



Homeschooling Experiences of Kenyan Mothers of Children with Dyslexia During The Covid-19 Pandemic: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

Previous studies have provided mothers to provide an African homeschooling homeschooling experiences of parents, but little attention has been paid to African mothers homeschooling their children. Mothers of children with dyslexia spend more time nurturing, socializing and in care work as compared to non-homeschooling mothers. This study uses a qualitative method from an African Feminist Epistemology lens to explore the lived experiences of homeschooling African mothers. A small case study sample is used to provide a rich, detailed understanding of the phenomena (Scribner and Crow, 2012). Out of ten mothers interviewed from a Nairobi-based social support group for children with dyslexia, two were fully homeschooled during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study specifically focuses on the unique experiences of the two homeschooling

mothers to provide an African homeschooling context and experience. A narratological method is used to compare and contrast the mothers' exclusive experiences. Five main themes emerged from the study: strategies used by mothers; impact on careers; mental health; financial independence, and impact on social life. We conclude that mothers' homeschooling mainly resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Mothers used wide-ranging creative strategies for successful homeschooling alongside household chores and care work for the family. Homeschooling, however, had a negative impact on mothers' careers, mental health, financial independence, and social life. We conclude that the lived experiences of homeschooling Kenyan mothers of children with dyslexia may be considered an impression of what other homeschooling Kenyan mothers of children with learning disabilities face.

Key words: *children with dyslexia, COVID-19, dyslexia, homeschooling, learning disability, lived experiences, mothering, strategies.*

1.0 Introduction

The beginnings of contemporary homeschooling can be traced back to John Holt, an educational theorist and school reformer in the 1970s whose ideas took root in 1977. This provided an

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alternative to traditional, formal, mainstream education. Ruban et al. (2021) report that Holt's homeschooling option was motivated by the desire to boost poor students' performance by improving pedagogical development. Gaither (2017) reviews various aspects of the history of American homeschooling and reports emerging themes as parental motivations. McTurnal (2019) explains families' choice of strict homeschooling, while Jamaludin et al. (2015) find varied reasons for the appropriateness and compatibility of the execution of homeschooling and report inconsistencies. Dyslexia is a neurobiological disability often linked with the inability to read, write, spell, and acquire literacy skills (Snowling & Nation, 2020). Dyslexia affects one in every five students globally. It is a specific learning disorder, lifelong, but it can also be acquired, in some instances. Sahu et al. (2018) find that parents of children with learning disabilities already experience significantly challenging and transformative responsibilities in supporting their children's education. Therefore, the added responsibility of homeschooling and working can have grave repercussions on them. It is generally expected that all parents should take their children through formal school. However, a critical examination of the Basic Education Act (Government of Kenya, 2013) in Kenya shows it does not discourage the homeschooling alternative. During the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown mothers had to assume roles of homeschooling. This was done in terms of facilitating online learning. Some mothers opted to continue with full-time homeschooling even after formal learning resumed. This study has a greater focus on homeschool mothers' experiences because mothers often spend a lot of time with their children. They reproduce, nurture, and socialize. The care work they provide is often unpaid and unacknowledged. The effort, time and energy are likely to have an impact on their careers, mental health, and social lives. The research problem was to explore the lived experiences of Kenyan mothers of children with dyslexia. Accordingly, the following objectives were formulated: to examine the reasons why mothers homeschool; to identify the strategies used by mothers to successfully homeschool and to explore the impact of homeschooling on mothers' lives.

2.0 Literature Review

Comprehensive literature exists on homeschooling parents. However, there are limited studies on homeschooling African mothers. Indeed, homeschooling presents a widespread option for parents desiring different pedagogical methods (Lindsay, 2003; Shepherd, 2010).

2.1 Homeschooling Mothers: Obligatory or by Choice?

Homeschooling was considered obligatory during pandemics such as Covid-19 (Devitt, 2017; Machovcová et al., 2021). The place of the mothers became more apparent during lockdown, restricted attendance and closure of schools. De Jong et al. (2022) note the central situation of mothers in homeschooling during COVID-19 and a rise in anxiety among parents due to the length of time and impact of online digitized classes. This included emotional and behavioural well-being, insufficient outdoor activities, and well-being, Zhao et al. (2020). Fontenelle-Tereshchuk (2021) observes the experiences of homeschooling curriculum and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in a study of ten parents in Alberta, Canada, with reports of immoderate pressure on them from teachers to help facilitate learning. He finds an array of negative impacts on parents, ranging from challenges of isolation and restricted movement, job losses, the weight of balancing between full working time, household chores and facilitating children's learning and impropriety of internet-based learning on young children as extremely stressful. Heers and Lips (2022) report the enormous responsibilities and challenges parents had to bear while taking up homeschooling during lockdown due to Covid-19. Mothers with lower incomes and less education bore the greatest brunt. Petts et al. (2021) give an overview of a gendered COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on childcare, homeschooling and parents' employment in the U.S. noting a gender difference in employment during pandemics. Using a qualitative–bibliographic study to investigate information on parents' coping mechanisms during COVID-19 Mendoza and Montes (2020) underscore the responsibility of parents in taking up homeschooling their children with findings that integrate individualized life

skill activities, with varied activities in art and sports that children find enjoyable produces holistic children. Mendoza et al. (2020), in an Egyptian study using a qualitative-bibliographic approach, explore homeschooling as a pedagogical option that enables parents to apply creative teaching and learning methods in a conducive home environment. Kallitsoglou and Topalli (2021) scrutinize the sentiments and experiences of employed mothers on homeschooling during the COVID-19 lockdown in the U.K. with findings of difficulties in combining care work and homeschooling with an escalation of socio-emotional stress, worry and remorse. Smith (2022) avers that alternative schooling methods provided by lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic could be replicated after the pandemic. Vincent et al. (2021) emphasize the luminous aspect of homeschooling children with special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic in a nurturing familial environment, reinforced family bonds, and opportunities for digitized learning. Dobosz et al. (2022) review the literature on parents' opinions on homeschooling children with special needs and disabilities between 2020 and 2021.

2.2 Strategies and Methods and Impact of Homeschooling

Carpenter and Gann (2016), in a qualitative study of three homeschooling families in the United States of America, analyses the pedagogical activities and tools used in facilitating a typical day. Findings revealed self-instructed adjustable lessons with parents playing coordinating roles in their children's education. Sabol (2018) presents parental viewpoints on homeschooling collaborations concerning instructional infrastructure in a multi-case study. Pazhwak et al. (2022) found a link between homeschooling and students' psycho-social health among Afghanistan's homeschooled children. In a Turkish homeschooling study, AHI and Sengil-Akar (2021) find discrepancies in parents' perceptions of the choice to homeschool or take children through the challenges of formal school and no fitting familial school experiences. DesRoches et al. (2021) find a link between mothers, homeschooling, Covid-19, stress, and poor mental health. McQueen (2019), in a qualitative study of 26 homeschooling parents, finds an inclination for their adolescent homeschooled children's psycho-social well-being and sees it as a preferable choice for their children's opportunity for self-discovery and growth. Murphy (2014), in a sociological study, analyses the merits and demerits of the social and educational outcomes of homeschooling on students in the USA, while Neuman and Guterman (2022) examine homeschooling away from parents' perception and examine perceptions of homeschooled teenagers.

2.3 Global, African American and African Homeschooling

A South African homeschooling study by Dlamini et al. (2021) compares prospective homeschooling constructed from exposure. The researchers argue that decision to homeschool is guided by parental values and that drawbacks should be addressed through government and policymakers' interventions. Besides, parents who had taken up the homeschooling alternative, preferred a more personalized school exposure for their children. Complimentary findings are reported by Smith (2022) with further results indicating that black American mothers chose the homeschool option due to discrepancies in disciplinary measures between black and other children, perennial referrals for special education support, undervaluing of black parents in mainstream schools and reports of inequalities. In an Indonesian homeschooling study, Halik et al. (2021) observe it as an evolving pedagogical model in Indonesia homeschooling choice as one that offers a flexible curriculum and provides an opportunity for talent progression. Moreover, they see a focus on the children's areas of interest despite drawbacks such as lack of interaction and socialization with other children and lack of applicable measurement tools for children's achievement. Demerits of homeschooling experiences, including social isolation, expropriation, and their implications on adulthood have been reported in studies by Cheng et al. (2016), while Qureshi and Ali (2022) explore the Pakistani benefits of homeschooling in a phenomenological study whose results reveal invigorated family relationships, enhanced personalized instruction and openings for better acculturation and self-contemplation.

Previous studies have shown that homeschooling enhances children's interests and talents Abuzandah (2021) in an evaluation of literature on homeschooling perspectives and best practices establishes that parents choose to homeschool because of individualized decisions. Others were based on spiritual, communal, and moral principles. Furthermore, homeschooling families had reservations about uncondusive school infra structure including aggression and overcrowding in schools. Parents reported that computer – based homeschooling was a better option than traditional schooling because of social collaborations that linked homeschooling families with universal networks.

Purwaningsih and Fauziah (2020) find that homeschooling enables the provision of an education that supports student's competences compared with formal mainstream schooling. They argue that homeschooling enhances the child's interests and talents which leads to the student's developing a sense of self-determination, and responsibility, strengthened psycho-physiological skills and lifelong skills acquired through lived experiences.

Research by Ray (2015) finds not only positive academic achievements in home-schooled students but also positive overall socio-emotional development. The study further finds relatively positive success in home-schooled students in adulthood in terms of their array of knowledge, attitude, behaviour, personal agency and self-efficacy when compared to those who had attended mainstream schooling.

Whether a decision is made to enrol a child in the mainstream school system or homeschool, a safe and conducive learning environment is critical in achieving positive outcomes. Baidi (2019) reports a link between an enabling home environment and successful homeschooling. He notes factors such as a conducive environment, involved parents, children's self-determination for a curriculum that fits their needs, use of appropriate study materials, application of workable techniques and strategies, self-teaching and relevant opportunities as essential for successful homeschooling.

Studies have shown that homeschooling may harm the mental health of mothers because of additional labour and burnout. Baker (2021) reports a link between homeschooling, mental health of mothers and coping strategies. The study explores mothers' experiences of homeschooling with findings that intensive mothering and homeschooling can hurt their mental health. This includes constantly recurring pressure, anxiety, and psychological distress.

2.4 Homeschooling of Gifted Children and Children with Special Needs

Whitlow-Spurlock (2019) explores the lived experiences of home educators with findings indicating the appropriateness of homeschooling to the gifted and twice-exceptional children and the need to change the name 'homeschooling' to 'personalized home education'. Cook et al. (2013) examine why parents choose to homeschool. The home environment is one that families of children with special needs deem appropriate where need-based instruction can be followed, and parents can closely supervise and control as reported in findings by Duffey (2002). Somerton and Mukashev (2023) find negative psycho-social, financial and mental constraints in parents' homeschooling children with disabilities. Ludgate et al. (2022) explore from an online survey the experiences of homeschooling parents of children with special education needs and disabilities (*SEND*) in England during the pandemic, with findings revealing new and exciting opportunities for creativity and all-embracing pedagogical activities that enabled reinforced familial bonds, productive learning and improved socio-emotional welfare of children and parents. This finding is corroborated in studies by Greenway and Eaton-Thomas (2020) and Cheng et al. (2016), further revealing parents' views that they were satisfied with the option to homeschool

Experiences of mothers homeschooling children with special needs are likely to differ from those of mothers of children in mainstream schools. Reilly et al. (2002), provide in-depth experiences of families homeschooling children with special needs with findings that children were able to cope better in the homeschool environment. The children had access to closer contact and assistance. However, their families frequently pursued external support. Additionally, their children

took longer years in homeschooling compared to regular school-going children. Recommendations were made for the development and implementation of policies at the national government as well as at the local government levels for homeschooling families and for enhanced partnerships to achieve positive results.

Delaney's (2014) study provides perspectives of parents of children with learning disabilities towards public and homeschool settings. The parents report positive aspects of homeschooling which they list as flexibility and tailored needs of the children, request by children to homeschool, and avoidance of bullying. Kouroupa et al. (2022) examine the experiences of homeschooling parents in the United Kingdom with a focus on children with neurocognitive challenges and learning difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings indicate positive results, including access to relevant resources, and access to technology and services. Recommendations are made for future education policy decisions during the pandemics that take into account special consideration children with neurodiverse conditions. Cook et al (2013) highlight the increase in the number of children with special needs who are homeschooled and the need to avail resources and services. This includes a review of the history of homeschooling families and the relevant legislation and its implications for children with special needs. Setyabudi and Sridiyatmoko (2022) emphasise the need for children to have a relevant and quality education, with findings indicating a preference for homeschooling by parents of children with dyslexia.

3.0 Methodology

This study uses material drawn from Qualitative Feminist methods from narrative interviews with two Kenyan mothers of children with dyslexia. The case study design drew from a small sample size of two mothers to enable a comprehensive, detailed analysis and rich interpretation. While Gumpili and Das (2022) identify the importance of large sample sizes in any study, they recommend the need to generate high-standard data. This includes familiarization with the data, and adequate examination of the sample frame and circumstances to efficiently represent the sample. Njie and Asimiran (2014) emphasized the significance of samples that help describe a person, people, experiences, and events to provide a sound comprehension of different facets of a research investigation. Indarayan and Mishra (2021) explore the significance of small samples in research with findings that sample sizes are determined by context. Scribner and Crow (2021) use a case study to single out moral principles, philosophies, and inspirations while Takahashi and Araujo (2020) evaluate the opening of research through a case study that enables a multiplicity of epistemologies. This paves the way for central clarity between technique, knowledge production and creativity.

The multiple case study allowed for comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences. This helped to strengthen the validity and generalizability of the findings by evincing how occurrences differed or intersected across the multiple cases, as in studies by *Parsons and Lewis (2010)*, *Skinner (2011)*, *Somerton and Mukashev (2023)* and *Tabatabai (2020)*. A narratological methodology enabled mothers to make sense of their world and tell stories of their lived realities. This provided an alternative to predominant conventional methods that exclude women's knowledge (*Fraser & Taylor, 2022; Woodiwiss et al., 2017*). It unveiled the uniqueness of individual mothers' insights into their place, power, and knowledge. Although women's epistemology has previously been overlooked in academic scholarship, it is a valuable and credible contribution to knowledge (*Lanser, 1986; Sosulsa et al., 2010*). This can be done through documentation of their life stories and narrative analysis.

Out of ten mothers identified from a Nairobi-based social support group, only two were fully homeschooling their children during and after the pandemic. Eight mothers were facilitating formal virtual classes organized by private and public schools. Only two mothers, therefore, met the criteria of homeschooling, which was a deviation from the virtual classes organized by formal schools during the pandemic. The kind of curriculum and pedagogical instructions the two mothers used for teaching and learning differed completely from the formal school online learning. The two mothers

had bio-data that were of specific relevance to the study, thus justifying their selection. Emails of requests were sent, and consent was sought. This was followed up by phone calls and preparation of interview schedules. The first part involved asking the two participants to narrate their homeschooling experiences during and after the pandemic with some guidelines and prompts. Each interview was audio recorded and lasted between one hour and 1 hour and 30 minutes. This was followed by transcribing the data, which was sorted and analysed into main themes and sub-themes using the NVivo 12 software version 12.0. Draft transcripts were shared with and discussed with participants to check for facts and accuracy, and more clarification was sought through email and phone calls. These comments were then incorporated into the analysis.

Table 1: Characteristics of study participants who combine mothering children with dyslexia and homeschooling.

| | Divorced mother in her thirties. | | Married mother in her forties. |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| | A media personality with a postgraduate education level. | | A civil servant in a parastatal with a Diploma. |
| Mariana | A mother of two children: a boy and a girl. | Imelda | A mother of two children: a boy and a girl. |
| | Her son has dyslexia. | | Both her children have Dyslexia and Multiple Disabilities. |

In order to preserve anonymity and protect children's identity these are not the real ages of mothers, names of mothers, names of their children, names of schools attended or professions.

4.0 Findings of The Study

4.1 Homeschooling by Choice or Obligation

Both mothers indicated that the choice to homeschool their children was mostly influenced by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and not a deliberate decision from the onset as expressed in the narratives below:

“Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, my children attended a private school in Nairobi that offered the Kenyan school curriculum. I homeschooled them during COVID and continued even after formal schooling resumed.” Mariana

“I have two children, a boy and a girl, both in their early teens and still in preparatory school; both have dyslexia and comorbidity special needs conditions. They had been attending a private school. My decision to homeschool first came about because of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.” Imelda

Virtual classes opened the challenges children with dyslexia face, which was an eye opener for mothers such as Mariana, thus the decision to continue to homeschool after the pandemic.

“My continuous absence from work was also becoming a challenge, and I started experiencing hostility from my employer when I frequently asked for time away from work to take my children to the hospital or to go to school and meet with their teachers.” Imelda.

“My children and I were victims of stigma, misunderstanding and judgement by peers and the community. This is because of a general lack of knowledge of learning and other overlapping disabilities. These were very difficult and emotional times. When I began to homeschool them, we coped better within a friendly and conducive environment.” Imelda

“From my research, I have discovered methods and resources I could use to complement what they could not in school. I could fully apply these methods and resources when i began homeschooling them” Imelda

4.2 Strategies Used by Mothers

The two mothers, Mariana and Imelda, employed converging and divergent strategies in mothering and homeschooling their children.

*“I use resources with many exciting and varied colours to sustain my son's interest in the learning activities. I engage both of my children in experiential learning through tours to relevant sites. As I facilitate and supervise, we do many practical **activities** that allow for self-directed learning. I have created and modified an abridged version of the Accelerated Christian Curriculum to accommodate his learning disability.” Mariana.*

“When I homeschool, I can monitor and supervise their learning activities. I focus on involving them in activities that teach and reinforce life skills. This includes cooking, drawing, painting, and conducting self-driven experiments.” Imelda.

“I do not allow any activities that eat into my children's play or leisure time. We strictly limit our teaching and learning activities to normal hours without carrying forward any work beyond what we have scheduled to do.” Mariana.

“Homeschooling has enabled me to cut on the cost of mainstream schooling and teach my children an appropriate curriculum for their learning type and need.” Imelda.

4.3 The Impact of Homeschooling

There was a general lack of positive impact on the careers, mental health, financial independence, family, and social life of the two mothers.

I had to stop working full-time, and my husband also took an early retirement, so for a while, we were unstable financially. I engage in simple entrepreneurial. This way, I am able to contribute to our household financial needs.” Imelda.

“While homeschooling, I still have to ensure I complete the household chores and care for my children. Sometimes, it gets challenging and very exhausting. On days I am not up to it, I take it easy on me and the children, too.” Imelda.

Mariana began to homeschool other children apart from her own to make some money and meet financial obligations.

“Apart from homeschooling my own children, I started taking in other people’s children to help me earn income to support my family. I am divorced and must do everything within my means to meet my financial obligations.”

“My experience with homeschooling my son during this period made me realize he needed personalized attention, which only I could effectively and efficiently provide. Sometimes, I homeschool other children, but I can only take very few at a time. The implication of this is unsustainably low remuneration.

Mothering children with dyslexia homeschooling required extreme patience and understanding, even with basic everyday support with routine activities. This was especially enhanced when dyslexia occurred with other conditions. Puberty also ushered in changes that required a lot of attention by the mothers:

“My son is very sensitive to noise and reacts negatively to crowds. He is also very possessive of his personal items, reacts negatively to strangers, and is greatly attached to only those he knows well. Now that my daughter has started experiencing pubertal changes, my husband and I have taken it upon ourselves to train her on personal self-care, which she has mastered well.”

My day begins at the crack of dawn because of the weight of my responsibilities. I have to juggle between household chores, homeschooling... My small entrepreneurial business of fresh water supply often suffers because of extreme mental and physical exhaustion.” Imelda

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Until now it has been presumed from literature review findings that the global lived experiences of homeschooling mothers of children with specific learning disabilities are similar regardless of contexts and individual mothers’ decisions. Nevertheless, the findings of this study present the unique perspectives that situate Kenyan homeschooling mothers of children with dyslexia as the ‘*knowers of their knowledge through their lived experiences*’. Thus, the findings address the structural biases and blind spots in the existing discourse by shifting the paradigm to the lived experiences of homeschooling African mothers of children with dyslexia, who are often an under-researched and underrepresented group. The following five points emanated from the mothers’ narratives: circumstantial and deliberate reasons that led mothers of children with dyslexia to homeschool; the strategies used by mothers to successfully homeschool; and the impact of homeschooling on mothering, careers, mental health, financial independence and family and social life. Mothers homeschooled their children mainly due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was circumstantial because of global, regional, and national lockdowns and restricted movement. Consequently, children could not physically attend school while adults had to work from home. Virtual teaching became the norm worldwide while parents had to contend with facilitating online learning within the home environment. Mothers appeared to play a more central

role, compared to fathers in facilitating learning at home. This has been validated in findings by Kallitsoglou and Topalli (2021). Findings further showed that the choice by mothers to homeschool was, therefore, not initially a deliberate choice but circumstantial. This is corroborated in studies by Devitt (2017), Lindsay (2003), Lois (2013), Machovcová et al. (2021) and Shepherd (2010). The literature also indicates the central role of mothers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as corroborated in studies by Carlson (2015), de Jong et al. (2022), Dobosz et al. (2022), Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, (2021), Heers and Lipps (2022), Kallitsoglou and Topalli (2021), Mendoza and Montes (2020), Vincent et al. (2021), and Zhao et al. (2020).

However, both mothers revealed that they continued to homeschool after normal schooling resumed. They felt the mainstream schools did not adequately address the needs of children with dyslexia studies. This meant the children did not benefit meaningfully from formal schools because of inappropriate pedagogical teaching and learning methods and stigma. This is corroborated by Smith (2020) who found that African American mothers homeschooled because they faced racial and discriminatory inequalities against their children. Included were dissimilar disciplinary measures, a lack of special education support services and the undervaluing of Black children in formal schools. Mothers also found the homeschool environment as conducive to providing relevant and quality education as found by Setyabudi and Sridiyatmoko (2022).

On strategies used by mothers to successfully homeschool children with dyslexia, mothers reported the opportunity to pay closer attention to children with dyslexia. This was a positive move because children with dyslexia require close supervision and attention to successfully complete assigned tasks that involve reading, writing, spelling, and comprehension. Mothers used the homeschooling environment to give their children individualized attention. This was particularly significant because mainstream schools did not provide positive school experiences for children with regard to their educational philosophy, developmental concerns of negative social interaction and school experiences. AHI and Sengil-Akar (2021) have reported similar findings.

Mothers used a number of strategies that worked for their children's successful homeschooling. They found researching homeschool curriculums that were appropriate for teaching children with learning disabilities to be useful. Both mothers were keen to facilitate self-directed learning and a conducive personalized environment, as found in a study by Jeynes (2016). This enabled them to identify the children's difficulties and reinforce their strengths. They emphasized on life-skills development, interests, and talents. Both mothers were, therefore, best positioned to monitor the progress and growth of their children. This corroborates the findings by Carpenter and Gann (2016) that American parents used creative pedagogical activities and tools which facilitated successful homeschooling.

Findings revealed that homeschooling mothers played a critical role in initiating organized learning at home. This included establishing day-to-day routines, ensuring and providing a conducive ambiance for learning and preparing of self-instructed adjustable lessons to facilitate their children's learning. Francis (2019) found that homeschooling parents used learner-centred pedagogical approaches, differentiated learning methods and creatively tailor-made activities to fit the student's needs. Mothers indicated that it took effort, creativity, and time to research, plan, use appropriate teaching and learning methods and prepare resources for homeschooling. Both mothers facilitated their children's learning process and knew homeschooling curriculums that best suited their children. Both mothers were able to deal with the unmet needs of their children in mainstream schools by using a wide range of online resources. Sabol (2018) found that pooling together interactive resources and activities helped support the children's education; Pazhwak et al. (2022) tailored curricula that met the needs of the learners and provided interaction between parents and homeschooling children that enabled greater satisfaction, monitoring and response to the growth and progress of the children by parents. This was found to be particularly important for children with learning and other disabilities, as reported in studies by Ludgate et al. (2022), Greenway and Thomas (2020) and Cheng et al. (2016). Thus, an enabling environment, appropriate curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, and intensive mothering are critical in successful homeschooling.

Homeschooling had both negative and positive impact on mothers, affecting all aspects of their lives: social, financial, and mental. Lois (2013) has similar findings and claims that American mothers' homeschooling experience restricted them to household chores. She finds negative impacts ranging from the sacrifice of the identity of mothers, psychological and physical demands, and juggling household chores.

For both mothers in Kenya, the positive aspects of homeschooling included some level of successfully balancing between household chores, family needs and care of children's social, psychological and educational needs. This is corroborated in studies by Cook et al. (2013) and Whitlow-Spurlock (2019) and seen as the best option that could accommodate homeschooling mothers of children with disabilities and coping mechanisms of mothers. (Cheng et al., 2016; Cook et al., 2013; Delaney, 2014; Greenway & Eaton-Thomas, 2020; Kouroupa et al., 2022; Ludgate et al., 2022; Setyabudi & Sridiyatmoko, 2022; Somerton & Mukashev, 2023).

Imelda's son and daughter were pre-teens, undergoing puberty and requiring close supervision and care. This incorporated self-growth, discovery and self-care, thus corroborating findings by McQueen (2019) who observed that parents of teenaged children preferred homeschooling because of positive advantages such as self-discovery and growth. These were among the benefits formal schooling could not provide. Similar findings are reported by Abuzandah (2021), Purwaningsih and Fauziah (2020), Qureshi and Ali (2022) and Ray (2015).

By contrast, Mariana's children were much younger, requiring more preparation, facilitation, and guidance. Although positive in terms of gains for their children, it implied a sacrifice of self in the case of both mothers. Baker (2021) and DesRoches et al. (2021) report stress and poor mental health in homeschooling mothers, which was visible in both mothers, but Imelda was more greatly affected than Marianna. Mothers' sacrificing careers and paid jobs for their children's welfare was perceived as positive. This included providing conducive home environments, flexible teaching and learning activities and hours. On the other hand, mothers' careers, mental health, financial independence, family, and social life were affected by the demands of homeschooling and childcare. In some instances, mothers had to give up the demands and stresses of paid jobs to give full time attention to their children's education.

Career loss and taking up full or part-time homeschooling limited mothers' financial capacity. Mariana bore all responsibilities, while Imelda had some support from her husband, both financially and emotionally. Both mothers engaged in activities that contributed to family income. Both had to quit their jobs to focus on their children's schooling. Mariana left her job to take up full-time homeschooling but had to take in other children to get some income. Thus, mothers go the extra mile, even when homeschooling, to contribute to family financial needs. Combining mothering and homeschooling was demanding of their time, contributing greatly to mental and physical exhaustion. Completing all household chores, caring for the children and family, preparing, and implementing homeschooling tasks had a toll on mothers' physical, psychological, mental, and social health. Both mothers put in amplified energy compared with mothers of children without learning disabilities. This was evident in the time spent in planning, preparation and execution of homeschooling and household tasks. There was the perception of accomplishing this as good parenting and intensive mothering. Similar findings are reported by Beláňová et al. (2018) and Lois (2013). Homeschooling was seen as emotional, intensive mothering labour and sacrifice by mothers for their children's welfare (Edri & Kalev, 2019; Lois, 2013).

6.0 Limitations and Future Research

This study commences to address the insufficient information about the homeschooling experience of African mothers of children with dyslexia. Although it is generally held that all homeschooling mothers may share similar experiences, such as the inability of formal schools to meet the specific need of their children, this may vary with regard to context and individual mothers' reasons to homeschool. While the literature on homeschooling mothers in studies by Ludgate et al (2021); Garlington (2020); Lois (2021); Murphy (2014), Carpenter and Gann (2016); Tabatabai (2021) and

Baidi (2019), was generally found to be congruent with the mothers' experiences of the two Kenyan mothers of children with dyslexia, future research endeavours should broaden on these findings based on different contexts. The sample size used was from a small homogeneous group with similar demographics. Although this was particularly useful for examining unique and specific demographics, caution must be exercised when generalizing these findings to the wider Kenyan homeschool mothers' population. Subsequent research is necessary to explore the larger population of more homeschooling mothers of children with learning disabilities. This is likely to strengthen well-grounded research in the field of African Feminist Epistemology. This is of significance because it can inform the development of relevant services and support for mothers in the demanding journey of mothering and homeschooling children with learning disabilities.

Thus, this study contributes to new knowledge by capturing the lived experiences of homeschooling African mothers by situating their epistemology at the core of the study. The knowledge of the Kenyan mothers foregrounds their initiatives, borne out of their experiences as legitimate knowledge in consideration for policy discourse on homeschooling mothers of children with dyslexia.

7.0 Conclusion

We may not be in a position to conclusively determine that African mothers of children with dyslexia homeschool because of obligatory circumstances brought about by pandemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we conclude from this study that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the commencement of homeschooling by some mothers. We conclude that children's learning disability such as dyslexia may contribute to mothers' choices to continue homeschooling as an alternative to mainstream schooling. We further conclude that mothers employ varied and well-researched strategies from global best practices best suited for homeschooling ranging from tailor-made curricula, resources, self-directed activities, and pedagogical instructions.

The mothers' experiences converge in areas of strategies applied in homeschooling but diverge in methods of coping with negative socio-economic and emotional repercussions. Homeschooling may have a negative impact on the mothers' paid jobs, careers, mental health, and social life. This may be because of having to juggle between mothering, personal care, household chores and unpaid care work to support children with dyslexia. Finally, the narratives told by the mothers enable the unpacking, demystifying and systematization of their homeschool experiences. These can be reclaimed, reformulated, and documented as an important contribution to African Feminist Epistemology.

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