. Louise McLean ████████████████████████████ or Mr Nicholas Gamble ████████████ ██████████████████ . Alternatively you can monitor the www.HomeEdResearch.com website or follow @HomeEdResearch on twitter as the study results will be presented there also.

If you would like to contact the researchers **about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigators:**	If you have a complaint **concerning the manner in which this research** (Project Number:) **is being conducted, please contact:**

Mr. Nicholas Gamble ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **Dr. Louise McLean** ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **Prof. Dennis Moore** ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮	**Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics** **Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee** **(MUHREC)** **Building 3e Room 111** **Research Office** **Monash University VIC 3800** ▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮

Thank you.

Mr. Nicholas Gamble   Dr. Louise McLean   Prof. Dennis Moore

MONASH University

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**6 June 2011**
Project Number:	**CF11/0882 - 2011000448**
Project Title:	**Resilience in parents of secondary school aged children in Australia**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Louise McLean**
Approved:	**From: 6 June 2011 To: 6 June 2016**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Jocelynne Gordon, Mr Nicholas Gamble, Mr Nic Serpesedes, Ms Cassie Hudson, Ms Suzanne Turley, Ms Electra Stathopoulos, Mr Scott Pendlebury, Ms Holly Rominov, Ms Nicole Varigos, Ms Min Li

MONASH University

Title: Resilience in Parents of Secondary School Aged Children

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Louise McLean, Dr. Jocelynne Gordon & Mr. Nicholas Gamble, Lecturers, from the Faculty of Education, Monash University, are conducting a research project that explores factors related to well-being in parents of school aged children. Students under their supervision who are enrolled in the Master of Psychology or the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology are also part of their research team. This means that each student will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a short book and that the research team will write several reports each the length of a magazine article.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are the parent of a secondary school aged child.

The aim of this research is to identify parental concerns, expectations, perceptions of support, child behaviour and strategies for managing everyday life. It is hoped that identification of these factors will facilitate the development of programs that improve well-being for parents of secondary school aged children.

Although you will not benefit directly from participation in this research project, it is anticipated that the study findings will help future parents of secondary school aged children by identifying potential targets for interventions.

Participation in this research involves completing a self-report questionnaire that asks about your expectations, concerns, support network, child's behaviour and the strategies you use to manage everyday life. The questionnaire should take about 60 minutes to complete and can be done at a time that is convenient to you.

It is not anticipated that you will experience any inconvenience or discomfort when completing the questionnaire. However, sometimes reflecting upon your experiences can

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bring up emotions such as sadness and grief. Usually these feelings are transient. If they become overwhelming and you wish to talk about them you may call Lifeline (24 hours) ▉ ▉ .

No payment or reward, financial or otherwise, will be offered for participation in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, please complete the questionnaire and return it to the University in the reply paid envelope. The questionnaire is anonymous.

If you feel that taking part in this research would be inappropriate for any reason, whether for cultural or personal reasons, we ask that you decline to take part in the study. You can withdraw from the study at any time by not returning the questionnaire. Your may also choose not to answer some of the questions.

No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. Since data must be stored for at least five years according to university regulations, all questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Krongold Building, Monash University. Only the research supervisors will have access to the files.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Dr. Louise McLean ▉

Thank you.

Dr. Louise McLean   Dr. Jocelynne Gordon   Mr. Nicholas Gamble

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigators:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research (Project Number:) is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Louise McLean ▉ **Dr. Jocelynne Gordon** ▉ **Mr. Nicholas Gamble** ▉ il:	**Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics** **Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)** **Building 3e Room 111** **Research Office** **Monash University VIC 3800** ▉

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 15 June 2010

Project Number: CF10/0921– 2010000463

Project Title: Resilience in parents of primary school aged children in Australia

Chief Investigator: Dr Louise McLean

Approved: From: 15 June 2010   To: 15 June 2015

Terms of approval

1.   The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
2.   Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3.   It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4.   You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
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8.   **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9.   **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

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Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Jocelynne Gordon, Mr Nicholas Gamble, Ms Ebonie Stewart, Mr Paul McKenna, Ms toni
        Roberts, Ms Rebecca Rodgers, Ms Catherine Morey-Nase, Ms Antonietta Sanfillipo, Ms
        Shanthini
        Sritharan, Ms Megan Kenny, Ms Jane Louise Hughes, Ms Kirsty Moore, Ms Jessica Bastiani,
        Mr Jonathan Best, Ms Eleanor Baptist

MONASH University

Explanatory Statement

Title: **Resilience in Parents of School Aged Children**

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Louise McLean, Dr. Jocelynne Gordon & Mr. Nicholas Gamble, Lecturers, from the Faculty of Education, Monash University, are conducting a research project that explores factors related to well-being in parents of school aged children. Students under their supervision who are enrolled in the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology are also part of their research team. This means that each student will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a short book and that the research team will write several reports each the length of a magazine article.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are the parent of a school aged child.

The aim of this research is to identify parental concerns, expectations, perceptions of support, child behaviour and strategies for managing everyday life. It is hoped that identification of these factors will facilitate the development of interventions that improve well-being for parents of school aged children.

Although you will not benefit directly from participation in this research project, it is anticipated that the study findings will help future parents of school aged children by identifying potential targets for intervention.

Participation in this research involves completing a self-report questionnaire that asks about your expectations, concerns, support network, child's behaviour and the strategies you use to manage everyday life. The questionnaire should take about 60 minutes to complete and can be done at a time that is convenient to you.

It is not anticipated that you will experience any inconvenience or discomfort when completing the questionnaire. However, sometimes reflecting upon your experiences can bring up

emotions such as sadness and grief. Usually these feelings are transient. If they become overwhelming and you wish to talk about them you may call Lifeline (24 hours) ██████ .

No payment or reward, financial or otherwise, will be offered for participation in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, please complete the questionnaire and return it to the University in the reply paid envelope. The questionnaire is anonymous.

You can withdraw from the study at any time by not returning the questionnaire. Your may also choose not to answer some of the questions.

No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. Since data must be stored for at least five years according to university regulations, all questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Krongold Building, Monash University. Only the research supervisors will have access to the files.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Dr. Louise McLean ████████████████████████████████████

If you would like to contact the **researchers** about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigators:	If you have a **complaint** concerning the manner in which this research **(Project Number:)** is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Louise McLean ████████████ ███ ████████████████████ **Dr. Jocelynne Gordon** Mr. Nicholas Gamble ████████████	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 ████████████ ████████ ████████████████████

Email:	

Thank you.

Dr. Louise McLean   Dr. Jocelynne Gordon   Mr. Nicholas Gamble

Appendix B

Questionnaires

The wellbeing of parents who home educate in Australia

A Research Project Conducted by Mr. Nicholas Gamble under the supervision of Dr. Louise McLean & Professor Dennis Moore, Monash University.

If you require further information about this project, please contact Mr. Nicholas Gamble ███████████████████████████████████ or Dr. Louise McLean █ ████████████████████████████████████ .

###Please note: In the online version, the questionnaire is more streamlined with some questions only being displayed if the participant has previously provided information indicating that they meet the criteria for the question's relevance.

Background Details

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Sex: Male   Female

2. Age: _____ (in years)

3. Marital status: a) married   b) living with partner

c) sole parent   d) Blended family (Step children living in the home)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(a) Primary School   (b) Secondary School   (c) Trade/TAFE

(d) University Degree   e) University Postgraduate degree

5. If you have a partner what is their highest level of education completed?

(a) Primary School   (b) Secondary School   (c) Trade/TAFE

(d) University Degree   e) University Postgraduate degree

6. If any, approximately how many hours of paid work do you per week?

_____ hours

7. If any, approximately how many hours of paid work does your partner do per week?

_____ hours

8. If you are employed, what broad category of employment are you involved in?

_____

9. If you have a partner and they are employed, what broad category of employment are they involved in?

_____

10. Please circle one of the following categories to indicate your yearly **household** income before tax

a) less than $20,000   b) $20,000 to $40,000   c) $40,001 to $60,000

d) $60,001 to $80,000   e) $ 80,001 to $100,000   f) $100,001-150,000

g) above $150,000

11. How many children do you have?   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

12. Age and gender of your children (e.g. 5m for a 5 year old male):

Child 1___Child 2___Child 3___Child 4___Child 5___Child 6___ Child 7___Child 8___ Child 9___

Child 10___ Child 11___ Child 12___ Child 13___ Child 14___ Child 15___

13. What is your nationality?

_____

14. What do you consider your ethnic heritage?

_____

15. If you have a partner have they completed this questionnaire? (We would encourage both parents to complete an individual questionnaire. However, to assist in population estimations it would be useful if you could tell us if you believe your partner has completed the questionnaire)

Yes   No

The following question(s) will ask you about the way your children are educated:

Do you home educate / homeschool one or more of your children? That is, do you as a parent choose to primarily educate your child at home rather than your child attending a government, independent or religious school on a full time basis? Please ciricle.

Yes

No

Do any of your children attend a government, independent or religious schools?
If so what is the primary reason for the differing education methods of your children?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the primary reason you decided to home educate / homeschool your child(ren)? (Please circle one only)

Allow the child to gain a religious education
Allow the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure
Allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment
Dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability
Dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability
Desire to build stronger family bonds
Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities
Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties
Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties

Which of the following contributed to you decision to home educate / homeschool your child(red). Please circle any that are relevant:

Allow the child to gain a religious education
Allow the child to gain an education with reduced peer group pressure
Allow the child to gain an education without the structure of a school environment
Dissatisfaction with social aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with academic aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with cultural aspect of conventional schools
Dissatisfaction with conventional school's social support for a child with a disability
Dissatisfaction with conventional school's academic support for a child with a disability
Desire to build stronger family bonds
Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with advanced academic abilities

Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with learning difficulties
Desire to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a child with social/emotional difficulties

In the last six months which of the following activities has your home educated child engaged in? There is no limit to the number of activities that you can select. (Please circle):

Unstructured time at the library
Structured activities at a library
Played an individual sport
Played a team sport with home educated/homeschooled children
Played a team sport with non-home educated/homeschooled children
Attended a guided tour of a factory/facility
Attended a zoo/nature park
Attended an unstructured play day with other home educated/homeschooled children
Attended an unstructured play day with other non-home educated/homeschooled children
Attended a structured play day with other home educated/homeschooled children
Attended a structured play day with other non-home educated/homeschooled children
Read for pleasure
Joined an educational Facebook group
Gardened with parents/family
Attended a home education/homeschooling support/play/education group
Attended classes at a community/local government centre (e.g. music, cookery)
Attended a TAFE/Adult education or other formal training/education course
Joined / Subscribed to an organisation (e.g. religious/social/environmental humanitarian)
Learnt a language other than English

Are there any other types of activities that your child(ren) has engaged in that you would like to include?
_____
_____

Have you used any of the following activities as learning tools with your child in the last month? (E.g. using shopping as a tool for developing numeracy or attending an exhibit or museum to develop knowledge of history or geography). Please circle any that are relevant:
Shopping
Local travel
Interstate travel
International travel
Board games
Card games
Cooking
Pets
Gardening
Attending a library
Attending a museum
Attending a historical landmark
Attending a centre of religious worship
Attending a historical religious landmark
Visiting a forest

Visiting a beach
Visiting a business/factory/workplace
Visiting a public works (e.g. water treatment plant or recycling centre)
The child(ren) earning pocket money for do household jobs
The child(ren) involved in money making venture (e.g. mowing lawns, selling chickens/eggs)

Are there any other activities that you have used as learning experience that you would like to include?

_____
_____

In the last six months which of the following educational materials/tools have you used with your home educated child(ren)? There is no limit to the number of activities that you can select.

Used a textbook
Used a qualified teacher or tutor for a subject
Used a qualified teacher or tutor for some subjects
Used a qualified teacher or tutor for most/all subjects
Used an online course for a subject
Used an online course for some subjects
Used an online course for most/all subjects
Used a computer program for a subject
Used a computer program for some subjects
Used a computer program for most/all subjects
Used a home-made workbook
Used a commercial workbook
Used a purchased curriculum
Used a personally developed curriculum
Used readers or structured reading program
Used download/purchased worksheets

Used a language program
Used a language program (for languages other than English)
Used education apps on smartphone / tablet computer

Are there any other types of materials that you have used with your child(ren) that you would like to include?

_____

_____

_____

If your home educated children use social media (Facebook, twitter, forums, SMS, discussion groups, etc), what do you consider they use it for (please select all that are relevant)?:

Educational activities
Entertainment

Socialisation
Keeping in touch with friends and family
Keeping in touch with friends and family who are overseas
Playing games
Procrastination
Receiving information
Creating information
Exchange of positive ideas
Exchange of negative ideas
Following celebrities / sports people
Following reporters / Academics
They do not use social media

How would you describe your method of educating your children at home? (Please select one only)

Structured: using a formal curriculum/work books that you have developed or purchased
Unstructured: unschoolng / natural learning. No formal curriculum used and limited use of formal materials

Eclectic: some aspects of each method

Overall, considering all of your children and subject areas, do you engage in more structured or unstructured educational activities? Please use the slider below to indicate where you think your education style lies on the range (there is no wrong or right answer)

Unstructured			about 50% of each method		Structured	

Have you registered with your State / Territory department board of studies to home educate yourchild(ren)? You can leave this question black if you prefer not to provide any answer.

If you do provide an answer, your individual response will not be provided to any Government organisation. There is no way for this information to be linked to you as this questionnaire does not collect any personally identifiable information. If you choose to answer this question it will help us in estimating the actual numbers of families home educating/homeschooling in Australia, we currently only have limited estimations.

Yes
No
No comment
Or leave blank

If you would like to provide any more information on why you have/haven't registered to home educate / homeschool your child(ren), please do so in the box below.

_____
_____

The following questions are about your family and will help us understand your family situation.

If you have a child aged between **4 and 12 years of age** please complete the following question for the oldest child in that age range. If you do not have a child aged between 4-12 please skip this question.

The following questions are about your child's general personality and behaviour. Please answer these questions in relation to your *oldest* child aged 4-12 years.

For each question choose from the following alternatives which best describes your child at the present time. Please tick the box that best represents your child.

		Almost never	Not often	Variable usually does not	Variable usually does	Frequently	Almost Always
1.	My child is shy with strange adults.						
2.	When my child starts a project such as a puzzle or model, he/she works on it without stopping until it is completed, even if it takes a long time.						
3.	If my child wants a toy or sweet while shopping, he/she will easily accept something else instead.						
4.	My child is shy when first meeting new children.						
5.	My child likes to complete one task or activity before going onto the next.						
6.	When my child is angry about something, it is difficult to side/track him/her.						
7.	When in a park or visiting, my child will go up to strange children and join in their play.						
8.	My child stays with an activity (eg puzzle, construction kit, reading) for a long time.						
9.	When shopping together, if I do not buy what the child wants (eg sweets, clothing), he/she cries and yells.						
10.	When unknown adults visit our home, my child is immediately friendly and approaches them.						
11.	If my child is upset, it is hard to comfort him/her.						
12.	When a toy or game is difficult, my child quickly turns to another activity.						

Short Temperament Scale for Children (STSC): Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D. & Oberklaid, F. (2000) *Pathways from infancy to adolescence: Australian Temperament Project 1983 - 2000* Melbourne Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The following statements are about families. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best describes how you feel about your family.

0 = never   1 = hardly   2 = some of the time   3 = almost always   4 = always

1. ____ I am satisfied that I can turn to my family for help when something is troubling me.

2. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family talks over things with me and shares problems with me.

3. ____ I am satisfied that my family accepts and supports my wishes to take on new activities or directions.

4. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family expresses affection and responds to my emotion, such as anger, sorrow or love.

5. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family and I share time together.

Family Functioning: Smilkstein, G., Ashworth, C, & Montano, D. (1982). Validity and reliabilty of the family APGAR as a test of family functioning. *Journal of Family Practice, 15,* 303-311.

About you…

Please read through the following statements and decide how much you either agree or disagree with each. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

1. _____In uncertain times I usually expect the best.

2. _____If something can go wrong for me it will.

3. _____I'm always optimistic about my future.

4. _____I hardly ever expect things to go my way.

5. _____Overall I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

6. _____I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Optimism: Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the life orientation test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 1024-1040.

The following questions ask how you feel about your quality of life, health, & other areas of your life. Please keep in mind your standards, hopes, pleasures and concerns. We ask that you think about your life in the **last two weeks.**

Circle the response that best represents your answer to each question.

		Very poor	Poor	Neither Poor nor Good	Good	Very Good
1.	How would you rate your quality of life?	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
2.	How satisfied are you with your health?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions ask about how much you have experienced certain things in the **last two weeks.**

		Not at all	A Small amount	A Moderate amount	A great deal	An Extreme amount
3.	To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
5.	How much do you enjoy life?	1	2	3	4	5
6.	To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	1	2	3	4	5

		Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
7.	How well are you able to concentrate?	1	2	3	4	5
8.	How safe do you feel in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
9.	How healthy is your physical environment?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	To a great extent	Completely
10. Do you have enough energy for every day life?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Have you enough money to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
13. How available to you is the information you need in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
14. To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
15. How well are you able to get around physically?	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
16. How satisfied are you with your sleep?	1	2	3	4	5
17. How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?	1	2	3	4	5
18. How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	1	2	3	4	5
19. How satisfied are you with yourself?	1	2	3	4	5
20. How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	1	2	3	4	5
21. How satisfied are you with your sex life?	1	2	3	4	5
22. How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
23. How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	1	2	3	4	5
24. How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	1	2	3	4	5
25. How satisfied are you with your transport?	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
26. How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?	1	2	3	4	5

Murphy, B., Herrman, H., Hawthorne, G., Pinzone, T., & Evert, H. (2000). *Australian WHOQOL instruments: User's manual and interpretation guide*. Melbourne: Australian WHOQOL Field Study Centre.

These questions ask about being a parent or step-parent. If you have a child aged **4-12 years**, please answer these questions in relation to your *youngest* child aged 4-12 years. There are no right or wrong answers, we are just asking about parents' views on child-rearing. If you do not have a child aged 4-12 please skip this set of questions

For each question choose from the following alternatives. Write the number (1 to 5) in the space provided next to each question.

Never/				**Always/**
almost never	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**almost always**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

		You response
1.	How often do you express affection by hugging, kissing and holding your child?	_____
2.	How often do you hug or hold your child for no particular reason?	_____
3.	How often do you explain to your child why he/she is being corrected?	_____
4.	How often do you tell your child how happy he/she makes you?	_____
5.	How often do you talk it over and reason with your child when he/she misbehaves?	_____
6.	How often do you have warm, close times together with your child?	_____
7.	How often do you listen to your child and do things with him/her?	_____
8.	How often do you feel close to your child both when he/she is happy and when he/she is upset?	_____
9.	How often do you feel you are having problems managing your child in general?	_____
10.	How often is your child able to get out of punishment when he/she really sets his/her mind to it?	_____
11.	When you discipline your child, how often does he/she ignore the punishment?	_____

Child Rearing Questionnaire (CRQ): Paterson, G. & Sarason, A. (1999). The association of behavioural adjustment to temperament, parenting and family characteristics among 5 year old children. *Social Development, 8,* 293 – 309.

The questions in this section ask about your feelings during the _last few weeks._ In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather indicate the alternative (given below) that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each question choose from the following alternatives. Write the number (0 to 4) in the space provided next to each question.

never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often
0	1	2	3	4

1. ____How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

2. ____How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

3. ____How often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?

4. ____How often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?

5. ____How often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?

6. ____How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

7. ____How often have you felt that things were going your way?

8. ____How often have you felt that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

9. ____How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

10. ____How often have you felt that you were on top of things?

11. ____How often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside your control?

12. ____How often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?

13. ____How often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?

14. ____How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Perceived Stress: Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, **24, 385-396.**

These statements refer to your feelings, thoughts and behaviour. Using the scale provided, decide how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Next to each statement write the number that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree 1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

1. _____ I don't have much control over my emotional reactions to stressful situations.

2. _____ When I'm in a bad mood I find it hard to snap myself out of it.

3. _____ My feelings are usually fairly stable.

4. _____ I can usually talk myself out of feeling bad.

5. _____ No matter what happens to me in my life I am confident of my ability to cope emotionally.

6. _____ I have a number of good techniques that will help me cope with any stressful situation.

7. _____ I find it hard to stop myself from thinking about my problems.

8. _____ If I start to worry about something I can usually distract myself and think about something nicer.

9. _____ If I realise I am thinking silly thoughts I can usually stop myself.

10. _____ I am usually able to keep my thoughts under control.

11. _____ I imagine there will be many situations in the future where silly thoughts will get the better of me.

12. _____ I have a number of techniques which I am confident will help me think clearly and rationally in any situation I might find myself.

13. _____ Even when under pressure I can usually keep calm and relaxed.

14. _____ I have a number of techniques or tricks that I use to stay relaxed in stressful situations.

15. _____ When I'm anxious or uptight there does not seem to be much that I can do to help myself relax.

16. _____ There is not much I can do to relax when I get uptight.

17. _____ I have a number of ways of relaxing that I am confident will help me cope.

18. _____ If my stress levels get too high I know there are things I can do to help myself.

PCOISS: Pallant, J. F. (2000). Development and validation of a scale to measure perceived control of internal states. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 75,* 308–337

The following questions ask you about people in your environment who provide you with help or support.

For *each* of the types of support listed indicate:

(a) **how <u>many</u>** people you can count on to give you this type of support

and

(b) **how <u>satisfied</u>** you are with the level of support you have. Using the scale provided put a number from 1 to 6 to indicate your satisfaction.

very dissatisfied   1   2   3   4   5   6   very satisfied

	(a) How many people can you count on for this type of support	(b) Using the scale provided, please rate how satisfied you are with the support you have
1. To distract you from your worries when you feel under stress.		
2. To help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense.		
3. To accept you totally, including both your worst and best points.		
4. To care about you, regardless of what is happening to you.		
5. To help you feel better when you are feeling down in-the-dumps.		
6. To console you when you are upset.		

Social Support: Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., Shearin, E. N., & Pierce, G. R. (1987). A brief measure of social support: Practical and theoretical implications. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 4,* 497–510

These questions ask about your overall satisfaction with your life. Please read each statement and indicate your agreement or disagreement by writing a number from 1 to 7 on each line.

Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Agree

1. _____In most ways my life is close to ideal.
2. _____The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. _____I am satisfied with my life.
4. _____So far I have got the important things I want in life.
5. _____If I could live my life again, I would change almost nothing.

Life Satisfaction: Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71-75.

Please read each statement and indicate how much the statement applied to you *over the past week*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement. Use the response choices below.

0 = Did not apply to me at all

1 = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

2 = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time

3 = Applied to me very much, or most of the time

1._____   I found it hard to wind down

2._____   I was aware of dryness of my mouth

3._____   I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

4._____   I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

5._____   I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

6._____   I tended to over-react to situations

7._____   I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)

8._____   I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

9._____   I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself

10.____   I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

11.____   I found myself getting agitated

12.____   I found it difficult to relax

13.____   I felt down-hearted and blue

14.____   I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing

15.____   I felt I was close to panic

16.____   I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

17.____   I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

18.____   I felt that I was rather touchy

19.____   I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)

20.____   I felt scared without any good reason

21.____   I felt that life was meaningless

Directions: Answer each question as honestly as you possibly can by circling the response that best reflects your agreement or disagreement with each item. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond honestly. Provide **only one response** to each item.

| 21 | Spirit is the fundamental connection between all things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Obasi, E.M., Flores, L.Y., James-Myers, L. Construction and Initial Validation of the Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS). *Journal of Black Studies, 20,* 1-25.

Please read each statement below and indicate how much you agree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

		Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am happy in my role as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5
2	There is little or nothing I wouldn't do for my child(ren) if it was necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Caring for my child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I sometimes worry whether I am doing enough for my child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel close to my child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5
6	I enjoy spending time with my child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5
7	My child(ren) is (are) an important source of affection for me.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Having children gives me a more certain and optimistic view for the future.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The major source of stress in my life is my child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5
10	Having children leaves little time and flexibility in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Having children has been a financial burden.	1	2	3	4	5
12	It is difficult to balance different responsibilities because of my children.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The behavior of my child(ren) is often embarrassing or stressful to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14	If I had it to do over again, I might decide not to have children.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of being a parent.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Having children has meant having too few choices and too little control over my life	1	2	3	4	5
17	I am satisfied as a parent	1	2	3	4	5
18	I find my child(ren) enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am happy in my role as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5

Berry, J.O., & Jones,W.H. (1995). The parental Stress Scale: Initial psychometric evidence.

Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12, 463–472

Being A Parent – Mother

Listed below are a number of statements. If you are a mother, please respond to each item, indicating your agreement or disagreement with each statement in the following manner.

If you strongly agree, circle the letters SA
If you agree, circle the letter A
If you mildly agree, circle the letters MA
If you mildly disagree, circle the letter MD
If you disagree, circle the letter D
If you strongly disagree, circle the letter SD

1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.   SA A MA MD D SD

2. Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her Present age.   SA A MA MD D SD

3. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning – feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.   SA A MA MD D SD

4. I do not know what it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.   SA A MA MD D SD

5. My mother was better prepared to be a good mother than I am.   SA A MA MD D SD

6. I would make a fine model for a new mother to follow in order to learn what she would need to know in order to be a good parent.   SA A MA MD D SD

7. Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.   SA A MA MD D SD

8. A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one.   SA A MA MD D SD

9. Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.   SA A MA MD D SD

10. I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child.   SA A MA MD D SD

11. If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.   SA A MA MD D SD

12. My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent.   SA A MA MD D SD

13. Considering how long I've been a mother, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.   SA A MA MD D SD

14. If being a mother of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.   SA A MA MD D SD

15. I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother to my child.   SA A MA MD D SD

16. Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.   SA A MA MD D SD

Being A Parent – Father

Listed below are a number of statements. If you are a father, please respond to each item, indicating your agreement or disagreement with each statement in the following manner.

If you strongly agree, circle the letters SA
If you agree, circle the letter A
If you mildly agree, circle the letters MA
If you mildly disagree, circle the letter MD
If you disagree, circle the letter D
If you strongly disagree, circle the letter SD

1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy   SA A MA MD D SD
    to solve once you know how your actions affect
    your child, an understanding I have acquired.

2. Even though being a parent could be rewarding,   SA A MA MD D SD
    I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her
    Present age.

3. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the   SA A MA MD D SD
    morning – feeling I have not accomplished a
    whole lot.

4. I do not know what it is, but sometimes when   SA A MA MD D SD
    I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like
    the one being manipulated.

5. My father was better prepared to be a good   SA A MA MD D SD
    father than I am.

6. I would make a fine model for a new father   SA A MA MD D SD
    to follow in order to learn what she would
    need to know in order to be a good parent.

7. Being a parent is manageable, and any problems   SA A MA MD D SD
    are easily solved.

8. A difficult problem in being a parent is not   SA A MA MD D SD
    knowing whether you're doing a good job
    or a bad one.

9. Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting   SA A MA MD D SD
    anything done.

10. I meet my own personal expectations for   SA A MA MD D SD
    expertise in caring for my child.

11. If anyone can find the answer to what is   SA A MA MD D SD
    troubling my child, I am the one.

12. My talents and interests are in other areas,   SA A MA MD D SD
    not in being a parent.

13. Considering how long I've been a father,   SA A MA MD D SD
    I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.

14. If being a father of a child were only more   SA A MA MD D SD
    interesting, I would be motivated to do a
    better job as a parent.

15. I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary   SA A MA MD D SD
    to be a good mother to my child.

16.   Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.   SA   A   MA   MD   D   SD

Parenting Sense of Competence Scale: Johnston, C., & Mash, E. J. (1989). A measure of parenting satisfaction and efficacy. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 18, 167-175.

MONASH University

Resilience in Parents of Secondary School Aged Children in Australia

A Research Project Conducted by Dr. Louise McLean, Dr. Jocelynne Gordon & Mr. Nicholas Gamble, Monash University, and Students enrolled in the Master of Psychology and the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology.

If you require further information about this project, please contact Dr. Louise McLean ████████████████ ████████████████████████████ **or Dr. Jocelynne Gordon** ████████████████████ **or Mr. Nicholas Gamble** ████ ████ ████ ████ ████ ████████████████████

Background Details

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Sex: Male   Female

2. Age: _____ (in years)

3. Marital status: married/living with partner   sole parent

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 (a) Primary School   (b) Secondary School   (c) Trade/TAFE   (d) University

5. Employment status: (a) employed full time   (b) employed part time
                             (c) unemployed   (d) full time student   (e) part time student   (f) retired
                             (g) homemaker

6. If you are employed, what is your occupation?_____

7. Please circle one of the following categories to indicate your yearly *household* income before tax

(a) less than $20,000   (b) $20,000 to $40,000   (c) $41,000 to $60,000
(d) $61,000 to $80,000   (e) $ 81,000 to $100,000   (f) above $100,000

8. How many children do you have?   1   2   3   4   5   6 +

9. Sex of your children. Male (number)____Female (number)____

10. Age of your children: Child 1___Child 2___Child 3___Child 4___Child 5___Child 6___Others_____

11. Do any of your children have a chronic condition (e.g., autism, asthma, diabetes)?
                             Yes   No

12. If Yes, what is it?_____

13. Do you have a chronic condition (e.g., arthritis, asthma, diabetes)?
                             Yes   No

14. If Yes, what is it?_____

15. What is your nationality? _____

16. What do you consider your ethnic heritage? _____

About your secondary school aged child….

If you have more than one secondary school aged child, can you please report on the one you have most sleep knowledge.

Age of Secondary School Child you are reporting on:

Gender: Male/ Female

This questionnaire will allow a better understanding of the sleep-wake rhythm of your child and of any problems in his/her sleep behaviour. Try to answer every question; in answering, consider each question as pertaining to the past 6 months of the child's life. Please answer the questions by inserting a number 1 to 5 in the box. Thank you very much for your help.

	9-11 hours	8-9 hours	7-8 hours	5-7 hours	Less than 5 hours
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1.	How many hours of sleep does your child get on most nights	

	Less than 15 min	15-30min	30-45min	45-60min	More than 60 min
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

2.	How long after going to bed does your child usually fall asleep	

	Never	Occasionally (once or twice per month or less)	Sometimes (once or twice per week)	Often (3 or 5 times per week)	Always (daily)
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.	The child goes to bed reluctantly				
4.	The child has difficulty getting to sleep at night				
5.	The child feels anxious or afraid when falling asleep				
6.	The child startles or jerks parts of the body while failing asleep				
7.	The child shows repetitive actions such as rocking or head banging while failing sleep				
8.	The child experiences vivid dreamlike scenes while failing asleep				
9.	The child sweats excessively while failing asleep				
10.	The child wakes up more than twice per night				
11.	After waking up in the night, the child has difficulty to fail asleep again				
12.	The child has frequent twitching or jerking of legs while asleep or often changes position during the night or kicks the covers off the bed				
13.	The child has difficulty in breathing during the night				
14.	The child gasps for breath or is unable to breathe during sleep				

		Never	Occasionally (once or twice per month or less)	Sometimes (once or twice per week)	Often (3 or 5 times per week)	Always (daily)	
		1	2	3	4	5	
16.	The child sweats excessively during the night						
17.	You have observed the child sleepwalking						
18.	You have observed the child talking in his/her sleep						
19.	The child grinds teeth during sleep						
20.	The child wakes from sleep screaming or confused so that you cannot seem to get through to him/her, but has no memory of these events the next morning						
21.	The child has nightmares which he/she doesn't remember the next day						
22.	The child is unusually difficult to wake up in the morning						
23.	The child awakes in the morning feeling tired						
24.	The child feels unable to move when waking up in the morning						
25.	The child experiences daytime somnolence [drowsiness].						
26.	The child falls asleep suddenly in inappropriate situations						

From: Bruni, O., Ottaviano, S., Guidetti, V., Romoli, M., Innocenzi, M., Cortesi, F. & Giannotti, F. (1996). The Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children (SDSC): Construction and validation of an instrument to evaluate sleep disturbances in childhood and adolescence, *Journal of Sleep Research*, 5, 251-261.

About you…

Please read through the following statements and decide how much you either agree or disagree with each. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

7. _____In uncertain times I usually expect the best.

8. _____If something can go wrong for me it will.

9. _____I'm always optimistic about my future.

10. _____I hardly ever expect things to go my way.

11. _____Overall I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

12. _____I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Optimism: Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the life orientation test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 1024-1040.

The following questions ask how you feel about your quality of life, health, & other areas of your life. Please keep in mind your standards, hopes, pleasures and concerns. We ask that you think about your life in the last two weeks.
Circle the response that best represents your answer to each question.

	Very poor	Poor	Neither Poor nor Good	Good	Very Good
1. How would you rate your quality of life?	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
2. How satisfied are you with your health?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions ask about how much you have experienced certain things in the last two weeks.

	Not at all	A Small amount	A Moderate amount	A Great deal	An Extreme amount
3. To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How much do you enjoy life?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
7. How well are you able to concentrate?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How safe do you feel in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How healthy is your physical environment?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	To a Great extent	Completely
10. Do you have enough energy for every day life?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Have you enough money to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
13. How available to you is the information you need in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
14. To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
15. How well are you able to get around physically?	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
16. How satisfied are you with your sleep?	1	2	3	4	5
17. How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?	1	2	3	4	5
18. How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	1	2	3	4	5
19. How satisfied are you with yourself?	1	2	3	4	5
20. How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	1	2	3	4	5
21. How satisfied are you with your sex life?	1	2	3	4	5
22. How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
23. How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	1	2	3	4	5
24. How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	1	2	3	4	5
25. How satisfied are you with your transport?	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
26. How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?	1	2	3	4	5

Murphy, B., Herrman, H., Hawthorne, G., Pinzone, T., & Evert, H. (2000). *Australian WHOQOL instruments: User's manual and interpretation guide*. Melbourne: Australian WHOQOL Field Study Centre.

The questions in this section ask about your feelings during the <u>*last few weeks.*</u> In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather indicate the alternative (given below) that seems like a reasonable estimate. For each question choose from the following alternatives. Write the number (0 to 4) in the space provided next to each question.

never	almost never	sometimes	fairly often	very often
0	1	2	3	4

15. ____How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

16. ____How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

17. ____How often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?

18. ____How often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?

19. ____How often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?

20. ____How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

21. ____How often have you felt that things were going your way?

22. ____How often have you felt that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

23. ____How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

24. ____How often have you felt that you were on top of things?

25. ____How often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside your control?

26. ____How often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?

27. ____How often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?

28. ____How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Perceived Stress: Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385-396.

These statements refer to your feelings, thoughts and behaviour. Using the scale provided, decide how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Next to each statement write the number that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree 1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

19. _____I don't have much control over my emotional reactions to stressful situations.

20. _____When I'm in a bad mood I find it hard to snap myself out of it.

21. _____My feelings are usually fairly stable.

22. _____I can usually talk myself out of feeling bad.

23. _____No matter what happens to me in my life I am confident of my ability to cope emotionally.

24. _____I have a number of good techniques that will help me cope with any stressful situation.

25. _____I find it hard to stop myself from thinking about my problems.

26. _____If I start to worry about something I can usually distract myself and think about something nicer.

27. _____If I realise I am thinking silly thoughts I can usually stop myself.

28. _____I am usually able to keep my thoughts under control.

29. _____I imagine there will be many situations in the future where silly thoughts will get the better of me.

30. _____I have a number of techniques which I am confident will help me think clearly and rationally in any situation I might find myself.

31. _____Even when under pressure I can usually keep calm and relaxed.

32. _____I have a number of techniques or tricks that I use to stay relaxed in stressful situations.

33. _____When I'm anxious or uptight there does not seem to be much that I can do to help myself relax.

34. _____There is not much I can do to relax when I get uptight.

35. _____I have a number of ways of relaxing that I am confident will help me cope.

36. _____If my stress levels get too high I know there are things I can do to help myself.

PCOISS: Pallant, J. F. (2000). Development and validation of a scale to measure perceived control of internal states. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 75,* 308–337

The following statements are about families. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best describes how you feel about your family.

0 = never   1 = hardly   2 = some of the time   3 = almost always   4 = always

1. ____ I am satisfied that I can turn to my family for help when something is troubling me.

2. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family talks over things with me and shares problems

     with me.

3. ____ I am satisfied that my family accepts and supports my wishes to take on new activities

     or directions.

4. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family expresses affection and responds to my emotion,

     such as anger, sorrow or love.

5. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family and I share time together.

Family Functioning: Smilkstein, G., Ashworth, C, & Montano, D. (1982). Validity and reliabilty of the family APGAR as a test of family functioning. *Journal of Family Practice, 15,* 303-311.

The following questions ask you about people in your environment who provide you with help or support.
For *each* of the types of support listed indicate:
(a) *how <u>many</u>* **people you can count on to give you this type of support**
<div align="center">***and***</div>

(b) *how <u>satisfied</u>* **you are with the level of support you have. Using the scale provided put a number from 1 to 6 to indicate your satisfaction.**

<div align="center">very dissatisfied   1   2   3   4   5   6   very satisfied</div>

	(a) **How many** people can you count on for this type of support	(b) Using the scale provided, please rate **how satisfied** you are with the support you have
7. To distract you from your worries when you feel under stress.		
8. To help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense.		
9. To accept you totally, including both your worst and best points.		
10. To care about you, regardless of what is happening to you.		
11. To help you feel better when you are feeling down in-the-dumps.		
12. To console you when you are upset.		

Social Support: Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., Shearin, E. N., & Pierce, G. R. (1987). A brief measure of social support: Practical and theoretical implications. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 4,* 497–510

These questions ask about your overall satisfaction with your life. Please read each statement and indicate your agreement or disagreement by writing a number from 1 to 7 on each line.

<div align="center">Strongly Disagree 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Agree</div>

6. ____In most ways my life is close to ideal.

7. ____The conditions of my life are excellent.

8. ____I am satisfied with my life.

9. ____So far I have got the important things I want in life.

10. ____If I could live my life again, I would change almost nothing.

Life Satisfaction: Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71-75.

These items deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers are as true **FOR YOU** as you can.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all   **2 = I've been doing this a little bit**
3 = I've been doing this a medium amount   **4 = I've been doing this a lot**

1. _____ I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.
2. _____ I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.
3. _____ I've been saying to myself "this isn't real.
4. _____ I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.
5. _____ I've been getting emotional support from others.
6. _____ I've been giving up trying to deal with it.
7. _____ I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.
8. _____ I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.
9. _____ I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.
10._____I've been getting help and advice from other people.
11._____I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.
12._____ I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.
13._____ I've been criticizing myself.
14._____ I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.
15._____ I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.
16._____ I've been giving up the attempt to cope.
17._____ I've been looking for something good in what is happening.
18._____ I've been making jokes about it.
19._____ I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.
20._____ I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.
21._____ I've been expressing my negative feelings.
22._____ I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.
23._____ I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.
24._____ I've been learning to live with it.
25._____ I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.
26._____ I've been blaming myself for things that happened.
27._____ I've been praying or meditating.
28._____ I've been making fun of the situation.

Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE.*International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 92-100.

Please read each statement and indicate how much the statement applied to you *over the past week*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement. Use the response choices below.

0 = Did not apply to me at all
1 = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
2 = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
3 = Applied to me very much, or most of the time

1._____   I found it hard to wind down

2._____   I was aware of dryness of my mouth

3._____   I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

4._____   I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

5._____   I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

6._____   I tended to over-react to situations

7._____   I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)

8._____   I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

9._____   I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself

10.____   I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

11.____   I found myself getting agitated

12.____   I found it difficult to relax

13.____   I felt down-hearted and blue

14.____   I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing

15.____   I felt I was close to panic

16.____   I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

17.____   I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

18.____   I felt that I was rather touchy

19.____   I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)

20.____   I felt scared without any good reason

21.____   I felt that life was meaningless

www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass, DASS 21.
Lovibond S. H. & Lovibond P. F. (1995) Manual for the depression anxiety stress scales (2nd ed.), Psychology Foundation, Sydney.

Directions**: Answer each question as honestly as you possibly can by circling the response that best reflects your agreement or disagreement with each item. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond honestly. Provide** only one response **to each item.**

Obasi, E.M., Flores, L.Y., James-Myers, L. Construction and Initial Validation of the Worldview Analysis Scale (WAS). *Journal of Black Studies, 20,* 1-25.

Scale removed to meet copyright requirements

Please complete the follow items in relation to your family. Please circle one answer that best represents your family in your honest opinion.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Your help with this research is appreciated greatly.

Please look back through the questionnaire booklet and check that you have not accidentally missed any pages. When the booklet is completed return it in the Reply Paid envelope to Dr Louise McLean.

If you wish to talk to someone about your feelings and concerns you may call Lifeline (24 hours) █████████

MONASH University

Resilience in Parents of Primary School Aged Children in Australia

A Research Project Conducted by Dr. Louise McLean, Dr. Jocelynne Gordon & Mr. Nicholas Gamble, Monash University, and Students enrolled in the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology.

If you require further information about this project, please contact Dr. Louise McLean ███████████████████████████████████ or Dr. Jocelynne Gordon on ██ or Mr. Nicholas Gamble ██

General instructions

In this booklet are a number of scales and questions designed to identify parental concerns, expectations, perceptions of support and strategies for managing everyday life. *Please answer the questions as honestly as possible, in a way that shows how you really are, not how you would like to be or how you think you should be. You may feel that some questions are very similar to others in the questionnaire. Each of the different sets of questions is measuring different things, so it is important that you answer each of the questions.*

Instructions are given for each of the different sets of questions. Please read these carefully as they vary from section to section.

Don't spend too much time thinking about your answers. (The first answer that pops into your head is what is needed).

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study.

Background Details

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Sex: Male   Female

2. Age: _____ (in years)

3. Marital status: married/living with partner   sole parent

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   (a) Primary School   (b) Secondary School   (c) Trade/TAFE   (d) University

5. Employment status: (a) employed full time   (b) employed part time
                        (c) unemployed   (d) full time student   (e) part time student
                        (f) retired   (g) homemaker

6. If you are employed, what is your occupation?_____

7. Please circle one of the following categories to indicate your yearly ***household*** income before tax

   (a) less than $20,000   (b) $20,000 to $40,000   (c) $41,000 to $60,000
   (d) $61,000 to $80,000   (e) $ 81,000 to $100,000   (f) above $100,000

8. How many children do you have?   1   2   3   4   5   6 +

9. Sex of your children. Male (number)____Female (number)____

10. Age of your children: Child 1___Child 2___Child 3___Child 4___Child 5___
        Child 6___Others_____

11. Do **any of your children** have a chronic condition (e.g., autism, asthma, diabetes)?
        Yes   No

12. If Yes, what is it?_____

13. Do **you** have a chronic condition (e.g., arthritis, asthma, diabetes)?
        Yes   No

14. If Yes, what is it?_____

About your primary school aged child….

The following questions are about your child's general personality and behaviour. Please answer these questions in relation to each of your primary school aged children.
For each question choose from the following alternatives which best describes your child at the present time. Write the number (1 to 6) in the space provided next to each question.

Almost never	Not often	Variable, usually does not	Variable, usually does	Frequently	Almost always
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
1.	My child is shy with strange adults.						
2.	When my child starts a project such as a puzzle or model, he/she works on it without stopping until it is completed, even if it takes a long time.						
3.	If my child wants a toy or sweet while shopping, he/she will easily accept something else instead.						
4.	My child is shy when first meeting new children.						
5.	My child likes to complete one task or activity before going onto the next.						
6.	When my child is angry about something, it is difficult to side/track him/her.						
7.	When in a park or visiting, my child will go up to strange children and join in their play.						
8.	My child stays with an activity (eg puzzle, construction kit, reading) for a long time.						
9.	When shopping together, if I do not buy what the child wants (eg sweets, clothing), he/she cries and yells.						
10.	When unknown adults visit our home, my child is immediately friendly and approaches them						
11.	If my child is upset, it is hard to comfort him/her.						
12.	When a toy or game is difficult, my child quickly turns to another activity.						

Short Temperament Scale for Children (STSC): Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D. & Oberklaid, F. (2000) *Pathways from infancy to adolescence: Australian Temperament Project 1983 - 2000* Melbourne Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

		Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
1.	Where does this child sleep (e.g., own bed in own room, own bed in shared room, with parents, other)						
2.	Average time it takes this child to go to bed.						
3.	Average time it takes this child to go to sleep.						
4.	Average morning wakeup time.						
5.	Number of times out of bed at the start of the night.						
6.	Number of times out of bed during the night.						
7.	Length of time child is awake during the night.						
8.	Nap duration during the day.						

The following statements are about your child's sleep habits and possible difficulties with sleep. Think about the past week in your child's life when answering the questions. If last week was unusual for a specific reason (such as your child had an ear infection and did not sleep well or the TV set was broken), choose the most recent typical week. Only answer these questions for your children who are in **Primary School.**

Answer **USUALLY** if something occurs **5 or more times** in a week; answer **SOMETIMES** if it occurs **2-4 times** in a week; answer **RARELY** if something occurs **never or 1 time** during a week. Also, please indicate whether or not the sleep habit is a problem by indicating "Yes," "No," or "Not applicable (N/A)."

3 = Usually	Is this a problem? Y = Yes
2 = Sometimes	N = No
1 = Rarely	N/A = Not Applicable

Bedtime

What is your child's bedtime: Child 1_____Child 2_____Child 3____Child 4_____Child 5____Child 6_____

	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4		Child 5		Child 6	
	1, 2 or 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A
Child goes to bed at the same time at night												
Child falls asleep within 20 minutes after going to bed												
Child falls asleep alone in own bed												

	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4		Child 5		Child 6	
Child falls asleep in parent's or sibling's bed												
Child falls asleep with rocking or rhythmic movements												
Child needs special object to fall asleep (doll, special blanket, etc.)												
Child needs parent in the room to fall asleep												
Child is ready to go to bed at bedtime												
Child resists going to bed at bedtime												
Child struggles at bedtime (cries, refuses to stay in bed, etc.)												
	Child 1		**Child 2**		**Child 3**		**Child 4**		**Child 5**		**Child 6**	
	1, 2 or 3	**Y, N, N/A**	**1, 2 OR 3**	**Y, N, N/A**	**1, 2 OR 3**	**Y, N, N/A**	**1, 2 OR 3**	**Y, N, N/A**	**1, 2 OR 3**	**Y, N, N/A**	**1, 2 OR 3**	**Y, N, N/A**
Child is afraid of sleeping in the dark												
Child is afraid of sleep alone												

Sleep Behaviour

Child's usual amount of sleep each day in hours & minutes (including nighttime sleep & naps) Child 1____Child 2____Child 3___Child 4____Child 5___Child 6____

	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4		Child 5		Child 6	
Child sleeps too little												
Child sleeps too much												
Child sleeps the right amount												
Child sleeps about the same amount each day												
Child wets the bed at night												
Child talks during sleep												
Child is restless and moves a lot during sleep												
Child sleepwalks during the night												
Child moves to someone else's bed during the night (parent, brother, sister, etc.)												
Child reports body pains during sleep. If so, where?												
Child grinds teeth during sleep (your dentist may have told you this)												
Child snores loudly												
Child seems to stop breathing during sleep												
Child snorts and/or gasps during sleep												
Child has trouble sleeping away from home (visiting relatives, vacation)												
Child complains about problems sleeping												

	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4		Child 5		Child 6	
Child awakens during night screaming, sweating, and inconsolable												
Child awakens alarmed by a frightening dream												
Waking During the Night												
Child awakes once during the night												
Child awakes more than once during the night												
Child returns to sleep without help after waking												
Write the number of minutes a night waking usually lasts												

	Child 1		Child 2		Child 3		Child 4		Child 5		Child 6	
	1, 2 or 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A	1, 2 OR 3	Y, N, N/A
Morning Waking												
Write in the time of day child usually wakes in the morning:												
Child wakes up by him/herself												
Child wakes up with alarm clock												
Child wakes up in negative mood												
Adults or siblings wake up child												
Child has difficulty getting out of bed in the morning												
Child takes a long time to become alert in the morning												
Child wakes up very early in the morning												
Child has a good appetite in the morning												
Daytime Sleepiness												
Child naps during the day												
Child suddenly falls asleep in the middle of active behavior												
Child seems tired												

During the past week, your child has appeared very sleepy or fallen asleep during the following (check all that apply):

1 = Not Sleepy   **2 = Very Sleepy**   **3 = Falls Asleep**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
Play alone						
Watching TV						
Riding in car						
Eating meals						

Goodlin-Jones, Be. L., Sitnick, S. L., Tang, K. Liu, J., & Anders, T. (2008). The Children's Sleep Habits Questionnaire in Toddlers and Preschool Children, *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, 29* (2), 82-88.

About you…

Please read through the following statements and decide how much you either agree or disagree with each. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

13. _____In uncertain times I usually expect the best.

14. _____If something can go wrong for me it will.

15. _____I'm always optimistic about my future.

16. _____I hardly ever expect things to go my way.

17. _____Overall I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

18. _____I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Optimism: Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the life orientation test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 1024-1040.

The following questions ask how you feel about your quality of life, health, & other areas of your life. Please keep in mind your standards, hopes, pleasures and concerns. We ask that you think about your life in the **last two weeks.**
Circle the response that best represents your answer to each question.

	Very poor	Poor	Neither Poor nor Good	Good	Very Good
1. How would you rate your quality of life?	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
2. How satisfied are you with your health?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions ask about how much you have experienced certain things in the last two weeks.

	Not at all	A Small amount	A Moderate amount	A great deal	An Extreme amount
3. To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How much do you enjoy life?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
7. How well are you able to concentrate?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How safe do you feel in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How healthy is your physical environment?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	To a great extent	Completely
10. Do you have enough energy for every day life?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Have you enough money to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
13. How available to you is the information you need in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5
14. To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
15. How well are you able to get around physically?	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
16. How satisfied are you with your sleep?	1	2	3	4	5
17. How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?	1	2	3	4	5
18. How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	1	2	3	4	5
19. How satisfied are you with yourself?	1	2	3	4	5
20. How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	1	2	3	4	5
21. How satisfied are you with your sex life?	1	2	3	4	5
22. How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
23. How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	1	2	3	4	5
24. How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	1	2	3	4	5
25. How satisfied are you with your transport?	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
26. How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?	1	2	3	4	5

Murphy, B., Herrman, H., Hawthorne, G., Pinzone, T., & Evert, H. (2000). *Australian WHOQOL instruments: User's manual and interpretation guide.* Melbourne: Australian WHOQOL Field Study Centre.

These questions ask about being a parent or step-parent. Please answer these questions in relation to each of your primary school aged children. There are no right or wrong answers, we are just asking about parents' views on child-rearing.

For each question choose from the following alternatives. Write the number (1 to 5) in the space provided next to each question.

Never/ almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always/ almost always
1	2	3	4	5

		Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
1.	How often do you express affection by hugging, kissing and holding your child?						
2.	How often do you hug or hold your child for no particular reason?						
3.	How often do you explain to your child why he/she is being corrected?						
4.	How often do you tell your child how happy he/she makes you?						
5.	How often do you talk it over and reason with your child when he/she misbehaves?						
6.	How often do you have warm, close times together with your child?						
7.	How often do you listen to your child and do things with him/her?						
8.	How often do you feel close to your child both when he/she is happy and when he/she is upset?						

Never/ almost never	Less than half the time	About half the time	More than half the time	All the time
1	2	3	4	5

9.	How often do you feel you are having problems managing your child in general?						
10.	How often is your child able to get out of punishment when he/she really sets his/her mind to it?						
11.	When you discipline your child, how often does he/she ignore the punishment?						

Child Rearing Questionnaire (CRQ): Paterson, G. & Sarason, A. (1999). The association of behavioural adjustment to temperament, parenting and family characteristics among 5 year old children. *Social Development, 8,* 293 – 309.

The questions in this section ask about your feelings during the *last few weeks*. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather indicate the alternative (given below) that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each question choose from the following alternatives. Write the number (0 to 4) in the space provided next to each question.

never	**almost never**	**sometimes**	**fairly often**	**very often**
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

29. ____How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

30. ____How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

31. ____How often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?

32. ____How often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?

33. ____How often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?

34. ____How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

35. ____How often have you felt that things were going your way?

36. ____How often have you felt that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

37. ____How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

38. ____How often have you felt that you were on top of things?

39. ____How often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside your control?

40. ____How often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?

41. ____How often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?

42. ____How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Perceived Stress: Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress.*Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385-396.

These statements refer to your feelings, thoughts and behaviour. Using the scale provided, decide how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Next to each statement write the number that best indicates how you feel.

strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   strongly agree

37. _____I don't have much control over my emotional reactions to stressful situations.

38. _____When I'm in a bad mood I find it hard to snap myself out of it.

39. _____My feelings are usually fairly stable.

40. _____I can usually talk myself out of feeling bad.

41. _____No matter what happens to me in my life I am confident of my ability to cope emotionally.

42. _____I have a number of good techniques that will help me cope with any stressful situation.

43. _____I find it hard to stop myself from thinking about my problems.

44. _____If I start to worry about something I can usually distract myself and think about something nicer.

45. _____If I realise I am thinking silly thoughts I can usually stop myself.

46. _____I am usually able to keep my thoughts under control.

47. _____I imagine there will be many situations in the future where silly thoughts will get the
   better of me.

48. _____I have a number of techniques which I am confident will help me think clearly and
   rationally in any situation I might find myself.

49. _____Even when under pressure I can usually keep calm and relaxed.

50. _____I have a number of techniques or tricks that I use to stay relaxed in stressful
   situations.

51. _____When I'm anxious or uptight there does not seem to be much that I can do to help
   myself relax.

52. _____There is not much I can do to relax when I get uptight.

53. _____I have a number of ways of relaxing that I am confident will help me cope.

54. _____If my stress levels get too high I know there are things I can do to help myself.

PCOISS: Pallant, J. F. (2000). Development and validation of a scale to measure perceived control of internal states. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 75,* 308–337

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The following questions ask you about people in your environment who provide you with help or support.
For *each* of the types of support listed indicate:
(a) **how _many_** people you can count on to give you this type of support *and*
(b) **how _satisfied_** you are with the level of support you have. Using the scale provided put a number from 1 to 6 to indicate your satisfaction.

</div>

very dissatisfied 1   2   3   4   5   6   very satisfied

	(a) How many people can you count on for this type of support	(b) Using the scale provided, please rate how satisfied you are with the support you have
13. To distract you from your worries when you feel under stress.		
14. To help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense.		

15. To accept you totally, including both your worst and best points.		
16. To care about you, regardless of what is happening to you.		
17. To help you feel better when you are feeling down in-the-dumps.		
18. To console you when you are upset.		

Social Support: Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., Shearin, E. N., & Pierce, G. R. (1987). A brief measure of social support: Practical and theoretical implications. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 4,* 497–510

The following statements are about families. Using the scale provided write the number on the line next to each statement that best describes how you feel about your family.

0 = never   1 = hardly   2 = some of the time   3 = almost always   4 = always

1. ____ I am satisfied that I can turn to my family for help when something is troubling me.

2. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family talks over things with me and shares problems

    with me.

3. ____ I am satisfied that my family accepts and supports my wishes to take on new activities

    or directions.

4. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family expresses affection and responds to my emotion,

    such as anger, sorrow or love.

5. ____ I am satisfied with the way my family and I share time together.

Family Functioning: Smilkstein, G., Ashworth, C, & Montano, D. (1982). Validity and reliabilty of the family APGAR as a test of family functioning. *Journal of Family Practice, 15,* 303-311.

These questions ask about your overall satisfaction with your life. Please read each statement and indicate your agreement or disagreement by writing a number from 1 to 7 on each line.

Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Agree

11. ____In most ways my life is close to ideal.

12. ____The conditions of my life are excellent.

13. ____I am satisfied with my life.

14. ____So far I have got the important things I want in life.

15. ____If I could live my life again, I would change almost nothing.

Life Satisfaction: Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71-75.

These items deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true **FOR YOU** as you can.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all   **2 = I've been doing this a little bit**
3 = I've been doing this a medium amount   **4 = I've been doing this a lot**

1. _____ I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.

2. _____ I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.

3. _____ I've been saying to myself "this isn't real.".

4. _____ I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.

5. _____ I've been getting emotional support from others.

6. _____ I've been giving up trying to deal with it.

7. _____ I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.

8. _____ I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.

9. _____ I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.

10._____ I've been getting help and advice from other people.

11._____ I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.

12._____ I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.

13._____ I've been criticizing myself.

14._____ I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.

15._____ I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.

16._____ I've been giving up the attempt to cope.

17._____ I've been looking for something good in what is happening.

18._____ I've been making jokes about it.

19._____ I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading,

daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.

20._____ I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.

21._____ I've been expressing my negative feelings.

22._____ I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.

23._____ I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.

24._____ I've been learning to live with it.

25._____ I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.

26._____ I've been blaming myself for things that happened.

27._____ I've been praying or meditating.

28._____ I've been making fun of the situation.

Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE.*International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 92-100.

Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you *over the past week*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

0 = Did not apply to me at all

1 = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
2 = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
3 = Applied to me very much, or most of the time

1._____   I found it hard to wind down

2._____   I was aware of dryness of my mouth

3._____   I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

4._____   I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

5._____   I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

6._____   I tended to over-react to situations

7._____   I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)

8._____   I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

9._____   I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself

10.____   I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

11.____   I found myself getting agitated

12.____   I found it difficult to relax

13.____   I felt down-hearted and blue

14.____   I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing

15.____   I felt I was close to panic

16.____   I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

17.____   I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

18.____   I felt that I was rather touchy

19.____   I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)

20.____   I felt scared without any good reason

21.____   I felt that life was meaningless

www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass, DASS 21.
Lovibond S. H. & Lovibond P. F. (1995) Manual for the depression anxiety stress scales (2nd ed.), Psychology Foundation, Sydney.

This next section asks about the general level of physical activity involved in your daily routine during the past year.
Please Circle your answer.

How many minutes a day do you usually walk and/or bicycle to and from work, school or errands?	Less than 5minutes
	More than 5 minutes but less than 15minutes
	More than 15 minutes but less than 30 minutes
	More than 30 minutes but less than 45 minutes
	More than 45 minutes
Did you watch television?	Less than 1 hour per week
	More than 1 hour per week but less than 1 hour per day
	More than 1 hour per day but less than 2 hours per days
	More than 2 hours per day but less than 4 hours per day
	More than 4 hours per day
Did you walk (for at least 15 minutes at a time)?	Never or less than once a month
	Once a month
	2-3 times a month
	Once a week
	More than once a week
Did you bike (for at least 15 minutes at a time)?	Never or less than once a month
	Once a month
	2-3 times a month
	Once a week
	More than once a week
This section asks about your participation in sports and exercise during the past year. Please Circle your answer.	
In comparison with other people of your own age, do you think your recreational physical activity is…	Much less
	Less
	Same as
	More
	Much more
Did you play sports or exercise?	Never or less than once a month
	Once a month
	2-3 times a month
	Once a week
	More than once a week
Did you sweat from exertion during sports or exercise?	Never or less than once a month
	Once a month
	2-3 times a month
	Once a week
	More than once a week
Which sport or exercise did you do most frequently?	Specify only one _____
How many months in this past year did you do this activity?	Less 1 month
	1-3 months
	4-6 months
	7-9 months
	More than 9 months
How many hours a week did you usually do this activity?	Less than 1 hour
	More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours
	More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours
	More than 3 hours but less than 4 hours
	More than 4 hours
Did you do any other exercise or play any other sport in this past year?	Yes
	No

If yes, what was the second most frequent sport or exercise you did?	Specify only one_____
How many months in this past year did you do this activity?	Less 1 month 1-3 months 4-6 months 7-9 months More than 9 months
How many hours a week did you usually do this activity?	Less than 1 hour More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours More than 3 hours but less than 4 hours More than 4 hours
Did you do any other exercise or play any other sport in this past year?	Yes No
If yes, what was the third most frequent sport or exercise you did?	Specify only one_____
How many months in this past year did you do this activity?	Less 1 month 1-3 months 4-6 months 7-9 months More than 9 months
How many hours a week did you usually do this activity?	Less than 1 hour More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours More than 3 hours but less than 4 hours More than 4 hours

Sternfeld, B. (1999). Physical activity patterns in a diverse population of women. *Prev Med, 28* (3), 313-323.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Your help with this research is appreciated greatly.

Please look back through the questionnaire booklet and check that you have not accidentally missed any pages. When the booklet is completed return it in the Reply Paid envelope to Dr Louise McLean.

If you wish to talk to someone about your feelings and concerns you may call Lifeline (24 hours) ▆▆▆▆
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