



Homeschool Alumni Reaching Out
presents

A Complex Picture:

Results of a 2014 Survey of Adult Alumni of the Modern Christian Homeschool Movement
Installment 3: Academics & Non-academics
April 1, 2015

Data analysis provided by:



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Read the first installment, which includes a description of the survey methodology, [here](#). The second installment, which focuses on demographic variables, can be found [here](#). *Note that this survey should not be used to make any generalized statements about homeschoolers as a whole; the only people it can be used to make claims about are the 3,702 people who took the survey.*

0. Introduction to Installment 3: Academics & Non-academics

In this installment, we will review the findings about homeschool academics and discuss extracurricular activities in the homeschool experience, including socialization.

In general, we find that respondents had satisfactory academic experiences, although this varied by grade level and subject area. Most respondents were employed, had family responsibilities, and participated in mainstream US culture. Further, most respondents were adequately socialized, had friends, and participated in group activities and extracurriculars. However, a sizeable minority of the respondents were prevented from engaging in mainstream culture, forced to work without pay, and denied adequate socialization.

1. Academics

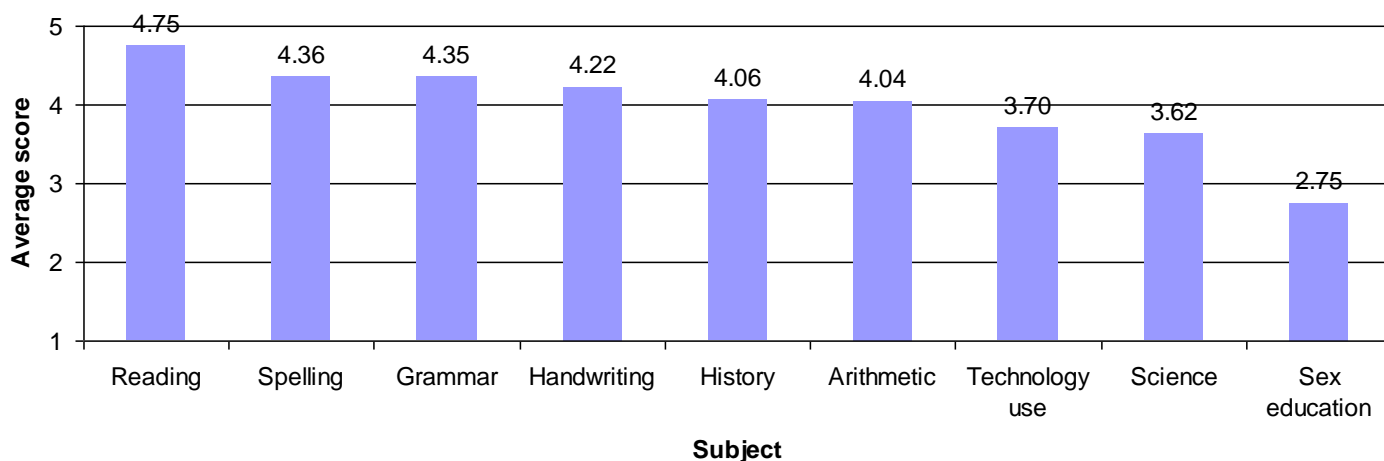
In Installments 1 and 2, we reported average scores for academic subject instruction. We reproduce them here and provide further analysis.

We find that respondents' mean rating of their academic experiences was higher than 'Average' in every subject except for sex education. However, respondents rated the instruction they received in STEM fields lower than the instruction they received in the humanities and social studies, and they rated the instruction they received in advanced subjects lower than the instruction they received in elementary subjects. We also find that three homeschool curricula were used by more than half of respondents (Saxon, Abeka, and Bob Jones).

Quality of Instruction

In elementary education, participants rated all the subjects except for sex education as higher than 'Average' (a rating of 3). The highest-ranked subject was reading, followed by other language arts topics. STEM fields ranked lower, with sex education being the lowest-ranked subject. (see Figure 1; note that here 5 is the best rating and 1 is the worst).

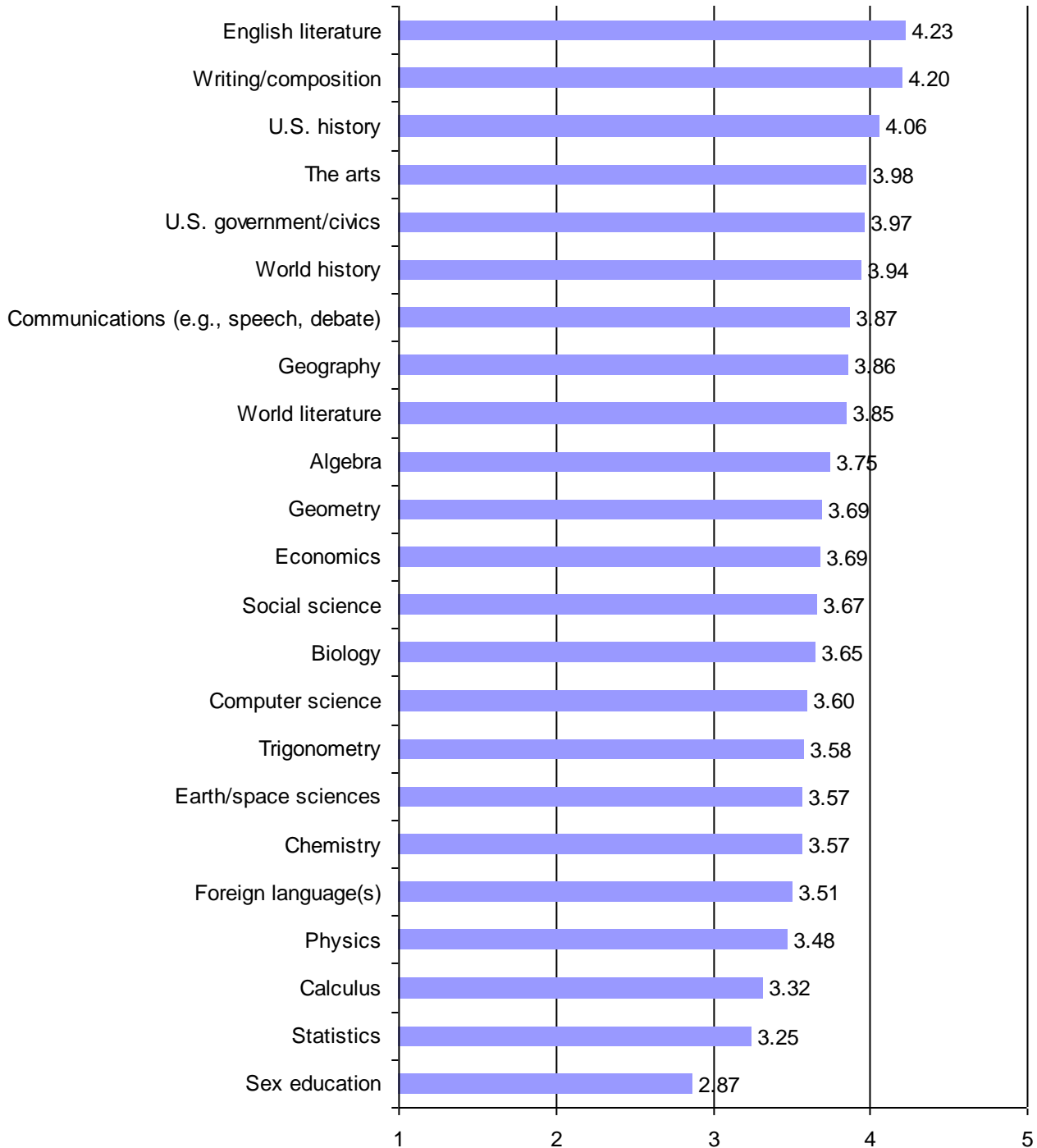
Figure 1: K-5 Academics



In secondary education, participants rated all the subjects as better than average except for sex education. The only subjects that had a mean rating over 4 (5 being the best) were English literature,

writing/composition, and US history. In general, respondents tended to rate their experiences in language arts and social studies courses as better than those in the sciences, foreign language, and upper-level math.

Figure 2: 6-12 Academics



A comparison of the two age levels by subject is more illuminating. Figure 3 shows the mean of weighted averages for each of the four major subject areas¹ in grades K-5 and grades 6-12.

¹ Note that this graph excludes sex education and foreign language. The groupings by subject (primary school ~ secondary school) are: Language arts (reading, spelling, grammar, handwriting ~ English literature, writing/composition, communications, world literature, the arts); History/Social Studies (history ~ US history, world history, US government, geography, social science,

Figure 3: Quality of instruction by subject and level

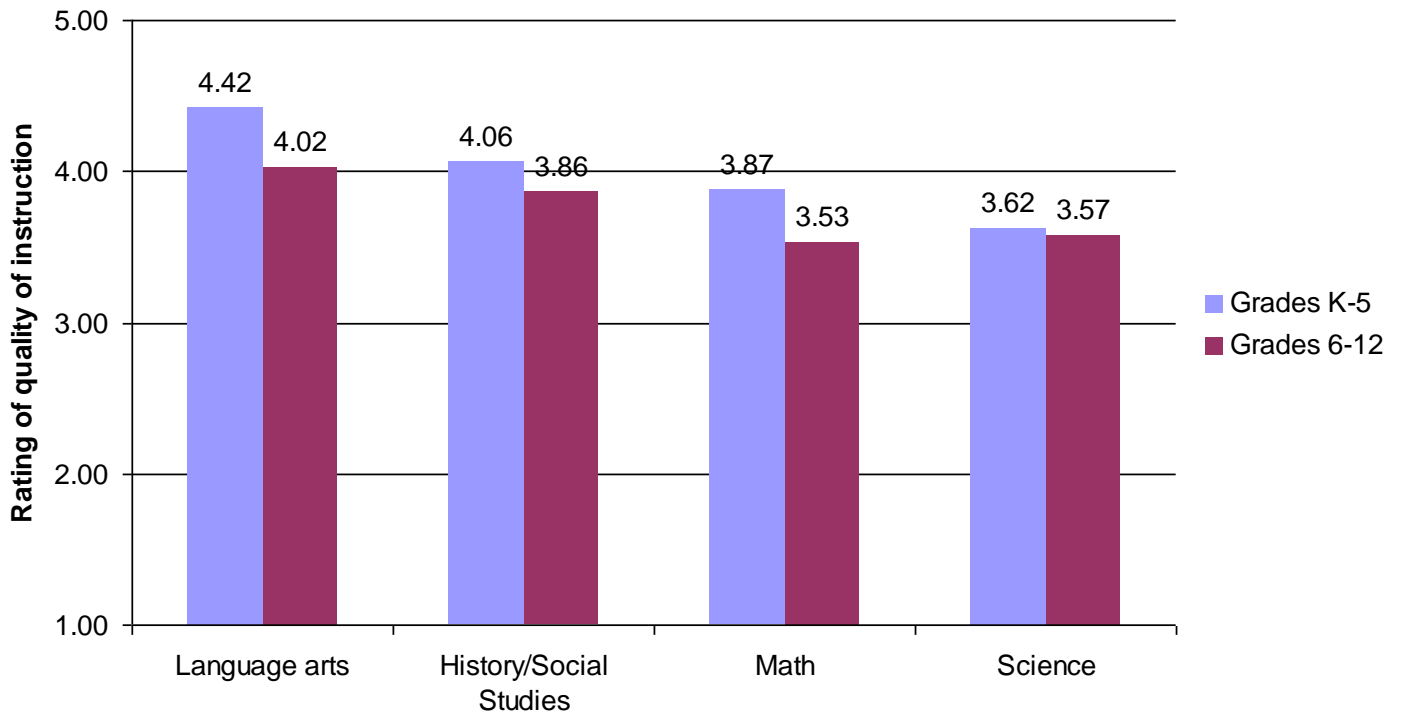


Figure 3 shows that the instructional quality that respondents reported receiving decreased from primary to secondary school. It further shows that instructional quality in math and science was rated lower than language arts and social studies in both primary and secondary school.

Curricula

Three homeschool curriculum manufacturers were used by more than half of all respondents at some point: Saxon (used by 74% of respondents), Abeka (69%), and Bob Jones (50%) (Note that respondents could select multiple curricula). Other popular curricula were Apologia (used by 32% of respondents), AWANA (27%), Answers in Genesis (24%), McGuffey Readers (22%), and Alpha Omega (22%). The other thirty curricula named in the survey were used by 20% or less of respondents.²

2. Non-academics

This section includes information on the quality of instruction respondents received in non-academic subjects, as well as data about their experiences in the labor force and in relation to modern culture. We find that in general, respondents participated in the labor force and in mainstream culture, although sizeable minorities did not do so.

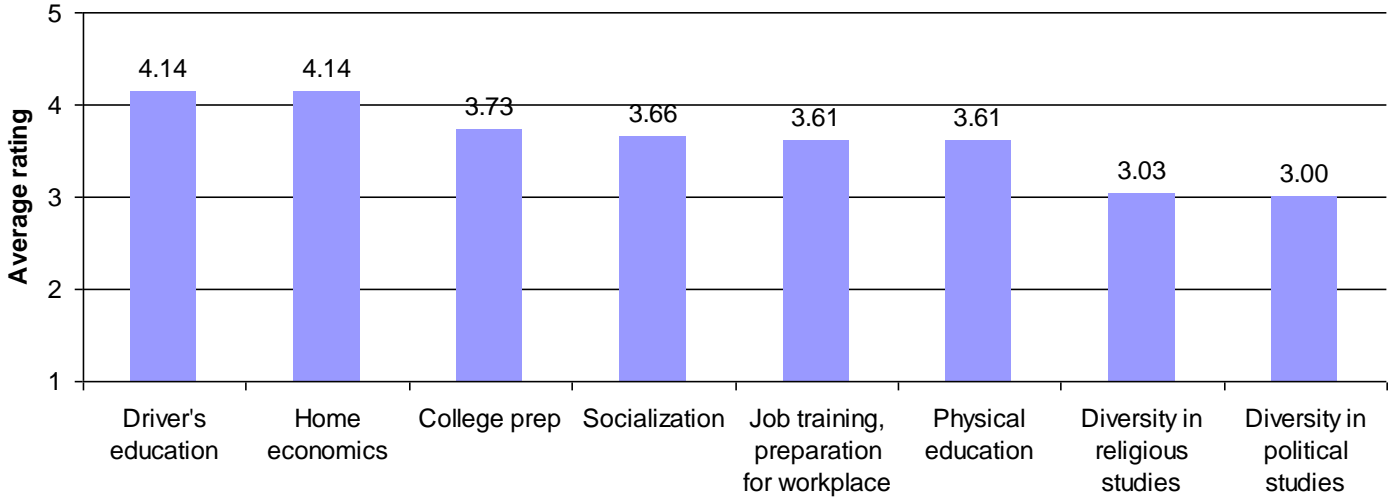
Non-academic subjects

Respondents scored all non-academic subjects at or above average (see Figure 4). The most highly ranked subjects were driver's education and home economics; the lowest ranked subjects were diversity in religious and political studies.

economics); Math (arithmetic, technology use ~ algebra, geometry, trigonometry, computer science, calculus, statistics); Science (science ~ biology, earth/space sciences, chemistry, physics).

² Other curricula used by more than 5% of respondents include: Rod & Staff (20%); Sonlight (19%); Math-U-See (18%); Veritas Press (18%); Institute for Excellence in Writing (17%); Streams of Civilization (17%); Vision Forum (16%); ATI (15%); Institute for Creation Research (14%); Lifepac (13%); Switched on Schoolhouse (12%); Sing, Spell, Read, and Write (12%); ACE (10%); KONOS (10%); Summit Ministries (8%); Beautiful Feet Books (8%); Horizons (8%); Christian Light (7%).

Figure 4: Non-academic subjects

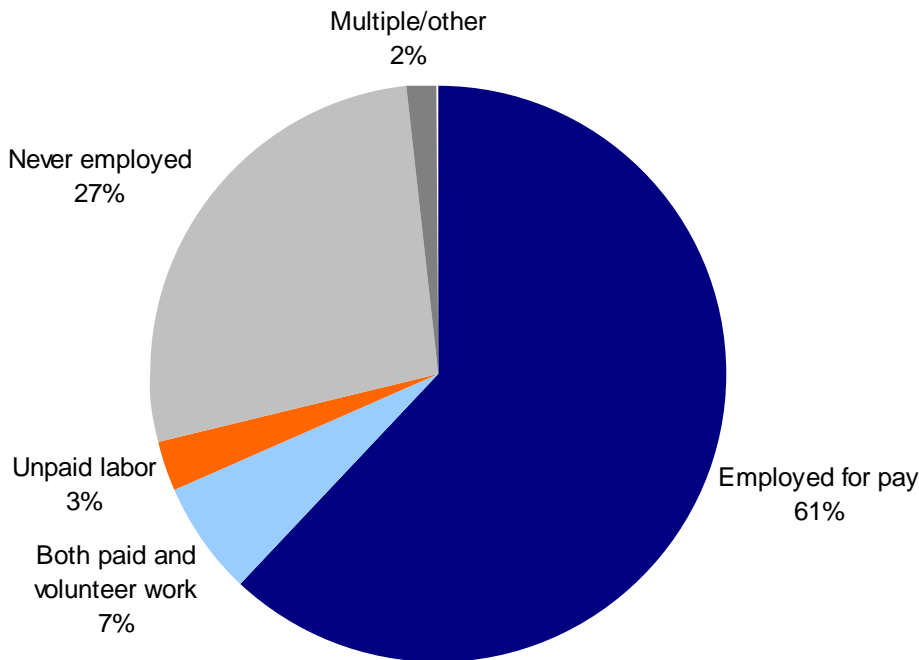


261 respondents (7%) stated that college prep was not offered.

Labor

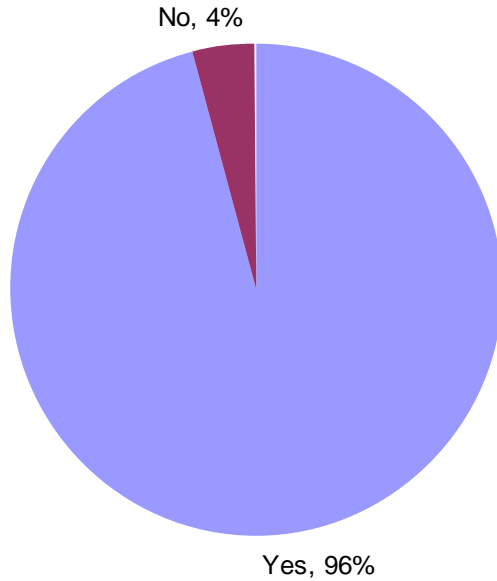
Nearly two-thirds of respondents (61%) were employed for pay at some point while being homeschooled (Figure 5), while 27% were never employed. 3% of respondents worked without pay, either for their family, for someone else, or both.

Figure 5: Were you employed while you were being homeschooled?



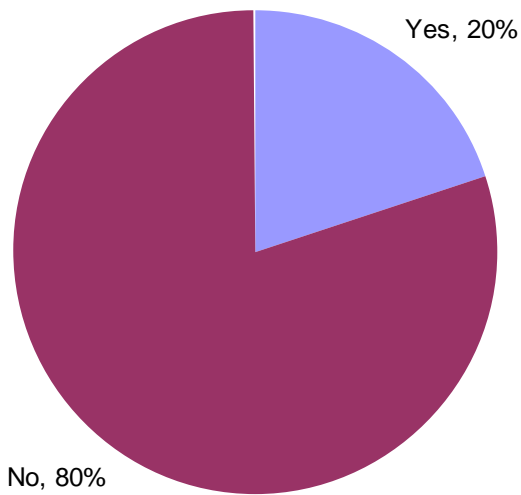
The vast majority of respondents (96%) had household chores (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Did you have household chores?



One fifth of respondents had primary childcare or teaching duties for a sibling, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Did you have primary childcare or teaching duties for a sibling?

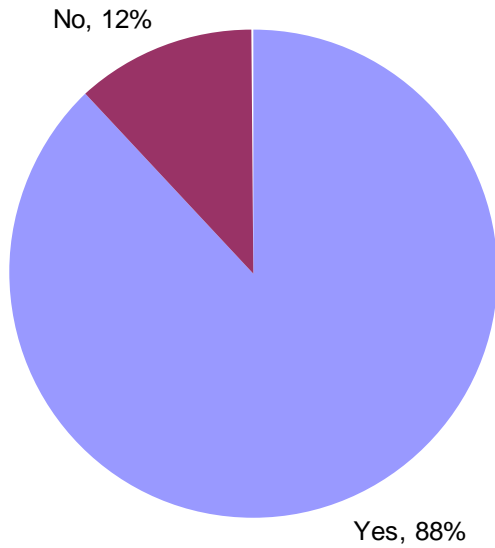


Modern culture

For the majority of respondents, homeschooling incorporated many aspects of modern culture, including independent hobbies, television, Internet usage, and contemporary music. However, some homeschoolers reported that they were sheltered from one or more of these influences.

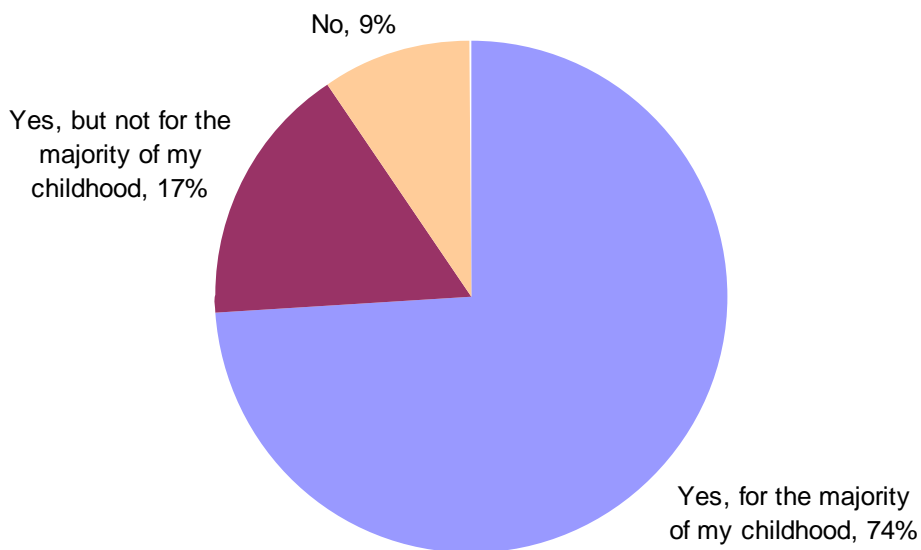
Approximately one in eight respondents (12%) reported they were not allowed to have hobbies independent of their parents' (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Were you allowed to initiate hobbies based on your personal interests (independent from your parent(s)'s interests)?



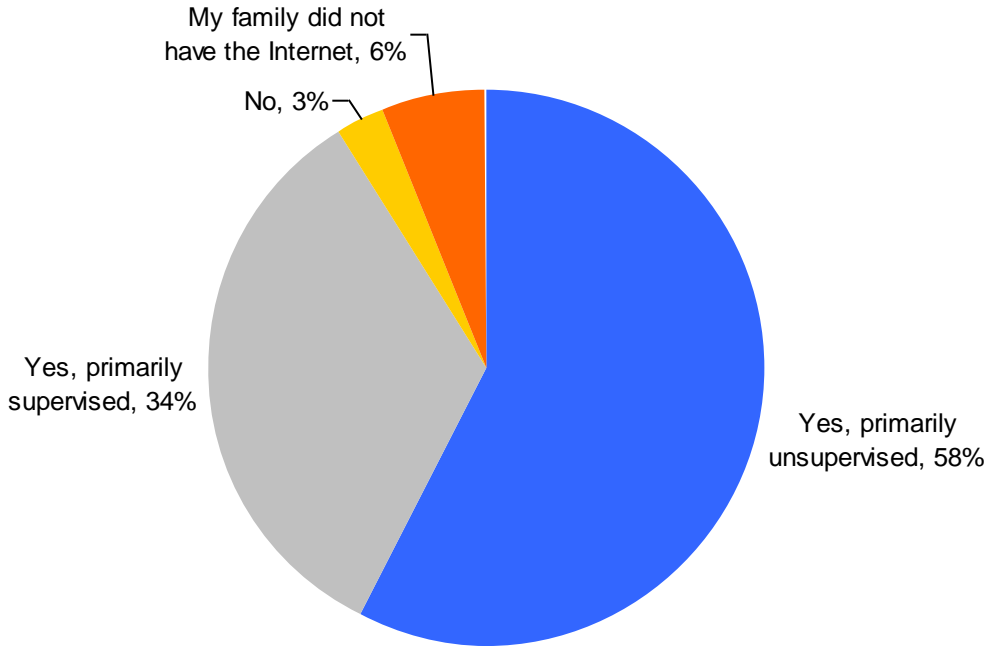
Nearly one in ten respondents (9%) reported that their family did not own a television (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Did your family own a television?



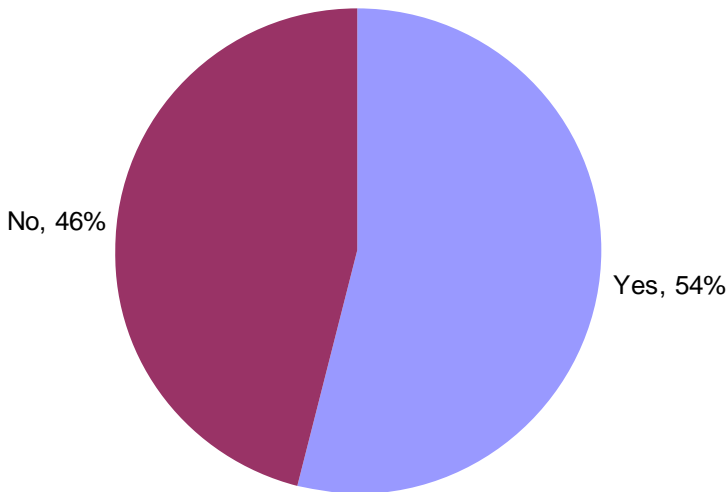
Of the 3,429 respondents who were born in 1980 or later, nearly one in ten (9%) did not have access to the Internet (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Were you allowed to use the Internet?



Nearly half of all respondents (46%) reported they were not allowed to listen to contemporary music (Figure 11).

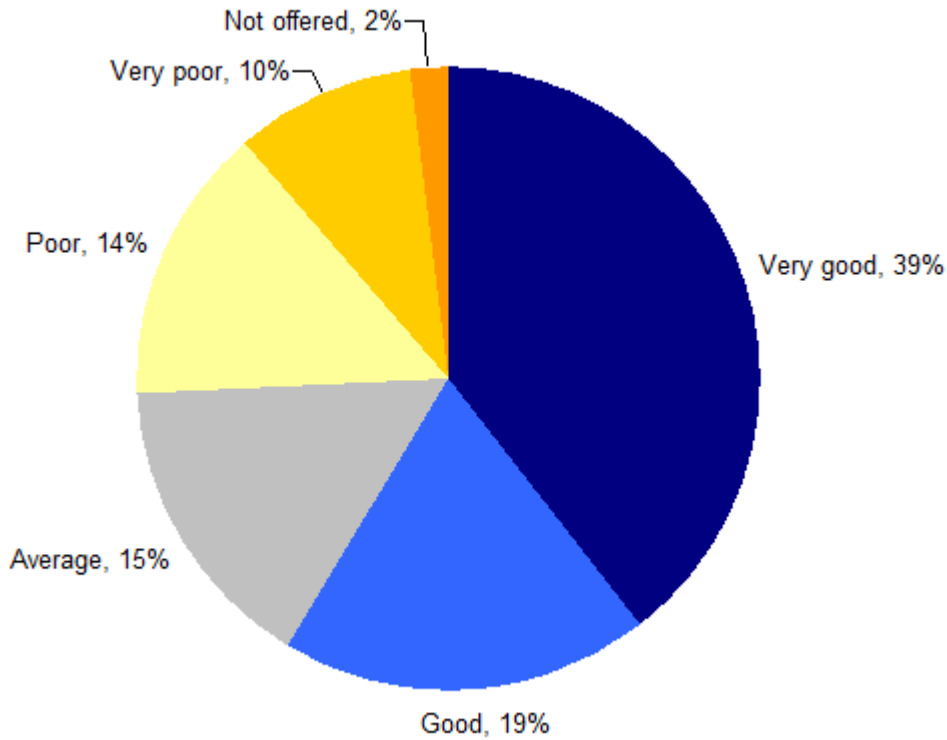
Figure 11: Were you allowed to listen to contemporary music that was not explicitly 'Christian'?



3. Socialization

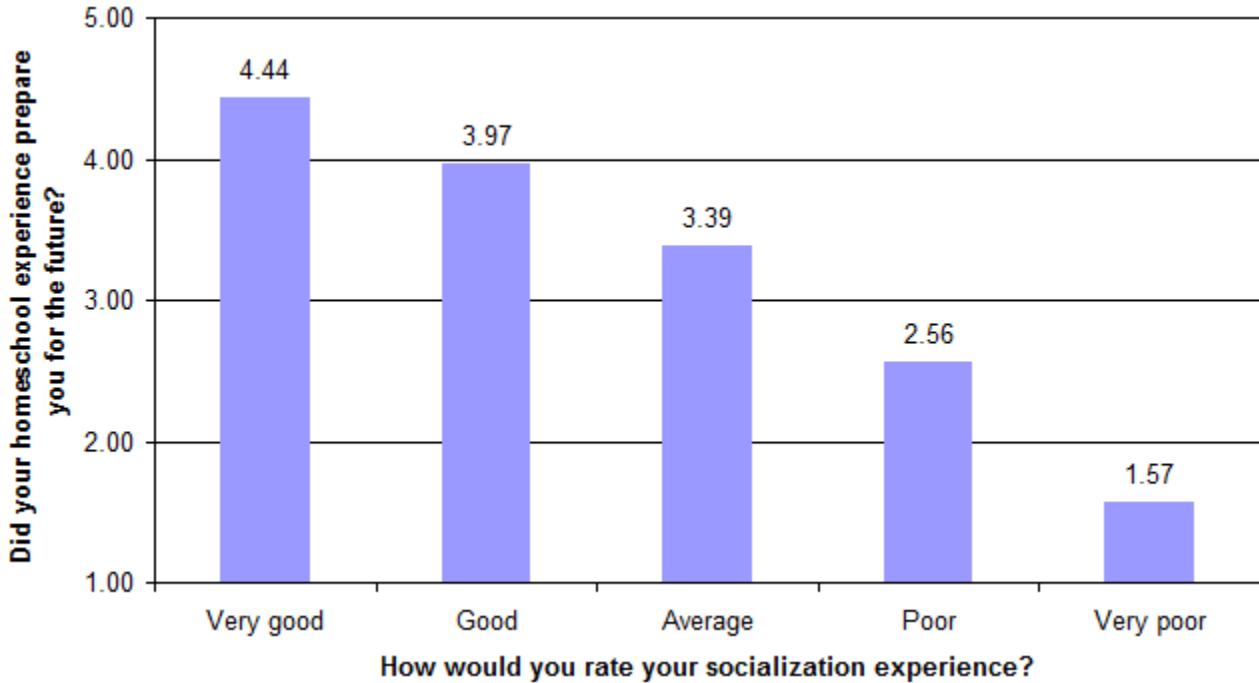
The majority of respondents had a positive socialization experience. However, approximately one in four had a deficient socialization experience, reporting either 'Poor' or 'Very poor' socialization or stating that they were not offered the opportunity for socialization (Figure 12).

Figure 12: In general, how would you rate the quality of the socialization aspect of your homeschool experience? (By "quality," we mean how well the subject was taught to you and/or experienced by you.)



This is important because the quality of socialization respondents received had a major impact on their reported preparedness for the future. Figure 13 shows that respondents with good socialization experiences reported high levels of preparedness for the future, while those with deficient socialization experiences were more likely to report that they were not prepared for the future. (Note that participants were asked to rate their agreement with the statement 'My homeschool experience prepared me for the future' from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'Strongly agree'.)

Figure 13: Effect of socialization on preparedness for the future

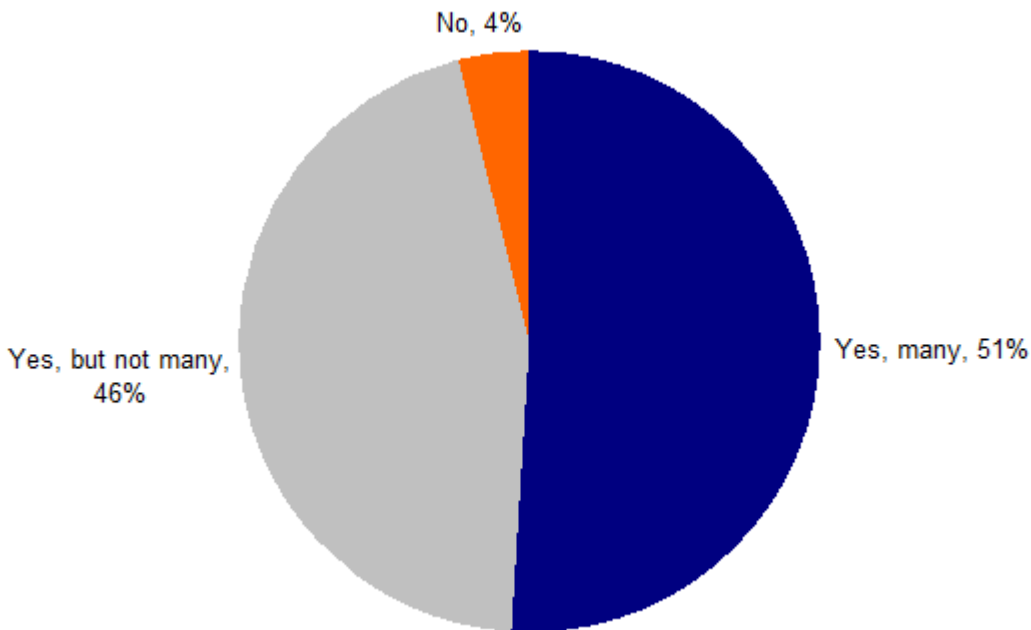


The survey collected information on several more specific measures of socialization, including peer groups, co-ops, and sports participation. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents had friends outside the family and participated in co-ops and sports.

Peer groups

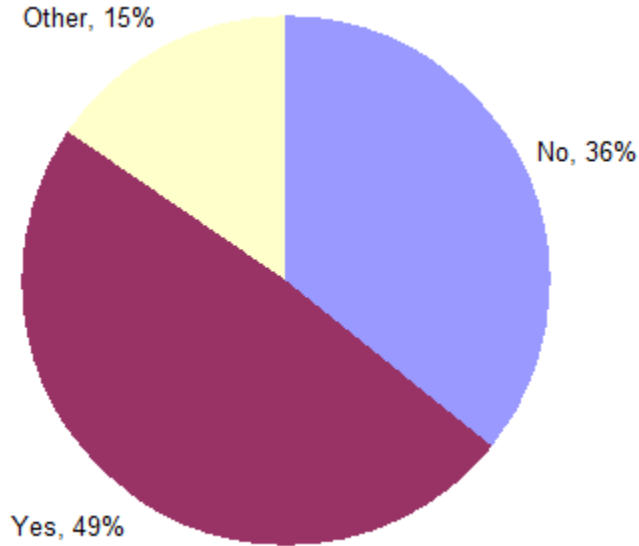
Most participants had at least some non-sibling friends in their peer group. As shown in Figure 14, only 4% of respondents were not allowed to socialize with non-sibling peers.

Figure 14: Did you have non-sibling friends in your peer group?



For around half of the respondents, parents played a major role in determining acceptable friendships (Figure 15).

Figure 15: If you had non-sibling friends in your peer group, were they vetted or monitored by your parent(s)?

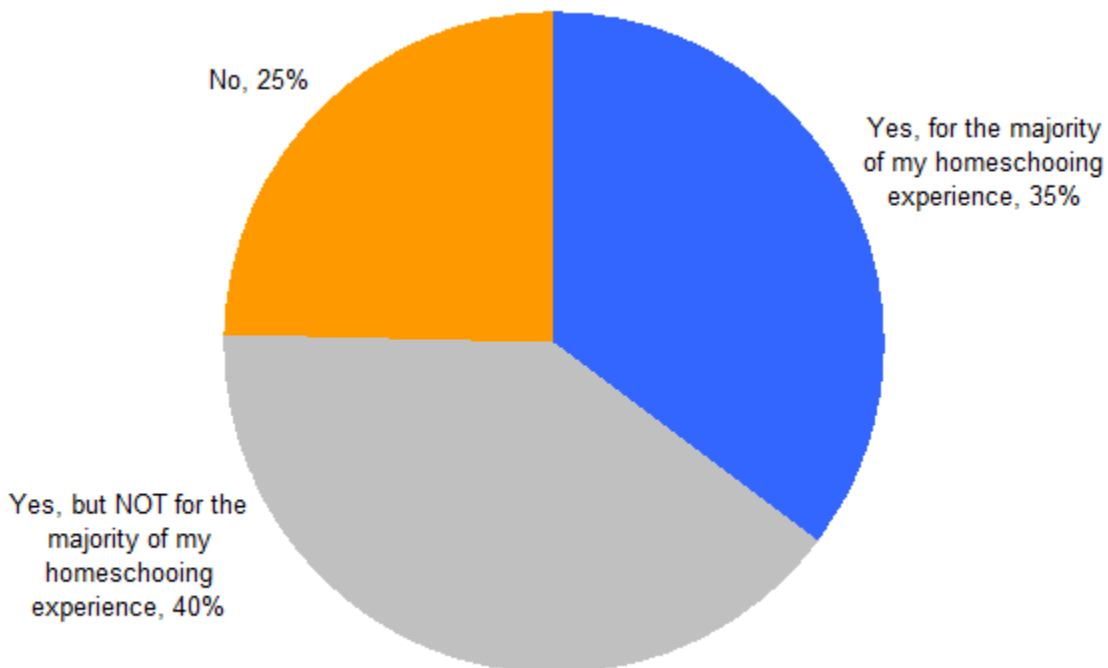


Note that respondents who replied 'Other' to this question included those who did not have non-sibling friends as well as those who approved of their parents' choice to oversee their friendships.

Co-ops

Three quarters of participants had at least some experience in a homeschool co-op (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Was your family part of a homeschool co-op?



This is important because membership in a co-op had a noticeable effect on respondents' average rating of the quality of their socialization experience, as shown in Figure 17. Note that socialization is ranked from 1 'Very poor' to 5 'Very good'.

Figure 17: Rating of socialization experience by membership in a co-op

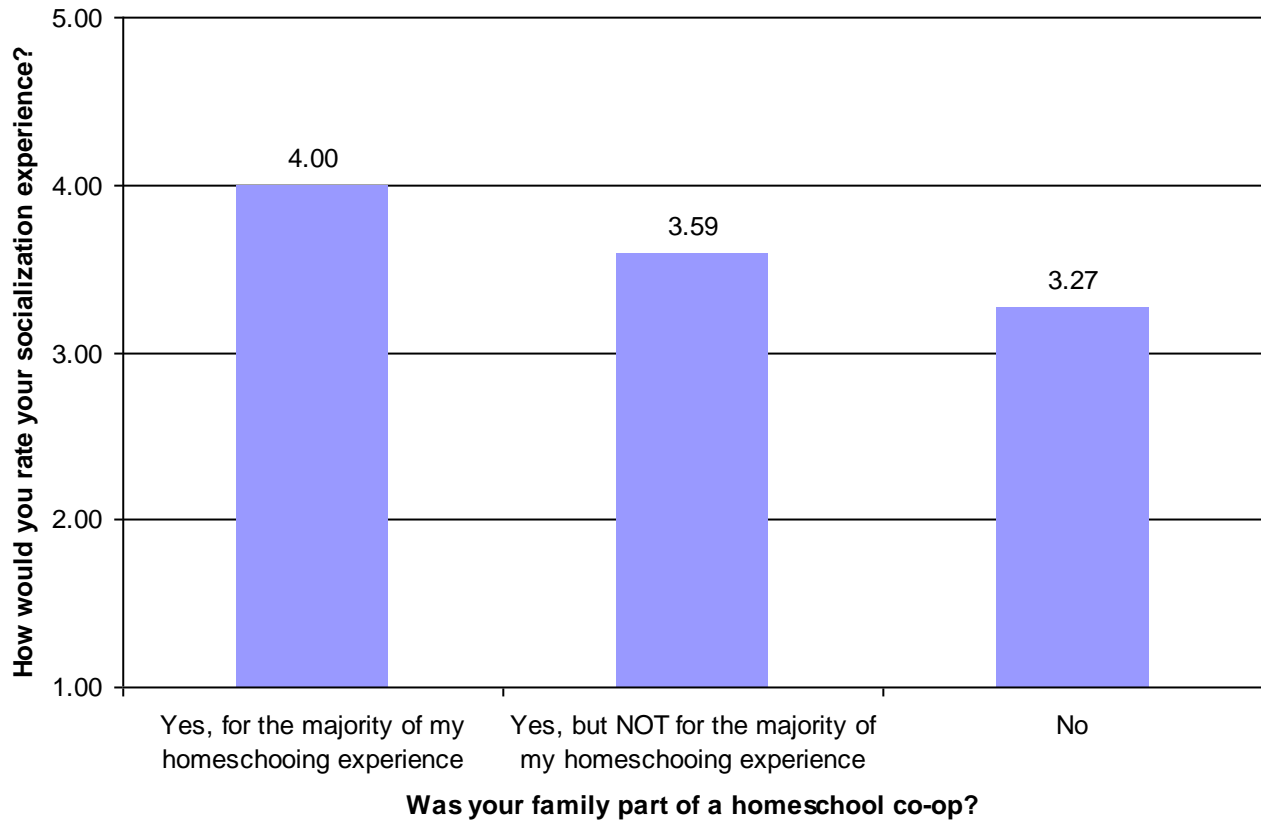
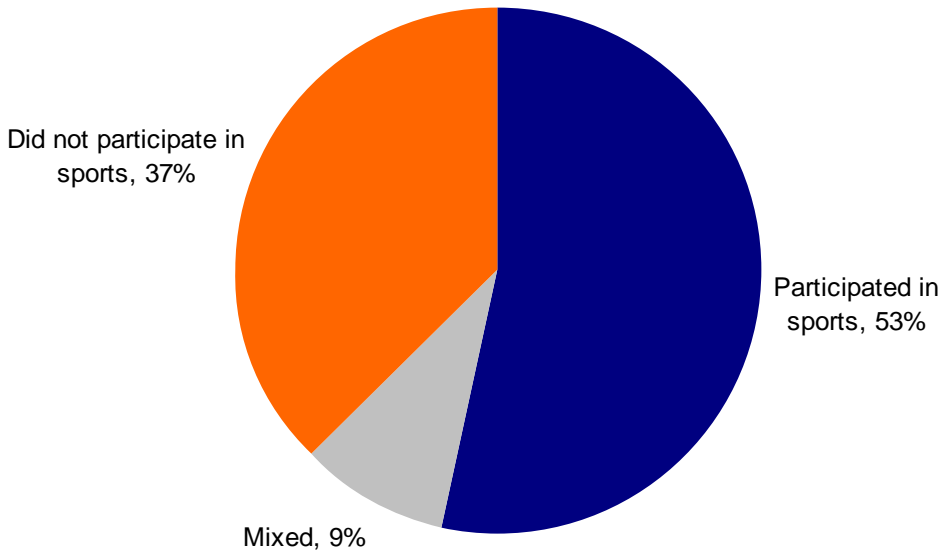


Figure 17 shows that respondents whose families were never part of a co-op reported lower-quality socialization experiences than those whose families were in a co-op—even those who were not in a co-op for the majority of their homeschooling experience.

Sports

Around two thirds of respondents (62%) reported that they participated in sports in some way, as shown in Figure 18. (Note that the 'Mixed' category includes respondents who chose both 'No' and 'Other'; respondents who chose both 'No' and 'Yes', and respondents who chose 'Other'. These respondents included those who had no interest in sports; those who participated in sports but not to the extent they wanted; those who participated in team-based activities which were not athletic, or athletic activities which were not team-based; those who participated only for a short time or in an informal way, etc.)

Figure 18: Did you do sports?



Sports participation had a noticeable effect on respondents' average rating of the quality of their socialization experiences, as shown in Figure 19. Note that socialization is ranked from 1 'Very poor' to 5 'Very good'.

Figure 19: Rating of socialization experience by sports participation

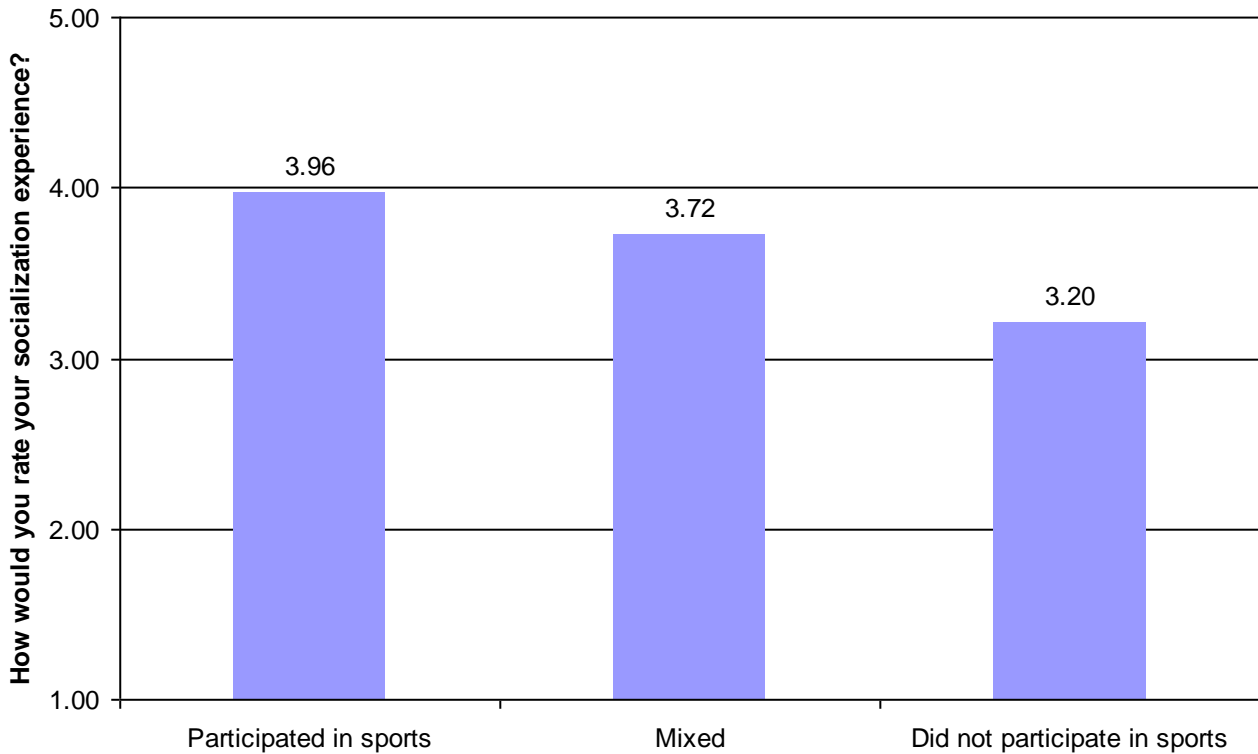


Figure 19 shows that those who did not participate in sports at all reported lower quality socialization experiences than those who did participate in sports. This finding is echoed in Figure 20, where respondents were asked whether they agreed with a statement that their homeschooling experience prepared them for the future. (Note that responses ranged from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'Strongly agree'.)

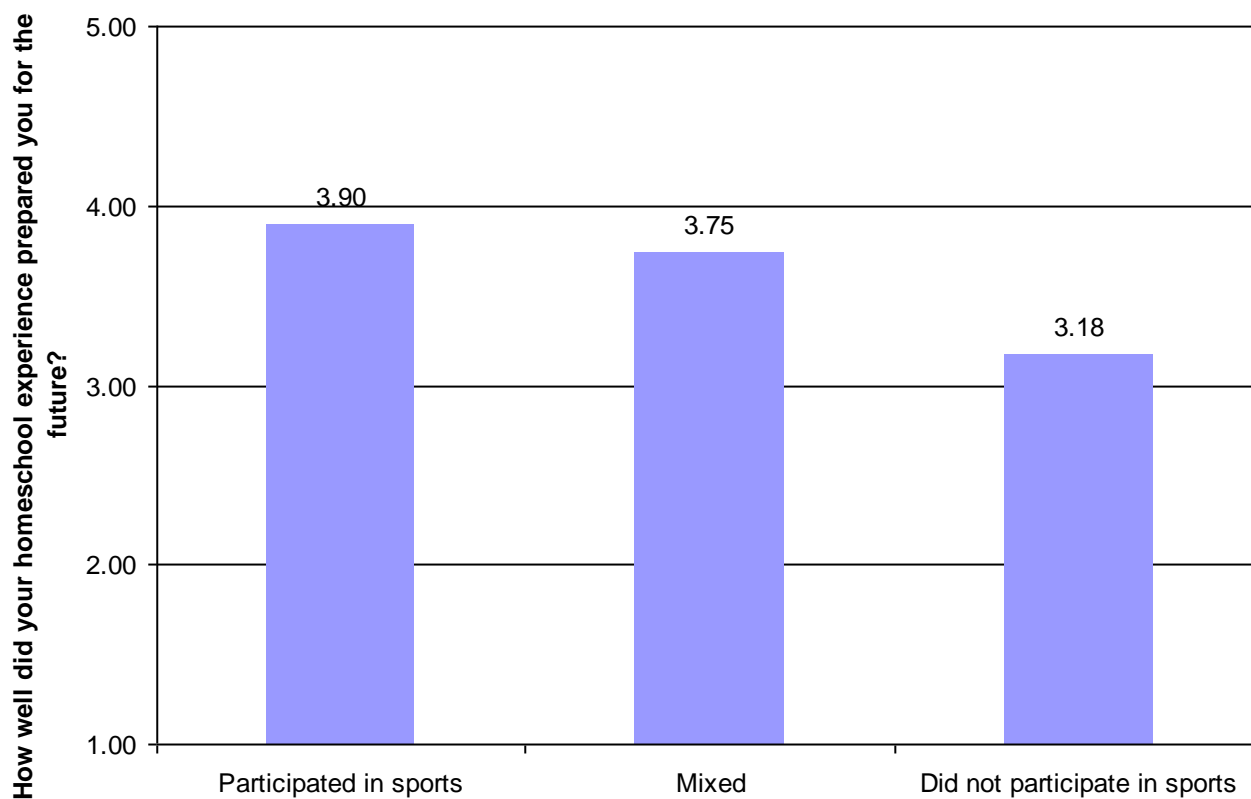
Figure 20: Rating of homeschooling experience by sports participation

Figure 20 shows that respondents who participated in sports reported that they were more prepared for the future than respondents who did not participate in sports.

Conclusion

In conclusion, key findings from this installment include that the instructional quality participants received was rated higher than 'Average' by the majority of participants. Participants also reported that this instruction varied in quality by grade level and subject area—instructional quality was higher in primary school than in secondary school, and was higher in language arts and social studies than in math and science. Other key findings include the fact that somewhere around 10% of respondents were prevented from participating in modern culture; and that a quarter of respondents reported deficient socialization experiences. However, negative socialization experiences were often mitigated by participation in sports and co-ops. The survey participants' experiences were highly varied, as is reflected by the range of responses to questions of socialization.