

**THE INTEREST OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS IN READING FOR LEISURE AT TWO
SCHOOLS IN WESTERN JOHANNESBURG**

BY

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Lastly, I wish to dedicate this work to my daughters, Cassidy and Christy, and to the memory of my late mother, Shirley, for the pride she would have taken in my achievement.

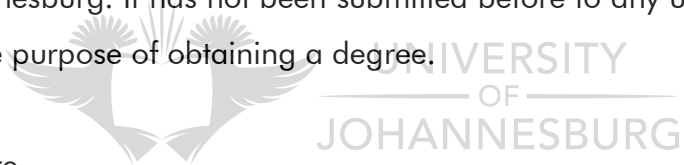
DECLARATION

I, Lisa McClure, student number 200622586 declare that the dissertation: "Learners interest in Leisure Reading" is my own work. All sources quoted in the study have been properly acknowledged.

It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Educational and Learning Support at the University of Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before to any university partially or in its entirety for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

Lisa Marion McClure

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate learners' interest in leisure reading and to suggest strategies for instilling this culture among the learners. The study used the quantitative method. A questionnaire comprising of closed-ended and open ended questions was used to obtain data from Coloured high school learners from two schools. The review of literature relevant to this study involved a number of aspects of which the following are only a few: a look at national and international perspectives regarding leisure reading; the role of teachers and parents in the lives of these children; the lack of leisure reading among the respondents as a result of modern technologies.

The study was conducted against the background of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory which views various levels and entities as subsystems of nesting within the larger system, which is the social context. Each level is dependent on the interaction within and between the other. The family (parents), the school (teachers) form subsystems and both share the membership of the child. These two subsystems collaborate to ensure maximum development of the child. The research question arose from the observation by parents that children are not participating in leisure time reading as much as they should.

The results of the study indicated that Coloured learners are involved and interested in leisure reading despite other modern technological devices competing for the learners' leisure time. Recommendations were suggested for parents as well as teachers relating to

the need to continuously encourage leisure reading in the lives of youth. The role parents can play in partnership with educators was also highlighted.

Key Words

- 1. Leisure reading**
- 2. Interest**
- 3. Coloured Learner**
- 4. Parental role**
- 5. Teacher role**

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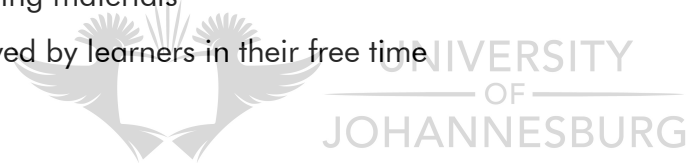


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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Background

Reading levels amongst the youth in South Africa continues to be a serious problem. An extensive study conducted for the Department of Education (DoE) by the Gauteng Literacy Strategy Project (GLSP) (2004:4) found that the general reading levels amongst learners to be inadequate, that is, less than listening comprehension levels. The concern is that the ability to read exerts an influence on an individual's development. Prior (1996) asserts that physical development becomes retarded as the fine motor skills and eye muscle would have been denied an opportunity to develop optimally. Language and cognitive skills could weaken since it is through reading, that the child is prone to grasp the variances in phonics; communication could be affected dismally as the vocabulary levels would be poor, and ultimately the educational progression on the whole would become affected. For South Africa, where the national matriculation pass rate is 73.3% and many learners are dropping out of the education system well before grade 12 or high school level, low reading levels amongst learners cannot be tolerated.

Several international studies suggest various reasons for learners' lack of interest in reading. For example, Mellon (1987:27) mentions that the society offers the youth a plethora of options such as: the endless array of clothing brands, the assortment of cell phones, the internet, television music, the obsession with celebrity culture, to mention a few. As inexhaustible as the list may be, the options are palpable. Furthermore, Mellon (1987:28) cautions that young people have no interest in reading because of the pressure exerted by too many choices they have to make. So, children are guided like moths to a flame to what is so easily accessible in their lives.

Correspondingly, Manikam (2007:2) associates the youth's lack of interest in reading with their obsession with cell phones, DVD's, computers and play stations. However, she further remarks that parents too, need to create an environment conducive for creative thinking by exposing their children to good reading material. Manikum also laments that magazines for the youth do not provide relevant and informative information that inspire children to engage in reading. Hopper (2005:113) concurs by indicating that the increasing number of iPods being used by the youth in society has overshadowed an interest in leisure reading. Similarly, DVD's, mobile phones, computer games as well as other technologies distract the youth from reading. An ethos of piracy have made movies so accessible that children would rather prefer watching a movie than reading a book, thus suggesting that the youth find these gadgets more appealing than reading [leisurely]. Hopper (2005:114) further notes that the overexposure of celebrities has led the youth to believe that they too can mimic their favourite celebrity. Consequently, they have become obsessed with these gadgets while reading has taken a backseat.

From the point of view of Manikum (2007:2), social and cultural influences play an influential role on the youth's lack of interest in reading for leisure purposes. Therefore, we cannot overrule the contribution of the practices of the Apartheid education system on the youth's interests in reading (Churches & Skuy, 2002; van Niekerk & Prins, 2001; Stead & Watson, 2006). The system had set off great imbalances and inequalities within schools in terms of resources such as libraries and fundamental facilities, to mention a few (Engelbrecht, Greene, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999). Lack and/or poor resources such as libraries and relevant materials that could have encouraged leisure reading at the school and within the community did not contribute towards the effective introduction of reading to the youth. Likewise, it did not foster the love or need for reading among the youth for they seem more concerned with the instant gratification that the above technologies offer.

1.2. Problem Statement

Hopper (2005:113) argues that reading is a universal problem which has been the focus of academic research worldwide for more than fifty years. However, my observation in 13 years of teaching experience on learners of Coloured descent is disturbing. Generally, learners' engagement in reading activities, particularly reading for leisure purposes (non-academic material) is not satisfactory, a problem which was confirmed by some parents when they were invited to school to share their concerns about their children's educational progress. Almost invariably the issue of great concern was always "getting their children to read." An issue which further heightened my concern was the media reports on Coloured learners' involvement in drug abuse, gangsterism and school dropout.

Reading is a major important factor that affects school learning which must be addressed as a matter of urgency, particularly if we are indeed committed to the provision of quality education to all learners and also promote educational success for all learners as required by Inclusive Education Policy in South Africa (DoE, 2001). Schools cannot afford to ignore learners "dropping-out" of the education system. Inclusive Education in particular, advocates for learners to learn optimally within their learning environments. In this way, any factor that undermines learner's chances for reaching academic success should be addressed. As low levels of reading, especially for leisure purposes proves to be a barrier in this regard, it becomes imperative for it to be the target of research. It is in this light that the focus of this study would be on investigating learners' participation in reading for leisure purposes.

1.3. Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate learners' interest in leisure reading and to suggest strategies for instilling this culture among the learners. Factors contributing to learners' low reading levels are part of this study as well as activities that take precedence over reading.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are twofold:

- a. To describe and explain learners' interest in leisure reading.
- b. To suggest strategies for instilling a culture of leisure reading amongst learners in the Coloured community.

1.4.1 Research Question

The study poses the major question: What is the learners' engagement in leisure reading?

The sub-questions to be addressed are:

- a. Are learners participating in leisure reading, and if so, what do they read for leisure?
- b. What are factors contributing to learners' interest in reading for leisure purpose?
- c. What possible strategies can be put in place to instil the culture of leisure reading amongst Coloured learners?

1.5. Rationale for the study

Reading is a central and an important element to learning and development which should be inculcated amongst all learners, particularly in the formative stage. Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:375) assert that children who enjoy reading become self-motivated readers who willingly participate in the broader and deeper experiences that reading can bring. Research undertaken on the Fiji Island quoted in the Gauteng Literacy Strategy Project (2004:9) represents a good example of how exposure to "real books" had a greater impact on learning and development than classroom textbooks did. Evaluation reflected much higher percentages in languages and reading but also in general knowledge and numeracy in children who were exposed to more general readers. In the

same way, the study conducted by GLSP (2004:9) suggests the best approach for increasing learners' reading and literacy amongst youths in South East Asia, Sri Lanka and South Africa. The study also reveals that learners who had access to real books achieved much higher percentages not only in reading but in first and second languages as well as general knowledge and Mathematics.

Reading undoubtedly enhances academic performance. A person who reads inevitably becomes informed, and can easily extract from the writing what is important for the particular task and can complete it quickly (The American Academy of Paediatrics, 2007). They furthermore claim that reading contributes to brain development and provides opportunities for physical development. The Academy indicates that by simply turning the pages of a book, the child is putting to work muscles which are necessary in helping fine motor skills. Learners, who read for leisure purposes in particular, become self-motivated, and their academic reading and writing skills improve (Sainsbury & Schagen 2004). Furthermore, their literacy and mathematical activities as well as all round general knowledge become augmented. According to the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:2), enthusiastic readers more readily develop the skill of concentrating on spoken information. In addition, they maintain better academic levels while weathering personal crises, accomplish their work with less expended time and energy, and have a more mature perspective of life in general.

Reading for leisure purposes is not a widely researched area, especially in South Africa. In my 12 month literature search at three university libraries in Gauteng, I was not able to obtain South African literature covering learners and/or youth participation in reading for leisure or non-examination purpose. Instead, available South African-based studies that I was able to obtain focused on the following: (a) reading for academic purposes; (b) reading of English materials, rather than in other languages and (c) did not focus on learners of Coloured racial background. This is one of the population groups that suffered discrimination under the Apartheid rule. For example, Pretorius, Mampuru and Maphoko (2007:38) focus on the implications of accessibility to books [English] on the

learners' reading proficiency and their academic performance. The study was conducted in Limpopo Province amongst Grade 7 learners whose first language was Northern Sotho. Their findings revealed the complex interplay between second language [L2] proficiency, first language (L1) reading and L2 reading. The findings revealed that when second language learners were actively engaged in reading, it contributed more variance than when learners were reading in their first language. Reading in both languages also contributed significantly to academic performance. The study highlights the need for more cross-linguistic reading research in different educational settings. Topping, Nel and van Kraayenoord's (2006:300) investigate the current South African initiatives aimed at enhancing reading amongst children. Their study, conducted at farm schools in the Tzaneen district in Limpopo Province, investigated whether the programmes made any impact on increasing the learners' interest of academic reading. Churches and Skuy (2002:813) focused on the problems and barriers that certain children experience when reading.

The current study is different from the existing ones in two ways. Firstly, it focuses on reading for non-examination purposes, an activity which is carried out for enjoyment, and not instructed by the teachers, parents and/or any other person. It is done out of one's volition and it is motivated by one's own interest. It involves reading materials (books) that are not officially prescribed for examination purposes. Secondly, the target population is learners, whose racial background is Coloured. This population group was historically disadvantaged. Schools with Coloured children encounter problems similar to those in other previously disadvantaged groups. They are under-resourced: shortages of books, libraries and classrooms are common. The few community libraries that are available have kept old and outdated books.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The study is theoretically underpinned by the ecosystemic model. This model originates from Urie Brofenbrenner's (1989) idea of understanding the child's development. The

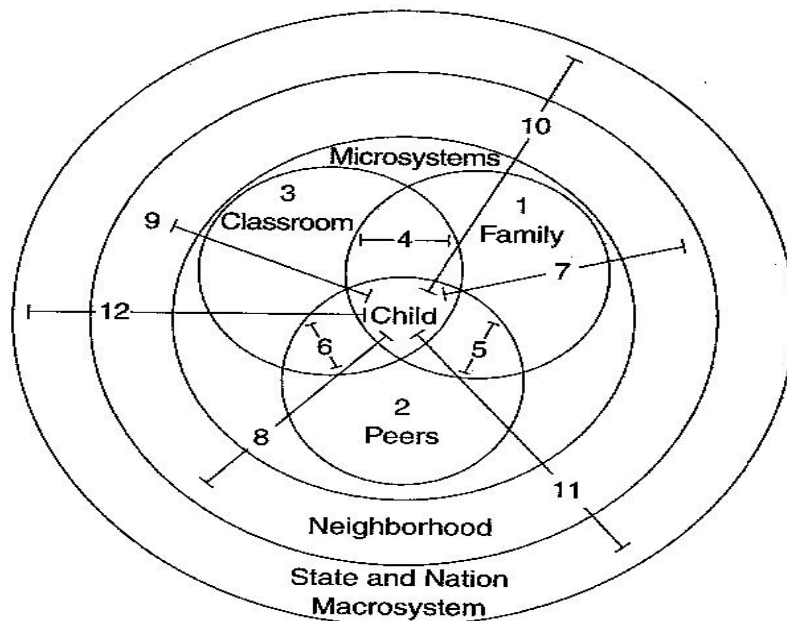
model views development as an on-going process, influenced by various factors lying within and outside the child's environment. This model has been pivotal in my understanding of the child as an individual whose affinity towards leisure reading is affected by so many people and things in the environment. Furthermore, my understanding of the model allowed me as a researcher to gain deeper insight into the lives as well as reading patterns of the respondents in this study.

To Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989), child development should be seen as the ecology of human development involved in the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. Similarly, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:53) corroborate this idea by adding that the interactions between the systems and their influences on individual development are all crossed by developmental time frames. That is to say that the model is forever changing. As the child develops physically and emotionally, needs, influences and interactions differ. Development involves a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between these five systems in which each person develops. This model helps us understand that an individual does not develop in isolation; rather s/he is influenced by her/his surroundings, which are always changing and impacting on her/his life in several ways consistently as well as continuously (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Swart and Pettifer, 2005).

For this study, the ecosystemic model is relevant for providing a better understanding about various factors contributing to learners' engagement in reading for leisure amongst Coloured learners. It is also fundamental that all stakeholders understand the descriptions of Bronfenbrenner's nested systems. Bronfenbrenner (2005) maintains that the social context is composed of four systems varying from the micro level to the meso, exo and macro levels. The definitions are as follows: The microsystem is a pattern of

activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face to face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief. The mesosystem comprises of linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school, and the workplace). A mesosystem in other words is a system of microsystems. The exosystem encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does not contain that person (e.g., for the child, the relation between the home and the parent's workplace; for a parent, the relation between the school and the neighbourhood group).

Finally Bronfenbrenner (2005) defines the macrosystem as consisting of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso- and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. The macrosystem might be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context. It then becomes apparent that the ecosystemic perspective be taken into consideration by all stakeholders in the lives and involved with learners' education and it follows that they would all need to recognise environmental complexity at all times and take heed of the fact that the children are shaped directly and indirectly by the various relationships in their lives.



EXAMPLES OF FACTORS IN A NESTED SYSTEM

A. Micro-level

- 1. family, nuclear and extended
- 2. peers and neighbors
- 3. classroom and school

B. Meso-level

- 4. parent-teacher conference
- 5. child's sibling and next door friend
- 6. friend who dropped out of school

C. Exo-level

- 7. parent's work supervisor
- 8. local curfew ordinance
- 9. school board

D. Macro-level

- 10. economic recession
- 11. discrimination, cultural norms
- 12. mandatory education law

Figure 1.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development reveals to us that collaboration is essential in our quest to assist our learners in the best possible ways. A holistic approach which acknowledges that all problems and developmental challenges are complex requires bringing in different perspectives of the problem and the solution. This does not mean that members of the team (individuals in all the systems) should not have particular expertise, but rather that each member needs to understand and engage with the full range of expertise available to solve the problem at hand. In practice this means that we need to talk and listen to one another; identify what we can and need to do together; and identify what each person needs to contribute to the whole.

1.7. Clarification of Key Concepts

Three important concepts are clarified, namely leisure reading/reading for leisure purposes, interest, Coloured learner.

1.7.1 Leisure reading

Influenced by Watkins and Bond's (2007:287) assertion that the key determinants of leisure definitions are perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation and a low work orientation, I, therefore, define leisure reading as a reading activity that children willingly do for their own enjoyment and/or the reading that is not enforced upon them by any other person or circumstances. It can also be loosely defined as a non-academic reading activity that is not instructed by the teachers, parents and/or any other adult (Hughes-Hassel & Lutz, 2006:40).



1.7.2. Interest

According to Oxford Concise Dictionary (2011), interest, is defined as the feeling of wanting to know or learn about something or someone.

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/page/about/world/about>, accessed 21 February 2011).

Wikipedia (2011) defines interest as a feeling or emotion that causes attention to focus on an object or an event or a process. In contemporary psychology of interest, the term is used as a general concept that may encompass other more specific psychological terms, such as curiosity. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interest>, accessed 21 February 2011).

With regard to my study I am concerned with Coloured learners and their interest in pursuing leisure reading as a pastime/hobby.

1.7.3. Coloured Learner

According to the Junior Worldmark Encyclopaedia of World Cultures (1999), the word “Coloured” refers to people of mixed race. They constitute 3.6 million of South Africa’s population and are descendants of the intermarriage amongst white settlers, African natives, and Asian slaves who were brought to South Africa from the Dutch colonies of Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, the term “Coloured” (also known as “*Bruinmense*, *Kleurlinge*” or “*Bruin Afrikaners*” in Afrikaans) refers or referred to an ethnic group of mixed-race people who possess some Sub-Saharan ancestry but not enough to be considered Black under the law of South Africa. They are mixed race and often possess substantial ancestry from Europe, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaya, Mozambique, Mauritius, Saint Helena and Southern Africa besides the extensive combination of these diverse heritages in the Western Cape — in which a distinctive 'Cape Coloured' and affiliated Cape Malay culture developed — in other parts of Southern Africa. Their development has usually been the result of the meeting of two distinct groups. Genetic studies suggest the group has the highest levels of mixed ancestry in the world (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloured>, accessed 2 February 2010). The Coloured learner under the apartheid regime suffered the consequences of The Bantu Education Act (No. 47) of 1953, which espoused the widened gaps in educational opportunities for different racial groups.

Today, however, according to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, (2002:18), South Africa faces many challenges in its development as a democratic society. Reconstructing education from what it has been to a system that brings equity to the education of all children is one of the most urgent of those challenges. This places Coloured learners in a position where as a once marginalized group, are now able to reap the benefits of a fair and democratic education system.

1.8 Further development of the study

The study developed as follows:

Chapter 1: The chapter introduces the research, followed by the historical background to the study, the statement of the problem, aims of the study, contribution of the study, theoretical framework, the rationale of the study, definition of terms and chapter outline.

Chapter 2: This chapter covers both national and international literature reviewed for this study. The chapter discusses the benefits of reading under significant subheadings as well as attitudes toward reading. Factors contributing to a lack of interest in learners' engagement in reading are also discussed under topical subheadings. The chapter concludes with a discussion on learners' reading preferences.

Chapter 3: This chapter encapsulates the research methods and procedures followed when conducting the research. These include: Research paradigm and methodology, research design, sampling, data collection methods, management of data.

Chapter 4: This chapter covers a presentation and brief interpretation of the results.

Chapter 5: A detailed discussion of findings is provided, relating it to the literature according to the various themes which emerged. Limitations of the study as well as recommendations are also incorporated.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the background of the study. It also focused on the importance of reading as well as the result of non-reading. The impact that family has on reading interest was also deliberated. The problem statement, aims and objectives of the inquiry as well as the rationale of the study were highlighted.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the literature reviewed for this study. It covers both international and local perspectives on reading and leisure reading respectively. The chapter continues to discuss the benefits of reading under significant subheadings as well as attitudes toward reading. Factors contributing to a lack of interest in learners' engagement in reading are also discussed under topical subheadings. The chapter concludes with a discussion on learners' reading preferences.

2.2. Perspectives on Reading

On an international level, Bintz (1993:604) emphasises that it is through reading that much of the world is opened to students. The link between literacy and reading is highlighted by Nippold, Duthie and Larsen, (2005:93), as they assert that literacy plays an important role in development of language in school-age children and adolescents. For example, by reading a variety of books, magazines, and newspapers, students gain exposure to complex vocabulary, and reading becomes a prime opportunity for learning new words. Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:373) postulate that reading is a central and an important element to learning and development and therefore it is a component that should be inculcated amongst all learners, particularly in the formative stage. Furthermore, they assert that children who enjoy reading become self-motivated readers who willingly participate in the broader and deeper experiences that reading proffers. Hopper (2005:115) describes reading as a complex activity involving transactions among reader, text, and context. To this mutually interactive process the reader brings not only a history of past reading experiences and contexts but also powerful layers of affective

responses. Paterson and Elliot (2006:378) argue that reading allows for progression from personal choice to shared appreciation of texts which enables a development of critical skills alongside pleasure. On the other hand, Hopper (2005:117) validates that reading brings about emotional satisfaction in children and young people. The American Academy of Paediatrics, (2007:10) reflects that by instilling a love for reading and encouraging children to maintain it motivates a stronger desire to resist persuasion of peers in the negative and helps them continue to develop. Moreover, reading is instrumental in forming a foundation on which to build a child's educational career on. Whether the child in question is too young to comprehend the words on a page or not, makes no difference. Furthermore, scientists, paediatricians, and educators alike agree that reading to children strengthens their resolve in learning. They also contend that setting an example by reading in front of children is one of the major ways to contribute to an interest in reading. However, it is important to remember that information should not be imposed on a child as he or she is an active respondent in his or her own development and education. However, taking the time to interact with a child over reading is a stimulus that helps to reinforce development and education.

In South Africa, as Rasana (2006:1) attests, the idea that learners can develop their language knowledge through extensive reading is attractive for several reasons. Firstly Rasana (2006:1) states that reading is essentially an individual activity and therefore, learners of different proficiency levels could be learning at their own level without being locked into an inflexible class programme. Secondly, it allows learners to follow their interests in choosing what to read and thus increase their motivation for learning and thirdly, it provides the opportunity for learning to occur outside the classroom. There has been a widespread agreement that encouraging students to engage in wide, independent, silent reading increases reading achievement. Most correlation studies found that the best readers read the most and that the poor readers read the least. These correlation studies suggest that the more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. As posited by (Worthy, 1996; Graves, 2001; &

Chambers, 1996) schools which aspire to have a successful reading programme that is aimed at producing proficient literate learners need:

- i. to have teachers who attach importance to independent reading
- ii. a library full of books and other reading materials, representing a variety of reading levels, topics, genres and authors
- iii. considerable amounts of uninterrupted time during the school day to read for a variety of purposes, including pleasure
- iv. to have healthy relations with parents of their learners and foster positive adult role models for learners
- v. daily reading-aloud
- vi. opportunities for learners to engage in varied and interesting activities related to reading
- vii. informal and formal opportunities for learners to talk to adults and their peers about their reading.

They further affirm that the quality of the teacher's instruction is an important factor in predicting learners' achievement and that for learners to attain high reading proficiency, they must have access to extensive selection of quality, engaging, highly interesting books and other reading materials both in their classrooms and in the school library media centre — that are written in their first language (L1) and second language (L2).

2.3. Leisure Reading

Mellon (1987:79) contends that helping teenagers develop and nourish the love of reading for pleasure is high on the list of priorities for most school and adult librarians. Hughes-Hassel and Lutz (2006:40) define leisure reading as the reading teenagers do by choice as opposed to the reading assigned by teachers. Love and Hamston (2003:163) record that leisure reading is understood in its narrowest sense as engagement with selected print-based informational and fictional texts. As Hopper (2005) argues, reading

choices can provide opportunities to engage with different roles at an imaginative level. "I always turned to books as the medium into which I was used to pouring my troublesome emotions" (Hopper 2005:115). The American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:2) declare that book lovers readily admitted their passion for reading and that books opened up the world to children in tremendous ways. Furthermore, books are a road to places, times, people, and events would never be able to be visited in person. In addition, they affirm that once children see the benefit in reading and what it could do for them they would become savvy readers who are motivated by their own interests to read. And the more they read, the better they read. The truly devoted reader has learned the benefits of reading, and they pursue it for the pure enjoyment of the reading experience. Nippold et al (2005:93) estimate that children encounter 15,000 to 30,000 unfamiliar words a year from reading only 25 min per day, and also argue that up to one half of student vocabulary growth may result from reading.

According to The American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:9) reading aloud is a time-honoured tradition between parents and children occurring in their formative years which has a lifelong impact on the child's learning experiences, developmental progress, and even social interaction skills. For example, even during infancy children are able to pick up on things as complex and subtle as the intonation in their parents' voices. According to a 1997 University of Chicago study presented at the White House Summit, an infant's brain structure is not genetically determined. Early experiences have a decisive impact on the architecture of a baby's brain. Brain cells in very young children have been shown to respond almost instantaneously to an adult's voice as that caregiver reads aloud. Triggered by this experience, new brain cells are formed that begin to create an increasingly intricate, long-lasting structure. Existing connections are also strengthened by this.

Because word knowledge plays a critical role in academic success and in other intellectual pursuits as Sternberg and Powell (1983:878) proclaim, it is important that

school-age children and adolescents spend time reading a variety of materials and that their interest in reading continues into adulthood. Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999:12) assert that pleasure reading can expose students to new words and allow them to cultivate a positive attitude toward reading as they refine their basic reading skills (e.g., fluency), building confidence in themselves as readers.

2.4. The Benefits of Reading

From the above, it is evident that reading is a noteworthy activity and much can be done within all the nested systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1998) in order to advance its promotion and improvement amongst learners. A discussion on the benefits of reading follows under the following subheadings: The advantage of being literate in the workplace; instilling a love for reading within children; facilitating language and physical development; improving academic performance; increasing general knowledge and environmental influence.

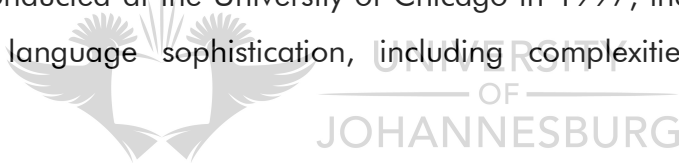


2.4.1. The advantage of being literate in the workplace

According to the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:2), reading is a critical activity, especially in today's technologically advanced world and one cannot survive without being a good reader. Research shows that adults who can barely read are more likely to live in poverty. Education and reading are the way out of that trap. A lack of basic skills allows one a few choices in life and leaves him/her at the mercy of employers. But a person who reads well has almost unlimited opportunities for career and personal growth.

2.4.2. Instilling a love for reading within children

Hopper (2005:113) explains that the skills that come from reading at a young age can ultimately carry on into adulthood. Reading generally enables children to become part of a wider community which connects them with words, culture and imagination. According to the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:4), reading success starts with young children enjoying library story times. Preschoolers' earliest experiences with books and reading are important and parent/caregiver knowledge can subsequently build on those experiences. The American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:3) further maintains that instilling a love for reading in children and maintaining it fosters a stronger desire to resist persuasion of peers in the negative and helps them to continue to develop. This then suggests that non-readers are more inclined to be influenced or swayed by negative pressures. Furthermore a person who reads becomes informed, and can easily extract from the writing what is important for the particular task and can subsequently complete it quickly. They also have a more mature perspective of life in general with a better humour. A study conducted at the University of Chicago in 1997, indicates that children who read, learn language sophistication, including complexities of phonics and grammar.



2.4.3. Facilitating language and physical development

According to the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:5), reading contributes to brain development and provides opportunities for physical development. They indicate that by simply turning the pages of a book, the child is putting to work muscles, which are necessary in helping fine motor skills. It stimulates the muscles of the eyes and affects chemistry of the body, too, by utilizing the brain. In addition, it also exerts an impact on senses such as sight, sound, touch, and smell.

2.4.4. Improving academic performance

The more students read, the more gains they accrue in their academic endeavours (Krashen 1993). Importantly, these gains also manifest themselves in their overall language development in that the more they read, the more they improve in vocabulary knowledge, comprehension, spelling, writing style, oral/aural language, and control of grammar. Furthermore, Krashen (1993) maintains that:

- i. Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) is superior to direct instruction on tests of reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and grammar,
- ii. Several studies (over more than a century) show that FVR is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and become good spellers,
- iii. More reading is done where there is a school library and a teacher-librarian. Children also read more where they live close to a public library.
- iv. A print-rich environment, including larger library collections, and a good reading environment, including comfort and quiet, affect reading, literacy development and reading scores,
- v. Children and young people read more when they are read to and when they see adults reading.

As Miller and Gildea (1987:94) report, students who are avid readers acquire larger vocabularies than those who read less frequently. Their study found a consistent link between the amounts of time spent reading and word knowledge in both children and adults. They also report that by allowing students to read simpler materials such as comics and magazines can improve their basic reading skills (e.g., fluency), leading to increased confidence. They suggest this could encourage students to tackle more technical reading materials in school. According to Campbell and Verna (2007:501), there is a significant association between early cultivation of children's reading habits and their future success. They attest that the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiated World Book and Copyright Day at its 1995 meeting as a way to encourage more people to read, publish, and to be aware of the importance of

protecting intellectual property. Moreover, an international survey further revealed that children at the average age of fifteen are watching more television than they are reading. This finding points to the need to invest further efforts to design effective programmes to cultivate reading habits among youths. Many reading programmes targeting students have been designed and launched, including sustained silent reading (SSR), free voluntary reading (FVR), drop everything and read (DEAR), daily independent reading time (DIRT), and uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR). Campbell and Verna (2007:502) points out that although there are differences among them, these programmes share some common features, such as letting students read silently, freely, and without interruption.

Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:375) maintain that the teaching of reading has dual goals and that children must be given the necessary skills to read effortlessly. In addition, their enjoyment should be developed so that they become self-motivated readers and participate in the broader and deeper experiences that leisure reading can bring. She decrees that children require as much stimulation as possible with regard to developing and improving their reading and writing skills. They further emphasise that learners who read for leisure purposes become self-motivated and more enthusiastic which ultimately lead to an improvement in their academic reading and writing skills. Contrastingly, a lack of reading affects the child negatively. Prior (1996:21) records that physical development becomes retarded, and that fine motor skills and eye muscle do not develop optimally.

2.4.5. Increasing general knowledge

While summarizing past research, Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999:13) state that beyond exposure to new words, reading for leisure offers additional benefits. They report that when children and adolescents engage in voluntary reading about topics that truly interest them, their effort, motivation, and attitudes about reading improve. The GLSP (2004:9) refers to a study conducted in the Fiji Islands which perhaps represents a good

example of how exposure to “real books” have a greater impact on learning and development than classroom textbooks do. The evaluation reflects much higher percentages in languages and reading, but also in general knowledge and Numeracy in children who were exposed to more general readers.

2.4.6. Environmental influence

Harlaar, Philip, Dale and Plomini’s (2007) study regarding reciprocal links between reading achievement and reading exposure suggest that children who read more do better at reading, and reading achievement itself promotes reading. They tested the hypotheses that these links arise because children’s genetically influenced reading performance is correlated with their leisure-time reading exposure, and reading exposure, in turn, may have an environmentally mediated effect on later reading performance. They conclude that reading exposure has environmentally mediated effects on children’s later reading performance beyond genetic transmission. They further state that from a practical standpoint, these findings suggest, first, that improving levels of early reading achievement may go some way towards fostering both engagement in reading and subsequent reading achievement, and, second, that fostering engagement in reading may weaken the cycle of poor reading achievement that can arise when children do not spend time reading.

2.5. Attitudes toward reading

Worrel, Roth, David and Gabelko (2007:1) state that attitude towards *reading* is defined as students' feelings toward *reading*, which result in approaching or avoiding *reading* tasks. According to Wigfield and Guthrie, (1997:425) whether children read or not is determined by their attitudes toward reading. If children do not like reading or they think that reading is boring, their negative attitude towards reading will hinder their reading improvement.

Wigfield and Guthrie, (1997:425) further pronounce that motivations are relevant because research indicates that higher ability readers are more interested and have higher intrinsic motivation for reading as well as a higher value for reading activities. In addition, Wang (2000) claims that children's experience and confidence in reading, parents' attitudes toward reading, and teachers' ways of teaching contribute to children's attitudes toward reading. Wang (2000) furthermore states that younger pupils usually have relatively positive attitudes toward reading in the initial stages of learning to read and that reading attitude is an integral part of the development and use of lifelong reading skills. Moreover, the ultimate success of instruction is strongly affected by the reader's attitude.

Research theorises that attitudes affect one's motivation and subsequent achievement by increasing the amount of time learners engage in reading (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1990; Richek, List, & Lerner, 1989). For instance, Parker and Paradis, (1986:313) affirm that poor readers generally have more negative attitudes than better readers. Another study by Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:380) reveals that the responses of girls to reading attitude surveys were significantly more positive than boys. It was discovered that girls are significantly more likely to read stories, magazines and poems than boys, whereas boys

are more likely to read comics, newspapers and information books. Correlation studies by Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999:14) shows that when children and adolescents engage in voluntary reading about topics that truly interest them, their effort, motivation and attitudes about reading improve. They also report that allowing students to read simpler texts such as comics and magazines can greatly improve their basic reading skills (e.g. fluency) leading to increased confidence. Finally, they advocate that these encourage students to tackle more technical reading materials in school.

In South Africa, a pilot study looked at the relationship between reading and attitudes concerning Grade 5 to Grade 10 learners in Gauteng in South Africa. As Machet (2004:1) reports, primary school learners have a high interest in reading religious works (both fiction and non-fiction), and that interest that is not evidenced in secondary school learners. On the other hand, Machet found that learners are not as interested in reading comics as respondents from England. Furthermore, the study reveals that younger children have interest in reading books that portrayed characters of the same race and ethnicity as the reader. Interestingly, the study reports that both primary and secondary school learners prefer to read in their home language, despite secondary school learners indicating that reading English books was important for them to practise their English. As Machet (2004:13) contends, the learners further indicated that they had no choice but to choose English books since there were insufficient books in their home language to interest them. In another South African study, READ probes black students' reading preferences at a secondary and tertiary level. According to Rasana (2006:176) most students are keen to read provided they have access to the right books, which means enjoyable stories written in straightforward language and related to young people's interests. The research identified over 100 popular titles, which have been listed in READ'S Top Twenty' Reading Cards for Grade 8-11. According to READ'S research findings, all the books tested had a message of some value and have raised some questions as to whether 'pulp' literature is really necessary (Rasana, 2006).

2.6 Factors contributing to a lack of interest in reading amongst young people

2.6.1. Individual factors

A Caribbean case study by Warrican (2007:33) attests that the problem of adolescents doing very little reading is one that in recent years has become a discussion point among educators. Educators, parents, education officials, examination bodies and other interests groups acknowledge the importance of reading. In fact, such importance is placed on reading that in 2000, the regional secondary school leaving examination body, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) wrote:

“General evidence suggests that candidates are becoming less and less familiar with fine literature and even any kind of light fiction. It appears as if the examination paper is the longest piece of writing that some candidates would have read at any one time”.

Stimulated by these comments Warrican embarked on a programme aimed at cultivating interest in reading among reluctant adolescent readers in a secondary school in the Caribbean. Warrican’s sample comprised of reluctant readers who had experienced repeated failure and were disenchanted about reading and all school-related activities. Warrican examined some of these factors that emerge when a leisure reading programme was introduced to a class of non-readers. From the start and continuing throughout the programme, the students reported that they were not interested in reading. Several of their teachers claimed that the students felt that way about themselves because they indeed had major reading difficulties.

2.6.2. School related factors

2.6.2.1. Involvement of the school/teacher

As Dreher and Singer (1989:612) argue, teachers play a central role in determining the goals, materials and methods of instruction. They further profess that the “right” way of teaching reading is typically represented by a commercial reading programme which

comes with goals, materials, tests and activities devised by experts. They consequently argue that the lack of teacher involvement in the curriculum and the development of reading programmes have a negative effect on the reading of learners and they claimed that in many instances this does not bring about a high degree of reading success. They maintain their argument by stating that the experts who developed these programmes were ill advised about the relevant reading material for learners because they have never met the learners and that the teachers merely become conduits for relaying these intact reading programmes. As a result, teachers were quite detached from the reading success of their learners.

Shannon (1987:307) concurs that reading instruction is seemingly considered to be an interaction between objects-commercial materials and students rather than a human transaction. In addition, Dreher and Singer, (1989:612) suggest that in order to facilitate all students' reading progress, teachers must be in control so that commercial programmes are used as a resource rather than a prescription. Moschovaki, Meadows and Pellegrini (2007:405) further posit that during book reading both the adult and the child are active in establishing a shared understanding and that another process that occurs with preschool age children is that of emotional referencing. During such a process, young children look to adults' reactions. Such reactions inform them of the appropriate stance that they should adopt and assist them to interpret the situation at hand. They are of the opinion that as young children are not yet able to read a written text alone or unaided, there is usually a reader who mediates between the text and the listener. Furthermore, Moschovaki et al (2007:406) propose that the adult acts as a vicarious form of conscience for the child. Thus, the way the reader is going to present the text and his/her personal stance towards it, will define children's reactions. If the reader makes the task interesting and pleasurable, it is most likely that s/he will manage to attract children's interest. In such a case, children will experience the pleasure of listening to stories and develop a positive attitude towards book reading.

Moschovaki et al (2007:407) affirm that teachers need to become aware of the use of various affective strategies as a means of attracting children's interest and prompting their emotional reactions, especially for those children who lack book reading experiences at home. They believe that when teachers explicitly express their emotions of pleasure, sadness and interest, children imitate them and end up sharing their feelings and that process assists children to experience the book reading session as a pleasurable activity, motivating them to immerse themselves in it. Hopper (2005:115) argues that a gap exists between what young people choose to read and what teachers provide as reading material, both for class use and recommends private reading. Hopper projects that part of the problem there may lie in the unfamiliarity of many teachers with fiction for adolescent readers. Furthermore, Hopper highlights that teachers' knowledge of teenage fiction was too limited for them to make recommendations that would enable school students to progress in their reading habits.



2.6.2.2. Availability of resources

This suggests that while indeed their academic performance may be directly related to their reading behaviour, as suggested by many in the Caribbean, greater attention ought to be paid to identifying reasons adolescents are not reading. It seems likely that the blame for their academic failure should not be cast solely on limited reading, but also on a school system that brought them this far without equipping them with the adequate reading skills. Evidently, it is also apparent that school factors had a greater influence on the students' reading behaviour. One school-related factor that seemed to have affected the students reading behaviour was the library. There was nothing of interest for struggling reluctant readers. Most of the books that were on the library's shelves were classics or novels that gained high reviews in literary magazines. The school's library did

not even carry magazines. The students themselves said they did not use the library because it had nothing that they were willing to read (Warrican, 2007). Warrican (2007:205) points out, 'students who have continually met with failure see reading as the enemy' and no doubt school too. Recommendations made by Warrican (2007:41) regarding his study include the need for the library to cater for students of different characteristics. For example, there should be books that are geared to students with different reading abilities and interests. A concerted effort should be made to ensure that materials that are of interest to boys are stocked in the library since they are the group that appears to be in need of most encouragement. In making materials available, considering the students' reading level, teachers and librarians must be careful not to provide materials that belittle them. As a result, a balance must be struck between reading level and content that is suitable for the particular age group. Moreover, students should be involved to select interesting reading materials. Time must be provided daily for students to engage in leisure reading activities.

2.6.2.3. Teacher Influence



According to Dreher and Singer (1989:612), the role of the teacher as well as the student during the reading process is played down since goals, activities and text materials have been determined by people who have never met the students. Furthermore, they state that readers' resources are taken into account at a very general level. Duffy, Roehler and Putman (1987:357) conclude that teachers make very little decisions regarding issues of curriculum and instruction and that these are determined by experts. Moreover, once reading groups are formed and organizational patterns are established, most instructional decisions focus on task completion and on maintaining student attention rather than on issues of content and student understanding. As Warrican (2007:33) maintains, it is generally felt that having created an interest in reading among students in the primary grades, the challenge is to get them to maintain it when they enter high school, and even more so as they move through those grades. In addition,

Bintz (1993:610) argues that much research on secondary reading suggests that most primary students have regular quality reading experiences, yet by the time they reach high school, they lose interest in reading to their detriment. For the first time in modern history, the percentage of adults that read Literature for pleasure is less than 50% of the adult population (Wigfield & Guthrie 1997). Understandably, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997:428) are concerned that reading for pleasure is declining rapidly among all Americans.

According to Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:375) the teaching of reading has two main goals. One is to instil the necessary skills in students to read effectively and the second is to develop a sense of enjoyment towards reading. Furthermore, they pose a pivotal question as to whether instructional methods of teaching reading were taught at the expense of enjoyment. This is to say that children are being forced to read and not really being encouraged or motivated to enjoy the experience. To understand a child holistically, it is imperative that the socio-economic environment is also investigated.

2.6.3. Family Related Factors

2.6.3.1. Poverty

As the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:6) maintains, the more a child reads, the more a child learns and that children who read poorly become frustrated, intolerant and eventually drop out of school and become social misfits, simply because they have not broadened their perspectives through reading. Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007:27) report on a student who mentions that "reading keeps you out of trouble." The American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:7) further affirms that children who do not read communicate dismally, vocabulary levels remain poor and education on the whole is halted. This opinion is also echoed by Prior (1996:28) who states that children who have been disadvantaged regarding early literacy and eventually drop out of school do this because they possibly had trouble breaking the reading code and hence found reading

unrewarding. Prior further records that comprehension was hindered and reading fluency limited. Conclusively, it becomes fair to say that these children could never keep up with reading material because they were not able to move smoothly from one stage of the reading process to the next.

2.6.3.2. Family involvement in children's reading

The value of parents' reading to their young children is recognized and strongly supported by research. Yarosz and Barnett (2001:67) report that shared book reading was the single most important activity for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in reading. As Shannon and Shaw (2008:1) claim, the process of developing leisure-related knowledge, skills, attitudes and values begins at a young age. Another view is expressed by Kleiber (1999) as well as Sigel and McGillicuddy-DeLisi (2002) who postulate that leisure researchers also acknowledge that a family is a key context in which children's leisure interests, values and behaviour patterns are developed and suggest that parents should play an important part in this developmental process. Although leisure learning continues throughout life, researchers suggests that childhood learning about leisure reading is important in a person's development and has a significant effect on his or her leisure behaviours later in life. Additionally parents, peers and teachers significantly influence individuals' development when they are young. Consequently, Kleiber (1999) envisages that those children's experiences and interactions influence and shape to varying extents the adults that they become and parents play significant roles in these experiences and interactions.

The American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:7) concludes that one of the most important gifts a parent or nurturing-one can give to a child is to enable and encourage them to love reading. Reading to very young children can be the basis of hooking them onto language, learning, and books for life. Moreover, reading is a significant aid in brain development and encourages a solidifying, emotional bond between parents and their

children as well. Despite this, it furthermore testifies that only 50% of parents are reported to actually read to their children. As the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:7) advises, reading aloud initiates a vital ongoing process and encourages children to enjoy reading independently as they get older. Furthermore, parents are critical to laying a foundation on which a child's education is based on. Parents are most often a child's first teachers and from them a child is taught not only fundamentals of education, but how to learn as well. Children who are introduced to books at an early age are more prone to grasp the variances in phonics, which in turn affects their language skills and cognitive abilities. Studies by the American Academy of Paediatrics (2007:8) indicate that children's familiarity with books is taught by their mothers who tend to typically be the main care giver of a child. The studies also revealed that children's familiarity with books is influenced by the mother's education level. The higher the level of education, the more apt a child is to be exposed to reading. Additionally, the cause and effect of reading on language skills and cognitive abilities is cyclical, yet progressive in nature. The more a child uses phonics to test out new words, the more he or she reads. The more he or she reads, then more is learned until the child branches out and repeats the cycle.

Within the influential parental unit, mothers may have unique opportunities to influence their children's leisure. Although fathers are caring more for their children than in the past, Shannon and Shaw (2008:2), state that mothers tend to be the primary caretakers. They furthermore state that mothers, regardless of their employment status, spend more time with their children than fathers and are often deemed responsible for transmitting values and preparing their children to be functioning members of society. Moreover, for female children, mothers are believed to be even more significant models as they identify more closely with their mothers than their fathers. On the other hand, Lei and Wu (2007:325) assert that as children approach middle childhood and adolescence, the influence of fathers on children's behaviour and development becomes more equivalent to that of mothers. The quality of father-child attachment operates as a stronger predictor of adolescents' cognitive and emotional development.

2.6.3.3. Parents' Habits

As Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson (2006:521) mention, the question why some learners turn to books and others do not is rather complex. They maintain that there are a series of interacting circumstances and reasons for the way habits develop. Some reasons are related to the home environment and the parents' habits. In a previous study by the same authors, the parents' television habits during the childhood years were proven to be a critical factor behind the television habits the children themselves developed as adults. They attest that they lack information on parents' reading habits and thus make it impossible to compare parents' and children's reading habits. The results of this study also indicate increased gaps in young people's book reading. Many of them do not read at all in their spare time while those who do read, read more. In the cultural-political debate, ambitions are expressed to make an effort to increase children and adolescents' book reading and to reduce the cultural gaps between children and adolescents from different environments. The recent reduction of the value-added tax on books in Sweden is an example of the efforts made to increase reading by making books cheaper. Propositions to consolidate and develop the activity of libraries have been discussed, as is the drive on measures to promote reading. They claim that the school system, as well as teacher education, is faced with a great challenge that not only involves stimulating the interest in books within different groups of pupils, but also changing the attitudes towards reading as something feminine and almost unmanly (Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson 2006).

2.6.4. Community Related factors

2.6.4.1. Lack of reading materials in South Africa

On a national level as stated in Rasana (2006:175), only one South African study (Machet 2001), looks at learners' reading preferences at primary and secondary schools where English is taught as a second language (all grades of learners were included). By comparison, Mawasha, Ralenala, Maibelo and Ralenala (1994:198), examine university and college students who were enrolled in foundation courses looking at their acquisition of literacy from early childhood to their high school years, and their learning and reading experiences from primary school to university. Rasana (2006:175) points out that in the limited research that has been carried out, findings reveal that there is an ever-increasing gap between learners' preferences and the reading materials that schools provide and recommend. As Worthy et al (1999:15) affirm limited availability of preferred materials in school leaves learners with three choices, namely: reading something outside of their interests, obtaining their preferred materials themselves, or not reading at all. Learners who cannot afford to buy the preferred materials are more dependent on school sources and, thus, have limited choices.



2.6.4.2. Methods of instilling reading interest (Peer tutoring)

According to Topping, Nel & van Kraayenoord (2006:300), illiteracy, lack of school and public libraries, insufficient funds for libraries, domestic poverty are some of the reasons the majority of South Africans lack a culture of reading. These difficulties are worse for children at farm schools, tucked away in rural areas, who have few if any books to read for pleasure and no means of travelling to the nearest public library. For example, a project by the Tzaneen Library and some local high schools reached out to farm schools through peer tutoring using the paired-reading (PR) technique, which aimed to improve reading skills and encourage reading for pleasure. The Tzaneen Library requested donations of books from book stores and organisations to establish a good collection of suitable books at Inzana. One of the established relationships was between Inzana Farm School and Merensky High which are under-resourced and well-resourced schools respectively.

During PR, learners from grades 1–3 read and were reading Sepedi books up to grade 3. The rest of the learners chose English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, or Tsonga books. The project was successful beyond expectation, and it continued to be popular with learners from both schools.

It could be deduced from Topping et al (2006:301) that the project was so successful because of its simplicity. Tutors and learners from both schools enjoyed the experience, and there was no criticism involved—only encouragement and good example. Consequently, learners' reading skills and they also developed a love of reading because of collaboration between these two schools.

As Machet (2004:2) states, a survey conducted by the DoE in 2001, discovered that fewer than 50% of schools had libraries, even in the form of a box library. (This figure was given to the author in an interview in March 2001 by a source from the DoE who requested to remain anonymous). Many school libraries were closed after the African National Congress (ANC) party came to power after the first democratic elections in 1994 as they needed to redress imbalances in the educational system. This meant that the traditionally white schools now received a reduced subsidy from the government, and many of them no longer had the finances necessary to employ a teacher-librarian or to buy books for the library. Evidently, in South Africa reading is seen as an activity undertaken primarily for educational purposes rather than for pleasure (Machet 2004).

According to South African Government Information (2011:1), minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga in a media briefing, stated that South Africa for the first time in history has tested over 6 million children in their literacy skills in tests that have been set nationally and proceeded to declare that the reason for Annual National Assessments (ANA) was to ascertain that all learners fulfil their academic and human potential by improving their literacy. She further affirmed that there had been an under emphasis on

the basic skills of reading at the foundation levels and this was where the ministry of education needed to focus.

2.6.4.3. Fostering of leisure reading in South African schools and homes.

According to Rasana (2006:177), one of the factors affecting the literacy development of South African students is lack of independent reading interventions. Having the experience of teaching English for fifteen years Rasana observed that students find it a huge effort to read set-work literature. Rasana's study investigated learners' reading preferences in selected Eastern Cape secondary schools where English is taught as a second language. The study also sought to understand the reading patterns and interests of Grade 11 learners. Rasana espoused that students never read anything at all because the problem could have been one of language proficiency; or of reading skills; or it could have reflected attitudes toward reading and available reading materials. The study concludes that learners have little exposure to a range of literature of reasonable quality, suggesting that teachers, school libraries, and local libraries failed to play their role in promoting reading. The research also shows that learners were most interested in magazines and newspapers and in reading about topics related to love, sport and politics. Therefore, teachers need to recognise such preferences when they select reading materials. Learners too, should be allowed to make their own choices and read anything which interests them. Another important issue to be taken into consideration by publishers, librarians and teachers is that of language and that students in such places as Grahamstown and Gauteng do not read much, nor do they aspire to, in their home language. The vast majority prefer English because they perceive it as necessary for future social, commercial or academic mobility. Therefore, publishers, librarians, and teachers should encourage learners to attach more value to reading in their home languages by publishing more interesting materials in these languages. This study also found that learners do not see reading as a way to increase their knowledge of other school subjects. This raises questions for teachers in relation to the importance of

projects, assignments, and homework as a way of introducing learners to libraries as sources of new information.

Rasana (2006:187) recommends that programmes need to be designed to develop learners' reading fluency in schools, and teachers need to work more closely with librarians. Libraries should also make their books more readily available. The role of parents must also be recognised, in setting up a good literacy environment for their children. But teachers too, have to play a part since many parents are illiterate and teachers spend more time with the learners at school. Furthermore, reading is not merely for language acquisition but for, problem-solving, personal enrichment and for pleasure. As a result, it is important that educators, librarians, and other people concerned with reading understand the reading patterns and preferences among students in their communities, so that appropriate policy decisions can be made.

2.7. Preferred reading materials

2.7.1. Magazines



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Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2006:43) affirm that the materials students enjoy reading most are magazines, comic books and the internet. For this reason, teachers should recognize this type of reading as legitimate. In addition, Beers (1996:110) and Mellon (1990:334) state that adults often insinuate that books are the only reading materials. Moreover, they claim that if it is priority to engage urban students in leisure reading then perhaps the relevant stakeholders would need to expand their definition of reading. As recorded by Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007:44) magazines are without question the favourite leisure reading material of these students. They, furthermore, maintain that adolescents are drawn to magazines by the number and quality of pictures, the speed with which information can be gathered from magazines, the "coolness" factor, and the reading level. Similarly, Norton (2003:140) and Versaci (2001:61) state that many teachers and librarians have successfully used comic books to engage reluctant readers

and they furthermore affirm that this format not only appeals to visual learners but also makes it easier to circulate comics.

2.7.2. Digital multimedia

Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson (2006:521) attest that books are not the only reading texts and that it was possible to become a good reader and a skilled writer and be able to express oneself without reading literature. They further state that there are plenty of texts available through other media, both traditionally printed ones like newspapers, magazines and comics, and computer-based media. Moreover, they claim that there is no lack of printed words in society and both arguments for book reading, put forward on the socio-cultural level and the abilities emphasised on the individual level, are seen as best cultivated by reading literature. On the contrary, Power (2001:54) argues that some forms of recreational reading place different (and often no fewer) demands on teenagers when compared to academic reading and that it was important to identify the various forms of recreational reading, from comic books to digital multimedia of various genres. Mellon (1987:27) reveals that her students who are teachers, librarians and parents, said that, "*teenagers just aren't interested in reading.*" Mellon concurs that the youth are a media generation who are exposed to sophisticated entertainment environment which competes with the printed word.

Reinking's (1997:626) reprisal to what Mellon (1987) regarded as sophisticated entertainment, is that computers have a strong position in our reading world today and bias should be avoided regarding books as the only form of reading. Reinking (1997:626) further projects that students, teachers and colleagues should not prejudice electronic forms of reading as they may have some clear advantages over printed forms and may even some day come to be the predominate mode of reading. However, his critics counter-argue that some individuals could not imagine anything replacing books while others affirm that they would always prefer a book over a computer when they read

on the beach or at bedtime. On the contrary, Reinking (1997:626) maintains that this was not necessarily an evil prejudice but rather just our way of holding onto their passionate devotion toward the singular technological artefact we call a “book”.

Hopper (2005:116) describes modern technologies as part of new and developing literacies. In contrast with books where girls traditionally outperform boys, Hopper (2005) recognises these technologies are areas in which boys’ achievement may well exceed that of girls. Hall and Coles (1999 & 2002) indicate that individuals should now take into account patterns of computer use and embrace the fact that computers can have a supportive function in reading. Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson (2006:537) are of the same opinion since they believe that the interest in reading in general and literature in particular, apparently diminished in favour of image and computer-based media. They further argue that with the new media situation, the question often arose as to whether this new media would displace the more traditional media. They record that the discussion of displacement often revolved around books and literature and that it was sometimes feared that the visual media and the new digital media would outrival reading of books as a leisure time activity. A similar hypothesis assumed the same, namely that other media may rather stimulate reading, evoke curiosity and increase interest in the printed word (Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson 2006:520).

Grant (2004:303) argues that reading is worthless without understanding. Grant emphasises the importance of comprehending when reading and claims that school districts across America are engaged in conversations of using technology to meet student educational needs. In addition, Grant posits that technology has advanced through telecommunication such as reading online, digital texts and /or electronic books. Furthermore, evidence has also pointed out that the ability of students to increase their word recognition and vocabulary has been significant. Hopper (2005:116) postulates that the Internet is now a rich source of relevant and attractive information about books

for teenagers, and allows them the possibility of networking and exchanging ideas about books.

According to Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson (2006:519) the ability to read and write is usually regarded as a basic skill in modern societies. It is seen as a key to knowledge and empowerment. To master these skills is regarded as necessary in order to participate fully in the democratic process and in civic society. They subsequently undertook a study in Sweden of young people who they believe leave school without adequate reading and writing skills. They claim that various reasons have been put forward to explain this situation, but believe that the media are among the most frequently blamed.

Visual and ICT media are often perceived as a threat to book reading in leisure time. They are accused of taking time and interest away from children and adolescents' book reading by offering them more approachable alternatives. Their study focused on children and adolescents' book reading habits and the way these habits have changed over time. Pertinent questions asked in their study were as follows: Was there any cause for concern regarding reading interest in the ever-hardening media competition? How have children and adolescents' reading habits changed during the past 25 years? In what way are reading habits related to social background, age and gender? Was it reasonable to maintain that TV and other media take time from book reading? They conclude that human beings are perceived as active media users. Children as well as adults turn to different media—text media, visual media and interactive computer media—for personal and social reasons, due to the entire life context and the surrounding society.

2.8. Conclusion

The theoretical grounding of this research project has been established in this chapter. Chapter three will examine the research design and describe the method used to collect data.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.1 Introduction

The literature study in chapter two formed the bedrock for the empirical study. The specific aim of this study was to investigate learners' interest in leisure reading and to suggest strategies for instilling a culture of leisure reading among the learners. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used to collect data, the sample and the sampling procedure for the selection of the sample as well as the management of data.

3.2 Research paradigm



According to Wisker (2001:122), a research paradigm can be described as “the underlying set of beliefs about how the elements of the research fit together and how we can enquire of it and make meaning of our discoveries. A paradigm shapes the researcher’s thinking and interpretation and influences the research design. The researcher’s paradigm therefore requires consideration.

The researcher has employed simple descriptive statistics and did not follow complex statistical analysis. Additionally, no control group was used. I have chosen to not align myself with a quantitative approach.

3.3. Research design

This is a case study design. A case study differs from studies such as phenomenology which according to (the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy) is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. In addition, it also differs from studies like grounded theory which, according to (Wikipedia), is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the generation of theory from data.

In a case study the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon "the case" bound by the time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Merriam, 1998). Yin (2003:3) corroborates this sentiment and claims that the purpose of the case study is to help define the unit of analysis (what is the case?) and to use lessons from the case study to advance knowledge and understanding of the given topic. Such a design is hence suitable since the researcher wanted to focus on leisure reading as a phenomenon, focusing entirely on reading for leisure purposes among Coloured learners; especially since research focusing on reading for leisure purposes among Coloured people of South Africa is very limited. This study fits best within this approach since the researcher was interested in obtaining a better understanding of why there is a lack of interest in leisure time reading amongst a targeted youth in our society. Yin (2003: i) states that the method is appropriate when the investigator either desires or is forced by circumstances to define topics broadly and not narrowly and to rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence. Furthermore, a case study, depending on the situation, can be conducted alone or in conjunction with the methods mentioned above. This case study has collected data by means quantitative research methods. For this study, a multiple case study over a single case study was chosen; and for this reason the focus was on two schools located in previously Coloured designated areas. These schools were chosen because they have a reasonable number of students who belong to Coloured population. For that matter it facilitated easy and quicker access to the desired sample. The reason why two schools were identified was

simply because it was not possible failed to gain a big enough complement of Coloured learners in one school only.

3.4. Research location

As the focus was on learners of Coloured origin, it was appropriate to use schools that cater for them. In this case, it was two English medium high schools that are situated in the western part of Gauteng Province. However, it should be noted that the schools also admitted learners belonging to other racial groups. Access to these research sites was granted by the Department of Education following a detailed explanation of the study and ethical clearance by the Research Ethics committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

3.5. Compliance to ethical standards

Before the researcher embarked on collecting the data ethics was taken into consideration, which concerns the attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour (May 1991:519).

3.6. Data collection methods

3.6.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to gather data. The questionnaire enables the respondents to answer questions relating to the problem. According to Vockell and Asher (1995:124), the questionnaire refers to any data-collecting instrument, other than an achievement or ability test, where the respondents directly supply their own answers to a set of questions. Vockell and Asher (1995:124) further emphasise the significance of a questionnaire in that it is capable of probing clearly and producing relevant valid and reliable data if it is well constructed or developed.

By distributing questionnaires the researcher was, as Creswell (2003:153) asserts, studying a sample of the population (Coloured youth) in terms of their participation in leisure time reading. The sample result made claims about this youths' attitude toward leisure time reading provided numeric description of trends, attitudes and reading patterns. This also allowed the researcher to obtain a general feel of the information required by targeting a fairly large group. By doing this, a better understanding of the information was fostered and any doubt surrounding the topic was eliminated (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004).

The questionnaire comprised of closed-ended as well as open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions requested respondents to give their rating on the Likert scale, whilst some questions required them to provide true or false answers. The questions covered information about the following: personal information, students' involvement in reading for leisure purposes [types of books; amount of time spent on reading; non-reading related activities].

Current engagement in leisure reading (one of the first aspects covered in the questionnaire) can be defined as the reading that the learners were participating in at the time the questionnaire was administered. This theme was fundamental to my study as it allowed me to ascertain whether learners were actually participating in leisure reading or not. Respondents were provided with the following statements: I am reading a book for pleasure at the moment; I am an active reader; I read leisurely all the time. In order to determine current engagement in leisure reading, respondents were asked to agree with statements which accurately described their feelings and experiences with regard to participation in leisure reading. The options for this question were: *strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.*

The influence of parents' level of education was used as a variable with regard to the following three statements. Gender was not used as a variable since the sample of Coloured learners was too small to further split into two groups. Respondents were required to mark one of the following options: strongly disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

- a. I am interested in reading books for leisure/ non academic purposes.
- b. Leisure reading is important and should be an activity that I should be participating in often.
- c. Reading should not be limited to prescribed books.

In order to further explore respondent perceptions regarding leisure reading, they were provided with the following statements in the form of a Likert Scale. Options for the statements were: *strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.*

Motivation was ascertained by examining the following factors:

Self motivation

Motivation by parents, teachers and friends

Self-motivation

With regard to self motivation respondents were asked to mark either *yes* or *no* to statements relating to their motivation for leisure reading. In this section of the questionnaire gender was used as a variable. In order to expand on this the researcher needed to capture the level of motivation held by the respondents and consequently, factors other than the influence of parents' level of education were investigated. Statements which were used to elicit this information were as follows:

I am never discouraged by words that I do not understand.

I am confident about my reading and find it difficult to put a book down once engrossed in it.

I would like to read more often than I do now.

In order to obtain information regarding accessibility of leisure reading material the following questions were asked:

Where do you obtain your leisure books from?

Have your parents always provided leisure books for you to read?"

The questionnaire ended with six open-ended questions. Five to six open lines were provided for every answer. They were as follows:

1. Why do you participate in non-academic reading?
2. What benefits are there in this kind of reading?
3. How does leisure reading help you in your daily life?
4. How does leisure reading make you feel?
5. How do you go about selecting a book that you would like to read for leisure?
6. Name a few of your favourite books.

According to Gillham (2000:4), the questionnaire as a method of data collection has numerous advantages including the following:

It is less time consuming than interviews and is therefore more economical.

Time was a factor when the researcher visited the schools and administered the questionnaires as cycle tests were being written and the learners did not have the time to be a part of interviews as they needed to use all their free time to study.

It can be completed at leisure and a broader spectrum of views can be obtained.

An arrangement with the teachers and the principal of the respective schools was made to administer the questionnaires during the Life Orientation period. Learners were

relaxed and most of them successfully completed the questionnaires within the one period. Moreover, learners were totally absorbed in the answering of the questionnaire and were not absorbed in conversations with each other. Hence a broader spectrum of opinions was indeed achieved.

The administration and scoring of a questionnaire is not complex.

A Statkon official analysed the questionnaire.

A questionnaire might guarantee confidentiality.

In the case of the questionnaire, confidentiality was indeed guaranteed and to obtain respondents, the researcher obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education, the principals and teachers of the identified schools, parents, and the learners. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at UJ. The purpose of the study was clarified to parents, learners and teachers. The learners were not coerced to participate in the study. Rather, they were informed about their rights to withdraw from the study at anytime which suited them without any negative consequences. Lastly, letters of permission were obtained; anonymity was granted to the respondents and they were given the opportunity to withdraw at any stage if they wanted to.

Less pressure for immediate response

Since the questionnaire requested written answers it eliminated the need for immediate responses that an interview would require.

Lack of interviewer bias

Since the researcher administered the questionnaire and did not interview any student, bias was completely eliminated.

However, the questionnaire as a method of data collection also has some limitations. According to De Vos (1998:153-156), the following are disadvantages of using a questionnaire:

The non-response rate may be high.

There is no control to determine that the right person completes the questionnaire.

Respondents may lose the questionnaire or not complete it.

There may be an unsuitable social environment.

In order to construct a good questionnaire, the following criteria were considered:

Questions should be clear

Irrelevant questions were eliminated

Negative items were avoided

Biased terms were avoided

3.7. Data collection procedure

3.7.1. Sampling



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According to De Vos (1997:191), a sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons which together comprise the subject of the study. De Vos (2000:253) advises that the criteria for identifying the respondents should be that they would be able to provide data/information that is "rich and descriptive". This study involved random sampling since questionnaires were administered to all learners regardless of race even though my objective was to investigate the Coloured learners' perceptions regarding leisure reading. I visited schools A and B on separate days in June 2008 and administered one hundred questionnaires to the Grade 10 learners at both schools respectively. The ages of these learners ranged between 16 and 19 years and they were learners who had never been identified as having reading difficulties. In total, eighty questionnaires were received from school A and seventy were received from school B.

The researcher administered the questionnaires in the absence of the class-teachers. This was done to avoid the learners being inhibited by their teacher's presence. This was important since in South Africa teaching still tends to be autocratic and teachers may be intimidating. One of the limitations of the study was that although every effort was made to ensure that the sample was representative of the Coloured learners, not all Coloured learners handed back their questionnaires and thus only 33 questionnaires could be analysed. The composition of the Coloured learners was 13 male and 20 female learners.

3.7.1. 1. Sample

Random sampling was used, whereby all Grade 10 learners irrespective of their racial background were asked to complete the questionnaire.

Random sampling



The sample for this project was drawn from secondary school learners in Grade 10 only. The learners' age average was 16. Learners in this age group possess developed reading patterns and preferences. They are also on the cusp of senior school and should be knowledgeable to a certain extent regarding their learning and reading habits. The sample selected for this study comprised of 100 grade 10 learners accumulatively from two different schools in Gauteng. The researcher aimed to select schools where I knew that I would get a functional Coloured learner complement but questionnaires were distributed freely to 100 learners of mixed race. This was done during Life Orientation periods as arranged before hand with the teachers involved. A questionnaire was completed in the presence of the researcher as it offered an opportunity for clarifying some questions. This was also to ensure that questionnaires were returned promptly.

It was previously decided during discussion with the teachers involved, that it would be preferable that they were absent when questionnaires were to be administered. It was a mutual decision since we felt that learners may not be as free to express themselves in the presence of the teacher and may even be intimidated by the teacher. For this reason, the researcher was able to be alone with the learners and was able to engage very naturally and honestly. Short conversations took place and opportunities for questions were allowed. Clarity of certain concepts was provided. Even though all ethical considerations had been handed to the learners in the form of permission letters prior to the day the questionnaires were distributed, the researcher once again took the opportunity to verbally assure them that their names would be kept unknown to the public and that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study any time. When the period ended the researcher successfully received questionnaires from 56 Black learners, 33 Coloured learners, 3 white learners and 3 Indian learners. Some learners did not complete their questionnaires in time and asked if they could return it the next day. The researcher went back to the school the next day and only received two. The lack of interest on the part of the learners could be attributed to the fact that they were writing cycle tests and were not as focused on completing the questionnaires.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

De Vos (1998:86), Vockell and Asher (1995:88), Macmillan and Schumacher (1993:227) and Mouton and Marais (1990:95) concur that reliability is the accuracy and consistency of the measurement. It is the extent to which the independent administration of the same instrument yields the same results under comparable conditions. If the instrument is unreliable, the information obtained is ambiguous, inconsistent and useless. It is, therefore, important for researchers to select and develop data-gathering procedures that will be highly reliable. Broadly speaking, validity refers to the degree to which an instrument does what it is intended to do.

Babbie (1995:127) postulates that there are four types of validity of which three relate to my research study. They are as follows:

i. **Face validity** (do the items appear to measure what the instrument purports what to measure). In the case of this study the question is: "Are the closed-ended questions reflecting exactly what the researcher needs to know from the respondents regarding their interest in leisure reading even though it may not be with our common agreements and individual images associated with leisure reading".

ii. **Criterion -related validity/ predicted validity** (do scores predict a criterion measure?) is based on some external criterion. Regarding the study, the question arises whether the results at the end of the study can predict how the Coloured learners will react toward strategies devised to implement leisure reading as a consistent practice amongst them.

iii. **Construct validity-** (do the items measure the content they were intended to measure) refers to the degree to which the measuring covers a range of meanings included with the concepts. In this regard the question that comes to the fore is: "Does the content of the questionnaire measure the content area of Coloured learners and their interest in leisure reading?"

The use of both closed and open-ended questions is a strategy to arrive at the conclusions that are reliable. In other words, most of the closed-ended questions were elaborated upon in the open-ended questions as a means to ensure consistency of the results. Therefore, validity was ensured in the following ways: using respondents' verbatim accounts when reporting the research findings, thus using literal statements and quotations to illustrate their views and feelings. Direct quotations are important for illustrating the respondents' meanings and to enable the readers to attach their own interpretations. There were six questions and learners needed to answer them as openly

and honestly as possible. The findings arrived at using these two different methods (that are commonly aligned to different approaches) complemented each other, and thus enhanced validity and interpretability of the study. Again, there was corroboration of the findings, and this increased the acceptance of the study (Sydenstricker-Neto, 2007).

Furthermore, the researcher ensured *internal validity* by spending a considerable time with the respondents and conversing with them about their reading habits and leisure time. "Member checks" were also conducted (Merriam, 1998:204) where I continually reviewed my findings with other professional people to determine if they were plausible and to get feedback from them. As a researcher, I remained conscious at all times and included information that contradicted my ideals. This was done to guarantee the trustworthiness of my research project.

3.9. Data Analysis

The data collected by means of the questionnaire was analysed statistically following the SPSS15 software. The process was facilitated by Statkon, a specialist organisation associated with UJ. The results were provided in the form of histograms and tables, which are presented in chapter 4.

3.10. Conclusion

In this chapter the research approach, design and data collection methods were discussed. Following this, data collection procedure was elaborated upon. Concluding the chapter a discussion about issues on trustworthiness and data analysis ensued. The next chapter presents the findings and results of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and their interpretation. Significant themes emerged such as current engagement in leisure reading; love and attitude toward leisure reading; sources of encouragement; access to reading materials; preferred reading materials as well as activities enjoyed by respondents in their free time.

4.2 Current engagement in leisure reading

With regard to the statement 'I am reading a book for sheer pleasure at the moment' 26 out of 33 respondents responded. Of the 26 respondents 14 marked the *strongly agree* option whilst 12 ticked the *strongly disagree* option. The other 7 respondents opted for the *neutral* option. The data, demonstrated that a fair amount of learners were participating in leisure reading. Refer to Figure 4.2.1.

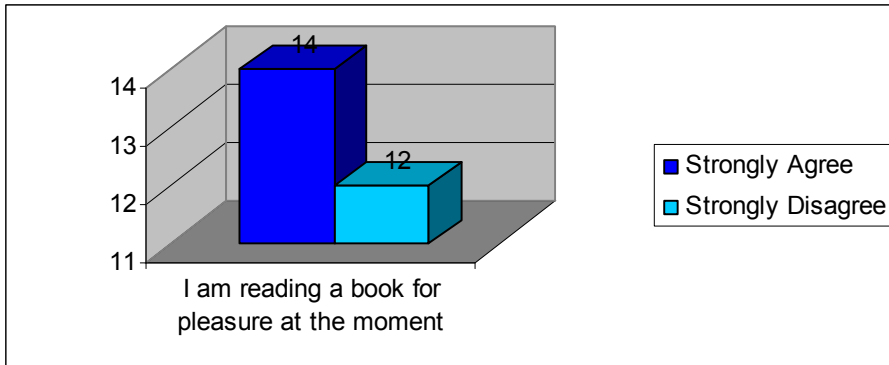


Figure 4.2.1. Pleasure reading

Gender was used as a variable in determining whether the learners read frequently. 57% (8 out of 13 boys) and 58% (12 out of 20 girls) agreed that they were active readers. Refer to Figure 4.2.2.

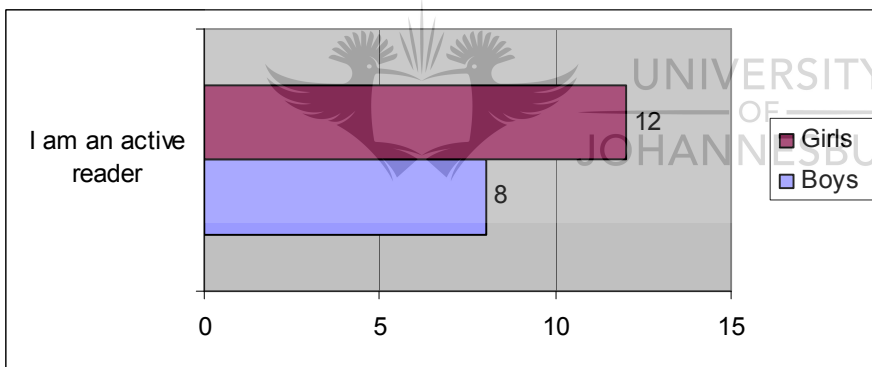


Figure 4.2.2 Active reading

More than 50% of all respondents (19/33 learners) said that they read leisurely during their free time daily, while 22% (7/33 learners) said that they did not make time to read every day. The remaining 7 did not respond. This demonstrated that 26 out of 33 Coloured learners read leisurely on a daily basis. Refer to Figure 4.2.3.

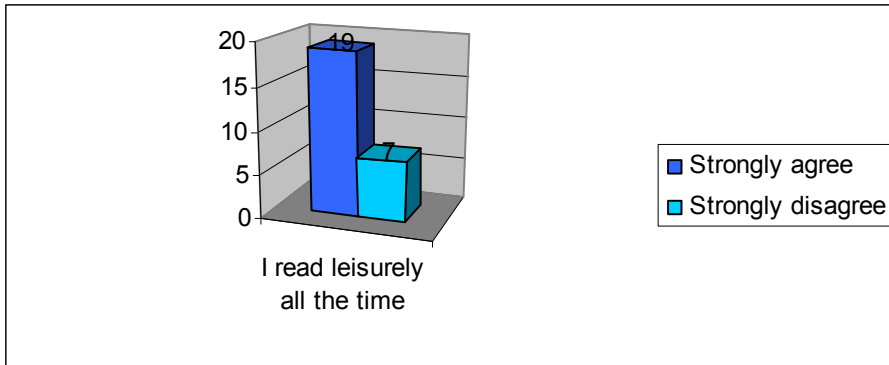


Figure 4.2.3 Frequent leisure reading

The impact of parents' level of education on their children's current involvement in leisure reading demonstrated that 28 out of 33 respondents read leisurely all the time. Of the 13 learners with high school educated parents, 4 strongly agreed that they read leisurely all the time whilst 9 strongly disagreed. Of the 15 learners with at least one parent with tertiary education, only 3 strongly agreed that they read leisurely all the time whilst 12 strongly disagreed.



The evidence portrays that the parents' level of education had no influence on their children's leisure reading habits. Refer to Figure 4.2.4

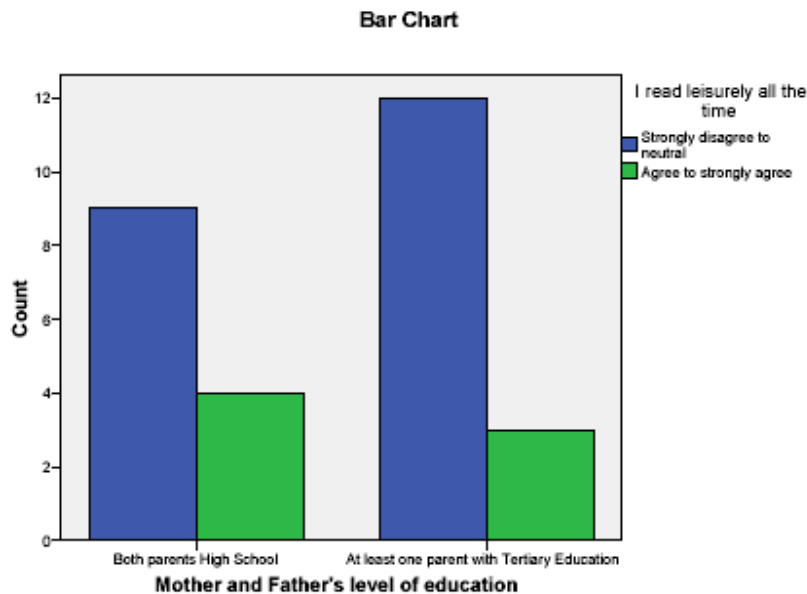


Figure 4.2.4 Frequent leisure reading and parents' education

4.3. Time spent on reading for leisure purpose



A section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate an estimation of time spent reading non-academically outside of the school day. The learners were required to estimate how much time they typically spent each day reading for pleasure outside of the school day, and were consequently required to choose an appropriate option (e.g., 5-10 minutes; 10-20 minutes and 20 minutes and longer).

The Fisher's Exact Test was executed. For gender, there were statistically insignificant differences. According to the data, 38.5% (5 out of 13 boys) read from 0-20 minutes and 40.0% (8 out of 20 girls) read for the same time. 61.5% (8 out of 13 boys) read for more than 20 minutes and 60.0% (12 out of 20 girls) read for that time. The data illustrated that a large number of boys (8 out of 13 boys) and (12 out of 20 girls) were reading for pleasure for more than 20 minutes outside of the school day. This is significant and

revealed that learners were indeed attaching importance to this activity. Refer to Table 4.3.1.

Crosstab

			rC3		Total
			0 - 20 minutes	More than 20 minutes	
Gender	Male	Count	5	8	13
		% within Gender	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%
	Female	Count	8	12	20
		% within Gender	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	13	20	33
		% within Gender	39.4%	60.6%	100.0%

Table 4.3.1 Time spent on reading for leisure purposes

Parents with a high school education had 30.8% (4 out of 33) of their children reading between 0-20 minutes as opposed to at least one parent with a tertiary education who had 40.0% (6 out of 33) of their children reading for that time. Both parents with a high school education had 69.2% (9 out of 33) of their children reading for more than 20 minutes and surprisingly at least one parent with tertiary education had a similar result with 60.0% (9 out of 33) of their children reading for this time. The data revealed that the level of education of parents' was not influential in encouraging the leisure reading habits of their children. Refer to Figure 4.3.2

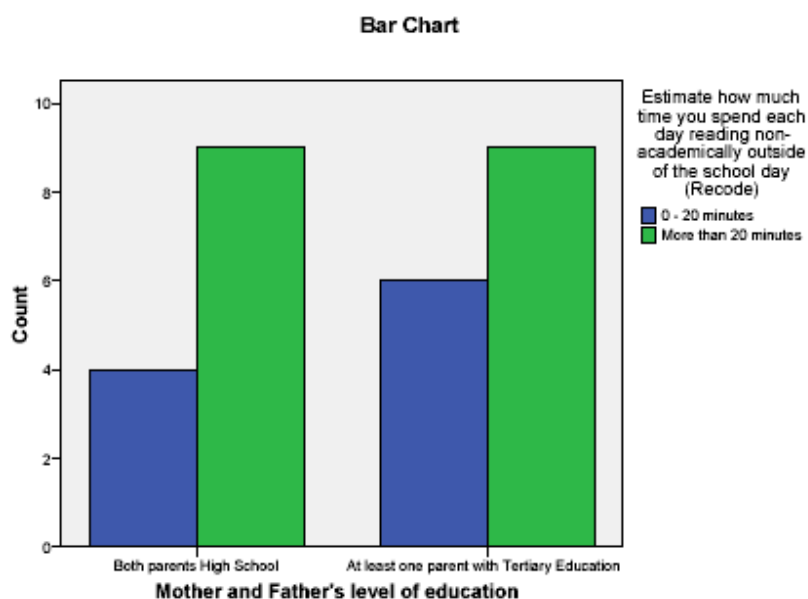


Figure 4.3.2 Time spent on reading and parents' education

4.4. Perceptions about leisure reading

A learner's love and attitude towards leisure reading greatly affects their perceptions regarding this pastime and for this reason, as an investigator, I found it necessary to seek out the mindsets of young people regarding their perceptions about reading, in an attempt to deepen my understanding of this phenomenon. Consequently, statements pertaining to 'learner perceptions' regarding leisure reading was also included in the questionnaire.

The definition of love according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2000:755) is to have a great attachment to and affection for someone or something. Attitude refers to the way a person views something or tends to behave towards it. Worrel, Roth, David and Gabelko (2007:1) mention, attitude towards *reading* has been defined as students' feelings toward *reading*, which result in approaching or avoiding *reading* tasks. The meanings of these

terms were significant in understanding how people attach meanings to what constitutes reading and how they essentially feel about the practice.

4.4.1 Interest in reading for leisure/non-academic purposes

With regard to the statement (a) 'I am interested in reading books for leisure/non academic purposes', Of the 13 learners with high school educated parents, 30.8% (4 learners) strongly disagreed with the statement whilst 69.2% (9 learners) strongly agreed with the statement. Of the 15 learners with at least one parent who had tertiary education, 46.7% (7 learners) strongly disagreed with the statement whilst 53.3% (8 learners) strongly agreed.

As illustrated by the data on parents' level of education does not seem to have a remarkable significance on their children's interest in leisure reading and also reveals that most children are interested in reading regardless of their parents' education. Refer to Figure 4.4.1.

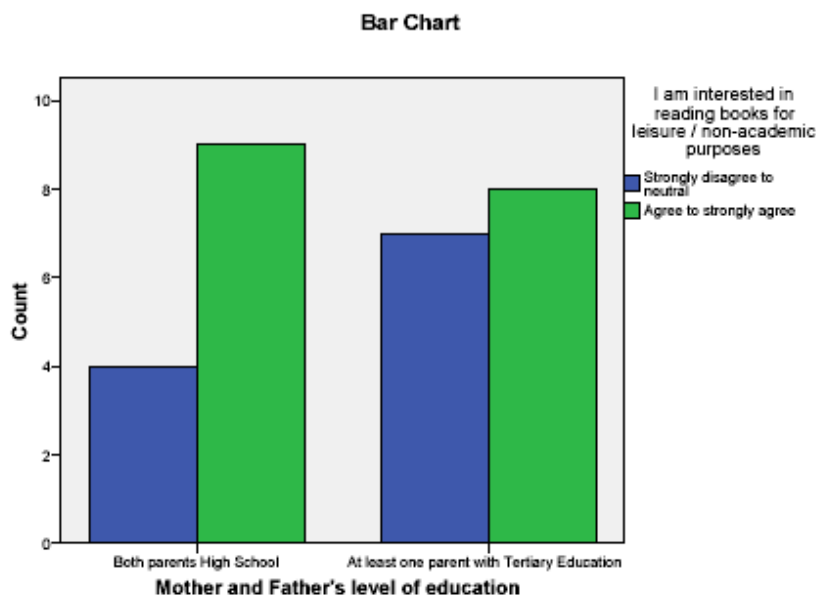


Figure 4.4.1 Interest in leisure reading

With regard to statement (b) 'Leisure reading is important and should be an activity that I should be participating in often.' Of the 13 learners with high school educated parents, 38.5% (5 learners) strongly disagreed with the statement whilst 61.5% (8 learners) strongly agreed with the statement. Of the 15 learners with at least one parent with tertiary education, 20.0% (3 learners) strongly disagreed with the statement whilst 80.0% (12 learners) strongly agreed with the statement. The data depicted that for the most part learners are aware that leisure reading is an important activity. The evidence also revealed that learners from a home where one parent is tertiary educated attached more importance to leisure reading than children from a home where both parents are high school educated. It follows that the influence of parents' education in this instance is quite significant. Refer to Figure 4.4.2. and Figure 4.4.3.

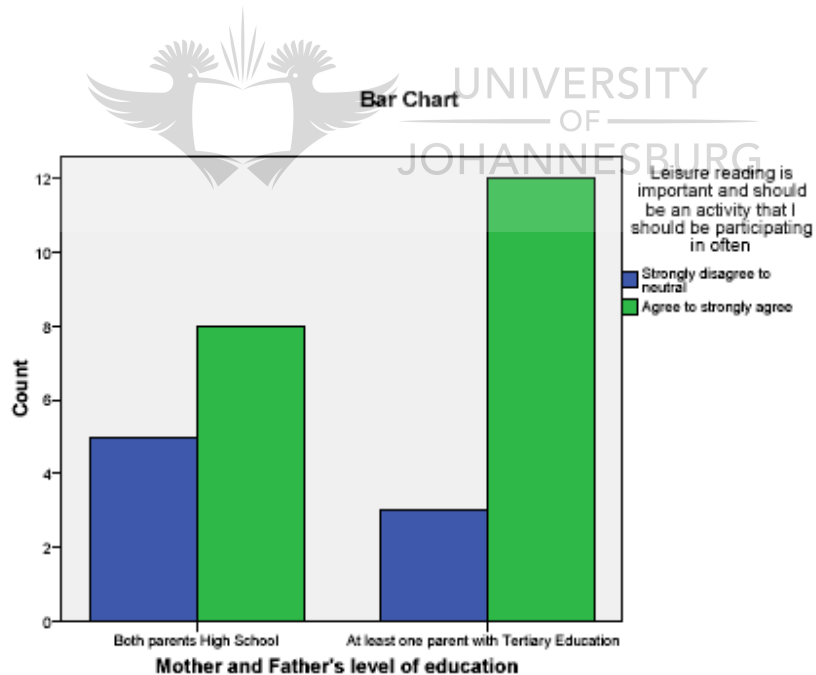


Figure 4.4.2

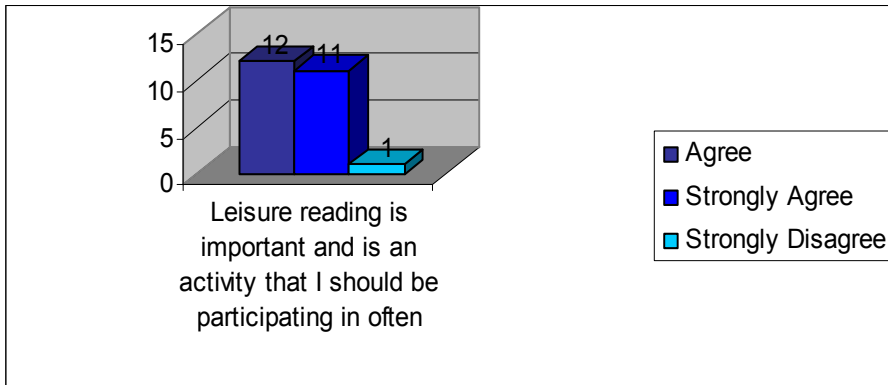


Figure 4.4.3 Perceptions about leisure reading

With regard to statement (c) 'Reading should not be limited to prescribed books', (24) learners strongly agreed with the statement whilst only (1) disagreed with the statement. This indicates that a very high number of learners believed that reading should not be limited to prescribed books. This suggested that these learners are aware that they should be reading broadly implying that reading should not be limited to academic reading only. It could be understood that even though this type of reading may not be academic it would, however, have a positive impact academically. Refer to Figure 4.4.4.

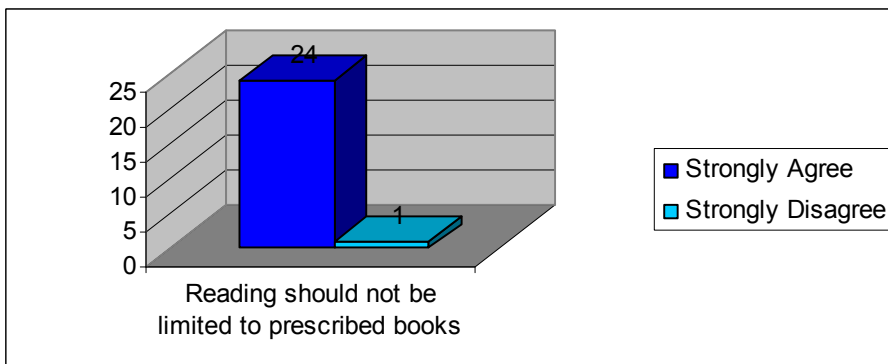


Figure 4.4.4 Reading and prescribed books

4.5. The Benefits of Reading

	Variable	Strongly agree	Total of all learners who strongly agree
a	Reading is valuable	13 Girls= 65% 7 boys= 53,8%	20 out of 33
b	Reading develops vocabulary	16 girls=80% 5 boys=38.4%	21 out of 33
c	Reading facilitates communication	9 girls=45% 4 boys=30.7%	13 out of 33
d	Reading extends general knowledge	13 girls=65% 7 boys= 53%	20 out of 33
e	Leisure reading impacts on academic success	Combination of girls and boys	12 out of 33
f	Leisure reading is not a waste of time	Combination of girls and boys	23 out of 33

Table 4.5.1 The benefits of reading

Reading is valuable. About 60.6% (20 out of 33 learners) strongly agreed that *reading is valuable*. Of this number 53.8% (7 boys) and 65% (13 girls) strongly agreed. They also clarified the following as additional benefits of reading for leisure purposes, namely: (a) Reading develops vocabulary; (b) Reading facilitates communication; (c) Reading extends general knowledge; (d) Leisure reading impacts on academic success; and (e) Leisure reading is not a waste of time.

a. Reading develops vocabulary: 63.6% (21 out of 33 learners) of all respondents strongly agreed that *reading develops one's vocabulary*. Of this number, 38.4% (5 boys) and 80% (16 girls) strongly agreed with this statement. This suggested that the girls more so than the boys associate reading with a well developed vocabulary. The following responses to the open-ended questions bear evidence as a learner mused that "*Reading helps a lot. I get to learn new words every day.*", and the other one said that "*It allows me to write better essays and to do well in English as a subject.*", and yet another said that "*Leisure reading is intriguing, as it broadens my vocabulary and I am better able to express myself in the written form*".

Certain responses revealed that learners participated in leisure reading because it allowed them to become creative, imaginative and even provided them with a channel in which they could fantasise. One learner said that "*I get lost in my own world where it's only me and the characters.*" Another said that, "*You can become very imaginative when you read for leisure and I can escape and enter a world of fantasy.*" Three claimed that by reading leisurely, they were given an opportunity to escape reality for a 'little while'. Yet another said that "*I am able to use my imagination and allow people to look like I would like them to look.*" Additionally another claimed that, "*When I read for fun it allows me to create my own pictures in my head which is cool.*"

b. Reading facilitates communication: 39.4% (13 out of 33 learners) strongly agreed that reading *facilitates communication*. Of this number, only 30.7% (4 boys) and 45% (9 girls) strongly agreed with this statement. From these low statistics, it was evident that learners did not perceive reading as a prerequisite for having the ability to communicate. In the open-ended questions respondents disclosed that they read to become better readers so that fluency could be enhanced. One learner reported that *"I read because I want to be fluent when I speak. I feel good about myself when I speak correctly."* Pronunciation also emerged as significant and these were some of the comments. *"When you read you pronounce the word in your head and then when you say it properly in conversation you sound intelligent."* Another claimed that *"Reading improves pronunciation."* Yet another said that, *"It's very embarrassing when you pronounce your words wrong, that's why it's important to read."* One learner reported that *"Reading helps me to be a better conversationalist."*

c. Reading extends general knowledge: 60.6% (20 out of 33 learners) strongly agreed that reading *extends general knowledge*. Of this number, 53% (7 boys) and 65% (13 girls) felt strongly about this. To further clarify learners' standpoint with regard to this view, open-ended questions revealed the following responses. For example, one learner made this response. *"When I read I become aware of daily events and it improves my general knowledge"*. A few learners stated that participation in non-academic reading was crucial because it augmented their general knowledge. During informal conversations at break-time with some of the respondents, it was disclosed that learners at a grade 10 level were quite aware of learners who were excellent with general knowledge. They also readily admitted that the "clever learners" were the ones who were always reading books other than their school/academic books. Some learners maintained that by participating in leisure reading they could develop their *knowledge* especially in ways where they were able to be more informed. One learner made this comment, *"I read newspapers and magazines so that I can have an idea of what is happening around me."*

d. Leisure reading impacts on academic success: 37.5% (12 out of 33 learners) strongly agreed that leisure reading impacts on *academic success*. It seems that the learners believed that their academic books have a greater impact on their educational success than their leisure books could ever have. In addition, it seems that the learners believed that their academic books have a greater impact on their educational success than their leisure books. However, when responding to the open-ended questions some respondents disclosed that they associated good marks with reading leisurely. For example, one learner commented that, "*Leisure reading was the key to all success and is a means to improve my results at school and beyond.*" Some learners believed that apart from leisure reading and improving *concentration*, it also allowed *critical thinking*. One learner said that "*I read leisurely to make me clever so that I am able to reason better*". One learner said that "*Because of leisure reading I feel as though I can be a deep thinker and writer.*" Another said that "*Reading helps you to sit down and concentrate and we need to concentrate on many things at school*". Four learners felt that leisure reading aided their *understanding* and consequently, allowed them to seek out the relevance in certain topics read on a more academic level.

e. Leisure reading is a waste of time as there are so many other important things to do. 69.7% of all learners (23 out of 33 learners) disagreed with the statement. Of this percentage, 39.4% (13 out of 33 learners) *strongly disagreed* and 30.3% (10 out of 33 learners) disagreed. This brings to light that although some learners' perceived leisure reading to be a waste of time, a large amount actually believed that it is necessary. Some learner's perceived leisure reading to be a waste of time but pleasingly a large amount actually believed that it necessary. This unveils that as a free-time-activity, leisure reading does have its place in Coloured children's free time and a positive attitude towards it is apparent.

Additional benefits of reading:

a. Sheer enjoyment: Some learners stated that through participation in leisure reading, they were able to achieve sheer enjoyment since they found it to be a past-time of great *fun and entertainment*. One learner said that *"Leisure reading is interesting, fun and exciting."* Another even claimed that through leisure reading he was kept out of trouble. He asserted that, *"It's best to stay out of trouble and reading a book for fun keeps me out of trouble."* Another learner mused that *"Leisure reading helps teenagers in general to stay away from drugs and bad things."*

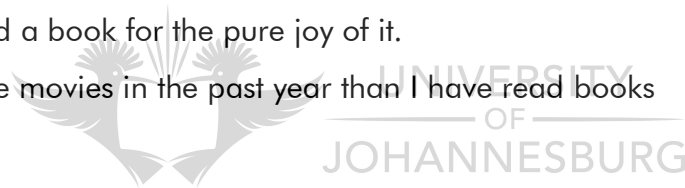
b. Freedom of choice: Certain responses revealed that learners relished the idea of having the *freedom of choice* in selecting their readings as well as the independence this kind of activity afforded them. Furthermore, they felt that leisure reading also aided them in becoming active readers and two learners deemed leisure reading as very important. One learner said that *"Leisure reading is fun because you can choose what you want to read."* Another declared that *"I get to choose books and have no time limits."* Six others stated that they participated in leisure reading simply because it presented ample opportunity to read without time constraints.

c. Psychological benefits associated with reading for leisure: *In response to this question one learner stated that "I feel enthused while reading leisurely."* I feel excited when I read for leisure. Quite a few learners claimed that leisure reading was a very *calming and relaxing past-time*, while some said that they think it is the most boring thing to do. One learner said that, *"I hate reading and everybody is always forcing me to read."* Another comment made by a not- so- ardent reader was that *"It makes me sleepy"* and another quipped that *"I don't feel the need to read at all except for the books we have to read at school."* Feelings of *contentment* also emerged when one learner claimed that *"I feel relaxed and not at all pressured by anything or anyone while I'm reading."*

d. Social benefits of reading for leisure purposes: A few learners even disclosed that their level of *tolerance* and *understanding* of others was strengthened, in a sense that they were more able to understand people's thought processes and personalities through the material that they read. One learner reported that "When you read you get to understand other people's perspectives on certain things." Another claimed that "Reading teaches me to understand others more."

Using gender as a variable in determining learner perceptions regarding leisure reading, three additional statements were presented in Likert Scale format as above and they were as follows:

- a. Reading seems to be a thing of the past
- b. One should read a book for the pure joy of it.
- c. I have seen more movies in the past year than I have read books



Statement	Gender	Percentage
Reading seems to be a thing of the past	12 out of 13 boys 19 out of 20 girls Strongly disagreed with the statement while 1 out of 13 boys 1 and 1 out of 20 girls strongly agreed with the statement	92.3% - Boys 95% - Girls Strongly disagreed with the statement 7.7% - Boys 5% - Girls Strongly agreed with the statement
One should read a book for the pure joy of it.	10 out of 13 boys 16 out of 20 girls Strongly agreed with the statement while 3 out of 13 boys and 4 out of 20 girls strongly disagreed with the statement	76.9% - Boys 80% - Girls Strongly agreed with the statement 23.1% - Boys 20% - Girls strongly disagreed with the statement.
I have seen more movies in the past year than I have read books	7 out of 13 boys 5 out of 20 girls strongly disagreed with the statement while 6 out of 13 boys 15 out of 20 girls strongly agreed with the statement.	38.5% - Boys 35% - Girls strongly disagreed with the statement. 61.5% - Boys 65% - Girls strongly agreed with the statement

Table 4.5.2 Gender and perceptions regarding leisure reading

The result for 'reading seems to be a thing of the past' clearly demonstrated that both male and female learners were of the opinion that leisure reading is not "a thing of the

past". This is significant and proved that leisure reading has a place in their lives. Refer to Figure 4.5.1.

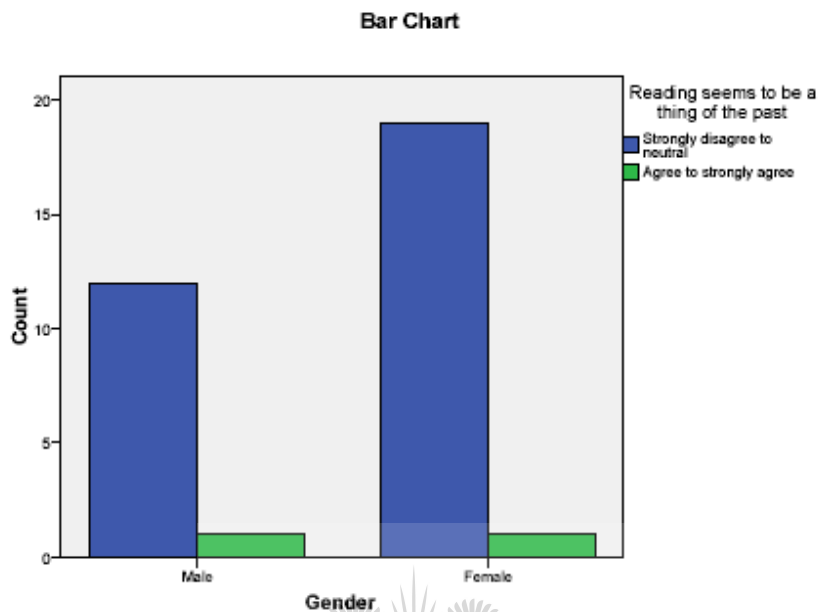


Figure 4.5.1 Reading seems to be a thing of the past

The results for, 'one should read a book for pure joy' revealed that both male and female learners strongly agreed that one should read a book for pure joy. This indicates that the learners were aware of the value and enjoyment that leisure reading brings. Refer to Figure 4.5.2.

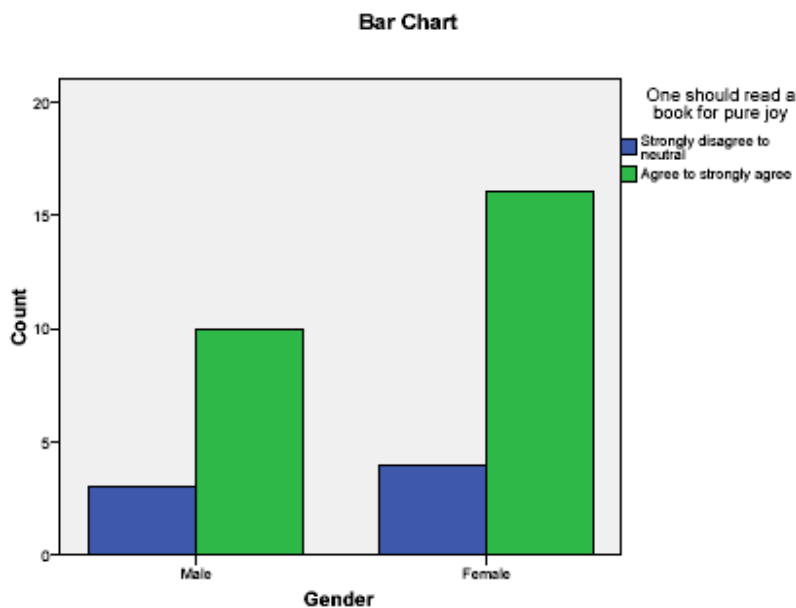


Figure 4.5.2 One should read a book for pure joy

The results for, 'I have seen more movies in the past year than I have read books' depicted that the majority of male and female learners agreed that they had seen more movies than read books in the past year while a fair amount of learners disagreed. This indicates that these learners placed reading as priority above watching movies which is a gratifying result.

4.6. Motivation

With regard to the statement 'I am never discouraged by words that I do not understand', the data revealed that 93% (12 out of 13 boys) said that they were never discouraged by words that they did not understand and that it actually stimulated them to read more, while 89% (18 out of 20 girls) agreed with the above statement. Clearly this demonstrates that a large number of respondents in fact have a strong 'staying power' towards their reading as they were not side-tracked by words that were not in their frame of reference. Refer to Figure 4.6.1.

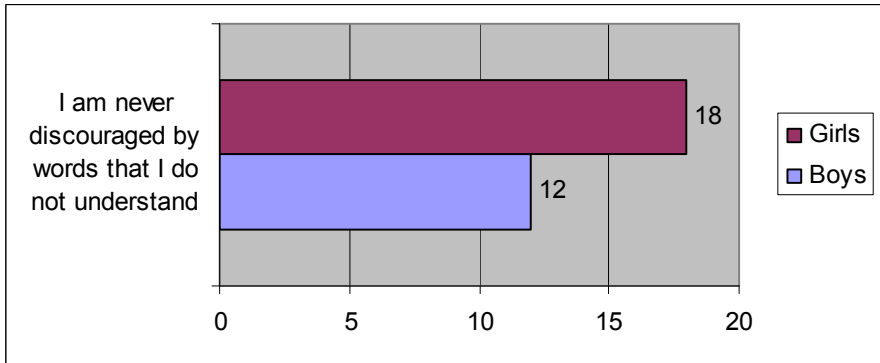


Figure 4.6.1 Difficult words

Concerning the statement 'I am confident about my reading and find it difficult to put a book down once engrossed in it', 50% (7 out of 13 boys) who said that they were confident and even felt it was difficult to put a book down when engrossed in one as opposed to 68% (14 out of 20 girls) who indicates the same. The data reveals an equal amount of boys and girls are in fact confident about their reading. Refer to Figure 4.6.2.

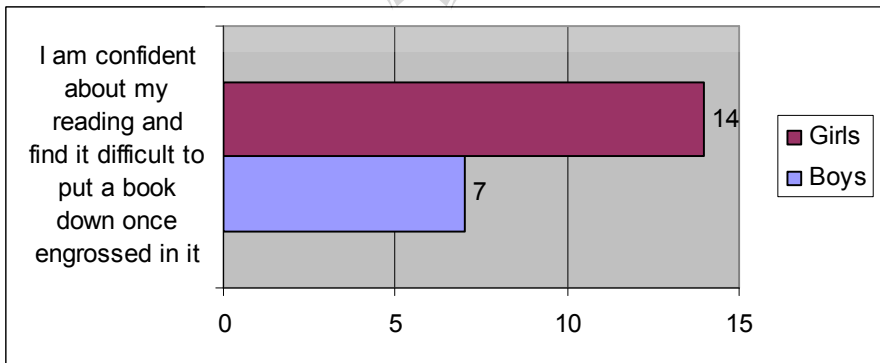


Figure 4.6.2 Confident reading

Regarding the statement 'I would like to read more often than I do now', had the data demonstrating that 100% (13 of the boys) would like to read more often than they do compared with 74% (15 out of 20 girls). This is indicative of a large number of

respondents feeling the need to read more often than they are doing presently, which is a satisfactory result. Refer to Figure 4.6.3.

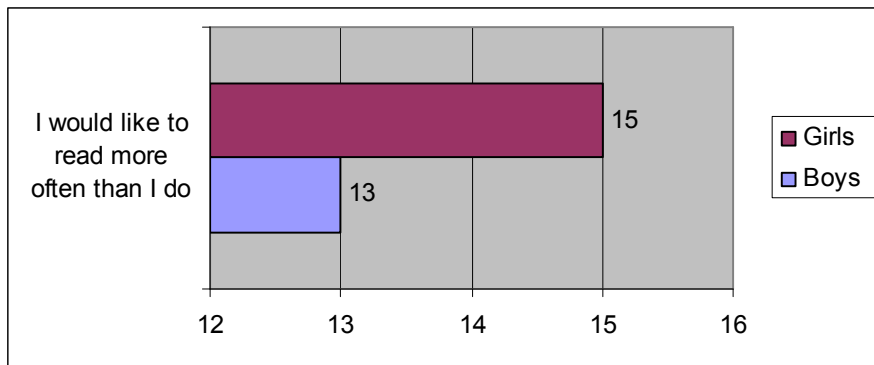


Figure 4.6.3 Extra involvement in leisure reading

Motivation by parents, teachers and friends

Respondents were asked to mark whether their parents, teachers, friends or others encouraged them to read.

The data revealed that 47.2% (25 out of 33) said that their parents encouraged them to read for leisure purposes while 37.7% (20 out of 33) said that their teachers encouraged them in this regard. Only 5.7% (3 out of 33) said that their friends supported their leisure reading habits. Remarkably, this reveals that the majority of learners are encouraged to read leisurely by the adults in their lives more so than by their friends. In addition, it could be that the adults are more aware of the importance and benefits of reading as opposed to the friends who may have other interests of which leisure reading is last on their list of priorities *if at all*. Refer to Figure 4.6.4.

The investigation of learners' literary habits by teachers could additionally lead to identifying learners with language or reading disorders and those who show different levels of reading proficiency. Some of the teachers at the research sites noted that no real time for leisure reading was possible in the school day. They also claimed that it was

difficult to get through the reading of set-works because of the time factor, and one teacher's comment made this explicit as she posited that there is *just no time for leisure reading!*

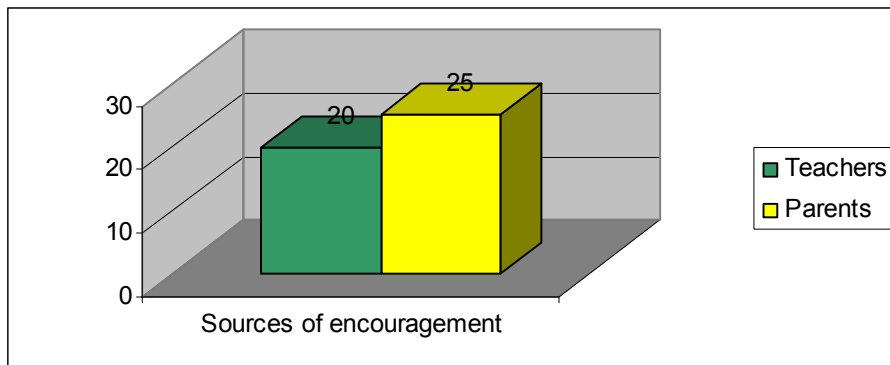


Figure 4.6.4 Sources of encouragement

4.7. Access to reading materials

The data concerning the question, "where do you obtain your leisure books from?" revealed that out of 33 respondents whose parents had high school education, 16 responded. 4 out of 16 said that they received their leisure reading material from their parents. Furthermore, 2 out of 16 said that they received it from their teachers while 4 out of 16 said that friends provided them with their readings. 5 out of 16 said that they obtained their reading from libraries and only (1 out of 16) claimed to get readings from other sources.

The data also revealed that out of 33 respondents with at least one parent with a tertiary education, 22 responded. In addition, 5 out of 22 said that their parents provided their leisure reading material while 2 out of 22 said that they received their leisure reading from their teacher and 4 out of 22 said that their friends provided them with leisure books. Interestingly, the largest percentage of (10 out of 22) said that they visited the

library for their books and only (1 out of 22) claimed to get readings from other sources. These statistics prove that parents' level of education is not a determinant factor regarding their children's leisure book accessibility. These low scorings reveal that there was no outstanding source for learners' leisure reading. Nonetheless, on this low spectrum, the parents were rated the highest source with friends as the second highest source and finally teachers as the lowest source. Interestingly, 10 learners with at least one parent who had a tertiary education indicated that they received their books from the public library as opposed to five learners who have both parents with a high school education. The reason why children were not readily reading books for leisure could be because they related reading with academics. This low scoring may also be indicative of the fact that learners are not being motivated sufficiently to read leisurely since it is by example that learners adopt an affinity for reading.

The data concerning the statement "My parents have always bought leisure books for me to read" revealed that out of 33 respondents whose parents had high school education, 28 responded. In addition, 7 out of 28 strongly agreed with the statement whilst 6 out of 28 strongly disagreed with the statement. The data also revealed that out of 33 respondents with at least one parent with a tertiary education, 15 responded and 13 out of 15 strongly agreed with the statement whilst 2 out of 15 strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings exhibited that that the tertiary educated parent placed much more importance on the provision of leisure books for their children than the high school educated parents. Refer to Table 4.7.1.

Mother and Father's level of education * My parents have always bought and provided leisure books for me to read

Crosstab

			rAB		Total
			Strongly disagree to neutral	Agree to strongly agree	
rQ3	Both parents High School	Count	6	7	13
		% within rQ3	46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
	At least one parent with Tertiary Education	Count	2	13	15
		% within rQ3	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	20	28
		% within rQ3	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%

Table 4.7.1 Provision of books by parents

4.8. Preferred reading materials

Respondents were probed on the type of reading materials they prefer. They were given the following options to choose from: n reading about nonfiction subjects) whether they liked poems, short stories, plays, novels, comics, technical books (books which provided lots of facts), newspapers, magazines, encyclopaedias, books with lots of pictures or using the computer (internet). The options for this question were as follows: *never, hardly ever, sometimes, often and very often.*

The data revealed that respondents preferred magazines, newspapers and books with lots of pictures as their first choice for most material on information-based subjects. As depicted by the data books with lots of pictures are read often by 46% (16 out of 33 respondents.) Newspapers are read often by 35.5% (11 out of 33 respondents) of which 46.1% (6 out of 13) are boys and 26.3% (5 out of 20) are girls. Refer to Figure 4.8.1.

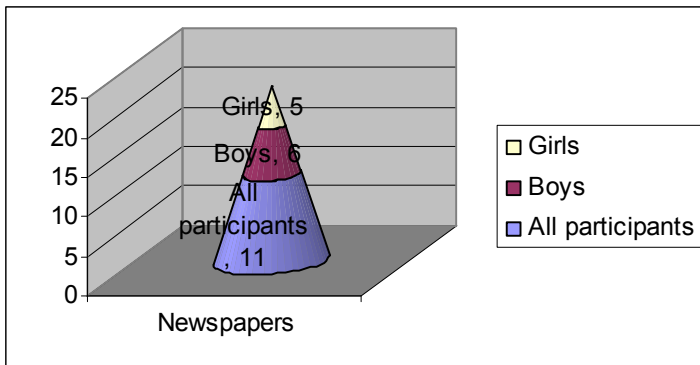


Figure 4.8.1 Reading of newspapers

The data also demonstrated that magazines are more popular with 66.7% (22 out of 33 respondents) reading them. Girls showed a greater preference for this kind of source and 94.7% (18 out of 20 girls) compared with 38.4% (5 out of 13 boys) read magazines very often. Refer to Figure 4.8.2.

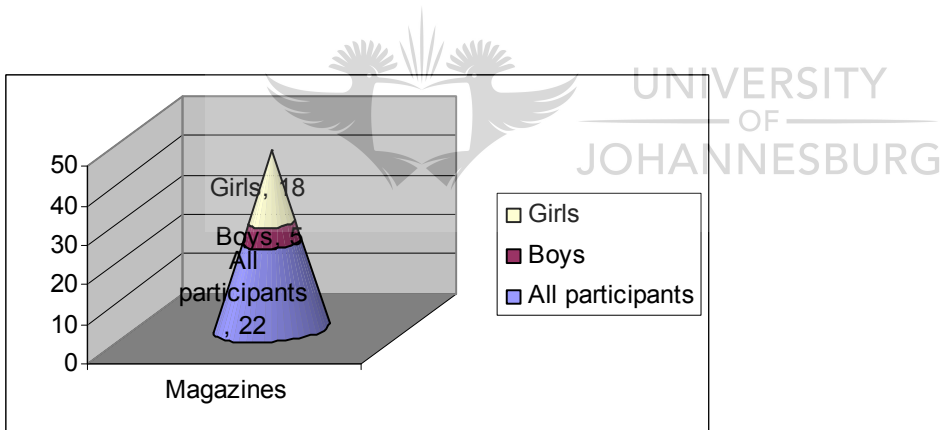


Figure 4.8.2 Reading of magazines

The data revealed that 76.9% (10 out of 13) boys used computers and the internet very often as compared to 21% (4 out of 20) girls. This suggested that either the girls were not very comfortable using the internet and/or may not have had access to computers. One of the schools did not have a computer laboratory. The other school had a computer laboratory but unfortunately had endless problems. In a discussion with some of the teachers during recess, it was discovered that Gauteng On-Line which is an organization

responsible for supplying computers as well as the necessary support to the school had failed to attend to certain problems and hence their laboratory was not functional. Regardless of this, a surprising number of male respondents indicated that that they enjoyed using the internet. It is possible that respondents had access to computers in public libraries or the internet at home. Another possibility is that respondents could have been focusing on their positive attitude towards computers rather than on the actual accessibility to computers. Refer to Figure 4.8.3.

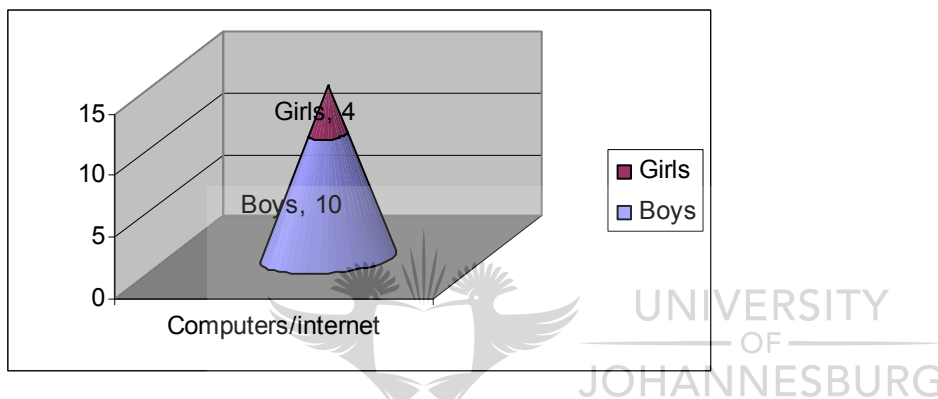


Figure 4.8.3 Use of computers/internet

The data also illustrated that 34.4% (11 out of 33 respondents) sometimes read novels as opposed to 18.8% (6 out of 33) who read novels often. It was interesting to note that more girls than boys prefer reading novels very often. 16% (3 out of 20) girls and 15.3% (2 out of 13) boys read novels very often. Refer to Figure 4.19. During informal discussions with the respondents, they revealed that novels were an escape from reality. One learner in particular exclaimed that "I can switch off from my life and live the life of the characters in my book." Refer to Figure 4.8.4.

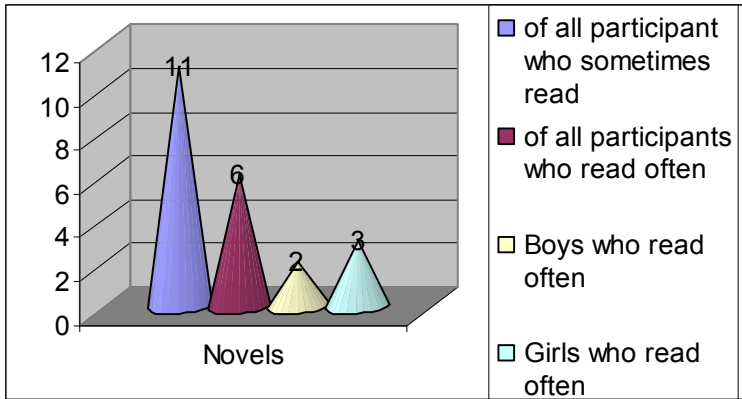


Figure 4.8.4 Reading of novels

The data illustrated that boys on the other-hand have a greater preference for factual books and that 38.4% (5 out of 13) boys read them very often compared to 0% of girls. Interestingly, 47.3% (9 out of 20) girls never read technical/factual books. This suggested that girls have a strong preference for fiction and boys for factual knowledge. One male respondent claimed that he preferred anything scientific to boring stories. Refer to Figure 4.8.5.

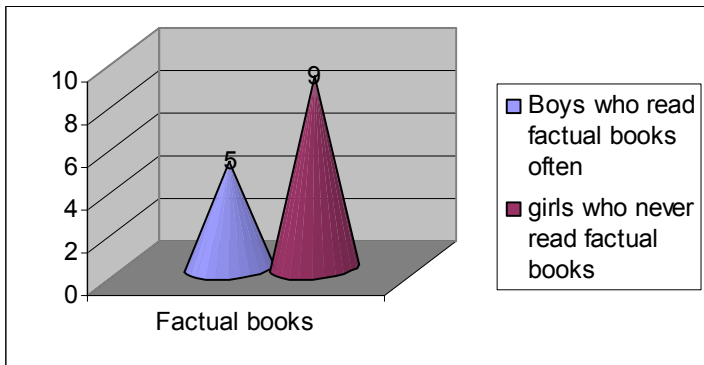


Figure 4.8.5 Reading of factual books

As depicted by the data, comic books were also the preference of boys rather than girls and as illustrated 38.4% (5 out of 13) boys read them very often while 26.3% (5 out of

20) girls read them very often. This is a low percentage and would deem comic books as an unpopular choice of reading. The 5 boys who enjoyed reading comics each claimed that they loved reading comics because they were interesting and full of action. Refer to Figure 4.8.6.

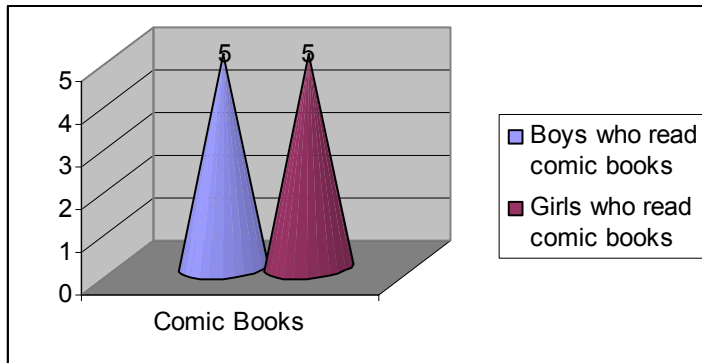


Figure 4.8.6 Reading of comic books

As evidenced by the data, 40.6% (13 out of 33 respondents) said that they read poems at least sometimes and as illustrated boys outnumbered the girls with 53.8% (7 out of 13) boys sometimes reading poems as compared with 32% (6 out of 20) girls. Even though this high percentage of boys reading poetry appears on the lower spectrum, it somehow discards the myth that girls have a greater affinity toward poetry. One boy exclaimed that he read poetry because he felt that it inspired him to become a "...magnificent orator like Nelson Mandela." Refer to Figure 4.8.7.

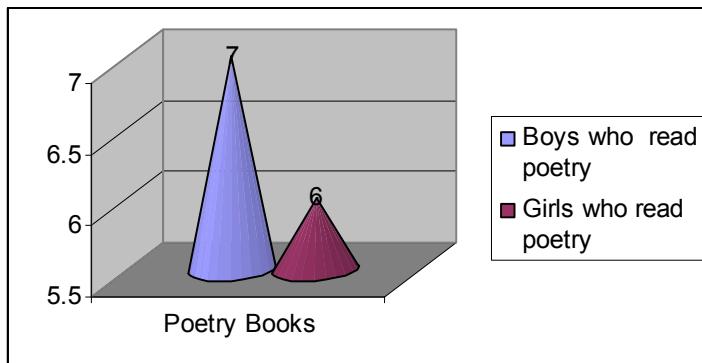


Figure 4.8.7 Reading of poetry books

As illustrated by the data, short stories were sometimes read by 46.1% (6 out of 13 boys) and 37% (7 out of 20 girls). Refer to Figure 4.8.8.

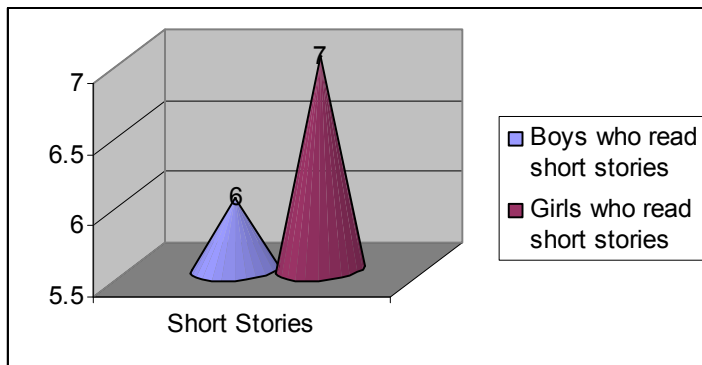


Figure 4.8.8 Reading of short stories

Lists of facts were less popular and encyclopaedias were the least popular source of information followed by poems which are read sometimes while plays arts and crafts which are hardly ever read.

They further revealed that their choice of books is guided by the following:

Respondents were required to respond to the open-ended question, "How do you select a book to read for enjoyment?" Their answers were analysed according to the following topics which emerged as selection factors.

Book cover

By the answers to this question, it would appear that the cover of the book generated the greatest power to effect reading the book. Fifteen learners elaborated by stating that an attractive, creative and colourful cover design was central to their choosing a book to read.

Abstract and title

Secondly, the abstract on the back of the book as well as the title made a very big impact on whether the book was worth reading. A thought provoking and relevant title was significant in twelve learners' choice to either read the book or not. Five learners highlighted the fact that if the abstract on the back cover did not fascinate them enough to actually read the book, they would undoubtedly disregard the book.

Gender choices

Boys preferred books about sports, comics, science, fantasy and generally fictional books, whilst girls preferred books about romance, mystery novels, friendship/family and young adult lifestyle kind of books.

Plot

In essence it could be concluded that if the plot was of no interest to them or if they could not relate to the book ten learners indicates that the book would be overlooked.

Author

Four learners were influenced into reading a book if they were familiar with the author. An avid reader claimed that he only read a book if it had interesting reviews, an interesting story line and if the author's style of writing appealed to him.

FAVOURITE BOOKS

Responses to open-ended questions such as "Which are your favourite books?" and "Who are your favourite authors?" were as follows:

Favourite Books:

Ten learners	Harry Potter Books
Three learners	The Outsiders
Two learners	All Roald Dahl books

Two learners	Goosebumps
Two learners	To Kill a Mocking Bird
Two learners	The Olsen Twins
Two learners	The Choice
Two learners	Hulk
Individual learners' favourite books	Lord of the Rings Series
	Sweet Valley High Series
	Teen books
	Diary of Anne Frank
	Hardy Boys
	Edge Chronicle Series
	Spider Man
	The Secret
	Princess Diaries
	Robin Hood
	The Virgin Suicides
Key to Wisdom	

Favourite Authors:

Four girls	Jacqueline Wilson
Five boys	Dan Brown
Three boys	Wilbur Smith
One Boy	Paul Jennings
Five girls	Anne River Siddons

The book choices learners are making show that young readers are responsive to the world they inhabit. Adolescents choose books that their peers have enjoyed, and which

validate reading as a peer group cultural experience. The popularity of Jacqueline Wilson's books point to a desire to read books about issues relevant to their own adolescent experiences and concerns. The popularity of Harry Potter is well known amongst the youth and provides a form of escapism from their lives. Dan Brown and Wilbur Smith were popular authors amongst the boys since this style of writing as well as plot appeals to their factual preferences. Girls on the other hand enjoy romance and real life drama and are inclined to enjoy fiction.

4.9. Activities enjoyed by learners in their free time

In this part of the questionnaire learners were required to circle the activities that they enjoyed doing during their free time. A list of activities was provided that was thought to be of interest to middle-school and high school students. As a result of investigator observations of young people and having the knowledge of the kind of activities young people enjoy, as a consequence of teaching in high school and being actively involved with children on a social level (drama and sports) as well as communicating with certain parents, it was believed that these activities might be good alternatives to compete for students' time and attention. In addition to activities that are primarily solitary (e.g., reading and writing), the list contained activities that could either be carried out alone or with others (e.g., shopping, running, playing cards). The category "other" was also provided to allow learners to write in any favourite activities that were not included in the list.

According to the data, the results of the findings were as follows: 19.2% (5 learners) enjoyed watching TV/videos. 3.8% (1 learner) enjoyed playing computer or video games. 7.7% (2 learners) enjoyed playing sports and 3.8% (1 learner) enjoyed playing cards or

board games). 19.2% (5 learners) enjoyed talking on the phone. Interestingly, 7.7% (2 learners) enjoyed using e-mail to chat to family and friends while 7.7% (2 learners) enjoyed listening to music and going to concerts and festivals. In addition, 15.4% (4 learners) enjoyed shopping and going to malls. 7.7% (2 learners) enjoyed arts and crafts and 7.7% (2 learners) one learner enjoyed communicating to friends on mix it and the other enjoyed singing and dancing.

As illustrated by the data, the most popular choice of leisure is talking on the phone and watching television. The second most popular activity that learners enjoyed was going to malls. Using e-mail to communicate, listening to music and participating in sports are the third most popular choices and finally playing video games, using mix it to communicate and playing card and board games come last. Refer to Figure 4.9.1.



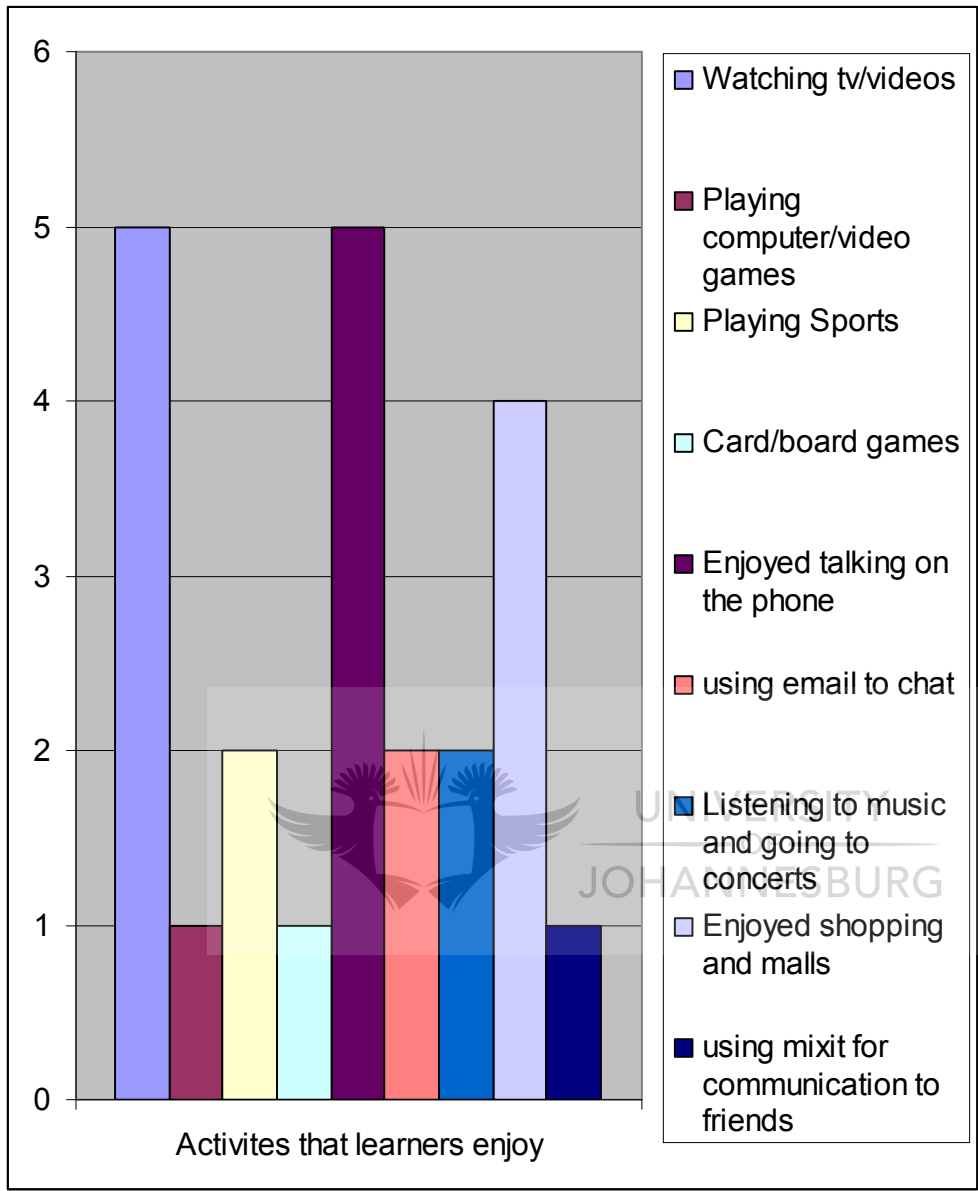


Figure 4.9.1 Activities enjoyed by learners in their free time

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter sought to recount the findings by presenting an expose' of crucial themes which emerged quantitatively.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study and their implications in relation to the literature. Themes which emerged from the findings are as follows: current engagement in leisure reading; love and attitude toward leisure reading; sources of encouragement; access to reading materials; preferred reading materials and activities enjoyed by respondents in their free time. The limitations and recommendations for further study are also outlined.

5.2. Discussion of the findings

5.2.1 Female and male learners value leisure reading

The data in chapter 4 revealed that the learners are well motivated regarding their leisure reading habits. For the most part, both boys and girls are never discouraged by words that they do not understand. Additionally, they are confident about their reading and most learners would like to read more often than they are presently doing. According to Wigfield & Guthrie, (1997:425), whether children read or not is determined by their attitudes toward reading. If children do not like reading or they think that reading is boring, their negative attitude toward reading will hinder their reading improvement. Maintaining this sentiment Nippold et al (2005:94) affirms that children who read consistently cultivate a positive attitude towards reading. Additionally in this study, it would appear that both female and male learners hold a high value for leisure reading. In correlation studies done by Sainsbury and Schagen (2004:380) responses of girls to reading attitude surveys were significantly more positive than boys. However, the researcher did not find this to be true regarding this study since both genders were

equally positive about the leisure reading experience. In this study it therefore appears that Coloured learners in South Africa hold positive attitudes toward leisure reading and that both genders are equally engaged in this past –time.

5.2.2 Parents and teachers encourage leisure reading

The study revealed that learners agree that parents and teachers are great sources of encouragement. Parents can be a positive influence in the children’s reading habits. The findings suggested that some learners indicated that their parents played an important role in encouraging them to read for leisure. This discovery in the study is in line with Hughes-Hassell and Rodge’s (2007) idea that children and young people read more when they are read to or when they see adults reading find relevance in this study. However, the question is: “What are parents doing to sustain this practice amongst their children”? From the data it is apparent that they are not being as proactive enough in ensuring that leisure reading is taking place. 22.7% (5 learners) said that their parents provided their leisure reading material and 9.1% (2 learners) said that they received their leisure reading from their teacher while 18.2% (4 learners) said that they received their leisure reading from friends. These are exceptionally low percentages which is indicative of a lack of tangible support by the most important people in the child’s education – parents and teachers. Even though information should not be imposed on a child, parents and teachers should make a substantial amount of time to interact with a child over reading material as that is necessary for stimulating and re-enforcing the child’s development and education

A very interesting finding was that although teachers were rated the lowest supplier of leisure books, they were rated highly as an encouragement force. Teachers should therefore take heed of this and build on the influential capacity that they have over their learners. As Moschovaki et al (2007:405) claims, the way the reader is going to present the text and his/her personal stance towards it will define children's reactions. In a

parallel study done by Hopper (2005), the influence of peer recommendation regarding leisure reading may have simply reflected the gap in expectations between adolescents and their elders, and the greater influence of peer-group culture at this particular developmental stage. On the contrary, the study revealed that friends were not influential. The small percentage of friends who were actually a source of encouragement may be avid readers and hence their love for reading may 'rub off' on their friends who they are in some cases perhaps subconsciously inspiring. Therefore, it can be deduced that if more friends were a source of encouragement, more learners would be reading for leisure as they would be reading what is relevant and interesting for their particular age group (Hopper 2005) and would possibly not be forced to read novels, for example, that their parents or teachers think would be interesting.

5.2. 3 Libraries are under-resourced

After spending considerable time at the schools where the research was undertaken, the stark reality was that these schools were not at all resourced with the appropriate books. The libraries were under-resourced and the books on the shelves were outdated. When asked about the school library, learners smirked and made sarcastic remarks. "What library, that's just an old dusty room!" "Those books are so ancient; my granny won't even read them." When asked about reading time during the school day, learners revealed that most reading takes place during English periods and that it is usually centred on set works and academic reading rather than reading leisurely. Similarly, a study done by Warrican (2007) in the Caribbean yielded the same sentiments by learners when questioned about their school library. The students themselves said they did not use the library because it had nothing that they were willing to read (Warrican, 2007). It can be concluded that Coloured learners in South Africa and learners in the Caribbean are faced with the same stark reality of an ill-equipped school library. Comments such as the ones made by learners should not be taken lightly. If inclusion in our schools is to take place, there should then be relevant and useful resources in the libraries (Donald,

Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002:21). Broadly speaking, inclusive education is subsequently a mechanism to iron out inequalities in the education system and to provide support for all. This consequently brings to light that efforts are not being made at all to create an atmosphere for leisure reading. This follows that the Gauteng Literacy Project launched by the Department of Education in 2004 has not as yet reached its target, which is to equip schools with the necessary books, training of teachers and methodologies as well as the revival of school libraries, in its quest to not only improve literacy in our country, but to instil a love for reading amongst our learners.

5.2.4 Magazines and computers are favoured by learners for leisure reading

In a correlation study of American teenagers done by Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007:23), reading materials such as magazines were ranked the most popular. The findings of this study were in accord with research since it was discovered that magazines were without question the favourite leisure reading material of Coloured South African students as well. Additionally, this study resonates with the findings of other researchers (Hopper, 2005; Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson, 2007; Reinking, 2007), since it has been discovered that indeed boys have demonstrated that they are more adept at working on computers than the girls and that they are reading, even if their reading is computer-based. Our society is a technological one with the internet as a compelling source for reading. The researcher strongly agrees with Reinking (2007) that our biases should be put aside and that this type of reading can be regarded as leisure reading and should therefore not be disallowed.

On the other hand, girls showed a definite preference for narrative structure as compared with the boys. Information in magazines is often presented in narrative form, for example, true life stories and this may be why this form of writing is popular with girls. In addition, the low interest level amongst Coloured female learners in computer usage should also receive attention. Computer literacy is essential in today's society and girls need to be encouraged to use computers to find information. Notably, Machet (2004:17)

purports that boys interest in computers is sustained by games that are predominantly aimed at a male market. This could be true even though when asked why they are drawn to computers most of the boys said that they use it mainly for the internet. If the boys in my study are using the computer for the internet, then surely they *are reading* since that is a definite prerequisite of effective “internet surfing”. The interest in reading in general and literature in particular, are said to have diminished in favour of image and computer-based media (Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson 2006:537). Furthermore, with the new media situation, the question often arises as to whether they will replace the traditional media. In this light, the Department of Education should supply all schools with computers and build fully functional computer laboratories as a way to also inculcate life skills. This would need to be a sustainable project for optimum progress by learners. Research suggests that individuals turn to all sorts of media for personal and social reasons due to life context and surrounding society (Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson 2006:519).

This study indicates that participants did not use the internet and consequently learners are not as au fait concerning computer use as they should be. This is a disservice to learners as the society is technologically advanced. The lack of technology in the form of computers and the internet in all schools is a hindrance to the academic as well as social development of the learners and steps need to be taken to transform the situation. It is imperative that we begin expanding the definition of reading by including websites, e-books, e-mail, discussion boards, chat rooms and instant messaging (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge 2007:43).

5.2.5 Leisure activities other than reading

Correlation studies have shown that there is not much difference between popular activities undertaken by Coloured and African American youth of the same age. A study undertaken by Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006:39) demonstrated this. They affirmed that

those who did not enjoy reading seemed to prefer other activities. In this as well as the American study, watching television was the most popular past-time. Going to malls and chatting on the phone could be regarded as very social activities which involve friends and subsequently draws a strong parallel with the American study, where the second most popular choice was spending time with friends. An apparent difference between the two studies was that video games ranked quite popular amongst the American youth while the coloured youth did not deem it a very popular past-time. An additional difference is that the American youth participated in internet browsing more so than the Coloured youth. This could possibly be because coloured learners do not have access to the internet as the American youth do. The schools where my research was undertaken lacked computer laboratories and many Coloured homes that have computers lacked internet access. Whether parents are high school educated or tertiary educated had no significant bearing on the activities that their children participated in. It follows that teenagers regardless of parents' education have similar interests and as the graphs depict, not many differences are evident. Learners from both homes respectively rank music and watching television and playing computer games as their favourite pastimes. Sport is the third most popular activity with talking on the telephone following closely. Shopping as demonstrated by the graphs appears to be a well-liked activity and is also a very sociable event. When asked who they preferred shopping with, many said that they loved going to malls with their friends and enjoyed shopping with friends. Some answers were: "I love going with my best friend she and I have similar taste in clothes." Another learner responded by saying that her mother restricted her clothing style very much and disapproved of the clothes she wore on weekends. Reading fascinatingly does not appear to be the least liked activity and the graph depicts that learners are actually participating in this endeavour for leisure. And so, even though reading is taking place we should bear in mind that it may not take precedence over other more social activities. Gym, cooking, bicycle riding, arts and crafts are the least liked pursuits.

5.3. Over view of the study

Clearly, this study provided a preliminary understanding of Coloured learners' interest in leisure reading but it has also offered suggestions to parents and teachers based on what the students disclosed. It may be an opportune time to make clearer connections between: curriculum imperatives for reading; what we understand by 'quality' in reading material and progression in reading and how we can embed the emerging technological literacy. With these connections made, we may be in a stronger position to encourage the development of a reading habit that will empower young people as learners and future citizens and that will also give them access to a leisure activity that will bring them pleasure and extend their understanding of the world.

5.4. The Strength of the study

The findings of this study suggest that a reasonable number of Grade 10 Coloured learners are reading for leisure. Although some learners indicated irregular participation in this activity, it was heartening to find that an acceptable number of learners engage in leisure reading for at least more than 20 minutes outside of the school day. Nippold, Duthie and Larsen (2005:93) estimate that children encounter 15,000 to 30,000 unfamiliar words a year from reading only 25 min per day, and argue that up to one half of student vocabulary growth may result from reading. An interesting point made by Rasana (2006:188) is that learners engaged in leisure reading despite the hindrances such as lack of school libraries, limited access to books especially in previously disadvantaged communities and the two schools who participated in my research are schools where libraries are under-resourced. The challenges are further illustrated in a survey carried out by the DoE in 2001, which found that fewer than 50% of schools had libraries, even in the form of a box library. For many adolescents, non-fiction serves the same purposes as fiction does for other readers: it entices, provides escape, sparks the imagination, and indulges curiosity (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007:29).

5.5. Limitations of the study

While this study has several limitations that must be addressed in future work, it nevertheless makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the leisure reading habits of South African Coloured learners. The limitation of the study is that the sample of Coloured learners was too small. On the contrary, a larger sample could have yielded more noteworthy results. The schools used in the study were situated in low and average income neighbourhoods and if more schools were used representing additional socio-economic levels results might have been different. This particular study focused on leisure reading and did not investigate time spent on other types of reading such as academic reading etc. It can be deduced that learners indicating little time spent on leisure reading were spending more time on academic reading. These possibilities should be investigated in future research. Future research could also investigate the literary habits of learners and could include learners who, for example, have been identified with having reading disorders and language disorders and how this impacts on their interest in reading for leisure. Unfortunately, there was no information on parents' reading habits and thus the possibility to make a corresponding comparison of how parents and children's reading habits are related were not investigated. Parents were not interviewed because of time constraints and perhaps pertinent information could have been disclosed during these interviews.

Future studies should be undertaken to address teens' non-fiction recreational reading interests, as well as their avid interest in magazines. Much can also be investigated in the area of how the impact of leisure reading affects academic success as well as how digital media such as the internet has a significant role to play in the reading that learners do. While some of the findings of this study are encouraging, other results should give teachers, parents and public librarians' food for thought. This study clearly demonstrates the need for a large-scale national study of teens of every race, their reading habits, and their relationship with school and public libraries. Further research is definitely needed to

determine the specific needs and interests of teens, especially if schools and public libraries are committed to serving the educational, informational, and recreational needs of learners. There is also a need to examine parental and adolescent data together in order to examine the extent to which there is congruence in perceptions between parents and adolescents with regard to the role that the parent is seen to play in structuring the adolescent's free time use.

5.6. Recommendations

The Department of Education should realise that time and effort should be placed in equipping all our schools with facilities to promote and enhance leisure reading. The appointment of reading therapists could alleviate the pressure experienced by English teachers as a reading therapy session/period would warrant an intensive hour or so for leisure reading with the therapist overseeing leisure reading. Discussion could be a vital part of the session. Teachers and therapists should be aware of students who experience deficits in reading and word learning and struggling readers should be given increased opportunities to read. During reading therapy sessions, neural impress could be managed whereby CD players with earphones could be used as aides to assist and promote reading amongst the learners while they follow the story in the book.

Book clubs should be encouraged in schools wherein interactive discussions can take place, which can be facilitated by student leaders. A book club could be allocated to one reading therapy period a month and not as an extra mural. The danger of introducing it as an option for the latter would not make it mandatory.

It is crucial that all stakeholders in the lives of learners are constantly exposing them to books by making them accessible in a manner to encourage this practice. For example, primary schools (the formative years are crucial and impressionable) could offer 'parent evenings out' where discussions covering new as well as classic children's books can take place as a manner to inform parents about the

significance of reading in the lives of their children and to prompt them to foster a love for leisure reading and hence to supply books of interest to their children.

A good idea would be to take an hour in the evenings and read stories or articles to each other and then discuss them later. This could substitute television time and not only would it build on family life but it would be an unquestionable manner to enhance leisure reading.

Parents should learn more about their children's interests and suggest books, magazines and articles that relate to those topics. Sometimes good movies are a starting point for pleasure reading-after seeing a movie based on a book; children will be motivated to read the book. When choosing books together the parent will need to make certain that the book is the appropriate age level for the child and that it is a book that the child likes. If a book is eye catching and is motivating, a child will read it again and again. Books that utilize repetition and rhyming are always very popular with children. Books that are filled with pictures are ideal for reading sessions as it will effectively engage the child in hearty discussion as well as commentary when looking at the pictures. Sometimes travel sparks reading and finding books that relate to a place you visit on a family vacation can get a child hooked. Parents should always keep books and other reading materials at home as it is important to make these sources a special thing in the home. Compiling a library could be tremendous fun; and this collection can be kept in a special place created to showcase the reading resources. Children will value books and respect them if a parent demonstrates that same care and value of them. Parents can also model being avid readers and life-long learners; and moreover allow their children to see them reading, since children need that modelling very early in life.

Given that teachers were rated the lowest supplier of leisure books for learners, much can be done by teachers to instigate this practice because they considerable time with learners at school.

Language teachers, in particular, could be very influential with regard to instilling the love for leisure reading amongst their learners and should become more practical in creating an atmosphere for reading within the classroom.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has cast some light on the importance of leisure reading. A discussion on the research findings resumed according to the themes which emerged. A short discussion on the limitations of the study followed and the chapter ended with recommendations for all stakeholders.





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Appendix A



February 2008
The Department of Education
Research Department

Re: Permission to conduct research

My name is Lisa Daniels and I am pursuing a Masters Degree in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr TN Phasha and Dr D Magano. My research topic is: **Learners' interest in leisure reading.**

The purpose of my research is to shed light into learners' reading interest, factors/reasons that hinder or contribute to their interest in this regard, as well as activities that precedence over reading. The intention is to suggest strategies for instilling a culture of reading amongst learners, particularly of Coloured background.

I wish to do this research at Langlaagte Technical School and Florida Park Secondary School respectively. The areas are situated in the Gauteng Province. My target group is Grade 10 learners. The ages of these learners range between 15 and 17 years and they would be learners who have never been identified as having reading difficulties. Respondents in this research will complete a questionnaire, tapping their feelings and attitudes towards leisure reading. Focus group interviews will also be executed with learners as well as teachers.

I will be considerate of all ethical issues and my research will not pose any physical threat to my respondents. I will provide the respondents with all the details of the research in which the research methods will be clearly explained. I will explain that their names will not appear anywhere in the documentation and that the use of pseudonyms will be exercised.

Participation to the study will be voluntarily and all respondents will be informed about their rights to withdraw any time during the research process and if they decide to do so, there will be no fine. The information will only be shared with the supervisors. All the tapes will be kept in a safe place away from my family and colleagues. No interviews will be recorded without respondents' permission and their consent, which I plan to attach to the invitation letters. Information will further be repeated verbally before any form of data collection to ensure that they understand their rights and what they are committing themselves to. There will also be an opportunity for respondents to ask questions about any matter related to the research. There is no payment for participation. This principle will be clarified in the invitation letter. The benefits of this research will be explained to respondents. I foresee no emotional or physical threat, however I will arrange for emotional support in case such a need arises.
I appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely,
Lisa Daniels

Appendix B



Date

Dear Principal

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I wish to do this research at Langlaagte Technical School and Florida Park Secondary School respectively. The areas are situated in the Gauteng Province. My target group is Grade 10 learners. The ages of these learners range between 15 and 17 years and they would be learners who have never been identified as having reading difficulties. Respondents in this research will complete a questionnaire, tapping their feelings and attitudes towards leisure reading. Focus group interviews will also be executed with learners as well as teachers.

I will be considerate of all ethical issues and my research will not pose any physical threat to my respondents. I will provide the respondents with all the details of the research in which the research methods will be clearly explained. I will explain that their names will not appear anywhere in the documentation and that the use of pseudonyms will be exercised.

Participation to the study will be voluntarily and all respondents will be informed about their rights to withdraw any time during the research process and if they decide to do so, there will be no fine. The information will only be shared with the supervisors. All the tapes will be kept in a safe place away from my family and colleagues. No interviews will be recorded without respondents' permission and their consent, which I plan to attach to the invitation letters. Information will further be repeated verbally before any form of data collection to ensure that they understand their rights and what they are committing themselves to. There will also be an opportunity for respondents to ask questions about any matter related to the research. There is no payment for participation. This principle will be clarified in the invitation letter. The benefits of this research will be explained to respondents. I foresee no emotional or physical threat, however I will arrange for emotional support in case such a need arises.

I appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Daniels

Consent Slip

I, the principal of

Give my consent to Ms Lisa Daniels to conduct research at this school.

Signature.....
Date.....



Appendix C



Date:

Dear xxx

Re: Permission to collect data

My name is Lisa Daniels and I am pursuing a Masters Degree in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr TN Phasha and DR D Magano. My research topic is: **Learners' interest in leisure reading.**

The purpose of my research is to shed light into learners' reading interest, factors/reasons that hinder or contribute to their interest in this regard, as well as activities that precedence over reading. The intention is to suggest strategies for instilling a culture of reading amongst learners, particularly of Coloured background.

This serves as an invitation for your participation in focus group interviews for a study that aims to document learners' interest in leisure reading. Respondents in this research will complete a questionnaire, tapping their feelings and attitudes towards leisure reading.

Please complete the reply slip below to indicate whether you would like voluntarily participate in this research. The return slip can be given to your registered teacher.

Participation in this research does not involve any risk. It is entirely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. All information obtained will be used for research purposes only and pseudonyms will be used.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Daniels

Student Researcher

--

Reply slip

I _____ am a willing candidate and agree to participate in the research. I fully understand that I can withdraw at any stage.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Biographical Details of Respondents

COLOURED LEARNERS	
Grade (10)	33
Gender	13 male; 20 female
<u>Age:</u>	
12-15	9
16-19	24
<u>Who do you live with?</u>	
Both parents	20
Mother	8
Father	2
Grandparents	2
Other	1
<u>Siblings</u>	
Learner 1	4 sisters; 1 brother
Learner 2	4 sisters; 1 brother
Learner 3	1 sister
Learner 4	1 sister; 1 brother
Learner 5	2 sisters
Learner 6	3 sisters; 1 brother
Learner 7	2 sisters; 1 brother
Learner 8	1 brother
Learner 9	1 sister; 1 brother
Learner 10	2 brothers
Learner 11	1 sister; 4 brothers

Learner 12	1 sister
Learner 13	2 sisters
Learner 14	1 sister; 1 brother
Learner 15	1 brother
Learner 16	1 sister
Learner 17	1 brother
Learner 18	1 brother
Learner 19	2 sisters; 1 brother
Learner 20	1 brother
Learner 21	2 sisters
Learner 22	1 sister; 1 brother
Learner 23	2 brothers
Learner 24	1 brother
Learner 25	2 brothers
Learner 26	1 sister; 2 brothers
Learner 27	1 sister; 1 brother
Learner 28	1 sister
Learner 29	2 sisters
Learner 30	1 sister
Learner 31	1 sister
Learner 32	2 sisters
Learner 33	2 brothers
<u>Parents level of education</u>	
<i>Mother</i>	
High school	17
Tertiary education	16
<i>Father</i>	
High school	14

Tertiary education	14
--------------------	----

Appendix E

My name is Lisa Daniels, a qualified learning support specialist, and working at Crossroads Remedial School. My contact details are: 083 4073712 and my email address is lisa-daniels@webmail.co.za. I am currently collecting data for my Masters Degree in Learning Support at the University of Johannesburg. My research topic is, "Exploring an interest in leisure reading/non-academic reading amongst learners. My research supervisor is Dr N.Phasha [011 559 2676] should any queries arise.

This questionnaire comprises of five main sections; the first section requires biographical information by the learner; the following four sections pertain to an in-depth look into learners' interest in leisure/non-academic reading. The answers that you provide will only be used for research purposes and your personal information will be kept confidential. The information extracted will not be shared with anyone except my research supervisor.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tell me about yourself. Please make a tick in the relevant block where necessary and/or provide additional information where necessary.

Grade	
-------	--

Gender	
--------	--

For the sake of transparency what is your race?	Black	Coloured	White	Indian
---	-------	----------	-------	--------

Age	12-15	16-19	20-23
-----	-------	-------	-------

Tell me about your parents

Who do you live with?	Both parents	Mother	Father	Grandparents	Guardian. If so who?	Other
-----------------------	--------------	--------	--------	--------------	-------------------------	-------

Profession /Occupation of adult/s that you live with?	 UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
---	---

Parents level of education	Grade 7	High school	Tertiary education
Mother			
Father			

Sibling information	Age	Occupation	Level of education
Sister/s			
Brother/s			

If you live with extended family...	Age	Occupation	Level of education
Aunt			
Uncle			
Grandparents			
Other:			

Would you like to participate in a follow up interview so that I can glean more information about leisure reading?	YES	NO
<input type="radio"/> Make a tick in the relevant block.		

XX



Student Questionnaire: "Reading at leisure"

This questionnaire should be completed by learners in Grade 10. The purpose of this questionnaire is to extract these learners' interest in leisure reading/non-academic reading.

The questionnaire comprises of four main parts aiming to explore four different avenues regarding leisure reading namely; a.) Participation in leisure reading; b.) Passion for leisure reading; c.) Apprehension toward leisure reading; d.) Curiosity and attitude toward leisure reading.

Instructions.

Please answer the questions according to your own experiences, thoughts and feelings. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions.

PART A- PARTICIPATION IN LEISURE READING

How much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your feelings and experiences with regard to reading?

Please use the scale below to indicate your opinions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the number that represents your opinions

1. I love reading books for leisure/non-academic purposes. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I am interested in reading books for leisure/non-academic purposes. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I always make time to read non academic books for leisure. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I read leisurely all the time. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I classify myself as a good reader. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I love reading non prescribed books. 1 2 3 4 5
7. My teachers encourage me to read for pleasure. 1 2 3 4 5
8. My parents have always bought and provided leisure books for me to read. 1 2 3 4 5
9. At the moment I am reading a book for pure pleasure. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Leisure reading is important and should be an activity that I should be participating in often. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Reading should not be limited to prescribed books 1 2 3 4 5
12. I make time to read every day. 1 2 3 4 5

13. Who encourages you to read? Make a tick in the relevant block.

Parents	Teacher	Friends	Other (if so whom?)

14. Where do you obtain your leisure books? Make a tick in the relevant block.

Parents	Teacher	Friends	Library	Other (if so where?)

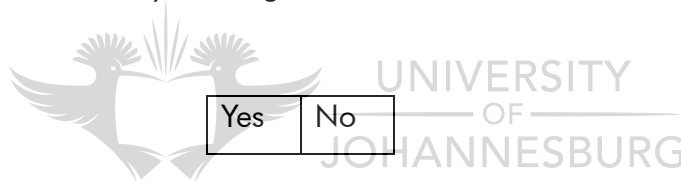
PART B- PASSION TOWARDS LEISURE READING

Please make a tick in the relevant column.

1. I am never discouraged by words that I do not understand in fact it stimulates me and allows me to read more.

Yes	No
-----	----

2. I am confident about my reading and once stuck in a book I find it difficult to put it down.



Yes	No
-----	----

3. The type of books I read makes me want to find out more about the characters, setting etc. It encourages me to read more in depth on an aspect.

Yes	No
-----	----

4. I am an active reader.

Yes	No
-----	----

5. I would like to read more than I do.

Yes	No
-----	----

PART C-APPREHENSION TOWARDS LEISURE READING

When reading about non academic subjects do you prefer?

Please make a tick in the relevant column

	When reading about nonfiction subjects do you prefer?	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1.	Activity books					
2.	Magazines					
3.	Books with lots of pictures					
4.	Books that provide lots of facts					
5.	Encyclopaedias					
6.	Using a computer					

How do you like to spend your free time?

Circle 5 that apply.

- A. watching TV or videos
- B. playing computer or video games

- C. playing sports (e.g. soccer, rugby, netball, swimming etc.)
- D. running or walking
- E. skating (skate board/ roller blades)
- F. playing cards or board games
- G. riding a bicycle/scooter/quad bike
- H. talking on the phone with friends or relatives
- I. gym
- J. using e-mail with friends or relatives
- K. listening to music / going to concerts and festivals
- L. shopping/ going to the mall
- M. reading (e.g. books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- N. writing (e.g. diary, poetry, notes to friends etc.)
- O. cooking
- P. arts and crafts
- Q. other (write in) _____



Please estimate how much time you spend each day, on average, reading non academically outside of the school day. This includes reading that you choose to do out of your own.

Please circle the **ONE** best answer.

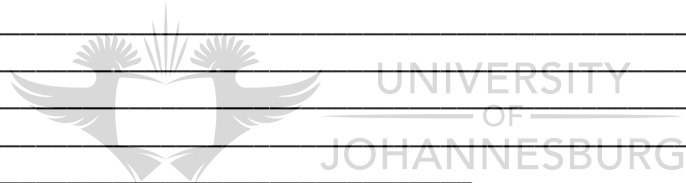
- A. None
- B. 5-10 minutes
- C. 10-20 minutes
- D. 20-30 minutes
- E. 30-60 minutes
- F. 1-2 hours
- G. 2-3 hours
- H. More than 3 hours

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. Why do you participate in non academic reading?

2. What benefits do you see in this kind of reading?

3. How do you think leisure reading helps you in your daily life?



4. How does leisure reading/non-academic reading make you feel?

5. How do you select a book to read for enjoyment (What is it about the book that will make you want to read it?)

6. What are some of your favourite books?

PART D- CURIOSITY AND ATTITUDE TOWARD LEISURE READING

I read,	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. Poems					
2. Short stories					
3. Plays					
4. Novels					
5. Comics					
6. Technical books (e.g. auto repair, science, history, computers, etc.)					
7. Newspapers					
8. Magazines					
9. Internet					
10. Arts and Crafts					

Reading,	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Is valuable					
2. Develops vocabulary					
3. Fuels					

communication					
4.Extends general knowledge					
5.Unlocks the door to success					
6.Leisure reading impacts on academic success					
7.Leisure reading is a waste of time, there are so many other important things to do					
8.Leisure reading stimulates curiosity about life					
9.Reading seems to be a thing of the past					
10.One should read a book for pure joy					
11.I have seen more movies in the past year than I have read books					
12.A good book is more invigorating than a movie					
13.Reading broadens one's vocabulary					
14. Reading a good novel allows one to escape the real world.					
15. Good reading skills allow one to think for oneself. (i.e. advantages and disadvantages of homeschooling, taking a trip to Ireland or following a recipe)					

Thank you for your participation.

If you would like me to contact you for future interviews, please indicate how you would like me to contact you.

How would you like to be contacted? Please make a tick next to the option chosen.	Please provide details
Cell phone	
Letter	(postal address)
Email address	
Through the teacher	