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FIFTEEN YEARS LATER: HOME-EDUCATED CANADIAN ADULTS

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Study funded by
Canadian Centre for Home Education 2009

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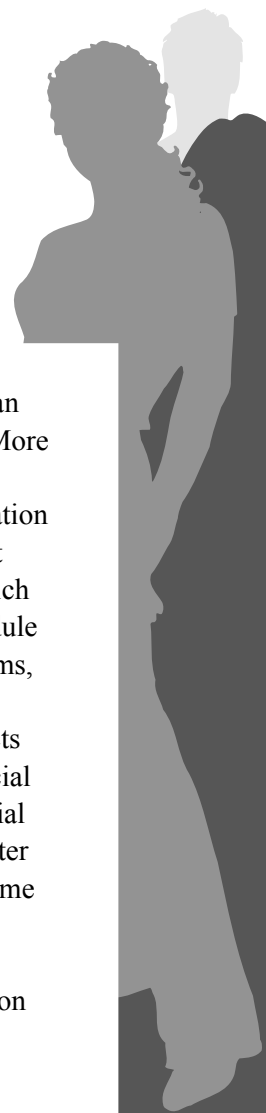
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ABSTRACT

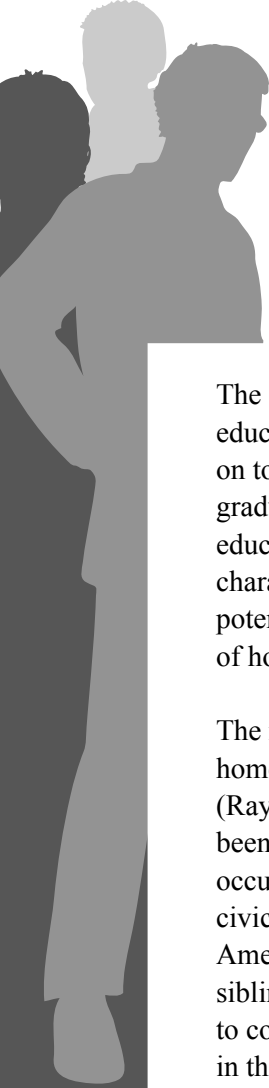


First-generation Canadian graduates of home-based education, who were involved in the 1994 study of their homeschooling experiences, were invited to respond to a survey addressing their economic, educational, occupational, social, civic, life satisfaction, and lifestyle characteristics. Their views on their experience with home education were also collected. Where possible, responses were compared with extant information (from public sources) relating to their school-educated peers.

Homeschooled adults who participated in this study were more likely than the comparable Canadian population to have completed an undergraduate degree, to be civically engaged, to value their religious beliefs, to have multiple income sources, to report income from self-employment, and to report high satisfaction with life. They were found to be physically active, to have higher average incomes than their peers, and were notably more engaged than the comparable population in a wide variety of cultural and leisure activities. They were equally as likely not to be married but, unlike their Canadian counterparts, did not live in common-law arrangements, and they were less likely to

have children early but tended to have larger than average families when they did have children. More than half of the respondents perceived that they were “very well” prepared for both future education and for life. The respondents described the most positive aspects about being homeschooled as rich relationships, opportunity for enrichment, schedule flexibility, individualization of pace and programs, development of their independence, and the superior education received. The negative aspects identified by some respondents included the social prejudice and, for a number of respondents, social challenges, some curricular limitations, some later difficulty adapting to classroom settings, and some wondered about possible strains on their family.

In general, the respondents conveyed appreciation for their home education and the opportunities offered to them. The educational attainments, occupational achievements, and societal engagement of these adults indicate the success of late twentieth and early twenty-first century Canadian home education and suggest that diverse approaches to education should continue to be probed for their future promise.



BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first generation of contemporary home-educated K-12 students has graduated and moved on to their early adult years. Tracking these graduates with a view to describing their economic, educational, occupational, social, civic, and lifestyle characteristics provides valuable indicators of the potential, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of home education.

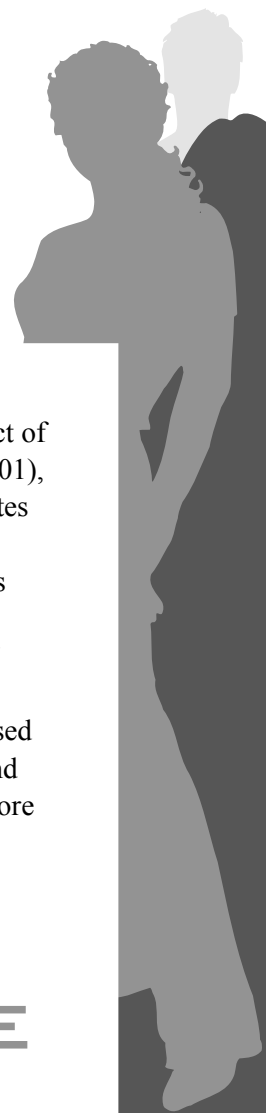
The research is limited to adults who were formerly home-educated students. A recent American study (Ray, 2004) surveyed over 7,300 adults who had been homeschooled, and reported on the education, occupation, community activities, style of living, civic involvement, and enjoyment of life of these American adults. Van Pelt (2004) asked older siblings who had completed their home education to complete a section of a questionnaire which, in the main, studied currently home-educating students and their families. It was intended as a preliminary study, undertaken because of convenient access to participants. A total of 182 adults participated. A further study was necessary as this sample would only include older siblings of long-term home-educating families.

Little is known of Canadians who were home educated as students, particularly as they compare to their Canadian adult peers who were educated in publicly-funded and private schools. It is not known, for example, whether formerly home-educated students demonstrate a similar level of engagement in democratic, cultural, and economically productive activities as their peers. Their income levels and income sources have not been compared. Do students who were home educated demonstrate a religious commitment similar to or different from regular school graduates? Are graduates of home education more or less likely to pursue postsecondary education, more or less likely to be involved in their

communities, more or less likely to be physically active? How do graduates of home education evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of their education experience? Through the preparation of a demographic and lifestyle snapshot of these young adults via economic, educational, occupational, social, civic, and lifestyle indicators, this study offers an initial description of some of the indicators of the outcomes of the first generation of home education in Canada.

Research questions

This study followed up with Canadian survey participants 15 years after they first shared information about their home education practices, family demographics, and academic achievements (Ray, 1994). It sought to describe their current situation including their education level, occupation, organizational and civic participation, religious affiliation and observance, charitable donations, income, life satisfaction, recreational pursuits, marital and family status, and to compare these demographic characteristics with those of the general adult population of Canadians in the same age group. This study also sought to describe aspects of the formerly home-educated students' family backgrounds, their parents' education and occupation, and their home environment. We looked at the home education experience of the graduates including their province of residence, the duration and grades covered, their curriculum and other educational experiences, their immediate postsecondary activities, and their family's reasons for choosing home education. The final set of questions asked home education graduates to reflect on the experience of being home educated, and whether it limited them or prepared them for further education and for life. We inquired about the best and the worst part of being home educated, as



well as their views on opportunities for socializing with other children during their home education years. We also offered an opportunity for additional reflections.

Theoretical or conceptual explanation

Expectations for education in our time include becoming citizens who are productive, who contribute to the social good, and who have developed a sense of their autonomy to design, identify, and pursue their idea of a satisfactory

life. Criticisms against home education have suggested that home education is the ultimate act of selfishness on the part of the parents (Apple, 2001), and that it fragments society by creating graduates who are not engaged and do not contribute to society. The first criticism assumes that the aims and objectives of the state with respect to the education of children should supersede those of parents, and this merits considerable debate in another forum. The second criticism is often based on anecdotal, and often apocryphal, evidence and the main purpose of this study is to provide a more solid basis on which to assess this claim.

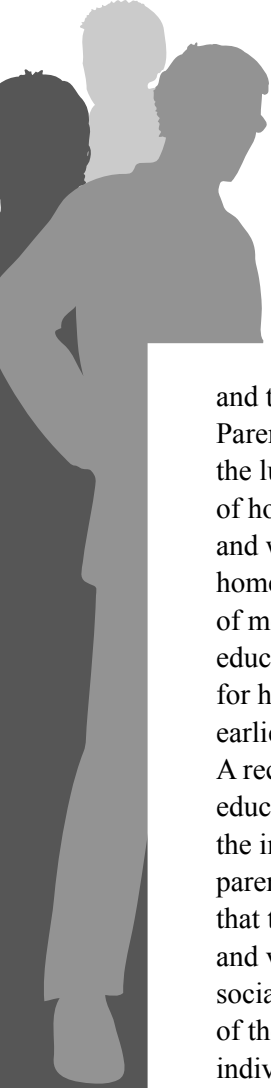
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While the practice of home education began to grow in the 1960's and 1970's, it especially grew in Western countries throughout the 1980's and 1990's. The numbers may now be growing slightly or leveling during this first decade of the new century. The regulation and history of home education, motivations for home education, characteristics of home-educating families, and academic achievement test scores of home-educated students have been studied and reported over the years. Considering how contested the practice of home education has been particularly in its twentieth-century advent, the outcomes of home education particularly as it affects the adult lives of formerly home-educated students has not yet been widely studied.

Analysis of the growth of home education over the last 50 years suggests three distinct phases. The

parents that chose home education in the 1960's and 1970's were part of a "counter cultural Left, principally advocates of New Age philosophies, hippies, and homesteaders" while "by the mid-1980's...most home schooling parents could be accurately described as part of the Christian Right" (Basham, 2007, p. 8). The first phase was more pedagogically oriented, questioning if schools were necessary or if participation in formal schooling should be delayed (Illich, 1971; Moore, 1969; Holt, 1964, 1981), and the second phase more ideologically oriented, questioning the secularization of public schooling. The adult participants in this study would be more likely to have been situated in the second phase given that they were being home educated in 1994.

The third phase of distinct motivations in the contemporary renaissance of home education would be situated in the late years of the 1990's



and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Parents in this era of home educating have had the luxury of analyzing the contemporary practice of home education and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The current motivations for home education are in part based on evaluation of measured or perceived outcomes of home education in our times. This pragmatic motivation for home education stands in contrast to the earlier pedagogical and ideological orientations. A recent study of parental motivations for home educating in Canada (Van Pelt, 2004) based on the input of over 1,600 families found that while parents overwhelmingly chose to home educate so that they could teach their child particular beliefs and values (84%), they also home educated for social (enhanced family relationships and safety of the child) and academic reasons (such as individualizing and customizing the program), and almost half reported that they were encouraged by the results of other home-educating families (p. 49).

Ray (2003), in summarizing his findings on the demographics, characteristics, and views of formerly home-educated Americans, claimed “the results show...that homeschooling produces successful adults who are actively involved in their

communities and who continue to value education for themselves and their children” (p.7). In her summary of a preliminary study of Canadian home-educated adults, Van Pelt (2004) states: “Although still young (mean age was 20.9 years), all of the homeschool graduates sampled engaged in either education or employment following their home education. Forty percent had participated in cross-cultural exchange programs. Almost all hold at least one volunteer position, the majority have voted within the last five years, none have ever received social security assistance, and only 6.7% have received unemployment insurance benefits. This sample reports a higher average life satisfaction score than most other normed sub-groups in Western society” (p. 89). A more comprehensive and comparative study of Canadian home-educated adults was needed to further understand the strengths and weaknesses of home education in terms of its outcomes.

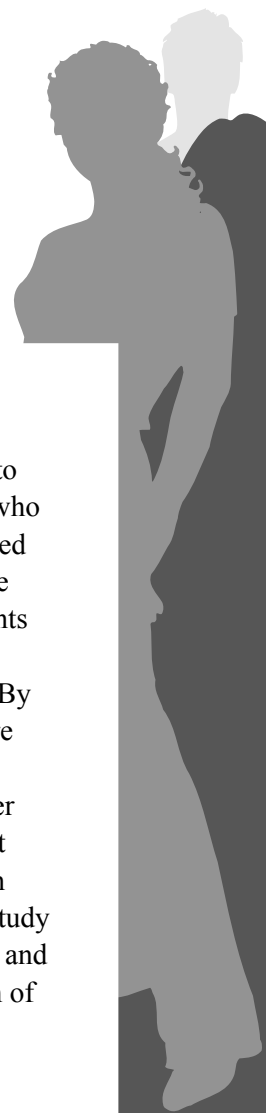
This study of Canadian adults formerly home educated will extend the literature in this area particularly as it not only considers various characteristics of its graduates but also probes their views about being home educated.

APPROACH TO INQUIRY

Study design

In 1994, 620 of the 808 families who participated in a Canadian home education study (Ray, 1994) indicated that they would be interested in being approached for future participation in further

longitudinal study. These parents represented a total of 2,129 children (of the 2,594 children that participated in the 1994 study). Contact information was provided by these families with the original 1994 questionnaires. Participants in the original study created unique identification code numbers (based on a combination of birthdates) and these



code numbers were the only identification available to the researchers. The agency, therefore, had contact information for families who had expressed their willingness to be approached, but no access to specific information about these participants, and the researchers had access to information based on code numbers but no knowledge of names or contact information. In order to preserve this state of affairs, the researchers provided the agency with a master copy of the questionnaire and of the Letters of Information, and the agency duplicated the necessary number and mailed them out, along with pre-paid return envelopes, to the families on their contact list.

The first Letter of Information, addressed to the parents who completed the original 1994 survey, explained the study and asked them to pass along the questionnaires to those of their children (now adult) who were being home educated at the time the family participated in the original study. The second Letter of Information was addressed to the now-adult children, inviting participation in the current study by completing the questionnaire and returning it in the pre-paid envelope provided. The completed questionnaires, identified only by the re-created identification code numbers, were forwarded to the researchers.

Distribution of questionnaires

Participating 1994 survey families who indicated their willingness to be contacted in the future for possible further research participation were contacted in October and November of 2008 by the agency which sponsored that study. A total of 285 of the original 620 families were found, and 281 accepted the telephone invitation to receive and pass on questionnaires to their children.

(See Appendix B for transcription of telephone conversation.) The agency mailed packages of questionnaires to the families and invited them to pass along the copies to those of their children who were being home educated when they participated in the original study. By December 22, 2008, the questionnaire packages were mailed to the parents of prospective participants. The parents in turn were to pass them along to their adult children. By June 22, 2009, a total of 226 questionnaires were received and passed along for analysis. A small number of parents contacted the researchers after receiving the package to ask whether they might distribute copies of the questionnaire to children who were too young to participate in the 1994 study but who had subsequently been home educated, and we encouraged them to do so, with the intention of deciding later whether to include these data.

Instrument

The questionnaire included three types of questions: (1) items which have been used in studies of similar populations elsewhere, and can thus provide direct comparisons; (2) items which have been used in surveys of the population at large to address questions of lifestyle, achievement, satisfaction, and so on, and can thus provide direct comparisons with the public at large; and (3) items which were specifically constructed for this study to best address the questions under investigation. Most data generated by the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively, but the data generated from the open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. Questionnaires were distributed in the fall of 2008 and returned by April 2009. Data were transcribed and analyzed in the spring and summer of 2009. Funding for the data collection and data analysis were provided by the Canadian Centre for Home Education.

RESULTS

A total of 226 completed questionnaires were received, representing 128 of the 281 families who said they would pass along a survey to their now adult children. These families ranged in size from one child to 14, with an average of four per family. About two-thirds (65%) of the respondents were either first or second in birth order in their families. Just over half (55%) of the respondents were female.

Although it was intended that respondents should be drawn only from those who were already being home educated at the time of the original survey, some families distributed the surveys to all of their children, and we received a small number of completed questionnaires (N=11) from respondents who were 15 to 17 years of age. Only one of these younger respondents had completed secondary education and was currently employed. The remaining ten were all engaged in secondary education, five of them in public school, four at home and one in a private school. Because the original survey went to families who were actively involved in home education in 1994, these younger respondents were younger siblings, at that time often infants, in homes in which their older siblings were being home educated. Furthermore, every one of them reported subsequently being homeschooled themselves. This being so, and after some deliberation, we felt that it was reasonable to include all cases in our analysis, particularly since the age groups in the data sets to which we were comparing our respondents all included 15- to 17-year-olds, making a more accurate match of 15 to 34 years of age for the purpose of comparisons.

Our respondents ranged from 15 to 34 years of age, with an average of 23.3 and a median of 23. Table 1 shows the distribution by age in comparison with one of the data sets used for comparative

purposes. As the table shows, the distribution of our respondents was somewhat less even than that of the comparative set, but not seriously so.

The largest group of respondents (36%) lived in Ontario at the time they completed the questionnaire. The next largest group (28%) lived in Alberta. The remaining respondents were scattered across six other provinces: 13% in British Columbia; 6% in Saskatchewan; 4% in Quebec; 4% in Manitoba, 1% in New Brunswick, and 1% in Nova Scotia. In addition, 5% were living in the United States, and one respondent each in Australia and Mexico.

Current Situation

Education

Sixteen (7%) of the respondents had not completed secondary education, or the equivalent. All but three of these were 18 or under and currently engaged in secondary education. The remaining three were all older, fully employed, and not pursuing their education at this time. More than half of the respondents (57%) had completed some form of postsecondary education, which, as Table 2 shows, is a higher proportion than the comparable Canadian population. Homeschooled adults were more likely to have undergraduate degrees, and equally likely to have graduate degrees. The proportion of homeschooled adults with a secondary education as their highest achievement to date was much greater than the comparable population, and far fewer had not yet completed secondary school. Furthermore, as noted above, most of those who had not yet completed secondary school were currently actively doing so, and about half of those who had completed secondary school were currently enrolled in postsecondary programs.



TABLE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTIONS
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Age	HS adults	Population
15 years	2%	5%
16 years	-	5%
17 years	3%	5%
18 years	5%	5%
19 years	7%	4%
20 years	7%	6%
21 years	12%	6%
22 years	7%	5%
23 years	11%	4%
24 years	10%	5%
25 years	9%	6%
26 years	8%	5%
27 years	4%	4%
28 years	2%	5%
29 years	2%	5%
30 years	4%	5%
31 years	2%	5%
32 years	1%	5%
33 years	1%	5%
34 years	<1%	5%

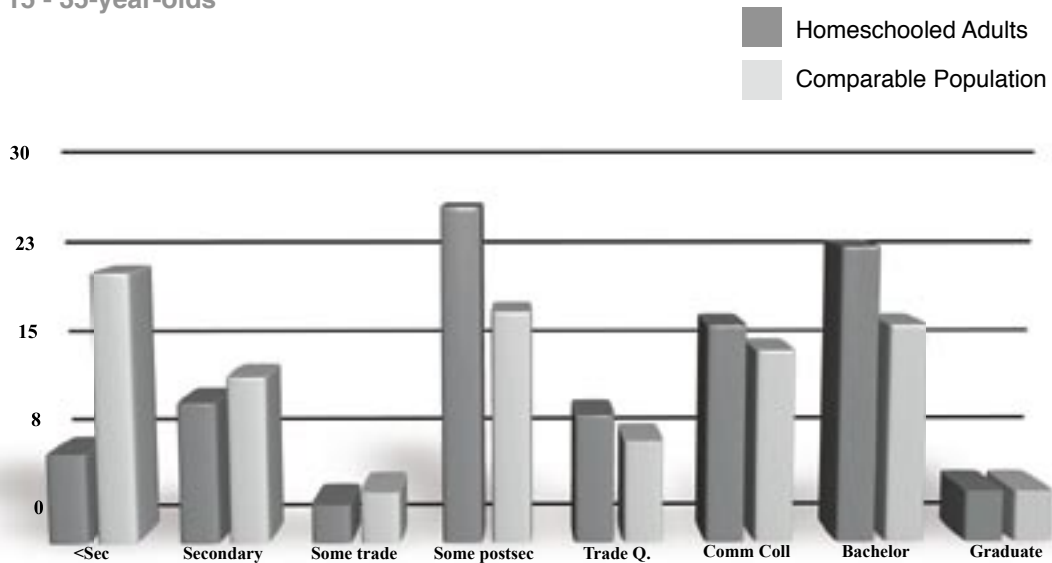
Source: General Social Survey, 2006

TABLE 2: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Degree, certificate, or diploma	HS Adults	Population
Earned doctorate/Master's/graduate degree	4%	4%
Bachelor's degree	23%	17%
Diploma from community college	17%	15%
Trade qualification	10%	8%
Some university	3%	10%
Some community college	-	8%
Some trade or technical education	-	4%
Secondary school diploma/equivalent	36%	13%
Some secondary school	7%	20%
Elementary only	-	1%

Source: General Social Survey, 2006

FIGURE 1: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION
15 - 35-year-olds



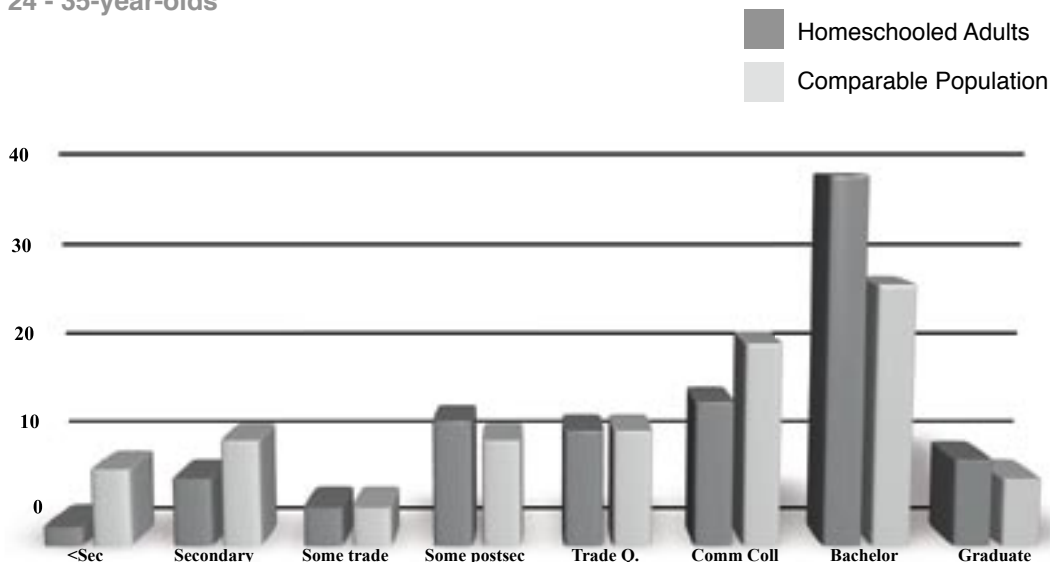


The following combinations of educational achievement were also recorded.

- Of the 61 respondents (27%) who held Bachelor's degrees, ten were currently pursuing graduate studies, two at the doctoral level. One had also completed a post-graduate diploma, five had completed college diplomas, six had undergraduate diplomas, and five also had trade qualifications.
- Of the eight respondents (4%) who held Master's degrees, two were currently engaged in doctoral studies.
- Of the 27 respondents (12%) who held trade qualifications, included five who also had Bachelor's degrees, and 10 who had completed college diplomas.
- Of the 59 respondents (26%) who had college diplomas, there were ten who also held trade qualifications, and 11 who also had university-level degrees or diplomas.
- Overall, young adults who had been homeschooled were better educated than similarly aged Canadians. This is particularly notable with respect to postsecondary education, where greater proportions of homeschooling graduates have attained Bachelors' and graduate degrees.

FIGURE 2: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

24 - 35-year-olds



Occupation

Only two of the respondents (1%) were currently unemployed, both of these being university graduates. A further 58 respondents (26%) listed their primary occupation as ‘student’ of one kind or another, making this the most common occupation. The second most common occupation was ‘homemaker’ reported by 14 (7%) respondents, all of whom were female. The next most common occupations were ‘registered nurse’ (4%), ‘teacher’ (2%), and ‘pastor’ (2%). There were also three missionaries (1%), one Member of Parliament, and one respondent who, at the age of 29, was retired on a military pension. Thereafter, respondents listed more than a hundred different occupations, ranging from unskilled work such as ‘dishwasher’, through skilled trades such as ‘electrician’, to professional work such as ‘lawyer’, and artistic employment such as ‘dancer’, ‘author’, and ‘musician.’

Table 3 shows a comparison of the distribution of occupations reported by our respondents and those in comparable age bracket for the country as a whole, using the Standard Occupational Classification (1991). The percentages for our respondents exclude the students, the homemakers, and the retiree, all of whom are classified by Statistics Canada as being out of the work force. As the table shows, the homeschooled adults were more likely to be engaged in health sector occupations, social support occupations such as education or religion, trades or performing arts, than were the general population. They were less likely to be engaged in sales, or in processing and manufacturing. In general, then, while one would expect to find homeschooling graduates in virtually all occupations, they are more likely to work in health, social service, and creative occupations.

Organizational and civic participation

We asked respondents to list the types of organization in which they had participated over the last year. Table 4 summarizes their responses in comparison with a comparable sector of the Canadian population. The majority of our respondents (69%) reported that they participated in organized activities at least once a week, compared with 48% of the comparable population. Very few of our respondents (5%) said that they participated in organized groups less often than a few times a month, making them somewhat more engaged than the comparison group.

Of the different types of organization, our respondents were most frequently involved in religiously related groups, such as church choirs and youth groups: 82% participated in these groups, usually at least once a week, compared with only 13% of young Canadian adults in general. Sports related groups were the next most common, with 48% participating, compared with 36% of the comparative population. The homeschooled adults were more likely to participate in cultural, educational or hobby groups, political parties or groups, and other organizations not listed, but somewhat less likely to participate in unions or professional associations. Taken together, these results show that homeschooled adults are more socially engaged than other young Canadians, tending to engage in more group activities than the comparable population, and doing so more often.



TABLE 3: CATEGORY OF OCCUPATION
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Category of occupation	HS Adults	Population
Management occupations	4%	5%
Business, finance, administration	16%	16%
Natural and applied sciences	1%	7%
Health occupations	14%	5%
Social science, education, government, religion	14%	7%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	8%	5%
Sales and service	17%	34%
Trade, transportation, equipment operation	22%	12%
Processing, manufacturing and utilities	0	4%
Primary industry	3%	6%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

FIGURE 3: CATEGORY OF OCCUPATION
homeschooled adults and comparable population

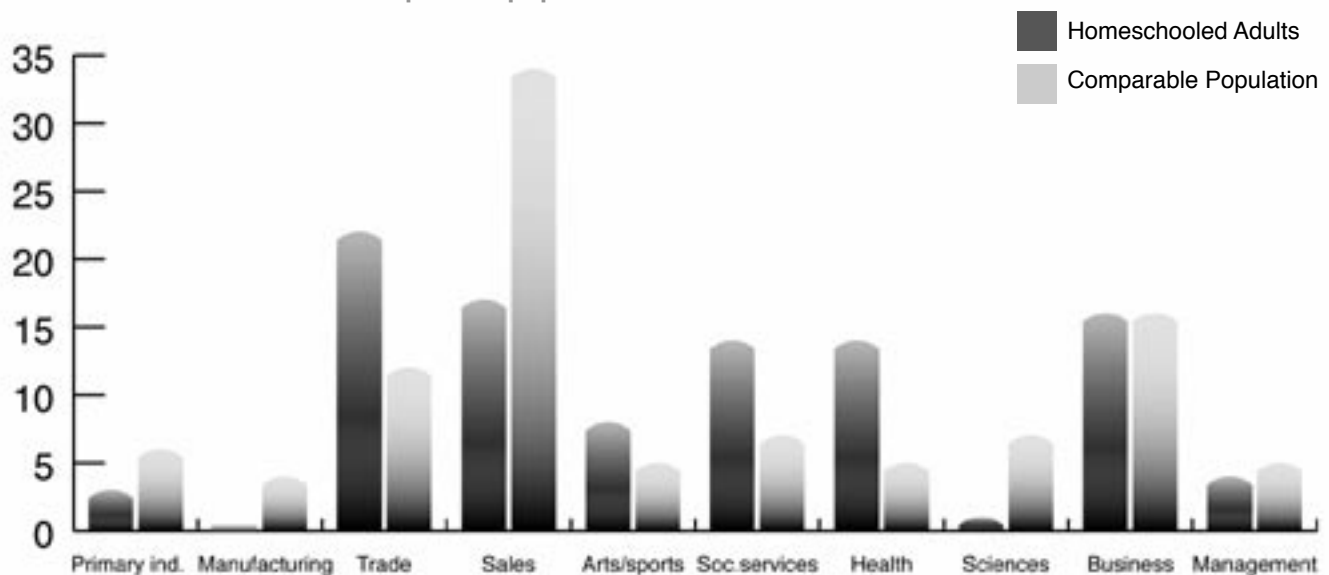


TABLE 4: CIVIC PARTICIPATION
homeschooled adults and comparable population

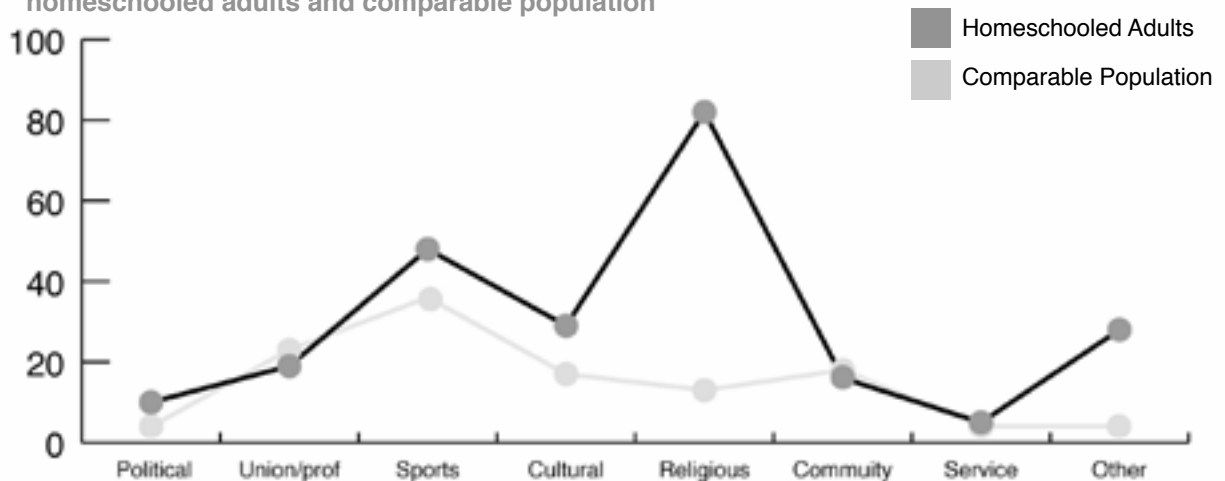
Organization type	HS adults	Population
Political party or group	10%	4%
Union or professional organization	19%	23%
Sports or recreation organization	48%	36%
Cultural, educational, or hobby group	29%	17%
Religious-affiliate group	82%	13%
School group, neighbourhood, or community association	16%	18%
Service club or fraternal organization	5%	4%
Any other organization	28%	4%

Frequency of participation in group activities

At least once a week	69%	48%
A few times a month	26%	19%
Once a month	-	15%
Once or twice a year	1%	13%
Not in the past year	4%	5%

Source: 2003 General Social Survey

FIGURE 4: CIVIC PARTICIPATION
homeschooled adults and comparable population





Organizational and civic participation (cont.)

Our respondents were rather more likely to have voted in federal elections than in provincial or municipal elections, but in all three cases, they were more likely to have voted than the comparative

population group, as Table 5 shows. Homeschooled adults were almost twice as likely to have voted in a federal election, and much more likely to have voted in a provincial election. Again, the homeschooled adults appear to be more involved in the life of their communities.

TABLE 5: PATTERNS OF VOTING

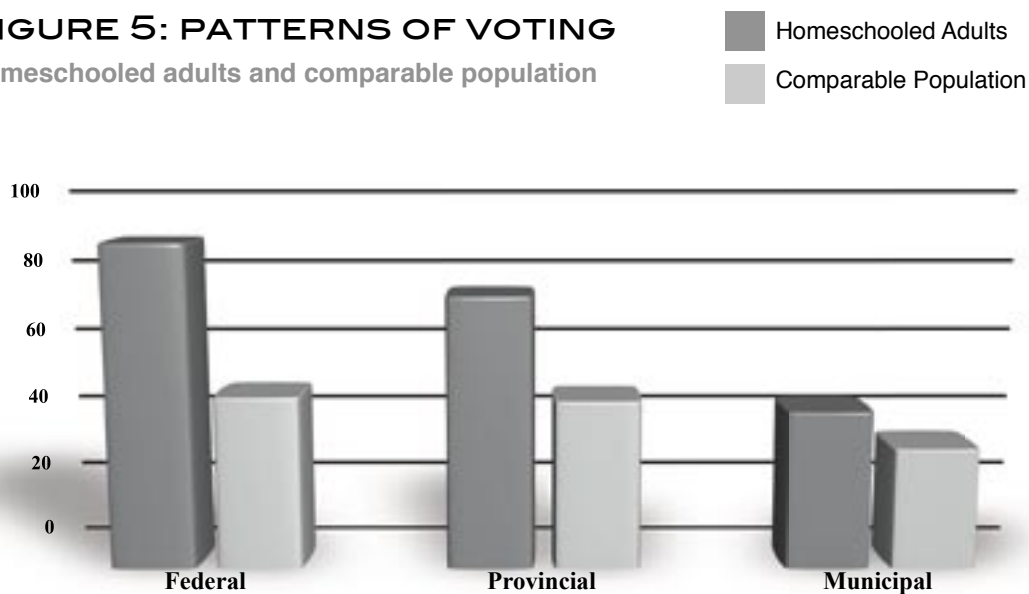
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Voting Activities	HS adults	Population
Voted in a federal election	88%	47%
Voted in a provincial election	74%	46%
Voted in a municipal election	43%	33%

Source: 2003 General Social Survey

FIGURE 5: PATTERNS OF VOTING

homeschooled adults and comparable population



Religious affiliation and observance

Only eight of our respondents (4%) reported that they had no religious affiliation of any kind, three describing themselves as atheists. All of the remaining respondents (95%) reported that they were Christians. Many simply wrote “Christian”, but many others wrote in a specific denomination or definition. These included Roman Catholic (of which there were 13), Evangelical, Protestant, Baptist, Adventist, Mennonite, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and one respondent who wrote ‘Christian/Buddhist.’ This compares with a distribution in the general population in which 29% declare no religion at all, 60% describe themselves as Christian, and 11% as belonging to other religions.

In response to the question about how important religious beliefs are in daily life, our respondents attached much more importance than did the comparative population. As Table 6 shows, three-quarters (76%) of our respondents said that religious beliefs were very important in their lives, compared with only one-quarter (26%) of similarly-

aged Canadians. Only six of our respondents (3%) said their beliefs were not at all important, compared with 20% of Canadian young adults in general.

Attendance at religious services mirrored very closely the importance of religion to respondents (although the match was not perfect). As Table 7 shows, the majority of respondents (74%) reported attending religious services at least once a week, compared with only 13% of young Canadians in general. Only 5% of our respondents reported that they never attended religious services, compared with 32% of the comparable population.

Religious observance in the home was also extremely common – indeed more so than attending organized services. A full 84% of the respondents reported participating in religious activities at home at least once a week. Only 10 participants (5%) reported that they never participated in religious activities at home. Of these, six did not attend religious services either, although two of them nonetheless described themselves as Christians.

TABLE 6: IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

homeschooled adults and comparable population

Importance	HS adults	Population
Very important	76%	26%
Somewhat important	13%	32%
Not very important	8%	22%
Not at all important	3%	20%

Source: 2006 General Social Survey



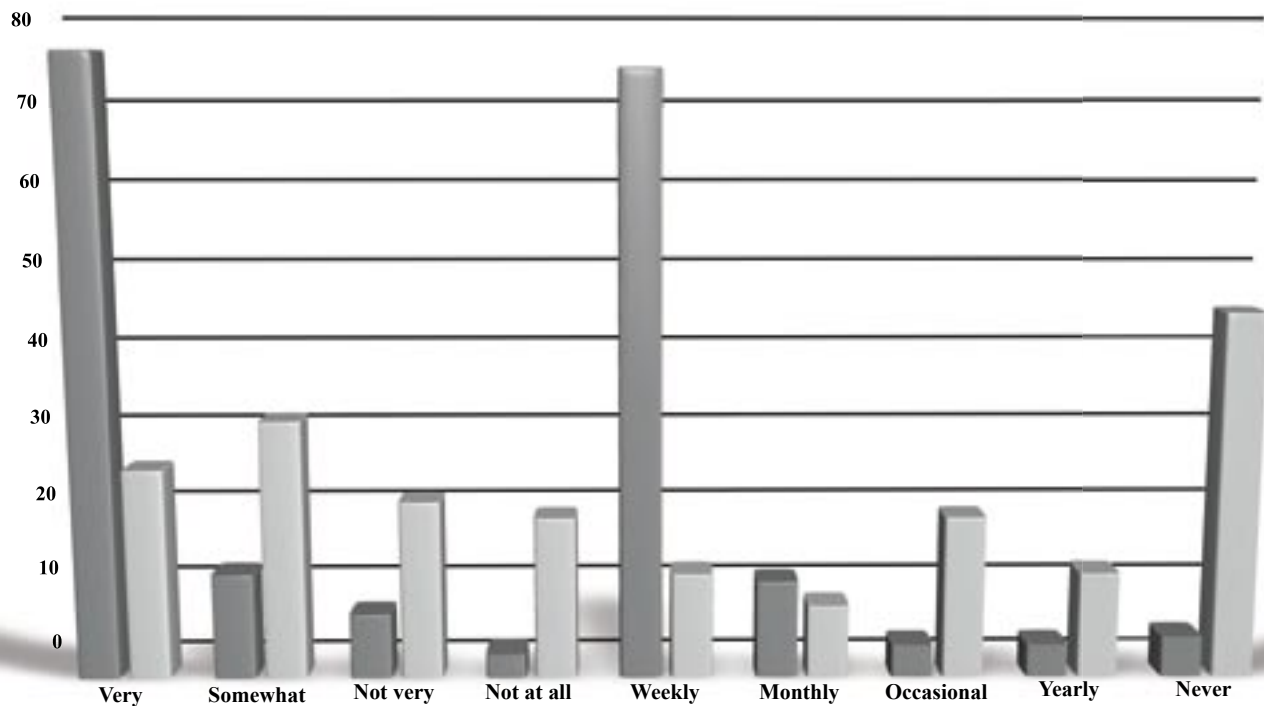
TABLE 7: ATTENDANCE AT RELIGIOUS SERVICES
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Frequency of attendance	HS adults	Population
At least once a week	74%	13%
At least once a month	12%	9%
A few times a year	4%	20%
At least once a year	4%	13%
Not at all	5%	45%

Source: 2006 General Social Survey

FIGURE 6: IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ATTENDANCE AT SERVICES
homeschooled adults and comparable population

■ Homeschooled Adults
■ Comparable Population



Charitable donations

Using questions taken from a Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (2004), we asked respondents about their motivation for making charitable donations. Six possible reasons were provided and respondents were asked to check every reason with which they agreed. Table 8 compares the responses of our respondents with those of the same age group in the survey. The most common reason for both groups was because

they felt compassion toward people in need. The least common reason among our respondents was a sense of owing something to the community, with which only 9% agreed, compared with 79% of the comparable population – a remarkable difference. Our respondents were less likely to contribute because they themselves or someone they knew had been affected by a particular cause, but much more likely to contribute in fulfillment of a religious conviction.

TABLE 8: REASONS FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Reasons	HS adults	Population
Government will give credit on income taxes	11%	14%
Feel compassion towards people in need	70%	88%
To fulfill religious obligations or other beliefs	48%	25%
To help a cause in which personally believe	68%	84%
To contribute to community	9%	79%
Self or someone known personally affected by cause	23%	55%

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004

Income

We asked respondents to check all sources of income during the last 12 months. Only about one-third of the respondents (36%) had a single source of income; rather more (40%) had two sources of income, and about half as many (19%) had three sources of income. For the most part, multiple

income sources consisted of combinations of the three most common income sources, these being wages, investments, and self-employment. Table 9 provides comparative data for the Canadian population in the same age group (15 to 34) with respect to sources of income, main sources, and distributions of income.



TABLE 9: SOURCES OF INCOME FOR LAST YEAR, MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME AND DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Income sources	HS adults	Population
Wages and salaries	93%	89%
Self-employment income	32%	4%
Investment income	33%	2%
Retirement pensions, annuities	<1%	<1%
Government transfer payments	2%	7%
Child benefits	11%	2%
Employment insurance benefits	5%	2%
Other income	16%	2%
Main source of income		
Wages and salaries	87%	76%
Self-employment income	10%	4%
Investment income	1%	1%
Retirement pensions, annuities	<1%	<1%
Gov't payments/child ben/EI	-	11%
Other income	2%	3%
Distribution of income		
No income	1%	11%
Under \$2,000	1%	9%
\$2,000 to \$4,999	9%	9%
\$5,000 to \$6,999	6%	6%
\$7,000 to \$9,999	8%	8%
\$10,000 to \$11,999	10%	5%
\$12,000 to \$14,999	6%	6%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	7%	8%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	9%	7%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	8%	6%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	8%	6%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	3%	5%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	4%	4%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	1%	3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	7%	4%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	3%	2%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	4%	1%
\$80,000 and over	5%	2%
Median income \$	20,000	18,335
Average income \$	27,534	22,117

Sources: General Social Survey, 2005

Statistics Canada, Canadian Census, 2006

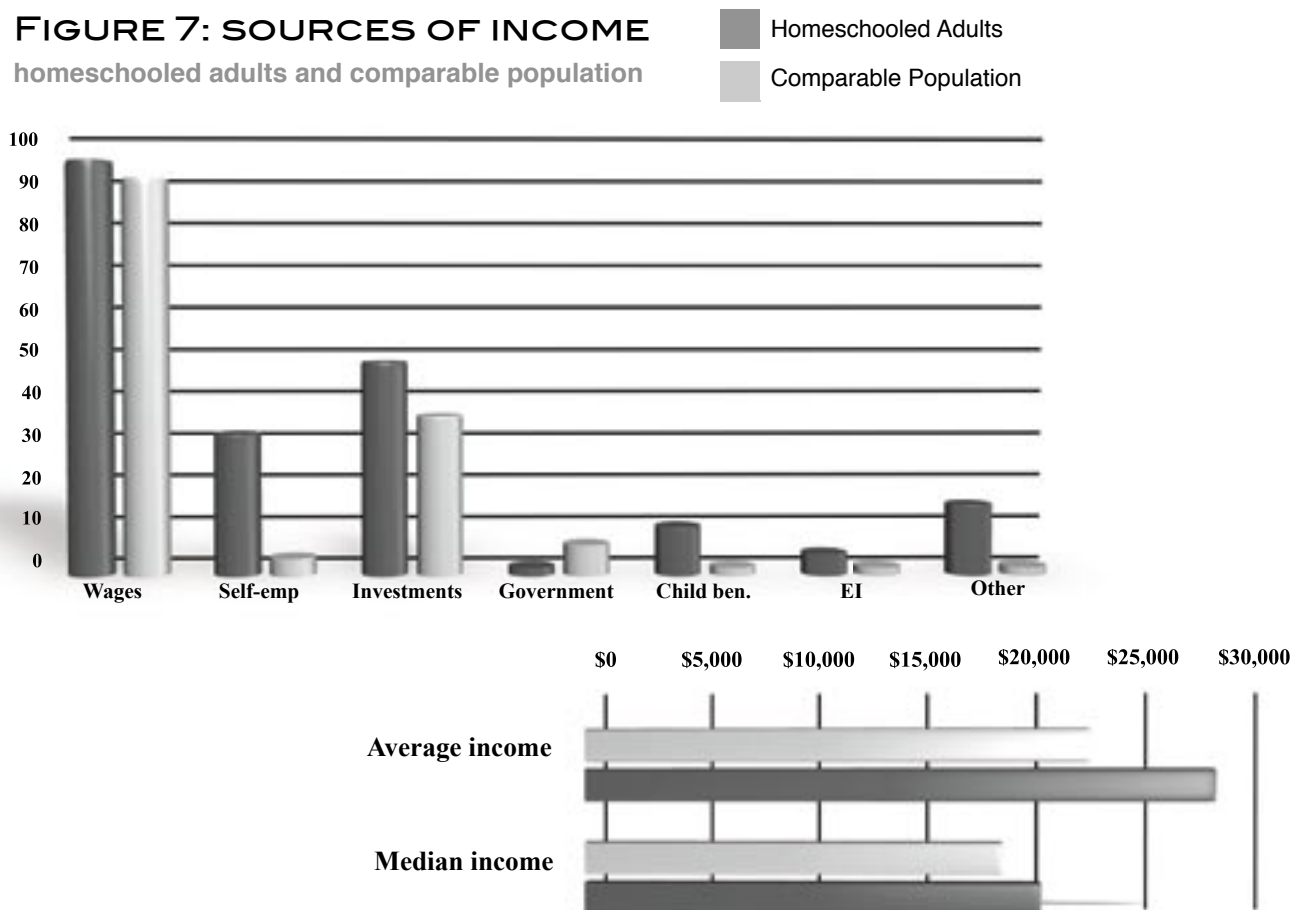
Our respondents were somewhat more likely to report that they earned wages, but very much more likely to report income from self-employment and investments. Very few of our respondents checked off any of the other sources of income listed, these being EI benefits, worker's compensation, benefits from Canada/Quebec Pension Plans, retirement pensions, social assistance or child support, but 39 checked off the box for other unlisted sources of income, a much higher proportion than in the comparable population.

Wages and salaries were the main source of income for our respondents, more so than for young Canadian adults in general. Furthermore, 22 (10%) homeschooled adults reported that self-

employment was their main source of income, which is considerably higher than the comparable population. None of the homeschooled adults reported any kind of government payment as their main source of income, compared with 11% of the comparable population. Taken together, this would appear to indicate that the homeschooled adults are somewhat more self-reliant.

Total income for the past year ranged from nothing at all to a high of \$160,000, with a median of \$20,000 and a mean of \$27,534. These numbers are similar to, but slightly higher than the 15- to 34-year-olds in the comparable general population, as reported in the 2006 Census, where the median income was \$18,335 and the mean \$22,117.

FIGURE 7: SOURCES OF INCOME
homeschooled adults and comparable population





Life satisfaction

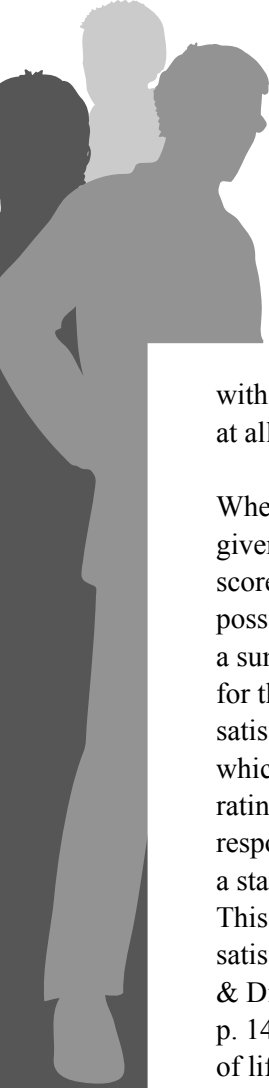
We asked a sequence of questions relating to general life satisfaction. The first question asked respondents how satisfied they were with the work that they were currently performing. About half (52%) said that they were ‘very satisfied’ with their work, and the addition of those who said they were ‘moderately satisfied’ (44%), accounts for almost all of the respondents. The remaining few (4%) reported that they were ‘not very satisfied’ but no one at all reported being ‘dissatisfied’. In the General Social Survey of 2006, the same question elicited a similar response from 15- to 34-year-olds, in that 88% rated themselves on the positive side of satisfaction with their current work. Overall, the homeschooled adults were slightly more likely to be satisfied with their current work.

The second question asked respondents how happy they were with their lives, all things considered. In response to an identical question in the General Social Survey of Canada of 2003, close to half (49.7%) of all Canadians surveyed said they were very happy, slightly less (45.7%) saying they were happy, and only a handful (4.1%) saying they were somewhat or very unhappy. Canadians in our comparative age group (15-34) reported slightly higher levels of happiness, a total of 97.2% stating they were fairly or very happy, only 2.8% saying they were somewhat or very unhappy. National data from 2005 showed a slight decline for the 15–34 age group, 43.8% stating that they were very happy, 52.5% that they were somewhat happy, and 3.8% reporting unhappiness. Overall, our home-educated adults reported that they were happier with their lives than the comparative population: all but one respondent was either ‘very happy’ (67.3%) or ‘fairly happy’ (32.3%). The one respondent who reported being ‘not very happy’ was a 26-year-old

university graduate who was currently working in an unskilled and low-paying position.

The next question asked specifically about satisfaction with the family’s present financial situation, and levels of satisfaction here were markedly lower than in the two previous questions. Considerably less than half of our respondents (38%) selected the highest level of satisfaction, while half of the respondents (50%) were only ‘mostly satisfied.’ A rough comparison with people the same age in the General Social Survey of 2005 shows quite consistent results: about 88% of the homeschooled adults rated their satisfaction with their financial situation as being on the positive side, compared with about 80% of the general population, and the proportions of individuals who were quite dissatisfied were almost identical (4% in both cases). No discernible pattern was evident among the dissatisfied respondents, by age, gender, educational achievement, type of employment, size of income, or marital status. In short, there was no discernible pattern amongst those who were not happy with their financial situation.

Our questionnaire included the five questions which comprise the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993). More than half of all respondents, and sometimes more than two-thirds or even three-quarters of our respondents, agreed or strongly agreed with all of the first five statements, all of which were very positive: “In most ways my life is close to my ideal” (64%); “The conditions of my life are excellent” (78%); “I am satisfied with my life” (76%); “So far I have gotten the important things I want in life” (67%); and “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing” (53%). For all five questions, most of the remaining respondents said that they would “agree somewhat”



with the statement, leaving very few who disagreed at all.

When the scores for the five questions were given numerical values and totaled, a single score, ranging from a possible low of 5 to a possible high of 35, was derived which provided a summary satisfaction scale. Our respondents, for the most part, scored quite high overall satisfaction ratings. The lowest rating was 11, which only one respondent scored. The highest rating was the highest possible of 35, scored by 14 respondents. Overall, the mean score was 28.5, with a standard deviation of 4.8, and a median of 30. This is a notably higher rating than the normative satisfaction levels for other populations (see Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 166 and Pavot & Diener, 2008, p. 143) but entirely consistent with the high levels of life satisfaction among homeschooled adults reported in an earlier work (Van Pelt, 2003, p.82).

We added one further question to the sequence, with respect to home education specifically. Only 10% of the respondents agreed with the statement “If I could live my life over, I would want a different education” and most of them could only “agree somewhat.” The greater majority (75%) disagreed with the statement or disagreed strongly. Evidently, very few of the home education graduates are less than very satisfied with their current lives, and hardly any of them regret being homeschooled.

Overall, homeschooling graduates appear to be very content with the education they received, as well as being happier and more satisfied with their work and life than similarly aged Canadians, and, indeed, young citizens of other countries.

Recreational pursuits

We offered a list of 20 different types of physical recreation, taken from the Canadian Community Health Survey, and asked respondents to check the activities in which they had participated over the last three months. Only one respondent reported undertaking no physical activities whatsoever, and a fairly large percentage (42%) reported that they participated in additional physical activities not specified in the list. For the most part, respondents seemed to be physically very active: the average total number of activities checked was six, ranging up to as much as 16. Solitary activities were somewhat more common than team sports, but this may in large part be attributable to the timing of the survey, in that most questionnaires were completed in late December or early January, and the three months in question would therefore not include much time for summer activities such as baseball or golf, especially in more severe climatic regions.

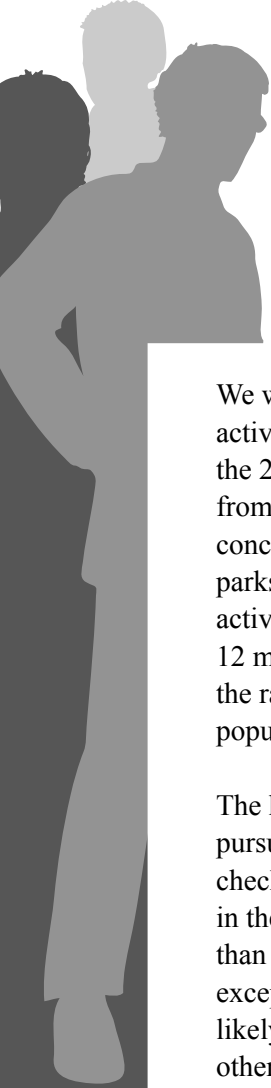
Table 10 compares our respondents with similarly aged respondents to the Canadian Community Health Survey, rank-ordering the latter. Walking was the most frequently undertaken physical activity for our respondents as well as for the comparable population, but was more common among the homeschooled adults. Our respondents were more likely to engage in home exercises or jogging. They were also more likely to have participated in typically winter activities, such as ice hockey and ice skating, but this may well be an artifact of the different time of year in which the survey was completed, since the national survey was conducted between May and December, while ours was conducted in December and January.



TABLE 10: PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Physical Activities	HS adults	Population
Walking	84%	67%
Swimming	38%	39%
Bicycling	42%	36%
Gardening	45%	35%
Home exercises	53%	35%
Jogging or running	51%	33%
Popular or social dancing	24%	29%
Weight training	37%	27%
Basketball	14%	19%
Ice skating	7%	18%
Golfing	8%	18%
Other	42%	18%
Bowling	21%	15%
Fishing	11%	14%
Exercise class or aerobics	20%	13%
Baseball or softball	8%	13%
Volleyball	12%	12%
Tennis	6%	9%
Ice hockey	23%	7%
In-line skating	32%	5%
Downhill skiing or snow-boarding	21%	4%
None	<1%	4%

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2002



We were also interested in other types of leisure activities and presented a list of possibilities from the 2005 General Social Survey of Canada, ranging from solitary reading and listening activities to concert attendance and visits to museums and parks. We asked respondents to check those activities which they had undertaken within the last 12 months. Table 11 lists their responses, alongside the rank-ordered responses of the comparable population.

The homeschool graduates for the most part pursued a wide variety of leisure activities—most checked off at least three-quarters of the activities in the list—and were notably more engaged than the comparable population. With only two exceptions, the homeschooled adults were more likely to have participated in an activity than were other young Canadians. They were much more likely to have read books, attended concerts of classical music and theatrical performances, but they were also more likely to have read magazines, listened to recorded music, and attended movies. They were more likely to have visited conservation areas or parks, historic sites, zoos, aquariums, or observatories and museums. Overall, it would appear that the homeschooled adults pursued a broader range of leisure pursuits, and were more involved in both classical and popular culture than the comparable population.

We asked specifically about hours spent listening to radio or watching television. Our respondents listened to the radio anywhere between zero and 60 hours per week, with an average of 8.8 hours, the comparable population reporting an average of 14 hours per week. The homeschooled adults also spent much less time watching television than the comparable population: our respondents watched television anywhere from zero to 50 hours with an

average of 6.8 hours, and a remarkable one-fifth (21%) of the respondents reported that they do not watch television at all. The comparable population reported an average of just over 14 hours of television viewing in a week. These results appear to complement those of the previous question, in that our respondents evidently spent less time watching television, and more time reading or attending cultural activities.



TABLE 11: LEISURE ACTIVITIES, LAST 12 MONTHS
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Activity	HS Adults	Population
Watched a video, rented or purchased	99%	90%
Listened to music on CD/s, tapes, etc.	94%	89%
Read a newspaper	87%	83%
Read a magazine	89%	80%
Gone to a movie or drive-in	85%	79%
Read a book	96%	68%
Listened to downloaded music	84%	54%
Attended a concert by professional artists	66%	45%
Visited a zoo, aquarium, botanical gardens, etc.	48%	39%
Visited a historic site	54%	33%
Visited a conservation area or nature park	71%	32%
Attended a popular musical performance	37%	31%
Attended a cultural or artistic festival	27%	27%
Attended a public art gallery or museum	40%	27%
Attended a theatrical performance	48%	20%
Attended a performance of cultural/heritage music	15%	16%
Attended a symphonic or classical music performance	32%	7%

General Social Survey, 2005.

Marital and family status

Table 12 shows the breakdown of marital status for our respondents and the comparable population. The majority of both groups (64.4% in both cases) had never been married, and the divorce rate was less than one percent for both groups. Yet, whereas about 35% of the homeschooled adults

were married, only about 20% of the comparable population were married. This difference disappears when common-law arrangements are taken into consideration, since about 13% of the Canadian population in the age groups from 15 to 34 were living in common-law relationships, whereas this was not the case at all for any of the homeschooled adults.

TABLE 12: MARITAL STATUS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Marital status	HS adults	Population
Never married	64.4%	64.4%
Married	35.1%	20.3%
Common-law	-	13.4%
Separated	-	1.0%
Divorced	0.4%	0.9%
Widowed	-	0.1%
Currently married (including common-law)		
15 to 19 years old	5%	2%
20 to 24 years old	24%	18%
25 to 29 years old	59%	49%
30 to 34 years old	90%	68%
Number of children (married households only)		
No children	53%	44%
One child	17%	21%
Two children	14%	25%
Three or more children	17%	11%

Source: Census 2006, Statistics Canada



Not surprisingly, our married respondents were on average a little older than those who had never married, with a median age of 26, as opposed to 21 for the unmarried group. However, the range of ages was very similar, with the youngest married respondents being 19 and the oldest unmarried respondent being 34. As the second part of Table 12 shows, the homeschooled adults were more likely to be married than was the comparable population in constituent age groups, even when common-law relationships are included.

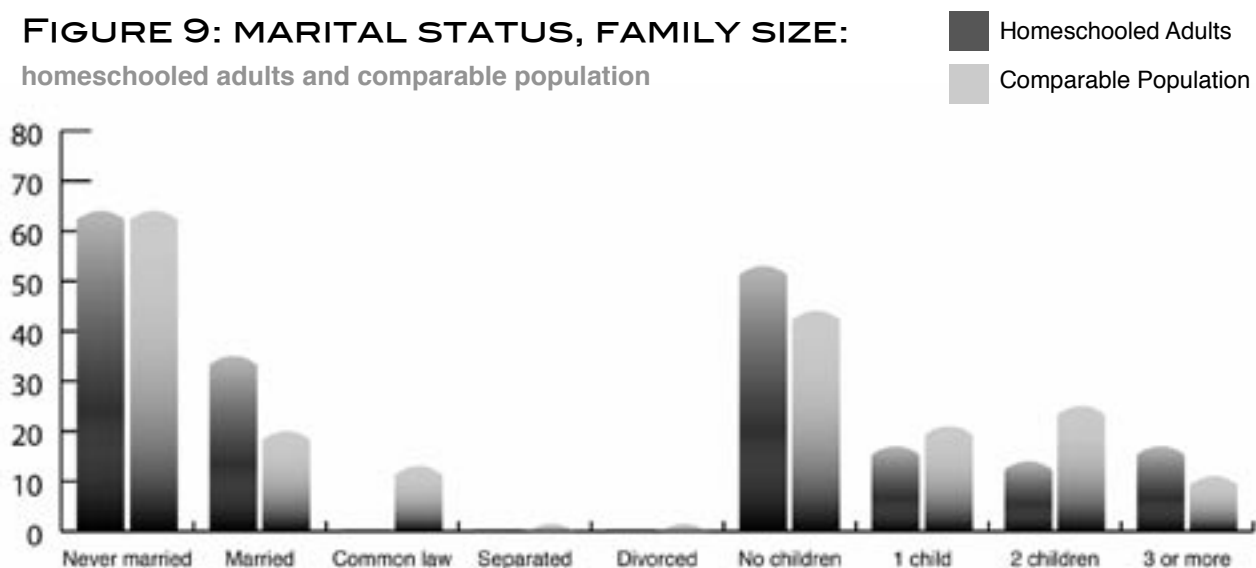
About one-third of the respondents (36%) owned their own homes, which is precisely the same percentage of home ownership as that reported in the 2006 General Social Survey for a comparative age group. A further third (32%) of our respondents rented their homes, and the remainder selected the 'other' option. Some noted that they were living with their parents, or in residence, these being mostly respondents under the age of 21, and about half of whom were currently students.

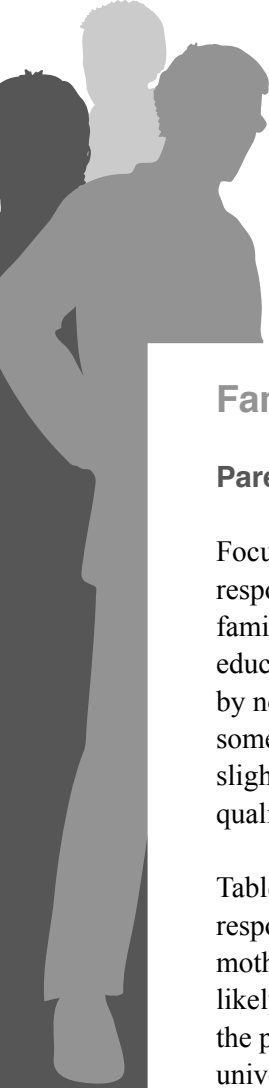
The third section of Table 12 shows the breakdown for the number of children in a family, looking only

at households with married couples (not including common-law). Among our respondents, 53% of the married respondents had no children, compared with 44% of the general population. Among those families with children, 17% of the homeschooled adults had one child, 14% had two, and 17% had three or more, compared with 21%, 25% and 11% in the general population. Three of our respondents had five children each, two had four, and eight had three children. Evidently, although the homeschool graduates were more likely to be married and to marry earlier, they were less likely to have children early, but tended to have larger than average families when they did have children.

Eleven of the 13 respondents who had school-aged children reported that at least one child had been or was being home educated. Only one respondent reported sending at least one child to a private school; one reported a combination of private and home education, and one reported a combination of public and home education. Three respondents reported that their school-aged children attended public schools.

FIGURE 9: MARITAL STATUS, FAMILY SIZE:
homeschooled adults and comparable population





Family Background

Parental education and occupation

Focusing on the 128 different families of our respondents, we asked several questions about family background, beginning with the level of education attained by their parents. While it was by no means universal, the majority of parents had some postsecondary education, and there was a slight tendency for fathers to be somewhat more qualified than mothers.

Table 13 shows a comparison between our respondents and the population at large. Both mothers and fathers of homeschooled adults were likely to have a higher education than average: the proportion of homeschooling parents holding university degrees was almost twice that of the general population. The proportions of parents with secondary education as the highest achievement were very similar, but very few of the parents of homeschooled adults had less than a complete secondary education.

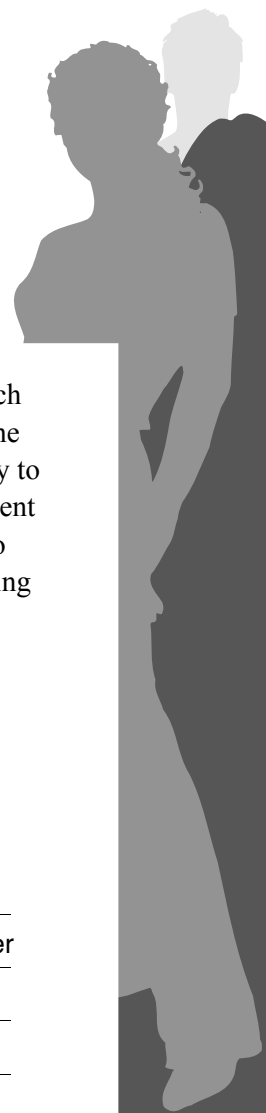
The university backgrounds of our respondents' parents were quite varied. Their university-educated mothers included eight with Bachelor of Education degrees, and 13 with graduate or professional degrees, including one PhD, one MD and one LLB. Their university-educated fathers included two with Bachelor of Education degrees, two PhD's, one dentist, one veterinarian, and three physicians.

Twenty-two (17%) of our respondents' family's mothers held teaching certificates, and most of them (19) had taught in the publicly funded school system at some point. Slightly fewer fathers (11%)

held teaching certificates, but nine of them had taught in public schools at some point.

The parents of the homeschooled respondents held an enormous variety of different occupations, but, not surprisingly, the greater majority of the mothers were homemakers (and home educators): 81% of the families reported a homemaker mother, and this included mothers with all levels of education, from secondary schooling to PhD and MD. Another eight mothers (6%) were reported as 'teachers'; of these, five held teaching certificates and it is possible that in one or two cases at least, the teaching referred to was home teaching rather than paid employment. In addition to the homemakers and teachers, the remaining 18 mothers held 15 occupations, ranging from lawyer, pharmacist and health inspector to librarian, dental hygienist, and potter.

Even after some obviously closely related occupations were collapsed, there were still more than 70 different occupations listed for fathers, only five of which accounted for more than three cases. The single most common occupation, held by 13 (11%) of the fathers was that of farmer, and the second, held by nine (7%) fathers was that of pastor. Six fathers (5%) were teachers, six were carpenters, and six worked in business. A few fathers were employed in relatively unskilled work, such as car sales, custodial work, or retail sales. Rather more were employed in skilled trades, including electrical work and welding, or in other skilled work such as computer programming, photography, and technological support. A similar number were employed in professional capacities, such as an orthodontist, a pharmacist, a university professor, an engineer, three physicians, and three missionaries.



Comparisons between the occupations of homeschooled adults' parents and those of the population at large using the Standard Occupational Classification (1991) present a difficulty. The occupations of mothers cannot be compared, since the official classification does not include 'homemaker' and therefore excludes most of our cases. With respect to the occupations of

fathers, the data are too generalized to offer much meaningful comparison, other than to say that the fathers of homeschooled adults were more likely to be occupied in social support types of employment such as education and religion, and less likely to be occupied in sales and service, or manufacturing employment.

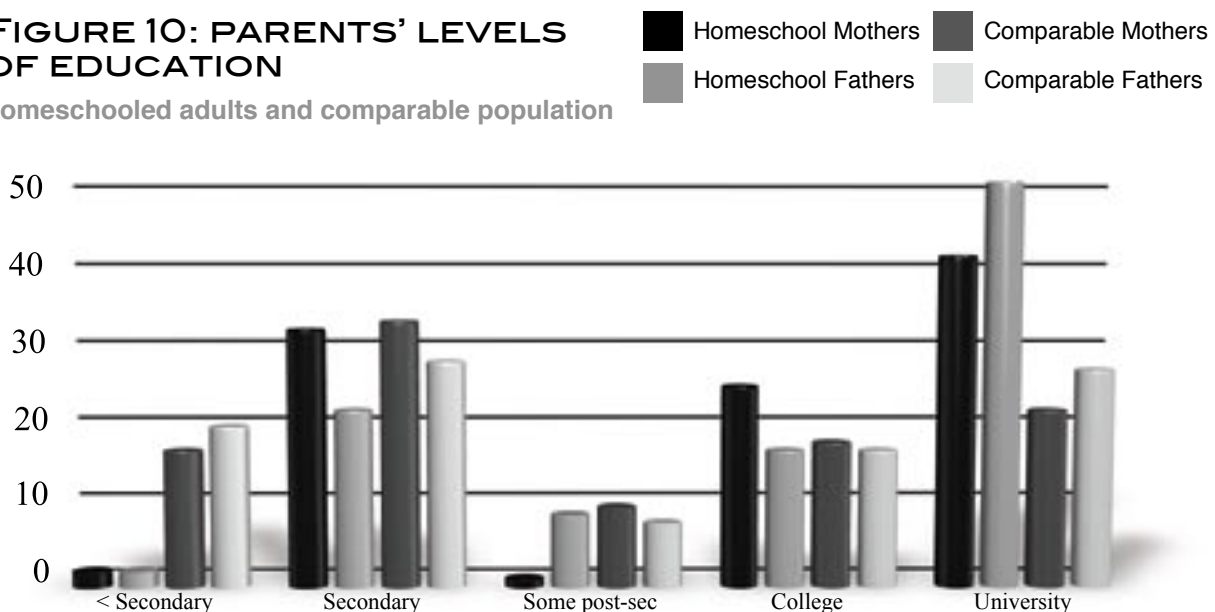
TABLE 13: PARENTS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION
homeschooled adults and comparable population

Level of Education	HS Adults		Population	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Highest Level				
University degree	50%	41%	27%	22%
Community College diploma	17%	25%	17%	18%
Some postsecondary	9%	1%	8%	10%
Secondary school diploma	22%	32%	28%	33%
Less than secondary	2%	2%	20%	17%

General Social Survey, 2006

FIGURE 10: PARENTS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION

homeschooled adults and comparable population



Home environment

The homeschooled adults typically came from large families. Only one family had just one child, and the largest family had 14 children. The median number of children in home-educating families was four, and 64% of the families had more than three children. In virtually all cases, all siblings were home educated together.

The vast majority of families (94%) were described as 'white' in ethnic origin, and only one family described otherwise might be considered a visible minority. This compares with the 2006 Census, which gives the national statistics as about 15% visible minorities. Most of our respondents (98%) were Canadian citizens by birth, as were most of their mothers (85%) and fathers (83%). This compares with about 79% of the general population according to the 2006 Census. Those parents who were not Canadians by birth were mostly Canadian by naturalization, with a few landed immigrants (eight mothers and seven fathers). There were 19 mothers who were not born Canadians, and 22 fathers, but there were only 12 families in which neither parent was born in Canada.

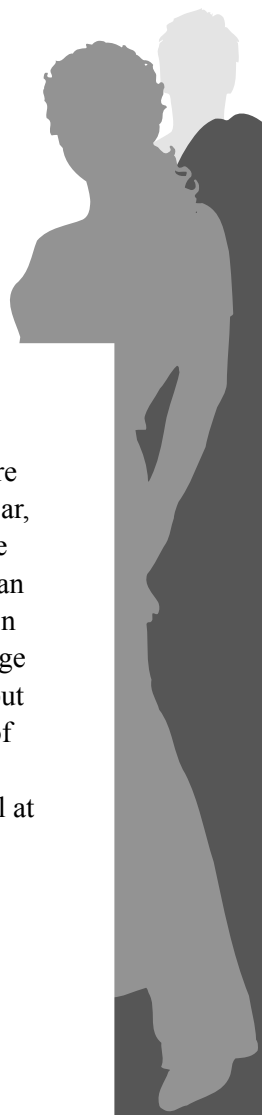
The greater majority of homes were English-speaking: English was the first language of 90% of the families, 82% of the mothers and 80% of the fathers. There were also five (4%) French-speaking families. In addition, respondents from three families first spoke German at home, and two first spoke Dutch. In all cases, the current language of the home was English (98%) or French (2%). The General Social Survey of Canada for 2005 showed only 59% of the population had English as a first language. The same survey also showed that

67% of Canadian families usually spoke English at home, 21% French, and 12% other languages, while in our respondent families, 98% spoke English in the home, and the other 2% spoke French.

Very nearly all of the families represented were Christian. Many used the term 'Christian' (86), but a number of others were more specific: Evangelical (10); Protestant (9); Roman Catholic (7); Mennonite (3); Jehovah's Witnesses (1); Baptist (1); Adventists (1); Methodist (1); Brethren (1); Pentecostal (1); Presbyterian (1); Anglican (1); and Lutheran (1). Only two families reported no religious affiliation at all: both of them were families with two now adult children, all of whom describe themselves as having no religious affiliation.

Overall, therefore, the homeschooling families were overwhelmingly white, Christian, English-speaking and Canadian by birth.

¹ Statistics Canada does not count aboriginals as visible minorities. Three of the study families were aboriginal.



Home education experience

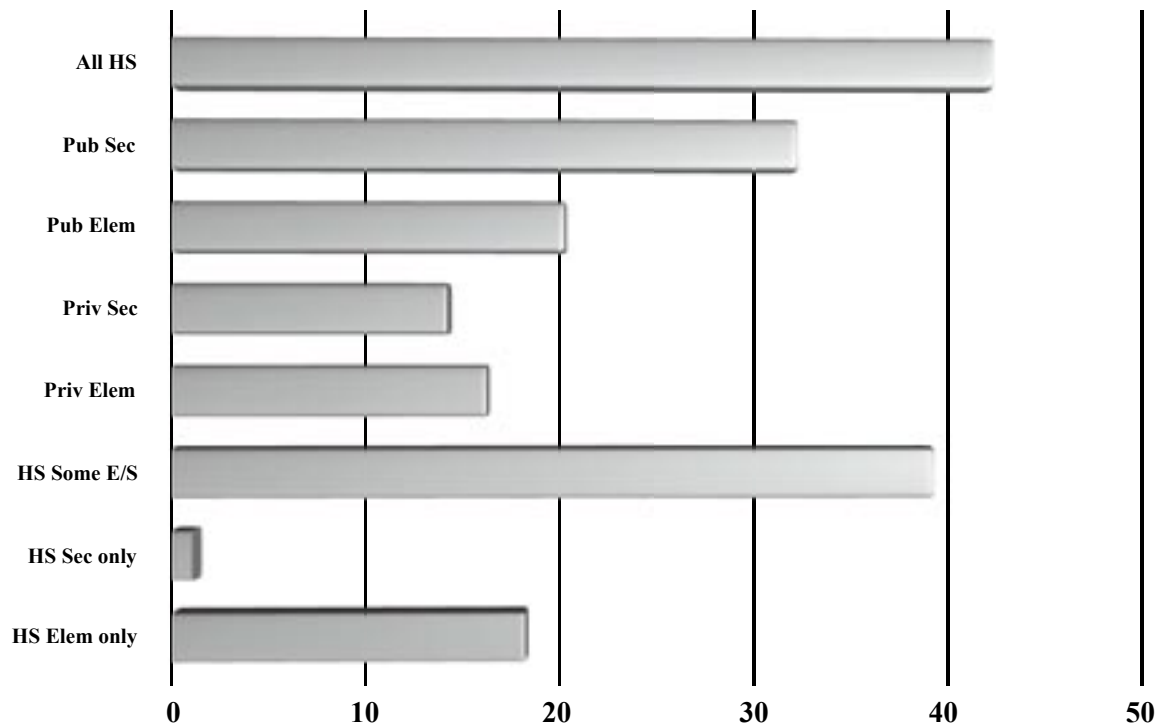
Province

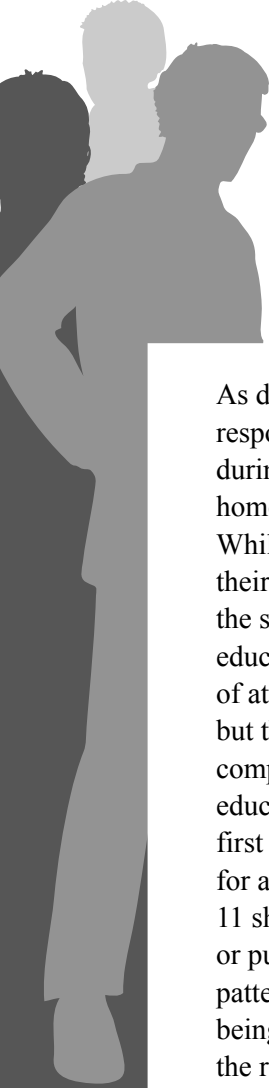
Most of the respondents (85%) still lived in the province in which they had received their home education. The largest group (36%) lived in Ontario when they were home educated and the second largest group (26%) lived in Alberta. A smaller group (14%) lived in British Columbia, and a few lived in Manitoba (2%), New Brunswick (1%), Nova Scotia (1%), Quebec (4%) or Saskatchewan (8%). Eighteen respondents (8%) reported living in two or more different provinces during their homeschooling years.

Duration and grades covered

Although there were many respondents who were homeschooled for periods as short as a single year, the typical pattern of homeschooling covered the entire period from the ages of 5 to 18. The median number of years spent in homeschooling between the ages of 5 and 18 was 11 years, and the average was 9.9 years with a standard deviation of 2.9, but the mode was 12 or 13 years, reported by 42% of the respondents, who also told us that they had never attended either a private or a public school at all.

FIGURE 11: SCHOOL EXPERIENCES
homeschooled adults





As demonstrated in Figure 11, very few respondents (1%) had been homeschooled only during their secondary years, but 18% had been homeschooled only during the elementary years. While the largest group (42%) had received all of their elementary and secondary education at home, the second largest group (39%) had been home educated for at least some of both levels. Patterns of attendance included all sorts of permutations, but the second most common pattern, after a complete home education, was to have been home educated for all of the elementary years and the first part of the secondary years, which accounted for about 20% of the home schooled adults. Figure 11 shows the proportions of attendance at private or public schools, and demonstrates this last pattern, with some attendance at secondary school being the most common. Thirty-four (16%) of the respondents had spent some time in a private elementary school, and 11 of this group had also attended a private secondary school for some time. A further 19 respondents also attended a private secondary school for a while, for a total of thirty (14%). Rather more respondents had attended public school for a while. Forty-two respondents (20%) had attended a public elementary school for some time, but rather more – 67 (32%) – had attended a public secondary school. Twenty-two respondents had attended both elementary and secondary public schools.

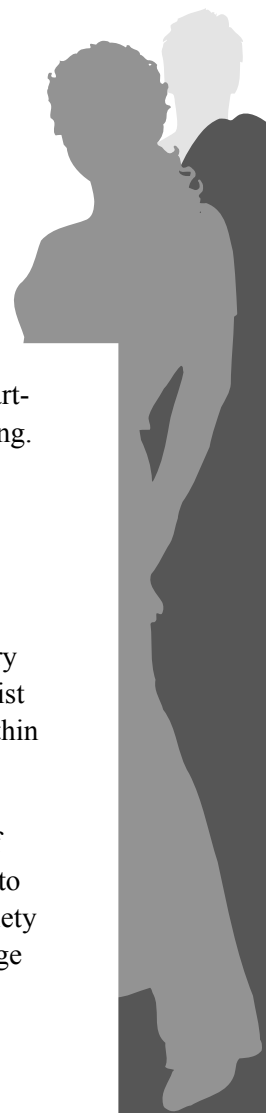
A little less than one-quarter (21%) of the respondents could be described as intermittent homeschoolers. These respondents had alternated between home education and attending school, the most common pattern being that of a year or two at school, then a block of years of home education, and a return to school for secondary grades. Only a very small number of respondents described patterns which involved more than one or two changes.

Curriculum and other experiences

In the majority of cases, the curriculum for homeschooling was designed by parents. In 66% of the cases, parents were the sole designers of the curriculum, and in another 16% of the families, the parents also made use of program components provided by an independent school or a satellite school curriculum. A satellite school curriculum was used exclusively in 8% of the families, and a program supplied by an independent school in 4%. In seven families (5%), respondents reported that the curriculum was designed jointly by parents and children.

Opportunities for collaborative learning with other children outside of the family were evidently quite common. Only 18% of the respondents said that they had no such opportunities. The majority (55%) reported up to five hours a week of such collaboration on average, and a further quarter (23%) reported between five and ten hours on average. Ten respondents (4%) reported more than ten hours per week. It is interesting to note that responses to this question varied within the same family, indicating perhaps that collaborative opportunities were often more likely to be individualized.

On average, respondents reported more opportunities for social interaction with children outside of the immediate family than for collaborative learning. The most common answer to this question was between five and ten hours per week of social interaction with other children, given by 38% of the respondents. Another 27% reported up to five hours a week and 32% reported more than ten hours. Overall, it appears that these homeschooled students had many opportunities for interaction with other children. There were



40 respondents (18%) who reported no social contact with other children, but only eight of these had also reported no collaborative opportunities. Furthermore, in several of these cases, other children in the same family reported several hours a week of such opportunities, indicating that, while one of the children might not have perceived many opportunities to interact, the families themselves were not isolated. Indeed, it appears quite evident that these homeschooled children and their families were most certainly not isolated in any sense.

Respondents were asked to check off, on a list of ten different types of activity, with space for additional unlisted activities, all of those in which they regularly participated. Every respondent checked at least one of the activities, and the median was five, giving a clear indication that the homeschooling experience was an extremely busy one for our respondents.

‘Play with people outside the family’ was the most commonly checked activity from the list we offered, at 87%. Sunday School was the next most common, at 80%. Close to three-quarters (74%) of the respondents took regular music lessons, and two-thirds (66%) participated regularly in group sports. Two-thirds (66%) also reported that they regularly went on field trips. About half of the respondents (50%) participated in volunteer work, and rather fewer belonged to choirs or orchestras (32%), or groups like 4H, scouts, or guides (30%). About one-quarter of the respondents (27%) took some regular classes with other students outside of their homes.

Twenty-five of the respondents wrote in additional activities which they regularly undertook, the most common of these being drama groups and youth groups. In addition, other respondents participated

in art classes, chess club, gymnastics classes, part-time jobs, sewing lessons, archery, and swimming.

Immediate postsecondary activities

We were interested in knowing what graduates did immediately after completing their secondary education, and we asked them to check from a list of possibilities those into which they moved within a year of completing their secondary education. The single most common answer was entering university, which was the case for about 29% of the respondents. About one-third (34%) went into college programs which they described in a variety of ways: Bible college (19%), community college (10%), Christian college (4%), private college (<1%) or seminary (<1%).

A few respondents (14) said they went on to ‘certificate’ or ‘diploma’ programs, but did not specify what these were. Only 13% went directly into full-time employment, and about 6% began apprenticeships. A handful (2%) went to trade schools, and a few (3%) began part-time employment. Some (2%) said they began non-traditional postsecondary education but did not specify what this was exactly. Nine respondents (4%) undertook a cross-cultural or mission program.



Reasons for choosing home education

A list of 22 possible reasons for choosing homeschooling was offered and respondents were asked to check those which applied. Most checked several answers. Only one respondent checked a single reason, and quite a few checked more than

ten. The median number of reasons checked was eight, ranging upwards to 16.

There was considerable agreement on the main reasons, with the desire for a better education at the very top of the list in terms of most frequently selected:

Reasons for choosing home education

- 186 (83%) The belief that a child receives a better education at home
- 149 (66%) A poor learning environment in the school
- 66 (29%) A lack of challenge at school

Religious and moral reasons also were indicated by three-quarters of the respondents:

- 184 (82%) A better environment for developing character and morality
- 169 (75%) Religious reasons
- 153 (68%) To teach a particular worldview, set of beliefs, and values
- 146 (65%) An objection to what was being taught in schools

Less common, but still quite frequent, were reasons which are family specific:

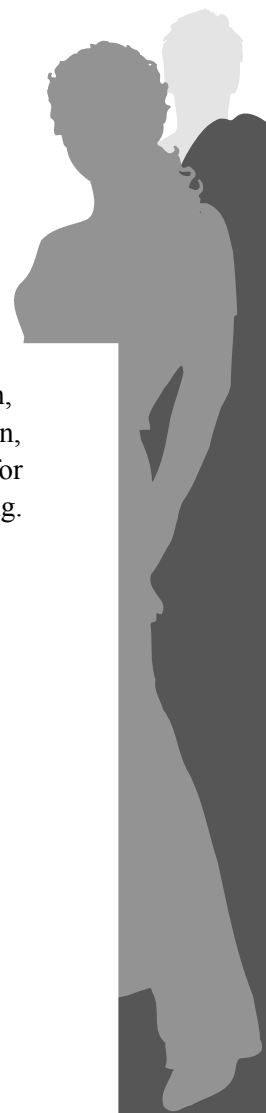
- 118 (52%) A desire for more parent-child contact
- 92 (41%) A belief that parents are the best educators of their children
- 80 (36%) A desire for more sibling-sibling contact
- 66 (29%) Family reasons

Focus on the child's individual academic potentials, interests, and needs also was indicated by more than one-third of the respondents:

- 96 (43%) In order to individualize the curriculum
- 80 (36%) In order to individualize the learning environment

Social reasons were mentioned by about one-fifth of the respondents:

- 51 (23%) A desire to closely supervise social interactions
- 37 (16%) Social and/or behavioural problems in the school



Finally, the least chosen reasons seem to be those that are more family specific, and do seem to challenge some of the more obvious expectations. Very few, it seems, chose homeschooling because of a parent's career or because of an illness. Very

few families were concerned about safety which, in another context (Van Pelt, Allison and Allison, 2007), was found to be a very common reason for choosing private schooling over public schooling.

- 16 (7%) Wanted a private education but could not afford private school
- 10 (4%) For safety reasons
- 9 (4%) Special needs / disabilities not being met in school
- 9 (4%) Transportation / distance problems
- 6 (3%) Parent's career
- 5 (2%) A temporary illness
- 1 (<1%) Could not get into a preferred school

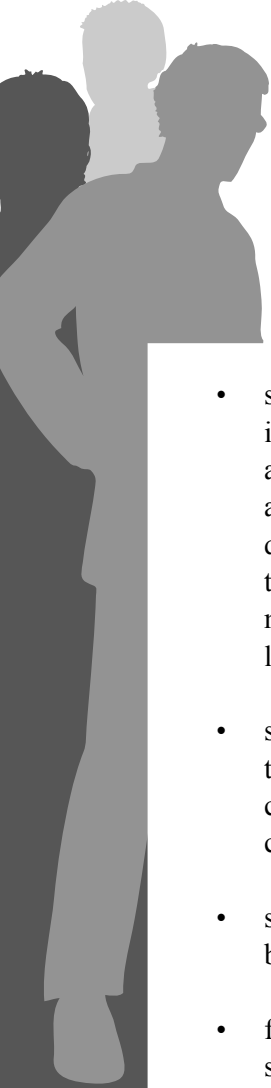
Space was provided for respondents to write in reasons which they felt were not adequately covered in the list. In all, 29 respondents indicated another reason, although in many cases they were amplifications of reasons already checked in the list provided. These items were noted by no more than four respondents each, and topics mentioned in addition to those listed above included child's preference, health and safety reasons, slow or stifling academic progress in school, freedom and flexibility, bullied in school, wanted an English education in Quebec, parents' negative experience in school, good pace, and time for extra-curricular activities.

Single most important reason for being home educated

Given that so many reasons were possible, we thought it would be valuable to ask respondents what was the single most important reason for the

choice of homeschooling. Respondents expressed the main reason in many different ways, but it is possible to reduce them to essentially four categories: educational reasons, religious reasons, family reasons, and other, large idiosyncratic, reasons. Educational reasons were by far the most commonly given main reasons, with 111 variations, for 53% of the responses.

- 59 gave the main reason as providing a better, or the best, educational environment, including academic and social factors, as well as the formation of character and morality.
- 25 had a problem with the public school environment, either in general or with respect to specific local schools; often there was a particular objection to the school curriculum and/or the values espoused in the public system.



- six chose homeschooling primarily because it allowed them to pursue a particular approach to education: “To grow naturally as God intended”; “To promote wonder and questioning”; “Wanted us to love learning”; “To tailor education to abilities”; “To use different modes of education”; “Positive interactive learning”; “More emphasis on basics.”
- six felt that the education provided in schools is too boring, wastes too much time, offers little challenge, and is too limiting: “School teaches colouring inside the lines.”
- six quite simply believed that parents were better equipped to teach their children.
- five considered that home education gave scope to follow a better curriculum and to individualize curriculum.
- two noted social problems at school as the main reason for choosing home education.
- two gave very individual academic problems: “I didn’t learn well in school”; “My grades dropped in junior high.”

The second most common main reason was one of a religious nature. Sixty-five of the responses (31%) could be categorized this way. Many respondents gave only a single word answer, but some expanded upon this point.

- 55 either cited “Religion” in general or referred specifically to teaching a Biblical and/or Christian perspective, worldview, or values.
- five said their parents wanted to keep them “away from sin”, “out of the world” or “removed from secular influence”.

- Three gave the main reason as a desire to provide a specifically Roman Catholic education. All three of these families were in provinces which have publicly-funded Roman Catholic schools systems.
- two families regarded it as God’s mandate to parents to educate their children.

Family reasons accounted for only 21 (10%) responses. Here, the main reasons for home education were given as providing more parent and child contact, more sibling contact, more family time, and/or more opportunities for family bonding. Five respondents merely said that it was parental preference, without further specifics, and three gave the main reason as ensuring that parents would be the primary influence on their children. One expressed this as “So as not to give children’s day to strangers.”

In addition, there were 13 (6%) very idiosyncratic main reasons. These included two who cited “safety” but without details, one student who was “Kicked out of independent school”, one with transportation problems, and one who “Could not afford private school.”

Thus educational reasons, religious reasons, family reasons, and finally a variety of idiosyncratic reasons were reported as motivation for the parents of the respondents to home educate.



Reflections

Views on being home educated

Respondents were asked to reflect on their home education experience by selecting among four statements the ones with which they agreed. The most commonly checked statement was “I am glad that I was home educated”, with which 187 (84%) of the respondents agreed. Close to half of all the respondents (48%) checked two statements, indicating that they were not only glad they were home educated but that they also believed that “Having been home educated is an advantage to me as an adult.” Altogether, 141 respondents (63%) checked the latter statement.

Limitations of being home educated

Far fewer respondents felt that, upon reflection, their home education had limited them. Only 13 (6%) believed that “Having been home educated has limited my subsequent educational opportunities”, and only six (3%) believed that “Having been home educated has limited my subsequent employment opportunities.” There were no discernible commonalities among these respondents with respect to the gender, age, or background, and their educational experiences were quite varied. Of the 13 respondents who believed

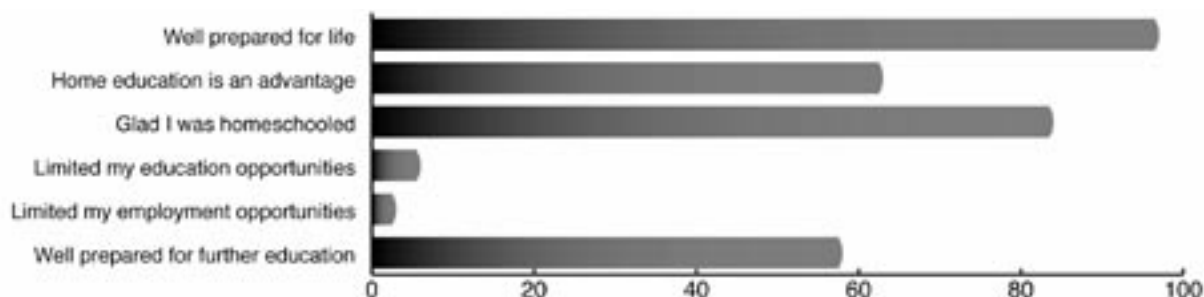
that home education limited their subsequent educational prospects, five had completed undergraduate degrees and two were not yet finished their secondary education.

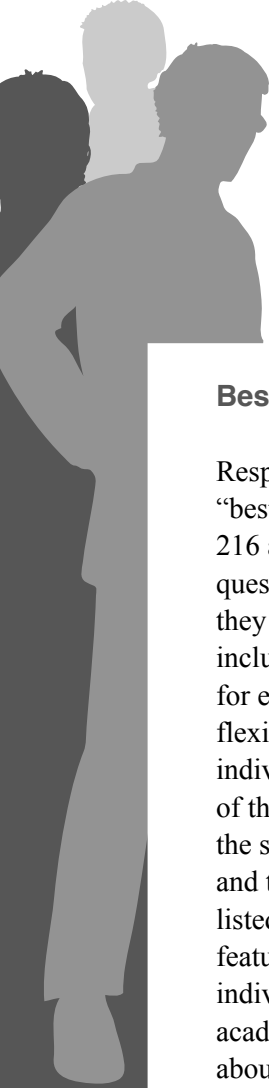
Preparation for further education and for life

The next question provided another measure on this point, since respondents were asked how well they felt home education had prepared them for further education. Only one respondent felt the preparation had been very poor, this being a 29-year-old who did not answer the question about educational attainment and who went straight into full-time employment after finishing secondary education. A further eight (4%) respondents felt that they had been “not very well” prepared. Of these, one was not yet finished secondary education and two had undergraduate degrees. The majority (58%) felt that they had been “very well” prepared for further education, and another 38% selected “quite well.”

With respect to how well home education had prepared them for life, respondents were very positive. The majority (59%) felt that home education had prepared them “very well” and a further 38% that it had prepared them “quite well.” Only 12 respondents (5%) selected “not very well” and none at all selected “very poorly.”

FIGURE 12: REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF BEING HOMESCHOOLED





Best part about being home educated

Respondents were asked what they felt was the “best part about being home educated”. A total of 216 answers were submitted to this open-ended question. Home-educated adults reported that they felt the best part about being homeschooled included the rich relational aspects, the opportunity for extensive curricular enrichment, the flexibility especially in terms of the schedule, the individualized pace and programs, the development of their own independence and confidence, and the superior education received. The number and types of responses in each category are listed in Table 14. In summary, it was these six features—relationships, enrichment, flexibility, individualization, independence, and superior academics—that home-educated adults found best about their education.

Worst part about being home educated

When asked what they felt “was the worst part about being home educated” a total of 208 respondents provided an answer. More than one-third mentioned an aspect of the social challenges of being home educated. These comments ranged from simple reflections such as “I feel I could have had more social interaction” to more angst filled ones such as “[I was] so different from others my age and [felt] somewhat awkward”. More than one-fifth indicated that their curriculum was limited in some manner, particularly in terms of sports. More than one-sixth mentioned the difficulties of living with societal stereotypes towards their education including those embedded in postsecondary institutional policies. “People [were] always watching, looking for something wrong” said one. “[People asking] ignorant or judgmental questions”, said another. More than one-tenth mentioned the

difficulties adjusting later to the expectations of education provided in classroom settings. More than one-tenth also mentioned their concerns about how home education may have strained their family relationships. Several (n=12) were concerned that on occasion boredom or lack of motivation set in, and almost as many (n=11) mentioned that the worst part of being home educated was the lack of snow days or P.D. days, or the irritant of having a slow internet connection. Table 15 lists the number of time items in each category were noted. In summary, while in no case did the majority of respondents agree on any specific challenge, in order of most commonly noted, the worst part of being home educated included the social challenges, curricular limitations, societal prejudice, later adaptation to classroom settings, and possible strains on family.

**TABLE 14: BEST PART ABOUT BEING HOME EDUCATED**

	n
Relational	
Build deeper relationships with family and with friends	64
Enriched curriculum	
Developed and pursued a variety of interests, hobbies, and perspectives within and beyond the usual school curriculum including gardening, farming, forestry, household management, reading/literary exposure, music, art, and religious integration	60
Flexibility of schedule	
Ability to travel, take time off, sleep in, play more; participate in several schools simultaneously, run businesses, hold jobs, volunteer	50
Individualized pace	
Could proceed at own pace, not held back by class, could use time efficiently, did not have to wait for others	48
Individualized program	
Individualized attention, individualized curriculum, one-on-one instruction	35
Developed independent approach to learning	
Develop independence in learning, self-directed learner, love for learning	34
Developed independence	
Develop independence, confidence, maturity, goal-oriented attitude, work ethic, develop as an individual with solid values	33
Superior education	
High standards, superior education, able to be accelerated when back to school, better understanding than when attended school	16
Social freedom	
Freedom from bullying, teasing, and peer pressure	12
Other	
Other miscellaneous factors such as creating a home culture of learning, low stress environment, eating lunch at home, no grades, no homework, provided a good foundation for life and career, and provided unique learning opportunities, experiences and approaches	25

TABLE 15: WORST PART ABOUT BEING HOME EDUCATED

	n
Social challenges	
Such as being excluded by others, developing poor social graces, feeling isolated from peers, having limited social interaction, having little opportunity to meet diverse peers, being lonely, still feeling like an outsider, didn't or still don't fit, missed exposure to opposite gender	77
Curricular limitations and concerns	
Lack of sports or team participation	23
Lack of specialized classes such as computers, various extra-curriculars, international baccalaureate and advanced placement courses, co-operative education, and peer tutoring	8
Lack of science laboratories and math program deficiencies	7
Poor French or second language learning	3
Curriculum became too similar over time, kept changing, poor, arrived late	6
Living with hurtful societal and academic institutional stereotypes	
Being stereotyped by others	19
Lack of Grade 12 certification, trouble entering postsecondary due to accreditation anomalies	13
Later adjustment to classroom-based education	
Difficulty adjusting to expectations of classroom-based education later (such as meeting due dates, working in groups, meeting demands of others, general adjustment troubles, not used to being compared to others)	28
Parental / Familial Concerns	
Strained relationship with mother or with both parents, too much sibling contact, parents too controlling, expected to be like family, parents were a limiting educational factor	26
Motivation	
Lacking in motivation, being bored, felt they were home too much	12
Irritants	
No snow days, no days off due to teacher professional development days, slow internet	11
No concerns	
The education provided good preparation	15



Opportunity for socialization with other children

Respondents were presented with the statement “A common criticism of home education is that children have too few opportunities for socialization with other children” and were asked “to what extent was this the case in your experience?” Fully 214 respondents commented. The vast majority said this was not the case for them; 150 claimed that they had plenty of opportunities for socializing with other children. One, for example, stated “In my experience [my siblings and I] had ample opportunity for socialization with other children. Between homeschooling group activities (such as art lessons, soccer, swimming lessons), piano and voice lessons, choir, guitar, cello and violin lessons and activities in the parish, we had a great deal of socialization”. Another stated “To no extent [was this the case]. I was schooled at home, I was not dead. There were kids in the neighbourhood, other homeschool kids. Depending on what is meant by socialization, I received a wide variety of socialization [opportunities] that extended well beyond my peer group”. Another stated, “I feel that I had a very social childhood, interacting with all kinds of groups of people.” Yet, at least 41 respondents were a little ambivalent, saying it may have been slightly or somewhat accurate to their situation, or “not too much of an issue”. One such respondent said, “my social contact was less [than others], though my parents did ensure that we had as much social interaction as possible. With a lot of what goes on at schools, I don’t think having less social interaction was at all a bad thing”. One said, “I didn’t feel poorly socialized, but I would have enjoyed more time with peers”. Others, a total of 23, were more definitive, claiming that the criticism was most certainly the case in their situation. One stated, “Very much so. Most of my friends lived in other areas of town and I wasn’t very close with

anyone in my neighbourhood”. Another reflected: “It was true and when given chances to interact I was generally too shy because I didn’t know how to act”.

Several respondents offered additional comments or thoughts about their socialization. Even though they felt the criticism about lack of contact with other children was not accurate for their case, upon evaluation did opine about the possible social influences of being home educated. One very strong comment makes the point here. “This was not the case for me [that I lacked contact with other children]. Also, I believe that this is a bullshit [sic] criticism usually only proposed by people who know relatively little about homeschooling. However, I do find that as an adult I don’t tend to go out and seek social interaction. If I could just stay in my house with my husband that would be ideal [for me]”. Another said, “I had plenty of opportunities to socialize (within my own peer group and other age groups)” and yet went on to comment “I do wonder if I might have developed more guy friendships sooner in a private [or] public school setting.” One stated, “My parents made the effort to bring me to as many social events with my peers as possible, but I found that there was a lot of adjustment necessary in order to ‘fit in’ upon entering public high school. It took me half a year to get the hang of it; then everything was fine.” In contrast, others claimed that the concern about too few opportunities for socialization with other children was accurate, and yet felt that this contributed to a healthier social life. “Yes, it’s true” stated one respondent. “It is [also] true that this is not the end of the world though. I am remarkably well adjusted and very good in social situations. Also, I was better at communicating with adults as a child than most children, which I consider a bonus.”

Additional respondent reflections

A total of 142 respondents accepted the invitation to answer the last question on the survey “is there anything else you would like us to know about your home education experience and/or its effect on your life?” The comments were wide ranging, generally provided a little more detail, although none were more than four or five sentences in length, most being less than the previous open-ended questions on the survey. Many of the comments invoked themes similar to those discussed in the earlier open-ended responses, but perhaps discussed only for the first time by the particular respondent making the comment.

When the comments were considered all together, they addressed more themes than the earlier questions, with fewer respondents addressing any one particular theme. The major themes addressed in the comments included the excellent preparation the home education provided for further

classroom-based education (whether in elementary, secondary, or tertiary institutions), the development of independence and initiative, appreciation for the opportunity to be home educated and for the dedication of their parents, the social and familial advantages of home education, the individualized program, the moral and/or religious aspect of the education, the enriched education received, and the influence of home education on future careers and thinking skills. As indicated in Table 16 below, a number of respondents commented on the societal prejudice they felt while being home educated and the difficulties they encountered when applying for tertiary education. Others commented on their intention to home educate or their current practice of home educating their own children. A small minority offered some hints at their very negative feelings and opinions of their home education. A comment in this section “I would not wish this experience on anyone” provided a heart-rending antithesis to the comment of another who said “those were the best days of my life”.

TABLE 16: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

	n
Excellent preparation for further education	
Very good / excellent academic preparation, well prepared for college, had an academic or educational advantage over peers	36
Development of independence and initiative	
Independence, learning to learn, learn on own, self-reliance, more mature, self-motivated, good work ethic, responsible, confidence, perseverance developed life-long passion for learning, self-starter, intrinsically motivated	36
Appreciation for their home education and for mother's / parents' dedication	
Very grateful, thankful for their home education, mother / parents were dedicated, made homeschooling a priority, well-balanced, educated, wise, had best interest of child in mind, created structure	29

**TABLE 16: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS (CONT.)****Social advantages**

Better social skills, better friendships, better social life, value relationships, able to lead	16
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Familial relationships

Close to family, teach younger siblings	14
---	----

Individualized program

Own pace, early start, head start, early maturity, own terms, one-on-one, able to get ahead	13
---	----

Development of values and faith

Develop strong values, morals, spirituality, faith, beliefs	11
---	----

Enriched education

Became well-rounded, more skills, more time outdoors, more experiences, more time with music, more travel, wide variety of interests and knowledge	11
--	----

Career connection

Influence on career, on career choice, on career path, opened many doors	8
--	---

Thinking skills developed

Critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, analytical thinking	7
--	---

Prejudice encountered

Prejudice / Stereotypes faced	7
Difficulty entering postsecondary	5

Intention to home educate own children

Would home educate own children	18
Would not home educate own children	1
Not sure if would home educate own children	4
Would encourage others to give home education a try but only if parents and children want to	3

Concerns and criticisms

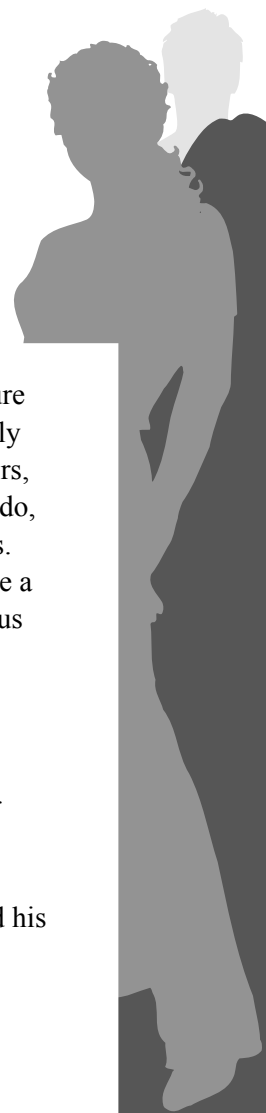
Not for everyone	4
Good only in early grades	3
Very negative experience, brainwashed by parents	2
Limitations – limited labs, math, French, sports, group participation	2
Difficult to transition to classroom	2

TABLE 16: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS (CONT.)

Difficult to transition to real world	1
Wouldn't wish it on anyone	1
Not enough career focus	1
Parents should not take the responsibility for their children's education	1
Didn't work as well for my siblings	1
Is it too sheltering?	1
Struggled socially for a while	1
Limitations – not enough exposure to different people	1
Was it simply my IQ? my parents' IQ that made it successful?	1
Other comments	
Good enough, has some pros and cons	5
Sheltered from problems of school, secure environment, imaginative time, carefree childhood	4
Enjoyed being HS, would not change a thing	4
Organized / disciplined	2
Some home education and some school attendance is the best combination	2
Didn't miss out academically or socially	1
No stress, low stress	1
Shocked later at behaviour of public school students	1
Became more open-minded	1
Later workforce, travel, university provided exposure HS did not	1
Better prepared for life than peers	1
Future research should consider K-8 vs 9-12 home education	1

Thus the reflections offered by the respondents provide a window into some of the strengths and weaknesses of home education as perceived by participants in home education. Based on the reflections of home-educated students, the strengths of home education include relationships, enrichment, flexibility, program individualization, development of independence and initiative, excellent academic preparation, and development of values and religious beliefs. The weaknesses according to these adults include social challenges, curricular limitations, societal prejudice, later

adaptation to classroom settings, and possible strains on the family.



DISCUSSION

The findings of this study address the characteristics, demographics, and views of adults who were home educated. Comparison data for adults who were not home educated provides a window into assessing the strengths and weaknesses of home education. The evaluative views and reflections of the adults also contribute to our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of homeschooling, and provide opportunity for improving and enhancing this educational approach. The consideration of the reasons for home education in comparison to the participants' views on the best and worst part of home education provides opportunity for considering the question of motivations for and outcomes of home education.

Current characteristics of homeschooled adults compared to Canadian peers

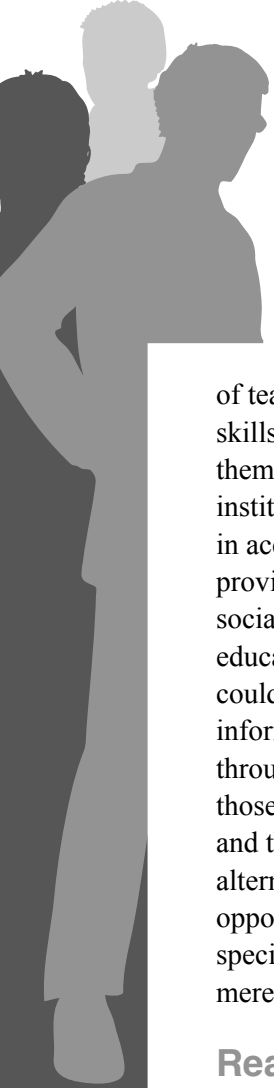
In terms of their highest level of education attained when compared to the general population, the formerly home-educated students attain higher levels. Their occupations are more oriented to health, to social services such as education, religious, and government, to arts and culture, and to participation in trades and transportation than the comparable population, and less oriented to sales and service, and natural and applied sciences. They are equally engaged in business, finance, and administration. They are much more likely to be civically engaged and to vote in federal, provincial, and municipal elections. Their religious affiliation and observance tends to be high, and their charitable donations tend to be oriented to religious obligations or beliefs. Their income tends to be slightly higher than that of their peers and none rely on government payments as their main source of income. Their life satisfaction is higher than that of their peers. They are more physically and

recreationally active, and more engaged in culture and the arts than their peers. They are more likely to be married and to marry earlier than their peers, less likely to have children early but when they do, they tend to have larger families than their peers. They come from homes where their parents have a higher academic education and are more religious than their peers' parents..

These findings are consistent with those Ray (2004) found in his study of 5,254 Americans (home educated for seven or more years of their K-12 education) in terms of the demographic characteristics of the adults such as education achieved and civic engagement. He summarized his findings thus:

The home-educated adults in this study were very positive about having been homeschooled and toward homeschooling in general, actively engaged in their local communities, keeping abreast of current affairs, highly civically involved, tolerant of others expressing their viewpoints, attaining relatively high levels of formal education, religiously active and wide-ranging in their worldview beliefs, holding worldview beliefs similar to those of their parents, and largely home educating their own children.

Canadians who were formerly home educated were willing to offer their thoughts on the worst part of being home educated and the five themes that emerged, while they do not undermine the sound educational, occupational, and societal achievements and contributions of formerly home-educated students, will be instructive for the improvement of future home education practice. Their concerns about the social aspects of their education include their perceived lack of developed social graces and social ease, their lack



of team sports participation and poorly developed skills in these areas, the stigmatization awarded them by others particularly in tertiary educational institutions, and the perceived hurdles involved in acclimatizing to later expectations of education provided in classroom settings. The eradication of social prejudice against those currently being home educated and against those formerly home educated could be achieved through concerted efforts to inform of the achievements of home education, through creating an awareness that stigmatizing those educated differently is a form of intolerance, and through creating awareness of the multiple alternative community-specific educational opportunities that are offered in our times, specifically that non classroom-based education is merely one of those forms.

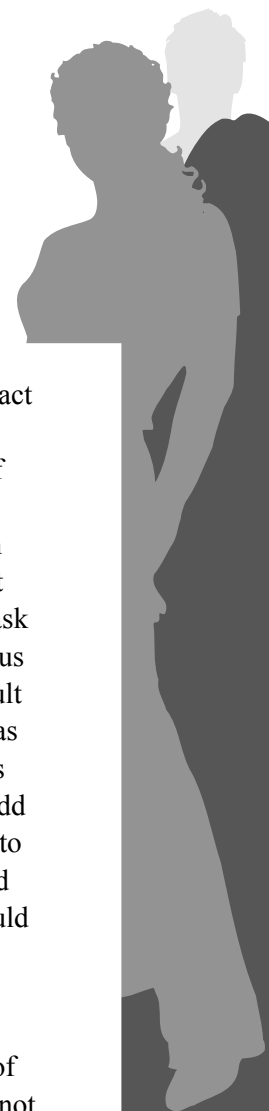
Reasons for home educating and outcomes of home education

The approach used in this study to eliciting reasons for choosing home education is unique. The adults were asked to identify why they were homeschooled as children. Yet it would hardly seem that the precise and accurate identification of motivations for choosing home education would be possible. Not only has much time passed, with experience perhaps altering reasons for the continuation of home educating different from initial reasons for home educating, but the respondents were asked to identify why a third party (their parents) made the decision to homeschool. Because Ray in the first study of this group (1994) had not asked the parents for their reasons for home educating, this was the most convenient route to establishing some baseline for motivations for these adults being home educated. While we may not have precisely identified initial parental motivations for home educating, we have captured how these formerly home-educated adults

account for the motivation behind their education.

The literature has shown that reasons for home educating over the last five decades have moved from pedagogical (educational) to ideological (religious), and that currently, parents and students are choosing home education, even on a short, intermittent basis, because of its demonstrated positive benefits in addressing specific individual needs or interests.

This changing orientation for motivations to home educate, from second-phase to third phase motivations, can be found by comparing these respondents' reports of why their parents home educated with what they felt was the best part about being home educated. When pushed for the single most important reason that they were home educated, they claimed first most frequently, educational reasons, second, religious reasons, third, family reasons and fourth, other, largely idiosyncratic, reasons. Note the slight move away from the dominance of ideological and/or religious motivations. This can then be compared with what the respondents said was the best part about being home educated. They claim that rich relationships, extensive enrichment, schedule flexibility, individualization of pace and program, development of independence and superior academics were the best aspects of home education. Thus, as they reflect, it is not the strong ideological and/or worldview that emerges as a best aspect of home education, but rather the academic opportunities and the personal enrichment. Nevertheless, 89% of them also said that religion was somewhat or very important to how they live their daily lives. Thus, the religious motivations of their parents for home educating must also have had an influence although it did not emerge as the "best" part about being home educated.



This subtle move towards a pragmatic orientation for identifying the benefits of being home educated is similarly mirrored in the growing choice for private schooling where parents seek such opportunities and outcomes for their children. A study of why parents choose private schools in Ontario found that programs with an individualized orientation embodying opportunity for enrichment and academic excellence were sought by parents choosing academically-defined schools (Van Pelt, Allison and Allison, 2007). What adults found through their being home educated—an enriched individualized education—is what today’s parents are expecting from academically-defined private schools. Those choosing private religiously-defined schools in the same province were not as concerned with opportunities for individualized advancement and flourishing as they were for the chance for their children to experience an opportunity for enculturation into a religious perspective and community. Thus home education, when selected by parents with religious orientations, seems to provide opportunity for an enriched individualized education usually available only to those students who attend costly “elite” type academically-defined schools, begging the question of whether home education is a path to both an elite education for the not so very wealthy while also offering a religiously-oriented focus.

Delimitations and limitations of the study

While the population for this study includes all the home-educated children of the participants in a 1994 Canadian study and would total 2,129

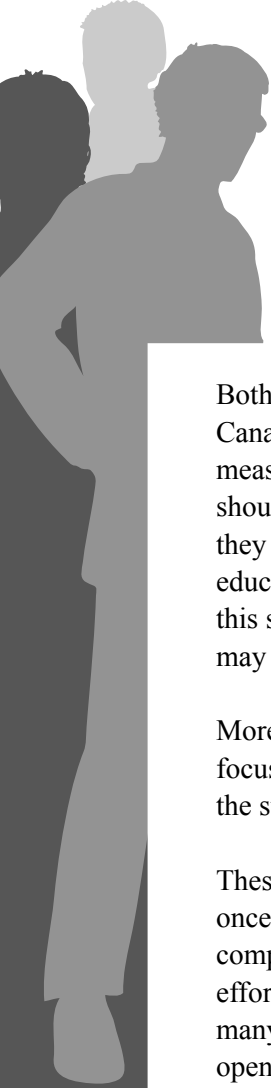
possible participants, we were only able to contact the parents of 1,015 of these formerly home-educated students. The eventual participation of less than one-quarter of these adults could, in part, be explained by the cumbersome approach we took to locating and inviting participation. It was our view that it would be inappropriate to ask parents who had participated in 1994 to supply us with names and contact information of their adult children. Our decision to ask the parents to act as “middle persons” was to respect the anonymous identity of these adults, but we knew it would add one more potential place for the questionnaires to be forgotten or neglected. Had we contacted and invited the adults to participate directly, this could have increased the participation rate.

Because of the design of this study, the generalization of its findings to the population of all Canadians who were ever home educated is not possible. Only those persons home educated in 1994 and whose parents participated in the study at that time were eligible to receive an invitation to participate. It is clear though that many were home educated for the majority of their years of K-12 education, and this makes some connections between their being home educated and various outcomes stronger than if they had only been home educated for a year or two.

Implications for future research

While studies such as this one only provide a starting point for considering the outcomes of home education, they do provide helpful benchmarks. Future research should probe more deeply into addressing the various questions.

²A marked difference in average income exists between private school families and home-educating families as in 2003 less than one-third of Canadian home-educating families had an income above \$65,000 (Van Pelt, 2004, p. 38) while in 2006, for example, 82% of Ontario private school families had an income above \$60,000 (Van Pelt, Allison & Allison, 2007, p. 21).



Both this study and the earlier preliminary study of Canadian homeschooled adults found that scores to measure subjective well-being were very high. This should be studied further without adults realizing they are being distinguished for having been home educated. If the high scores continue to hold, then this should be further studied since home education may be positioned as a predictor of well being.

More in-depth conversations with individuals and focus groups should take place to further probe for the strengths and weaknesses of home education.

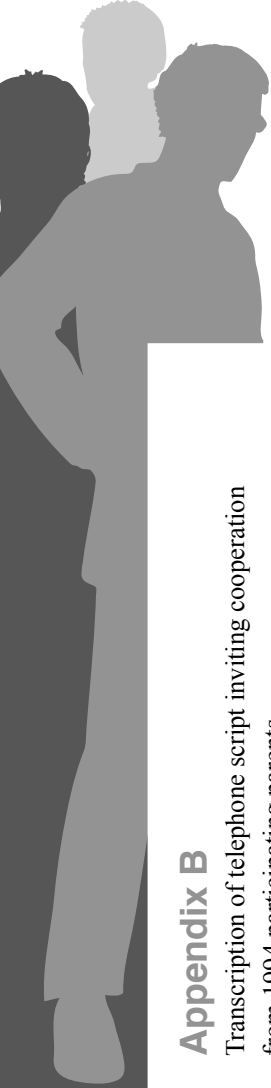
These adults should continue to be tracked and, once they are settled into their middle years, again compared with their peers. Perhaps even more effort and money should be allocated to locating as many of the original respondents as possible. An open call to all Canadians ever previously home educated to also participate would provide a further comparison group and perhaps a more accurate understanding.

If home education seems to achieve the positive results that are reported here in general, more comparative study of the outcomes of the various versions of home education such as non classroom-based charter schools, cyber schools, partial day school attendance, and funded approaches should be undertaken with a view to preparing proposals for further improving other forms of education.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Ethical Review Approval
Redeemer University College

Available from the authors upon request

Appendix B
Transcription of telephone script inviting cooperation
from 1994 participating parents

Call to respondents of 1994 Home Education Study

Good morning (or afternoon),

My name is _____. I'm calling from The Home School Legal Defence Association. We are following up with participants from the homeschooling study we did in 1994. Our records show that you filled out our questionnaire in that study.

We are now doing another study on homeschooling in Canada. It involves following up with the 1994 students and asking them to fill out another questionnaire. This will allow us to compare the data from 1994 with the data from 2008 when they will likely be adults.

This is a really exciting opportunity and we are wondering if you are willing to be a part of this. It is completely confidential.

If yes:

Thank you very much. First we need to make sure that we have up to date contact information from you. Confirm info.

What we need to do to complete this study is to have each child who was surveyed in 1994, fill out another survey.

What we would like to do, with your permission, is to send you a package with survey's for the _____ (number) children in your family who were involved in that 1994 study. Each of these surveys will come in their own envelope with an envelope for you to send on to your children. When they receive the package from you, they simply need to fill it out and then send it to us in the envelope included. The postage will be paid.

Does that sound reasonable?

The package we send you will have a letter explaining all of this. All you will have to do is put your children's address on each of their packages, add the correct postage if necessary or hand deliver them, when your children receive their packages, there will be a letter explaining the process as well as a postage paid return envelope.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. The final study will not have anything tied to you or your child. We simply want the information for averages.

If they say No:

Try to find out why. Everything is completely confidential. Because there is a limited number of original respondents, it is very important that as many people participate as possible.

Appendix C

Letter of Information to Parents

Fifteen years later: A longitudinal study tracking Canadian home-educated students

December 3, 2008

My name is Daniel Van Pelt and I am a full time faculty member in the Department of Education at Brockton University College in Hamilton, Ontario. In 1994 your family was involved in research looking at the experiences of families who were home educating their children. At the time of the 1994 study, your parents indicated that you of follow-up research to that study and to invite you to participate.

The purpose of our current research is to gather information which will help us to describe the current situation (occupation, education, income, community participation, civic involvement, family characteristics, life satisfaction, etc.) of those home-educated students who participated in the 1994 study. This study is designed so that the current situation of those adults who were formerly home educated can be compared with those of the general Canadian population of similar age (as reported by Statistics Canada and other sources). To this end, a number of questions in the new questionnaire reproduce questions from Statistics Canada and other sources. In addition, some of the current characteristics of participants will be correlated with their characteristics and/or academic achievement as reported in 1994. We are also interested in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of home education, as perceived by adults who were home educated as children.

The role we are asking you to undertake with respect to this research is simply to pass along the enclosed questionnaires to those of your adult children who were being home educated at the time you participated in the 1994 study. Each questionnaire contains a Letter of Information which fully explains the study, and requires no further explanation. Please ensure that you allow your sons and/or daughters to make up their own minds about whether they wish to complete the questionnaire.

My colleague on this project will be Prof. Patricia Allison from the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Education, and Dr. Derek Allison, of the same Faculty, will be a consultant. This research has received ethical clearance from the Brockton University College Ethics Review Committee (BREC). You may contact the BREC chair, Dr. Charles Hickory, at 905 648 2139 x. 4254 with any questions or concerns.

Should you have any questions pertaining to your involvement in this study or should you like to discuss this research further, I can be reached at 905 648 2139 x. 4271 or at <dvapelt@brocktoner.ca> and Patricia Allison can be reached at 519 666 0394 or at <pdallison@uwo.ca>. The results of this study should be available by late August 2009.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Van Pelt
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Brockton University College

Appendix D

Letter of Information for Respondents

Fifteen years later: A longitudinal study tracking Canadian home-educated students

December 3, 2008

My name is Daniel Van Pelt and I am a full time faculty member in the Department of Education at Brockton University College in Hamilton, Ontario. In 1994 your family was involved in research looking at the experiences of families who were home educating their children. At the time of the 1994 study, your parents indicated that your family would be interested in being contacted in the future with respect to further research. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of follow-up research to that study and to invite you to participate.

The purpose of our current research is to gather information which will help us to describe the current situation (occupation, education, income, community participation, civic involvement, family characteristics, life satisfaction, etc.) of those home-educated students who participated in the 1994 study. This study is designed so that the current situation of those adults who were formerly home educated can be compared with those of the general Canadian population of similar age (as reported by Statistics Canada and other sources). To this end, a number of questions in the new questionnaire reproduce questions from Statistics Canada and other sources. In addition, some of the current characteristics of participants will be correlated with their characteristics and/or academic achievement as reported in 1994. We are also interested in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of home education, as perceived by adults who were home educated as children.

We are inviting you to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided. We anticipate that, depending on how much you choose to write, completion of the questionnaire should take between 20 and 35 minutes. Please note that you are under no obligation to complete the questionnaire, and no one will know whether you choose to complete it or not. Your responses will be identified by code number only and at no time will any identifying information be available to us.

You will also find a small card that you can complete and return, which will indicate your willingness to be contacted in the future for further longitudinal research. This card will be immediately detached from the survey by the researchers so as to preserve anonymity.

My colleague on this project will be Prof. Patricia Allison from the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Education, and Dr. Derek Allison, of the same Faculty, will be a consultant. This research has received ethical clearance from the Brockton University College Ethics Review Committee (BREC). You may contact the BREC chair, Dr. Charles Hickory, at 905 648 2139 x. 4254 with any questions or concerns.

Should you have any questions pertaining to your involvement in this study or should you like to discuss this research further, I can be reached at 905 648 2139 x. 4271 or at <dvapelt@brocktoner.ca> and Patricia Allison can be reached at 519 666 0394 or at <pdallison@uwo.ca>. The results of this study should be available by late August 2009.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Van Pelt
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Brockton University College



51

At least once a week	
A few times a month	
Once a month	
Once or twice a year	
Not in the last month	

	Child Tax Benefits
	Provisional or municipal social assistance or welfare
	Child support
	Alimony
	Other

Questionnaire

[illegible]

Please check all of the following talent activities (i.e., not for paid work or students) which you have undertaken during the past 12 months:

☐	read a newspaper
☐	read a book
☐	gone to a movie or play
☐	visited a radio, record or pub house, YES or NO
☐	done any other talent activity in your school or district, YES or NO
☐	attended a concert or school, YES or NO
☐	attended a summer or performance by professional artists, music, dance, theater, etc. (not school assembly)
☐	attended a musical performance such as a drama, musical theater, dance theater, comedy
☐	attended a symphony or classical music performance
☐	gone to a rehearsal or action band (such as film, stage, dance, jazz, folk, rock, blues or comedy)
☐	gone to a performance of cultural heritage music, theater or dance (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese)
☐	attended any other type of cultural performance
☐	gone to a public art gallery or an museum (including contemporary or special art exhibits)
☐	visited museums other than public art galleries or museums
☐	gone to an historic site
☐	gone to a site, separate building, historical garden, monument or observatory
☐	gone to a construction site or nature park

22. Last week, about how many hours did you help in the school at home, in a car, or work at elsewhere?

23. Last week, about how many hours did you watch television, including while doing something else?

24. What is your current reading arrangement?

☐ One-to-one lesson
 ☐ Home alone
 ☐ Other

25. How many children do you have?
 ☐ How many of them are school-aged (i.e., 5-18)?

26. Please check the statements from the following which apply to your school-aged children.

My children have all attended publicly funded schools.

At least one of my children has attended a private school for at least a year.

At least one of my children has been home educated for at least a year.

My children have been educated at private schools (i.e., some of the time and at home some of the time).

My children have been educated at public schools (i.e., some of the time and at home some of the time).

My children have been educated at both public and private schools (i.e., some of the time and at home some of the time).

FAMILY BACKGROUND

27. What was the highest degree, certificate or diploma held by each of your parents?

Mother	Father
YES NO	YES NO
YES NO	YES NO

28. Did either parent ever hold a teaching certificate?

29. Did either parent ever teach in a publicly funded elementary or secondary school?

53

HOMELANGUAGE									
30. What was the primary immigration, population or tribe of each parent during the years you were born educated? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER			31. How many siblings did you have when you were born educated? 32. How many of your siblings were also born educated for a time? 33. Please indicate the most appropriate ethnic group(s) to which your parents belong. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER		
FATHER	MOTHER								
FATHER	MOTHER								
Other (please specify): <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>		FATHER	MOTHER						
FATHER	MOTHER								
34. What is your current status in Canada, and that of your parents? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER			35. What language did you and each of your parents speak most often at home? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER		
FATHER	MOTHER								
FATHER	MOTHER								
36. What language did you and each of your parents speak most often at school? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER			37. In what religion were you raised? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">FATHER</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">MOTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> </tr> </table>	FATHER	MOTHER		
FATHER	MOTHER								
FATHER	MOTHER								

YOUR HOME EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

38. For how many years were you home educated between the ages of 5 and 18?

39. In which provincial state was you living at the time?

10

40. For how many years were you home educated between the ages of 19 and 18?

41. In which provincial state was you living at the time?

40. Roughly speaking (since we understand that home education does not always emphasize grade levels) which grade levels did you spend in home education? Please check as appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

41. Please check (x) *any* of the following which apply:

I have spent some time attending an independent (private) elementary school
 I have spent some time attending an independent (private) secondary school
 I have spent some time attending a regular publicly-funded elementary school
 I have spent some time attending a regular publicly-funded secondary school

42. How would you describe the approach and/or curriculum which was used in your home education?

parent designed curriculum (major components chosen by parent)
 satellite school curriculum
 home education program supplied by local independent school
 no particular curriculum (major components chosen by child)

43. To what extent did your home education program provide opportunities for collaboration/learning with other students outside of your family?

10 hours per week or more ☐ 5 to 10 hours ☐ 3 hours or less ☐ not at all ☐

44. To what extent did your home education program provide opportunities for social interaction with children outside of your family?

10 hours per week or more ☐ 5 to 10 hours ☐ 3 hours or less ☐ not at all ☐

45. In which of the following activities did you regularly participate?

Group sports (swimming, wheel, chess) ☐ Field trips ☐ Music lessons ☐
 Volunteer work with parents ☐ 80 day+ events (golf, etc.) ☐ Dance classes ☐
 Play with peers outside the family ☐ Classes with address outside the home ☐ Choir / orchestra ☐

(Please check as many as apply.)

46. Within one year of completing your secondary education, you entered:

Approximate
 Alpha College
 Certified program
 Christian College
 Community College
 Cross-cultural exchange (in another program)
 Episcopal program
 Employment outside
 Full-time employment
 Military
 Non-traditional post-secondary education (on line, correspondence, experiential)
 Parental higher education and post-graduate employment
 Trade or Technical School (other than a 2-year college)
 Two-year college
 Other (please specify)

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[illegible]

2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027, 2027-2028, 2028-2029, 2029-2030, 2030-2031, 2031-2032, 2032-2033, 2033-2034, 2034-2035, 2035-2036, 2036-2037, 2037-2038, 2038-2039, 2039-2040, 2040-2041, 2041-2042, 2042-2043, 2043-2044, 2044-2045, 2045-2046, 2046-2047, 2047-2048, 2048-2049, 2049-2050, 2050-2051, 2051-2052, 2052-2053, 2053-2054, 2054-2055, 2055-2056, 2056-2057, 2057-2058, 2058-2059, 2059-2060, 2060-2061, 2061-2062, 2062-2063, 2063-2064, 2064-2065, 2065-2066, 2066-2067, 2067-2068, 2068-2069, 2069-2070, 2070-2071, 2071-2072, 2072-2073, 2073-2074, 2074-2075, 2075-2076, 2076-2077, 2077-2078, 2078-2079, 2079-2080, 2080-2081, 2081-2082, 2082-2083, 2083-2084, 2084-2085, 2085-2086, 2086-2087, 2087-2088, 2088-2089, 2089-2090, 2090-2091, 2091-2092, 2092-2093, 2093-2094, 2094-2095, 2095-2096, 2096-2097, 2097-2098, 2098-2099, 2099-2100, 2100-2101, 2101-2102, 2102-2103, 2103-2104, 2104-2105, 2105-2106, 2106-2107, 2107-2108, 2108-2109, 2109-2110, 2110-2111, 2111-2112, 2112-2113, 2113-2114, 2114-2115, 2115-2116, 2116-2117, 2117-2118, 2118-2119, 2119-2120, 2120-2121, 2121-2122, 2122-2123, 2123-2124, 2124-2125, 2125-2126, 2126-2127, 2127-2128, 2128-2129, 2129-2130, 2130-2131, 2131-2132, 2132-2133, 2133-2134, 2134-2135, 2135-2136, 2136-2137, 2137-2138, 2138-2139, 2139-2140, 2140-2141, 2141-2142, 2142-2143, 2143-2144, 2144-2145, 2145-2146, 2146-2147, 2147-2148, 2148-2149, 2149-2150, 2150-2151, 2151-2152, 2152-2153, 2153-2154, 2154-2155, 2155-2156, 2156-2157, 2157-2158, 2158-2159, 2159-2160, 2160-2161, 2161-2162, 2162-2163, 2163-2164, 2164-2165, 2165-2166, 2166-2167, 2167-2168, 2168-2169, 2169-2170, 2170-2171, 2171-2172, 2172-2173, 2173-2174, 2174-2175, 2175-2176, 2176-2177, 2177-2178, 2178-2179, 2179-2180, 2180-2181, 2181-2182, 2182-2183, 2183-2184, 2184-2185, 2185-2186, 2186-2187, 2187-2188, 2188-2189, 2189-2190, 2190-2191, 2191-2192, 2192-2193, 2193-2194, 2194-2195, 2195-2196, 2196-2197, 2197-2198, 2198-2199, 2199-2200, 2200-2201, 2201-2202, 2202-2203, 2203-2204, 2204-2205, 2205-2206, 2206-2207, 2207-2208, 2208-2209, 2209-2210, 2210-2211, 2211-2212, 2212-2213, 2213-2214, 2214-2215, 2215-2216, 2216-2217, 2217-2218, 2218-2219, 2219-2220, 2220-2221, 2221-2222, 2222-2223, 2223-2224, 2224-2225, 2225-2226, 2226-2227, 2227-2228, 2228-2229, 2229-2230, 2230-2231, 2231-2232, 2232-2233, 2233-2234, 2234-2235, 2235-2236, 2236-2237, 2237-2238, 2238-2239, 2239-2240, 2240-2241, 2241-2242, 2242-2243, 2243-2244, 2244-2245, 2245-2246, 2246-2247, 2247-2248, 2248-2249, 2249-2250, 2250-2251, 2251-2252, 2252-2253, 2253-2254, 2254-2255, 2255-2256, 2256-2257, 2257-2258, 2258-2259, 2259-2260, 2260-2261, 2261-2262, 2262-2263, 2263-2264, 2264-2265, 2265-2266, 2266-2267, 2267-2268, 2268-2269, 2269-2270, 2270-2271, 2271-2272, 2272-2273, 2273-2274, 2274-2275, 2275-2276, 2276-2277, 2277-2278, 2278-2279, 2279-2280, 2280-2281, 2281-2282, 2282-2283, 2283-2284, 2284-2285, 2285-2286, 2286-2287, 2287-2288, 2288-2289, 2289-2290, 2290-2291, 2291-2292, 2292-2293, 2293-2294, 2294-2295, 2295-2296, 2296-2297, 2297-2298, 2298-2299, 2299-2300, 2300-2301, 2301-2302, 2302-2303, 2303-2304, 2304-2305, 2305-2306, 2306-2307, 2307-2308, 2308-2309, 2309-2310, 2310-2311, 2311-2312, 2312-2313, 2313-2314, 2314-2315, 2315-2316, 2316-2317, 2317-2318, 2318-2319, 2319-2320, 2320-2321, 2321-2322, 2322-2323, 2323-2324, 2324-2325, 2325-2326, 2326-2327, 2327-2328, 2328-2329, 2329-2330, 2330-2331, 2331-2332, 2332-2333, 2333-2334, 2334-2335, 2335-2336, 2336-2337, 2337-2338, 2338-2339, 2339-2340, 2340-2341, 2341-2342, 2342-2343, 2343-2344, 2344-2345, 2345-2346, 2346-2347, 2347-2348, 2348-2349, 2349-2350, 2350-2351, 2351-2352, 2352-2353, 2353-2354, 2354-2355, 2355-2356, 2356-2357, 2357-2358, 2358-2359, 2359-2360, 2360-2361, 2361-2362, 2362-2363, 2363-2364, 2364-2365, 2365-2366, 2366-2367, 2367-2368, 2368-2369, 2369-2370, 2370-2371, 2371-2372, 23

20. Which of the following statements reflect your feelings about your home education experience?

31. How well do you feel your home situation prepared you for further education? ☐ Very well ☐ Quite well ☐ Not very well ☐ Very poorly

32. How well do you feel your home situation prepared you for life? ☐ Very well ☐ Quite well ☐ Not very well ☐ Very poorly

☐ Not at all	☐ Quite well	☐ Fairly well	☐ Very well
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------------

Very well ☐ Quite well ☐ Not at all ☐

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14. What do you find was the worst part about being home educated?

16. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your home education experience and/or its effect on your child?

Name _____ Telephone: (____) _____
 Address _____ Email: _____

Please include the journal identifying number from the front of your card in the box.

Please provide the unique identifying number from the front of your questionnaire:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

Please indicate your
 gender (M = male, F = female)
 10 (male) 11 (female) 12 (other)

Please indicate your
 race (1 = white, 2 = black, 3 = other)

PLEASE NOTE: This card will be immediately separated from the survey by the researchers so as to preserve anonymity. It will also be kept by CCHH in a secure place and will not be available to the researchers. Your name and personal information will be used only for follow-up contact purposes in future research, and will at no time be linked with your confidential data.

Third, Post

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER:

HOME-EDUCATED CANADIAN ADULTS

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge with sincere appreciation the contributions of many individuals without whose vision, energy, insights, and time, this project would not have begun or been completed. Thank you to Dallas Miller whose dream this study was, to Paul Faris who put legs on the dream, to Naomi Baribeau for skillfully locating original study participants, to Carole Cardinal for tirelessly editing this work, and to Suzanne Faris for the artful approach to presenting this research. Thank you to each of the original study participants for passing along the invitations to take part in this new study to your adult children. And finally, a sincere thank you to each person who participated in this study by completing a questionnaire. Your contributions have made this research possible.

About the Authors

Deani A. Neven Van Pelt, B.Comm. (McMaster), B.Ed. (Toronto), M.Ed. (UWO), Ph.D. (UWO) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at Redeemer University College, Hamilton, Ontario. Her international research collaborations, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and others, centre on private schooling, religious schooling, home schooling and Charlotte Mason's educational philosophy. A former teacher in the math and business departments of public and private secondary schools, she and her husband home educated their three children for more than a decade.

Patricia A. Allison, B.Ed. (Alberta), M.Ed. (UWO) recently retired from the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario, where she worked for over thirty years as a teacher, administrator, and researcher. Prior to joining the Faculty, she taught elementary school, secondary school, and pre-school. In the Faculty's teacher education program, she taught the social, legal, and policy foundations of professional practice, and also developed and taught an elective on private and independent schools. She has over thirty years' experience as an educational researcher.

Derek J. Allison, B.Ed., M.Ed., Ph.D. (Alberta) has taught in the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario for over thirty years, specializing in educational administration, organization, and law. He has taught the social and legal foundations of education to thousands of teacher education candidates, and guided hundreds of graduate students through advanced research and study. Prior to beginning his academic career, he was a teacher and principal, in England and northern Alberta. He has an extensive publication and research record.

Funding

Canadian Centre for Home Education (CCHE) was formed in order to fill the void on a national scale for the need to do quality research in the area of home education and to train volunteer homeschool leaders from across the country. CCHE is a charitable organization.



For more information about CCHE visit: www.hslda.ca/cche

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