

LIBRARIANS AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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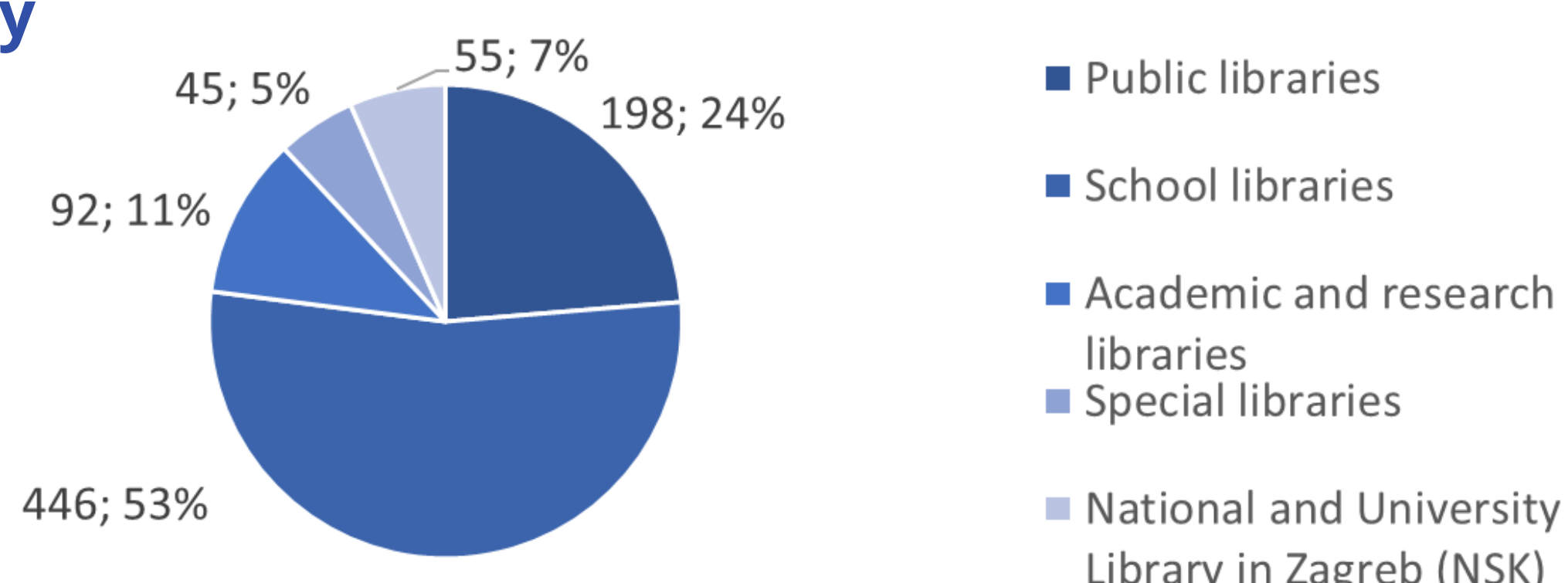
Since 2002, the **Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians in the Republic of Croatia (CSSU)** in National and University Library in Zagreb has been organizing continuing education programs in the physical environment, and since 2018, in order to make education more accessible throughout Croatia, it has introduced webinars. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 caused major and far-reaching changes in the library business - most of the training organized by CSSU took place at a distance.



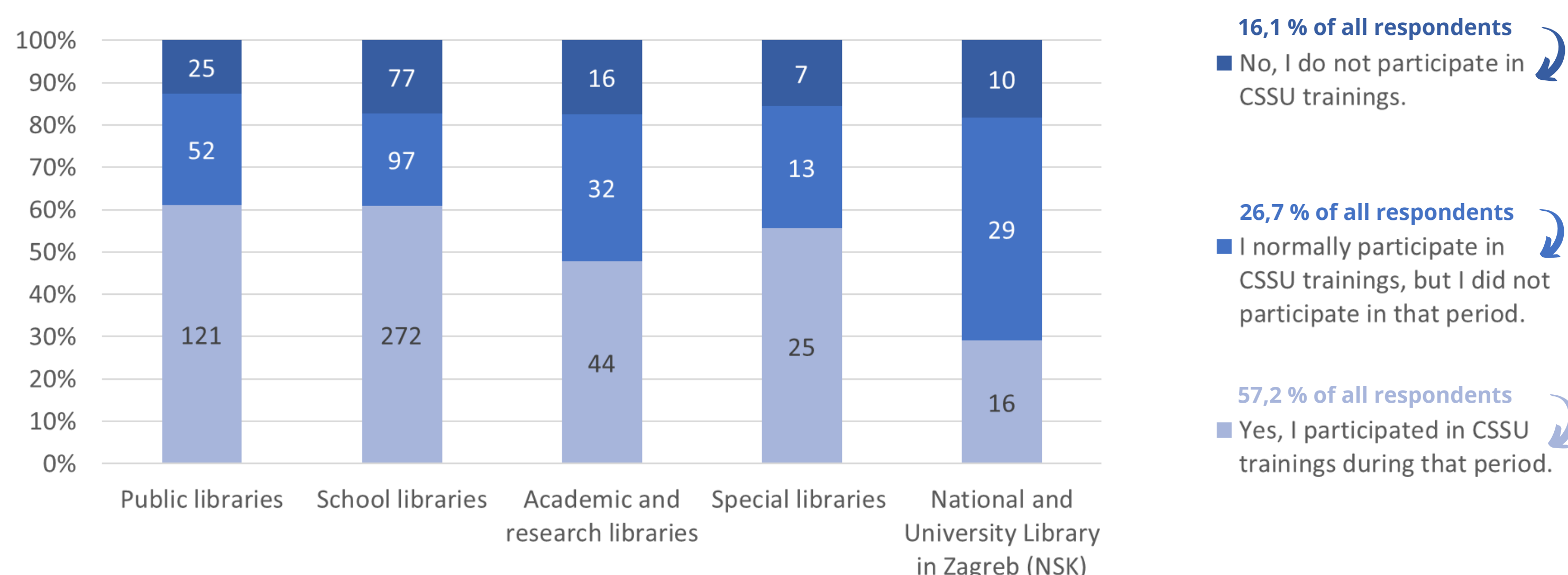
In 2021 CSSU conducted a survey on the attitudes and participation of the **Croatian librarian community** in continuing professional development during and before the pandemic and expectations for the future. The research period is from **1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021**. The survey involved **836 respondents** from all types of libraries.

Results

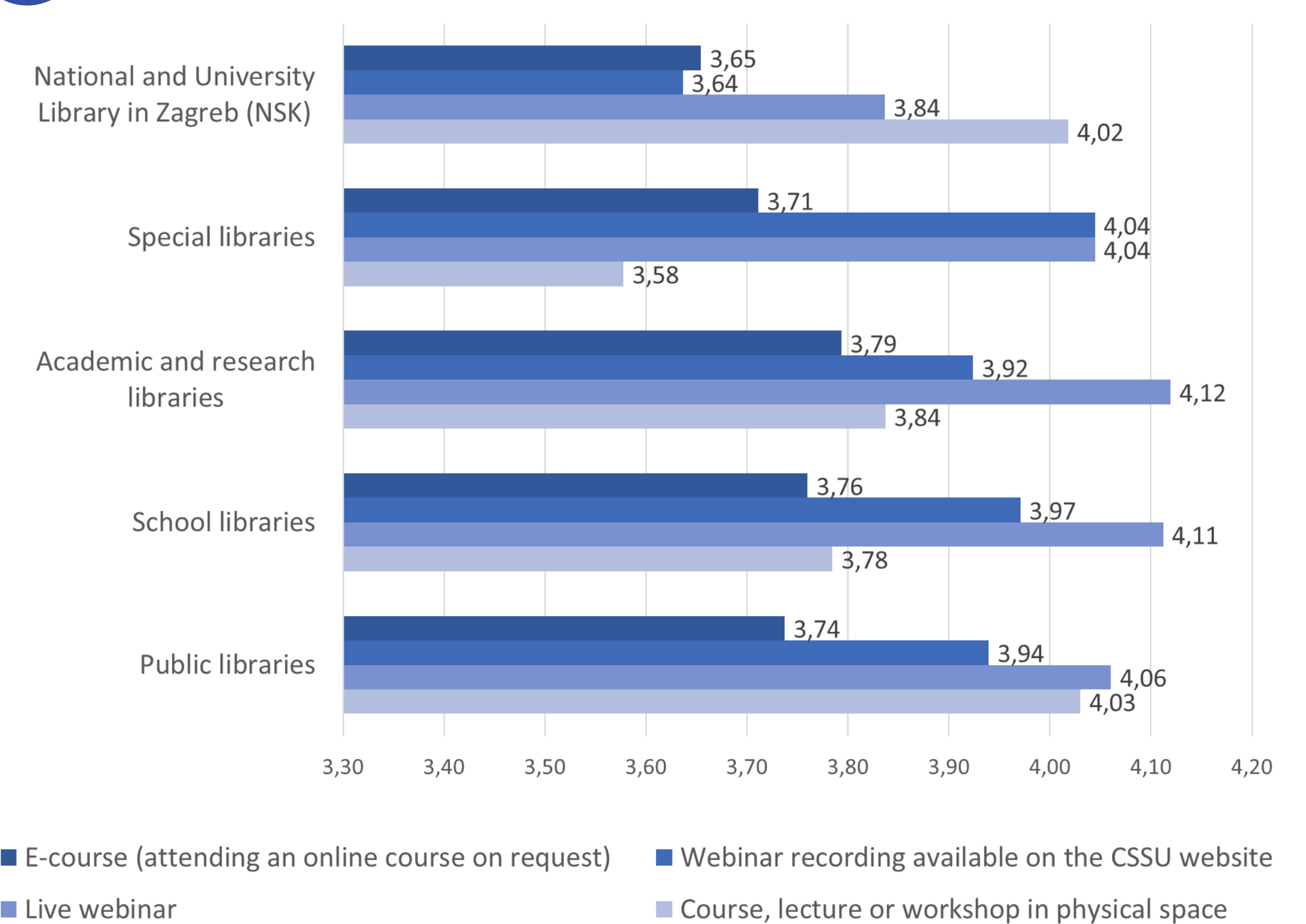
1 Library type



2 Did you participate in CSSU trainings from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021 (coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic)?



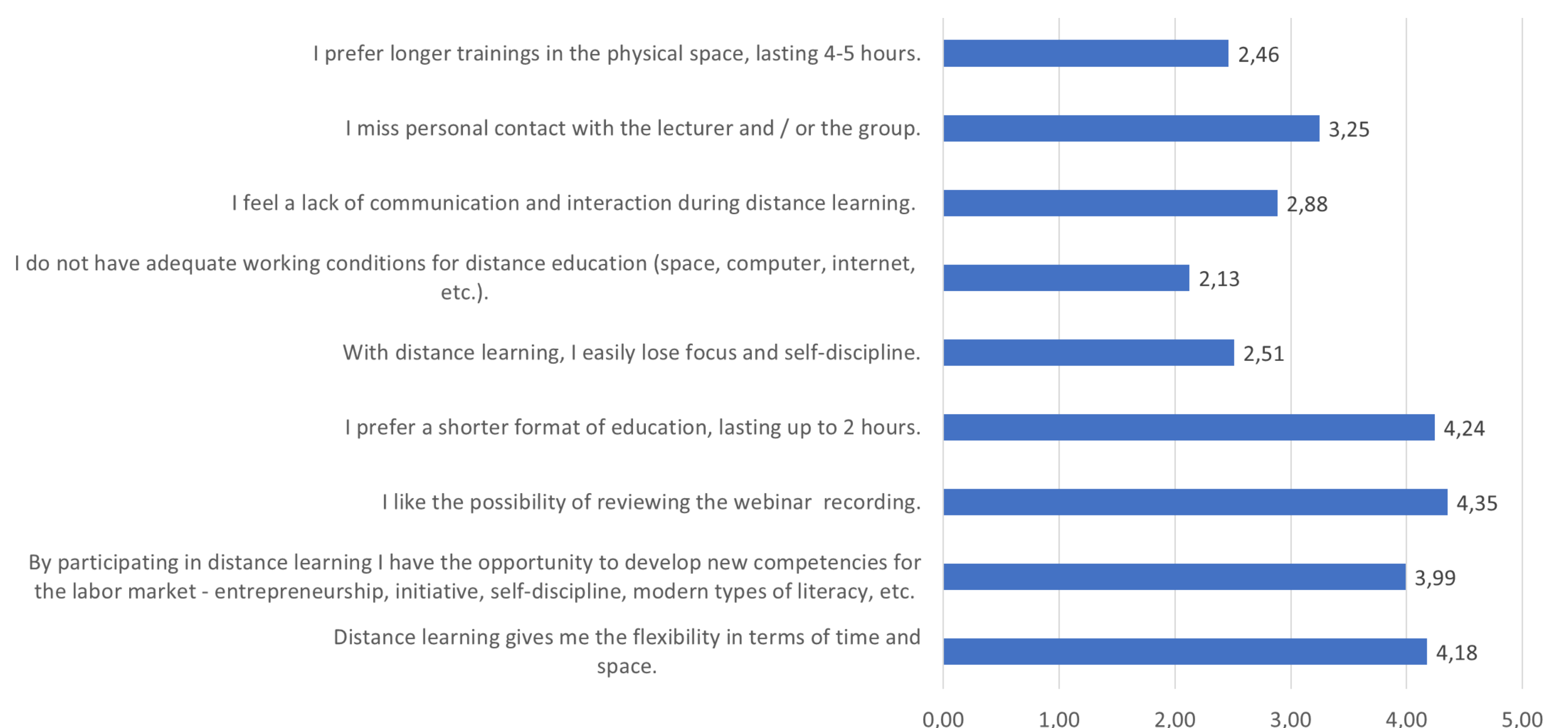
3 What form of education would you prefer in future?



Respondents from public, school and academic and research libraries are most interested in live webinars, respondents from special libraries are equally interested in the webinar recordings and respondents from NSK prefer traditional courses. Respondents from special libraries prefer e-courses to traditional courses and respondents from NSK prefer e-courses to webinar recordings. Other respondents are also interested in e-courses but give preference to other forms of education.

Statements on distance education

The survey results support online learning. Respondents appreciate the flexibility of education. They prefer shorter education format, the possibility to review the content and to gain new skills. Most of them have adequate conditions for online learning. Their responses about personal contact, lack of communication and self-discipline are neutral.



Conclusion

Respondents from all types of libraries took part in the survey. School librarians are the most numerous (as they are the largest group of librarians in general). Although we can assume that the respondents would like to have the possibility of "normal" traditional courses again, the most respondents gave preference to online learning, which has advantages such as content reviewing, flexibility, etc. Future plans include new educations in order to attract more participants, online content, but also workshops in physical space with the aim to respond adequately (as a national training Centre) to the needs of the entire librarian community in Croatia.



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