

# ***Ideology of Homeschooling: Experiences, Expectations, Needs and Guidelines***

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**Abstract:** Chinese parents, who are strongly influenced by Confucian culture, universally prioritise education, viewing it as a crucial factor in determining their children's future achievements. Nevertheless, several parents possess reservations regarding the conventional exam-focused educational system, as they worry it can suppress pupils' originality, inventiveness, and critical thinking skills. Consequently, they opt for homeschooling as an alternative. Although homeschooling is illegal in China, this hasn't deterred some young parents from settling in other countries to gain exposure to more Western educational philosophies, resources, and experiences to supplement their homeschooling plans. They aspire to provide their children with a more comprehensive and diverse education by incorporating Western insights and methodologies. Therefore, this study utilises a qualitative methodology by conducting interviews with 24 homeschooling families. The aim is to explore the motives and strategies of these families regarding homeschooling. The study specifically focuses on Chinese parents who are homeschooling their children in Thailand. Initial indications indicate that parents' motivations mostly arise from a predilection for customised instruction, discontentment with the examination-focused educational system, and conviction in the value of bilingual education. Moreover, the data indicates that adolescents who are homeschooled demonstrate comparable or superior academic achievement and socio-emotional functioning compared to their peers who attend traditional schools. This study provides suggestions and strategies for Chinese parents to augment their understanding of homeschooling.

**Keywords:** Chinese Parents, Experience, Homeschooling, Motivation, Thailand.

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## **1. Introduction**

The pandemic has once again highlighted the practice of homeschooling. Prior to this, around 2 million children in the United States were being educated at home (Haller & Novita, 2021; Thorell et al., 2022). Due to the pandemic, more than 300 million students are now being homeschooled, as parents are required to assume responsibility for their children's education. This has resulted in a significant increase

in the number of students being homeschooled (Price, Peersman, & Matherne, 2021). Homeschooling is a growing and widespread phenomenon worldwide. Although there is a wealth of literature on homeschooling with a primary focus on European countries, there is still a lack of research on homeschooling in China. Homeschooling in China has a long-standing tradition, dating back to ancient times. However, it is not as prevalent as the more often adopted public or private school systems.

The Chinese Ministry of Education issued a notice in 2017 regarding enrolment in compulsory education, stating that “homeschooling cannot be used as a substitute for the national compulsory education,” explicitly halting “homeschooling” for the first time (Sheng, 2019b). Chinese students seek overseas education to evade the rigorous college entrance examination in China, commonly known as the “Gaokao,” often referred to as China’s “exam hell.” Considering the fierce competition for admission to prestigious Chinese universities, only a small fraction of Gaokao candidates gain acceptance (Pires, 2019), making “alternative education” an attractive option. As first-generation parents homeschooling their children in China, they take the risk of breaking away from the system in pursuit of an “ideal education,” mainly due to the challenges their children face in the Gaokao and their desire for top-tier education (Sheng, 2019a).

Every child is unique and inherently different, and the diversity of children should be the starting point of modern educational theory. However, in the context of uniform standards and rigid implementation of test-orientated education, this aspect is greatly overlooked. Consequently, some Chinese parents opt for an alternative path and choose to homeschool in Thailand. Since 1999, the homeschooling model in Thailand has officially become a legally permissible educational method (Arphattananon, 2018). Through analysing the experiences of Chinese parents homeschooling in Thailand, researchers have reflected on this educational form. In this article, researchers summarise the demographic characteristics of homeschooling Chinese families, motivations for homeschooling, and parents’ expectations for homeschooling.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 presents the rising trend of homeschooling, whereas Section 3 answers the question, What is homeschooling? Section 4 describes the Compulsory Education Act in China, Section 5 explains the homeschooling regulations in Thailand, and Section 6 focuses on the motivation behind homeschooling. Similarly, Section 7 describes the method used for this study, Section 8 explains the research process, and Section 9 discusses the results obtained. Finally, Section 10 concludes this work. The certificate of approval (COA: RSUERB2024- 036) was issued by the Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University.

## **2. The Rising Trend of Homeschooling**

Homeschooling in the United States has evolved from being a niche phenomenon to a vibrant and lasting educational approach. In the last ten years, homeschooling has not only become a prominent social trend but has also seen substantial expansion. Champions of homeschooling have persistently advocated for its rights, overcoming initial legal hurdles and regulatory obstacles to establish it as a valid educational option. During the 1970s, the population of homeschooled children was estimated to be between 10,000 and 15,000. However, by 2010, this number had significantly increased to 2 million. However, recent estimates indicate that the number of homeschooled students aged 5 to 17 increased from 850,000 in 1999 to 1,690,000 in 2016. Additionally, the

proportion of homeschooled students rose from 1.7% to 3.3% between 1999 and 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Murphy (2014) confirms that the current enrolment in homeschooling accounts for approximately one-fifth of private school enrolments. Presently, there are 2.3 million homeschooled children in the United States (Dwyer, 2022). By February 2020, approximately 9 million American students had experienced homeschooling at least once. In 2020, the number of homeschooled students reached as high as 2.65 million, rising to 3.7 million in 2021. By 2022, this number had further increased to 4.3 million (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). These general statistical trends suggest that homeschooling will continue to steadily rise in 2023, even without another surge caused by a pandemic.

**Table 1: The Number of Homeschooling Households from 2016 to 2022.**

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2016
Data	4.3 million	3.721 million	2.65 million	2.5 million	2.3 million

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2022)

### 2.1. What is homeschooling?

Homeschooling, also known as home education, is an educational approach where parents or guardians choose to educate their children at home rather than sending them to a traditional public or private school. In homeschooling, parents take on the primary responsibility for their child's education, designing and implementing a curriculum tailored to their child's individual learning style, interests, and needs (AHI & Sengil-Akar, 2021). As we know, homeschooling is not simply replicating a traditional school environment within the home. Therefore, researchers argue that children who use school online courses during the pandemic do not fall under the category of homeschooling (Zhao et al., 2020). Additionally, students who are temporarily home due to illness and using school curricula also do not fall under homeschooling (Valiente et al., 2022).

### 2.2. Compulsory Education Act in China

Homeschooling is legally recognized as an educational method in numerous nations and has emerged as a feasible alternative to education. Nevertheless, homeschooling is a relatively novel idea and has not yet gained widespread acceptance in China. Homeschooling in China faced increased difficulties with the issuance of a notice by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in 2017, which prohibited homeschooling (Sheng, 2019c). In addition, homeschooling contravenes the stipulations outlined in Articles 2, 4, and 35 of China's Compulsory Education Law. According to Article 2 and Article 4, parents must ensure that their school-aged children attend educational institutions to acquire mandatory education. Therefore, except for parents of eligible disabled children, Chinese legislation and judicial practice do not grant parents the right to choose homeschooling (Wang, 2019). The education law in China mandates that children must enter the Chinese education system at the age of seven and remain enrolled for nine years (Wang, 2020). Over the past decade, a significant number of homeschooling cases have emerged quietly in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. Surveys indicate that the homeschooling community is rapidly growing (Sheng, 2019b). As of February 2017, the group closely monitoring and intending to homeschool their children numbered about 50,000 people, with approximately 6,000 students practicing homeschooling. Compared to the 2,000

students in 2013, the annual growth rate of the homeschooling community in China far exceeds 30% (The State Council of the People's Public of China, 2021). Therefore, homeschooling is gradually developing in China.

### *2.3. Homeschooling Regulations in Thailand*

The Thai education system consists of formal education, non-formal education, and informal education, and credits accumulated by learners can be transferred between different educational platforms (Chansaengsee, Peungposop, & Junprasert, 2017). Homeschooling in Thailand was legalised in 1992 and further endorsed by a law passed in 2004, allowing families to homeschool. The Ministry of Education of Thailand conducted an “educational reform experiment” on the “home school” system in 1999, where families took responsibility for educating their children. Parents must apply for a homeschooling permit and undergo annual assessments. Section 4 of the Thai Constitution B.E. 2540 stipulates the principles of rights and freedoms: “The dignity, liberty, and equality of individuals shall be protected.” Articles 49 and 50 of the Thai Constitution B.E. 2550 state:

Education provided by professional organisations or private sectors, alternative education of the people, self-study, and lifelong learning shall be protected and promoted by the government. Everyone has the right to academic freedom. Education, training, learning, teaching, research, and dissemination of such research results conducted by these basic principles shall be protected (Parliament.go.th, 1997)

These concepts are key principles of education reform mentioned in the National Education Act B.E. 2542 and its subsequent amendments (Engchun, Sungtong, & Haruthaithanasan, 2018). Parents must register their intention to homeschool with the local district office or the Provincial Administrative Organisation. This registration process includes submitting a letter explaining the reasons for homeschooling and providing detailed information about the curriculum and teaching methods to be used. Registration is also required with the Educational Service Area Office, and it must ensure that the intentions of families applying for homeschooling for their children are sincere. The Ministerial Regulation No. 3 on the “Rights to Basic Education at Home” governs homeschooling. The Ministry of Education requires regular assessments and evaluations of homeschooled students (Engchun et al., 2018). This can be done through exams or assessments conducted by departments or qualified reviewers. The assessment process aims to ensure that children receiving homeschooling receive education of comparable quality to traditional schooling. Against this background, the Thai education system supports alternative forms of schooling, allowing parents to take responsibility for educating their children. Homeschooling has been considered a novel option within the Thai education system.

### *2.4. Motivation behind Homeschooling*

Parents' motivations are often closely tied to their care for and expectations of their children. For instance: 1. Children's Happiness and Success; 2. Social Status and Recognition; 3. Expectations for Children's Future; 4. Educational Background and Cultural Values; 5. Personal Satisfaction and Sense of Achievement (Green-Hennessy

& Mariotti, 2023; Green et al., 2007). Overall, parental motivation constitutes a complex combination involving their love for their children, expectations for the future, understanding of their roles, and personal sense of achievement and satisfaction, among other factors. Many scholars have studied the motivations and experiences of homeschooling families. Various reasons drive parents to choose homeschooling, including concerns about the school environment, dissatisfaction with academic outcomes, and the desire to provide religious or moral guidance (Gaither, 2009; Kunzman, 2009).

According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the vast majority of parents (up to 80.3%) cite concerns about the safety of the learning environment as their primary motivation for homeschooling. With the increasing occurrences of campus shootings and peer crimes, more parents are opting to educate their children safely at home. Approximately 72.6% of parents believe inadequate academic quality to be the primary reason for homeschooling (Green et al., 2007), while 58.9% decide to incorporate religious education into their curriculum. Additionally, 23.1% of parents mention special needs as a factor influencing their decision to homeschool, and 15.6% state that their children have physical or mental health issues (Bell, Kaplan, & Thurman, 2016). Furthermore, 34.8% of parents cite various miscellaneous reasons such as children not reaching school age, traffic congestion, and lower costs compared to public schools (Ray, 2015). Additionally, some scholars propose that children can benefit greatly from one-on-one tutoring. In such cases, children can receive the necessary time and attention for personalized instruction and learn at their own pace. Private tutoring often provides higher-quality education than schools because children's specific needs and abilities can be catered to Cai, Reeve and Robinson (2002). Moreover, homeschooling also contributes to building family relationships, as compared to mainstream schools, homeschooling strengthens the bonds between parents and siblings. In the homeschooling environment, children are not subject to negative peer pressure and can learn from good role models like parents, without being influenced by rebellious or untrained peers.

Moreover, the lack of bullying in the homeschooling setting enables children to learn in a secure and nurturing atmosphere. Parents can more effectively instill morals and religious beliefs inside the home environment, hence safeguarding family values and culture more effectively than secular humanism in school teaching. Contrary to certain misunderstandings, homeschooling does not entail the isolation of children from the actual world. Contrarily, children who are homeschooled frequently exhibit superior social skills, being able to effectively connect with individuals of various age groups and engage in meaningful conversations with adults with confidence. Homeschooled children have a greater amount of time and a wider range of possibilities to explore and develop their interests, hobbies, sports, skills, and other areas of passion that are not typically included in traditional school curricula. It helps them to nurture creativity and to undergo personal development.

### 3. Method

The qualitative research design was adopted in this study. Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2015) point out that a qualitative approach means collecting data that mainly is in written or spoken form of recording about human experiences and observable activities. Scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and

implications of the experiences of homeschooling families through the interpretation. This procedure enables exposing the internal dynamics of homeschooling families; different motivations, feelings, and obstacles they face are uncovered (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). This depth of understanding provides more than just an academic view but also lays and provides compelling evidence for legislators and professionals in education as to how to cater for the educational needs of these families more effectively.

### 3.1. Participants

The data in this paper was part of a study that spanned a period of one month, February 2023 to March 2024, in Thailand. There were 24 families with 30 children in the study, and there were more boys than girls. Each family had at least one child of primary school age who was homeschooled. These families were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling methods, starting from an initial family and expanding to a total of 44 families across various cities in Thailand. Some families declined to participate in the interviews. All participants were given pseudonyms. The following table provides an overview of the participants:

**Table 2: Demographic information of participants (N=24).**

Variable	Mean	Mode	Range
Number of children homeschooled	1.25	2	1-3
Homeschooling mothers' years of formal education	20	19	12-23
Spouse years of formal education	16.75	16	12-23
Number of children actively being educated in the home	1.25	1	1-3
Number of years actively homeschooling	3.3	2	1-5

All Chinese parents have no religious beliefs and originate from mainland China. The majority of families have only one child, with one family having three children, but only two of them reaching school age. Most families have backgrounds in overseas study, with mothers having high educational qualifications. There are five mothers with a doctoral degree in education and only one mother with an associate degree. Fathers are mainly involved in IT, overseas operations, executive positions in overseas companies, and private business ownership. All families have at least one year of experience in homeschooling. Mothers are the primary implementers of homeschooling.

### 3.2. Research Process

Most of the in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face and typically lasted about one and a half hours in Sitor Homeschool. Only one is conducted in the homes of participants. Participants will be provided with a description of the research, written details of their rights as participants, and details regarding data use and handling. Qualitative methodology, as suggested by Taylor et al. (2015), involves the collection of descriptive data in the form of written or oral words that capture people's experiences and observable behaviours (Creswell, 2012). A series of interviews will be conducted with twenty-four mothers and their children to delve into their homeschooling journey, the motivations behind their decision, and the mothers' perceptions of their children's development. Based on the insights of the literature review, we can make an interview guideline that enquires about the homeschooling experience in Thailand. Interview questions are based on recent research by Firmin et al. (2019). The interviews were

conducted using scripted questions, as well as open-ended follow-up questions, and performed conversationally rather than strictly following a set Q&A format. Closed Interview Questions—The interview lasted about one hour, and participants were asked questions that were broad and open-ended that allowed for greater sharing of experiences and sentiments (Berg & Lune, 2018). By talking to the participants, the researchers were able to establish a comfortable relationship with the participants, and they could get a more detailed response regarding the lifestyle of a homeschooling.

**Table 3: Interview Data.**

Family Codes	Duration of Interview (mins)	Number of Utterances	Family Codes	Duration of Interview (mins)	Number of Utterances
FM1	228	1022	FM13	173	623
FM2	237	782	FM14	169	745
FM3	177	492	FM15	192	568
FM4	189	483	FM16	201	457
FM5	213	494	FM17	189	590
FM6	222	327	FM18	166	821
FM7	190	581	FM19	158	1089
FM8	169	623	FM20	177	921
FM9	175	412	FM21	146	625
FM10	183	723	FM22	172	439
FM11	188	787	FM23	180	821
FM12	156	658	FM24	213	471

### 3.3. Data Analysis

Recognising that qualitative research must still respect structure, they systematically conducted the analysis. Hennink et al. (2020) put it, there is a systematic way to go about qualitative data. The analysis process began during data collection and then followed early established approaches defined by the researchers. Berg and Lune (2018) suggest creating an initial “initial coding” list, which we took to mean preliminary coding categories based a priori on a conceptual framework. This required them to use alphanumeric coding in order to provide structure and break down the data. Coding began as soon as the first interview transcripts were ready. Analysis was conducted through five stages, starting with transcribing and translating all interviews into English. In the stage of data organisation, data was organised and classified into different categories. Since the first stage includes a very large amount of interview text (96 transcripts) and intensive reading of this material, the first stage in the analysis process was the “screening” of the interview material, which involved the reading of each interview (as opposed to reading each interview through, scanning the number of utterances, and writing down the totals). After all utterances were captured and counted, all original interview data was sorted in order of total number of utterances.

**Table 4: Coding of Data.**

Utterances	Descriptor
FM3: “Flexible learning is more achievable in homeschooling. If a child encounters difficulties in a particular subject, we can adjust the teaching methods on-the-fly, providing additional learning time or utilizing different materials.”	Flexible Learning Perspectives
FM6: “We can delve deeper without being restricted by the fixed curriculum of traditional schools. This flexibility encourages more exploratory and in-depth learning.”	Flexible Learning Perspectives
FM21: “Homeschooling provides us with a great deal of flexibility in learning. Each child has different learning styles and interests, which may be overlooked in traditional schools.”	Flexible Learning Perspectives

Coding was undertaken in the next stage using an inductive method to identify themes from the data. After identifying patterns and themes, first-level codes were grouped into categories using the text extracted from the sources. These codes were subsequently integrated into higher-order themes after discerning links in the data (Hennink et al., 2020). Each utterance was labelled and grouped, and then utterances written in keywords or phrases were coded under the corresponding codes. Over time, as we observed patterns, we binned utterances in the same category together. In this process, data relevant to the research questions were organised together. After organising utterances under the same labels, all utterances were combined under broader themes. In the final stage of the analysis, new categories were added and refined as data emerged until saturation was reached with recurring patterns.

## **4. Results**

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the reasons of Chinese parents for homeschooling. The researchers examined the total number of utterances and categorized them depending on parental motivation. Chinese parents who opted for homeschooling overseas cited discontent with conventional schooling and ideological motivations as their primary reasons. The primary factors are as follows:

### *4.1. Disagreement with the School's Educational Philosophy*

Disagreement with China's educational philosophy may stem from various factors, including cultural, social, and teaching differences. Chinese education has traditionally emphasized rote memorization and standardized testing. Critics argue that this approach stifles creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills because students often focus on memorizing facts rather than understanding concepts. A parent from Shenzhen emphasized the importance of skill development beyond exams: "Our education system relies too much on standardized tests, which may limit children's development. We should pay more attention to fostering their critical thinking, communication skills, and teamwork, which are equally important in real life." (FM8)

However, a parent from Changzhou, a second-tier city in Jiangsu Province, expressed a different view: "I believe rote memorization is necessary because it helps children master basic knowledge. However, I also think it should be balanced with understanding and application. Pure rote memorization may limit children's cognitive development." (FM7)

### *4.2. Slow Pace of School Teaching Progress*

Several parents expressed concerns about the school's teaching pace being excessively sluggish. The leisurely tempo of conventional Chinese classroom instruction is impacted by a multitude of factors. First and foremost, conventional teaching prioritizes the transmission of fundamental knowledge and the comprehension of students, rather than emphasizing speed. Furthermore, classrooms can include a substantial number of students, necessitating additional time for professors to ensure comprehensive comprehension of the content among all students. In addition, conventional instructional approaches might be inflexible and deficient in terms of interaction and innovation, resulting in a slower assimilation of knowledge. Parents have varying perspectives on the sluggish rate of instruction in traditional schools:

“A slow-paced teaching helps ensure that every student can keep up with the course content. This approach gives students more time to digest and understand knowledge, avoiding shallow understanding and missing important concepts caused by hurried learning.” (FM4)

However, a mother from Shenzhen with a doctoral degree strongly opposed this view: “A slow-paced teaching may lead to students losing interest and motivation. Prolonged repetitive practice and slow progress in the curriculum may lead to students feeling disengaged, affecting their learning effectiveness and sense of achievement.” (FM17)

#### *4.3. Child not Receiving Adequate Respect at School*

In traditional Chinese culture, respect for authority is crucial, and traditional Chinese schools may emphasize teacher authority over treating students equally. Some traditional schools may be constrained by strict educational systems, unable to adapt flexibly to changes in modern society and students’ needs, resulting in inadequate respect for students. Additionally, due to the large class sizes in traditional Chinese classrooms, teachers may struggle to give each student enough attention and respect. A mother recounted her daughter’s painful experience:

There was a milk-drinking time every day, using a straw to insert into a small hole. My child couldn’t insert it for a long time or drank slowly. After five minutes, regardless of whether the milk was finished or not, the teacher asked the child to throw it away. (FM21)

Another child shared an extremely unpleasant experience:

My child took a classmate to the clinic. Originally, it was a good deed, but because they were late returning to the classroom, they were scolded by the teacher. The teacher didn’t have time to ask for the reason, but the child felt very innocent and wronged.

#### *4.4. High Pressure from Exams and Assignments*

Parents mentioned dissatisfaction with the pressure from exams and assignments as another reason for homeschooling. The term “exam-oriented education” refers to the phenomenon where entrance or promotion opportunities are entirely determined by exams. More accurately, it is a concise term for an educational practice that allocates limited educational resources based solely on competitive exam scores. University entrance competition in China is extremely fierce, and exam scores are often a key factor in admissions. Therefore, students must strive for excellent grades to be admitted to ideal universities. Students are often assessed and ranked, leading to high pressure from exams and assignments. A mother from Chengdu gave up her job and chose homeschooling, which she deemed a necessary decision:

I feel that excessive preparation for standardized tests consumes too much time and energy for children. These exams may bring unnecessary stress and anxiety to them. It’s important to let them experience joy in learning, not just pursue grades. (FM19)

A mother from Nanjing said she is from Jiangsu, an area with heavy emphasis on education. She never considered withdrawing her child from school until she found out her daughter was struggling. She tearfully said:

Every morning, she would cry and ask if she could skip school, saying, 'Mom, I'm too tired, I can't finish my homework, I can't remember what the teacher said, I don't have time to sleep, I'm a bad child, I can't escape this vicious cycle.' (FM11)

#### *4.5. Promotion of bilingualism*

All parents support bilingual learning and the mixed use of both languages as instructional languages. These Chinese parents' educational beliefs are related to their ideology regarding bilingual development. From a socio-cultural perspective, bilingual education helps cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness and cultural adaptability. By learning two languages, children can better understand and respect people from different cultural backgrounds and communicate effectively in cross-cultural environments. In addition to two families using the IB curriculum for bilingual teaching, other families use the mainland Chinese curriculum to teach Chinese, mathematics, and the IB curriculum. Most parents emphasized the need for enhanced English courses for their children, so families' homeschooling face the challenge of promoting bilingualism.

We believe bilingual learning is very important for children's future development. Bilingualism can open up a broader world for them and enhance their international competitiveness. Therefore, we support bilingualism as the instructional language and are committed to helping children excel in both languages. (FM13)

Using bilingualism as the instructional language at home is indeed a challenge, but we are willing to face it and strive to overcome it. We believe that through bilingual education, children will be able to better understand and integrate into both cultures, becoming talents with international perspectives and cross-cultural communication abilities.(FM15)

When asked about their children's views on learning Chinese, parents expressed the importance of learning Chinese and their children's reluctance due to the relatively higher difficulty compared to English. However, parents do not intend to give up on learning Chinese because they hope their children realize that Chinese is not just a language but also a link to their family and cultural traditions. They must retain their Chinese identity and return to serve the motherland in the future. Academic research shows that language use is closely related to individuals' identity and sense of belonging. Bilingual learners, while mastering two languages, also form dual or compound language identities. Emphasizing bilingual education in the family not only helps children master two languages but also helps them develop positive dual language and cultural identities.

Although Chinese may be somewhat difficult for our children, we firmly believe that mastering Chinese is crucial for their growth and future. We don't want them to lose connection with our culture and traditions, and we also hope they

can confidently showcase the charm of Chinese culture on the international stage. (FM12)

As Chinese parents, we hope our children can proudly identify with their racial identity and pass it on and carry it forward. Learning Chinese is not only for personal development but also to contribute to the future of the motherland and the nation. (FM19)

#### *4.6. Pursuit of Top Universities in the World*

Influenced by Confucian culture, Chinese parents pursue their children's admission to top universities in the world for reasons including the pursuit of educational resources and expectations for future careers and social status. Firstly, top universities usually have outstanding teaching and research resources, providing students with a better learning environment and broader development space. Secondly, graduates from top universities often find it easier to obtain high-paying jobs and broader career development opportunities, which is also an important reason why many parents pursue top universities. A mother who studied abroad in New Zealand expressed her views on top universities, longing for international prestige due to her own experience:

Although China's university rankings are constantly improving, their international recognition still needs to be strengthened. Therefore, I hope my children can study abroad to gain a richer international perspective and a wider interpersonal network, laying a better foundation for future career development. Studying abroad is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about fostering children's independence and confidence. Living and studying abroad can help children independently solve problems, adapt to different cultures and environments, which is very beneficial for their growth. Now with the IB curriculum he is using, he can directly apply to international universities in the future! (FM4)

Another mother, with a background in education management, views this as an educational investment. She believes that planning for her child's future from an early age is necessary to reap good returns in the future:

For me, sending my child to a top university is an investment. Although the cost is high, I believe top educational resources and academic atmosphere can provide children with broader development space and better future opportunities. Although studying abroad has various benefits, I also realize the challenges and risks involved. Children traveling far from home need to face linguistic, cultural, and psychological adaptation pressures, and studying abroad is also a significant financial burden. This is also why we chose Thailand now, to slowly let the children adapt, but I think it's a worthwhile investment, an important decision for the children's future... and for some professions and industries, top universities may be more competitive. (FM2)

#### *4.7. Personalized learning is advantageous*

Parents unanimously concurred that individualized learning is capable of addressing their children's individual requirements and interests, a consensus that was reached about practical matters. Personalized learning prioritizes customizing instructional

strategies according to individual students' personality traits, interests, and preferred methods of learning, resulting in a more focused and specific educational experience. This strategy enhances children's learning motivation and cultivates their capacity for autonomous learning. Through the creation of focused educational initiatives, parents can enhance their comprehension of their children's capabilities and facilitate more profound learning encounters. This individualized attention enables youngsters to focus on certain areas, establishing a strong basis for their future professional pursuits and academic achievements. Therefore, parents homeschooling generally view personalized learning as an effective means of providing quality education. A family from Beijing mentioned personalized learning:

Homeschooling provides us with great flexibility in learning. Each child has different learning styles and interests, which may be overlooked in traditional schools. In the home environment, we can tailor learning plans to each child's unique needs, sparking their interest. This personalized approach helps cultivate motivation and self-learning skills. (FM22)

A mother from Shanghai affirmed this view and emphasized the flexibility in personalization:

Homeschooling makes it easier to achieve flexible learning. If a child encounters difficulties in a subject, we can adjust teaching methods immediately, provide extra learning time, or use different materials. This kind of personalized flexibility is difficult to achieve in traditional education. Traditional school teaching is often rigid and less tolerant of change. (FM1)

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

### *5.1. Conclusion*

This study aims to delve into the motivations of Chinese parents residing in Thailand who opt for homeschooling their children. Given the rapid rise of homeschooling in China, comprehending the underlying reasons becomes imperative. The findings of this research suggest that the majority of these families hail from affluent backgrounds, characterised by parents with higher educational qualifications and robust financial means. Nevertheless, there's also participation from a minority of middle-class families. Typically, one parent assumes the responsibility of educating their children at home. Ideological impetus regarding education plays a significant role in this context, profoundly influencing the homeschooling dynamics. Personalised learning emerges as the cornerstone of Chinese parents' choice for homeschooling. They often express a desire to shield their children from being moulded into "mass-produced" entities. Each participant underscores their profound comprehension of their children's individualities, cognitive styles, and learning methodologies, acknowledging the diversity in learning approaches. Homeschooling offers a unique opportunity for personalised learning experiences, allowing children to adapt their education to meet their individual needs, interests, and learning styles. Chinese parents prioritise their children's cultural heritage by using bilingual education, which helps them maintain a strong connection to their Chinese roots while simultaneously improving their skills in a secondary language,

mainly English. Parents aim to cultivate their children's dual cultural and linguistic identities in order to provide them with the essential skills and information needed to succeed in an ever more interconnected world. Bilingual education not only provides access to prestigious university admissions and professional growth but also cultivates a strong sense of identity and cultural heritage. Children who are brought up in bilingual environments frequently acquire enhanced cultural sensitivity, empathy, and communication skills, which are extremely valuable advantages in today's linked world.

In addition, Chinese parents demonstrate a progressive educational philosophy by embracing bilingual education. They recognise the importance of being adaptable and culturally skilled in a constantly changing global environment. They acknowledge the need to provide their children with a well-rounded education that combines traditional values with global perspectives, as it is crucial for their future achievements and satisfaction. Chinese parents, who are influenced by Confucian values, typically prioritise academic attainment as the primary path to success, considering other interests to be of lesser importance. Nevertheless, parents who homeschool do not solely prioritise academic grades. Their educational system promotes the idea that the ultimate goals are lifelong learning and a strong enthusiasm for information. Chinese parents' worries differ from those rooted in religious views commonly observed in some Asian or European countries. Instead, their issues primarily focus on the speed of instruction and their active participation in their children's education. Many express apprehensions regarding the brisk pace of China's education system, where curriculum content is often hurried through, leaving scant room for children to truly grasp the material. They mention a willingness to allow their children to learn at a more measured pace, emphasising comprehension over rushing through coursework. Nevertheless, schools frequently mandate supplementary tutoring, exacerbating pressure on children and potentially yielding adverse outcomes such as disinterest or withdrawal. Parents note that while they still leverage traditional Chinese curriculum materials, they adapt the teaching pace. Consequently, children exhibit notable enhancements in academic performance and an augmented enthusiasm for learning.

This paradigm shift demonstrates a desire to provide a comprehensive education that emphasises individualised learning and overall growth, rather than simply memorising information and relying on standardised tests. Chinese parents adopt homeschooling for several reasons, including pedagogical and ideological factors. Although the reasons may differ among families, personalised learning is often identified as a common goal. However, this study has some shortcomings. First and foremost, the sample size is limited, and most of the participants come from affluent families. Further investigation should explore the difficulties faced by middle-class households in greater detail. Furthermore, this study used a cross-sectional methodology. Prospective longitudinal research could monitor the progression, maturation, and homeschooling encounters of these individuals to acquire a sophisticated comprehension of homeschool learners' viewpoints.

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