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An Alternative Account of Muslim Home-Education:

Escaping the Lens of Muslim Exceptionalism

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Abstract

Home-education has emerged as a key educational context in Britain over the past decade, a time in which the number of home-educated children in England and Wales has more than doubled. This is coupled by the impact of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, which saw mainstream-schools close across the UK and home-education become the primary educational option available to families. Home-education research has taken on an enhanced position in this educational context, transcending the marginal position it occupied in the past. Home-education research has however been charged with overlooking the experiences of religious minorities who home-educate, a point highlighted by the limited number of studies on Muslim home-educators. Furthermore, the limited research that has been carried out on Muslim home-educators suffers from an overtly politicised focus. This thesis seeks to offer an alternative portrayal of Muslim home-education. Through eight qualitative interviews, this thesis investigates aspects of Muslim home-education that have been overlooked in previous studies. By drawing on my participants unique educational perspectives and pedagogic experiences, this research can offer an alternative account of home-education; leading to a more nuanced understanding of Muslim home-educators emerging.

Key Words: Home-Education, British Muslims, Motives, Pedagogy, Islamic Education

1.0 Introduction

This research began with a broader interest in the experiences of Muslims in diverse educational contexts. There has been a plethora of recent research in this field, which is commonly referred to as "Muslims in education" (see Sahin 2018). One educational environment that has received limited academic attention in this field is Muslim experiences of home-education (henceforth referred to as HE). The absence of research on this subject is surprising considering the dramatic increase in HE over the past decade, with numbers estimated to have doubled in the past five years (Issimdar 2018). HE has received renewed attention in the past 6-months following the outbreak of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, a time that has seen mass school closures and the emergence of HE as the most viable educational alternative. While schools have begun re-opening in a limited capacity, uncertainty continues to surround the future of education in Britain. While my interest in HE preceded the outbreak of the Coronavirus, this topic, which once may have been considered part of a marginalised and poorly understood educational context, is today arguably at the centre of British educational debates.

In recent years there has been broad recognition by scholars within the field of HE that ethnic and religious minority families who HE have been overlooked as research subjects (Bhopal and Myers 2018). Muslims in Britain often face a dual marginalisation, being members of both religious and ethnic minorities, which perhaps explains why their presence in the HE literature is particularly acute. In the past decade a small body of research has emerged that has prioritised the experiences of families from minority backgrounds. It is within this emerging body of literature that research focusing on Muslim experiences of HE has begun to appear (Sarwar 2013; Myers and Bhopal 2018; Pattison 2020). A limitation with these studies is the narrow, politicised lens within which they assess Muslim home-educators. One of the main reasons for this constricted focus is arguably the political context within which these studies have been produced. At the end of 2015 the head of OFSTEAD Michael Wilshaw claimed that Muslim families were using HE as a "cover" to send Muslim children to unregistered schools where they were at "risk of exposure to extremism and radicalisation" (Wilshaw 2015; 2016). In the following year The Times Newspaper ran

the headline, "Home schooling is blamed for rise of extremist Islam", which drew on claims by the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Neil Basu, that "segregated, isolated communities, unregulated education and home-schooling are a breeding ground for extremists and future terrorists" (Simpson 2017). These securitised discourses have arguably shaped the type of research that has emerged on Muslim HE, with studies seeking to explore both the impact and basis upon which the links between Muslim home-educators and "extremism" have been made.

The current research on Muslim HE offers an important critical framework within which to assess these allegations, which remain unsubstantiated by any empirical evidence. That said, the securitised focus of these works has also created a narrow lens through which Muslim HE has been viewed. This limits the scope of our understanding of Muslim HE and arguably reinforces what Marby calls the lens of "Muslim exceptionalism" (2015: 1). For Marby, the lens of "Muslim exceptionalism" dictates that the only narratives presented in popular, political and now academic discourses on Muslims are ones concerned with security issues. This illustrates the development of what Miah terms the "Muslim problematic", in which Muslims have come to be viewed not as indviduals associated to a particular religion, but rather as an array of political issues that need to be addressed (2017: 147). This logic is also evident in academic research on Muslim experiences of education, which Sahin argues is influenced by a "politicisation bias" (2018: 334). This is demonstrated by the recent saturation of this field with studies focusing on the twin issues of extremism (Davies 2015; Arthur 2015) and Prevent (Pattison 2020; Durodie 2016). By foregrounding these political issues, other aspects of Muslim experiences of education are overlooked and subsequently undervalued according to Sahin (2018). With these limitations in mind, I will aim to move away from this lens of exceptionalism and will instead engage with aspects of Muslim HE that have been underappreciated in previous research.

This approach conforms with research that explores "everyday religion" as Ammerman (2007) terms it, which aims to portray the role of religion in everyday life. As Scourfield et al. (2013) argue, this approach can broaden the scope within which certain subjects are viewed. By applying such an approach, I hope to provide an alternative lens through which to view Muslim HE, assessing issues that have been undervalued in previous research. This can inform a more nuanced portrayal of this phenomenon

emerging, acting as a counternarrative to the intense political suspicion that currently informs popular and political portrayals of Muslim home-educators (Myers and Bhopal 2018). I will also aim to contribute to the wider literature on HE in the UK, which Kunzman and Gaither (2013) argues is currently lacking in research focused on non-white, non-Christian families. By drawing on alternative educational perspectives, such as those drawn from the field of Islamic education, I will add a new voice to existing HE debates around pedagogy and educational philosophy. These unique aspects of my work can contribute to a more nuanced portrayal of Muslim HE emerging.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

The overarching aim of this thesis is to produce an intimate portrayal of Muslim experiences of HE, derived through qualitative interviews with Muslim parents. First and foremost, I will aim to create what Geertz refers to as "thick" descriptions of Muslim HE (1973: 27). This refers to the particular, experiential aspects of my participants experiences of HE, which will form the foundations of my data analysis. These thick portrayals will be used as starting points through which to situate my findings amidst the wider debates found within the existing body of HE literature. The primary debates my research will contribute to concern the following subjects and questions:

1. *Motivations*: Why do Muslim parents HE?
2. *Educational experiences and styles:* What experiences have Muslim parents had home-educating and what educational approaches and techniques do they apply in their children's education?
3. *The role of Islam in Muslim parents HE* – What role does Islam play as a factor in my participants educational motivations, experiences and approaches?

One of my primary aims is to move away from an analysis of Muslim HE that is rooted in the lens of exceptionalism presented in the initial section of my introduction. This requires the production of new data that is not focused on the political issues that are tied to this lens. This can offer an alternative portrayal of Muslim home-educators, one that can be used as a point of engagement with the wider body of HE literature. This leads to the secondary aim of my research, which is to add a new educational

perspective to this field of research. Current HE literature has relied on a very narrow conception of education, one that is often reliant on the concepts of "structured" or "unstructured" education; which will be explored in more detail in my literature review (Nelson 2014). This has created a one-dimensional understanding of HE that does not encompass diverse educational philosophies and styles. By drawing on questions around the role of religion in my participants educational techniques and approaches, I will attempt to generate data that can access the unique faith dynamic of Muslim parents' experiences of HE. Such questions can help generate fresh data on HE, drawing on an educational perspective that is not available in current HE research. These unique aspects of this thesis can ensure the originality of my study, which will engage with topics that have been overlooked within the current body of HE literature.

1.2 Chapter Guide

Chapter two will explore the current literature related to my thesis. It will begin by offering a broad overview of HE in the UK. It will then look at tensions between the state and home-educating families, paying particular attention to the political accusations aimed at Muslim home-educators. The final section of my literature review will explore research on HE motivations and educational approaches. This section will also introduce the field of Islamic education, exploring ways in which this field can add a new perspective to current HE research. **Chapter three** discusses my methodology. It will begin by explaining the theoretical foundations of this research before outlining my reasons for using qualitative interviewing as a means of data collection. I will then outline my research process so far, exploring my participant recruitment, ethical considerations, data analysis, broader issues of reflexivity as well as summarising my participants' profiles. **Chapter four** presents the findings that have been gathered through this research. This section is split between the broad topics this work aims to cover, which are as follows: Muslim parents' motivations to HE; their educational experiences and approaches; the role of Islam in Muslim families' HE. **Chapter five** discusses some of the implications of my study and how it contributes to current debates within the field of HE. Finally, **Chapter six** offers an overview of the project, identifying this research's main findings and broader contributions to the HE literature, as well as suggesting how further studies may build on my research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 An Overview of HE in the UK

There are various terms applied to the phenomenon of HE, which in its simplest form can be described as the education of children, primarily by parents, within and around the home. The UK as a whole is widely acknowledged within the literature as having one of the largest HE populations in the world (Kunzman and Gaither 2013; Winstanley 2009; Nelson 2014). Various estimates have been given for the total number of home-educated children in the UK, ranging from 40,000 (Issimdar 2018) to 80,000 (Badman 2009). The most recent figures were produced in separate Welsh and English governmental reports in which the number of HE children was estimated at 2,517 for Wales and around 58,000 for England (Hughes 2019; Foster 2019). These estimates only paint a partial picture of the HE population, as they are reliant on home-educated families registering with local authorities, which is not a legal obligation (ibid). Lees and Nicholson argue that estimates are also limited as they do not illustrate that the HE population is in a "constant state of flux", as children come in and out of home-educating and mainstream-schooling environments (cited in Gaither 2016: 309). While limited, this data does indicate a steady increase in the numbers of home-educated children, with numbers almost doubling in England and Wales over the past five-years (Issimdar 2018; Hughes 2019).

2.1.1 Legal Status of HE in the UK

While various reasons have been given for this increase, there is broad agreement within the literature that the legal framework within which education in Britain has been conceived has facilitated the practice of HE. Whereas in certain countries HE is heavily regulated and in some cases illegal (Spiegler 2003), in England and Wales the right to home-educate is enshrined in Section 7 of The 1996 Education Act, which states,

> The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to

any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school *or otherwise* ('Education Act 1996'; *emphasis added*)

The final phrase "or otherwise" provides the legal freedom for parents to home-educate, with parents rather than the state being given the responsibility to determine their child's education. In practice this has allowed parents to home-educate with little governmental interference. Monk however argues that while the Education Act places the "responsibility" to educate on parents, it grants local authorities the responsibility to determine what a "suitable education" might be (2016: 8). Others such as Burke (2007) claim that the vague nature of the legal terminology in the Education Act limits the ability of local authorities to enforce a particular understanding of education. As Morton (2011) reflects, the legal ambiguity of the Education Act has led to a series of confrontations between the State and parents, with various trials arising in response to their differing interpretations of what a suitable education entails.

2.1.2 Tensions with the State and the Emergence of a Culture of Suspicion

The underlying tensions between the State and home-educating parents has been a key point of debate within the HE literature. Stevenson argues that British colonialism created "an unashamed sense of cultural superiority" in which Britain's schooling system was enforced both in overseas colonies and the UK (2015: 540). The decision to break the mould and engage in alternative educational practices such as HE therefore challenges the assumed superiority of Britain's schooling system. Bhopal and Myers (2018) on the other hand, argue that the tensions between HE and mainstream-schooling lie in the fact that HE disrupts the state's monopoly on moulding future citizens. This instrumentalised understanding of mainstream-schooling is supported by Auld and Morris, who broaden this perspective by claiming that HE is out of sync with a global "grand narrative" in which education's aim is to create citizens who can help nations compete in the global market and knowledge economies (2016: 203). From these perspectives HE is seen to conflict with the normative and homogenising impulses of modern educational systems and practices. Rothermel summarises these various perspectives by claiming that the underlying issue is one of control, namely "who should be in control [of education]: parents or the state?" (2015: 6).

While HE is legally secure in principle, in practice HE has routinely been portrayed through a lens of suspicion within the UK's public and political spheres. This culture of suspicion has been particularly acute since the Government commissioned the Badman review of HE in 2009 (Badman 2009). The primary concern raised in the review was that HE suffered from a lack of regulation which could leave children vulnerable to abuse (Smith and Nelson 2015). The subsequent Badman Report recommended mandatory registration of all home-educated children and the development of a definition for "suitable" and "efficient" education (Myers and Bhopal 2018: 214). These recommendations were dropped the following year when a review of the Badman Report questioned the evidence upon which its "strong conclusions" had been reached (cited in Rothermel 2015: 6). Despite the successful challenge of the Badman Review, political and public suspicion of HE has continued to persist in its aftermath. Several studies have argued (see: Myers and Bhopal 2018; Pattison 2018; 2020) that since the Badman Report, Muslim families have emerged as a primary target of state suspicion towards HE. This has arguably been predicated on a fusion of narratives, in which a discourse concerning the vulnerability of home-educated children has intersected with the broader political discourses of "extremism" and "radicalisation" that surround Britain's Muslim communities.

2.2 British HE Research Focused on Muslims

2.2.1 Essentialised Narratives of Muslim Home-Educators

There is currently a limited body of research that focuses on Muslim families who HE, with the following four works being identified in the course of this research (Monk 2016; Myers and Bhopal 2018; Pattison 2020; Sarwar 2013). Of these works only Sarwar's (2013) explores subjects that transcend the securitised lens within which Muslims who home-educate have predominately been viewed. This lens is drawn from a wider political context which Miah terms the "Muslim problematic" (2017: 2). To Miah, the "Muslim problematic" is a socially constructed discourse in which Muslims are portrayed not as individuals associated with a particular religion, but rather as a community connected to series of political issues (2017b: 146). The "Muslim problematic" takes various discursive forms, often being reactive to particular political

issues or events. Since the 2005 London bombings Muslims have come to be viewed as a "security threat" within popular and political discourses (2017: 2). Miah's argument has been reiterated in various studies (see: Kundnani 2009; Birt 2009; Mamdani 2002) which reflect on how political engagement with Britain's Muslim communities has been predicated on the assumption that these communities form the locus from which societies primary security threats are likely to emerge. Thus, political issues such as terrorism, radicalisation and extremism have come to form the dominant discursive frames within which Muslim communities are assessed in the public, political and academic spheres. This framing leads to a form of "Muslim exceptionalism", in which Muslims are viewed through an increasingly narrow lens in these domains (Mabry 2015: 1). It is within this securitised frame that research on Muslim HE has largely been carried out.

2.2.2 Political Developments Determining the Shape of Muslim HE Research

Those studies that focus on Muslim HE (Monk 2016; Myers and Bhopal 2018; Pattison 2020) emphasise the impact two political developments have had on perceptions of Muslims home-educators; the so called "Trojan Horse" scandal and the Government's Prevent strategy. Prevent aims to combat the "process of radicalisation" that leads to "violent and non-violent forms" of "extremism" (Home Office 2011: 13 & 23). Importantly for Muslims home-educators, Prevent views education as a key sector within which to achieve its strategic aims, with Muslim children being viewed as particularly vulnerable to this "process of radicalisation" (ibid). The logic of Prevent was illustrated during the so called "Trojan Horse" scandal in 2014, when a letter was leaked to national newspapers alleging that an "Islamist plot" was aiming to "take over" several Birmingham schools (Miah 2017b: 139-140). Prevent guidelines where employed during OFSTEAD's investigation into the affair, despite the fact that a Governmental review into the scandal had found no evidence of "radicalisation" or a "sustained plot" in any of the schools identified (House of Commons, Education Select Committee 2015: 3).

The underlying assumptions that informed the Trojan Horse scandal resurfaced in 2015 when the then head of OFSTEAD Michael Wilshaw claimed that Muslim home-educated children were at "risk of exposure to extremism and radicalisation" (Wilshaw

2015; 2016). More explicit links were made between Muslim home-educators and extremism in 2017 when the then Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Neil Basu claimed that HE was a "breeding ground for extremists and future terrorists" (Simpson 2017). The only empirical study to have investigated these claims is Charles-Warner's study, which contacted 152 English Local Authorities (LA's) asking whether there had been any cases of home-educated children being radicalised (2017). The findings claim that, "100% [of LA's] stated that they had no evidence to suggest that any home-educated child in their region had been radicalised" (ibid: 2). To Pattison, political distrust of HE in general has been intensified in the case of Muslim home-educating families, where a "new and narrower focus of suspicion" has emerged (2020: 8). As Myers and Bhopal argue, the current political context has created a paradigm within which a Muslim's decision to home-educate is portrayed as "evidence of separation from mainstream society, of inculcating radicalising non-British values and eventually threatening British society with extremism." (2018: 224).

2.2.3 The Limitations of Current HE Research on Muslims

Both Myers & Bhopal (2018) and Pattison's (2020) works take a critical stance towards the dominant frames within which Muslim home-educating families have been portrayed. While offering a nuanced account of the contemporary political context Muslim home-educators face, the political focus of these studies fails to transcend the securitised lens they are contesting. These works arguably represent a missed opportunity, for as Kunzman & Gaither's summary of "virtually the entire universe of English-language" research on HE found, there is currently a deficiency of research on religious minorities who home-educate (2013: 4). Rather than engaging with the everyday experiences of Muslim home-educators, current research foregrounds a marginal dimension of Muslim HE. This in turn produces a one-dimensional account of this subject, which remains isolated from, and subsequently cannot contribute to, broader HE debates. To find an analysis on the topics cover in this thesis, we need to move into two broader fields of research: those studies that look at Muslim experiences of education outside the context of HE; and those studies that look at the motives and experiences of home-educating families who are not Muslim. One benefit of my research is that it brings Muslim HE research into contact with these broad fields of enquiry, which in turn, can expand the existing body of HE literature.

2.3 HE Research on Parental Motivations and Educational Styles

2.3.1 Founding Theories on Parental Home-Educating Motives

Studies that explore parental motives to home-educate generally take two approaches, seeking either to provide broad theoretical categories that explain general motivational trends, or to focus on the particular and nuanced motivations of individual home-educating families. Of the former category the most widely cited study is Van Galen's work in America (1988; also cited in Pitman 1991), which places parental motivations into one of two categories: "ideologues" or "pedagogues". Ideologues are those parents motivated by ideological reasons, objecting to the values taught in schools and wanting to inculcate a certain worldview within their children (ibid). Pedagogues on the other hand disagree with the "methods" rather than the "content" of mainstream schooling (ibid: 55). Van Galen's typography has been replicated in various studies, for example Lowden's (1993) UK based study which claimed that the religious trend Van Galen identified was less applicable to British HE.

Though Van Galen's typography remains widely cited in the HE literature, her dual categorisation is seen as "simplistic" by scholars such as Nelson, who argue that this polarisation of home-educating families is irreflective of the nuanced reality of parents' motives to home-educate (2014: 33). Similarly, Burke (2007) argues that Van Galen's work is limited in that it is tied to the particular spatial and temporal context of 80s America. Both these views are reiterated by Rothermel, who believes home educators in the UK are "too diverse a population… to be neatly categorised" (2003: 78). Rothermel's research found an array of factors motivated parents to home-educate, these included Van Galen's ideological reasons and pedagogic concerns, as well as more specific reasons, such as bullying and even parents' own negative school experiences (ibid). More recently Rothermel has claimed that attempts to limit the motivations of parents into specific "types" is based on a "fruitless and flawed methodology" (2011: 52).

2.3.2 A More Nuanced Account of Parental Motivations

The current body of British research on parental home-educating motives has largely overlooked the motives of families from ethnic or religious minorities. An exception to this is Burke's (2007) study, whose sample of home-educating families from inner-city London is primarily comprised of families from religious and ethnic minority backgrounds. Her work found that religious affiliation was the most commonly cited motive in her sample, supporting her view that the influence of religion has been "hugely under-estimated in much of the UK literature" (ibid: 44). Burke compares her study to Fortune-Wood's work (2005), which contends that British HE motivations are primarily pedagogic. Burke reflects on the fact that where the majority of her respondents were from ethnic minorities, Fortune-Wood's study was primarily composed of white families, which she tentatively suggests explains the divergence in their findings. Burke's work offers an indication of the fruits of focusing on home-educating families from non-white backgrounds, which can help inform a more accurate picture of Britain's home-educating population.

There is a small but emerging body of research that focuses on these previously overlooked home-educating families. Bhopal and Myers (2018) book for example has chapters dedicated to: Gypsy and traveller home-educating families; families of children with special needs and disabilities; as well as religious and ethnic minorities. A key finding from their study is that where white families who home-educate are portrayed as "responsible" agents making an informed educational choice, minority families' choice to home-educate is portrayed as "irresponsible" in popular and political discourse (ibid: 224). This is reflected in the words of MP Barry Sheerman who claimed while HE was "tolerable" when it was "confined to a small number of middle-class families", he was "worried" at the emergence of home-educating families from "strong faith backgrounds" (Pattison 2020: 4). This emerging body of HE literature, has succeeded in presenting a different lens through which to understand HE. This has arguably highlighted that some of the assumptions that inform current British HE research may need to be revisited to reflect a more diverse populace of home-educating families.

2.3.3 Parents' Educational Approaches when Home-Educating

Neuman and Guterman (2017) identify three primary educational aims; acculturalisation, socialisation and individualisation. Acculturalisation and socialisation are generally seen within the literature to underlie the aims of mainstream-schooling, while individualisation is more commonly tied to HE (Mitchell 2020; Ryan 2019). Acculturalisation seeks to initiate a child into a particular culture's dominant beliefs and values, while socialisation is more concerned with inculcating within children the norms and rules of conduct that govern society. Individualisation on the other hand, focuses on the growth of the individual through a child-led process of learning, aimed at personalised goals such as self-fulfilment (Ryan 2019). Two other broad educational approaches have been commonly attributed to HE, generally referred to as "structured" or "unstructured" education (Neuman and Guterman 2017: 269). A "structured" HE approach replicates certain aspects of the mainstream-schooling system, for example following a set curriculum and timetable, while in an "unstructured" approach the content and pace of learning is often determined by the learner (Davies 2015).

The broad categories outlined above constitute the primary frames within which the educational styles of home-educating families have been assessed. In British research, Thomas (2002) and Fortune-Wood's (2005) argue that home-educating families tend towards an unstructured approach. Nelson (2014) however argues that long-term home-educators in Britain prefer to use a mix of structured and unstructured techniques to accommodate different age ranges and abilities. Burke's study (2007), which drew primarily on families who identified as religious, found that participants relied on a structured educational approach, with 90% following a timetable and over 70% following a curriculum (ibid: 47). This echoed, Fortune-Wood's contention that there is a "significant difference in the educational styles employed by those who choose to home educate for faith-based [as opposed to pedagogic] reasons" (2005: 48). The above discussion indicates that alterative educational traditions have not been engaged with in the wider HE literature. Of the research I encountered, only Sarwar's (2013) engages with a different perspective on education, drawing on Islamic terminology to inform her analysis of HE.

2.3.4 Islamic Educational Approaches

Murad argues that "it is always best to use indigenous Islamic terminology" when seeking to understand how Muslims conceptualise education (Sufi World 2015). This approach conforms with an emerging academic field called "Islamic education", which according to Sahin aims to bring the "core Islamic values to bear on the meaning of education" in order to interpret education "Islamically" (2018: 335). Sahin claims this field is not based on a "direct religious and dogmatic faith association", rather it seeks a critical assessment of historical and contemporary practices that are understood as "Islamic" by Muslims (ibid). Of the current research on Muslim HE, only Sarwar (2013) attempts to situate her discussion of HE among ongoing debates within this field. These debates can offer an important lens through which to understand how Muslim families may draw on distinct understandings of education when home-educating, which in turn influences their educational approaches and styles.

Hussain (2004) argues that Islamic educational theories begin from a dualistic understanding of the individual and knowledge, which recognises both their spiritual and physical natures. In this conceptualisation both acquired knowledge, such as the natural sciences, as well as revealed or divine sources of knowledge, such as the Quran and Prophetic traditions, are used as sources of educational theory. Merry argues that this leads to separate educational aims, with Islamic education being "pre-eminently concerned with cultivating and sustaining faith" (2010: 53). Others such as Alkouatli (2018) argue that in practice "Muslims in different times and places may hold varying concepts [of education], which interact, change, and build upon one another" (2018: 366). Thus, scholars within the field of Islamic education appreciate the distinct ontological and epistemic foundations that have informed Muslim understandings of education, while also reflecting on the multifaceted ways in which educational theory has been implemented in practice by Muslims historically.

A distinct understanding of Islamic education is more firmly established by reference to three frequently cited Islamic educational concepts: tarbiyah, ta'leem and ta'deeb (Halstead 2004). Tarbiyah is seen by Sahin to be the most encompassing of these terms, which he claims conforms closely to the original Greek meaning of pedagogy, "to lead the child" (Sahin 2018: 335). Derived from the Arabic root raba, which means

to grow or increase, Tarbiyah refers to the physical and spiritual nurturing of a child, which leads to "the transformation of the human condition in its diverse psychical, cognitive, spiritual, moral and emotional articulations" (2018: 335). The second term Ta'leem comes from the Arabic root *alama* which means *to know*, *perceive or learn*, and refers to the process of obtaining or imparting knowledge (Hussain 2004). Nasr argues that taleem ultimately means 'to be transformed by the very process of knowing" thus there is a dynamic component to this term which again draws on both an intellectual and a spiritual transformation (cited in Halstead 2004: 520). Finally, Ta'deeb from the root aduba, meaning to become refined, disciplined or cultured, is understood by Halstead as the development of character accompanied by the inculcation of the correct moral and social etiquette (ibid). Al-Attas (1980) sees this process of moral and social refinement as being geared not simply towards inculcating proper etiquette within society, but as inculcating a correct understanding of the purpose and etiquette of education itself. Thus, Al-Attas draws this term away from an idea of correct conduct, towards one of correct understanding, which again is centred upon humanity's relationship with the divine (ibid).

When balancing these aspects of Islamic education against the wider educational approaches explored above, we recognise that Islamic approaches both share and depart from the educational approaches that are often used to understand HE. For example, the focus on developing and nurturing the individual towards self-realisation, characteristic of the educational approach of "individualisation", is also reflected in the Islamic concept of tarbiyah. However, tarbiyah must be distinguished somewhat due to the understanding that nurturing here refers not only to the physical and intellectual dimensions of the child, but also the spiritual aspect of their character. A further parallel could be made between ta'deeb and the ideas of "acculturalisation, or "socialisation", in that both seek to inculcate within the child an understanding of the social norms and etiquette of society. However, ta'deeb can again be distinguished in that it seeks to inculcate both societal and Islamic norms derived from sources such as the Quran and Prophetic traditions. Thus, while aspects of Islamic education conform with broader theories of education, any parallels must be tempered by an appreciation of the ontological and epistemic perspectives that underlie Muslim understandings of education. This can help inform a more nuanced understanding of the decisions

behind, and educational approaches of, Muslim families who HE, one that is lacking in existing HE research.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

As is true of the original meaning of the Greek word method, "a route that leads to a goal", one's methodology, or research route, is inevitably informed by the theoretical map one refers to when navigating the research process (Kvale 1996: 4). Kvale (ibid) draws on two metaphors to elucidate the varying theoretical maps, or approaches, that can be used in interview research. The first sees the interviewer as a miner, who seeks to unearth valuable knowledge that is situated within the interviewee in the form of "objective facts" or "essential meanings" (ibid). From this epistemic perspective, knowledge is something that is waiting to be uncovered and the goal or value of knowledge is determined in reference to how it reflects an external "real world" or a fully formed, internalised "subjective… authentic experience" (ibid). This conforms to a positivistic conception of knowledge, in which interview data is conceived of as an objective, fixed entity waiting to be drawn out of the interviewee. Data here is often sought for instrumental purposes, such as to achieve generalisable results that can establish facts about a particular phenomenon. The second metaphor that Kvale draws upon sees the interviewer through the lens of a traveller, with knowledge taking the form of stories, or qualitative accounts, that are uncovered at different stages of the traveller's journey (ibid). In line with the original Latin meaning of the word conversation "wandering together with", knowledge arises in this metaphor as part of a dynamic, interactive process, with both the interviewer and interviewee involved in the production of knowledge (ibid). This epistemic perspective takes a more interpretive frame, seeking to arrive at knowledge in a form that reflects "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty 1998: 67). The approach I have taken conforms to this latter, interpretive understanding of knowledge, with the works interest, or goal, being to explore the unique, individual and qualitative aspects of my interviewees' experiences of HE.

I have adopted aspects of a phenomenological approach in my research, first articulated in Brentano's conceptualisation of the "life-world (lebenswelt)" (Sahin 2013: 59). Schutz (1972) conceived of the "life-world" as relating to the study of subjective

experiences, located in the events of daily life, through which an individualised understanding of meaning could emerge. This can be used as a means to focus on the individual meanings Muslim parents assign to their experiences of HE. I also draw on Husserl's dynamic conception of individual self-understanding, in which an individual's "life-world" is not understood as fixed, but rather as in a constant process of becoming, as it interacts with the constantly evolving spatial, temporal and social contexts in which it is situated (Husserl 1970: 138). This conforms to a constructionist ontology, in which social phenomena and the subjective meaning assigned to them, are understood to be in a continuous process of emergence, formation and revision (Bryman 2008). In line with those elements cited above, I will emphasise the dynamic, contextual and interactive nature of my participants' HE journeys, which will be explored through the use of qualitative interviewing.

3.2 Qualitative Interviewing and Accessing the Subjective

Qualitative interviewing is seen as a particularly effective method for gaining access to subjective sources of data, those aspects of the individual that are normally "hidden from ordinary view" (Gubrium and Holstein 2001: 105). Qualitative interviewing, arguably more than any other qualitative tool, allows the interviewer to be "attuned" to individual accounts, which McKraken claims allows the researcher "to step into the mind of another person" (1998: 9). It is worth noting here that the idea of accessing subjectivity is contested in the literature on qualitative interviewing. Atkinson and Silverman for example are wary of a naïve view of subjectivity and contend that interviews offer "no more authentic or pure a reflection of the self than any other socially organized set of practices" (1997: 322). They go on to argue that rather than being an "authentic" individual account, interview data is an intersubjective construction, with the researcher playing a key role in the production of meaning derived through the interview (ibid). Hammersley and Atkinson offer a more practical portrayal of subjectivity, claiming that the value of interview data does not lie in its ability to access subjectivity, but in its ability to assist the researcher in answering their research questions (2007: 109).

This functional approach underlies my decision to use qualitative interviewing, which was seen as best suited to deriving an in-depth account of my participants'

experiences of HE. In-depth here refers to what Johnson sees as the capacity of qualitative interviewing to "penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature" of a particular phenomenon, allowing "us to grasp and articulate multiple views and perspectives" on a particular subject (cited in Gubrium and Holstein 2001: 106-107). These aspects of the qualitative interview can help me produce deep and diverse accounts of Muslim HE, which is needed due to the fact that there is presently a notable deficit of qualitative data on this subject. Another concern of my research is to diversify the current narratives that exist around Muslim HE, which are currently characterised by a narrow, security driven focus. Qualitative interviewing was useful in this sense as it allowed multiple subjects to be explored in a short period of time, creating a greater spectrum of data then could have been achieved within so called "natural" conversational settings. Qualitative interviewing was therefore utilised to provide both a broad and a deep account of Muslims parents experiences of HE, one I believe is missing in the current body of HE literature.

3.3 Conducting Research Under Exceptional Circumstances

A further reason behind both the adoption and subsequent reliance on qualitative interviewing is the unique conditions within which this research has been carried out. While I initially intended to access parents in their homes, the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic has made access to the physical HE space impossible, as all research related activities have been moved online as a result of the pandemic. To reformulate my project within these unprecedented circumstances, I first had to conduct a review of the literature on online interviewing. Coomber claims that online research presents "new [methodological] horizons for the researcher", with both new tools and new challenges emerging (1997: 11). A point raised by several studies (Deakin and Wakefield 2014; Sullivan 2012; Lo Iacono et al. 2016) is that the available literature on online research is currently being outstripped by technological innovation. This lag time means that the literature is in a perpetual state of catch up, as new forms of technology require new methodological considerations.

The first decision I faced in rethinking my research approach concerned the type of technology I would use to conduct my interviews. Online interviewing is generally divided into "synchronous" and "asynchronous" platforms (Sullivan 2012: 55).

Synchronous platforms refer to technologies such as videoconferencing, in which communication occurs in real-time, while asynchronous communication is out of sync, such as in the case of email correspondence. I employed synchronous technologies during my interviews, with the videoconferencing platform Zoom being used to conduct all my interviews. This was seen to best replicate the communicative properties associated with face-face interview formats, within which qualitative interviews are generally conducted.

The communicative impact of conducting interviews online is a key debate in current research on online interviewing methods, with many works arguing that the "human qualities" so important to interview communication are dramatically altered by moving interviews online (Salmons 2011: 1). This is a point reiterated by Hesse-Biber and Griffin, who argue that "tone of voice, and gestures, all provide a certain richness to qualitative data" that is undermined in online interactions (2013: 56). Such communication problems are also seen to undermine the building of rapport, which refers to the trust needed to enable the participant to "feel comfortable in opening up" during the interview (King et al. 2018: 48). Deakin and Wakefield (2014) argue that technical issues such as poor internet connection, can disrupt the flow of conversation, which inhibits the development of rapport. Sullivan however, highlights that communicative issues commonly associated with online communication need to be reassessed in light of society's increasing proficiency and dependence upon technology as a means of communication (2012). These debates illustrate a body of research that is constantly being revised in light of new technologies and social realities. Researchers that employ online technologies are therefore well situated to reflect on their own methodological experiences, which can help to contribute to this subfield of methodological literature.

3.4 Personal Reflections on Online Interviewing

One benefit of conducting interviews online is the reflective opportunities that arise as a result of the various recording technologies linked to online interview programmes. My interviews were recorded via an online screen recording in which both my own and my participants faces were visible. When re-watching my interviews, I was able to

observe my facial expressions and overall demeanour during each interview. The opportunity to evaluate these interview recordings allowed for greater reflectivity during the interview process, as I became more self-conscious of how my online performance could impact the data being produced. This reflects the role the interviewer plays in the production of data during the interview, affirming Atkinson and Silverman's contention that meaning is a joint production within the interview. The dynamics of online interviewing also add to the factors contributing to this production of meaning. For example, the physical distance at which the interview is conducted is not reflected in the actual software interviews are conducted on, which project a very intimate portrayal of the interviewer and interviewee. Lo Iacono et al. (2016) contends that this can actually be beneficial for the interviewer, as the environment created provides both the intimacy of being able to speak within a comfortable space, such as the interviewee's bedroom, while also providing a physical distance that allows the interviewee to feel more comfortable discussing personal topics. While there were subtle differences in the communicative properties of online as opposed to 'real-life' interviewing, I would argue that online interviewing provides a comparable communicative context to face-face interviews. Furthermore, the video recording programmes allowed me to be more self-critical during my post-interview analysis, which helped me develop more refined means of data collection.

3.5 Interview Design and Participant Recruitment

Initially, I veered towards a more open-ended interview design when planning my research, however, during a pilot interview I realised that at times an open-ended approach often led to conversations drifting from the focus of my research. To offset this interview drifting, I decided to employ a semi-structured interview format in my remaining interviews (May 2011: 136). This format allowed me to strike a balance between a flexible approach, in which I could go off script to probe for deeper responses, and a focused approach, that ensured the data drawn from the interview was tailored to the studies central research questions. My initial interview schedule had three main sections, the first explored the motivations of Muslim parents to home-educate, the second explored their educational experiences and styles and the final section assessed the role religion in their HE. My questions were designed to illicit

open responses, which Silverman claims are best suited to accessing the interviewee's "views, interpretations of events, understanding, experiences and opinions" all key ingredients of a deep account of Muslim families' HE arising (2015: 171).

My participant recruitment relied on a "snowball sampling" technique, in which my initial participants put me in contact with other home-educating parents. An important feature of my participant recruitment was to find parents who were at different stages of their HE journeys. Some of my participants had just begun home-educating, others had children who were at primary or secondary school, while some children had finished their education altogether. The intention behind this recruitment strategy was to replicate a longitudinal study, which Kunzman and Gaither (2013) suggest is currently lacking in the HE literature. In my interviews I was able to explore the experiences of parents whose children were at the beginning, middle and end of their educational journeys. This allowed me to compare and contrast the experiences of families during different educational phases. Through this approach I was able to explore the dynamic and transformative dimensions of parents' educational experiences, which conformed with the phenomenological approach I sought to apply in my interviews.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior to beginning my research, I was required to obtain ethical approval from Cardiff University by submitting a "School of History, Archaeology and Religion Research and Teaching Ethical Approval Form". As this research relied specifically on data obtained through interviews, informed consent was required to ensure participants were aware of what participating in the research would entail. A participant information sheet was sent out to all my participants prior to their interviews being conducted. This outlined the general aims of the research, as well as stating that it was being carried out for an MA dissertation. It also included issues more directly related to my research participants, which included; what participant involvement would entail; how the research data generated would be handled and stored; as well as a clear statement that participants had the right withdraw from the research at any time. There were no direct risks identified with being involved in the study, though the issue of participant

confidentiality was addressed prior to conducting the interviews. I made it clear that all efforts would be made to anonymise data during the research, such as by refraining from using identifiable information in the thesis and using pseudonyms during my data analysis. Participants were then given a consent form to sign and date prior to their interviews being conducted, which established that they understood the details explored above.

3.7 Reflexivity

Alvesson defines reflexivity as "an effort to reflect on how the researcher is located in a particular social, political, cultural and linguistic context" and how this impacts the research being carried out (Alvesson 2002: 179). A key aspect of reflexivity is being aware of the autobiographical lens one brings to the research, which is particularly important to the interview process, where data production and analysis are the result of an intersubjective interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (Finlay 2002). Gubrium and Holstein's (2003) study argues that taking account of one's situatedness in the research process enriches the research, adding to the authenticity of the data analysis. As a Muslim, the father of a new-born son and a teacher, I had a personal connection to this research topic in various ways, each of which informed my interview approach. During the interviews I was therefore often able to illustrate how this research related to me personally, either as a father thinking of his son's education, as a teacher looking at alterative educational practices or as a Muslim thinking about Islamic approaches to education. I felt that this openness facilitated the building of rapport during my interviews and often opened up channels for deeper discussion. I was however, aware of Dwyer and Buckle's (2009) warning that reliance on this insider perspective can create a naïve view of a researchers positionality in the research, which obscures the reality that one is never an absolute insider. So, while I drew on my personal narrative and the characteristics I shared with my participants during the interviews, such as religion and at times ethnicity, I was also aware of how other factors, such as our ages, gender and occupations, could remained distinct. This reflects the balancing act that is required when drawing on one's insider/outsider status, as one occupies different positions along this spectrum during the interview process. I did my best to take into consideration my positionality not only during the interview process itself, but also during my data analysis, being aware that the

production of meaning that occurs during interviews is also evident in the subsequent stages of the research process.
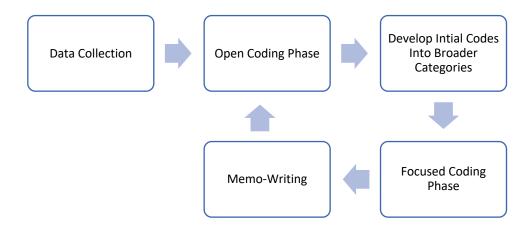
3.8 Data analysis

My data analysis was informed by some of the core tenants of a grounded theory approach. Originally conceived of by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory has since evolved into an array of analytical strategies that are often applied in "diluted ways" according to Charmaz and Belgrave (2012: 346). Despite the various approaches employed under the rubric of grounded theory, a hallmark of this analytical approach is to generate theories through the data itself (Halaweh et al. 2008). The original architects of grounded theory Glaser and Strauss (1967) diverged on questions such as the extent to which data collection should be informed by a prior literature review. My analytical approach could broadly be assigned to a Straussian approach, which Gray (2014) characterises as inductive-deductive, as the researcher draws on preconceived theories and hypothesis, while also allowing new concepts and theories to emerge throughout the research process. This process is therefore iterative in the sense that the researcher goes back and forth between data collection and analysis several times during the research process as a means of data refinement (Charmaz and Belgrave 2012). For example, my interview guide was adapted several times as I gained a clearer idea of the questions best suited to the particular themes I wanted to investigate.

A key aspect of grounded theory is the process of coding, which involves the researcher undertaking a detailed and close inspection of the data. Coding is governed by analytical "sensitivity", which reflects the ability of the researcher to determine what pieces of data are significant and what meanings can be assigned to them (Halaweh et al. 2008: 5). This sensitivity was initially informed by my literature review[1] and then sharpened during my interviews and during the transcription phase of my interviews. I used several methods to transcribe, outsourcing half of the interviews to an external company and transcribing the other four myself. After my transcription came the first

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[1] My initial literature review was carried out through the Cardiff University search engine and other platforms such as Scopus. Key words such as "Muslim" and "Home-Education" were given quotation marks to narrow my search results. I also contacted scholars who had written on Muslim HE directly for further references.

phase in my coding process, often referred to as the initial or "open" coding phase (ibid). This involved highlighting words, phrases or sentences that I believed were relevant to my research questions (ibid). The pieces of text highlighted were then given a particular code or title, which reflected the particular meaning I felt the data held, for example any phrases that related to Islamic ideas of education were given the code "Islamic education".

During the next phase of coding, often referred to as focused coding (Charmaz and Belgrave 2012), I organised my coded data into specific themes or categories which constituted the focus of my data analysis. These correlated with the three lines of questioning in my interview schedule: my participants' motivations to HE; their educational experiences and styles; and the role of religion in their HE. This phase was followed by the final and key stage of my data analysis, which was the process of memo-writing. Memo-writing consists of interpreting the key pieces of data that have been identified in the earlier coding phases and detailing how they relate to my research questions. This constitutes the process of writing a cohesive narrative, within which key quotes from the interview are interwoven into the final body of analysis being developed. My coding process and memo-writing were carried out iteratively over several cycles, as I revisited, revised and developed my memos and codes to produce a refined body of analysis. The following diagram gives an overview of this process.

3.9 Participant Profiles

Participants	Educational Qualification/Subject	Teaching Experience Prior to HE (N/Y)	No. of Children	Children's Age Range (Years-old)
Safiyya	MA in accountancy	N	2	5-8
Sawda	BA in Education	Y	2	5-8
Salma	BA in Education	Y	4	5-14
Usama	BA in Education	Y	3	1-5
Umamah	B.Sc. in Pharmacy	Y	3	1-5
Habiba	PhD in Medicine	N	3	14-21
Hafsa	BA in Art	Y	4	11-25
Muhsin	PhD in Social Science; Degree in Education.	Y	1	1
Zayd	Ijaza in Islamic Studies; MA in Social Science	Y	2	5-7
Zaynab	BA in Education	N	2	5-7

My study involved ten research participants, of which seven were female and three were male. I conducted eight interviews in total, two featuring both parents (Usama & Umamah / Zayd & Zaynab), five featuring just the mothers and one featuring just the father. Three of the ten participants were based in Wales, while the other seven were based in England. Seven of my participants were of British-Asian ethnicity, while one was White-American and two White-British, my white participants had become Muslims during adulthood. A strong trend among my participants was educational and teaching experience. All my participants had university degrees, half of which were in education. Almost all of my participants had teaching experience prior to beginning their children's HE. Four of my participants claimed to have formal Islamic training, though in various institutional capacities. One had studied at a seminary full-time, one had studied part-time while teaching at an Islamic school, one was beginning a BA in Islamic studies at the Cambridge Muslim College and the final parent received her Islamic education at home. Three of the four parents who identified as having some form of formal Islamic education were men, interestingly they were the fathers who were most actively engaged in their children's HE from the families interviewed.

4.0 Findings

In this section I will present my findings. These will be split into the following three sub-sections which represent the main themes of my thesis: Muslim parents' motivations to home-educate; Muslim parents' educational styles and approaches home-educating; and the role of Islam in Muslim parents' HE. Each sub-section will be further divided into the more specific themes that emerged from my interview data.

4.1 Muslim Parents' Motivations to Home-Educate

My findings reiterate Rothermel's (2003) claims that classifying parental motivations into distinct types is irreflective of the complexities that govern this dimension of HE. Rather than parental motivations being singular and isolated, my participants' reflected on the varied and interrelated influences that informed their decisions to HE. Furthermore, rather that this decision being fixed and final, parents illustrated how their decisions were dynamic, with motivations evolving and altering over time. The decision to HE was also dialectic in nature, as parents' motivations to home-educate were made in consultation with both family members and wider social networks. These nuances are necessary to keep in mind as we assess my participants' motives to home-educate.

4.1.1 The Convergence of Pedagogic and Ideological Motivations

The motivations identified in my study depart in important ways from the findings of previous studies on the parental motives of religious families' who home-educate. For example, Habiba makes the following claim,

> Initially it [my motivation to home-educate] was because I was deeply moved by a vision of a utopian beginning to the education of my children. And then hand in hand with that was keeping in mind the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, that for the first seven years you play with them, the next seven years you educate them and then you befriend them.

This idea of a "utopian beginning to education" is indicative of what Van Galen (1988) refers to as a "pedagogic" motivation, in which pedagogic concerns drive a family's decision to home-educate. Van Galen and others (i.e. Fortune-Wood 2005; Burke 2007) claim that pedagogic motivations are less prevalent among home-educating families who identify as religious, where ideological factors are seen as more pronounced. While in certain cases my findings support those claims, on the whole my research points to a more complicated picture than this motivational dichotomy between religious and non-religious home-educating families.

For Usama, ideological factors were central to his decision to HE. As he states,

> More and more you see that education is not just this objective training and knowledge of the world, it's more instilling a different set of principles from those of our religion… there is always this underlying bias that comes from a secular, materialistic and often times cynical worldview and I don't want that to be imparted on my children rather than their Islamic heritage. So that's one of the main reasons I want my children to be home-educated, so they can inherit what we Muslims want to pass on to them. (Usama)

Sawda draws on similar influences to frame her primary motivation to HE. As she states,

> Just to awaken the spirituality within my children that is sometimes put to sleep because of the [mainstream] education system; because it's so dry, so factual and so knowledge-based. I think that is the main motivation, how can I raise an individual or individuals who will benefit not just themselves but their whole environment (Sawda)

Despite certain similarities, there are important differences between these quotes which have implications for how we understand the particular motivations being presented. In Usama' case, he focuses on the impact of sending his children to mainstream-schools, where there is an absence of the worldview he wants to transmit to his children. Sawda however shifts the focus away from what is absent in mainstream-schools and towards the possibilities presented in the context of HE, in

which the faith dynamic of a child's education can be prioritised. In many interviews these two points were understood to be interrelated, as a concern for mainstream schooling's inability to support a child's faith development was weighed against the opportunities for their faith development within the context of HE.

While previous research has emphasised a dichotomous view of parental motivations, in which ideological and pedagogical concerns are seen as distinct, my findings indicate that these motivational strands were seen as interdependent in my participants' views. This convergence between the ideological and pedagogic is encapsulated in how my participants referred to the Islamic concept of "tarbiyah". Sahin describes tarbiyah as a pedagogic process aimed at the "the transformation of the human condition in its diverse psychical, cognitive, spiritual, moral and emotional articulations" (2018: 335). This understanding of tarbiyah, and by extension of pedagogy, was echoed by several parents in this study. Zayd for example states that, "tarbiyah is about providing a wholistic upbringing to children… focusing on the mental, physical, educational, social and spiritual needs of the child". Inherent within this pedagogic understanding is the idea that the nurturing of children comprises both physical and metaphysical qualities. Pedagogy is not seen as an end or a motivation in itself in this conceptualisation, but rather as a process that is related to a particular understanding of reality. In this sense the pedagogic and ideological factors parents identified during my interviews are best understood as dependant rather than distinct motives. As Muhsin summarises, "tarbiyah is a pedagogical process through which we realise the divine", which could be rephrased to read, pedagogy is a means through which ideology is realised (Muhsin).

4.1.2 The Unique Circumstances Within Which Parents Decide to Home-Educate

I have initially framed my discussion of parental motivations amidst the broader HE literature. I would now like to focus on some of the more particular aspects of my participants' decisions to home-educate. As Sawda states,

> I actually did not want to home educate, I took a career break with the intention that whatever they [my children] were taught at school I would supplement it, I would give the spiritual aspect that may be missing in their education at school,

but I had no intention of home-schooling. But my children wanted me to home-school them, my husband wanted me to home-school them and this was because of the lockdown [Note - this research was conducted in 2020 during a global pandemic which resulted in major international restrictions on movement and access to public spaces such as schools]. Because the lockdown started I had to teach my children at home and the manner in which I taught, my children really liked that. My husband who was a silent witness to this was also really impressed with the way I taught them… With my eldest child, who was bullied at school, he didn't have a very good start at school because he is very emotionally intelligent, he is emotionally intelligent but not academically intelligent… he just refused to go back to school, he said I can't go back to school after you've taught me. So, then I decided ok I'll go ahead with it. (Sawda)

There are several particularities to Sawda's account that are worthy of deeper reflection. Firstly, Sawda identifies the unique circumstances that have been bought about by the Coronavirus pandemic and the influence this had on her decision to home-educate. This indicates how particular circumstances can influence a parent's decision to home-educate. This is also true of the influence her child's experience of being bullied had in that decision. These extenuating circumstances and specific issues often fall outside the typologies employed in previous studies to explain parental home-educating motives. In my research however, I found that parents often emphasised these more nuanced, particular factors, and the role they played in their decision to home-educate.

Salma for example claimed her primary motivation to HE was a desire to ensure her children had more time with their father who worked long hours. Other parents such as Umamah and Safiyya cited the impact of being impressed with the character of their friends' home-educated children. The myriad of motivations my participants cited supports Rothermel's claim that attempts to limit parental motivations to specific "types" is based on a "fruitless and flawed methodology" (2011: 52). Rather my analysis favours a more expansive view of parental motivations, with a recognition that the decision to home-educate is influenced by various and often interrelated factors, as well as the particular circumstances within which that decision is made.

4.1.3 Interactive Dimensions of Parental Motivations

A final observation that can be drawn from Sawda's passage in the previous section is the dynamic component of a parent's decision to home-educate. Sawda explicitly states that her family's decision to home-educate was largely influenced by her children's desire to be home-educated. This demonstrates the agency children and other actors exhibit in a family's decision to home-educate. By recognising the interactive dimensions of parents' motivations we add an extra layer of complexity to our analysis of parental motivations. This interactive dynamic is also evident between parents when they decide to home-educate, which is an aspect of this subject that is largely overlooked in HE research. In the interviews I conducted in which both parents participated, it was evident that parents were often driven by different motivations. For example in Usama and Umamah's case, Usama was more intellectually driven while Umamah was convinced by her experiences meeting home-educated children. It is important to appreciate the process through which these distinct motivations are integrated when parents decide to home-educate. This integration is not necessarily a mutual process, in which the role of each parent is equal, rather my findings suggest that one parent often has a stronger influence in the decision-making process.

In the majority of my interviews, mothers exhibited greater influence in both their children's education and in the family's decision to home-educate. As this exchange between Zayd and Zaynab illustrates,

> Zaynab: Even when we got married, I did push home-schooling quite a lot… we didn't always agree on this because I had more time to think about it and because I was much more passionate... I knew what it was all about. So, I guess we were in different stages of our home-schooling journey… And I did feel quite upset at times that he didn't agree with me in certain things – which, obviously now looking back, I shouldn't have forced it upon him.

> Zayd: Yes. I mean, literally, that is exactly what happened. I hadn't even heard of the concept of home-schooling before getting married. So, it is just about being at different stages. Obviously, she was aware of it a lot earlier. And, for

me, this was a completely new concept. So, it took me time just to process this idea.

This emphasises the point that rather than being a unified force, parents' autonomy needs to be recognised when assessing their motivations to home-educate. While parents ultimately make a unified decision, the motivating factors and emotions that surround this decision are ultimately held and experienced separately.

While in Zayd and Zaynab's case the decision to home-educate was eventually made in consultation, in Salma's case it appears that this decision-making process was more one-sided. As she states,

> I make the final decisions with the children. That is just the dynamic that we have. I discussed it with him [the decision to home-educate], but I don't think he was that keen … I think now, particularly as they've got older and he's seen the benefits of HE, he's glad that we did it. (Salma)

Salma's case is illustrative of the supportive role fathers were presented as playing in the decision to home-educate. Thus, fathers were described as "on board" (Safiya) or a "silent witnesses" (Sawda), "supporting" (Habiba) mothers during this process. The greater influence mothers exerted in the decision-making process was perhaps reflective of their role as their children's primary educator. As Usama points out, "my wife has been the major player, she deserves 90% of the credit" for our children's HE. Fathers on the other hand were mainly portrayed as providers in my intereviews, with only three fathers claiming to be involved in their children's education. Thus, my findings indicate that the more limited the father's role in their children's education the more limited their influence in the family's decision to home-educate.

4.1.4 Motives in Motion

A final point worth reflecting upon is how different families at different stages of their HE journeys explained their motives. Of the eight families interviewed, three had children who had finished their education or were in secondary school, three had children of primary school age and the final two had children who were below the

Government's compulsory school age of five. In this sense my study replicated the different stages of a child's educational journey. Those parents with more experience home-educating often spoke about how their motivations changed over time. As Hafsa reflects,

> Obviously, you want to know why people home-school? For a myriad of different reasons people home-school however there is a strain, which I probably was influenced by a bit when I started, which was quite a strict motivation, like I want to keep my children away from everything… keeping them very insular. When I home-schooled my first child I was a little bit that way of thinking. But then when I started home-schooling my youngest daughter it was very different; she is 14 and my eldest daughter is 23 so there's over 10 years between them.

In Hafsa's case her initial motivations fitted Van Galen's typography, in which ideological factors drove her decision to HE. However, as time went on she became more concerned with pedagogic issues, being influenced by alternative educational philosophies. This illustrates the transformative aspects of a parent's decision to home-educate, which cannot be accounted for within the rigid typography often used to understand parental home-educating motives. This dynamic and constantly unfolding understanding of HE validates Kunzman and Gaither's (2013) proposal that new studies on HE should take a longitudinal approach, observing families experiences of HE over a longer period of time. While I was unable to provide such a study due to the time constraints of my research, I sought to replicate this longitudinal approach in a very limited way through my participant recruitment. By drawing on participants at diverse stages of their HE journeys, I was able to illustrate the dynamic, negotiable and unfolding nature of this aspect of HE; contributing to a more nuanced understanding of HE emerging.

4.2 Muslim Parents' Educational Styles and Approaches to HE

4.2.1 Structured vs. Unstructured HE, A False Dichotomy?

Current British research on HE often assumes that families that identify as religious are more accustomed to employing structured educational approaches and practices (Fortune-Wood 2005). This infers that those parents will rely on an educational approach that mimics mainstream schools; for example, following the national curriculum, a timetable or textbooks. In the only previous study that has included data on the educational practices of Muslim families who home-educate, Burke (2007) argued that structured educational methods were indicative of her participants' educational approaches. These findings echoed Fortune-Wood's claim that there is a "significant difference in the educational styles employed by those who choose to home educate for faith-based [rather than pedagogic] reasons" (2005: 48). My findings challenge these claims, suggesting that the abstract dichotomy of "structured" vs "unstructured" offers a limited framework within which to understand my research participants' educational styles. Far from being fixed, the parents interviewed in this study employed diverse and flexible educational practices when home educating, echoing Nelson's (2014) claim that long-term home educators use a mix of structured and unstructured educational techniques.

Several parents indicated that while they initially started with so called structured educational methods, their approaches tended to become more flexible as time went on. As Zaynab reflects,

> For me, initially I thought that I would like to make school at home… where I have a set text for everything and the children will follow the curriculum in all subjects every single day, just like in school. But I think, over time, that has changed.

As with Zaynab, several other parents commented on the gradual transformation of their educational approaches as they became more experienced home-educating. For Umamah the initial phase of her HE journey involved a personal struggle, in which she

sought to recalibrate her previously held understandings of education in light of the new realities she faced home-educating her children. As she reflects,

> I'm actually in the process now of trying to break myself out of the mentality of a rigid system… In my head I have this internal pressure, a clock that's ticking and saying you know she needs to learn because she's showing interest and she's ready to learn… for me to become freestyle and just blow with the wind, it's quite a challenge, but it's something I'm trying to get my head around. (Umamah)

Umamah's case reflects the evolution several parents went through in their educational approach. As she goes on to state,

> This HE journey is not just about my children, but it's about me and my approach to education and children, and me undoing some of the pressure from the schooling system that's in the back of my mind … so, it is definitely a journey, it's a struggle. (ibid)

For all my participants, the reality of home-educating had a transformative effect on their understanding of education. This reflects what Neuman and Aviram describe as the "paradigmatic change" that occurs when parents begin home-educating, as preconceived ideas of education have to adjust to fit a new educational context and lifestyle (2003: 132).

My findings indicate that the adoption of a binary, structured vs unstructured framework, cannot account for the transformative aspects of my participants' experiences home-educating. Rather, my participants' educational journeys were part of an ongoing process, in which they explored and integrated diverse educational elements into their children's education. Those parents who had more experience home-educating were able to offer a more detailed picture of this process. As Salma's response to the question "what advice would you give people interested in HE?" indicates,

Don't try to recreate school at home... I tried it, it doesn't work. I've seen various people come into HE with all this planning, and, "We're going to do this at nine o'clock" It doesn't last. It's just very, very stressful. I think it's just having the confidence in the kids that they will be fine. They will read, they will write, they will find an interest that they will follow. And you don't have to get too involved… Just be there and facilitate opportunities.

As is evident, Salma eventually settled on a more relaxed educational approach, which was indicative of the unstructured educational styles adopted by the most experienced parents in my study.

Despite this transition towards an unstructured educational approach, most parents incorporated certain structured features into their children's educational programmes. In particular, English and Maths were largely taught in structured ways, with most parents referring to the national curriculum as "a base" from which to measure their children's development in those subjects (Habiba's interview). For some families this was a means to track their children's development in these key subject areas, while for others it was intended to prepare children to enter secondary schools in the future. All the parents interviewed allocated a specific slot in which literacy and numeracy skills would be covered, though in general this was incorporated into a flexible daily timetable. As Safiya outlines,

It [the children's timetable] changes from day to day, week to week. For example, my son woke up at 6 a.m. today and then went back to bed and then woke up at 10 a.m. so everything today has been different. But we do try to get up early and do some formal study after breakfast... With three kids it depends on their timetable, every day's different to be honest. We try to squeeze in about an hour to 2 hours of formal education when possible.

While Safiya and other parents incorporated a short slot in their day for these "formal" subjects, outside of this period learning occurred in varied and often highly individualised ways.

One of the reasons for this individualised approach to education was that parents wanted to cater to the different ages, abilities, learning styles and interests of their children. This meant that parents tended towards "child-led" approaches, in which learning was directed by the interests of the children themselves (Ryan 2019: 6). As Zaynab puts it,

> For me, I want my children to be able to pursue what they enjoy. So, if they are inclined towards, I don't know, the sciences or if they are inclined towards the arts, then I would like them to pursue their passion and increase their creativity in that passion, rather than being restricted to the same subject every day and having to complete each subject, even if they are not comfortable with it.

Another common theme in my participants educational approach was an expansive, non-classroom-based model of education, in which learning happened in varied contexts during the day. As Habiba relates,

> Even though the formal education was from 9:00am until 1:00pm every day, I don't think I ever stopped teaching. So, it [her children's education] would always relate back to, "Do you remember when we talked about this?" or, "Look at that. Do you remember what that was about that?"… looking for the links and the informative aspects of daily life that tied into a much higher intellectual thought process.

Habiba's integration of her children's education into everyday activities was replicated by several parents, with concepts such as "rounded" (Zayd & Zaynab's interview), "holistic" (ibid), "interconnectivity" (Habiba's interview), etc. being common place in my participants' descriptions of their children's education.

Parents were also keen to stress the extra-curricular aspects of their children's education, which was cited as a means of allowing children access to broader socialisation with children their age. This emphasis on finding environments to interact with children from different backgrounds has a heightened meaning in the case of Muslim families who choose to home-educate. As my literature review outlines, popular and political discourses around Muslim families who home-educate are often

tied to political issues such as integration and extremism. While these issues were not explicitly addressed in my interviews, parents seemed aware of these debates, which perhaps explained their eagerness to emphasise the socially orientated aspects of their children's education. Muhsin offers a concise summary of the sentiments echoed by various parents,

> Our son's HE has to be supplemented with as much interaction with the outside world as possible... With this constant interaction with the world around him, along with the model we implement at home, he can understand that these things can be negotiated, i.e. his faith and the world around him.

Muhsin seemed to recognise that HE is somewhat detached from wider society and that efforts need to be made to ensure children are given opportunities to engage with it. While parents reflected on this, there was little indication of how children felt about the topic of socialisation. The only reference I had to a child's perspective on this issue came indirectly during Habiba's interview, when she related that her daughter said the following to her before our interview, "I want to make sure you explain that it [her HE] wasn't all perfect. It wasn't all rosy. It was a little bit lonely and it was a little bit strange" (Habiba's interview). This quote indicates that children are likely to draw on distinct aspects of their education to that which is presented by their parents. The exclusion of children from my research represents a limitation of my thesis, which would have benefited from the unique perspectives' children could have provided. A possible way to offset this limitation would have been to either interview children, a choice that was made more difficult in my case due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, or to alter my interview structure to include questions that asked my participants about what they thought their children's experience of HE had been. While this latter option wouldn't include children's views directly, it would have generated distinct responses to those gathered through my interviews; which focused exclusively on parents perspectives.

4.2.2 Challenges Parents Faced when Home-Educating

Parents faced an array of challenges during their children's HE eliciting varied emotions. Salma's "biggest challenge" was having to cater to the needs of four children of varied ages, learning styles and abilities. As her sons got older it became

increasingly difficult for Salma to manage the different demands each child's education required, not to mention the other responsibilities she had as a mother of four. As she relates,

> When they were younger, I found it easier to do stuff with them in the house and teach. We did more projects or work or whatever it was, but as they've got older, it's impossible for me to do that because I've got two younger children as well and the house stuff and I work, and I can't do it all. (ibid)

Salma's experience indicates the struggles mothers in particular face in balancing the various roles and responsibilities expected of them when home-educating. Reflecting on some of the emotions this bought up, Salma states that "it was hard and I'm really (Laughter) really fed up with it. I don't enjoy it as much as I did in the beginning, on a personal level". This sense of frustration and fatigue was echoed by Habiba, who states,

> It is also sometimes hard to try and motivate every aspect of them and to try and be their playmate and the teacher and the parent and the companion. You have to be everything, and it is not always that easy because we are all human. It was quite exhausting.

In the case of Hafsa the challenges she faced were amplified by the fact that she was a single mother. The difficultly of maintaining these varied responsibilities eventually caused her to stop home-educating. As she reflects,

> It was very difficult doing it at that time because I moved a lot, I moved three times in one year, so you can imagine how stressful it was. It was very difficult home-schooling two kids with another baby... So, I had no car, no computer and I was a single parent, well I'm not a depressive person that was just a very difficult time… So, I had to just throw in the towel and I thought it was better they go to school. (Hafsa)

It is interesting to note the parallels between the experiences mentioned in the above three cases, with each mother highlighting the challenge of balancing their various responsibilities as both primary educator and carer of their children.

These extracts were taken from those interviews that involved the three most experienced home-educators in my study. Interestingly the challenges these parents identified contrasted with those portrayed by mothers who were just beginning their children's HE; which often revolved around mothers' struggles to decide which educational approaches to adopt. As Zaynab reflects,

> I think the challenges are that there is no clear guidance on how to home-school... There are all sorts of different types of home-schooling. It is very overwhelming for somebody who is just new into it... It is like a minefield, there is so much information that you just don't know what to do, and you just get confused.

This initial phase of a family's HE journey elicited a range of emotions, from the confusion Zaynab highlights, to the anxieties felt by Umamah in the following passage,

> I do have fears, I think every parent has fears. I've taken the responsibility away from the schooling system and we've put it on ourselves. So that makes us more fearful of what if we wrong our children, what If through education we crush their spirit. (Umamah)

In comparing the challenges identified by mothers in their HE journeys, it appeared that there were distinct emotions that were felt at different phases of those journeys. The initial anxieties mothers faced were eventually replaced by the varied demands that were placed on them as both mother and educator. Those fathers involved in their children's education echoed their wives' concerns, however again, due to their limited role in their children's HE, fathers' struggles were less identifiable than the mothers interviewed in my study.

4.2.3 Comparisons with Previous HE Research

The only other study available that has data on the educational choices of Muslim families who home-educate is Burke's work (2007). Burke's research found that Muslim home-educating parents primarily relied on structured educational styles, which contrasts with the varied, but primarily unstructured styles my participants employed. There are a few reasons that possibly explain the discrepancies in our findings. The first concerns the demographics of our studies, Burke's study was focused on a specific inner-city community in which low-incomes and unemployment were above the national average. My participants on the other hand included families from varying financial background, located in different parts of England and Wales. In certain cases, there was an acknowledgement that the family's economic status allowed for greater educational possibilities. As Habiba states,

> I must admit I am very fortunate in the sense that my husband is a consultant doctor and so we have enough to sustain our approach financially without me having to go and work.

These economic circumstances had a bearing on the educational choices families could make. Thus, while for some of my participants access to private tutors and classes such as horse-riding were part of their HE programmes, for the parents in Burke's research these choices may not have been financially viable. Zayd believed that HE was a "privilege" due to the role economic factors played in the ability to home-educate. He and his wife Zaynab reflected upon the financial constraints they faced in their HE; as he reflects,

> We might send our children to secondary school. We might continue to home-school if we are able to get tuition. But, again, there is an economic factor there… we probably wouldn't be able to afford that ourselves. (Zayd & Zaynab's interview)

In the build-up to Hafsa deciding to stop home-educating she faced severe economic issues, such as not having access to a car and being evicted three times in one year, which she cites as key reasons for her decision to stop her children's HE. My

participants therefore recognised the role economic factors played in their educational approaches, with some parents being granted greater freedom in their educational choices and some facing greater constraints.

While economic factors clearly played a role in the educational approaches and activities parents adopted, economic factors in themselves cannot describe the divergences in mine and Burke's findings. Another factor that I would say played a more pronounced role in the differences in our findings is the educational experiences of our participants. Eight of the ten participants in my study had teaching experience in mainstream schools, while five had degrees in education. Those parents who had taught in mainstream schools all reflected critically on their teaching experiences and several of my participants drew links between these experiences and their own educational styles when home-educating. As Sawda relates,

> I would like to include [in my children's HE] all the things I would have liked to do in the primary school context, but that I wasn't able to because the curriculum was very constricted in what you had to teach.

For my participants, HE was valued for offering alternative educational opportunities to mainstream-schooling, which arguably explains their tendency to employ alternative educational styles to mainstream-schools. In Burke's study however, there is no indication that parents had prior teaching experience. While her participants did express negative views of particular schools, their critique was not aimed at the schooling system in general. This is highlighted by the fact that in response to the question "what would an ideal education look like?" the majority of Burke's participants responded that it would be, "to find the right school" (2007: 84). My participants on the other hand, emphasised that the underlying issue with mainstream-schooling was not the poor performance of particular schools, but the underlying structures and philosophies that govern the mainstream-schooling system. This leads to a central theme that emerged during my interviews, which concerned the distinct understandings of education my participants presented and the role of religion in those conceptualisations.

4.3 The Role of Islam in Muslim Parents' Understandings of HE

4.3.1 Parental Views on the Aims of Education

A question that elicited particularly rich responses in my interviews was the question, "what do you consider the aims of education to be?". A common answer given, though framed in varying forms, was that education should be geared towards nurturing virtuous human beings. As Sawda outlines,

> Even if I didn't have religion in my teaching approach there would still need to be an ethical quality about my teaching, so that the individual becomes a higher self a higher being, a better being, I feel as though that is lacking [within mainstream schooling].

This absence of an ethical or moral dimension within the mainstream education system was a recurrent critique raised. As Usama contended, "the whole premise of a good educational system has to be a moralistic one… it has to give students the agency to approach life and approach knowledge in a moral way". Muhsin reaffirms this contention, while also raising an important issue concerning the underlying structures that govern mainstream-schools. As he states,

> When we talk about mainstream-schooling you have to look at the structure or framework within which they are operating and whether that framework is looking to nurture those qualities we have discussed; humility, good character etc… Unfortunately, the structure or mainstream-schooling doesn't do that, because mainstream-schooling is very much limited… the overall structure of school is representative of a *compartmentalisation of knowledge.* (Muhsin)

The idea that mainstream-schooling is founded on a "compartmentalised understanding of knowledge" points to a critique several parents echoed in my study; which was that the mainstream-schooling system does not employ a rounded or wholistic educational model.

For my participants, education was seen as directed towards the development of a child's character, importantly this was seen as both spiritual and intellectual in nature. This development was not, however, seen as an end in itself in most cases, rather it was often seen as a means towards a higher, Islamically orientated goal. Thus, for Sawda the aim of education was to "open up levels of higher spirituality" as a means to gain proximity to God. Similar sentiments are expressed by Muhsin, who claimed,

> A key Islamic concept that drives the way I feel Islamic education should be is attaining total devotion to Allah... The end goal of Islamic education is to provide an individual with that access of total devotion.

Thus, during my interviews a very different conceptualisation of education began to emerge, one that sought to integrate faith within a child's broader educational experience.

4.3.2 Towards A Tawhidic Educational Paradigm

Parents often expressed a desire to "integrate" their children's spiritual development with their broader educational experiences (Usama & Umamah's interview). A common critique of mainstream schooling was that the faith dynamic of their children's education was either "compartmentalised" or completely neglected in mainstream-schools (ibid). These sentiments were often informed by parents' experiences as teachers and students at mainstream-schools. As Zayd and Zaynab reflected,

> For me growing up, the home was very Islamic. The school, it was un-Islamic, but not anti-Islamic, but just not Islamic, so to speak... we didn't want the children to think, "Islam is just for home," or, "Islam is just for the mosque," you know, it is you, it is everything. So, you can't separate your religion from your education. It is a holistic view. Everything is one.

Such sentiments often governed how my participants assessed the educational options available to Muslim parents in Britain. As Muhsin summarises,

What are the various arenas Muslim parents have access to? Mainstream schooling, which doesn't encompass any of these aspects [of character and faith development] at all. This is not an option if you want to develop this mindset. Then you have Muslim schools… Most Muslim schools use the pedagogical frameworks that are used in state/mainstream school and are reflective of good practice. From Ofsted or the Government, you won't find a pedagogy that is rooted in an Islamic approach. Where else can Muslim's send their kids to get the level of interaction we are looking at? It has to be the home, it can't be anywhere else.

As Muhsin's quote suggests, HE was seen to provide an environment in which parents could integrate religion into their children's daily lives and education. While the manner in which this faith dynamic was implemented varied, all the families interviewed recognised the space HE granted religion in their children's education.

Parents identified and prioritised different aspects of this faith dynamic in their children's HE. Many parents for example cited the benefits of being able to pray together during the day and how Quran and Arabic lessons could be incorporated into their daily timetables. Habiba gives an overview of how religion was infused into the fabric of her educational approach,

So, all of those things, the manners, the etiquette, the rhythm of the day, of praying, the stories to keep the Prophet's knowability close to their heart, that they had a personal relationship to him. Talking about the names of Allah, bringing that in to major tables. So, I would say that the framework, the skeleton that everything else was built on [in my children's HE] was *"la ilha ila Allah wa Muhammad ar Rasul Allah"*. (Habiba; emphasis added)

In her last sentence Habiba refers to Islamic declaration of faith, an interpretation of which is "there is no deity but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God". Thus, Habiba explicitly states that her educational approach is directed towards this Islamically orientated goal, with this goal informing all elements of the educational paradigm she had implemented.

This idea of religion becoming interwoven into the fabric of a child's educational experience came up in several interviews. Sentiments such as Islam is, "linked to everything" (Habiba), "part of daily life" (Safiya), "an everyday aspect" (Salma), were common place in my interviews. As this exchange between husband and wife Umamah and Usama indicates,

> Umamah: The question goes back to how will we introduce Islam [into our HE]? Islam is being introduced now, it's a way of life, it's a way of thinking, it's a way of living… There's no point where we say ok, this is Islamic knowledge… it's all one… Everything is part and parcel of Islam.

> Usama: Islam isn't just we sit down and now its Islamic studies time; the idea of our whole education system is that *we want to see the world from the viewpoint of tawhid*…. It's not just were doing the national curriculum and then were stapling on some more Islam. It has to be an integrated, wholistic system of education that includes Islam. (emphasis added)

Usama employs the term tawhid in this extract, commonly understood as the quality of God's oneness, as a unifying educational objective. This application of the term tawhid is echoed by Muhsin, who states,

> Tawhid is not just affirming that there is One God and we don't worship anything else, it is building a paradigm that is underpinned by that concept, so you need to have a structure wherein that is your objective.

For Muhsin and Usama tawhid is seen as an integrating force, in which different aspects of HE are unified by a particular educational goal. As Muhsin summarises,

> We hope that we are able to impart knowledge onto our son, not in a sense that is purely academic. Rather as an Islamic pedagogy, the model of tarbiyah, which is a pedagogical process through which we realise the Divine.

Over the course of my interviews there were striking commonalities in the educational goals my participants identified, which could be summarised as the inculcation of

virtuous characteristics as a means to gaining proximity to God. Thus, while there was a high degree of methodological multiplicity in my participants' HE, which constitute the pedagogic means of education, this multiplicity was unified by their promotion of a particular educational aim, which constituted the ideological ends of education. These aspects of my participants' educational approaches distinguish what I would term a tawhidic educational paradigm, in which pedagogic multiplicity is unified towards common educational end. It is the Islamically orientated content of these means and ends that distinguishes this educational paradigm from other educational models found in the HE literature. This in turn can be said to illustrate a uniquely Islamic approach to HE.

5.0 Discussion

From the outset, my research has sought to provide a thorough and qualitatively based exploration of Muslim experiences of HE, one that can address the absence of such a study in the existing body of HE literature. This involved moving away from the essentialised and politicised portrayals that currently define academic and popular portrayals of Muslim home-educators, and towards an assessment that engaged with debates found in the broader body of HE literature. To achieve this, I focused on the following research areas: parental motivations to home-educate; parental educational approaches and styles; and the role of religion in HE. In the following section I will assess the implications and broader significance of my findings, indicating how they contribute to the broader fields of research within which they are situated.

5.1 Challenging Previous Research on Parental Motivations

My findings reiterate Rothermel's claims (2013) that parental motives to home-educate are too varied to be neatly categorised. This perspective moves away from a dominant trend in HE research, in which parental motives are categorised into abstracted "types" (ibid). This tendency has been particularly prevalent in research on home-educating families who identify as religious, with studies such as Fortune-Wood's (2005) arguing that religious families hold distinct motives to other British home-educators. This argument is predicated on the claim that religious families are driven by ideological motives rather than the pedagogical ones that predominate in the wider home-educating populace. These contentions are rooted in Van Galen's research on "fundamentalist Christian" families in America (1987: 161), with his typography being adopted in various studies (including: Lowden 1993; Stevens 2003; Fortune-Wood 2005). There are particular issues that emerge when detaching Van Galen's findings from the spatial and temporal context in which they emerged. In the case of my research, Van Galen's findings seem to support a particular portrayal of Muslim home-educators emerging.

Muslim home-educating families' have faced intense media scrutiny over the past decade, with senior public figures such as the Assistant Commissioner of the

Metropolitan Police Neil Basu describing them as, "breeding grounds for extremists and future terrorists" (Simpson 2017). Such narratives have resulted in Muslim home-educators being seen in isolation from the wider home-educating populace, in what Pattison refers to as a "new and narrower focus of suspicion" (2020: 8). The idea of Muslim families being ideologically motivated to home-educate takes on a new meaning within this political context; with ideology potentially being attributed to extremism. While existing studies on Muslim home-educating families (Myers and Bhopal 2018; Pattison 2020) have provided a useful critical assessment of this context, their politicised focus has arguably perpetuated a one-dimensional portrayal of Muslim HE. Without an alternative lens through which to view Muslims home-educators, these essentialised, political narratives are unlikely to be substantially challenged. My findings offer such an alternative, one that foregrounds aspects of Muslim HE that have been overlooked in previous research.

One way in which I have done this is by complicating the dichotomous view that religious families who home-educate are primarily driven by ideological influences. While ideology did play an important role in some of my participants' motivations, in general ideology was one among a myriad of motivational factors. This indicates that the foregrounding of ideology in religious families' home-educating motives overlooks the nuances that govern this decision. Furthermore, while pedagogic and ideological concerns are often treated as distinct in HE research, for my participants these factors were often interlinked, with pedagogy seen as a means through which an Islamic worldview could emerge. In this sense, pedagogical and ideological factors were not understood as distinct influences in my participants accounts of their motivations. This allows for an alternative portrayal of ideological motivations, one that is tied to a pedagogic, rather than a political motive. These nuances are often lost in research that seeks to stratify data in order to place parents into particular motivational categories. To present a different account of parental motivations, and of home-educators who identify as religious, I adopted an alternative framework within which to assess my findings.

5.2 A Dynamic, Contextual and Interactive Portrayal of Parental Motives

The framework within which I assessed my findings was informed by a phenomenological understanding of subjectivity, which placed my participants' subjective experiences at the centre of my analysis. Implicit within this approach is a recognition of the dynamic nature of human-subjectivity. My participant selection sought to explore this dynamic dimension of parents' motivations, selecting parents who were at different stages of their HE journeys. Rather than seeing parental motivations as fixed and final, my findings illustrate how parental motivations are fluid, with motivations in a constant process of negotiation and adaptation. This supports Kunzman and Gaither's (2013) recommendation that future HE studies should look to carry out longitudinal research that can assess home-educating families' experiences over time. Such an approach can move away from a one-dimensional, rigid understanding of parental motivations, towards a more dynamic and nuanced portrayal of these motives.

Connected to this dynamic understanding of parental motivations is the importance of recognising the interactive and contextual nature of parents' decisions to home-educate. My findings move away from an abstracted presentation of parental motivations, which are portrayed in isolation from the varied contexts in which they are situated. For example, my findings illustrated the social context in which parents decided to home-educate, presenting an interactive understanding of parental motivations. This interaction occurred between various actors, for example children were shown to play a central role in several families' decision to home-educate. The key interactive process my findings uncovered however, was the interaction that occurred between parents when they decided to home-educate. Most studies speak of parental motivations in the singular, without engaging in the intersubjective dimensions of this aspect of HE. My findings highlighted the power-dynamics involved in parental motivations and how mothers often had a greater influence on the final decision to home-educate. I suggest that this was due to the greater role mothers played in their children's education, which meant they had a greater stake in the decision to home-educate. Fathers on the other hand, were often portrayed as playing a supportive role in this decision, though as studies such as Barson's (2015) have contended, the lack of engagement with home-educating fathers limits our capacity to

reflect on their perspectives. These dynamic, contextual and interactive aspects of parental motivations have been overlooked in previous research, highlighting how the alternative lens I applied in my research can offer a distinct, and arguably more nuanced portrayal, of this aspect of HE.

5.3 Reframing the Role of Religion in Parents' Educational Styles

Home-educating parents are often portrayed as fitting into one of two educational camps, generally termed "structured" or "unstructured" home-educating styles in the HE literature (see: Davies 2015; Neuman and Guterman 2017). Home-educating families who identify as religious are primarily seen as structured in their educational approach, with Fortune-Wood claiming there is a "significant difference in the educational styles employed by those who choose to home-educate for faith-based [as opposed to pedagogic] reasons" (2005: 48). Apart from my study, only Burke's (2007) research engages with the educational styles of home-educating families who identify as Muslims. While her findings validate Fortune-Wood's contentions about the educational styles of religious families, I have presented a more complicated picture of this aspect of HE. My findings indicate that parents can employ diverse educational styles, drawing on both structured and unstructured techniques and approaches. On the whole, my participants leaned towards a less structured style when home-educating, although they incorporated structured tools and techniques, such as drawing on the national curriculum when teaching English and Maths. These findings challenge broader assumptions about the educational styles of religious families who home-educate, as well as the specific claims that have been made about the Muslim home-educators.

As with my analysis on parental motivations, my research was able to offer an insight into the dynamic dimensions of parents' educational experiences home-educating. This aspect of my work illustrates the intricacies of my participants' educational styles and how rather than exhibiting fixed educational styles, parents' educational practices and approaches often evolved over time. This reflects what Neuman and Aviram describe as the "paradigmatic change" parents undergo when they begin home-educating, whereby the new educational context parents encounter demands a distinct approach to education that requires the adoption of varied educational

techniques (2003: 132). My research captures this paradigmatic change, as well as the challenges parents faced adjusting to this new educational reality. This educational adjustment appeared to evolve over several phases, with my participants facing distinct challenges at each stage of their HE journeys. For example, for parents who had just begun home-educating, the primary challenge parents faced was to choose an educational approach that conformed with the demands of HE. This led to parents adopting more flexible, pragmatic approaches to their children's HE, in which varied educational techniques and styles were employed. On the other hand, more experienced home-educators seemed to settle on a highly personalised approach to teaching, matching their style with the distinct abilities and interests of their children. This approach bought with it its own challenges, especially for parents with multiple children, who had to cater to the distinct demands each child's education required. These demands seemed to drive the move towards a flexible, unstructured educational approach, though as previously mentioned, parental educational styles often transcended this dichotomous conceptual framework.

The dynamic understanding of parents' home-educating styles present in my research offers an alternative lens to the structured vs. unstructured framework that has informed previous HE studies. This binary approach has had particular implications for how religious home-educating families are understood in the wider HE literature. Religious families who home-educate are largely seen in British research as a distinct category of home-educators, whose motivations and educational styles separate them from the wider home-educating populace. My findings go against the grain of previous research, with my participants experiences often transcending this binary, religious vs. non-religious framework. This contributes to a more complicated picture of Britain's home-educating population emerging. As with my analysis of parental motivations, my participant's dynamic accounts of their educational styles can help reframe HE debates on the educational styles of home-educating families who identify as religious. This can help undermine simplistic portrayals of religious home-educating families, leading to a more nuanced discussion of the role of faith in British HE.

5.4 An Alternative Analysis of Muslim HE

So far, I have sought to illustrate how I have contributed to a more complex understanding of Muslim HE. For example, I have outlined how my findings challenge simplistic portrayals of the role religion plays in aspects of HE such as parental motivations and parental educational styles. To add to this complexity, I will now draw on debates from the field of Islamic education, which can add a new lens through which to view the role of faith in British HE. An important aim of the field of Islamic education is to present authentic and rigorous academic accounts of Islamic perspectives on, and Muslim experiences of, education. Sahin contends that previous research on these subjects suffers from several shortcomings. Firstly, he identifies a lack of critical reflection as to the underlying meanings of education, which hinders our ability to "think about Islam educationally and education Islamically" (Sahin 2018: 335). Connected to this point is the lack of academic engagement with Islamic terminology and conceptual frames of reference, which Sahin claims are needed to build a paradigm within which to assess internal Muslim understandings of education. Following Sahin's suggestions, I sought to highlight the Islamic component of my participants understandings of education. The accounts my participants gave supported Sahin's claims that to think about "Islam educationally and education Islamically" researchers need to incorporate Islamic vocabulary and frames of reference into their data analysis (ibid).

In regard to the underlying aims of education, my participants' views departed in significant ways from the educational perspectives found in the wider HE literature. Two primary aims can be identified in my findings, firstly my participants aimed to nurture their children to become virtuous human beings. This aim partially corresponds to the idea of "character" or "moral" development that can be found in broader HE research (Berkowitz and Grych 2000: 56). However, as Berkowitz and Grych's argue, one's understanding of what constitutes "character" or "moral" development is rooted in the particular ideological framework within which education is conceived (ibid). For my participants this framework often drew on Islamic terminology and frames of reference. For example, for my participants, a child's development was rooted in a dual understanding of the nature of human beings, which is composed of both a physical and a spiritual dimension. In regard to this point, the term tarbiyah was

commonly adopted by my interviewees to illustrate this dual understanding of a child's development. Such aspects of my work highlight the benefits of engaging with Islamic conceptualisations of education, which arguably offer more accurate reflections of internal Muslim understandings of education.

For my participants, HE was seen as an educational setting in which Islam could be integrated into a child's daily life and education. This idea of faith becoming interwoven into the fabric of a child's educational experience was an important theme in my findings. To synthesise the varied educational perspectives my participants presented I developed the idea of a tawhidic educational paradigm. This paradigm relates to the underlying faith dynamic in my participants HE, in which varied pedagogical approaches were directed towards a common educational aim; which could be summarised as the inculcation of an awareness of God's reality. As one of my participants commented, "Islamic pedagogy, the model of tarbiyah, is a pedagogical process through which we realise the Divine". Thus, in my participants' portrayals of the aims of HE, methodological multiplicity, the pedagogic means of education, were seen to be directed towards a higher educational aim, the ideological ends of education. It is this higher aim that defines my idea of a tawhidic educational paradigm, in which an underlying educational unity exists, despite the presence of pedagogic multiplicity. My findings therefore contribute to a very different view of HE to that which is found in the current HE literature. This can be used to contribute to a more nuanced and thorough account of the varied ways in which faith is incorporated into families' HE in Britain.

A limitation of previous HE research has been its inability to engage the faith dynamic of home-educators, with the role of faith often being subsumed into broader categories and debates; such as debates around ideological vs pedagogic motivations, or structured vs unstructured educational styles. The foregrounding of faith in my analysis leads to a different portrayal of the role religion plays in HE. This arguably reflects how the meaning arrived at through the interview process is a joint construction of the interviewer and interviewee. Since my interview schedule consciously aimed to explore the role of religion in my participants HE, it is perhaps unsurprising that this faith dynamic emerged in my findings. My familiarity with broader debates in the field of Islamic education also increased my capacity to incorporate

Islam into the discussions I had on education in my interviews. Where previous studies have foregrounded the political context within which Muslims home-educate, I actively sought to engage with a different dimension of HE, which explains some of the distinct characteristics of my findings.

A final point I wish to address is how the foregrounding of faith in my analysis differs from the idea of "the lens Muslim exceptionalism" which I raised in my literature review (Marby 2015: 1). The primary contention I made in regard to this concept is that studies from diverse fields of research have been guilty of investigating Muslim communities in Britain through a limited, one-dimensional lens. This lens is predicated on the assumption that political issues should form the primary lens through which Muslim communities are viewed in academic research. I would argue that such an approach narrows the parameters within which research on Muslim communities has been conducted, which in turn limits the possible findings that can emerge. This is one way in which essentialised narratives of Muslims are constructed and replicated in the academic and public spheres. To avoid this, I consciously sought to focus on aspects of HE that have been overlooked or undervalued in previous research. In this sense, while the distinct role of Islam in my participants' HE distinguishes my findings from other studies, this is not an example of an essentialist narrative. Rather, it is indicative of the importance my participants placed on Islam when giving accounts of their experiences home-educating. While this faith dynamic was an important feature of my work, I also illustrated how my findings can engage with and contribute to broader HE debates. Rather than creating an essentialised, isolated portrayal of Muslim home-educators, I sought to situate my study within the wider field of HE literature. This demonstrates how researchers studying Muslims in Britain can transcend the narrow parameters that are imposed on them should they adopt the lens of Muslim exceptionalism. In turn, my findings demonstrate the value of departing from this lens and how future research on British Muslims can engage with, and contribute to, broader academic debates within diverse fields of inquiry.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Research Contributions

My research has sought to offer an alternative portrayal of Muslim home-educators to those that exist within the HE literature, which I have argued perpetuate what Marby terms the "lens of Muslim exceptionalism" (2015: 1). Within this lens, Muslims in Britain are viewed through a narrow and overtly politicised framework, one that de-values the non-politicised dimensions of their experiences. This typifies current research on Muslim home-educators, where a pre-occupation with political issues such extremism, has resulted in a one-dimensional account of this subject. This has led to Muslim HE research being marginalised from wider debates in the HE literature, which arguably further reinforces essentialised portrayals of Muslim home-educators. In order to move away from these essentialised portrayals, my research actively sought to produce an account of Muslim HE that was not focused on exploring political issues. Thus, in my research I focused on the following three research topics: parental motivations to home-educate; educational styles and approaches to HE; and the role of religion in HE. These topics relate to three key areas of debate in the wider HE literature. By engaging with these areas of debate I aimed to resituate my analysis of Muslim HE. Instead of treating this subject as a marginal and isolated phenomenon, my analysis engages with wider HE discussions. Below I will illustrate the unique contributions that have arisen from this engagement.

Through a phenomenological interview approach, I have offered a contextualised and dynamic account of my participants motivations, as well as their educational approaches and styles. Such an account challenges previous HE research that places parents into abstracted home-educating 'types'. In the case of parental motivations, parents have in the past been stratified into categories such as, "ideological" or "pedagogical" home-educators. Such categorisations have contributed to the commonly held view that religious home-educating families exhibit distinct motivations from the wider British home-educating populace. My findings illustrate that such assumptions are in many cases overly simplistic and irreflective of the nuances that govern parental motivations. What emerges in my work is a dynamic, interactive and

contextual account of my participants motivations, in which change, inter-subjective negotiation and contextual influences are seen as key, rather than marginal elements of a parent's decision to home-educate.

As with my assessment of parental motivations, my exploration of parents' educational styles and approaches counters academic assumptions that religious families are distinct from the wider British home-educating population. Where religious home-educators have generally been seen to ascribe to structured educational approaches, my findings present a more complex picture. My participants drew on varied educational styles, which were susceptible to change over time. By drawing on participants from different stages of their HE journeys, I was able to incorporate the transformative dimensions of my participants' educational experiences. My findings also moved away from a binary paradigm in which educational styles are seen as either structured or unstructured. Rather, my participants demonstrated how such rigid categorisations are irreflective of the flexible educational styles often employed by parents, which transcend the structured vs unstructured divide.

An original aspect of this thesis was my assessment of the role Islam played in my parents' understandings of the aims of education. This drew on broader debates found in the field of Islamic education, which places an emphasis on thinking about "Islam educationally and education Islamically" (Sahin 2018: 335). This aim is rooted in an attempt to reflect internal Muslim understandings of education, an account that I argued cannot be achieved through the narrow, structured vs unstructured paradigms, that currently define educational debates in the HE literature. To accurately reflect my participants' understandings of education I had to draw on the field of Islamic education, which helped me develop the idea of a tawhidic educational paradigm. This paradigm reflected the unique faith dynamics of my participants' educational perspectives. As my data indicated, my participants drew on distinctly Islamic understandings of the aims of education, which incorporated both spiritual and intellectual goals. I therefore argued that the Islamic orientation and conceptualisation of my participants understandings of education constituted a distinct, Islamic approach to HE, that further distinguishes my findings from previous HE research.

The unique educational elements that I incorporated into my body of analysis have contributed to a unique and nuanced assessment of Muslim HE, one that exhibits both consistencies and departures from the findings of previous research. One of the aims of this research was to reframe the discussions that currently surround Muslim HE in Britain. I was able to do this by drawing my analysis away from an isolated, politicised portrayal of Muslim home-educators, and towards a more comparative study, one that is engaged with the main debates found in the HE literature. Through this engagement, I was able to offer a critical analysis of this field of research, identifying areas of weakness within it, as well as demonstrating the benefits of applying an alternative analytical framework to the study of HE. This, along with the unique faith dynamic I was able to portray in my findings, constitute the key contributions I have made to the broader field of HE research.

6.2 Ways to Develop this Research

As I mentioned in my introduction, British HE research has suffered from a reliance on data that is primarily drawn from white, middle-class families. This means that the experiences of religious and ethnic minority home-educators have been neglected in HE research. My thesis is part of an emerging body of research that is seeking to address this gap in the HE literature. Since my research is one of only a handful of studies on Muslim HE, there are multiple aspects of this phenomenon that remain unexplored. Future research on this topic begin by assessing the experiences of a wider range of Muslim home-educating actors. My research focused on the home-educating experiences of parents in general and mothers in particular, who were largely identified as the key actors in my participants' HE. My work however reflected on the fact that other actors, such as fathers, children and other social actors played key role in the overall dynamics that govern a family's experience of HE. Drawing on these different actors would enrich our understanding of these broader dynamics and lead to a more intricate portrayal of Muslim HE.

The first of these alternative actors I would focus on in future research on Muslim HE would be Muslim fathers who home-educate. Barson (2015) and others have argued that fathers have long been overlooked in HE research and my findings suggest that the role of fathers has been underestimated in this field of study. Another subject that

has been overlooked in HE research is the experiences of children who are home-educated. The development of a study that is focused on Muslim children could be used as to assess whether the distinct educational understandings and experiences Muslim parents hold are shared by Muslim children. A final suggestion I would echo, is Kunzman and Gaither's (2013) suggestion that future HE research should adopt longitudinal research strategies. Such an approach is better able to reflect the dynamic and transformational elements of a family's home-educating experience. This form of research should aim to include the experiences of both parents and children, contributing to a more thorough exploration of a family's overall HE journey, rather than a snapshot of a single aspect of it. These suggestions can help contribute to a deeper, more nuanced account of Muslim HE emerging, one that helps diversify the existing body of HE literature.

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CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Exploring Muslim Parents Experiences of Home-Education

Name of Chief/Principal Investigator: Samuel Bartlett

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read the Participation information sheet dated 18/05/2020 for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have understood the participant information sheet dated 18/05/2020 for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any adverse consequences (e.g. to medical care or legal rights, if relevant).	
I understand that data collected during the research project may be looked at by individuals from Cardiff University or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in the research project. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information that regards my experiences Home Educating my children, for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be held in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation and in strict confidence, unless disclosure is required by law or professional obligation.	
I understand who will have access to personal information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.	
I consent to being audio recorded for the purposes of the research project and I understand how it will be used in the research.	
I understand that anonymised excerpts and/or verbatim quotes from my interview may be used as part of the research publication.	

I understand how the findings and results of the research project will be written up and published.	67
I agree to take part in this research project.	

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature
(print)

_____   _____   _____
Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature
(print)

MA Researcher at Cardiff University, Student Number: C1745397
Role of person taking consent
Samuel Bartlett

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR RESEARCH

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP

Appendix B – Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: The Experiences and Motivations of Muslim Parents who Home Educate their Children

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if you wish.

Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the purpose of this research project?
This research is being carried out for my MA thesis at the Centre for the Study of Islam in Britain. The aim of this research is to explore the experiences and motivations of Muslim parents who Home Educate their children. The work will be based on information gathered through online interviews with Muslim parents who Home Educate their children.

2.   Why have I been invited to take part?
You have been invited because you are a Muslim parent who has Home Educated or plan to Home Educate your children.

3.   Do I have to take part?
No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

4.   What will taking part involve?
Participation in the research will involve one online interview, via skype, that will be conducted on an agreed upon time and date and will last roughly an hour. The interview will be recorded through digital software. There may also be follow up questions/correspondence via email to supplement information gathered through the interview.

5.   Will I be paid for taking part?
No

6.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There will be no direct advantages or benefits to you from taking part, but your contribution will help us understand the experiences of Muslim Home Education which is currently an

under researched topic. I hope this research can help produce a more nuanced account of Muslim home education than is currently available in the research on this topic.

7.   What are the possible risks of taking part?
As far as we are aware there are no disadvantages in partaking in this study. Steps will be taken to safeguard your anonymity as far as possible. To best maintain anonymity, I will not use your identifiable features, such as your name/the names of your children/spouses, ages of children, specific locations etc.. If you have worries please contact me via the details at the end of this document.

8.   Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?
All information collected from (or about) you during the research project will be kept confidential and any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Please see 'What will happen to my Personal Data?' (below) for further information.

9.   What will happen to my Personal Data?
Personal data will be initially collected via the consent form that you will sign prior to the interview that will be submitted to receive ethical approval. Participant anonymity/ identification will be preserved by the exclusion of name, identity, age in the analysis of the interview required for the thesis.

Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. Further information about Data Protection, including:

-   your rights
-   the legal basis under which Cardiff University processes your personal data for research
-   Cardiff University's Data Protection Policy
-   how to contact the Cardiff University Data Protection Officer
-   how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office

This may be found at https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection

The research team will anonymise all the personal data it has collected from, or about, you in connection with this research project, with the exception of your consent form. Your consent form will be retained prior to essay submission on 05/09/2020 and may be accessed by members of the research team and, where necessary, by members of the University's governance and audit teams or by regulatory authorities. Anonymised information will be kept in accordance with the University Records Retention Schedules (5 years), before being deleted, unless it published in support of the research and/or retained indefinitely if it is likely to have continuing value for research purposes.

Should participant withdrawal occur, personal data and samples collected up until the point of participant withdrawal from the research project, through consent forms etc will be dealt with accordingly. It will not be possible to withdraw any anonymised data that has already

been published or in some cases, where identifiers are irreversibly removed during the course of a research project, from the point at which it has been anonymised.

10. What happens to the data at the end of the research project?
The data collected through interviews will be analysed and personal data will be anonymised. The essay will be read and marked by my Thesis supervisor and the exam board, who will conform with University Data Control and national Data Protection legislation outlined in section 9 of this form. Consent forms will be retained in accordance with the University Records Retention Schedules (five years) and may be accessed by myself or, where necessary, by members of the University's governance and audit teams or by regulatory authorities.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?
The data collected is intended for use in an MA dissertation; the paper should become available online through the Islam UK Centre website (https://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/islamukcentre/virtualcentre/) from January 2021. Participants will not be identified in any report, publication, or presentation.

12. What if there is a problem?
If you wish to complain, or have grounds for concerns about any aspect of the manner in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research, please contact the following individuals:
Supervisor: Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray,
Email: gilliat-rays@cardiff.ac.uk.

If your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, please contact:
The Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee and Research Integrity Lead,
Professor Helen Nicholson, Tel: +44 (0)29 208 74250
Email: nicholsonhj@cardiff.ac.uk .

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, you may have grounds for legal action, but you may have to pay for it.

13. Who is organising and funding this research project?
The research is being carried out within the School of History, Archaeology and Religion at Cardiff University, and specifically within the Islam-UK Centre. The researcher, Samuel Bartlett, has received a Jameel Scholarship for the conduct of the MA programme within which this MA dissertation is being conducted.

14. Who has reviewed this research project?
This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the School of History, Archaeology and Religion Ethics Committee.

15. Further information and contact details
Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact the following during normal working hours:

    Name: Samuel Bartlett   Email: bartletts6@cardiff.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)7930 568 370   Address: 47 Llanishen Street, Cardiff, CF143QB

If you have any complaints or queries you do not want to discuss with me directly you can contact my Supervisor:

Name: Prof. Sophie Gilliat-Ray   Email: gilliat-rays@cardiff.ac.uk.
                                        Address: School of History, Archaeology and
                                        Religion Cardiff University John Percival
                                        Building Colum Drive Cardiff CF10 3EU

If you feel your complaint has not been appropriately handled please contact the Chair of the SHARE Research Ethics Committee

Name: Professor Helen J. Nicholson   Email: nicholsonhj@cardiff.ac.uk

Address: School of History, Archaeology and Religion Cardiff University John Percival Building Colum Drive Cardiff CF10 3EU

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

Appendix C – Interview Schedule

<u>Introduction to interview and pre-interview procedures</u>

1. Introduce Myself and my project to interviewees giving an overview of the main research questions;

   - *Motivation* - Why Muslim parents' home educate (HE).
   - *Practice and Pedagogy* – What experiences have Muslim parents had HE / What educational approaches do they apply.
   - *Role of Religion in HE* – How has being a Muslim influenced their HE motivations and experiences.

2. Explain the interview procedures
   - Time involved (about 1 hour)
   - Will be recorded (with your permission) and transcribed. Transcript and recording kept private (explain how – identifiable information removed, pseudonym, etc).
   - Right to withdraw from interview or project at any time. Recordings will be deleted after transcription.
   - Ask if the interviewee has any questions.
   - Check willingness to continue with interview.

<u>Motivations to HE</u>
1. Initially I'd like to get an idea of your own *educational backgrounds*; so, if you could please begin by telling me about your education?

2. Did you have a positive experience of school?

   > *Probes:*
   - Can you tell me about your favourite teacher/least favourite teacher?
   - Why were they your favourite teacher.
   - What do you think makes a good teacher?

3. Would you say you received a good education?

  - What were the strengths of your education?

4. How would you define what a good education is? What is the aim of education in your opinion?

5. Did you have any supplementary religious education?

  - Where did this happen?
  - Did you have a positive experience in these educational settings?
  - How did this education compare to your other education experiences?
  - Did you feel your religious identity was supported at school?

6. What have been your educational, employment experiences since leaving secondary school.

7. Do you feel your own education experiences informed your decision to HE?

  - If so what aspects of these experiences?
  - Where these positive or negative aspects of your prior educational experiences?

8. I'd now like to move on by covering some of *the motivations* behind your decision to HE. So, if you could please begin by giving me an idea of your prior knowledge of HE before you decided to HE educate your children?

  - Did you know any other families who had HE their families?
  - Where there any other sources of information that helped you form an opinion of HE, people, books, articles that you could identify?
  - (If interviewing both parents) did you know how you wanted to educate your children before you were married?
  - Did you discuss how you were going to educate your children after you got married?

- How did your families/friends react when you informed them you would HE your children?

9. What would you say were the main reasons behind your decision to HE?
    - Are there aspects of mainstreaming schooling that you disagree with? Can you give examples?
    - Are there aspects of the content of mainstreaming schooling that you disagree with?
    - Are there particularly benefits you identified in HE that motivated you to HE?
    - Were there any religious considerations behind your decision to HE? If so could you expand on these.

Experiences of HE

10. I'd now like to explore some of your experiences of HE. Did you have any teaching experience prior to beginning your children's HE?

11. Could you tell me about your children?
    - Ages, girls/boys? How long have they been HE?
    - Have you had different experiences with each child HE?

12. Can you describe for me a typical HE day?
    - Did you follow a set routine?
    - What would you say are the differences between a HE and a mainstream education?
        - Perhaps in approach and content.
    - What are the main lessons you covered? Do you follow the national curriculum? Did you supplement this with any of your own classes?
    - What books, resources etc do you use to construct your curriculum?
    - How long are your lessons?

13. Where there any Islamic classes in your curriculum? What resources do you use for these classes?

14. Do you feel you have had adequate support teaching your children?
    - Who have you had support from? Groups, family, friends, tutors, schools etc.

15. Do you know other Muslim families who HE? If so ask,
    - Do you engage with these families?
    - Do they have a similar educational approach to yourself?
    - Do you know non-Muslim families who HE? If so, repeat above questions?

16. Did your teaching practice/philosophy changed while you have HE? If so how?

17. Could you tell me any challenges you have faced HE?

18. Looking back is there anything you would do differently in how you have HE?

19. What advice would you give someone who is considering HE?

20. What do you consider a successful education for your children? Do you think this differs from mainstream schooling?

21. Has HE impacted you as a person? *Probe:* has it changed or developed your approach to Islam, your spiritual life? Your family life? Your relationship with your children?

Role of Religion in HE

22. Do you think we can speak of an Islamic approach to education? If so how would you define it?
    Probes:
    - What would the focus or content of Islamic education be?

- What would its aims be?

23. Do you think mainstream schooling in Britain is distinct from an Islamic approach to education?

24. Would you say HE allows for a more "Islamic" education that mainstream schooling? Why/Why not?

25. Could you identify any particular strengths and weaknesses in how each educational setting prepares you for living in contemporary British society.

26. Do you think Muslim children face challenges in developing their faith in British society? Why/why not?

27. Does HE support this faith development? Why/why not?

Concluding the Interview.
- Anything else interviewee would like to add?
- Invite to contact me if other thoughts arise
- Summarise the most important things that have come out of the interview.
- Ask if the interviewee would like to keep in touch in regard to the work:
  o Potentially send them a transcript of the interview
  o A copy of the completed thesis.
- Thank them for their time.

Appendix D – Extract from Zayd and Zaynab's Interview

Interviewer: Would you say you received a good education? And if so, how would you go about defining what a good education is - perhaps looking towards the aims of education, in your opinion?

Zayd: So, overall, I think it was a good education.

Whilst I was studying, I felt like, "This is the best education possible." And, again, that was because of the feeling I got from the teachers. But pretty much all of the schools that I went to were fairly under-resourced, even in Edinburgh, and I only realised that afterwards.

It was only after meeting other people and hearing their experiences of school, and the variety of subjects that they had studied. Comparatively, I would say the quality was less. But whilst I was studying, I never felt like that.

But I don't think it has hindered me too much. It has probably set me back 5% or 10% behind others who went to better schools. But the fact that the teachers were able to instil a passion for knowledge, that- in itself, was sufficient to then catch up to others.

So, even if my initial schools I attended weren't the most well-resourced schools, I think what was taught, or the way we were taught, was enough to suffice us for the rest of our lives to… Because, at the end of the day, a school can't give you everything. A teacher is someone who lights a candle in you, and once they have lit that candle, then it is up to you to then study further and work hard. And I think that was achieved, and that was achieved in the schools that I studied in.

Interviewer: And the same question for you Zaynab?

Zaynab: For me, again, my primary and middle school, they were not
                    Christian schools per se, but they had very Christian values at
                    the core of their school. They were quite religious. And they
                    were quite well-resourced. (Laughter) So, it was kind of like a
                    privileged schooling in that way. So, we did have all the
                    resources and we did have many different subjects that we
                    studied.

                    High school, again, it was not like a Christian valued school. But,
                    initially, it was good. But I think as I progressed to high school, I
                    felt that the quality of education wasn't that great. I don't know.
                    The teachers didn't seem to be like the traditional teacher. Like,
                    they were becoming too friendly with the students. They were
                    like becoming your friend rather than your teacher, which I think
                    didn't really push people to achieve what they could achieve.
                    But that was towards the end, like towards sixth form, or the end
                    of the GCSE year.

                    But I think, overall, I did receive a very good education. And,
                    again, like we said that it is up to the student to push
                    themselves. But that is what I found towards the end of the
                    schooling because the teachers were not so… They were not
                    really pushing us, you could say.

Interviewer: Could I follow-up on that. You said that you were also being
                    educated at home by your parents alongside that [your
                    mainstream school]. Could you perhaps give me a kind
                    comparison between these two educations in terms of their
                    quality?

Zaynab: Yes. So, I think the schooling… (Laughter) Well, you wouldn't
                    call it schooling, but the standard of education I was getting at

home was… So, my mother, she used to have… like, you could say, a mini mosque (Laughter) at home, so students- girls used to come to get their education from her. So, we would just join in with those classes, too.

And that was from a young age. So, my earliest memory would be about 5, 5-ish, 6-ish. So, that would be initially to learn the Quran. That is what I was doing.

And then the subjects got broader with Arabic, and learning about Islamic history, and Tafseer and the translation of the Quran, and the meaning behind it.

So, that progressed as I got older. So, that would take place after I had come home from school. So, it was kind of like (Laughter) school at home, basically.

Interviewer: I think you mentioned about the traditional role of a teacher, that you felt that that wasn't given to you or supplied at your secondary school. Do you think your classes at home offered a better reflection of the traditional role or authority of a teacher? One that was lacking at your secondary school?

Zaynab: Yes. Yes. It was not so much authority, but there was a blurred line at school. So, in the later years. You were not sure when the teacher was your friend, or your teacher was your teacher. (Laughter) I don't know how to explain this.

So, basically, what I mean by "traditional teacher" is that, yes, they have authority, but they also can help you. And it is not so much as a friend, but they are there to comfort you and support you. And a lot of the teachers were quite young and they just seemed like, "Okay. So, we are 17, 18-year-olds and we are

being taught by 23, 24-year-olds," (Laughter) and it just didn't seem to have that authority over us.

Interviewer: Perhaps I could return to you Zayd, do you think your educational experiences had any impact on the decision to home educate your children?

Zayd: Definitely, especially in our Islamic studies, a lot of emphasis was put on what they call the tarbiyyah the nurturing of children, and that it is primarily the parents' job. And that, although we have schooling, the responsibility primarily lies with the parents. So, even if we hadn't homeschooled, I would still take a large responsibility upon myself to provide them with an education. And by education, I don't mean it in the sort of literal sense of certificates and degrees.

In the Islamic sense, education is much more rounded. It is about creating a well-rounded individual, someone who has got a good character, a good conduct. And I would say even the knowledge is secondary. It is more about creating a good human being, a good person.

So, I felt this based on my own childhood, as well, from growing up with my parents and so on, the influence of the home is probably one of the strongest- I mean, through our childhood, definitely the strongest. And then through the teenage years, I mean, that influence stays with you, but then you are just exposed to a lot more.

But those early years, it is like almost rooting you, you know, putting your roots down so that when you go and face the world on your own and your parents are not there, you have got those principles that keep you in line.

	So, even if we hadn't home educated, I would still have taken a large role and a large responsibility upon myself to educate my children, and educate in the broader sense. Yes.
Interviewer:	Do you think there mainstream schooling doesn't supply the opportunities to focus on those aspects of education that you have identified?
Zayd:	In my mind, it feels as though- and maybe this is nostalgia, it feels as though in the olden days, there was more emphasis in the school on children's characters, and their conduct, and there was an emphasis on being an upright, truthful, a hard-working person, an honest person.
	It feels like that is lost. And, again, I don't have any data to back that up. It just feels like that probably isn't emphasised in schools anymore, which is a shame. So, yes.
	It is not only a case of whether the schools provide it or not. Even if they had provided it, I would still take it as my own responsibility.
	But, saying that- again, this is just I suppose not from any data. It does feel like over the last past generation or so, so the last 30 years or so, there is less emphasis from the school side on creating a better person.
	It does, unfortunately, feel like- and, actually, this is based on news reports and lots of teachers must have mentioned this, they are judged on how well their child performs academically, the test scores.

So, for me, that is completely against the nature of education. It is not about test scores and grades. Education is more holistic than that.