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A study of the services, materials and policies provided for homeschooling families by New Jersey public libraries

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A STUDY OF THE SERVICES, MATERIALS AND POLICIES PROVIDED FOR
HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES BY NEW JERSEY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by
Patricia A. Collins

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Masters of Arts Degree
of
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Approved by
                              Professor

Date Approved_____May 9, 2005_____

ABSTRACT

Patricia A. Collins
A STUDY OF THE SERVICES, MATERIALS, AND POLICIES PROVIDED FOR
HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES BY NEW JERSEY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
20004/05
Dr. Marilyn Shontz
Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

The purpose of this study was to determine if homeschoolers were being

adequately served by the county public library systems of New Jersey. This was done by

identifying and tabulating the materials, services, and policies available to homeschooling

families served by twenty county library systems of New Jersey. The Website and online

catalog of each system was searched using checklists developed by the researcher. A

questionnaire developed by the researcher was completed by a representative of eighteen

of the selected libraries. Most of the libraries surveyed had services and policies that were

available to the general public rather than specifically for homeschoolers. The numbers of

homeschooling materials varied, as did the percentage of titles available that were

published since 2000. In conclusion, while three New Jersey county library systems

offered many of the services, materials, and policies requested by homeschoolers, the

remaining seventeen New Jersey county public library systems were in need of various

improvements.

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INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Topic

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 1.1 million or 2.2

percent of students in the United States were homeschooled in 2003. This estimate was

based on interviews with the parents of 12,000 students, ages five through seventeen.

These families had chosen to homeschool for various reasons, including concern about

the environment of other schools and providing religious or moral instruction (Princiotta,

Bielick, & Chapman, 2004). Although registration is not required for homeschoolers in

New Jersey, about 133 students were reported to be homeschooled in Gloucester County

(*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2004). The public library endeavors to serve most segments of

the population, and the families who homeschool are a small, but engaged segment.

The NCES also reported that more than half of the homeschooling families used a

library several times a month (Princiotta, et al., 2004). Kleist-Tesch (1998) and Campbell

(2002) both wrote articles suggesting that public libraries can serve homeschoolers by

offering meeting rooms, curriculum-related materials, orientation programs, and balanced

collections. They reported that homeschoolers often attended children's programs and

used the interlibrary loan service. The Unschoolers Network information paper listed

responses to the question "What would homeschoolers like to see offered in their

library?" (Plent, 2004). The responses included science and book clubs, craft programs,

presentations on homeschooling, research workshops, and permission to post notices on

the public bulletin boards. At the 2004 New Jersey Youth Services Forum, the panelists for the homeschooling workshop suggested that libraries provide homeschoolers the privilege of taking out more books for an extended period of time, occasionally borrowing a reference book, receiving an educator's library card, and receiving interlibrary loans without a fee. These home educators requested more educational videos, more homeschooling materials, and the opportunity to peruse withdrawn books before they were sold or recycled (*Homeschooling*, 2004). An interesting request was for "respect, toleration, and sensitivity to 'our conservative views'" (Plent, 2004, p. 2). Barbara Walker suggested that libraries might want to build a Christian collection to "further the position the library as an institution reflecting the diversity of readership in the community" (Walker, 1998, p. viii), and she also recommended that public libraries have clearly defined collection policies in place.

As libraries develop their collections and increase some services, such as access to databases through a home computer, it is important that the needs of homeschooling families be considered. While some New Jersey county libraries already offer links for homeschoolers on their Webpages, homeschooling families might be an underserved group by some county public library systems of New Jersey.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if homeschoolers were being adequately served by the county library systems of New Jersey. This was done by identifying and tabulating the services, materials, and policies available to homeschooling families served by twenty county library systems of New Jersey. The Website and online catalog of each system was searched, and an administrator or

coordinator of children's services of each library or system was asked to complete a questionnaire about the library's services, materials, and policies for homeschooling families.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions the researcher for this study.

1) What public library services and policies were available to homeschooling families on New Jersey county public library Websites?

2) How many materials about homeschooling were available to homeschooling families through New Jersey county public libraries' OPACs?

3) What public library services, materials, and policies available for homeschooling families through the county public library but possibly were not observable on the library Website or OPAC?

4) What were the perceptions of some public librarians concerning homeschooling families and library services to them?

Operational Definitions and Important Terms

A balanced library collection, for this study, reflects the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights* that states "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves" (*Library Bill of Rights*, 2004).

A coordinator of children's and/or youth services, for this study, is the person in a public library responsible for providing and managing juvenile and/or young adult services, materials, and programs.

Curriculum-related materials, for this study, are those library items related to subjects

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studied by homeschoolers using a specific, possibly purchased, curriculum.

A county public library for this study represents a library chosen within a county system or within a county whose representative cooperated with the researcher for this study or whose Website or online catalog was researched for this study

An educator's library card, for this study, is a public library membership card provided free of charge to an educator within the defined service area of the public library system.

Homeschooled students are students whose parents reported them as being schooled at home instead of at a public or private school for at least part of their education, pre-school through college (Princiotta, Bielick, & Chapman, 2004).

Homeschooler, for this study, is an adult who taught a child at home or the student who is taught at home.

Interlibrary loans, for this study, are loans by a library for materials from another library for use by one of its member patrons.

The OPAC is an Online Public Access Catalog - A computerized system to catalogue and organize materials in a library (the kind that contains books). OPACs have replaced card-based catalogues in many libraries. An OPAC is available to library users (public access) (Farlex, 2004).

Orientation programs, for this study, include tours of the facility and instruction on the use of automation and Web services.

Materials, in this study, include books, audiovisual materials, periodicals, e-books, and electronic resources available at a public library for loan or use.

Meeting rooms, in this study, are rooms in a public library made available for use by the general, usually non-commercial, public.

Electronic pathfinders, in this study, are lists of materials and online, topic-based resource links that are provided on a public library's Website

The public library is a noncommercial library often supported with public funds, intended for use by the general public, endeavoring to serve all segments of the community (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.,* 2000).

Services, in this study, include interlibrary loans, links on a Website, use of meeting rooms, extended loan periods, newsletters, reference assistance, book lists, online holds, online book discussions, curriculum-related collections, and programs such as story times, book clubs, library orientations, educational/educational events, activity clubs, and craft programs.

A Website is a set of interconnected Webpages, usually including a homepage, generally located on the same server, and prepared and maintained as a collection of information by a person, group, or organization (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.,* 2000).

The county public library systems in New Jersey included in this study were Atlantic County Library System (ACLS), Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS) (Bergen, Essex, Passaic, and Hudson counties), Burlington County Library System (BCLS), Camden County Library System (CCLS), Cape May County Library, Cumberland Libraries United Electronic System (CLUES), Gloucester County Library System (GCLS), Hunterdon County Library (HCL), Mercer County Library System

(MCLS), Monmouth County Library, Morris County Library (MCL) Ocean County Library, Passaic County Library System (PALSplus), Somerset County Library System (SCLS), Sussex County Library System, Elizabeth Public Library for Union County, and Phillipsburg Free Public Library for Warren County. Salem County does not have a public library with an independent online catalog. See Appendix A for a complete list.

Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that homeschoolers lived in all counties of New Jersey and that many used the public libraries. It was assumed that the staff of the public library or county library system knew that homeschoolers were using their library. It was also assumed that the public library staff who completed the questionnaire would honestly share information on the public library's services, materials, and policies.

This study was limited to public libraries within twenty county systems in New Jersey that have or share online catalogs. The online catalogs of these public libraries and county library systems listed materials available to patrons. Another limitation of this study was that there might be large independent public libraries in some New Jersey counties that provided the requested services to homeschoolers but were not included in the sample. The items on the questionnaire and on the checklists were those listed by homeschoolers who had an interest in library service and might not reflect the needs of those who do not use a library.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Homeschoolers Use of Public Libraries

Homeschoolers have decided that their children would receive their best education at home. Compulsory school attendance laws have been changed in many countries and states to allow parents to educate their own children. Homeschoolers can now access the Internet from home to do research and communicate with teachers and others worldwide (Cohen, 2000). While the public library has apparently become a source of materials for many homeschoolers, questions remained as to whether public libraries were meeting the needs of homeschoolers with services, materials, and policies. Since the reasons families chose to homeschool seemed to be as numerous as the families, research results usually recommended that each library survey the homeschoolers in its area to determine what services needed to be provided (Stanwood, 2001; Schwartz, 1991).

One of the most often referenced surveys on homeschoolers' use of public libraries was done by Schwartz in 1991. The 150 responses to a survey distributed at a Christian homeschoolers conference showed a 99 percent use of the public library. The attendance at this conference was about 2,100 people, so those who took the time to complete and return the survey might have had an existing interest in library services to homeschoolers. The surveys were easy to understand and the discussion and summary were adequate.

Schwartz (1991) attempted to list many of the curricula available for purchase by homeschoolers. The reason for this was not explained, but the responses showed that many homeschoolers in this group used a variety of prepared curricula if they used one at all. If a public library in Ohio were considering the purchase of curricula at the time of this survey, that curriculum would most likely be serving only a small part of the homeschooling population. The researcher presented this as a warning to other public libraries to survey their patrons before purchasing such material for circulation.

A few of the respondents were definite in their reasons for not using the public library. They expressed concern about the superstitious, evil, anti-American, disrespectful, or humanistic materials available there (Schwartz, 1991, p.22). The lists of services, materials, and policies used in the libraries was similar to other lists, except that there were few requests for use of a meeting room. Schwartz interpreted responses to indicate that homeschoolers would like to work with "informed librarians, not only those who are friendly and helpful" (Schwartz, 1991, p. 26).

In her 2000 book about homeschooling teens, Cohen reported, "some experienced home educators point out that you can homeschool successfully with nothing more than pencil, paper, and access to a good library" (Cohen, 2000, p.11). On the other hand, some how-to-homeschool books may only mention using a library. Cohen reported that her online surveys of educators and teens indicated that the public library was second only to a support group as the destination chosen most frequently by homeschoolers.

From the 104 responses to the lengthy survey that Cohen (2000) emailed to homeschooling families of teens in thirty-four states and five other countries, she found that almost all home educators were the mothers, that most of the families had been

homeschooling for four to ten years, only 13 percent lived in cities, 55 percent used a mixed style of teaching, and 69 of the families had two or three children. She also received thirty-four responses to a shorter teen survey. The respondents were those who volunteered to answer Cohen's posted messages on Internet homeschooling bulletin boards and electronic mailing lists. Examples of the continuum questions on the long survey were provided and explained in the first chapter of Cohen's book, but it would have been interesting to see the entire survey. A response rate was not given, nor was there an explanation of the reliability or validity of the survey instruments. Limitations and assumptions were not mentioned, although it might be appropriate to assume that the respondents were comfortable using computer technology since the surveys were online. An obvious limitation of the research was that the responses of those who did not use a computer were not adequately represented in the survey.

Anecdotes and comments from the surveys were used by Cohen (2000) to assist and encourage home educators of teenagers. Cohen's book provided an abundance of resource ideas and lists. Cohen emphasized the value of the interlibrary loan program for homeschoolers, including it as a method of previewing educational materials before purchasing them. She encouraged home educators to borrow and read at least one book on learning styles. A list of resources used by teens in libraries included magazines, audio books and language materials, lectures and classes, computers, and volunteer opportunities (Cohen, 2000, p. 239). It was interesting to notice that she encouraged students to visit all of the libraries in their community, including the local school and college libraries, and the historical society.

Campbell (2001) conducted a survey of public library use by homeschooling

families of Shelby County, Alabama. This survey was conducted through six of the ten public libraries in Shelby County. Eighty-eight responses were received from the libraries. About 335 families had submitted homeschool notification forms to the Shelby County Office of Education. No assumptions or limitations were provided in this article, and the size of the sample received no further comment. The survey was thorough and asked for the information that public librarians would like to know about their homeschooling customers. A large percentage of these families (74 percent) used a purchased curriculum, which the libraries did not typically have available. Campbell reported that the survey indicated that the respondents used the library at least several times a month, especially for research and to check out books and materials. The use of the library to distribute the surveys might have affected this statistic. Percentages were given for each variable, including general satisfaction with the services of the county's public libraries. The researcher reported that the survey's space for comments and suggestions was well used to provide ideas for future programs and services.

A study of the homeschoolers' needs from the Atlantic County Library System (ACLS) was undertaken by Stanwood in 2001. As in the other studies, the sample studied was homeschoolers who used the library. However, these 28 people were members of two homeschooling organizations that met at the Galloway Township Library. The replies suggested that the Galloway branch was the most often used by the respondents, but Stanwood suggested that this might be related to the coincidence of having the groups' meetings there. An estimate of the number of homeschoolers within the library's service area would have helped establish some relevance, but since New Jersey doesn't require registration, this would have been difficult information to acquire. Stanwood gave

several definitions and although she did note the limitation of the study to the groups who used the library, she did not consider 28 to be a low number of patrons to survey for Atlantic County.

Stanwood (2001) gave an extensive review of literature that included several of the often- reviewed studies of the relationship between homeschoolers and libraries. Her survey included many questions on the use of ACLS by homeschoolers. The questions were appropriate for the information requested. The format for the questions on usage also returned responses on frequency and helpfulness. These were apparently used to evaluate the homeschoolers' satisfaction with the ACLS. She included many programs in a small amount of space and provided space for quick responses.

In displaying the results of the research, the Stanwood (2001) provided counts, percentages, and a variety of graphs. Each survey question should have been included with each discussion of the results. In her discussion, Stanwood failed to note that a reason for very frequent visits to the library might have been the three-day lending policy for the videos.

Stanwood (2001) concluded that the Atlantic County Library System did meet the expressed needs of the homeschoolers who used their libraries. Her research supported the view that homeschoolers were a unique population within the ACLS service area and the library system was providing educational support for them. One way they did this was by cooperating with the local schools to provide the appropriate curriculum. The homeschoolers also took advantage of the invitation to use the Galloway Branch Library's meeting rooms.

Kleist-Tesch (1998) reported on homeschoolers' use of public libraries. Most of

her thorough paper consolidated other studies to describe homeschoolers and the reasons why they homeschool. Her information on public library use included the study by Schwartz. Basically, she recommended inviting homeschoolers to tour the library and share information. Her suggestions followed the pattern established by Madden (1991) and Brostrom (1995) and included urging the public librarian to attend homeschool meetings and conferences. She echoed the other studies in the necessity to make homeschoolers "strong supporters of the library" (Kleist, 1998, p. 7).

Stoever (2004) published her report about her presentation for the 2004 Youth Services Forum held by the New Jersey State Library on the Education Network of Christian Homeschoolers (ENOCH) of New Jersey Website. She wrote:

> I was pleasantly surprised at the questioning. I guess I am so used to hearing adversarial positions that I just expected a lot of the usual objections. Not so!! The librarians present were truly friendly and shared with us that they are ready and willing to help homeschoolers find whatever resources they needed. Many of them already have forged good relationships with homeschoolers in their districts and shared how they have assisted them, such as providing meeting space, ordering or purchasing books that they need and by helping to tailor programming especially suited to the unique needs of homeschoolers (Stoever, 2004, p.1).

Stoever continued by listing the recommendations she had made to the group of librarians. These included borrowing reference books, research and reference instruction, educational videos, and "respect, toleration, and sensitivity" to their views on "sexual identity, right-to-life issues for the young and old, suicide, and occult practices" (Stoever, 2004, p.2).

The Responses of Public Libraries to Homeschoolers' Requests

Madden (1991) worked with the King County Library System of Washington and the Washington Homeschool Organization members to produce an informative article for public librarians working with homeschoolers. This article was based on a talk she gave at the Public Library Association Conference in San Diego in 1991. She provided a definition and a profile of homeschool families based on national and Washington State statistics, reminding the reader that some homeschoolers would not participate in surveys and that many children under eight were taught at home but not included in the official counts. She mentioned the results of a local survey showing that 93 percent of homeschoolers used the public library. The researcher listed a number of reasons why people homeschooled, both from research and from her observations as the Young Adult Services Coordinator for the King County Library System. She said that most people taught at home for one of two reasons: to follow the principles and precepts promoted by John Holt or to follow the advice of Ray Moore and avoid the offending curriculum of the schools.

Madden (1991) addressed six concerns she had encountered over ten years and offered creative and applicable solutions. On the censorship issue and problems like subject wipeout, she recommended developing a working relationship with the homeschoolers and giving group presentations describing the library's services, materials, and policies. She suggested sensitivity training for public library staff and allowing the homeschoolers to volunteer their assistance to avoid a seeming overload of work for the library staff.

Madden (1991) listed fourteen ideas that a public library could do to implement

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services, materials, and policies for homeschoolers and while at the same time providing for all educators and enhancing the visibility of the library. These ideas included tours, educator's bulletins and bulletin boards, workshops and education programs, a resource file that included curricula from the local schools, and display space for educational projects.

While Madden's (1991) article did not propose to be a research paper, it did provide a good introduction to the homeschooling family and suggested many items to be used to evaluate other public libraries' services, materials, and policies.

Almost ten years ago, Brostrom (1995) published his *A Guide to Homeschooling for Librarians.* In the Foreword, his publisher, Patrick Farenga, wrote, "The most vital library resource is a knowledgeable and helpful librarian" (Brostrom, 1995, p vii). He suggested that the librarians' positive interaction with homeschoolers would encourage them to become informed and supportive patrons.

Brostrom (1995) based his information on his reading of the literature on homeschooling and on his own observations, informal interviews, and surveys. At the time he was writing his book, the indicators showed that the majority of parents who chose to homeschool did so for religious reasons. While current research has shown an increase in other reasons, religion remains a strong influence on the choice of schooling (Princiotta, Bielick, & Chapman, 2004).

Brostrom surveyed selected libraries in ten states and Canada by mailing out "hundreds of surveys and posting messages with two large Internet discussion groups" (Brostrom, 1995, p. 27). The first of the seven open-ended questions on the survey could be answered simply by a "yes" or "no," but the extra space invited a descriptive response.

The other questions requested longer answers. No information was provided about the response rate. He collected descriptions of programs some public libraries offered to homeschoolers and examples of the challenges and concerns facing librarians who tried to work with them. Forty of the individual responses were discussed in one chapter and provided interesting and helpful firsthand information. The challenges remained similar to those found by Madden but included the purchase of curriculum, reluctance to use the computer, and unsupervised children in the library. Most responses to the survey expressed positive interaction as the means of solving any problems. As Brostrom discussed ways to meet the challenges, he expressed concern about possible negative attitudes by library staff members and recommended methods to make the interaction with homeschoolers more rewarding for everyone.

Brostrom (1995) used the individual responses to his *Improving My Public Library: A Survey for Homeschoolers* to construct a list of suggestions from parents and students. He did not elaborate on how many surveys were sent out, how many were returned, or how they were distributed. A copy of the survey was not included. No information on reliability or validity was given for the surveys. The firsthand responses quoted in his book emphasized the variety of needs for library services, materials, and policies for homeschoolers. Brostrom also recommended increased and continuing use of technology, including online access to real-time classes, CD-ROM databases, homeschool pathfinders, and online links to local schools.

Kaplan (2001) reported that "it is essential to designate one staff person as the contact for homeschoolers" (Kaplan, 2001, p.1). In his article about Illinois public libraries and homeschoolers, he suggested that public libraries should have a reference

binder containing information for new homeschoolers, a file of homeschool curricula catalogs, a brochure of the library's services to homeschoolers, and a newsletter sent out to homeschoolers once or twice a year. He recommended trying to interlibrary loan some out-of-print materials while offering available titles. If the cost of interlibrary loans became excessive, he stated that the policy should be reexamined. Kaplan emphasized that patrons should be treated equally with realistic policies. For example, program registration forms should not request a student's school and grade. Kaplan suggested that an orientation program should include a book cart of reference materials, annotated booklists, and brochures explaining programs and databases.

The homeschool taskforce of Tulsa City-County Library was mentioned in one or two of the articles used for this review. The homeschool liaison there was contacted by the researcher by email and asked for copies of the survey and report. K. Jennings responded that they were not available but went on to describe the resulting programs developed by the library. It was found that the families who homeschooled used the basic resources and children's programs of the library. The public relations person made the topic of some programs (like Halloween) clear so that families were able to choose not to come. Their professional materials were purchased to be used by many different educators. Meetings, resource fairs, and discussions with group leaders helped to dispel some of the suspicion of libraries and establish an understanding of why the library does not have older titles of nonfiction books. One mother had heard that the library didn't have any old (before 1960) fiction and was surprised when shown so many of the classic fiction titles. The library had also added juvenile and young adult Christian fiction series. The staff took time to teach the students how to use the Internet sites through the library's

Website. They were very aware that there were different groups of homeschoolers who appreciated different programs and services. Ms. Jennings reported that this ability to communicate paid off when a vote on millage for the library needed everyone's support. The library staff was able to explain some things at the meetings, and the funding issue passed (K. Jennings. Personal communication, November 23, 2004).

Summary

Homeschooling families have become a special population to most public libraries. The families vary in their reasons to homeschool for educational, religious, special needs, gifted and talented, or medical reasons (Princiotta, et al., 2004). Basically, homeschooling parents have decided that their child or children will receive a better education at home. Surveys of their needs for public library services, materials, and policies return similar results. It is now each library's responsibility to use these results and conduct its own survey to determine whether or not the library is meeting the needs of the local homeschool families. Lists of these needs were available online through the homeschool Websites and in several books (National Home Education Network, *What Homeschoolers Want from Libraries*).

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Rationale for the Study

The review of the literature established that some homeschoolers in New Jersey

considered the public library to be a source of services, materials, and policies necessary

to the successful education of their children. This study used applied research in the form

of descriptive surveys to observe the present status of services to homeschoolers by the

county public library systems or selected county libraries of New Jersey. An exploratory

survey was used because it provided information that described the services, materials,

and policies available to homeschoolers by New Jersey county public libraries and the

results offered incentives for further research and applications.

The items on the survey were patterned by the researcher on the requests of

homeschoolers that were mentioned in the review of literature. Librarians interested in

evaluating or developing services to homeschoolers would benefit from considering these

items. Items on the Website checklist and the OPAC survey were composed by the

researcher to reflect the possible searches by a patron interested in finding general

information on homeschooling.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if homeschoolers were being

adequately served by county library systems of New Jersey. This was done by identifying

and tabulating the materials, services, and policies available to homeschooling families

served by a main library or the county library system of twenty counties in New Jersey.

The Website and OPAC of each library were searched, and a selected representative of each county public library was asked to complete a written questionnaire about the services, materials, and policies for homeschooling families offered by that library.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions for this study:

1) What public library services and policies were available to homeschooling families on New Jersey county public library Websites?

2) How many materials about homeschooling were available to homeschooling families through New Jersey county public libraries' OPACs?

3) What public library services, materials, and policies available for homeschooling families through the county public library but possibly were not observable on the library Website or OPAC?

4) What were the perceptions of some public librarians concerning homeschooling families and library services to them?

Population and Sample

There were more than 260 public libraries in the state of New Jersey in 2005. Some of these public libraries within a county had cooperated to share an online catalog. Some were sharing materials as well as the online catalog. Some had merged to form a county-administered system with one branch becoming the main administrative branch. Several libraries from two or three counties were sharing an online catalog, and some of these public libraries shared materials. Some public libraries did not have an online

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catalog. Thus there were many combinations of public library services for the people who live in New Jersey. Because part of the research for this study included searching Websites and online catalogs, only public libraries and library systems that provided access to a Website and an online catalog were included in this research.

The libraries used for the sample in this study were selected by county location and status and by the availability of an online catalog and an interactive Website. The purposeful selection of a sample from these public libraries or county library systems was expected to provide a view of the range of New Jersey county public libraries' services, materials, and policies provided for homeschoolers.

County public library systems of fifteen New Jersey counties and individual libraries from five counties were surveyed and observed for this study. There were twenty-one counties in New Jersey, but one shared its online catalogs with two other counties and did not have a library with a searchable Website. The search for a county system was performed online using the *Google Search Engine*.

The New Jersey county library systems investigated in this study included: Atlantic County Library System (ACLS), Burlington County Library System (BCLS), Camden County Library System (CCLS), Cape May County Library, Cumberland Libraries United Electronic System (CLUES), Gloucester County Library System (GCLS), Hunterdon County Library (HCL), Mercer County Library System (MCLS), Middlesex County Library Consortium (LMXAC), Monmouth County Library, Morris County Library (MCL), Ocean County Library, Passaic County Library System (PALSplus), Somerset County Library System (SCLS), and Sussex County Library System. The individual libraries included Teaneck Public Library for Bergen County, the

Newark Public Library for Essex County, the Jersey City Public Library for Hudson County, the Free Public Library of Elizabeth for Union County, and Phillipsburg Free Public Library for Warren County. Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS) (Bergen, Essex, Passaic, and Hudson counties) was used for the OPAC information for Bergen, Essex, and Hudson Counties. Salem County did not have a public library with an independent online catalog. The list of the libraries included in this study with each address, Website and contact person is in Appendix A.

Variables

The dependent variables were the items on the Website Content Analysis Survey checklist (see Appendix B), the services, policies, and materials listed in the checklists for the questionnaire survey (see Appendix D), and the counts of homeschooling materials found on the OPAC (see Appendix E). The perceived importance of the library services to homeschoolers was also surveyed.

Instrumentation

Three survey instruments and a cover letter were developed by the researcher to provide quantitative information (see Appendices B, C, D, and E.) The questionnaire and the checklists were designed to provide information on the services, materials, and policies provided for homeschoolers by that county public library.

Website Content Analysis

The Website Content Analysis checklist (see Appendix B) was designed by the researcher to note the results of the search of county public library online Websites for some of the services and policies that were requested by homeschoolers and suggested for libraries (Brostrom (1995), Kaplan (2001), Madden (1991) and National Home

Education Network). The availability of links for homeschoolers was also noted because links might be considered valuable to current homeschoolers.

Librarian Questionnaire

As many items requested by homeschoolers were not on the library Website, a questionnaire was sent to a representative at each selected county public library. (See Appendices A, C, and D.) This person was the children's coordinator or a library administrator for that library. She was previously contacted by the researcher by telephone and had agreed to participate in the survey.

The first three questions on the Librarian Questionnaire sought to provide quantitative information on the number of libraries sharing materials, the size of the county public library membership, and the estimated number of homeschoolers using the library. These statistics were used as independent variables to be related to the other survey items and questions.

The responses to Question Four, about staff training on the topic of homeschoolers, indicated the number of surveyed libraries that were following the recommendation of homeschooling advocates to offer library staff training to help homeschoolers.

The responses to the items on the checklist for Question Five showed each library's level of accommodation of homeschoolers' requests.

Question Six sought to gauge the perception of importance of services to homeschoolers by the library as observed by the individual completing the questionnaire.

Questions Seven through Nine were open-ended questions included to encourage individual responses that could be used for qualitative evaluation.

Question Seven asked for the respondent's perceptions of benefits to that library resulting from services to homeschoolers. This question encouraged the respondent to name positive results from the cooperation with homeschooling families.

Question Eight in the questionnaire asked the respondent to name concerns about that library's provision of services, materials, and policies for homeschoolers.

Question Nine offered each respondent the opportunity to list other services to homeschoolers that might be unique to that library.

OPAC Survey

The OPAC Survey (see Appendix E) was designed by the researcher to count of the number of books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, and other items directly related to homeschooling that were observable by searching the OPAC of each of the selected county public libraries. Books published since 2000 were further noted to indicate the currency of the books. The researcher searched the OPACs to complete the survey for tabulation.

Data Collection

Website Content Analysis

The evaluation of each Website entailed searching for the services and policies requested by homeschoolers on the Website of each selected county public library. Often several links had to be followed. Services and policies for the general public were counted if listed. If a site search box was available, "homeschoolers" was keyed in to search for other links.

Librarian Questionnaire

The questionnaire was mailed to a representative at each of the selected county

public libraries or systems that had been contacted by the researcher by telephone and had volunteered to complete and return the questionnaire. The respondents were requested to return the survey by using the stamped envelope provided by the researcher (see Cover Letter in Appendix C). The return envelopes were addressed to a Gloucester County Library System staff member who opened the envelopes and gave the questionnaires to the researcher. Each library volunteer respondent was also asked to mail an enclosed postcard listing the respondent's name and library to the researcher when the questionnaire had been mailed. Those who had not returned the postcard after ten days were notified and reminded to return the questionnaire. Another copy was mailed if requested.

OPAC Survey

The search for materials was accomplished by keying in "homeschooling" in the search bar of each selected county public library's online catalog. This search was done under "Keyword" in the areas of "Words or phrases," "Title," and "Subject" or in similar categories depending on the automation program used. The quantities of individual titles were noted and tabulated (see Appendix J).

The results of the investigations were tabulated, and a quantitative analysis was applied. The results for each data collection are reported in Chapter Four.

Validity and Reliability

A draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested by a total of ten people: the instructor and three classmates in the Rowan graduate thesis class, three Gloucester County public library directors, and three librarians. A revised questionnaire was evaluated by the same instructor and three students of the Rowan thesis class. The questionnaire was designed

based on the survey used by Stanwood (2001). The items on the questionnaire and on the checklist were those listed by homeschoolers who had requested these library services (Cohen, 2000; Stoever, 2004) or by librarians who had recommended them (Brostrom, 1995; Madden, 1991; Kaplan, 2001). The results were considered valid only for New Jersey county public libraries.

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CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Sample

The New Jersey public libraries in Appendix A used as the sample in this study were selected by county status and location and by the availability of an online catalog and an interactive Website. The purposeful selection of these county library systems or public libraries as a sample was expected to provide a view of the range of New Jersey public libraries' services, materials, and policies provided for homeschoolers.

Methods of Investigation

A cover letter and three survey instruments were developed by the researcher to provide qualitative and quantitative information (see Appendices B, C, D, and E). The questionnaire and the checklists were designed to provide information on the services, materials, and policies provided for homeschoolers by each selected New Jersey county public library.

The Website Checklist (see Appendix B) was used to note the results of the search of county public library online Websites for some of the services and policies that were requested by homeschoolers. The existence of links for homeschoolers was also noted because links might be considered valuable to current homeschoolers.

The availability of many items requested by homeschoolers might not be observable on a library Website. Therefore, a questionnaire was sent to a representative at

each library (see Appendixes A, C, and D.) This person was the children's coordinator or library administrator for that New Jersey county public library. Each participant was previously contacted by the researcher by telephone and had agreed to participate in the survey.

The OPAC survey (see Appendix E) was designed to show the results of the count of the number of books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, and other items directly related to homeschooling that were observed in the researcher's search of the OPAC of each of the selected county public libraries. Books published since 2000 were further noted to indicate the currency of the materials.

Response Rate: Questionnaire

Twenty librarians were contacted by the researcher and agreed to complete and return the mailed questionnaire. Three volunteers received a second copy of the materials. A total of eighteen questionnaires were returned and used for the study, a response rate of ninety percent.

Adjustments

Since most volunteer participants did not know the number of homeschooling families served by the selected libraries, this variable was not available for analysis.

Data Coding

Microsoft Excel was used to create a spreadsheet to record and summarize the results from the questionnaire. Final results were listed on a copy of the questionnaire. *Microsoft Word* tables were used to list and summarize the results from the Website Content Analysis and the OPAC Observation. *Microsoft Excel* was used to determine the means and medians for the totals of the spreadsheets and to create the figures to illustrate

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the results of the checklists and questionnaire.

Variables

The dependent variables were the services and policies listed in the Website survey (see Appendix B) and questionnaire for librarians (see Appendix D) and the materials found by searching the OPAC for each county public library (see Appendix E). The perceived importance of the library services to homeschoolers was also a dependent variable and was compared to the number of services provided by that library.

Method of Analysis

The questions requiring a count were answered by using the summation tool in *Microsoft Excel* and in the *Microsoft Word* tables. The means and percentages were calculated using *Microsoft Excel.*

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1.

1) What public library services and policies were available to homeschooling families on New Jersey county public library Websites?

The data in Appendix F were the results of the content analysis of the Websites of the selected New Jersey county public libraries. One point was given for each item found in the search of the Website. Totals were given in Table 1 for the number of items observed on the Website for each library. Figure 1 and Figure 2 gave a graphic view of the diversity of Website offerings of the surveyed county public libraries.

Table 1 *Total Number of Services and Policies Found Through Library Websites*

Library	Number of Services
Atlantic	6
Bergen	6
Burlington	10
Camden	11
Cape May	5
Cumberland	7
Essex	6
Gloucester	7
Hudson	7
Hunterdon	11
Mercer	8
Middlesex	7
Monmouth	4
Morris	7
Ocean	9
Passaic	9
Somerset	8
Sussex	7
Union Elizabeth	6
Warren Phillipsburg	6

Figure 1.

Total Number of Selected Services and Policies Offered on Each Library's Website
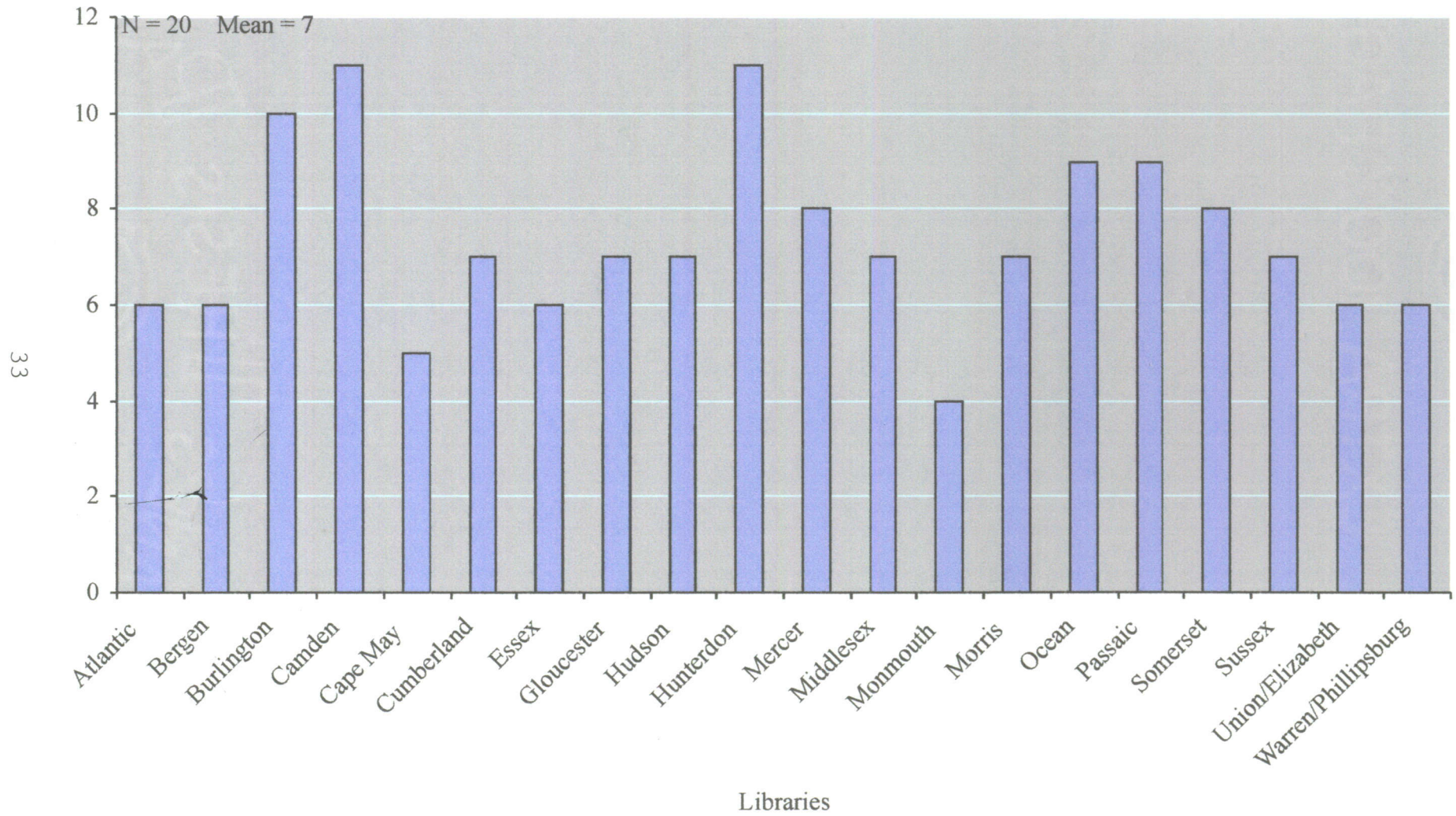
Figure 2.
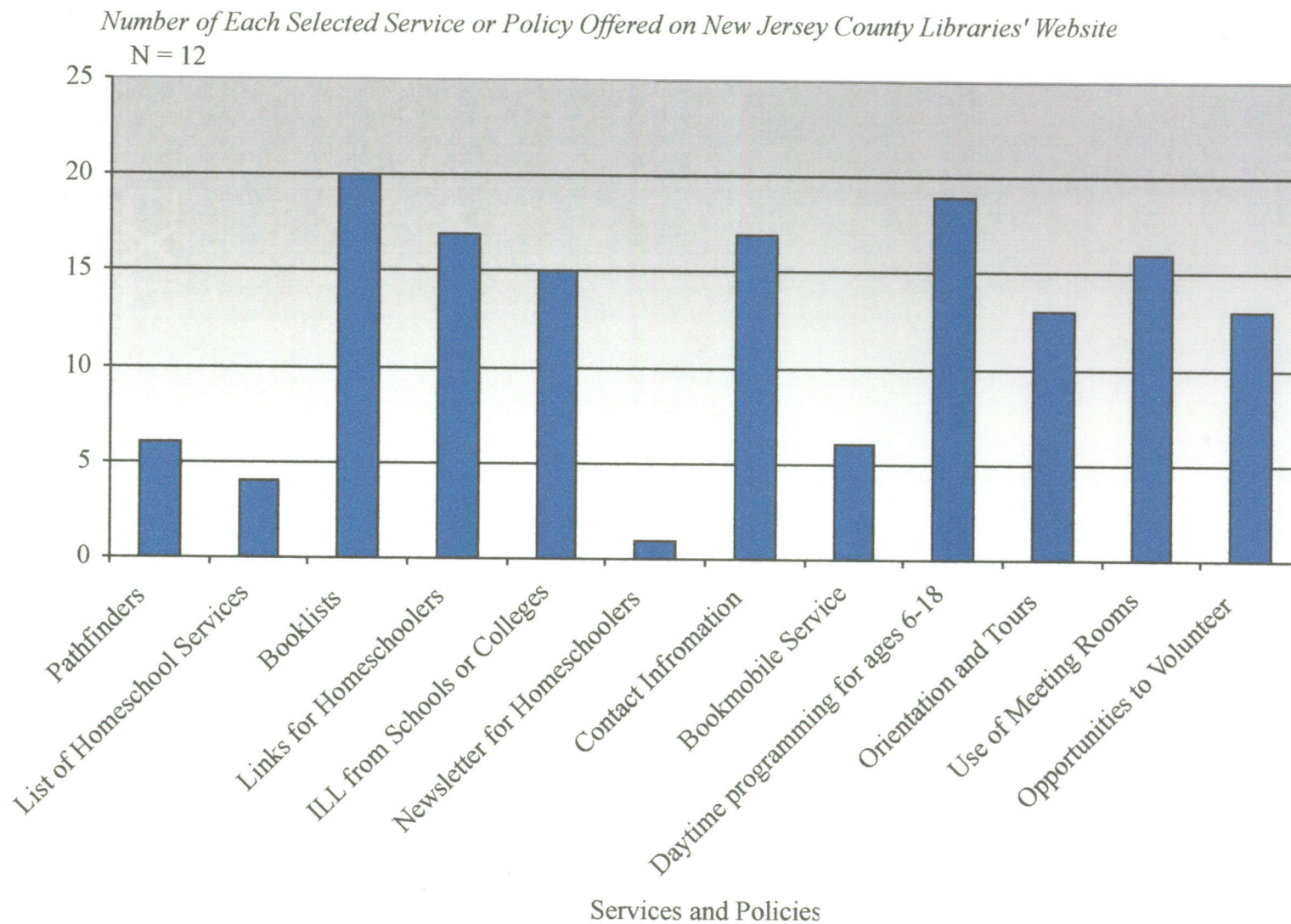
Number of Each Selected Service or Policy Offered on New Jersey County Libraries' Website

2) How many materials about homeschooling were available to homeschooling families through New Jersey county public libraries' OPACs?

Table 2 and Figure 3 show the results of the search for materials on the online catalogs of the New Jersey county public libraries used in this research. Totals for shared OPACs were listed only once, so Essex County and Hudson County were not included on the list because many of their libraries share the BCCLS catalog. Nonprint materials were too few to include in the table.

The number and percentages of books published since 2000 were also noted on Table 2 and in Figure 4.

The mean of the counts of individual book titles was 57; the median, 41. The mean of the counts of titles published since 2000 was 18; the median 17.

Table 2

*Counts of Homeschooling Book Titles from Each New Jersey County Public Library's
Online Public Access Catalog*

n = 18

Library	Group	Number sharing OPAC	Book Titles	Book Titles since 2000	Percentage of Current Titles
Atlantic County	ACLS	9	28	11	39
Bergen County	BCCLS	76	45	23	51
Burlington County	BCLS	17	98	21	21
Camden County	CCLS	16	107	39	36
Cape May County	CMCL	7	28	5	18
Cumberland County	CLUES	6	69	16	23
Gloucester County	GCLS	15	42	17	40
Hunterdon County	HCLS	14	31	4	13
Mercer County	MCLS	9	32	5	16
Middlesex County	LMxAC	27	152	61	40
Monmouth County	MCL	25	23	8	35
Morris County	MAIN	37	40	2	50
Ocean County	OCL	20	83	21	25
Passaic County	PALSPlus	17	66	31	47
Somerset County	SCLS	7	94	12	13
Sussex County	SCL	6	23	13	57
Union County	Elizabeth	4	41	17	41
Warren County	Phillipsburg	1	32	3	9

Figure 3.

Number of Book Titles on Homeschooling Listed in OPACs of New Jersey County Public Libraries

N= 18
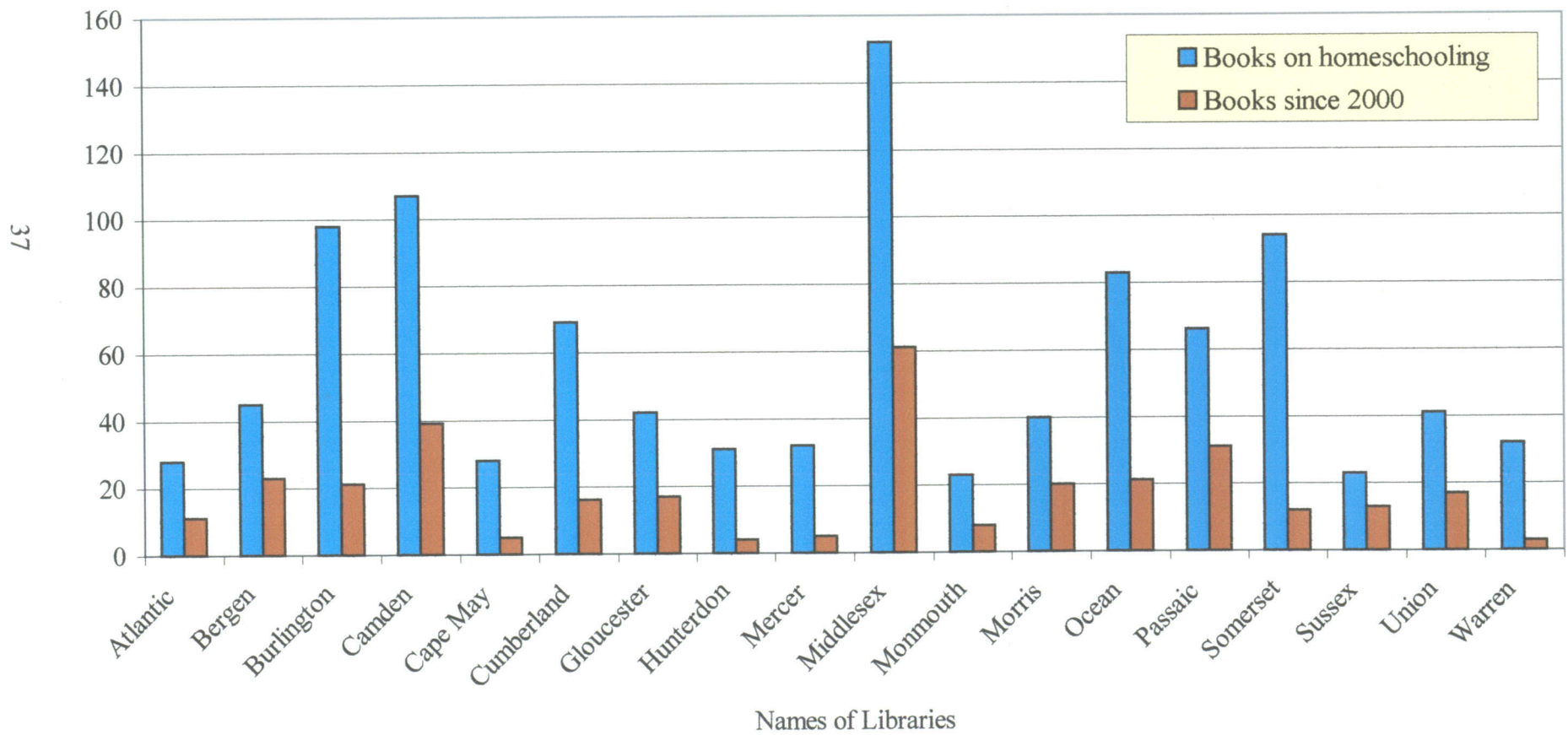
Figure 4.

Percent of Book Titles on Homeschooling Published Since 2000 Found on New Jersey County Library OPACs

N= 18   Mean = 32%
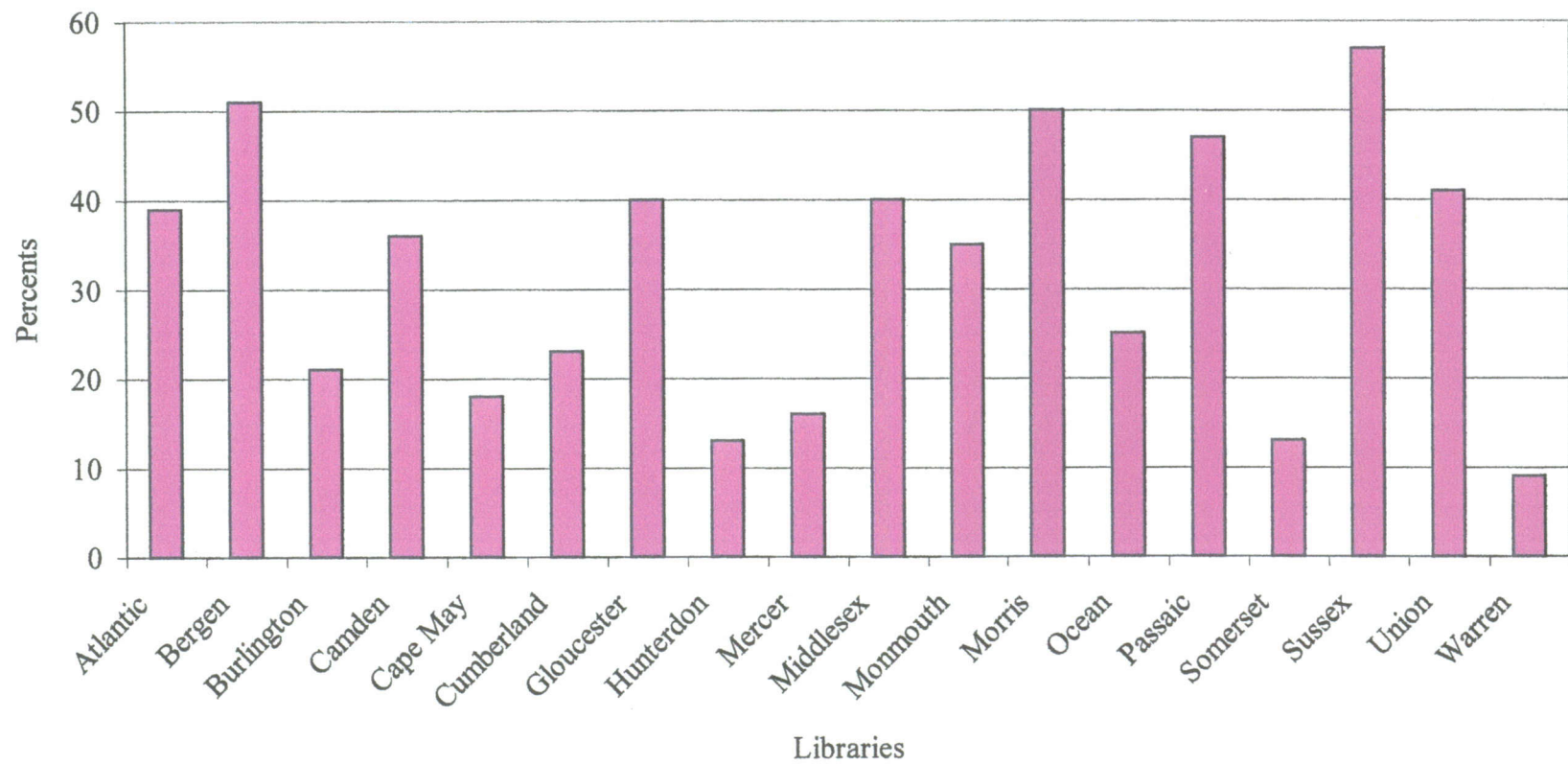
3) What public library services, materials, and policies available for

homeschooling families through the county public library but possibly were not

observable on the library Website or OPAC?

Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 and Figure 5 show the results of the Librarian Questionnaires

that were returned by the eighteen librarians who volunteered to participate in this

research. One librarian did not complete side two of the questionnaire. Responses in the

form of "?", "NA", and blank were not considered for this table. For complete data from

the questionnaire see Appendixes G, H, I,

Table 3

Results of Questionnaire on Library Services to Homeschoolers

n = 18   *Page 2 not completed by one respondent

This library			Item	Was this used by homeschoolers?	
Offers	Does not offer	Plans to offer	Services	Yes	No
11	7		Booklists for homeschoolers	7	0
4	14		Bookmobile service	3	0
2	15	1	Brochure listing homeschool services, materials, and policies	2	0
13	5		Children's play area	12	0
8	10		Daytime programming for youth ages 13-18	6	0
11	7		Daytime programming for youth ages 5-12.	9	0
12	6		Display space for projects	5	2
4	13		Homeschool information file	4	0
2	15		Librarian's attendance at homeschool meetings	1	3
5	13		Homeschooling pathfinders	5	0
17*	0		ILL from schools and colleges	10	0
0*	16		Newsletter to homeschoolers	0	0
15*	2		Orientation and tours	10	1
5*	12		Outreach to homeschoolers	5	0
7*	8	2	Website options and links	6	0

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Table 4

Results of Questionnaire on Library Materials for Homeschoolers

n = 17   (Page 2 not completed by one respondent)

This library			Item	Was this used by homeschoolers?	
Offers	Does not offer	Plans to offer	Materials	Yes	No
3	13		Curriculum guides	3	0
0	17		Circulating textbooks	0	0
0	17		Circulating science equipment	0	0
0	17		Circulating math manipulatives	0	0
3	14		Circulating homeschool curricula	2	0
5	11	1	Homeschooling periodicals	4	1
17	0		Juvenile and YA nonfiction audiovisual materials	13	0
17	0		Non–English materials	7	0
14	3		Special needs materials	7	0

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Table 5

Results of Questionnaire on Library Policies for Homeschoolers

n = 18

This library			Item	Was this used by homeschoolers?	
Offers	Does not offer	Plans	Policies	Yes	No
6	10		Library/homeschool liaison	6	0
3	14		Educator's privileges or cards for homeschoolers	1	0
1	15		Extended loan periods for homeschoolers	1	0
2	13		Interlibrary loan extended privileges for homeschoolers	2	0
3	13		Invitation to homeschoolers to purchase withdrawn materials	1	0
11	7		Library volunteering opportunities	5	2
17	1		Consideration of Homeschoolers' requests for materials	11	0
15	3		Use of meeting rooms	10	3

Table 6

Sample	Services	Materials	Policies	Totals
				Sample Totals
Number	15	9	8	32
1	7	3	2	12
2	6	3	3	12
3	6	3	3	12
4	3	2	1	6
5	5	5	4	14
6	2	0	3	5
7	10	6	3	19
8	8	3	5	16
9	10	4	4	18
10	8	3	3	14
11	4	3	1	8
12	6	2	3	11
13	2	3	1	6
14	9	6	3	18
15	9	4	3	16
16	11	4	5	20
17	4	2	6	12
18	5	3	3	11
Mean	6	3	3	12

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Figure 5.

Totals of Services, Materials, and Policies for Reponses to Librarian Questionnaire

n = 18
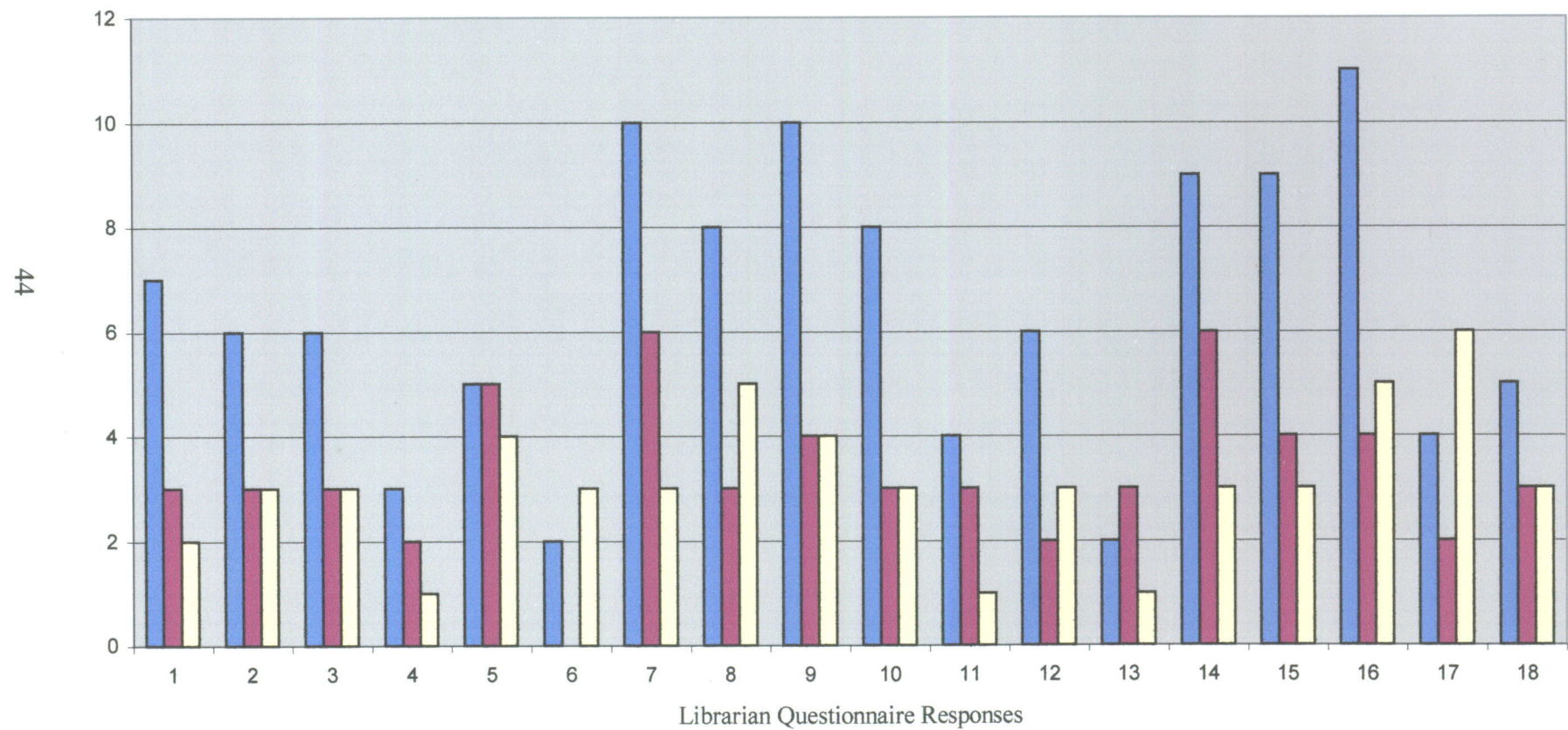
Research Question 4

4) What were the perceptions of some public librarians concerning homeschooling families and library services to them?

Question Three of the questionnaire asked, "Approximately how many member homeschooling families are served by your online catalog?"

The response totals were given in Table 7

Table 7

Report of Approximate Number of Member Homeschooling Families Served by a County Public Library's Online Catalog

n = 18

Unknown	Less than 50	50-200	More than 200
13	2	3	0

Question Four of the questionnaire asked, "Has service to homeschoolers been a topic of staff training in your library?" Table 8 gave the totals of the responses.

Table 8

Availability of Training for Public Library Staff to Work with Homeschoolers

n = 18

Yes	No	Unknown
3	14	1

Question Six of the questionnaire asked the librarian to complete the sentence "Services to homeschoolers are". Table 9 summarized the number of responses to each completion.

Table 9

Librarians' Perception of a Library's Attitude Toward Service to Homeschoolers

n = 18

Services to homeschoolers are	
Not an important part of our library services.	1
An important part of our library services.	3
Included in our general services.	13

Question Seven of the Questionnaire asked librarians to respond to the question "What benefits, if any, have you seen from your services to homeschoolers?"

Eight librarians responded. Four responded that homeschoolers used the library's resources, and one offered a "club" to bring homeschoolers together to share experience. Two librarians said that homeschoolers were appreciative of a welcoming library, and two explained that homeschoolers did not attend special programs and might not identify themselves.

Question Eight asked librarians to respond to the question "What concerns have you encountered in your service to homeschoolers?"

There were eleven sets of responses. Seven respondents said that it was difficult to identify homeschoolers in the library or to reach out to them in the community. Four respondents said that homeschoolers who did come into the library often requested outdated materials. One reported that homeschoolers were not much different than other patrons, and one said that homeschoolers were adept at using the library and its resources and might be using the online services instead of coming in to ask for assistance.

Question Nine asked the librarian to list other services, if any, that were used by

or offered to homeschoolers at the library.

Nine respondents replied to this question. Three respondents expressed the idea that all of the library's services, materials, and programs were available for homeschoolers. Two librarians named book discussion groups as favorite activities. One librarian said that the library gave the homeschoolers the encyclopedia when it was replaced, and another librarian reported trying to order requested titles. One library had a parents club and had selected materials shelved and labeled for homeschoolers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A Summary of the Study

Public library service to homeschoolers was described and recommended by Brostrom (1995), Madden (1991), Cohen (2000), Campbell (2001), and Stoever (2004). The purpose of this study was to determine if homeschooling families were being adequately served by the county public library systems of New Jersey. A quantitative analysis was conducted by identifying and tabulating the services, materials, and policies suggested in the research and made available to homeschooling families served by twenty county public library systems of New Jersey. The Website and online catalog of each system were searched using checklists developed by the researcher (see Appendices B and E). A questionnaire (see Appendix D) developed by the researcher was completed by representatives of eighteen of the selected libraries (see Appendix A). The data were collected on spreadsheets (see Appendices F, G, H, and I), on figures using *MicrosoftExcel,* and in tables using *MicrosoftExcel* and *MicrosoftWord.*

The eighteen surveyed libraries had services, materials, and policies available to homeschoolers as members of the general public. The numbers of homeschooling materials varied, as did the percentages of available book titles published since 2000. While a total of eight of the surveyed New Jersey county public libraries offered better than average total service for homeschoolers, four counties consistently reported excellent service. The other ten county libraries needed to improve the services,

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materials, and

policies they offered. The services, policies, and special materials suggested specifically

for homeschoolers were not available according to seventeen of the eighteen librarians

surveyed.

Discussion of Results and Conclusions

Research Question 1: Website Content Analysis

Research Question 1 asked, " What public library services and policies were

available to homeschooling families on New Jersey county public library Websites?" A

point was given for each service or policy found on the selected Website. The library

systems in Camden and Hunterdon Counties scored eleven of twelve points and

Burlington County Library scored ten points. The average number of points scored was

seven, and seven of the twenty public libraries scored above average (see Figure 1).

Sixty-five percent of county public libraries offered average or below average selected

services and policies through their Websites.

Figure 2 illustrated the popularity of booklists and programming for children as

services for the patrons. Homeschoolers considered both of these as preferred services

(Brostrom, 1995, p.19). Links to helpful sites, interlibrary loans, a contact person,

information on orientation and tours, and information on the use of the meeting rooms

were available through more than half of the Websites. The daytime programs for

children over five were scheduled for late afternoon, a time that might accommodate

school children. The Youth Services Coordinator was considered a contact person for this

checklist, and only one library did not have this contact listed by name or number. Six

libraries offered a bookmobile. Thirteen of the twenty libraries offered information on

library orientation and tours. Instruction in the use of modern libraries and their automation systems should benefit homeschoolers and other patrons. The opportunity to volunteer for Friends of the Library group was included in the tally for volunteer opportunities. Thirteen library Websites had information that would encourage someone to volunteer at the library. Cohen (2000, p.242) had reported that the library was the top volunteer place for homeschooled teens. Services specific to homeschoolers, such as a list of homeschool services or links, were available through only four of the Websites, and a newsletter was found on only one Website. These would need to be maintained and updated regularly to be reliable and useful.

It was possible that various large libraries within a library system offered some of the selected services and policies, but the information was not available on the system's Website. Access to most of the information on the selected Websites was available without a password or card number. Librarians and homeschoolers could find this information without belonging to the individual library.

Research Question 2: The OPAC Search

Table 1 showed the number of books titles on homeschooling that were listed in the OPAC of each of eighteen county public library systems. The mean number of titles of 57 was influenced by the 152 titles listed in the Middlesex County OPAC. The median of 41 titles gave a more accurate view of the range of number of titles on homeschooling.

The investigation of the currency of the titles indicated that Middlesex County offered the most (61) titles published since 2000. Camden County (39) listed the next highest total. While these counts translated into a lower percentage of the totals listed for these counties, the numbers were well above the mean of 18 and the median of 17 current

titles. Bergen, Morris, and Sussex Counties had fifty percent or more of the listed titles published since 2000. The numbers of current titles for Bergen (23) and Morris (20) were more than the median of 17 titles. This might indicate that there had been more recent interest in homeschooling titles and that some earlier titles had been withdrawn. It was interesting to note that Hunterdon County had below average listings for homeschooling book titles (31) and yet had a high score on the services available for homeschoolers. Perhaps the Website was more developed than the OPAC in terms of the indicators used for this study. It was also possible that service to their patrons was important, but the lack of a demand for homeschooling texts did not warrant the purchase of current materials. The availability of interlibrary loans would make it easier for homeschoolers to borrow materials from other libraries and make purchasing the titles optional. Burlington County Library System and Camden County Library System scored well in both the Website Content Analysis and the OPAC count of homeschooling titles.

Research Question 3: The Librarian Questionnaire

Twenty questionnaires were sent to selected librarians in the county public libraries. These librarians had agreed to complete and return the mailed questionnaire anonymously. Most of the items on the questionnaire were suggested by Brostrom (1995) and by Madden (1991). Eighteen questionnaires were returned and used to compile the spreadsheets found in Appendices G, H, and I.

There were fifteen services listed on the Services section of the checklist on the questionnaire (see Table 3 and Appendix G). The most frequently provided services were booklists, a children's play area, daytime programming for children, interlibrary loans, orientations, and display place for projects. These items were also the most likely to be

offered to anyone using the library. The least frequently provided services were a brochure listing homeschool services, a newsletter for homeschoolers, an information file for homeschoolers, and attendance at home school organization meetings by a librarian. These services might be most often used only by homeschoolers and were perceived to have been used at the libraries. The services offered but reportedly not used were the opportunities to display students' work, a librarian's attendance at homeschool meetings, and orientations for homeschoolers. These services involved outreach and advertising that would have had to be done as frequently as new homeschoolers became members of the library.

Table 4 and Appendix H showed the results of the Materials section of the Librarian Questionnaire. All of the responding librarians listed the availability of Juvenile Nonfiction audio-visual materials and of non-English materials. These would also have been available to all patrons. The fourteen libraries with special needs materials would have had them available for all patrons. Five librarians reported that the library subscribed to homeschooling periodicals. Three librarians reported that the libraries offered homeschool curricula or guides. No one reported offering textbooks, science equipment, or math manipulatives for circulation. Extra funding might be necessary to consider offering these special materials, but they might be appreciated by the homeschoolers.

Table 5 and Appendix I showed that the most frequently offered policies reported by the librarians were opportunities to volunteer, consideration of requests for acquisitions, and use of meeting rooms. Six librarians reported that there was a library liaison for homeschoolers. The absence in all but a few libraries of policies such as an

educator's card and privileges, extended loans, and invitations to purchase withdrawn materials indicated that homeschooling parents were not offered these policies or had not requested them. It was encouraging to note that sixteen respondents had considered homeschoolers' requests when purchasing materials. It was surprising to see the lack of cooperation between libraries and homeschoolers in the purchasing of withdrawn materials. It was possible that homeschoolers who purchased withdrawn materials had done so at library book sales.

Table 6 summarized the numbers of services, materials, and policies for homeschoolers that the respondents to the Librarian Questionnaire indicated were available in each selected county public library (see Appendix A). Six libraries offered one half of the thirty-two items listed in the questionnaire. This could indicate that the New Jersey county public libraries did not have adequate services, materials, and policies specifically for homeschoolers.

Research Question 4: Perceptions of Library Service to Homeschoolers

Question Three of the Librarian Questionnaire asked, "Approximately how many member homeschooling families are served by your online catalog?" The responses of the eighteen participants were given in Table 7.

The thirteen responses of "Unknown" to this question emphasized the problem of identifying homeschooling families who used the library in person or online. This suggested that librarians might have difficulty planning services and policies and purchasing materials for homeschooling families because they did not know how many were using the library. Three of the librarians indicated a large population of homeschooling families. Since the questionnaire was anonymous, it was not possible to

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align these responses with the libraries that had the highest scores on the Website and OPAC surveys. It was encouraging to note that five of the respondents had some idea of the number of homeschoolers using their services.

Question Four of the questionnaire asked, "Has service to homeschoolers been a topic of staff training in your library?" Table 8 gave the totals of the responses.

Fourteen of the respondents indicated that staff training for serving the homeschooling families had not been provided in the library. Training of staff would have been an efficient tool for serving homeschooling families. Cohen (2000, p. 11) wrote that access to a good library was often the tool for success for a home educator. Stoever (2004) was surprised to have had librarians interested in hearing what she had to say at a librarians' workshop on homeschool issues. Improved training might be the key to more awareness of home schooling families so they can be served more completely. It was conceivable that more homeschooling families would have been recognized and involved if the staff had been better trained.

Question Six of the questionnaire asked the librarian to complete the sentence "Services to homeschoolers are". The totaled responses in Table 9 and Appendix J indicated that fourteen of the eighteen respondents considered their service to homeschoolers to be a part of their general service. Three librarians indicated that the library had a special interest in serving homeschoolers. The responses mirrored the suggestions in the checklist answers that homeschoolers were expected to use the services, materials, and policies offered to the overall library membership. Fourteen of the eighteen respondents did not appear to consider homeschooling families' specialized needs to be appropriate for extra library services. The librarian who reported the highest

54

number (20) of services, materials, and policies for homeschoolers also indicated that services to homeschoolers were an important part of the library's services.

Question Seven of the Questionnaire asked librarians to respond to the question "What benefits, if any, have you seen from your services to homeschoolers?"

Six of the eight librarians who responded to Question Seven described a positive experience with homeschooling families. This was one-third of the librarians who had completed the questionnaire. It did not appear that the benefits of the services to homeschoolers were obvious to all of the surveyed librarians.

Eleven respondents expressed their concerns in their replies to Question Eight. The difficulty in identifying and finding homeschoolers was the expressed concern of seven of the respondents. Advertising and outreach were needed but involved time and money. The other major concern was that some homeschoolers requested materials that the library no longer had or usually had difficulty obtaining. The comment that homeschoolers were now using the Internet and online services provided both encouragement that the library could provide these services and realization that some homeschoolers would be even less likely to make the library aware of their presence.

Question Nine asked the librarian to list other services, if any, that were used by or offered to homeschoolers at the library.

The nine respondents to this question described a range of services to homeschoolers. Three were very definite that homeschoolers had benefited from the overall service provided by the library. Two librarians named book discussion groups as favorite activities. This was encouraging. It was also important to know that a librarian thought it was important that requested titles were acquired when possible. Three

suggestions to public libraries were provided: give replaced sets of encyclopedia to homeschoolers, offer a special club for the parents of homeschooling families, and develop a labeled and shelved collection for homeschoolers.

Homeschooling families were being served by the county public library systems of New Jersey, but the degree of service varied considerably. The survey results showed that four libraries offered more services and materials than the others did. Eight other libraries offered average or slightly above average service. The other six libraries appeared to need to make changes if it was found that the homeschooling families they served would benefit from improved service, materials and policies. If homeschoolers were more vocal in their needs and more training were provided for library staff, there would be more successful collaboration between homeschooling families and public libraries.

Recommendations

Homeschooling is a legal and educational option for families in New Jersey. The public library should be a partner in the education of all children, and the homeschooling family is already contributing toward the costs of many public libraries. Therefore, it is recommended that

1) Librarians in public libraries should increase their efforts to contact homeschooling families and groups to ascertain their needs and opportunities for cooperation.

2) Research needs to be completed using an online survey tool be developed and distributed to determine and evaluate the services to homeschooling families currently being offered by a larger sample of New Jersey public libraries.

3) Research using an online survey needs to be completed to determine the needs of homeschooling groups who might use New Jersey public libraries.

4) Staff training programs for cooperation with homeschooling families should be offered in public libraries and, when feasible, be implemented in state and local training sessions.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

List of Libraries

LIST OF LIBRARIES

County	OPAC Group	Library	Contact Person
Atlantic	Atlantic County Library System	Galloway Township Branch	Pat Morrow
	ACLS	306 East Jimmie Leeds Road	609- 652-2352
	http://www.atlanticlibrary.org	Galloway, NJ 08205	
Bergen	Bergen County Cooperative	Teaneck Public	Amy Sears
	Library Services: BCCLES	840 Teaneck Road	201- 837-4171
	http://www.bccls.org	Teaneck, New Jersey 07666	
Burlington	Burlington County Library System	Westampton Branch	Susan Frasier
	BCLS and BLINC	5 Pioneer Boulevard	609-267-9660
	http://www.burlco.lib.nj.us	Westampton, NJ 08060	
Camden	Camden County Library System	South County Regional Branch	Diana Joniec
	CCLS	35 Coopers Folly Road	856-753-2537
	http://www.camden.lib.nj.us	Atco, New Jersey 08004	
Cape May	Cape May County Library System	Cape May Courthouse Branch	Judy Jarner

	CMCLS	DN2030, 4 Moore Road	609-463-6354
	http://www.cape-may.county.lib.nj.us	Cape May Court House, NJ 08210	
Cumberland	Cumberland Libraries United	Vineland Free Public Library	Helen Cowan Margiotti
	Electronic System: CLUES	1058 East Landis Avenue	856-794-4244
	http://www.clueslibs.org	Vineland, NJ 08360	
Essex	BCCLS	The Newark Public Library	Michelle Cappetta
	http://www.bccls.org	5 Washington Street P.O. Box 630	973-733-7784
		Newark, NJ 07101-0630	
Gloucester	Gloucester County Library System	Mullica Hill Branch	Donna Bensen
	GCLS	398 Wolfert Station Road	856-223-6000
	http://www.gcls.org	Mullica Hill, NJ 08062	
Hudson	Jersey City Free Public Library	Jersey City Free Public Library	Sonia Araujo
	JCFPL	472 Jersey Avenue	201 547-4549
	http://www.jclibrary.org	Jersey City, NJ, 07302	
Hunterdon	Hunterdon County Library	Hunterdon County Library Headquarters	Adrienne Gardner

	HCL	314 State Road 12	908-788-1444
	http://www.hunterdon.lib.nj.us	Flemington, NJ 08822	
Mercer	Mercer County Library System	Lawrence Headquarters Branch	Laura Groniger
	MCL	2751 Brunswick Pike	609)-882-9246
	http://www.mcl.org	Lawrenceville, NJ 08648	
Middlesex	Libraries of Middlesex Automation	East Brunswick Public Library	Carol Phillips
	Consortium LMxAC	2 Jean Walling Civic Center	732-390-6950
	http://www.lmxac.org	East Brunswick, New Jersey 08816	
Monmouth	Monmouth County Library	Monmouth County Library Headquarters	Constance Lyons
	http://www.monmouth.lib.nj.us	125 Symmes Drive	732-431-7220
		Manalapan, NJ 07726	
Morris	Morris Automated Information Network	Morris County Library	Princess Thomas
	MAIN	30 East Hanover Ave.	973-285-6930
	http://web2.morris.org	Whippany, NJ 07981	
Ocean	Ocean County Library	Long Beach Island Branch	Elise Weber

	OCL	217 S. Central Avenue	609- 494-2480
	http://www.oceancountylibrary.org	Surf City, NJ 08008	
Passaic	Passaic County Library System	Wayne Public Library	Melanie Raymond
	PALS	61 Valley Road	973-694-4272
	http://www.palsplus.org	Wayne, NJ 07470	
Somerset	Somerset County Library System	Somerset County Library Headquarters	Marna Elliott
	SCLS	1 Vogt Drive	908-526-4016
	http://www.somerset.lib.nj.us	Bridgewater, NJ 08807	
Sussex	Sussex County Library System	Main Branch	Debbie Mole
	SCLS	Rt. 655	973-948-3660
	http://www.sussexcountylibrary.org	Frankford Twp., NJ	
Union County		Free Public Library of Elizabeth	Carolyn Geeding
	http://www.elizpl.org	11 South Broad Street	908) 354-6060
		Elizabeth, NJ 07202	
Warren County		Phillipsburg Free Public Library	Ann Derenzis

APPENDIX B

Website Content Analysis Survey Instrument

Website Content Analysis

Name of Library _____

Number of libraries sharing the online catalog _____

Services available on Website

____ Homeschooling pathfinders

____ Listing of the libraries' homeschool services, materials, and policies

____ Booklists for homeschoolers

____ Links available for homeschoolers

____ ILL from schools and colleges for homeschoolers

____ Newsletter, print or online, offered to homeschoolers

____ Contact information for library/homeschool liaison

Services available and listed on Website

____ Bookmobile service to homeschoolers

____ Daytime programming for youth ages 6-18

____ Orientation and tours offered to homeschoolers

Policies explained on Website

_____ Use of meeting rooms

_____ Opportunities to volunteer

APPENDIX C

Cover Letter to Librarians

Patricia A. Collins
507 West Broad Street
Gibbstown, NJ 08027

Cover Letter to Librarians

March 2005

Ms.
Address

Dear Ms.,

Thank you for speaking to me last week. Realizing that the role of the public library has become more important for some homeschoolers, I am preparing a master's thesis on that topic for the Public Librarianship course at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. My research will investigate the services, materials, and policies for homeschooling families offered by the county library systems of New Jersey.

Please help me by completing the enclosed survey and returning it in the accompanying envelope. The envelope is addressed to my friend who will open and save all of the surveys. This is to help assure your anonymity. Please mail the postcard separately when you have sent the survey.

If you have any questions, need more information, or would like a copy of the results, please contact me at 856-223-6028 during the day or e-mail me at pcollins@gcls.org. You are also welcome to contact Dr. Marilyn Shontz, my thesis advisor, at shontz@rowan.edu.

Your cooperation is very much appreciated. Thank you, also, on behalf of the homeschooling families of New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Patricia Collins

APPENDIX D

Librarian Questionnaire

SURVEY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

1. How many public and academic libraries share an online catalog and circulating materials with your library? _____

2. Approximately how many member customers are in the area served by your online catalog? Please check one answer. _____Unknown

    _____Less than 100,000 _____ 100,000-200,000 _____ More than 200,000

3. Approximately how many member homeschooling families are served by your online catalog? Please check one answer. _____Unknown

    _____Less than 50 _____50-200 _____More than 200

4. Has service to homeschoolers been a topic of staff training in your library?
    Yes ___ No ___ Unknown ___

5. Listed in the chart below are some services, materials, and policies that have been mentioned in homeschool and library literature as requested by homeschoolers. Please check the appropriate box on the left for each item as related to your library system. To the right of the item, mark whether or not the service, material, or policy seems to be used by homeschoolers. Check NA if the use is unknown. Please use the back of the survey for comments on any of these items.

This library			Item	Is this used by homeschoolers?		
Offers	Does not offer	Plans to offer	Services	Yes	No	NA
			Booklists for homeschoolers			
			Bookmobile service			
			Brochure listing homeschool services, materials, and policies			
			Children's play area			
			Daytime programming for youth ages 13-18			
			Daytime programming for youth ages 5-12.			
			Display space for projects done by homeschoolers			

This library			Item	Used by homeschoolers?		
Offers	Does not offer	Plans to offer	Services (Continued)	Yes	No	NA
			Homeschool information file or binder available			
			Librarian's attendance at homeschool meetings			
			Homeschooling pathfinders on Website			
			ILL from schools and colleges			
			Newsletter (print or online) to homeschoolers			
			Orientation and tours for homeschoolers			
			Outreach to homeschoolers			
			Website options and links for homeschoolers			

This library			Item	Used by homeschoolers?		
Offers	Does not offer	Plans to offer	Materials	Yes	No	NA
			Curriculum guides from local schools			
			Circulating local school textbooks			
			Circulating science equipment			
			Circulating math manipulatives			
			Circulating homeschool curricula			
			Homeschooling periodicals			
			Juvenile and YA nonfiction audiovisual materials			
			Non–English materials			
			Special needs materials			

This library			Item	Used by homeschoolers?		
Offers	Does not offer	Plans	Policies	Yes	No	NA
			Library/homeschool liaison			
			Educator's privileges or cards for homeschoolers			
			Extended loan periods for homeschoolers			
			Inter-Library Loan extended privileges for homeschoolers			
			Invitation to homeschoolers to purchase withdrawn materials			
			Library volunteering opportunities for homeschoolers			
			Consideration of homeschoolers' requests for acquisition of materials			
			Use of meeting rooms by homeschoolers			

6. Please check one.

Services to homeschoolers are

_____ not an important part of our library services.

_____ an important part of our library services.

_____ included in our general services.

Please answer the following questions if applicable to your library.

7. What benefits, if any, have you seen from your services to homeschoolers?

8. What concerns have you encountered in your service to homeschoolers?

9) Please list other services, if any, that are used by or offered to homeschoolers at your library.

Thank you so much for your help.

Patricia Collins
507 West Broad Street
Gibbstown, NJ 08027
856-223-6028
pcollins@gcls.org

APPENDIX E

OPAC Survey

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Counts of homeschooling titles observed in each county public library's Online Public Access Catalog. Totals for shared OPACs were listed only once.

Library	Group	Number sharing OPAC	Books	Books since 2000	Periodicals	Audio-Visuals	Other Items
Atlantic County							
Bergen County							
Burlington County							
Camden County							
Cape May County							
Cumberland County							
Essex County							
Gloucester County							
Hudson County							
Hunterdon County							
Mercer County							
Middlesex County							
Monmouth County							
Morris County							
Ocean County							
Passaic County							
Salem County							
Somerset County							
Sussex County							

Union County							
Warren County							

APPENDIX F

Results of Website Content Analysis

Services and Policies Observed on the County Public Library Websites

New Jersey County Public Library	Number of libraries sharing Website	Pathfinders for homeschoolers	List of homeschool services	Booklists for homeschoolers	Links for homeschoolers	ILL from schools or colleges	Newsletter for homeschoolers	Contact information	Bookmobile service	Daytime programming for youth	Orientation and tours	Use of meeting rooms	Opportunities to volunteer	Totals of services offered
Atlantic	9	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	6
Bergen	76	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Burlington	7	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	10
Camden	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	11
Cape May	7	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
Cumberland/Vineland	6	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
Essex/Newark	10	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	6
Gloucester	15	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	7

Hudson/Jersey City	13	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	<u>7</u>
Hunterdon	14	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	<u>11</u>
Mercer	9	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	<u>8</u>
Middlesex/East Brunswick	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	<u>7</u>
Monmouth	27	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	<u>4</u>
Morris	37	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	<u>7</u>
Ocean	20	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	<u>9</u>
Passaic	17	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	<u>9</u>
Somerset	7	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	<u>8</u>
Sussex	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	<u>7</u>
Union/Elizabeth	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	<u>6</u>
Warren/Phillipsburg	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	<u>6</u>
Totals		<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>	

APPENDIX G

Services Data from Librarian Questionnaire

sample	No. of libraries	members	hs families	training?		booklists		used		Bookmobile		used	
	SERVICES			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	10	100	50	1			1			1		1	
2	10	200	unknown		1	1		1			1		
3	17	300	100		1					1		1	
4	1	200	50		1	1		1			1		
5	7	200	100	U		1					1		
6	7	100	unknown		1		3				1		
7	1	100	unknown		1	1		1			1		
8		200	unknown		1	1				1			
9	5	100	unknown		1	1					1		
10	1	unknown	unknown		1	1		1			1		
11	73	200	unknown		1		1				1		
12	23	200	unknown		1	1		1			1		
13	1	< 100	100		1	1					1		
14	37	200	unknown	1		1		1			1		
15	2	200	unknown	1		1		1		1		1	
16	7	200	unknown		1	1					1		
17	300+	unknown	unknown		1						1		
18	37	200	unknown		1		1				1		
Total				3	14	11	7	7	0	4	14	3	0

Survey of public library services to homeschooling families

Plans	Brochure		used		Play area		Used		Teen day		used		5-12 day		used	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		1			1		1			1				1		
		1			1		1			1			1		1	
		1			1		1			1			1		1	
		1				1				1				1		
		1			1					1				1		
		1			1		1			1			1		1	
		1			1		1		1		1		1		1	
		1			1		1		1		1		1		1	
1					1		1		1					1		
		1			1		1		1				1			
		1				1			1				1			
		1			1		1			1				1		
		1				1				1				1		
	1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1	
		1			1		1			1	1		1		1	
	1		1			1			1		1		1		1	
		1			1		1			1				1		
	1					1			1		1		1			
1	3	14	2	0	13	5	12	0	8	10	6	0	11	7	8	0

display		used		info file		used		meetings		used		pathfinders		used	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1		1		1		1			1				1		
1		1			1				1				1		
1		1			1				1				1		
	1				1				1				1		
1					1				1				1		
	1														
1		1		1		1			1		1		1		
1					1				1				1		
1					1			1			1	1		1	
	1				1				1		1	1			
1					1				1				1		
1					1				1				1		
	1				1				1				1		
1		1			1							1		1	
	1		1	1		1			1			1		1	
1			1	1		1		1		1		1		1	
	1				1				1				1	1	
1					1				1				1		
12	6	5	2	4	13	4	0	2	14	1	3	5	12	5	0

ILL		used		newsletter		used		orientation		used		outreach		used		Web links			used		
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Plans	Yes	No	Totals
1		1			1			1		1		1		1				1			7
1		1			1			1		1			1				1				6
1		1			1				1				1				1				6
1		1			1			1		1			1				1				3
1					1			1					1					1			5
																					2
1		1			1			1		1		1		1		1			1		10
1					1			1		1			1				1				8
1		1			1			1		1			1			1			1		10
1					1			1					1			1					8
1					1				1				1				1				4
1					1			1			1	1		1		1					6
1					1			1					1				1				2
1		1						1		1		1		1		1			1		9
1		1			1			1		1			1			1			1		9
1		1			1			1		1		1		1		1			1		11
1		1			1			1			1		1				1				4
1		1			1			1		1			1				1		1		5
17	0	11	0	0	16	0	0	15	2	10	2	5	12	5	0	7	8	2	6	0	

APPENDIX H

Materials Data from Librarian Questionnaire

	MATERIALS															
	guides		used		textbooks		used		science equipment		used		math manipulatives		used	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1		1				1				1				1		
2		1				1				1				1		
3		1				1				1				1		
4		1				1				1				1		
5	1		1			1				1				1		
6																
7	1		1			1				1				1		
8		1				1				1				1		
9		1				1				1				1		
10		1				1				1				1		
11		1				1				1				1		
12		1				1				1				1		
13		1				1				1				1		
14	1		1			1				1				1		
15		1				1				1				1		
16		1				1				1				1		
17						1				1				1		
18		1				1				1				1		
TOTAL	3	13	3	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	0

curricula		used		periodicals		used		JNF A-V		used		Non-English		used		Special needs		used		Totals
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	1				1			1		1		1		1		1		1		3
	1				1			1		1		1		1		1		1		3
	1				1			1		1		1				1				3
	1				1			1		1		1		1			1			2
1		1			1			1		1		1		1		1		1		5
																				0
1				1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		6
	1							1		1		1		1		1		1		3
	1			1		1		1		1		1				1				4
	1				1			1				1				1				3
	1				1			1				1				1				3
	1				1			1				1					1			2
	1				1			1		1		1				1		1		3
1		1		1			1	1				1				1				6
	1			1		1		1		1		1				1				4
	1			1		1		1		1		1				1				4
	1				1			1		1		1					1			2
					1			1		1		1		1		1		1		3
3	13	2	0	5	11	4	1	17	0	13	0	17	0	7	0	14	3	7	0	

APPENDIX I

Policies Data from Librarians Questionnaire

	POLICIES																	
	Liaison		used		educator's card		used		extended loans		used		ILL plus		used			
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
1	1		1			1				1				1				
2		1			1					1				1				
3	1		1			1				1				1				
4		1				1				1				1				
5		1			1													
6	1		1			1				1								
7																		
8					1		1			1				1				
9	1		1			1				1				1				
10		1				1				1			1		1			
11		1				1				1				1				
12		1				1				1				1				
13		1				1				1				1				
14	1		1			1				1				1				
15		1				1				1				1				
16	1		1			1				1				1				
17		1				1			1		1		1		1			
18		1				1				1				1				
Totals	6	10	6	0	3	14	1	0	1	15	1	0	2	13	2	0		

buy materials		used		volunteer		used		requests		used		meeting rooms		used		Totals
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Totals
	1			1		1		1				1		1		2
	1				1			1				1				3
	1				1			1		1		1		1		3
	1				1				1			1		1		1
				1				1				1				4
	1				1			1		1		1		1		3
				1		1		1		1		1		1		3
1				1				1				1				5
	1			1				1		1		1		1		4
	1			1				1					1		1	3
	1				1			1		1			1			1
	1			1			1	1		1		1			1	3
	1				1			1					1			1
	1				1			1		1		1		1		3
	1			1		1		1		1		1		1		3
1				1		1		1		1		1		1		5
1		1		1			1	1		1		1		1		6
	1			1		1		1		1		1			1	3
3	13	1	0	11	7	5	2	17	1	11	0	15	3	10	3	

APPENDIX J

Importance of Library Service to Homeschoolers

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	Services to homeschoolers			Totals from S, M, P
	not important	important	general	
1			1	12
2			1	12
3			1	12
4			1	6
5			1	14
6	1			5
7			1	19
8			1	16
9		1		18
10			1	14
11			1	8
12			1	11
13			1	6
14			1	18
15		1		16
16		1		20
17			1	12
18			1	11
				12