

Pilot Study: Homeschooling Parents'
Motivations and Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to validate through statistical analysis the assertion that homeschooling parents can be divided into two polarized groups: Ideologues and Pedagogues (Van Galen 1988). However, based on 76 surveys, no association was found between parents' most important reasons for homeschooling and the pedagogical methods they utilized. A moderate, statistically significant association was found between parents who were motivated in part by their child's special needs or giftedness and the pedagogical methods employed. Qualitative analysis identified several themes within parental motivations for homeschooling: individualized education, cultural enrichment, parental qualification to teach, and a desire to protect children from peer pressure and popular culture.

REFLEXIVE STATEMENT

The public school system is charged with a task of utmost importance: to provide a quality education to students of diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. Ideally, the public school environment can instill a sense of tolerance for others, while allowing students to maximize their academic potential. However, the academic and social needs of many students are unmet. Alternatives must be explored for the benefit of these young people. Some may find adequate support through existing networks in the public schools, such as tutoring for students with learning disabilities, or advanced academic programs for those who excel.

While I believe that the public school experience is valuable for many students, I recognize that others thrive outside the formal school environment. I admire parents who expend the time and energy to teach their children at home. However, I have personally known several homeschooling families, and struggled to understand how their children's academic and social needs are met through homeschooling. These parents are "unschoolers", meaning that they do not engage in any formal instruction. My bewilderment at these parents' educational choices spurred my interest in the homeschooling endeavor.

By acknowledging my preexisting notions on the topic of homeschooling, I can proceed with the most objective data collection and analysis possible.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have conceptualized homeschooling parents as divisible into two distinct groups (Van Galen 1988; Knowles et al 1992) based on motivating factors and teaching methods. I sought to validate this assertion through statistical analysis. Additionally, I utilized a qualitative method with allowed homeschooling parents to explain their reasons for homeschooling and their pedagogical methods in their own words.

My primary research question asked: Is there an association between parents' reasons for homeschooling and the pedagogical methods employed?

Additionally, I investigated parents' specific concerns regarding public school environments, and public school instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prevalence

Homeschooling is a fast growing alternative to traditional education in America. A 2003 study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, authorized by the Department of Education, estimated that 1.1 million American children were being homeschooled, comprising 2.2% of the school age population. This represented a substantial increase from 1999, in which 850,000 children were homeschooled. White students comprised 77% of the homeschooled population, as opposed to 61% of the public schooled population. Homeschooled children were more likely than their public schooled counterparts to come from two-parent households in which only one parent was in the labor force. Parents who homeschooled their children averaged

higher levels of educational attainment than parents who sent their children to public school, and less than parents opting for private school.

While the Department of Education's study represents the most comprehensive of its kind, establishing an accurate census of the homeschooling population is difficult. All 50 states in the U.S. allow for homeschooling, and many homeschooling parents are in compliance with their state's terms. However, some parents choose to forgo cooperation in state efforts to control or organize homeschooling. This suggests that underreporting of the numbers of homeschooled children is likely. Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute argues that there were 2 to 2.5 million children being homeschooled for the 2007-2008 school year, representing a substantial discrepancy from the figures reported by the Department of Education.

Historical Background

Although reports on the exact number of home educated children vary, most agree that home education is increasing rapidly. However, it is not a new phenomenon in American society. American pioneers typically taught their children at home out of necessity. The first public school system began in the Massachusetts Bay Colony to promote Bible literacy, and all states had instituted public education systems by the late 1880s. Public schools extended their focus from religious studies to general skills. The goals of the public school system included the assimilation of immigrants into American society, and the civilization of the lower classes. Home education fell into relative obscurity, only to experience resurgence in the 1970s.¹

(Koetzsch 1997).

¹ One of the earliest advocates of homeschooling, Charlotte Mason, published a series of books on the subject in the early 1900s. Her books stressed the importance of a liberal education, biblical study, and the influence of the home. Her seminal works are considered to be the founding documents of the homeschooling movement (Mason 1905).

Informal education guided by elders is a fact of life in many traditional societies (Scupin 2003), but the emergence of homeschooling as a social movement is relatively recent phenomenon. Knowles et al (1992) argue that homeschooling meets the definition of a social movement as described by Gerlach and Hine in that it characterized by organization, ideology, recruitment, commitment, and opposition. Knowles outlines the progression of the homeschooling movement in five phases. The first, contention, occurred in the early 1970s between school administrators and homeschooling parents. A period of confrontation followed in the late 1970s. Cooperation characterizes the third phase beginning in the 1980s, as legal restrictions diminished. This allowed for more cooperative efforts between homeschoolers and school systems. Consolidation followed, as homeschooling networks and lobbies became more established. Finally, compartmentalization is occurring, as the homeschooling movement becomes factionalized into opposing camps. Knowles links the impetus of the homeschooling movement with the school reform movement, which began a decade earlier.

“Unschooling”

The American educational system was subjected to harsh criticism in the 1960s. One educational reformer, John Holt, ultimately conceded that the problems of public education were endemic to the system. Holt resolved that the best option for parents was to teach children at home, coining the term “unschooling” for his educational approach (Willink 2001). Holt rejected the idea that there was a universal body of knowledge which all people needed to know. Rather, he asserted that children’s natural inquisitiveness would drive them to learn about their world naturally, without prompting or instruction from a teacher. Holt distinguished between *doing*, as

However, formal home education was primarily relegated to privileged students, whose parents could afford private tutors until the 1970s.

“self-directed, purposeful, meaningful life and work” and *education*, as “learning cut off from life and done under pressure of bribe or threat, greed and fear” (Holt 1981 p. 9). Thus, unschooling families do not typically separate “learning time” from “playtime”, weekdays from weekends. Learning is integrated into the daily routine, and children are free to engage in as many or as few academic pursuits as they desire. The parent-teacher acts as a facilitator for these activities, providing access to learning opportunities as initiated by the child (Holt 1981).

Conservative Christians

During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, another group became prominent in the homeschooling movement. Christian parents, mostly members of the political right, turned to homeschooling in order to provide a biblically-oriented education for their children.

Conservatives still comprise a substantial portion of the homeschooling population. Conservative Christians are estimated to comprise 75% of the homeschooling population, while 25% are politically liberal, incorporating a variety of belief systems (Cai et al 2002).

“Ideologues” and “Pedagogues”

Van Galen developed a dichotomous classification for homeschooling parents. She identified the first group to emerge in the 1960s as *pedagogues*, motivated to homeschool because they opposed the bureaucratic nature of the public schools, and believed that their children learned best in the individualized home environment (Van Galen 1988). This group was inspired by the educational reformers of the 1960s. Their primary objection to the public schools was not the specific material that was being taught, but *how* it was being taught. Van Galen suggests that this group is more likely to employ a creative homeschooling, or unschooling methodology.

The other group was identified by Van Galen as *ideologues*, drawn to homeschooling because they wish to teach their children fundamentalist religious doctrine which is absent in the public schools. Ideologues are likely to replicate the teaching styles of the public schools, with the omission of objectionable secular material and the injection of religious doctrine. Their curriculum is often composed of work books and text books with a similar format as those used in formal schools. Van Galen drew upon interviews with 23 homeschooling parents from 16 families. Thirteen of the families she interviewed described themselves as conservative Christians. Van Galen also utilized homeschooling publications such as John Holt's *Growing Without Schooling* and attending meetings with the Central Christian Academy.

While Van Galen conceived of the homeschooling movement as comprised of two polarized groups: liberals motivated by pedagogical concerns, and conservative Christians wishing to impart religious doctrine, Gaither (2008) describes the commonalities between the two groups. Gaither identifies the converging interests of radical leftists and conservative Christians which led to the founding of the modern homeschooling movement. Both groups had a distrust of mainstream society and were dissatisfied with public schools. While the countercultural left rejected the regulations and restrictions imposed by the public schools, right-wing conservatives were put off by the increasing secularization of the public school system. The increased desire for privacy, driven in part by suburbanization, made homeschooling attractive for many conservative Christians. Both disparate groups ascribed to the "American cult of the child," inspired by Rousseau, a sentiment that children possess boundless potential and thrive in the home environment.

Parental Motivation

Evidence suggests that homeschooling parents cannot be neatly classified as either Pedagogues or Ideologues. Parents provide a host of motivating factors for their decisions to homeschool. The largest percentage of parents in the 2003 Department of Education survey (31.2%), cited their “concern about the environment of other schools” as their primary reason for homeschooling, and this reason was included as a motivating factor for 85.4% of parents surveyed. 72.3% of homeschooling parents cited religious or moral instruction among their reasons for homeschooling, and 29.8% cited this as their primary reasoning. “Dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools” was a motivating factor for 68.2% of parents surveyed, and was the most important factor for 16.5%. A child’s special needs (or perceived special needs) can also be an important motivator for parents. 44.8% of survey participants cited their child’s perceived physical or mental health problem, or other special needs as a contributing factor in their decision to homeschool, and 13.7% listed this as the most important reason. It appears that homeschooling parents are, in fact, motivated by a constellation of reasons.

A 2007 study conducted by Green and Hoover-Demsey sought to correlate the decision to homeschool with parental psychological factors such as belief in their own teaching efficacy and their ability to foster strong role-construction. The study used a sample of 136 surveys returned by homeschooling families in the southeastern United States, and compared these results with preexisting data on parents who sent their children to public school. The study confirmed that homeschooling parents scored higher on scales related to belief in personal teaching efficacy, the encouragement of strong role-construction, and belief in the necessity of strong parental involvement in education. Additionally, many parents cited dissatisfaction with the public schools’ ability to teach core values such as character development, and approach to special needs.

A study conducted by Collom in 2005 found that homeschooling parents' education, gender, income, and political identification were not significantly related to their reasoning behind homeschooling. Homeschoolers of color (16.6% of survey respondents) were more likely to be motivated by their criticism of the public schools than White respondents. Families in which the parent-teacher is not employed were more likely to cite ideological reasons. Collom identified several relationships between parental factors and student achievement on standardized tests. Students whose parents had higher levels of educational attainment scored better, as did children of Conservatives. Collom suggests that the disparity between the test scores of children from Conservative and Liberal households may reflect the different teaching styles employed (traditional versus unschooling respectively), although this factor was not specifically studied. Furthermore, parents who expressed criticism of the public schools as their reason for homeschooling had children with higher Language and Reading scores than parents citing other reasons.

Pedagogical Methods

Not all people agree that a structured home classroom, particularly based on work books, is the most advantageous to the child. Willink argues that work books are not considered developmentally appropriate for young children, based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Rather, children thrive when learning is integrated into their lives in a tangible way. Willink's study sought to determine the level of developmentally appropriate practices which were being implemented in homeschools in the Central Florida area, as well as parents' reasons for homeschooling. The survey of 120 homeschooling parents indicated that the largest percentage (43.3%) of parents used Christian text and work book and took field trips, while the second largest percentage (16.6%) indicated that "we live our lives and learn as we go." Parents

cited a multitude of reason for homeschooling, which are listed in order of frequency: education-related concerns (32.2%), religious reasons (12.3%), desire for family unity (7.9%), peer pressure (6%), and greater control (6%). Observations were conducted in seven homes to determine the level of developmentally appropriate practices based on an Assessment Profile which establishes early childhood education program accreditation. A score of 85% is required for accreditation, and no families observed scored higher than 75%.

A study by Medlin in 1994 found that a more structured approach to homeschooling, involving more intensive, prolonged instruction and grading, was associated with a lower level of academic achievement and student motivation. Medlin found that 61% of the 27 families studied utilized the traditional schooling methods found in public schools. 19% of families reported a relaxed educational method, in which children were allowed to explore freely, and learning took place in “real life” situations.

McKeon’s 2007 study explored the possible relationships between family characteristics, such as location, ethnicity, and religion and the teaching styles used by homeschooling parents. McKeon placed homeschooling styles along a continuum, including Traditional, Classical, Eclectic, and Unschooling. Traditional homeschooling essentially duplicates the public school experience at home, including lectures, textbooks, and often follows a particular grade-level curriculum. Classical homeschooling includes many of the same instruments and teaching methods used by the public schools, but it is geared toward the individual child’s level of development and unique skills. Eclectic homeschooling uses traditional instruments, while including opportunities for child-led learning. Unschooling is entirely student-direct and paced, and learning is initiated by the child with the parent-teacher as a facilitator.

McKeon's study found that overall, the majority of respondents engaged in an eclectic style of teaching (69.5%). Protestant and Catholic respondents were more likely to use traditional methods than those indicating their religion as "other." Respondents in the "other" religion category were more likely to unschool than Protestants or Catholics. The geographical region in which the families lived was not related to the home education methods they used.

Clements (2002) used a qualitative approach to study the homeschooling methods of three families. While curriculum was varied, including computer, video, and work-book based learning; all parents indicated that they had used other curriculum prior to their current method. This suggests that homeschooling parents' teaching methods may evolve over time. Parents cited personal characteristics (such as their own weakness in a particular area) as well as child characteristics (such as distractibility) as reasons for their curriculum choices.

A study by Cai et al (2002) compared the motivating styles of conservative Christian homeschooling parents to public school teachers. A questionnaire consisting of multiple school-related "vignettes" asked teachers (and homeschool parent-teachers) to indicate how they would respond to a hypothetical situation. Each answer was assigned a point value, which placed respondents along a continuum ranging from "controlling" to "autonomy-supportive." The researchers found that homeschooling parents exhibited more controlling motivating styles than did public school teachers. They correlate evangelical and politically conservative beliefs with a controlling motivating style. One major downfall of this study is that it intentionally did not investigate the substantial portion of the homeschooling population who are politically liberal.

While studies seem to correlate a Christian-centered household with a more structured home learning environment based on ideology (Cai et al, McKeon), it is important to recognize

that a Christian household may also be motivated to homeschool based on pedagogical concerns. The literature on the matter (Knowles et al, Van Galen) seems to have collapsed the categories of conservative Christian households and ideologically-motivated homeschooling parents. Christian homeschoolers may very well be motivated by pedagogical concerns as well. Similarly, liberal households may have ideological concerns, such as particular lifestyles and belief systems which are incongruent with the subjects taught public schools. Most parents cite multiple reasons for their decision to homeschool (Princiotta et al, Willink) and it is reductionist to attempt to pigeon-hole parents into particular motivational categories based on their religious or political backgrounds.

Theoretical Framework

Weber emphasized the rationalization of institutions in modern society, as illustrated through the mechanism of bureaucracy. The public school system is highly rationalized, attempting to produce the greatest academic achievement for the most students at minimal cost. Most people, being rational thinkers, enroll their children in public schools in order to receive the maximum benefits (adequate education for their children, time to participate in the workforce) for the lowest cost (in money, energy, and time). However, home educators deviate from this norm, and I seek to understand their unusual decision.

Weber argued that the best methodological approach to the “human sciences” is *verstehen* (subjective understanding). He rejected the concept that social science could be entirely objective. In order to understand social processes, one must assume the perspective of the people being studied. Weber argued that the goal of sociology was use an “interpretive understanding” of social action to develop a “causal explanation.”

The issue of legitimacy was of central importance to Weber. He described the types of authority, which are legitimized by various factors including legal-rational authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority. However, Pierre Bourdieu argues that legitimacy is derived, not from personal charisma or legal characteristics, but from the primary pedagogic work which occurs within the family in childhood.

The pedagogic process, Bourdieu argues, represents a type of “symbolic violence” in which ideas and values are imposed on the learner by an authority figure. The concepts and ideas which are transmitted are “arbitrary” in that they are true only within the context of a particular culture at a certain point in time. Likewise, the cultural authority (or teacher) is also arbitrary. However, the pedagogical process serves to obscure the arbitrariness of this relationship, reifying the legitimacy of the pedagogic authority. The pedagogical process produces “the habitus” in the individual, “a system of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action” (Bourdieu 1977:40).

The system of pedagogic work is fundamental to the process of cultural transmission and reproduction. In its primary and most basic form, pedagogic work occurs within the home between generations. Here, children are bestowed with “cultural capital”, reflective of the cultural background (class) of the family. The value of this cultural capital is determined by its degree of resemblance to the dominant “cultural arbitrary”.

The school system represents a type of secondary pedagogic work which strengthens and reinforces the culture of the dominant class. This process is most effective when it does not deviate substantially from the primary pedagogic process. Both primary and secondary pedagogical processes serve to establish and reinforce the legitimacy of the pedagogic authority.

Children are advantaged who, upon entering the school system, already possess substantial “linguistic capital” and whose primary pedagogic work is consistent with the culture of the dominant class. Likewise, children whose upbringing clashes with that of the dominant class will be opposition to the school system, and will retain their lower status.

The dynamic described by Bourdieu in which the interests of the dominant class are reinforced by the school system raises an interesting concern in the analysis of homeschooling families. In general, homeschooling parents are more likely to be White and have higher educational attainment than their public schooling counterparts. Homeschooling families do not have significantly higher incomes than public schooling families. However, homeschooled students are more likely than public schooled students to come from two parent households where one parent is not in the labor force (54% versus 20% respectively) (Princiotta et al 2003). Therefore, in regards to race, educational attainment, and income per working adult, homeschooling parents tend to be more privileged than public schooling parents.

This raises the question as to why privileged parents would choose to distance their children from a system which would reinforce their privileged position in society. Perhaps this quandary can be explained through a comparison of homeschooling families to private schooling families. Private schooling families are more likely than homeschooling families to have incomes greater than \$75000 (38% versus 17.4%). Parents opting for private school have higher average levels of educational attainment than homeschooling parents (Princiotta et al 2003). Thus, parents may choose to homeschool who cannot afford private school, but desire to advantage their children compared to public schooled students. Homeschooling represents an alternative to the proletarian blandness of public school, without the hefty cost of private school.

The homeschooling parent is reasonably well-educated, and can provide individualized instruction which is absent in the public schools.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

I utilized non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling targeting parents who view homeschooling support sites. As there is no comprehensive list of home educators, I decided to target my selected population through online networking and support servers designed for homeschoolers. A multitude of online support servers exist for homeschoolers, and I used the following sites: www.vegsource.com/homeschool, <http://forums.hsfreethinkers.com>, ivillage.com/homeschool, and <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CA-Homeschooling-HSC>. In total, 78 survey responses were received, although two of these were discontinued within the first four questions and consequently discarded. The 76 remaining survey responses were subsequently analyzed.

I chose to utilize non-probability purposive sampling as it was the most feasible sampling method for this study. I considered employing a quota sampling method, aiming to receive responses which represented the religious/political demographics of the overall homeschooling population. However, this approach was fraught with potential problems, due to the lack of rigorous, comprehensive studies on the matter. While it has been suggested that conservative Christians comprise 75% of the homeschooling population, and progressives 25% (Cai et al 2002), this figure does not account for other subgroups, such as Muslims, who are increasingly homeschooling. My research would be confounded if based on an initial demographic miscalculation.

Therefore, I sought to obtain my data through existing homeschooling networks, many of which constitute lively online communities. By posting ads in a variety of online forums, I attempted to reach a diverse range of homeschooling parents.

Mode of Observation/Methods

I used a mixed-method approach to my research. My research instrument consisted of an eighteen question survey, utilizing both quantitative (multiple choice) and qualitative (text box) questions. Questions focused on homeschooling parents' reasons for homeschooling and teaching methods. Subjects were directed to the site hosting my survey (questionpro.com) via posted online advertisements on homeschooling support sites. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

Quantitative data was gathered using the first 16 questions of my online survey. The last two questions of the survey are open-ended, and prompted respondents to elaborate on their reasons for homeschooling and pedagogical methods in their own words.

I chose this approach in an attempt to provide a balanced view of home educators' motivations and pedagogical methods. The initial survey questions provided the quantitative data, while the last two questions were open-ended to allow for a greater depth of analysis and personalization. In total, 78 survey responses were received, although two of these were discontinued within the first four questions and consequently discarded. The 76 remaining survey responses were subsequently analyzed.

I have found no quantitative studies which included the specific details influencing parents' decisions to home school. While the Department of Education found that 85% of homeschooling parents were concerned about the environment at other schools, they did not

elaborate on these environmental concerns. Was their child being bullied, punished harshly, subjected to peer pressure, or in danger or violence? In the Department of Education study, 62% of parents were dissatisfied with the academic instruction at schools. Was this due to their child not being challenged enough, not achieving at grade level, or a high teacher-to-student ratio? Deeper analysis was called for in these matters. I used univariate analysis to establish the percentage of respondents who expressed concern over various specific matters related to public schools.

Theoretical Framework

Weber distinguished between “value-judgments” and “empirical knowledge”, and he admitted that social researchers are not devoid of personal values and biases. He felt that these personal values should be acknowledged by the researcher. Once the value basis of the researcher was established, the pursuit of scientific objectivity could proceed. Weber paradoxically advocated for “value-free” social science, while acknowledging that objectivity was only possible after personal values and biases were accounted for. I followed Weber’s guidelines by including a reflexive statement which establishes my personal viewpoint, after which every attempt at objectivity was made in the collection and analysis of my data.

Pierre Bourdieu’s *Reproduction: In Education, Society and Culture* (1977) also informed my research. Bourdieu argued that legitimacy is derived from an unfolding pedagogic process which begins within the family in childhood. He described the ways in which the culture of the dominant class is reproduced through pedagogic work of the school system. Bourdieu cautions against a methodology which relies solely upon simple multivariate analysis. He argues that

sociological attributes cannot be reduced to a single factor, as people are constituted of a multitude of pedagogic processes beginning in early childhood and situated by class.

Bourdieu argues that any single measure obtained through research is only representative of a particular moment in time, and cannot account for the unfolding personal biography of each person, beginning with primary education in the family. While I use bivariate analysis in my research, I did so with the understanding that the pedagogic process cannot ultimately be reduced to such simplistic terms. By incorporating qualitative survey responses, I was able capture the quality and candidness of my participants' comments.

Advantages/Disadvantages

An advantage of using this research design is that I was able to include participants in various distant areas which would be impossible for me to sample in person. The degree of anonymity which can be achieved through online research provided a way to share information while protecting the identities of homeschoolers, which is important due to the potentially sensitive nature of their information. Home educators have extensive online support networks, and it is logical to make use of these networks as a researcher.

One disadvantage of this design is that it excluded people who did not have access to the internet, or did not frequent online support groups. This eliminated some subsets of this population which would be interesting to study. For example, Amish people frequently homeschool, but they do not use computer technology.

I faced an unanticipated complication in posting my initial advertisements on online support networks: the hesitancy of forum moderators to accept the legitimacy of my survey. For example, the moderator of one Christian homeschooling network simply blocked my account

after I contacted her to inquire as to whether I could post a link to my survey. Another moderator of a Christian message board indicated that their site did not accept research requests. While ads for my survey were posted on inclusive sites with no specific religious affiliations, I suspect that most Christian homeschoolers prefer to frequent sites specific to Christians. Attempts were made to gather responses from Christian homeschoolers, but they are admittedly underrepresented in my study. Christian participants represent only 23% (16) of my responses. Results may not be generalizable to the Christian homeschooling population.

My method of collecting qualitative data lacked the intimacy of face-to-face communication, so it is possible that some emotive data was lost due to the absence of physical presence of my participants. Despite some disadvantages of my approach, I think that it will contribute valuable information to the growing body of research on this topic.

Data Analysis Procedures

My quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. I used univariate analysis to establish the frequency distributions of responses to the questions concerning reasons for homeschooling, concerns regarding public school environments and instruction, and the teaching methods used by homeschooling parents. The Pearson's Chi-square test of significance was utilized to explore possible associations between the parents' reasons for homeschooling and the teaching methods used.

Qualitative data was analyzed for emerging themes, which were discussed using a theoretical framework based on the work of Bourdieu (1977).

RESULTS

The notion that homeschoolers are divided into two diametrically opposed groups is prevalent in scholarly works on the subject (Knowles et al 1992; Van Galen 1988). Van Galen's oft-cited work (Cai 2002; Collom 2005; Green, 2007) suggests that religiously-motivated home educators ("Ideologues") replicate the teaching methods of the public schools, while omitting objectionable material. Conversely, home educators motivated by academic concerns ("Pedagogues") utilize teaching methods which are unstructured and emphasize student choice. I attempted to validate these assumptions through my primary research question, which asked whether parental motivations for homeschooling were associated with the pedagogical methods they employed. However, this association was not evident in my statistical analysis of quantitative survey data.

Van Galen developed her classification based on participant observation with the Central Christian Academy, an organization comprised of 15 to 20 families, interviews with 16 families (13 of which were conservative Christian), and a review of homeschooling newsletters. Van Galen's conception of "Pedagogues" seems to be derived primarily from her review of John Holt's newsletter *Growing Without Schooling*. I argue that newsletters catering to specific subpopulations (i.e. Holt's unschoolers) represent ideality rather than reality. Similarly, the experiences of families affiliated with the Central Christian Academy cannot be generalized to represent the total homeschooling population. Thus, Van Galen's dualistic classification does not account for the diverse motivations and teaching methods characteristic of home educators today. Most home educators cannot be reduced to a single motivating factor.

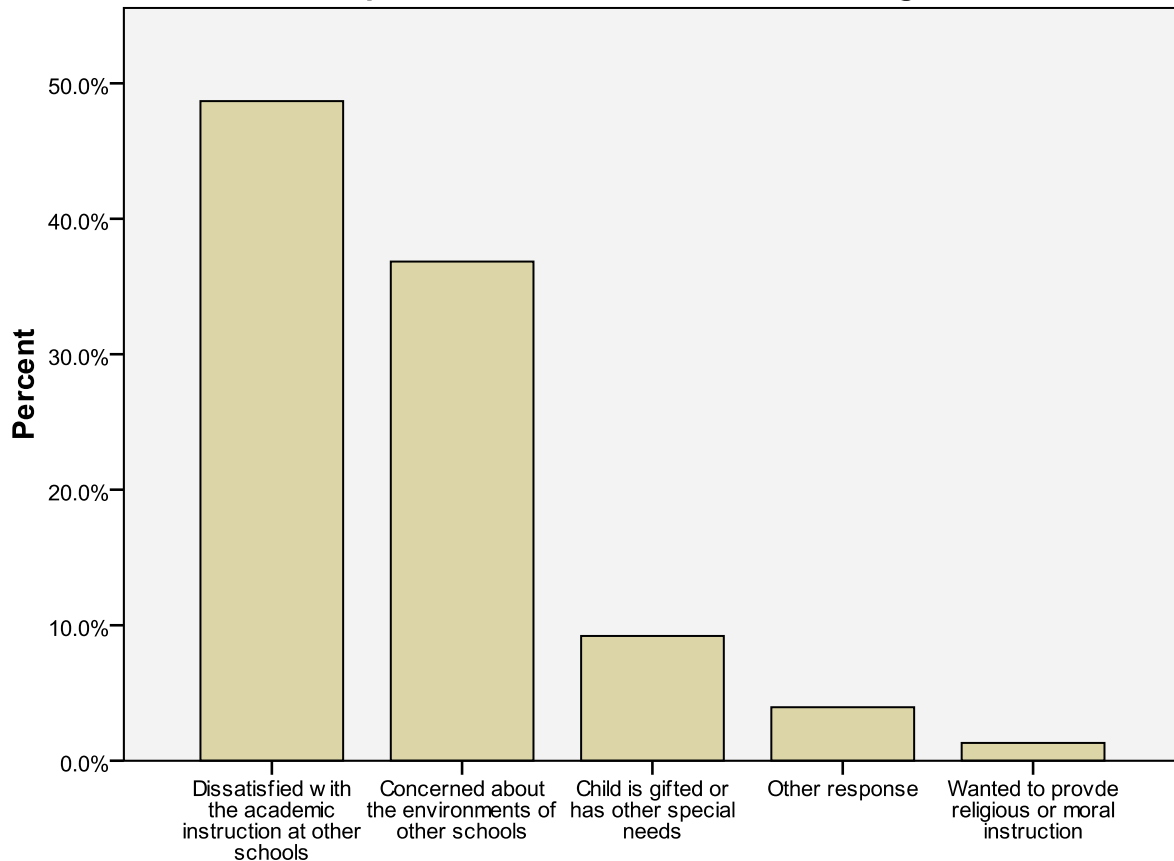
Quantitative Analysis

Before detailing my bivariate analysis, I will first describe my findings regarding homeschooling parents' motivations. Based on 76 surveys analyzed, 37 (48.7%) respondents were primarily motivated to homeschool due to their dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools, and 28 (36.8%) parents were primarily motivated by their concern about the environment of other schools. 7 (9.2%) respondents were chiefly motivated by their child's special needs or giftedness. Only one (1.3%) respondent indicated that providing religious or moral instruction was his/her primary motivating factor.

Respondents' most important reasons for homeschooling

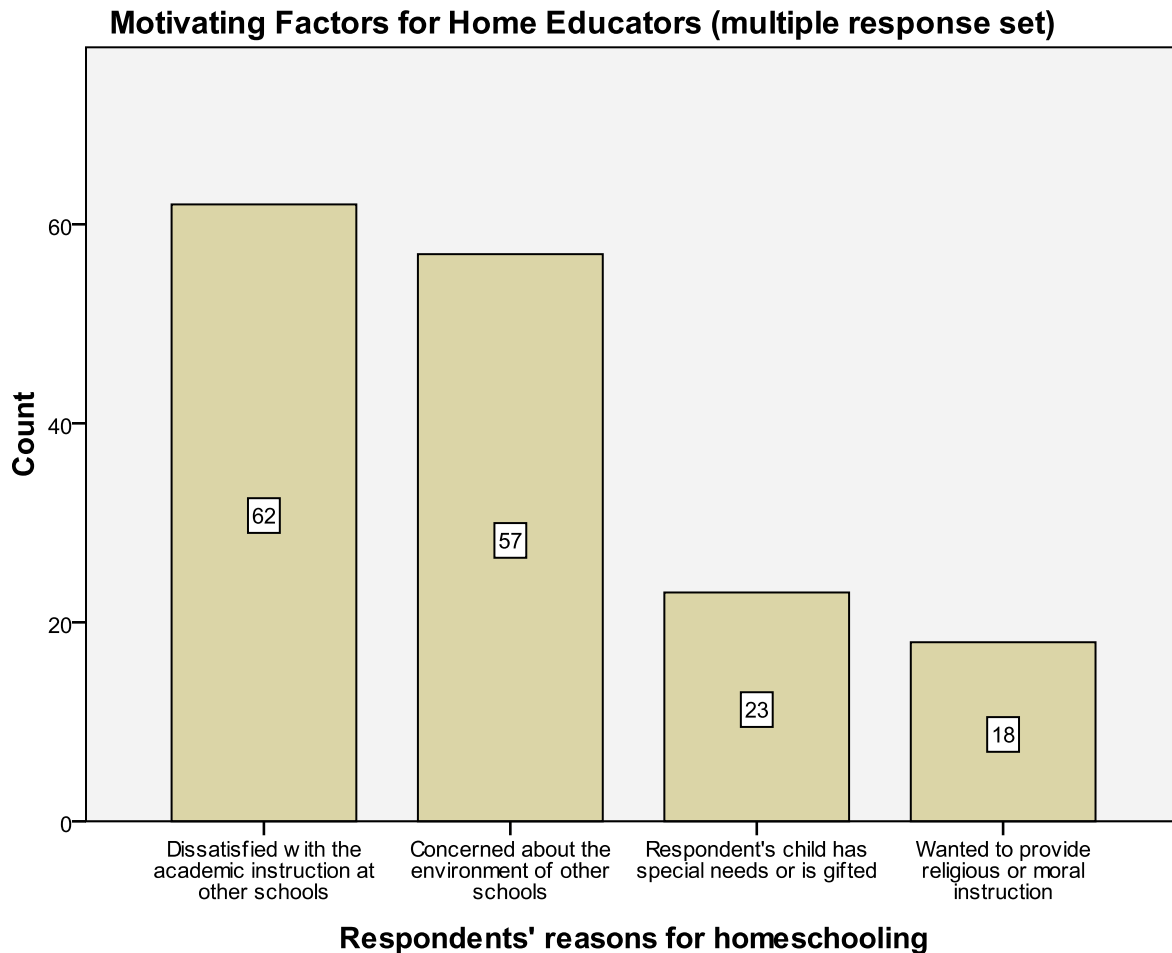
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Concerned about the environments of other schools	28	36.8	36.8	36.8
Dissatisfied with the academic instruction at other schools	37	48.7	48.7	85.5
Child is gifted or has other special needs	7	9.2	9.2	94.7
Wanted to provide religious or moral instruction	1	1.3	1.3	96.1
Other response	3	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Most Important Reasons for Homeschooling



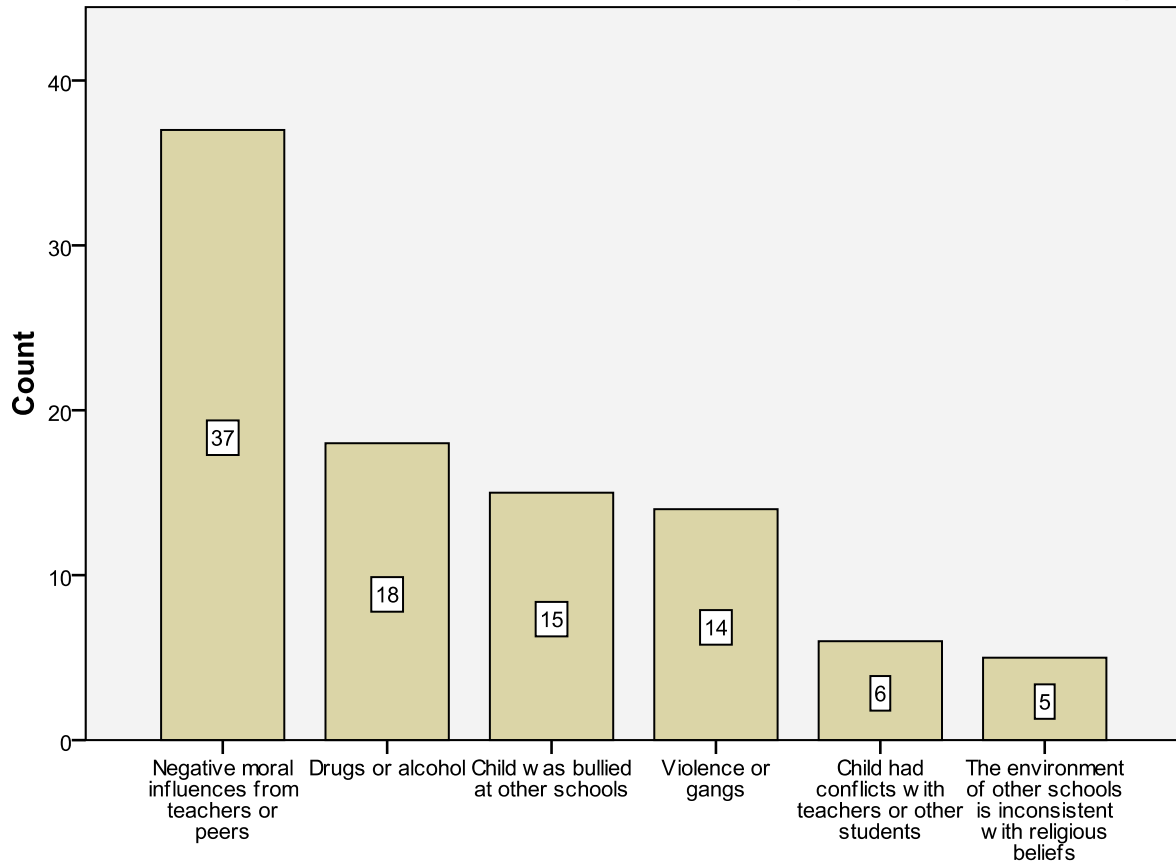
Respondent's most important reason for homeschooling

By allowing respondents to choose more than one applicable answer, the breadth of motivating factors for home educators can be appreciated. This was achieved through a series of multiple response questions. While only one respondent indicated that providing religious or moral instruction was his/her most important reason for homeschooling, 18 (23.7%) respondents indicated that this was a contributing factor in a multiple response question. When permitted to choose multiple contributing motivators for homeschooling, 62 (81.6%) respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the academic instructions at other schools, 57 (75%) were concerned about the environment of other schools, and 23 (30.3%) indicated that their child was gifted and/or had special needs.



Respondents with concerns regarding the environment of other schools were asked to indicate their specific concerns. 37 (48.7% of the total sample) indicated that they were concerned about negative moral influences from teachers or peers. 18 (23.7%) expressed concern regarding exposure to drugs or alcohol, 15 (19.7%) indicated that their child was bullied, and 14 (18.4%) were concerned about exposure to violence or gangs. 6 (7.9%) respondents indicated that their child had conflicts with teachers or other students, and 5 (6.6%) indicated that the environment of other schools was inconsistent with their religious beliefs.

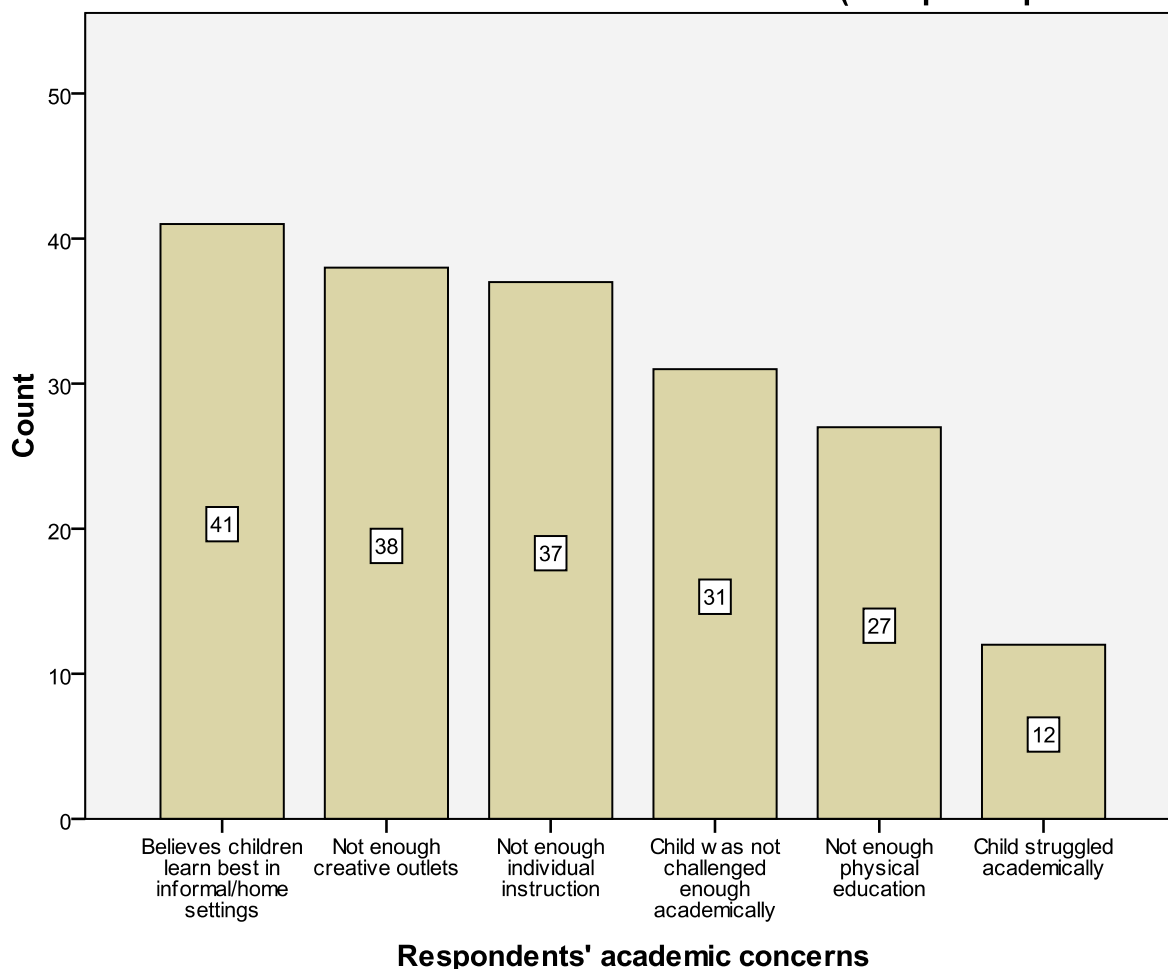
Concerns about the environment of other schools (multiple response set)



Respondents' environmental concerns

Respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools were asked to indicate their specific concerns with a multiple response question. 31 (40.8%) respondents reported that their child was not challenged enough academically, while 12 (15.8%) respondents reported that their child struggled academically. Other concerns included lack of individualized instruction (48.7%), not enough creative outlets (50%) or physical education (35.5%). 41 (53.9%) respondents expressed their belief that children learn best in informal or home settings.

Concerns about the academic structure of other schools (multiple response set)

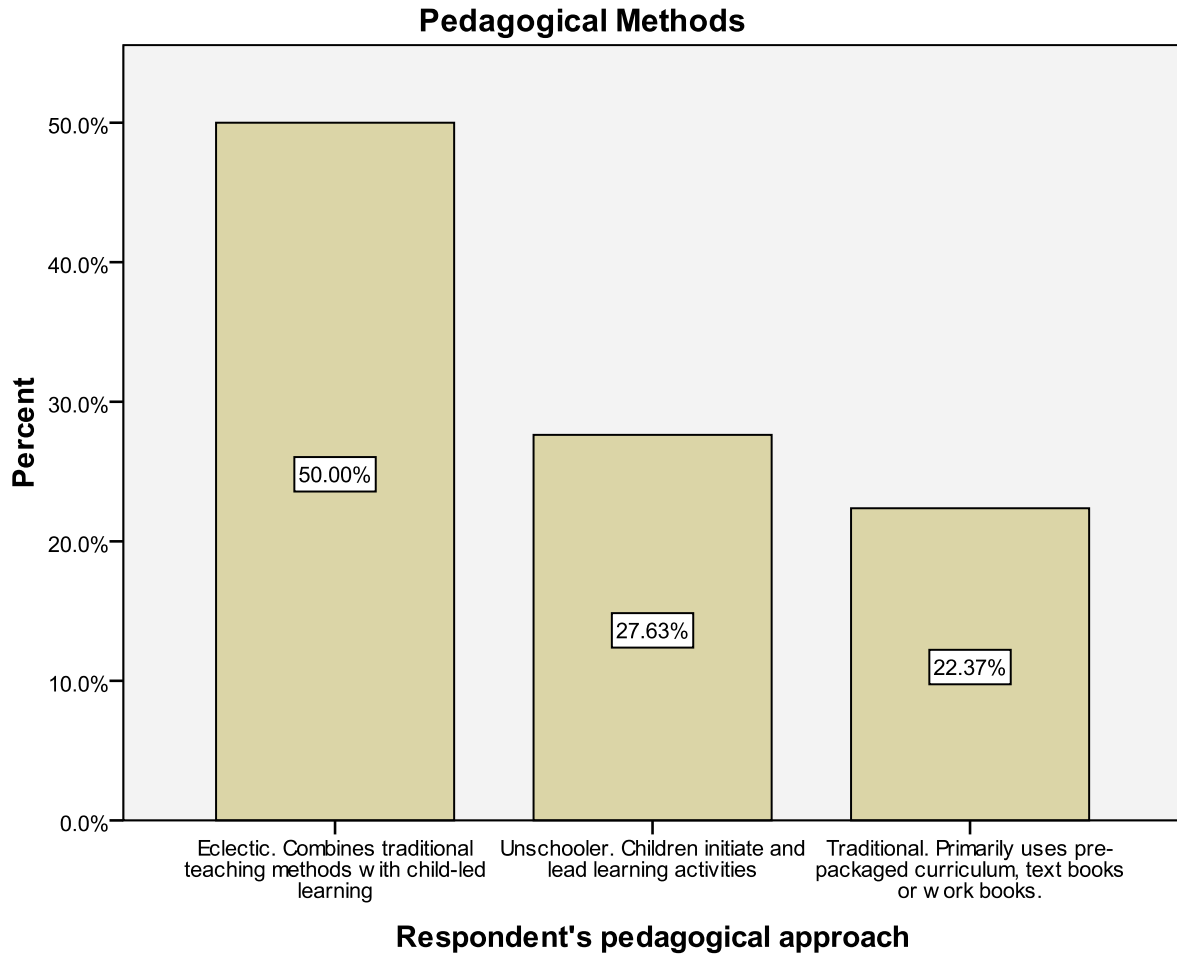


Furthermore, 49 (64.5%) respondents indicated that they were both dissatisfied with the academic instruction and concerned about the environment of other schools. Van Galen contends that “Ideologues” are motivated to homeschool by their desire to impart religious values, and have few qualms with the academic structure of formal schools. However, 15 of 18 respondents who indicated they wished to provide religious instruction also indicated dissatisfaction with the academic instruction of other schools. Thus, 83.3% of respondents with religious considerations were also dissatisfied with other schools’ academic instruction. Similarly, 47 out of 58 non-

religiously motivated respondents expressed concern regarding academic instruction, representing 81% of this population.

Van Galen argues that “Pedagogues” choose to homeschool due to their criticism of the formal schooling structure, and reportedly have few concerns regarding negative moral influences in traditional schools. However, 9 out of 37 (24.3%) respondents who indicated dissatisfaction with the academic instruction of other schools as their most important reason for homeschooling also expressed a desire to impart religious or moral values in the multiple-response question. Thus, Van Galen’s dichotomy represents a gross oversimplification of home educators’ motivations.

Respondents were asked to classify their teaching methods as traditional, primarily utilizing packaged curriculum and work books, unschooling, consisting of child-led activities, or eclectic, representing a combination of traditional schooling and child-led methods. 38 (50%) respondents classified themselves as eclectic, 21 (27.6%) as unschoolers, and 17 (22.4%) as traditional. Eclectic educators comprise the largest group, generally teaching the basic school subjects but allowing for flexibility and pursuit of the child’s interests.



The Chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the primary motivating factor with the teaching method employed by each respondent. Those citing special needs (7) and religious instruction (1) were defined as missing out of necessity due to the small number of responses in those categories. The Pearson's Chi-square value of 0.498 with two degrees of freedom demonstrates that these variables are independent.

Respondent's Pedagogical Approach	Respondent's Most Important Reason for Homeschooling		Total
	Concerned about the Environment of other Schools	Dissatisfied with Academic Instruction	
Traditional (count) %	8 28.6%	8 21.6%	16 24.6%
Unschooler (count) %	7 25%	9 24.3%	16 24.6%
Eclectic (count) %	13 46.4%	20 54.1%	33 50.8%
Total (count) %	28 100%	37 100%	65 100%

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.498 ^a	2	.779
Likelihood Ratio	.497	2	.780
Linear-by-Linear Association	.486	1	.486
N of Valid Cases	65		

Due to the small number of respondents who indicated that religious instruction was their primary motivating factor, an additional crosstabulation and Chi-square test was conducted with those who cited religious or moral instruction as a motivating factor. The Pearson's Chi-square value of 3.221 indicates that these two variables are independent. Based on this calculation, religious or moral motivations (as contributing factors) cannot be associated with the pedagogical methods employed by home educators. However, my study cannot provide a statistical analysis of parents primarily motivated by religious or moral factors due to the small number of respondents in this category.

Pedagogical Approach/Motivating Factor (Religiosity) Crosstabulation			
Respondent's Pedagogical Approach	Motivating Factor (multiple response)		Total
	Providing religious or moral instruction was not a motivating factor	Providing religious or moral instruction was a motivating factor	
Traditional (count) %	12 20.7%	5 27.8%	17 22.4%
Unschooler (count) %	19 32.8%	2 11.1%	21 27.6%
Eclectic (count) %	27 46.6%	11 61.1%	38 50%
Total (count) %	58 100%	18 100%	76 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.221 ^a	2	.200
Likelihood Ratio	3.673	2	.159
Linear-by-Linear Association	.117	1	.732
N of Valid Cases	76		

An association was found between respondents who indicated their child's special needs or giftedness was a contributing factor (in the multiple response question) and their pedagogical methods. The Pearson's Chi-square value of 8.512 with two degrees of freedom indicates that the two variables are dependent with a probability >97.5%. However, utilizing Lambda, the association is stronger (.130) when considering special needs/giftedness as the dependent variable. Therefore, by determining a parent's teaching method, we can better predict whether or not they consider their child to be special needs or gifted by 13%, indicating a moderate relationship. The majority (58.8%) of parents utilizing a traditional teaching method indicated that their children were special needs or gifted, while only 23.8% of unschooling parents and 21.1% of eclectic parents considered their children special needs or gifted. When pedagogical

methods are considered as the dependent variable the Lambda value of .053 indicates a weak (but statistically significant) association.

Motivating Factor (Special Needs/Giftedness)/Pedagogical Approach				Total
Crosstabulation				
Motivating Factor	Pedagogical Approach			
	Traditional	Unschooler	Eclectic	
Was not motivated by child's special needs or giftedness (count) %	7 41.2%	16 76.2%	30 78.9%	53 69.7%
Was motivated by child's special needs or giftedness (count) %	10 58.8%	5 23.8%	8 21.1%	23 30.3%
Total (count) %	17 100%	21 100%	38 100%	76 100%

Directional Measure (Lambda)	Value
Symmetric	.082
Motivating Factor (dependent)	.130
Pedagogical Method (dependent)	.053

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.512 ^a	2	.014
Likelihood Ratio	7.987	2	.018
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.635	1	.010
N of Valid Cases	76		

Based on my analysis, home educators cannot be classified into two polarized groups.

Parents choose to educate at home for a variety of reasons, which are often unique to their

family. The teaching methods used at home are often tailored to the specific needs and abilities of the students, as evidenced by the large percentage of home educators (50%) who categorize their teaching methods as “eclectic”. 67 (88%) respondents agreed with the statement “teachers should use a variety of materials depending on what works for each child and not let any particular philosophy determine what that is.”

Due to the bureaucratic nature of the public school system, the needs of students with alternative learning styles cannot be adequately met. Rather, subjects are taught in a specific manner which is accessible to many students, but incomprehensible to some. Bourdieu (1977) stresses that the “rationality” of the school system is not equated with democratization or egalitarianism. He writes of the school system as an institution which reproduces class inequalities through the reinforcement of the dominant “cultural arbitrary.” Students lacking in cultural and linguistic capital due to their class background (and the primary pedagogic work in the home) retain their subordinate status. Likewise, students imbued with high cultural and linguistic capital (due to their affiliation with the dominant class) are relegated to positions of success and power.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative component of my study asked respondents to describe their specific reasons for choosing to homeschool and the teaching methods utilized in their own words. This allowed for a greater depth of analysis than was possible with a strictly quantitative study. Several themes emerged within parents explanations for their decision to homeschool: a need for individualized education, cultural enrichment, parental qualification to teach, strengthening the family, and a desire to protect children from peer pressure and popular culture.

Individualized Education. A lack of flexibility in the public schools was a frequently cited reason for choosing to educate at home. Many parents expressed that their children were struggling in some subjects while excelling in others. The public schools could not accommodate their specific needs. Homeschooling allows their children to work at their own pace, sometimes using advanced materials, while allowing for more time on difficult subjects. One parent wrote:

Originally it was to provide the perfect environment for learning for my child, who has a serious learning disability but is also very, very smart (i.e., reading at a middle school level at age 5, but couldn't write her name.)

Other parents expressed concern over their children being “tracked” into various groups based on ability, as determined through standardized tests. One respondent wrote:

The schools have a certain timetable for children to develop and if they don't meet this then they are put into programming i.e. my 7 year old who is just now learning to read would have been in programming last year if he was in [public school].

Bourdieu explains that schools systematically advantage students possessing high linguistic and cultural capital. A parent’s decision to homeschool their child who is labeled as “slow” can be interpreted as a rejection of this systematic stratification. Homeschooling parents average higher levels of educational attainment than parents opting for public school. Therefore, many refuse to accept their child’s demotion to lower class status, despite learning difficulties.

One respondent wrote:

We were confronted with having to homeschool when a principal told my son, and me, he couldn't learn Algebra and should be a menial worker.

Homeschooling enabled her child to learn Algebra, and he is now a successful college student. Individualized instruction made possible through homeschooling benefits students who would otherwise be written off by the school system.

For children who excel academically, homeschooling provides the opportunity to learn advanced material, which advantages them compared to their public-schooled peers. The following responses serve as examples:

I removed my gifted child from school because they had nothing to offer him beyond punishing him for being too far ahead and asking too many questions.

My first child was very early learning reading and math. We tried two days of preschool, but tracing a single letter, when he could already read and write, was very boring for him.

Public school did not challenge my children. They are 99th percentile intellectually, but were being forced to go at the pace of the rest of the class. I very nicely asked if I could send supplemental materials so they would be challenged, and the answer was 'No'.

Homeschooling allows such students to progress to advanced material, while public school would have stalled their academic development, resulting in boredom and frustration.

Cultural Enrichment. Bourdieu explains that the upper class is associated with a high degree of cultural capital. This may include a propensity for visiting museums, theatre-going and other activities associated with “high culture.” Exposure to the arts enriches a student’s educational experiences while increasing their cultural capital. Some respondents expressed that their decision to homeschool facilitated a lifestyle of frequent travel. Two respondents explained:

My husband and I are far more educated and we have far more resources at our disposal than do any public or private schools. I want to be free to expose my daughter to all the things that I enjoy- music, art, opera, theater, etc. that public schools cannot afford.

We travel and live between two countries. We found public education punished our son in a way when he would miss class.

By choosing to homeschool, these parents are able to provide their children with a higher level of cultural capital than public schooled children.

Parental Qualification to Teach. Many respondents expressed that they felt uniquely qualified to direct their children's education because of their love for and familiarity with their own children. The following responses echo this theme:

I wanted to continue to be a part of their growth and development on a daily basis, not turn it over to others.

My child requested it. He said he learns best from me, because I understand his learning style and respect his 'voice' in matters.

As a parent I know my child best and can provide the best educational environment and opportunities.

I love my daughter more than any teacher ever could and even if a teacher did have my child's best interests at heart, s/he would be stretched too thin and would not have enough resources to meet her (and every other child's) specific needs.

Children have been learning from their parents since the beginning of time and I still believe it to be the best way to educate and mentor children. Children learn best at home from their parents (and sometimes siblings) rather from a distant teacher (stranger) and a group of their peers, learning a bunch of meaningless stuff.

Bourdieu states that that the primary pedagogic work occurs within the home among family members. The effectiveness of secondary pedagogic work (in the schools) is determined

by the foundational work within the home. By choosing the homeschool, parents remain the central pedagogic authority in their children's lives. Their legitimacy as teaching authorities is not challenged by school teachers, principals, or peers. Many respondents felt that, as their child's parents, they were especially qualified to teach them.

Strengthening the Family. Another common theme was that homeschooling strengthens the family bond. Respondents stressed the importance of the family group over the peer group:

I like that the students (my kids) are a family group and they get to grow at their own pace, with the resources provided by family and community.

The main reason is to be together as a family. I see no benefit to farming my kids out for an institution to raise. I feel so much energy is wasted in schools on peer pressure and working to fit in or stay in a particular social area. I feel kids desire to learn should be fostered and not beaten out of them by being bored or at a level above or below where they are.

Values/morals are so much easier to imprint on them without the addition of peer pressure, we have a more solid family unit and are able to pursue family oriented activities, we are able to pursue their individual interests and abilities, their friendships have blossomed with more time to devote to actual relationship, etc.

Peer Pressure/Exposure to Pop culture

Bourdieu argues that the school system serves to reproduce the dominant cultural arbitrary. Parents whose values and beliefs clash with those of mainstream society may choose to homeschool to avoid conflicts. Homeschooling allows parents to exercise a greater degree of control over their children's exposure to popular culture and peer groups. In this way, unwanted behaviors and beliefs can be avoided. The following responses express these sentiments:

I don't want them learning every bad behavior out there. They can learn faster, better, and with more fun with me.

School is more about serving the needs of a conformist society than it is about nurturing children into happy, fulfilled adults.

Children are being shamelessly exploited by fads, commercialization, sexualization etc and the [public school] system encourages it, in my opinion.

My son is very active in Scouting and in fencing, and is by far the most polite and respectful young man in these circles. I attribute this to the fact that he relates his behavior to adult/real-world behavioral expectations, and is not as susceptible to pressure from his peers.

I believe that homeschooling has allowed my children to make friends with many children they may not have gotten to know in the public school system because of the cliques that form in that setting. There is much more acceptance of people who are 'different' in our homeschooling communities than I've seen in public schools and in the general population.

Socialization. A child living in the world, under the safety of a parent is more able to experience what the 'real world' is like and to acclimate to those things they need. A child in a classroom with 30 other kids only their own age, learn to distrust adults and suffer under the unwarranted pressures of fulfilling unreasonable 'norms' set by unknown, un-named suits. It changes children and creates weird & false ideas of socialization - across the board.

[Homeschooled] kids are more real. They do not put on conformist social masks as kids in school do, trying on different personalities that are not really their own to see what gets the most status.

I do not want my young child exposed to American pop culture. This is not in keeping with our family values. Also, my daughter is profoundly and globally gifted. She needs to work at HER own pace; not do what others do. She took a differential equations class, at a local University, when she was 14 -- her schooled age peers were starting algebra then! She loved her class and I certainly didn't want her adopting pop culture attitudes that 'girls can't do math.

We watched as friends' kids who entered school in the four years before our kids would have turn into, well, animals! They'd been such fun small kids to be around, but once they got in school, they were rude, sometimes out of control, and their parents said things like, 'Once you send them to school they bring all this stuff home and you can't do anything about it. You have to pick your battles.'

Homeschooling parents commonly believe that their educational choice results in better behaved, happier children. They are able to regulate their children's exposure to media and peer influences.

Other Factors

Additionally, some respondents brought up factors which are unique to their situations, but reflective of deficiencies in the public school system. While these responses do not fit into the above mentioned categories, they are insightful and worth mentioning:

My daughter is Black; I see how teachers react to her at times, with a caution that reveals their expectation that she will be a problem. She is a perfect student and wins them over every time, but I am concerned that she not have this initial, subtle prejudice undermine her learning opportunities.

Our daughter was borderline precocious puberty- at 8 years old she was physically an 11 year old. One month after pulling her out of the school, her hormone levels dropped to a normal 8 year old's level. Possibly the effects of cortisol-long term stress.

One of my children has a life-threatening asthmatic reaction to rats. The school was infested with rats. We repeatedly told the teacher and principal that the rats were a severe threat to our son's health. We, and many other parents, requested that the school take measures to control the rats, but they never did.

These parents made their decisions to homeschool when their children were faced with discrimination and school situations which threatened their health. Few would argue against homeschooling as a logical option when dealing with abhorrent situations such as a school rat infestation. Such situations are reflective of the school system's failure to accommodate children's basic health needs.

Just as parents' decisions to homeschool were characterized by diverse and unique circumstances and concerns, their pedagogical methods were varied. The following responses represent examples from the three broad categories of teaching methods: traditional, unschooling, and eclectic.

Traditional

We are using the K-12 program which consists of 5 hours of math, 10 hours of language arts, 3 hours of history, 2 hours of science, and 2 hours of art per week. However we work on our own time schedule, we can substitute a field trip in for our hours on any given day. We do 23 hours of school per week whereas our state only requires 20 hours per week. She is able to work at own pace and as a result of this she is getting ready to complete her semester 1 (actual semester end date is Jan 30), when she has completed 90% of the curriculum they will send the next grade supplies.

Unschooling

A typical day consists of our family living and exploring. It might include books, magazines, TV, DVDs, computer games, videogames, Internet, nature walks, household activities such as grocery shopping, cooking, yard work. Closest similar example would be a day in the middle of what most kids call 'school vacation'

Every day is different. Our homeschooling journey is living life and following our interests. Sometimes that means reading from a book, sometimes that means 'dad' drills on math facts, sometimes that means we go to Disneyland.

Enjoying ourselves, asking questions, answering them or figuring out how to, reading, watching TV, playing sports, drawing, coloring, playing with sibs, talking with each other, cooking together, arguing & resolving, eating together, hanging out with friends nothing very structured, but extremely enjoyable.

Eclectic

No two days are ever the same. Sometimes we do 'school stuff' literally all day. Most days, we're just too busy with life. However, we make time to read every day. Daughter also takes weekly music lessons and practices piano daily. We go to weekly park days for exercise and socialization

with other kids. Daughter does weekly gymnastics and 'science' classes. Daughter participates in Girl Scouts/Brownies. We travel extensively, and take in whatever interests us where we go. My daughter has received a far better education here at home than she would anywhere else.

Although philosophically I would most agree with radical Unschooling, I have gravitated over the years to workbooks that I trust to give a good grounding in their subjects. This is in part because I have my own projects, as have the children and the workbooks allow me to stop and start, and not feel I am leaving holes which will cause them trouble latter (for example in Math).

Some days, if I am working on the house (we are renovating) or preparing for an exhibition (I am an artist) the kids will just play all day. Other days we make plans to visit other homeschoolers and go on an outing to a museum or other such place. Other days, we just hang out at home and the older ones work independently at their assignments while I work more closely with the youngest.

Conclusion

Clearly, parents choose to homeschool for a host of diverse reasons, and utilize a variety of teaching methods based on philosophical beliefs, efficacy, appropriateness, and sometimes convenience. To classify homeschooling parents into two dualistic groups is reductive. Home educators' rejection of mainstream schooling is often motivated by the school's refusal to accommodate their children's unique learning styles and needs. Other parents simply feel that they are best qualified to teach their children, and are able to provide their children with more time and resources. The homeschooling parent can monitor their children's exposure to unwanted peer pressure, resulting in better-behaved children. Other parents expressed grievous deficiencies in the school system regarding academic flexibility, discrimination, and health issues.

The bureaucratic public school system does not accommodate individual needs and abilities. Trapped in an inflexible and rigid iron cage, there is little room for inventiveness and individuals may become, "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart, this nullity

imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved” (Weber 1958).

Homeschooling parents reject attempts to label their children and limit their potential.

Considering the relatively high economic and social standing of many homeschooling families, their refusal to accept less than excellence for their children should come as no surprise. Homeschooling provides the best of both worlds: individualized instruction without the costs (and sometimes conflicting ideologies) associated with private schools. Furthermore, the pedagogic authority of the parent remains unchallenged, reifying the pupil/teacher relationship. While unschooling parents maintain that their children initiate learning activities, parents essentially control the home environment, thereby limiting the range of options from which the children may choose.

The ability to control outside influences is an overt function of homeschooling. Indeed, the outside world has many dangers including peer pressure, conflicting beliefs, and other challenges to parental authority. The urge to protect one’s children is basic, but schooling at home can be a major undertaking. Parents may face opposition from school districts, family and friends. However, parents repeatedly express that the rewards are great, resulting in happier, healthier children.

Implications/Suggestions for Future Research

In my research I have attempted to move beyond false, externally-imposed constructs. While it may be tempting to label and categorize homeschooling parents into narrow groups, such reductionism should be avoided. Each homeschooling experience is complex, often inspired by particular family circumstances. Even when the homeschooling parent is drawn to a particular ideology (unschooling, for example), their children’s needs are often prioritized over adherence

to a particular philosophy. Most homeschooling parents express an earnest desire to maximize their children's educational experiences.

No statistically significant association could be found between a parent's most important reason for homeschooling and the pedagogical methods they employed. However, my sample included a disproportionate amount of non-religious/atheist homeschoolers. This provides insight into the non-religious homeschooling population, but additional quantitative studies should be conducted which include a substantial amount of parents motivated primarily by religious concerns. Based my analysis of multiple response questions, no association could be found between religiosity as a contributing factor and the teaching methods utilized.

An association was found between parents who considered their child gifted/special needs and the teaching methods used. It appears that parents using traditional teaching methods were more likely to identify their child as gifted/special needs than parents opting for unschooling or eclectic methods. Perhaps these parents have few qualms with the structure of formal schooling, but their child required additional support or opportunities for advanced work.

The qualitative component of my study demonstrated the variety of motivating factors and teaching methods used by home educators. Lack of educational flexibility in the public schools was a frequently cited reason. Some parents withdrew their children from school because they wished to be more involved in their children's educations. Added benefits include the ability to limit children's exposure to certain peer groups and other unwanted influences.

Additional research is needed to identify and address the sources of home educators' dissatisfaction with the public school system. Public school reform is needed which emphasizes parental involvement in their children's educational experiences. A greater degree of flexibility,

in which parents can opt to enroll their children in school part time, could be of benefit to the homeschooling population. Furthermore, a useful research endeavor would be to determine the subsequent academic/career success of homeschooled children resulting from the specific pedagogical approaches of their parents.

Homeschooling parents invest much time and energy in their children's education. In the words of one home educator, "I see no benefit to farming my kids out for an institution to raise." Rather, homeschooling parents take the time to cultivate and nurture their own offspring. Raised within the primary institution of the family, the trusting relationship of parent and child, teacher and pupil, remains intact.

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APPENDIX

Survey instrument (Questions adapted from Princiotta et al 2006; McKeon 2007).

Background Information

1. Please indicate your role in the homeschooling family.
 - a. Mother
 - b. Father
 - c. Other responsible adult

2. Please indicate your level of responsibility in the homeschool.
 - a. I am primarily responsible for instruction in the homeschool.
 - b. I support the primary homeschooling adult.
 - c. I share equally in the teaching responsibility with another adult.

3. What is your religious preference?
 - a. Protestant
 - b. Catholic
 - c. Jewish
 - d. Buddhism
 - e. Hinduism
 - f. Other Eastern
 - g. Moslem/Islam
 - h. Christian
 - i. Internondenominational
 - j. none
 - k. other

4. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven point scale on which the political views that people hold are arranged from extremely liberal-point 1-to extremely conservative-point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?
 1. Extremely liberal
 2. Liberal
 3. Slightly Liberal
 4. Moderate
 5. Slightly conservative
 6. Conservative
 7. Extremely conservative

5. How many children do you currently homeschool? _____

6. Please indicate the ages of the children you homeschool. _____

7. This question concerns public school enrollment of your children. Please check all that apply.

- None of my children have ever been enrolled in public school.
- One or more of my children was enrolled in public school prior to withdrawal.
- One or more of my children was enrolled in public school prior to expulsion.
- One or more of my children is currently enrolled in public school for less than 9 hours per week.
- One or more of my children is currently enrolled in public school for 9 or more hours per week.

Reasons for Homeschooling

8. What reasons contributed to your decision to homeschool? Please check all that apply.

- I was concerned about the environment at other schools
- I was dissatisfied with the academic instruction at other schools
- I wanted to provide religious or moral instruction.
- My child has a physical or mental health problem.
- My child has other special needs.
- Other _____

9. Among the reasons which contributed to your decision to homeschool, which would you say was the most important?

- I was concerned about the environment at other schools
- I was dissatisfied with the academic instruction at other schools
- I wanted to provide religious or moral instruction.
- My child has a physical or mental health problem.
- My child has other special needs.
- Other _____

10. If your decision to homeschool was based, on whole or in part, on your **concerns about the environment of other schools**, what were your specific concerns? Please check all that apply.

- I was concerned about exposure to violence or gang activity
- I was concerned about exposure to drugs or alcohol.
- I was concerned about exposure to negative moral influences from peers or teachers.
- The environment of other schools is inconsistent with our family's religious beliefs.
- My child was bullied at school.
- My child had conflicts with other students or teachers.

- Other concern _____
- N/A-My decision to homeschool was not influenced by a concern about the environment of other schools.

11. If your decision to homeschool was based, in whole or in part, on your **dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools**, what specific aspects were you dissatisfied with? Please check all that apply.

- My child was not challenged enough academically at other schools.
- My child struggled academically at other schools
- My child was not provided with enough individual instruction
- Other schools do not provide enough creative outlets for students.
- Other schools do not provide enough physical education.
- The teacher/student ratio is too high at other schools.
- I believe that children learn best in informal/home environments.
- Other _____
- N/A-My decision to homeschool was not influenced by my dissatisfaction about the academic instruction at other schools.

Homeschooling Methods

The following two questions ask you about what type of homeschooling your family engages in.

12. What kind of homeschooler are you?

- a. Traditional. I primarily use pre-packaged curriculum, textbooks/workbooks, and/or lectures.
- b. Unschooler. The children initiate learning activities and are free to work at their own pace.
- c. Eclectic. I combine traditional teaching methods with “unschooling” methods.

*The following two questions ask you to finish a statement based on how you think a homeschool should operate. Please select **one** answer which best represents your view.*

13.

- a. there is an essential body of knowledge which must be transmitted to the next generation.
- b. everything in life is educational and the individual must determine for himself what is right and wrong.
- c. a homeschool should incorporate direct instruction with the every day activities which are educational.

14. I think...

- a. students should use a curriculum that is subject-centered and structured.
- b. my students should be free to discover and create their own learning experiences.
- c. teachers should use a variety of materials depending on what works for each child and not let any particular philosophy determine what that is.

The following two questions concern your views regarding a cooperative relationship between your homeschool and public school programs.

15. If one or more of your children is currently participating in any public school programs or classes, please indicate what activities they participate in. Check all that apply.

- Full or part-time academic instruction
- Athletic teams or programs
- Physical Education classes
- Art/Photography/Ceramics Classes
- Foreign Language Classes
- Tutoring
- Curriculum or educational materials reimbursement.
- None of my children participate in public school programs.

16. What, if any, public school resources would you be interested in utilizing, if they were available through your local public school. Check all that apply.

- Full or part-time academic instruction
 - Athletic teams or programs
 - Physical Education classes
 - Art/Photography/Ceramics Classes
 - Foreign Language Classes
 - Tutoring
 - Curriculum or educational materials reimbursement.
- I am not interested in receiving services or resources from the public schools.

The following two questions allow you to elaborate on your personal reasons for homeschooling and educational methods in your own words. Please feel free to skip these questions if you choose.

17. Please describe the reasons why you chose to teach your child/children at home.

18. Please describe the educational approach you utilize at your homeschool. For example, what does a "typical" day of homeschooling consist of for you and your child/children?

