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Motivating and Engaging Readers

A study of pre-adolescent Namibian primary school readers

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Abstract

This PhD study broadly aims to contribute to the body of knowledge of the reading preferences, activities, motivation and engagement of Namibian pre-adolescent learners. A mixed research design has been employed and the overall research question formulated as: What are the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent primary school learners in Namibia?

The theoretical framework of the study included an approach to reading comprehension (as developed by the RAND study group) that recognised the importance of reader, text and activity when interacting in a specific social and cultural context. Furthermore, the study regarding reading motivation and engagement was enriched by the reading engagement model developed by Guthrie, Wigfield, Klauda and You, as well as the theories of Self-Determination (Ryan and Deci) and Expectancy Value (Wigfield and Eccles).

The findings have been reported in three articles. While broad aspects of texts and readers in seven Namibian regions (both rural and urban) were investigated in the first phase, the reading activities, motivation and achievements of a number of pre-adolescent, Namibian readers in one urban region were the focus of Phase Two. An action research innovation concerning reading for pleasure in one urban school concluded the final phase. Learner views of selected changes in classroom practices, and influence of these on their reading motivation and engagement, were investigated in this final phase.

In Article One, as far as the socio-economic situation was concerned, as well as the resource status in schools in the regions studied in the first phase, findings depict a landscape of deprivation. Results indicate that only 22.4% of the sample (N=1402 from 36 schools) could be regarded as readers who read for pleasure. This small group of learners had positive perceptions of reading, and they read mainly for instrumental and utility reasons.

The second article reports moderate reading activity and high levels of motivation among the participants (402 Grade Seven learners from six schools in one urban region). Learners reported that they read fiction in traditional print mode more often

than in digital format, and read more for pleasure than for academic purposes. Motivation was recognised as a multifaceted concept and positive relationships between motivation and reading activity, as well as between reading motivation and reading achievement, were established.

Results presented in Article Three indicate that the implementation of enabling principles in the programme (such as choice and interaction), in an action-inspired project, enhanced the rediscovery of the joy of reading among the participants (N=48), and that attention to reading for pleasure was important in developing reading motivation. The value of the study lies in the attention given to the way that students viewed the development of guidelines for similar programmes, as well as in the illustration of useful strategies for building a reading culture in schools.

Across all three phases, the study demonstrates that pre-adolescent learners were aware that reading was important, and that they were motivated to read despite the challenging circumstances regarding reading opportunities and resources that most learners faced, as was described in Phase One. It is concluded that alternative ways to bring books and other reading material to children in Namibia will have to receive continued attention. The value of this study, furthermore, lies in the opportunity it afforded learners to influence teaching and learning through documenting and implementing their views and opinions in an action research based design.

Sammendrag

Hovedformålet med ph.d.-avhandlingen er å bidra til kunnskapsutvikling om unge namibiske tenåringers lesepreferanser, -aktiviteter, -motivasjon og -engasjement. I avhandlingen brukes et sammensatt forskningsdesign (mixed research design) for å utforske det overordnede forskningsspørsmålet: Hva kjennetegner lesepreferansene, lesemotivasjonen og leseengasjementet til unge tenåringer i namibisk grunnskole?

Studiens teoretiske rammeverk inkluderer en tilnærming til leseforståelse (utviklet av The RAND study group) som bygger på betydningen av samspillet mellom leser, tekst og en aktivitet, og på at samspillet finner sted innenfor en bestemt sosial og kulturell kontekst. Studien av lesemotivasjon og –engasjement blir også belyst ved bruk av leseengasjementsmodellen utviklet av Guthrie, Wigfield, Klauda og You og ved bruk av teoriene om Self-Determination (Ryan og Deci) og Expectancy Value (Wigfield og Eccles).

Studiens funn er rapportert i tre artikler. Mens et bredt perspektiv på tekst og lesere i sju regioner som representerer både rurale og urbane strøk i Namibia, utforskes i studiens første fase, er fokus for fase to leseaktiviteter, lesemotivasjon og leseferdigheter til unge, namibiske tenåringer i én urban region. I den tredje fasen avsluttes studien med et mindre innovasjonsprosjekt om det å lese for fornøyelsens skyld på én skole i den urbane regionen. I denne siste fasen er det elevenes synspunkter på utvalgte endringer i klasseromspraksisene og disse endringenes innvirkning på elevenes lesemotivasjon og leseengasjement som utforskes.

På bakgrunn av den sosioøkonomiske situasjonen og skolenes ressurssituasjon i regionene som ble undersøkt i den første fasen, tegner den første artikkelen et bilde av deprivasjon. Resultatene indikerer at bare 22,4 % av respondentene (N=1402 fra 36 skoler) kunne karakteriseres som lesere som leste for sin egen fornøyelses skyld. Denne lille gruppen elever hadde positive oppfatninger av lesing og begrunnet for det meste lesingen sin utfra instrumentelle hensyn eller nyttehensyn.

Den andre artikkelen rapporterer moderat leseaktivitet og samtidig høy grad av motivasjon blant tenåringene som deltok (402 sjuendeklassinger fra seks skoler i en urban region). Elevene rapporterte at de leste mer på papir enn digitalt og at de leste mer for sin egen interesses skyld enn for skolen skyld. Motivasjon ble funnet å være

et mangefasettert begrep. Studien viste positivt samsvar mellom motivasjon og leseaktivitet og mellom lesemotivajon og leseferdigheter.

Resultatene som legges fram i den tredje artikkelen, indikerer at implementering av et sett prinsipper (som valg og samhandling) som ble brukt for å legge til rette for lesing i et aksjonsforskningsinspirert prosjekt, styrket deltakerne (N=48) i å gjenoppdage leseglede, og i å rette oppmerksomhet mot at det å lese for sin egen fornøyelses skyld er viktig for utvikling av lesemotivasjon. Studiens bidrag ligger i fokuset på elevenes synspunkter på utvikling av denne typen program og i belysning av et sett strategier som kan bygge lesekultur i skoler.

På tvers av alle de tre fasene viser studien at de unge tenåringene var bevisste på lesingens betydning. Studien viser også at de var motiverte for lesing til tross for at omgivelsene ofte ikke gav mange lesemuligheter og til tross for den vanskelige ressurssituasjonen som møtte flest lesere, jf. beskrivelsene i den første fasen. Det konkluderes med at alternative måter å sikre tilgang på bøker og annet lesestoff til unge i Namibia trenger kontinuerlig oppmerksomhet. Studiens bidrag ligger også i at den gav elever muligheter til innflytelse på undervisning og læring, både gjennom å dokumentere synspunktene deres og ved å ta hensyn til dem i implementeringen av leseprosjektet gjennom det aksjonsforskningsbaserte designet.

Preface

This thesis is dedicated to the children of Namibia, and especially those who participated in this study.

Apart from my involvement in language teacher education, as a founding member of the Namibian Children's Book Forum (NCBF), I will always share the vision of the Forum to develop appropriate children's literature in all the Namibian languages for the children of Namibia. I initiated the registration of the NCBF study on the reading preferences and behaviour of Namibian children as a research project at the University of Namibia (UNAM). This research, funded mainly by UNAM, opened further research opportunities for me. I remain indebted to UNAM for granting me staff development leave to pursue the current study on this most crucial issue regarding children's reading. Similarly, I want to thank the Norwegian Government for the scholarship opportunity (Kvoteprogrammet) and Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN) for admitting me to the PhD programme in Teaching and Teacher Education. I also wish to thank the other members of the NCBF research team, Prof. Dr. Andree-Jeanne Tötemeyer and Susan Alexander, with whom I completed an extensive report and co-authored Article One.

My co-supervisors, Associate Prof. Dr. Louise Mostert, co-author of Article Two, as well as Associate Prof. Dr. Jørgen Klein, were truly supportive. Prof. Dr. Lise Iversen Kulbrandstad, my main supervisor, was a tower of strength and without her wisdom and guidance, I would not have managed. I want to thank my fellow PhD students, and especially the staff of INN, who assisted me in various ways with information searches, as well as technical, administrative and international issues. Karianne Dæhlin Hagen, University Librarian at INN, deserves special mention. You all made me feel at home in Hamar, and accommodated my lack of the Norwegian language throughout my studies. A part of me will remain in the Holsetgata.

To my husband, Kit, a special tribute for his encouragement, love and patience with this project. I am grateful for the support of family and friends to Kit and myself during the many months I was away from home.

Finally, I cannot but declare, *Soli Deo Gloria.*

Emmarentia Kirchner

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List of Abbreviations

GEM	Global Education Monitoring Report
ILA	International Literacy Association
INN	Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences
MRQ	Motivation for Reading Questionnaire
NCBF	Namibian Children's Book forum
NSD	Norwegian Social Science Data Services
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RAI	Reading Activity Inventory
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational quality
SAT	(Namibian) Standardised Achievement Test
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa

List of Articles

Article 1:

Tötemeyer, A.-J., Kirchner, E., & Alexander, S. (2015). Reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian children. *Mousaion, 33*(2).

Article 2:

Kirchner, E., & Mostert, M. L. (2017). Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers. *Cogent Education, 4(1).*

Article 3:

Kirchner, E. (unpublished). "Sitting there - cool and reading": Results of a reading-for-pleasure programme with Grade Seven Namibian learners.

List of Appendices

Note: The appendices are contained in a separate document. Deletions in the appendices ensure confidentiality where necessary.

1 Introduction

1.1 Theme, relevance and motivation of research

"Achievement in reading literacy is not only a foundation for achievement in other subject areas within the educational system, but also a prerequisite for successful participation in most areas of adult life" (OECD, 2016, p. 5).

Literacy remains one of the most important skills that has to be acquired in the lifespan of any individual, and forms an important foundation for most other academic skills and for managing life in modern societies. UNESCO states that the advancement of literacy is "a concern globally, in every region of the world and in countries at every level of income. It is widely recognized as critical to the achievement of most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that comprise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 8). Literacy skills will only develop in a supporting economic, social and cultural environment where children and adults alike will be motivated to learn and to read (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 8).

Today, being literate depicts far more than being able to read printed text. The 2017 UNESCO review, *Reading the past, writing the futu*re, traces the conceptual development of the term, *literacy*, over 50 years. Literacy and reading were first seen as similar concepts, and reading being described as one of the five skills needed for developing language proficiency. Reading focused on the decoding of printed text. In subsequent years, interpretations of literacy have moved through periods of focusing on functional literacy and literacy as empowerment as central to approaches that interpret literacy as a social practice (UNESCO, 2017b, p. 38).

Reading has gradually been included, together with writing, in this broader concept of literacy (Miller & Faircloth, 2009). The terms, l*iteracy* and *being literate*, can also refer to being educated in an area of competence, resulting in terms, such as "digital literacy" and "health literacy" (Kulbrandstad, 2018, p. 41). In the PISA framework, the term "reading literacy" is defined as "understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and *engaging with texts* in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society" (OECD, 2016, p. 10, my emphasis).

"Engaging with texts", according to the OECD, implies that the process of engagement which refers to behavioural and motivational aspects in reading is integral to attaining proficiency. Furthermore, the PISA definition of "text" includes not only traditionally printed text, but also electronic texts, acknowledging that, in order to participate in modern society, new literacies and wider interpretations of the term, *literacy*, are of importance (OECD, 2016, p.10). Such an expansion includes a wide range of new literacies, such as the interaction of all forms of digital and multimodal text (Hutchison, Woodward, & Colwell, 2016, p. 436).

A question could be posed regarding how these interpretations of reading and literacy influence young readers in developing countries where it is particularly challenging to create engaging classroom contexts and where access to resources and technology is not a given. My project relates opportunities to read various text types to the reading preferences, reading motivation and engagement in reading of pre-adolescent readers. The motivation for the project grew out of the observation that my home country, Namibia, does not have a well-developed reading culture, and that information about the reading behaviour and reading preferences of adolescent learners in the Namibian context is lacking. Reading motivation and fluency underlie school success, and largely impact the rest of a person's career path. Reading for pleasure and the amount, as well as diversity of texts read, in turn, affect reading competence (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012). The poor reading achievement of Namibian learners is widely seen as a main reason why our school system is not delivering the human capital – a new generation of young people – that Namibia needs to fulfil her goals towards the eradication of poverty, as well as developing Namibia into a knowledge-based, industrialised nation (Tötemeyer, 2010; Wolfaardt, 2005).

Factors. such as culture, age and gender, affect motivation and reading patterns (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012), and the meaningfulness of reading and literacy can differ between cultures and contexts (Hutchison, et al., 2016; RAND, 2002). In comparison to the vast amount of existing literature on reading motivation and engagement in international contexts, relatively little information exists about landscapes similar to my own. In a setting like Namibia, the socio-economic and educational situation differs markedly within the same country, and the influence of resource provision on reading behaviour needs to be accounted for. This project developed against this background, and explores the reading activity and reading

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motivation among learners in Namibia, a resource-poor country, where reading achievement is generally low.

The overall aim of my project is to contribute to knowledge about reading and motivation in an African context like Namibia. The questions of equity in literacy education and access to books and content were thus important factors in my project. These topics were also ranked among the most important in the 2018 survey, "What's hot, what's not", by the International Literacy Association with more than 2000 answers from 91 countries and territories (ILA, 2018).

1.2   Research context

1.2.1   Namibian context

Namibia, one of the youngest democracies in Africa, became independent in 1990, and is linguistically and culturally diverse. According to the census of 2011, 57% of the small population of 2.1 million (currently estimated to have risen to 2.4 million) still live in rural areas (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2011). The national literacy level is indicated as 89%. Half of the population speaks an Oshiwambo language (of which Oshiwanyama and Oshindonga are developed as school languages). The other main languages are Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab, Ojtiherero and the Kavango languages, spoken by between 9% and 10% of the population respectively (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2011). Together with smaller languages, and distinguishing different languages within the Oshiwambo and Kavango language groups, 14 languages are currently recognised as national languages in education; this includes Namibian Sign Language (Ministry of Education Namibia, 2015).

The SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) party has remained in power since the country's independence. SWAPO's language policy elaborated in detail why English should be adopted as the only official language of the Republic of Namibia. These reasons included aspects of unification and internationalisation (*Toward a Language Policy for Namibia: English as the official language*, 1981). An overhaul of the education system was one of the first priorities of the new government. After 28 years of independence, Namibia has achieved a nearly 100% enrolment in primary education (Republic of Namibia National Planning Commission, 2013). The language

policy for schools, implemented in 1993, calls for mother tongue based education for the first three years of schooling. After a transition year (Grade Four), all subjects are taught through the medium of English. The mother tongues, offered as subjects and employed as main media of instruction in the first three school years, are retained as school subjects. English is a compulsory subject throughout, mostly as a second language. In the various curriculum reforms since Independence, the language policy has not changed markedly, and English is still favoured at the expense of indigenous languages. According to the new school curriculum, currently being phased in, learners are obliged to take a Namibian language only until Grade Ten. English as school subject is compulsory until Grade Eleven, which is also an exit point for many learners. A 12th study year is available, possibly only for some advanced learners. In this final school year learners can include a language as one of their subjects, but it is not compulsory (Ministry of Education Namibia, 2015).

Namibia is thus not fully reaping the benefits of mother tongue based education – as research shows (cf. Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2014; Brock-Utne, 2001; Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002). The language policy and the poor results in English have been seen as major factors affecting school results in all school phases negatively. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)[1] provides an important reference point for educational quality in parts of Africa. The results of three SACMEQ studies, published in 2000, 2005 and 2010, report the poor English proficiency of Namibian Grade Six learners, indicating, for example, that 38.7% of Namibian students could not read for meaning (SACMEQ, 2011, p. 5). Similar results are reported in the Namibian National Standardised Achievement Tests (NSATs) for Grades Five and Seven. English proficiency results have shown a decline of 2% since 2011, and the 2015 study reveals that 87% of Grade Seven learners performed in the "basic" and "below basic" achievement categories (Mupupa, 2016). Achievement in other Namibian languages is not tested in these studies. For both these assessments (SAT and SACMEQ), more current results were not available at the time of my study.

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[1]SACMEQ, the largest African comparative study on learner literacy in English Second Language reading and Mathematics, reports on 14 sub-Saharan African countries, including Namibia.

School results of 2017 remain a cause for concern. Of the 56305 candidates enrolled on full- and part-time basis, 29.8% scored a D symbol or better grade (indicating satisfactory achievement) in English Second Language, and only 39.3% of full-time Grade Twelve learners qualified to enter tertiary education (Ministry of Education Namibia, 2018). According to Namibian scholar, A.-J. Tötemeyer, results will not improve if no consideration is given to more recognition of mother tongues in education and society at large (Tötemeyer, 2018).

The lack of reading resources, as well as the role of untrained language teachers and the lack of library teachers and librarians, has not changed much in the past decade, and further impedes the creation of reading opportunities for Namibian children. Based on Smith, Fouche, Muirhead and Underwood (2008), Kirchner, Alexander and Tötemeyer (2014) conclude that three quarters of schools in Namibia do not have library facilities. Smith, et al. (2008), furthermore, indicate that the average capacity of a school library was a mere 37 books. The running of school libraries seems to be seen as the task of teachers who also teach other subjects. The final draft policy of the Namibian Information and Archive services (NLAS, Republic of Namibia, 2010) (accessed on 26 March 2018) reports similar challenges and further highlights the gap in information provision between rural and urban communities. The lack of skilled staff and a shortage of Namibian content, especially in Namibian languages, are mentioned as important challenges. It has, furthermore, been indicated that only 0.75% of the budget for education is spent on this subsector, and it is estimated that only five books per school per year are currently funded (NLAS, Republic of Namibia, 2010, p. 9; p.12). Apart from the three regional libraries funded by the Millennium Challenge Account, minimal development seems to occur, and the number of community libraries in the country remains low (Iilonga, 2015, p. 3).

Currently the possibilities for young Namibian readers to read for pleasure in traditional formats can thus be regarded as limited, due to unequal resource provision and the lack of reading material in all languages. The question arises in what ways a variety of pleasurable literacy activities can be developed and engagement in leisure reading supported to address these challenges. The documentation of such supportive efforts would develop more understanding of the possible effect of attempts to influence reading motivation and language skills, as well as school achievement in the Namibian situation. It should also contribute to research in this area.

Since Namibia's independence, non-governmental organisations have embarked on many efforts to foster a reading culture in Namibia. The work of the Namibian Children's Book Forum (NCBF) needs to be mentioned in this regard (Parry, 2003; Tötemeyer, 2001). Recently, together with the implementation of a new curriculum for schools, the Namibian government has instituted a reading period for all Grade levels in order to provide time on the school timetable for sustained, silent reading for pleasure (Ministry of Education, Namibia, 2015).

1.2.2 Global and African perspectives

Globally, the reading levels of children, including teenagers, are not up to standard. In the presentation of the indicators set for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of Education, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report of 2017/2018 provides alarming statistics regarding literacy on a global level. It reports that in 2015, 56% of the world's children (387 million) had not reached the minimum proficiency levels in reading (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 116).

Namibia does not take part in the PISA studies but for several countries, PISA has become an important indicator of the literacy levels of adolescents. The PISA studies measure reading literacy every three years. Regarding the 2000 results of 31 countries, OECD (2002) indicated that "[e]ven in countries in which there is generally a high level of reading proficiency, there are substantial numbers of 15-year-olds who are not proficient readers which is likely to limit them in their choices and opportunities in their future life" (p. 3). Limited reading literacy skills is evident from the fact that, in more than a third of the 31 represented countries, in excess of 20% of the students had failed to reach Level 2, regarded as the baseline of the six possible levels of achievement, on the PISA reading scale (p. 76). Furthermore, countries with a generally high level of reading proficiency thus experience challenges as far as reading literacy was concerned (p. 3). When one considers the situation in the United States, it becomes clear that the majority of Grade Eight and Twelve readers read below grade level, and are not prepared for the reading demands of college (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006, pp. 7-8). Similarly, Kim, Hemphill, Troyer, Thomson, Jones, LaRusso and Donovan (2016, p. 357) report that around 25% of US youth in Grade Eight scored below the basic level in national assessments of reading, and that "they struggle with the reading demands of secondary school".

UNESCO reports that, over the past 50 years, due to the increase in population growth, increases in literacy rates in Africa were slow (UNESCO, 2017c, p. 22). In the GEM of 2017 it is indicated that, for sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of children not reaching minimum proficiency in reading, is estimated at 87% (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 116). With reference to reading achievement in South Africa, Pretorius and Spaull (2016) point out that, in the 2006 and 2011 PIRLS assessments, even in African languages, learners did not perform well. They, furthermore, report that, in 2011, 29% of the Grade Four learners, who participated, could not reach the Low International Benchmark, and nearly 60% not the Intermediate International Benchmark.

Many of the challenges facing Namibia regarding literacy and reading are shared with countries belonging to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African continent and on a global level. To address this situation, I concur with Jacobs (2008, p. 24), who advocates that literacy should be placed "at the heart of educational reform". Effective literacy programmes for adolescents also with attention to reading for pleasure are, therefore, crucial.

Results from PISA 2009 indicate that children who read for leisure purposes and for enjoyment also tend to be more able readers. Versatile readers who enjoy reading achieve better results: "Although students who read fiction are more likely to have higher scores […], it is the students who read a wide variety of materials who perform particularly well (OECD, 2010, p. 34). To develop motivated and engaged readers in a country like Namibia, therefore, seems important. The OECD (2002) reports that engaged readers from parents with low occupational status obtained higher scores than disengaged readers from parents with higher occupational status (OECD, 2002, p. 3).

1.2.3 Adolescent reading motivation and engagement

Prior to a discussion of adolescent readers, and their motivation to engage with different kinds of texts, a preliminary distinction needs to be made between motivation and engagement. While motivation can be regarded as a "private" process and an antecedent and source of engagement, engagement can be viewed as a "public" outcome of motivation (Reeve, 2012, p. 151.) These two processes continuously influence each other (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012). For

the purposes of my study, reading motivation can be defined as "the drive to read resulting from a comprehensive set of and individual's beliefs about, attitudes (or disposition) toward, and goals for reading." (Conradi, Jang, & McKenna, 2014, p. 154) and reading engagement as "the joint functioning of motivational processes and cognitive strategies during reading comprehension" (Wigfield et al., 2008, p. 432).

In this study, motivation and engagement will be researched mainly in reading-for-pleasure settings. Teresa Cremin describes this type of reading for enjoyment as "the volitional act of reading", including the reader's "agency and desire to read", as well as the "anticipation of the satisfaction gained through the experience and/or afterwards in interaction with others" (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2014, p. 5). Nell (1988, pp. 7-8) refers to this type of reading as "ludic reading", which includes aspects of play and relaxation, engaged in for its own sake.

Adolescent readers can be described as readers in transition, both in terms of preferences and interests, as well as in terms of the complexity of strategies employed for reading, especially regarding their need to understand texts that are more intricate. Adolescence (occurring between 12 and 18 years of age), is considered a biological and psychological stage in the process of becoming an adult. The start of this phase can be referred to as pre-adolescence, and some of these changes can already occur in children from as early as 9 years old (Hutchison et al., 2016). Although an age-related perspective has limitations, in this study in the Namibian context, I considered students in Grades Six and Seven, ranging in age from 10 to 14, as being mainly pre-adolescents. According to a developmental view, adolescents should be nurtured in their transition to emotional stability and maturity (Bean & Harper, 2009, p. 40). During adolescence, various important changes in terms of physical, cognitive, social and contextual spheres take place. Apart from sexual maturity, adolescents have an increased ability for reasoning and abstract thought, and develop more sophisticated comprehension skills, such as drawing inferences, understanding text structure and making connections across texts (Alexander & Fox, 2011, p. 165). Greater responsibilities are carried by this age group, in terms of coping with the transition from primary to secondary school and the changing roles at home (Alexander & Fox, 2011; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008). Furthermore, adolescents are maturing socially. The role of significant others remains important, although in different ways. While pre-adolescents still conform to social norms, and will tend to please authority

figures like parents and teachers (Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis, 2014), adolescents tend to strive towards autonomy and interaction with peers (Alexander & Fox, 2011; Moje et al., 2008).

During this time adolescents' reading behaviour, needs, interests and preferences also change. They will be keen to read if their peers do, and will not necessarily read because adults tell them that reading has value (Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, & Wright, 2012). Alvermann (2002, p. 200), furthermore, points out that even struggling adolescent readers experience a great interest to explore multimedia and participate in various formal and informal literacy practices. Marked differences between in-school and out-of-school literacy can occur, where out-of-school literacy, engaged in as a choice, is more reflective of the individual personalities (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013; McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012). These changes may manifest in differing ways, depending on variables like gender, culture and race (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006; Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

Bean and Harper (2009) argue that adolescent literacy should not be approached from an age or Grade level perspective, but rather in terms of literacy needs (p. 45). Adolescent readers need to cope with material that is more complex. For a proficient adolescent reader, literacy refers to the capacity of not only being able to "comprehend passages of text", but also the ability to "(1) integrate information across multiple texts, (2) critically relate paragraph meaning to personal experience, (3) employ knowledge from texts to evaluate science observations or historical documents and (4) compose complete messages in the form of stories and reports for actual audiences" (Guthrie & Metsala, 1999, p. 382).

Clearly, adolescents are required to integrate "multiple linguistic and cognitive processes" (Kim et al., 2016, p. 358). More complex reading strategies are indeed crucial to cope with the higher academic demands of secondary school. Fletcher (2014, p. 293) calls this "a critical stage" in the education of adolescents, because normally there would be less instruction in reading, while the focus of the activity would shift to academic reading in the different subject areas. This is particularly challenging when learning and reading in a second language. As was pointed out in section 1.2.2, research shows that globally there is concern that vast numbers of young readers have not mastered these complex reading skills (Moje et al., 2008), and many adolescents

end up being categorised as "struggling". These adolescent readers have difficulty to cope as readers and learners – which in turn will affect their desire to engage in these activities.

During adolescence, most readers experience a decline in reading activity and motivation to read and to learn. This is well documented for American and European contexts (Alexander & Fox, 2011, pp. 158-164; Moje, et al., 2008; Unrau & Schlackman 2006; Paige, 2011; Wolters et al., 2014). In this regard, Guthrie, Wigfield and You (2012, p. 602) indicate that large proportions of students are "disaffected with reading", especially in the content areas. Similarly, Ellis and Coddington (2013) report that analyses of PISA results point to a decline in reading engagement among students – from 68% to 63% between 2000 and 2009. The decline in motivation and engagement in literacy and learning, and an increased desire for easy work (Paige, 2011), happen at a time when the demands of academic life increase. The (pre)adolescent has to move to a secondary school, has to study independently and make choices that can affect her or his future career. Beliefs regarding competence and expectancies of success decline with the increase in complexity of the reading material. Experiences of success or failure will thus result in an increase or decrease in intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, Alao, & Rinehart, 1997; Kim et al., 2016; Wigfield, 1994). In a discussion of these issues in an African context, Pretorius (2002, p. 189) indicates that underperforming students thus find themselves in a "negative cycle of failed reading outcomes and academic underperformance".

Unrau and Schlackman (2006) indicate that these declines occur across gender, ethnicity and Grade level in urban schools, specifically for the Hispanic and Asian students in their sample. In terms of gender differences, research found that the motivation levels of girls deteriorated less dramatically than those for boys (Wolters et al., 2014). Boys are often characterised as more disengaged as readers, seeing reading as feminine and schoolish (Brozo, 2011, p. 26; Young & Brozo, 2001, p. 323).

The question arises whether the profile of the adolescent reader manifests similarly in the Namibian landscape, where first encounters with literacy might be very different from other contexts, and where access to forms of literacy other than oral and print sources is limited.

1.3 The status of research

The relationship between reading motivation and achievement has been investigated mainly for young children and not adolescents. According to Wolters, Denton, York, and Francis (2014), this points to a limitation in current knowledge. The first *Handbook of Reading Research* (Pearson, 1984) contains one chapter on social and motivational influences on reading, focusing on the impact of race and socio-economic status on the reading attitudes and achievement of children in general (Wigfield & Asher, 1984). This research interest has grown since, as is evident in the continued attention given to this field in subsequent editions of the handbooks. Only in the fourth handbook (Kamil, Pearson, Moje, & Afflerbach, 2011), however, is a chapter devoted to adolescents as readers (Alexander & Fox, 2011). In that chapter, Alexander and Fox summarise research from two emerging areas: reading in the content areas and reading engagement. In their review, they indicate the need for more empirical studies on adolescents and the role reading plays in finding their identities and social roles. Reading for pleasure is not explicitly referred to.

Klauda and Guthrie (2015) compared the development of reading motivation, engagement and achievement of struggling and advanced readers in early adolescence. In this longitudinal study, they found that, while motivation and engagement were more strongly related to achievement among advanced readers, attention to reading did not yield similar results for struggling readers. They propose that this may vary according to the genre read, but that motivation does predict concurrent engagement, as well as growth in engagement, similarly for struggling and advanced readers.

In current reading research, the reading of academic and informational texts is receiving renewed attention. For instance, Guthrie, Wigfield and Klauda (2012), as well as Wood and Blanton (2009), published work devoted entirely to the literacy instruction of adolescents and the engaging of adolescents in academic literacy. An important focal point is the development of classroom contexts that will promote engagement with informational texts.

The importance of the reading of fiction and reading for pleasure in building reading motivation and engagement is reflected in Cremin et al. (2014). This study reports on an extensive UK project to equip teachers to promote reading for pleasure. McGeown,

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Duncan, Griffiths and Stothard (2015), in a further study on adolescent reading in the UK, found that the motivated reading of fiction, in particular, predicted reading comprehension. Atkinson (2009) established that academically stronger students were more motivated and positive about reading for pleasure, while struggling adolescents tended to have lower expectations of success and enjoyment (cf. Wolters et al., 2014).

In publications summarising research on reading motivation, such as these discussed above, scant, if any, reference to research conducted in African countries is made (Du Toit, 2004; Pretorius & Machet, 2004). Journal articles based on extensive reviews of research (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012; Van Steensel, Van der Sande, Bramer, & Arends, 2006) include no studies from Africa, possibly pointing to a lack of research from this perspective. It is, therefore, not surprising that reference to literacy research from Africa is absent in the section "Literacy research around the world" in the *Third Handbook on Reading Research* (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2000). However, some informative research regarding reading motivation and reading habits from African countries do exist, and a selection of studies are discussed and referred to in this dissertation (see Chapter Four and Article Two). Reading investment in English language learning (ELL) seems to be a prominent focus in this regard (cf. Mori, 2002).

Contributing to research from an African perspective, Du Toit (2004) conducted a study on avid, adolescent readers in South Africa. She found that intrinsic motivation, mastery learning and self-efficacy played a central role in continued voluntary reading among these students. South African reading behaviour researcher, Maritha Snyman, in cooperation with other researchers, also conducted additional reading research projects in South Africa. According to Snyman (2006), similar to global trends, the reading of fiction and non-fiction among Afrikaans speaking youth seemed to have declined markedly. Kleyn, Snyman and Geldenhuys (2013), furthermore, indicate that the reading habits of a group of first year university students did not positively affect their academic reading. Regarding reading motivation, Lessing-Venter and Snyman (2017) investigated the possibility of employing humorous texts to increase reading motivation and reading for pleasure.

Differences in reading motivation between early-Grade readers and adolescent readers, and between girls and boys, have been clearly pointed out in research. Motivation patterns are also dependent on the domain where reading occurs, and are

further affected by the proficiency levels of readers. Research on struggling readers regarding declines in reading cannot be generalised automatically to advanced readers. Similarly, results from US and European contexts should not be applied to other contexts without confirmatory data, since cultural background and context may influence reading behaviour. In this regard, Guthrie et al. (2012, p. 632) indicate that the knowledge based on the reading behaviour of African-American and Hispanic students in the United States should not be assumed to be similar to that of European Americans. Populations from other countries should also be thoroughly researched, and similarities and differences carefully documented. This project on reading motivation and engagement in Namibia will add to this type of context-specific research on adolescents and pre-adolescents. In this study, socio-economic and demographic factors, as well as proficiency levels and access to reading resources, will be accounted for.

1.4 Research questions

Although adolescent literacy has been studied widely, I argue that little information about the initial years of adolescence (pre-adolescence) exists. Additional research on adolescent reading motivation in reading-for-pleasure contexts will enrich existing knowledge, and can also include wider perceptions of literacy. Specifically, the expansion of research in diverse cultural contexts can reflect the ways in which literacy is perceived and what reasons for reading are deemed important in specific communities. As was pointed out, no study on the reading motivation and engagement of Namibian adolescents or pre-adolescents had been conducted at the starting point of this project. Additional research is needed on reading in settings where English as second language is employed. This should include the complexities of a situation where limited access to reading materials exists with regard to the languages used in the community and also pertaining to traditional and digital formats of reading material.

This PhD study is presented as article-based, and was conducted in three phases or stages. The study broadly aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the preferences, reading activity, reading motivation and engagement of Namibian pre-adolescent learners. These learners are in a critical time of transition and turbulence in their lives, living in a country that is said to lack a reading culture. The overall

research question is formulated as: What are the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent, primary school learners in Namibia? The sub-questions developed for the different phases are presented in Table 1. The first phase broadly investigated the Namibian landscape and determined the opportunities and challenges to promote reading for pleasure that existed. It accounted for the socio-economic and resource factors in homes and schools that affected reading in both rural and urban areas across Namibia. It ascertained whether Namibian learners included reading as leisure activity outside of school and also reflected on the reasons for their behaviour. A second phase followed up on these first findings, and focused on urban readers in one specific region in Namibia. In this phase, I describe aspects of the reading activity and motivation, as well as discuss the relationships of these factors and reading achievement. Attention is also given to gender variables in this context. The third phase implemented strategies in a small-scale intervention to promote reading for pleasure, as well as reading motivation and engagement, in a specific school in the same region. The views of pre-adolescent, urban, Namibian readers in the programme, as well as their views about the value of, and the reasons for, reading were documented.

Table 1: Research questions

Overall research question: What are the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent, primary school learners in Namibia?		
Sub-Questions for Phase One	Sub-Questions for Phase Two	Sub-Questions for Phase Three
What is the overall situation regarding reading and reading preferences amongst Grade Six learners in Namibia? What is the home and school environment like? Do Namibian children read for pleasure, and what do they read? What factors influence their behaviour? Are there significant differences in the reading behaviour of rural and urban learners, and between learners from well-, reasonably, and poorly resourced schools?	What is the nature of reading motivation and reading activity amongst urban, Grade Seven, Namibian learners who have adequate reading skills in English as a second language? What are the relationships between, reading motivation, reading activity and reading achievement amongst these learners, and to what extent do these variables differ between boys and girls?	How do pre-adolescent, Grade Seven, urban learners in Namibia view the provision of reading-for-pleasure opportunities in an action-based research project?

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1.5   Outline of the extended abstract

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present the topic and aim of my research, as well as to summarise the status of research, focusing on pre-adolescents in a diverse cultural context. It, furthermore, motivated the relevance of the project in terms of the contribution it would make to reading motivation research. In Chapter Two the theoretical perspectives that inspired the research are presented. It focuses on reading comprehension, reading motivation and engagement, as well as explores the influence of the Self-Determination and Expectancy Value theories on reading. Chapter Three explains and justifies the mixed research design employed throughout the three phases of the study. In this chapter the development of the research instruments are described and also the way in which the mixed design was employed in sampling, data collection and analysis. The three phases of the study are explained: data collection and analysis of Phase One were completed before the commencement of the next phases. Data in Phase Two and Phase Three were gathered in consecutive stages, but the phases of analysis and interpretation in Phase Two and Phase Three overlapped to some extent.

As explained in section 1.5, the research was structured around a number of research questions. Each phase resulted in separate articles, and Chapter Four presents a summary of the three articles. In Chapter Five the findings are discussed in terms of the research questions posed. Sources consulted in the extended abstract are referenced in a final section that follows Chapter Five.

2   Theoretical framework

2.1   Introduction

In order to advance my project, it was necessary to develop an understanding of theoretical perspectives regarding reading motivation and engagement, as well as reading comprehension. The concepts of reading motivation and engagement, as well as reading comprehension, have been defined and operationalised in different, sometimes opposing, ways (Conradi et al., 2014). This chapter describes and discusses the main theoretical inspirations, and provides the foundation for my definition of concepts.

In this chapter, a balanced view of reading comprehension is presented through the model of reading comprehension developed by the RAND Reading Study Group, where the importance and interaction of reader, text and context is recognised (RAND, 2002). The engagement perspective of reading, as developed by Guthrie and Wigfield which builds on several motivation theories from educational psychology (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Guthrie et al., 2012), is also of fundamental importance to my study. The Self-Determination and Expectancy Value theories, which I regard as central to engagement, are, therefore, also presented.

2.2   Reading comprehension

2.2.1   Overview of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading instruction, especially in the later phases of the development of readers. In definitions of reading (or "reading literacy"), the process of understanding text is stressed. Comprehension involves the active involvement of the reader. The RAND Reading Study Group describes reading comprehension as a process of "simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (RAND, 2002, p. 1). Written language includes digital, as well as traditionally printed texts.

In younger readers, skilled reading is developed by focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. For the adolescent reader, the

development of more sophisticated skills, such as drawing inferences, reasoning and critical analysis (RAND, 2002, p. 23), are important. In addition, in all age groups the maintenance of motivation and engagement should also be added as central to the development of skilled reading (Paratore, Cassano, & Schickedanz, 2011, p. 110). Becoming a skilled and fluent reader of a variety of texts may take a lifetime, and is affected by a myriad of factors. The process of acquiring language skills in more than one language also adds another dimension to the reading agenda.

The development of theories on reading comprehension over the past decades can be traced by examining the interaction between three major factors – the text, the reader and the context. In their overview of the history of reading comprehension research, Pearson and Cervetti (2015) visualise these three factors as three overlapping circles, and indicate the area of overlap between them as the zone (space) where reading comprehension occurs. In each period, one of these factors "had its moment in the spotlight" (p. 15), and was prioritised as most relevant in developing theories of reading comprehension. In the following, I will use Pearson and Cervetti (2015) as my main source.

In the era before 1965, in line with the dominant behaviourist theoretical perspectives, the text was seen as central. Observable stimuli and responses were studied, and the reader was reduced to a "component" receiving input and producing output through reading tasks. "Comprehension was all about the text" (Pearson & Cervetti, 2015, p. 2). According to the authors, the simple view of reading, (developed by Gough and Hilliger in 1980), for instance, postulated that meaning resided in the text, and that the task of the reader was to exhume (dig out) that meaning through listening and decoding. Reading instruction, based on close reading, thus also emphasised the centrality of the text, and text-based questions had one correct answer only.

Through the cognitive revolution starting from around 1965, the focus of reading comprehension theories shifted to include the reader – and what went on inside the head of the reader – as central to the comprehension process. Renewed interest in the Reader-Response theory of Rosenblatt (as outlined in 1939 and 1968) influenced views on reading comprehension, and it was argued that the process of making meaning of texts relied on the interaction between reader and text. This led to a unique reconstruction of the text through each reading. Shared meaning, however, could be agreed upon through discussions among readers. Schema theory (developed by

Anderson and Pearson in 1984), another cognitive approach, emphasised the role or the existing knowledge of the reader in comprehension, and accounted for the way in which the reader as *builder* constructed meaning from text. Metacognitive skills were employed by the reader to check and *fix* comprehension on a continual basis. In terms of reading instruction and comprehension, students were motivated to incorporate new knowledge into their schemata. Meaning-making occurred by "intentionally applying strategies (summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting)" (Pearson & Cervetti, 2015, pp. 4-7).

Around 1985, literacy theories and psychology took a sociocultural turn. Social and cultural contexts dominated theories of comprehension, and a "situated view of cognition" emerged. During this time, the views of Vygotsky re-emerged. His construct of the "zone of proximal development" emphasised the impact of scaffolded learning (and thus also comprehension) through interventions of peers and elders. Pedagogical and classroom approaches included the "social construction of meaning", stressing the importance of talking about texts. This included the "analyzing and questioning power relations and ideology in texts, through the emergence of critical literacies" (Pearson & Cervetti, 2015, pp. 7-9).

In most contemporary theories these three elements, the reader, the text and the context, remained important, and shifting the focus from reader to text and context resulted in a rich approach to reading comprehension and literary studies. The Four Resources Model of Luke and Freebody (developed in 1999), for instance, indicates that, in comprehending text, the reader can assume four roles, namely the role of code breaker, meaning maker, text user and text critic. According to Pearson and Cervetti (2015, p. 17), these four roles incorporate the differing roles of the reader and indicate that this model has an appropriate balance of reader, text, task and context; it, furthermore, "synthesizes important views of reading comprehension". Pearson and Cervetti (2015, pp. 10-11) conclude their historical overview by stating that, during the last decades, a more balanced view regarding the factors of text, reader and context emerged. Though still recognised, in later models context plays a lesser role.

In an analysis of reading comprehension research, focusing specifically on second language readers, Prater (2009) identifies two research frameworks, according to views of the reading process. Firstly, reading can be viewed as a cognitive process: a view of reading as composite of abilities which can be divided into parts and measured

objectively, without taking underlying factors that could have impacted comprehension, into account. Alternately, reading can be viewed as social practice: a view of reading as a socially constructed meaning-making activity, where the cultural background and background knowledge of readers are taken into account. Comprehension is thus part of social practice and meaning-making is viewed as a complex interaction between text factors and reader factors, where the unique qualities of bilingual readers are accounted for. Especially in terms of the assessment practices associated with comprehension, Prater indicates that, in both views, language, culture, attitudes and opportunities to learn are social factors that have to be considered in comprehension instruction and assessment.

Both Prater, as well as Pearson and Cervetti, thus ultimately argue for approaches to comprehension that are balanced and integrated. In my understanding of reading comprehension (and reading motivation), cognitive, affective and social domains are all relevant, and reader, text and context play an important role. To emphasise only one factor or approach may lead to a somewhat skewed view of the comprehension process. Readers are individuals, but just as the texts they are reading, their reconstructed understandings of texts also need to be understood within a specific cultural and historical background.

Regarding approaches to reading comprehension, the RAND Reading Study Group under the leadership of Catherine Snow, developed such a balanced approach (RAND, 2002). Their heuristic and empirical model has links to the construction integration perspective of reading, and takes the historical development and the importance of reader, text and context into account. Apart from the reader (that has to comprehend) and the text (that must be comprehended), the RAND model includes a third component, namely the activity. Reading activity includes "the purposes, processes, and consequences associated with the act of reading" (RAND, 2002, p.11). The relation between these factors and context is visualised differently from the three circle models discussed above. Reader, text and activity are all three enclosed, and comprehension takes place in a particular context. The sociocultural context facilitates the experiences of the reader, but is also affected by what the reader brings to the process.

2.2.2 The RAND reading model

I have opted to focus mainly on the RAND model as framework for my study. It is suitable as point of departure, because the sociocultural context is recognised and always present. In Phase One of my study, the context of Namibian readers is the main focus, while in Phase Two and Phase Three, aspects of the motivation to read texts and the stimulation of reading by means of different activities are explored for a specific group of Namibian readers. In the RAND model, the relationship that is created between the reader, the text and the activity (see Figure 1) is understood in the frame of the sociocultural context.

Figure 1: The RAND model of reading comprehension
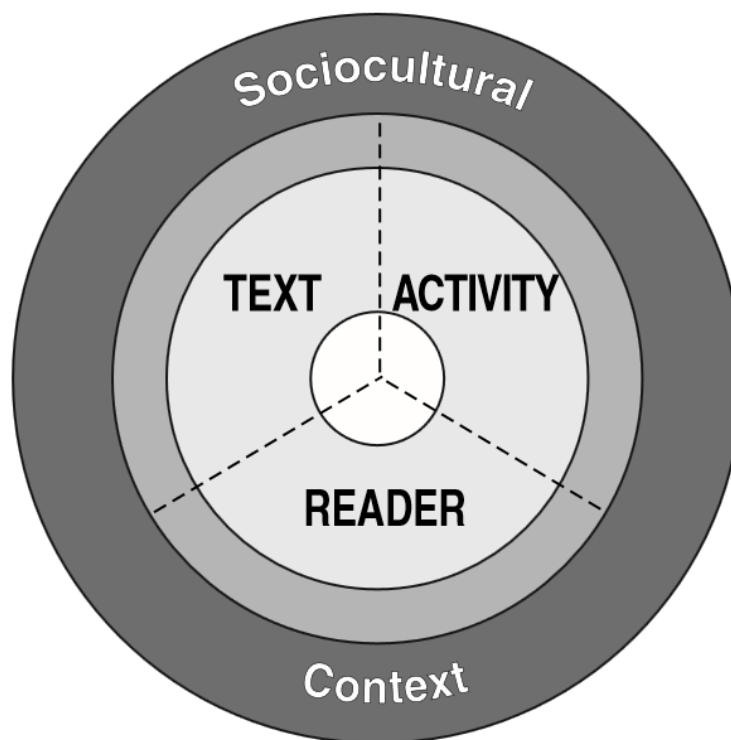
(RAND, 2002, p. 12).

Apart from knowledge and cognitive abilities, the reader also brings motivation to the comprehension process. This includes goals for reading, as well as beliefs of being successful in the task (self-efficacy), and his or her interest in the text and task ahead (RAND, 2002, p. 13). The initial fluency of the reader impacts comprehension. During the process of reading, on micro- and macro-level, changes can occur. Motivation, for

instance, can increase because of various reasons, but may also decrease if the text is experienced as too complex or uninteresting. The ultimate goal of reading instruction would be to develop proficient and strategic readers, who are autonomous and self-regulating. When describing the endpoint, proficient adult reading, "interest" and "pleasure" are included in the following description:

> …the capacity to read, with ease and interest, a wide variety of different kinds of materials for varying purposes and to read with comprehension even when the material is neither easy to understand nor intrinsically interesting. Adult reading involves reading for pleasure, but also learning, and analysis, and it represents a prerequisite to many forms of employment, to informed participation in the democratic process, to optimal participation in the education of one's children, and to gaining access to cultural capital (RAND, 2002 p. 9).

The RAND report (RAND, 2002, p. 14) employs a wide interpretation of the term *text.* It encompasses traditionally printed text, but also electronic and multimodal texts. Texts can be perceived as difficult or easy, and the text type and purpose of reading requires different strategies from the reader. Complexity depends on the content of the text, and how well versed the reader is in the domain, but also how text is presented in terms of vocabulary, style and genre. Engaged readers find challenging texts motivating, but if there is little interaction between reader and text because of complexity, frustration, low motivation and little engagement may be the result.

The activity refers to the "acts a reader engages in with a text, and it encompasses purpose, operations, and consequences" (RAND, 2002, p. 26), and has strong links to motivation. Readers can read for pleasure and relaxation or for information. These purposes for reading can be externally imposed or arise from an internal reason for reading. In the motivational theory of Self-Determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000), motivation for reading is regulated in different ways, and can be interpreted on a continuum with internal and external motivation being the two opposite poles (see section 2.3.2).

The consequences of reading, for instance, an increase in knowledge or know-how and well-being, are affected by engagement (a construct which links up with motivation). Engagement can occur with all types of text and reasons for reading – reading for pleasure or engaging with complicated academic material.

All interaction between reader and text occurs in a social and cultural context (RAND, 2002, p. 16). An important, instructional context for reading is the classroom. The classroom context includes aspects, such as the use of space and the available physical resources. Readers add to the intricacies of classroom context by adding their own unique background knowledge and experience.

The classroom as context of learning to read is influenced also by a larger social context, and will reflect the socio-economic conditions of the neighbourhood and broader society. The school context is growing more and more diverse, also in terms of language and culture. An ideology of viewing diversity as a valuable resource, should support the selection of instructional tools, strategies and approaches regarding reading comprehension (Nocon & Cole, 2009, p. 25).

In order for teachers not to rely solely on traditional practices in teaching reading, an understanding of cognitive and sociocultural approaches to reading and literacy is essential. In the creation of meaningful reading activities, they should be able to cater for readers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, with different cognitive abilities. They should have an understanding of literacy as a wide concept and also as a continuum, as well as transformational. Individuals could then be supported to reach their full potential through literacy experiences and thus become "analytical, reflective and critical individuals" (UNESCO, 2011, pp. 6-7).

Moje et al. (2008, p. 113) posit that reading is a result of "an intricate intersection of learner knowledge and interest, textual factors, and social, cultural and disciplinary contexts". Teachers of reading should be aware of the "the complex and fluid interrelationships among readers, texts, purposeful activities, and contexts" (RAND, 2002, p. xviii) in order to support the development of competent and motivated readers that will continue to grow throughout their lives. Variations in the three reading comprehension elements, as well as in the context, can take many forms and influence one another in intricate ways (see RAND, 2002, pp. 19 - 28).

The RAND model implies a lifetime perspective of reading comprehension, and highlights the role of motivation and engagement (cf. also OECD, 2016). Alexander (2006, p. 415) expands on the benefits of viewing reading as "a long-term developmental process […] from the womb to the tomb". This view is of particular relevance for studies of later reading development and, therefore, also for my study of pre-adolescent readers. Alexander identifies acclimation (adjusting), competence

(ability development) and proficiency (expertise) as three stages of reader development in both cognitive and motivational areas. The acclimation stage refers to readers who are discovering reading, finding themselves in an unfamiliar terrain. They will use mainly "surface level" strategies (p. 424). Competent readers have more domain and topic knowledge, are advanced in strategic text processing, and are also more intrinsically motivated. Proficient readers are fluent and automatic readers in their domain, and utilise mostly deep processing strategies (p. 425). Such readers take a lifetime to develop, and individual interest plays an important role. In the school context, the reader in the first stage, faced with an academic terrain (reading), needs much scaffolding to move to the next developmental stage (p. 430). The role of the teacher to develop motivated, strategic readers during this stage is crucial.

2.3   Reading motivation and engagement

The RAND model for reading comprehension is grounded in the inclusion of motivation and engagement as central concepts, and the belief that adolescents who value reading will develop as adults who are able to self-determine their reading behaviour. Devotion to reading results in improved comprehension and learning. Substantiated by my own analysis of contemporary literature on motivation and engagement, I decided to draw on more than one theoretical perspective for my project. Thus, both theories of Self-Determination and the Expectancy Value served as important inspiration for the project.

By employing more than one framework, I concur with Conradi et al. that "it seems unlikely that a single theory can embrace all aspects of motivation at this time" (Conradi et al., 2014, p. 152). This view is supported by Ho and Guthrie (2013, p. 103). In the case of reading motivation research, more general models, and not reading specific models, still dominate, possibly because they are regarded as providing sufficient "grounding [for] empirical inquiry" (Conradi et al., 2014, p. 152). This stance is also evident in Ho and Guthrie (2013, p. 103) and Van Steensel, Van der Sande, Bramer, and Arends (2006, p. 45).

In section 1.2.3, preliminary definitions of reading motivation and engagement were given. It was pointed out that the motivation to read resulted from beliefs and attitudes

towards reading, and that engagement was the result of the joint functioning of motivation and cognitive strategies.

As indicated in section 2.2, developing readers do not depend on developing reading skills only, and skilled readers do not always choose to read. Readers also need to be motivated to read and to achieve. Ideally, learners must choose willingly to engage in reading, based on their personal goals. Learners who are personally interested to learn about a topic, view reading as valuable and rewarding. The development of reading skills is also influenced by expectations of success. A positive self-concept as a reader develops when one experiences success in a task.

Although motivation researchers differ about the elements of motivation, the following criteria enjoy wide consensus:

- Motivation is mostly perceived as an internal process, comprising "thoughts, beliefs and emotions" (Unrau & Quirk, 2014, p. 262), and thus only indirectly observable through action.

- Motivation is multifaceted or multidimensional, and is structured around higher order concepts, such as goals for reading, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read, self-efficacy and perceptions of the socio-cultural context (social reasons for reading) (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

- Motivation has a reciprocal relationship with many actions, including engagement (it fuels achievement which, in turn, results in increased motivation). Both motivation and engagement influence, and are influenced, by students' reading experiences (De Naeghel et al., 2012).

- Motivation is dynamic – it changes over time (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006), and may vary in strength and quality. Motivation can be cultivated, manipulated and activated through various kinds of activities, for example, by instructional practices (Guthrie, 2004).

- To these criteria, largely based on the summary of Unrau and Quirk (2014, pp. 262-263), should be added that motivation can be regarded as domain-specific (Alvermann, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2012; You, Dang, & Lim, 2016).

2.3.1 An engagement perspective on reading

Reading engagement is a frequently used framework in the reading motivation domain (Unrau & Quirck, 2014, p. 268). My work has a strong focus on motivational aspects and reading for pleasure, but it is framed against the broader perspective of the Reading Engagement theory. The decision to use this framework in my study was also motivated by the growing interest in reading engagement, for instance, as evident in the PISA studies. Although there are vast differences in reading profiles and reading engagement between countries reported in PISA 2000, in general, engaged readers and frequent readers of a diversity of materials achieved higher literacy scores than readers with different reading patterns (OECD, 2002, pp. 106-121). Engaged readers strive to understand, to gain pleasure from reading and learning and are confident in their reading. "They are mastery oriented, intrinsically motivated, and have self-efficacy" (Guthrie, 2001, p. 1).

The Reading Engagement theory stems from the broader Engagement theory, and captures the view that ownership of learning or reading includes feelings of self-confidence and command, and that intrinsic motivation is an essential component in developing engagement in reading. Scholars, such as Guthrie, Wigfield, Klauda and You, have developed models of reading engagement that have an important bearing on my project.

Historically different types (dimensions) of engagement have been identified (Reschly & Christenson, 2012, p. 11). Cognitive, behavioural and affective or emotional dimensions of engagement are widely recognised in the literature (Ellis & Coddington, 2013; Guthrie et al., 2012; Unrau & Quirk, 2014). With reference to Unrau and Quirk (2014), *cognitive* engagement refers to "strategic or metacognitive actions associated with knowledge creation during reading" (p. 266). *Behavioural* engagement can be observed in the conduct of an individual, such as time spent on a task (p. 266), while *emotional* (affective) engagement is described as the "affective reactions of students in various classroom contexts (cf. Unrau & Quirk, 2014, p. 265). Although not necessarily directly observable, affective engagement has to do with enjoying and liking, or disliking, an activity, such as reading, and whether boredom is experienced. Disengagement is thus commonly used as an opposite term in this context. This dimension is especially relevant in reading-for-pleasure contexts, which were explored

in my project (especially in Phases One and Three). Another type of engagement added in more recent literature is *agentic* engagement (active involvement in, and enrichment of, the activity) (Kim et al., 2016. p. 361; Reeve, 2012, p. 151).

The relationships between reading, motivation and engagement are complex but, as basic argument, it can be postulated that motivation influences engagement which, in turn, will affect reading achievement (Eccles & Wang, 2012, p. 138), as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Relationship between motivation and engagement

Motivation ⟶ Engagement ⟶ Outcome (Reading achievement)

Complexity is caused, amongst others, by the fact that both motivation and engagement are multi-faceted concepts, and can change over time. As was indicated in Chapter One, motivation includes beliefs and goals, as well as social reasons for reading, and can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie et al., 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). The resulting engagement can be categorised as behavioural, affective, cognitive or agentic (Reeve, 2012), as was previously illustrated.

Furthermore, engagement and motivation are not the only factors affecting reading comprehension and achievement. Based on motivation to read and in order to understand, achieve or gain knowledge, the reader makes (cognitive) choices, select strategies and interacts with communities to construct meaning. Therefore, according to the reading engagement model of Guthrie and Wigfield (as presented in the inner part of Figure 3), engaged readers can be described as "*motivated* to read, *strategic* in their approaches to comprehending what they read, *knowledgeable* in their construction of meaning from text, and *socially* interactive while reading" (Guthrie et al., 2012, p. 602, my emphasis).

Figure 3: Engagement model of reading development
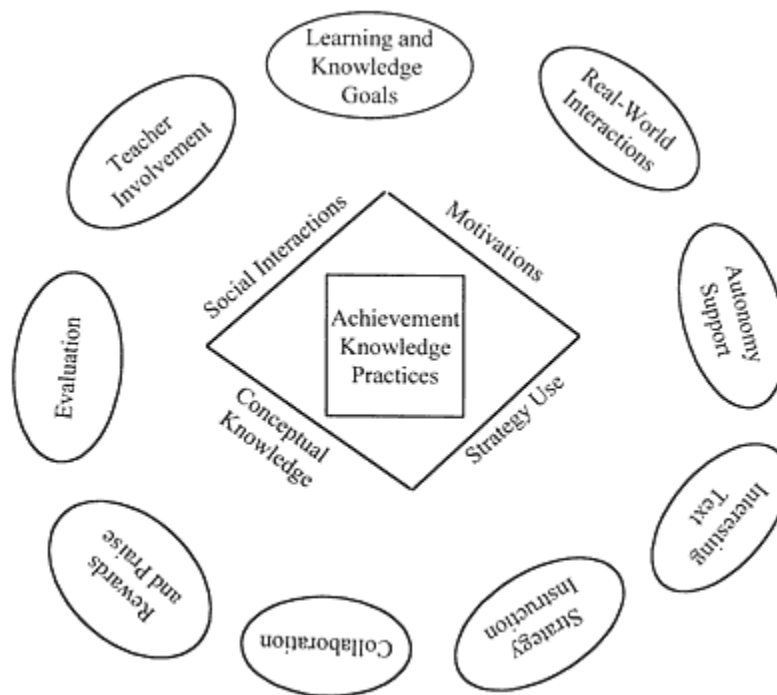
(Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 419).

In this model the centre square represents the outcome (improved achievement, knowledge or practice) and the diamond shape the four facets of engaged reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 416) in the definition mentioned above.

The engaged reader is motivated, chooses to read and uses strategies, as well as knowledge, to comprehend. Reading is thus regarded as "knowledge driven". Reading strategies refer to the processes involved in comprehending, for example, monitoring comprehension and constructing "understandings and beliefs". Social interactions include collaboration between members of a community, such as assisting peers and cooperating with the teacher (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 416).

The smaller ovals, surrounding the diamond-shaped representation of the engagement processes, represent *instructional practices* that teachers can utilise to influence engagement and thus also reading competence or achievement. These nine practices have been established through various studies (cf. Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), and include:

- helping students identify learning and knowledge goals
- making use of real world interaction

- supporting student autonomy
- using interesting texts
- providing strategy instruction
- supporting collaboration
- using praise and rewards
- evaluating and providing feed-back
- being involved as teacher

These instructional practices were employed and reported by, for example, Guthrie et al. (2010), Rettig and Hendricks (2010), as well as Guthrie and Klauda (2014) and, from an African perspective, by Carstens (2013). By employing self-narratives, Carstens investigated the role of the teacher in the development of motivation and feelings of competence and autonomy in literacy activities among young adults. The importance of strategy instruction for African readers is, furthermore, pointed out by Livingston, Klopper, Cox and Uys (2015). In the development of the reading programme in Phase Three of my project (and reported on in Article Three) these instructional practices were considered and implemented in various ways.

Further developments of this model are summarised in Guthrie et al. (2012), as well as in Guthrie and Klauda (2015), focusing on the influence of *instructional contexts*, and *individual differences* in reading motivation, engagement and achievement. Guthrie, Wigfield and You present extensive research on the engagement of students in reading activities and the results of classroom and instructional practices on engagement and reading achievement (Guthrie et al., 2012). Their model is presented in Figure 4, and indicates this inclusion of instructional practice.

Instructional classroom practices, which are found to be motivating, and the resulting motivation, mediate behavioural engagement, and results in improvement in reading competence. This development of the Guthrie, Wigfield and You model (See Figure 4) is based on extensive research, demonstrating that the pathways from practice to competence are, however, far more intricate. Instructional practices (cf. Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) can influence reading components, of which motivation is only one. The reader, furthermore, selects from a number of cognitive strategies (self-monitoring, constructing of understanding and beliefs). While instructional practices do influence motivation (as indicated above), they may also impact achievement directly. This conceptual model thus explains the different

pathways between these factors, and shows direct and indirect linkages between classroom practices and motivation, as well as achievement and engagement.

Figure 4: Model of reading engagement processes in classroom contexts
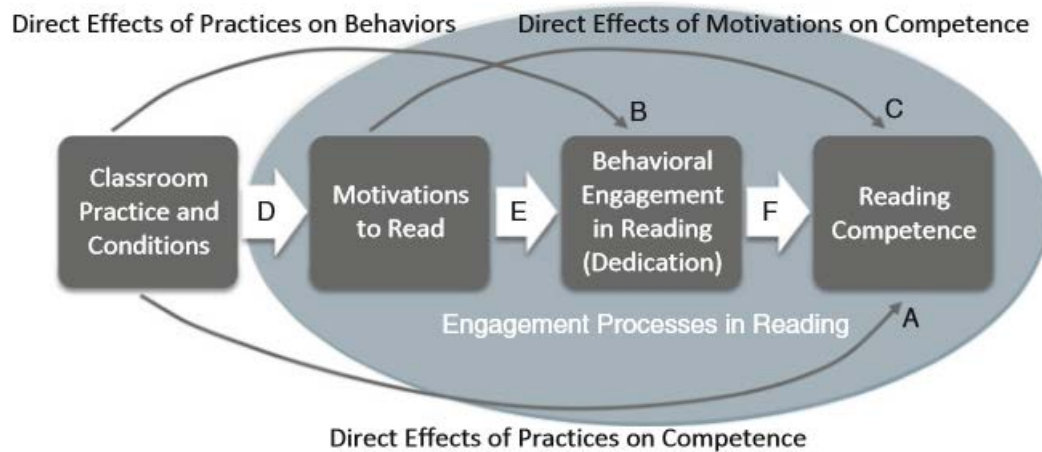
(Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012, p. 604).

The capital letters in the model refer to possible pathways to reading competence. The four squares represent the way from classroom practice through motivation and engagement to reading competence (D-E-F). The model also visualises other possible pathways. As explained by the authors, only pathways that they regard as motivated by adequate research are included. Although emotional and cognitive engagement (as discussed in section 2.3.1) can influence reading competence, it is not reflected in the model (Guthrie et al., 2012, p. 605).

According to the model, the following pathways to reading comprehension thus exist:

- Behavioural engagement in reading impacts reading competence (F)
- Motivation to read impacts behavioural engagement in reading (E)
- Motivation to read impacts reading competence (C)
- Classroom practices and conditions impact students' motivation to read (D)
- Classroom practices and conditions impact behavioural engagement in reading (B)
- Classroom practices and conditions impact students' reading competence (A)

As can be seen from the model, engagement often functions as mediator between classroom practices and conditions and reading competence.

Klauda and Guthrie (2015) later extended the model by incorporating *cognitive processes* in reading, and thus visualised results of research by focusing on the relations among achievement, engagement, motivation and cognitive processes, especially as these relate to classroom context (instructional practice) and reading achievement. In line with the *Handbook of Individual Differences in Reading* (Afflerbach, 2015), in which this chapter was published, Guthrie and Klauda, furthermore, focus on individual differences in these relationships. Based on this later version of the model – for the purposes of my project – the linear model presented in Figure 2 can be adapted further to show these pathways (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Reading engagement model of achievement, engagement, motivation and cognition
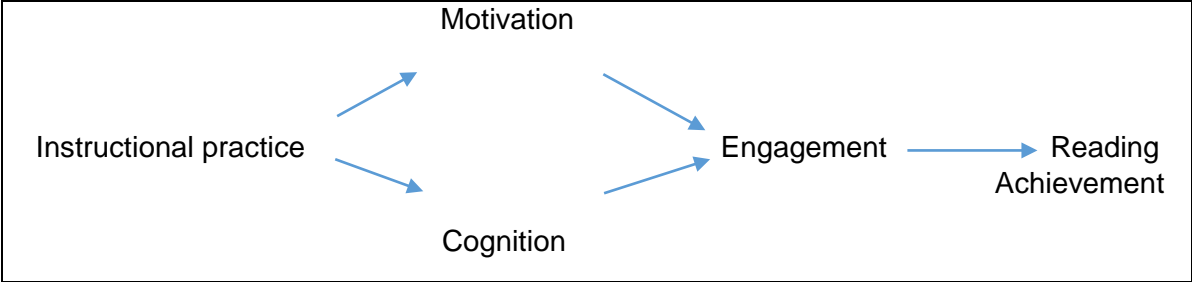
(Adapted from Guthrie & Klauda, 2015)

The model proposes that classroom practices and contexts influence various dimensions of motivation, as well as cognitive processes involved in reading – which all contribute to engagement. In terms of behavioural engagement, the influence of these will be visible in "higher quality engagement" – the effort and time spent on reading. Furthermore, the resulting "higher qualities" (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015, p. 42) of achievement (for example, reasoning skills) will be visible in reading.

Guthrie and Klauda (2015) argue that differences in motivation and engagement can be discussed as they appear on both global level and individualistic, profile levels, as well as the way in which diversity manifests on cultural level. Students with high levels of intrinsic motivation read more than those with low levels of motivation (cf. the study of Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). However, the specifics of dimensions of motivation may differ for individuals. Furthermore, patterns of differences may occur systematically across cultural or ethnic groups. For instance, one study referred to by Guthrie and

Klauda (2015, p. 41) shows a higher correlation between achievement and the dimension of self-efficacy for European Americans than for African Americans.

Regarding the connections between these processes, and substantiated by references to research findings, the models presented in Figures 2 - 5 propose that:

- *Engagement* is correlated with achievement. This is true for primary and elementary students, as shown by the various studies discussed, and is also evident from 2009 PISA results (cf. OECD, 2010). Important for my study, as discussed in Article Two, is the mediating role of engagement that the effects socio-economic status and gender have on achievement.

- *Motivation* affects engagement. The model proposes that motivation influences achievement through the effect on behavioural engagement (for example, reading activity).

- *Cognitive* processes affect engagement. The model, furthermore, proposes that advanced readers are more engaged than struggling readers. Research shows that this is a reciprocal process. Individual differences in reading ability thus also influence different aspects of engagement and achievement.

- Classroom practices and contexts influence motivation. This aspect of the model confirms most of the propositions of Guthrie et al. (2012), and specifically refers to the effect of contexts built on principles of the Self-Determination (collaboration, choice) and Expectancy Value (value, importance and relevance) theories that form an important theoretical reference for my study.

In this discussion, Guthrie and Klauda (2015) stress that, although more research is needed, motivation and cognition have unique effects on achievement and that both motivation and engagement affect achievement over time. The authors conclude that "the benefits of motivation for achievement growth are not a mere marginal luxury. Reading motivation may stand as the strongest psychological variable influencing achievement" (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015, p. 48).

2.3.2 Motivation: Perspectives from the Self-Determination theory

The meta-theory of Self-Determination, as developed and refined by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in various publications (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b) states that human beings have an innate need and capacity to steer their own

lives. The Self-Determination theory has been established as a much used framework in research on learning and reading motivation, and is also valuable for my project. I expand the application of the theory by applying it to a different context and culture. The theory will be explained first, followed by implications for reading motivation and engagement.

2.3.2.1 Self-determination and needs

According to the Self-Determination theory, there are three uniquely human needs "*that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being*" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229, their emphasis). Furthermore, these needs – the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness – are "innate for all humans in all cultures and apply in all situations" (Pintrich, 2003, p. 670). Although there are differences in the strengths of these needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 232), without satisfaction of these needs, a person will not find it possible to develop in an ideal and healthy manner.

The first need is the need for *competence.* This need refers to the desire to be competent in "interactions with the environment" (Pintrich, 2003, p. 670). Humans have the need to master their world and to experience feelings of being capable. Feelings of competence can develop from positive feedback and communication, thus from "interpersonal events and structures" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 58).

Secondly, humans strive to fulfil the need for *autonomy*, namely to be in control of their lives. This need has to do with the desire to self-determine one's life and behaviour. It involves integration and freedom to live a healthy life (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 231). The opposite of this would be a life that is controlled by the environment, for example, by humans or physical factors. Self-determination thus involves choice: "the capacity to choose, and to have those choices […] be the determinants of one's actions" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 38).

The third need (the need for *relatedness*) refers to the need for humans to be in a relation to the world, to experience closeness and contact and to belong to a family or a group. This third need, termed by Andersen, Chen and Carter (2000, p. 270) as a "need to human connection", includes the need for "tenderness, warmth, emotional responsiveness and acceptance".

One would engage in a task if it is aligned with one's own goals, and if it enhances feelings of *competence*, *autonomy* and *relatedness*. In an ideal setting, humans thus would be naturally motivated to engage in activities supporting their existential needs. If an activity has no relation to these essential needs, one may argue that an individual would not experience any motivation to engage in it. However, Deci and Ryan (2000) point out that humans are more complex than this argument allows for. Even though expressions of these needs may differ across cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2000b. p. 75), it is part of human nature to pursue a "unified sense of self" and to engage in interesting activities, as well as seek connections with individuals and groups. Natural activities, like play, exploration and enjoyment of nature, are not consciously engaged in to satisfy needs, but do require need satisfaction to "operate optimally". If the three basic needs are satisfied, it provides support ("nutriments") to engage in other activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 230).

2.3.2.2 The continuum of intrinsic and extrinsic behaviour

Behaviour and motivation can be described in terms of the degree of self-determination and the level of control by the individual or by external forces. According to the Self-Determination theory, these points "fall along a continuum anchored by autonomous and controlled regulation" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237). This continuum is presented in Figure 6. One can thus typify motivation as ranging from totally unmotivated, or amotivated (Gagné and Deci, 2005), to absolutely and personally committed, intrinsically motivated behaviour (cf. row one and two of the model). The types of regulation and degree of control are depicted by rows three and four.

Figure 6: The Self-Determination continuum*

Behaviour	Nonself-determined					Self-determined
Type of motivation	Amotivation |		Extrinsic motivation		|	Intrinsic motivation
Type of regulation	Non-regulation	| *External regulation*	Introjected regulation	*Identified regulation*	Integrated regulation |	Intrinsic regulation
Locus of causality	Impersonal	*External*	Somewhat external	*Somewhat internal*	Internal	Internal

* The self-determination continuum, showing the motivational, self-regulatory and perceived locus of causality bases of behaviours that vary in the degree to which they are self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 61).

With regard to reading, one would be either motivated to engage in a reading activity because it is inherently interesting or one would have diminishing levels of interest to engage in it. This is often the situation in reading-for-pleasure contexts. If behaviour does not result from an innate need or curiosity, and one still engages in it, other reasons are at work. In opposite cases, the engagement in an activity or task would be the result of other factors, such as coercion and force or external reward upon completion of the task.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is common. Ryan and Deci (2000a) make use of the following distinction as point of departure: Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is "inherently interesting or enjoyable", while extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in action "because it leads to a separable outcome" (p. 55). In extrinsic motivation the focus is thus not on the activity itself, but rather on an outcome, for example, the rewards, a specific goal (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334; Moran, Diefendorff, Kim, & Liu, 2012, p. 355).

Intrinsic motivation can be regarded as the prototype of self-determined activities. It can be described as spontaneous, and the natural pleasure of engaging in the activity

or task is the fundamental motivation for the behaviour. Experiences of fun and challenge, as well as an inherent interest (curiosity) in the activity are the reasons for action. Since this is linked to basic needs, one could thus argue that intrinsically rewarding activities lead to feelings of happiness and well-being. This is important for human development and also a marked feature of human nature. Intrinsic motivation has less to do with outcomes and consequences of tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Gurland and Glowacky (2011, p. 2) rightly argue that "motivation is indicated not by whether individuals engage in an activity or not, but rather by how they *experience* the activity – as interesting, enjoyable, and personally valued versus as pressured or coerced". Thus, genuine interest – a sense of truly ''wanting to'' – is the hallmark of autonomous, self-determined motivation.

According to Deci and Ryan, the Self-Determination theory has as its main concern the specification of factors that would support and enhance intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 70). To enhance intrinsic motivation, feelings of competence (efficacy) should be fostered. Tasks should, therefore, be experienced as challenging and rewarding. Furthermore, research has shown that regular feedback on positive performance enhances intrinsic motivation further (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 81). However, these experiences of competence must be accompanied by a feeling of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 58). If the decision to engage in behaviour rests within the self, and behaviour is thus the result of choice, it can be regarded as self-determined. Intrinsic motivation thus further implies a high degree of perceived internal control (Pintrich, 2003) (cf. row four in Figure 6). Relatedness also plays a role in intrinsic motivation. According to Andersen et al. (2000, p. 271), relatedness is possibly more important than normally perceived in the Self-Determination theory, and this "sense of connection" will possibly impact autonomy positively. Intrinsic motivation will flourish in a warm and caring environment, where relatedness is experienced, for instance, between a student and a teacher (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 235).

Motivation is not static. Intrinsic motivation can increase or diminish due to its impact on competence, autonomy and control, and can thus be affected by, for example, offering rewards for previously, internally motivated behaviour or being in a threatening environment.

Classically, extrinsically motivated behaviour is regarded as controlled by external factors and "reinforced" by rewards. Behaviour is embarked upon because of totally

external reasons. In the Self-Determination theory, however, the concept of external motivation has been expanded further to differentiate between types of motivational styles. Not all forms of extrinsic motivation should be regarded as a poor alternative to intrinsic motivation, as externally motivated behaviour can also represent "active, agentic states" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 55). While intrinsically motivated behaviour should ideally be developed in individuals and groups in educational and work settings, unfortunately and realistically speaking, humans engage in a variety of activities – sometimes for periods spanning most of their adult lives – that are not inherently pleasurable or enjoyable. Externally motivated behaviour is a fact of life.

Frankly speaking, because many of the tasks that educators want their students to perform are not inherently interesting or enjoyable, knowing how to promote more active and volitional (versus passive and controlling) forms of extrinsic motivation becomes an essential strategy for successful teaching (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 55).

2.3.2.3 The regulation of behaviour

As visualised in Figure 6 (row three, regarding types of regulation), the Self-Determination theory does not view intrinsic or extrinsic motivation as unitary concepts. In terms of being extrinsically motivated, one can perform a task "with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively, with an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 55). Self-sanctioned behaviour, assumed with a sense of "volition" is quite different from feeling pushed into action by external forces. One can thus engage in activities, not because they are inherently enjoyable, but because they would be instrumental in achieving a chosen objective in life, or one can comply to do something because one wants to "avoid sanctions" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p.60). Central to this argumentation is that extrinsic motivation may differ vastly in the *extent* to which it is autonomous. Five regulatory styles of motivated behaviour are identified, dependent on the extent to which the behaviour is autonomous, that is, either more internally or externally controlled.

Amotivated behaviour (on the left side of row three in Figure 6) depicts a situation where individuals have no intention to act. This may be because they see no value in the activity or they do not experience any feeling of competence. This is followed (to the right) by four distinct types of externally regulated behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000;

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Ryan & Deci, 2000a). *External regulation* is the classic case where behaviour is not controlled by the individual, but where external factors like rewards, praise or fear of punishment regulate behaviour.

- *Introjected regulation* refers to behaviour that reflects some internal control and internalisation of value. The regulation is partly internalised, and the motivation stems from the avoidance of guilt or anxiety and pressure, or to enhance the ego (the pursuit of pride or worth). The behaviour is considered as the "right thing to do".

- *Identified regulation* includes a greater amount of internal control and autonomy. The value of the activity and goals pursued are self-endorsed and of personal importance.

- *Integrated regulation* results in behaviour that reflects high internal control. The reasons for engaging in the behaviour are closely aligned to personal values and goals and integrated with aspects of the self. This type of motivation is closely aligned to classic, internal motivation but, in this case, the activity is not engaged in because of inherent enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 73).

An important clarification, related to extrinsic motivation, is the impact of *rewards* on motivation. In motivation literature, a recurring conclusion is often that reward impacts intrinsic motivation negatively. However, Moran et al. (2012) argue that external reward, occurring in different degrees in individuals, will not impact negatively, provided that the behaviour is rather more autonomously motivated than control motivated. Schunk (2009, p. 391) supports this view for educational contexts: "Rewards can help develop skills, self-efficacy and interest when they are linked to one's actual performance and convey that one is making progress in learning" (cf. also Gambrell, 1996). He concludes that grades can function in the same way. As a form of feedback, it can be indicative of increased competence and can build self-efficacy and further intrinsic motivation. Grades can thus be utilised as informational events regarding competence and not as controlling events (Bergin & LaFave, 1998, p. 331; Cerasoli & Ford, 2014).

2.3.2.4 Implications for reading motivation and engagement

The theory of Self-Determination has much to offer to the study of reading motivation. Reading tasks can be pursued because of the enjoyment of the activity itself, or the

motivation can stem from desirable outcomes and educational value attached to reading. The Self-Determination theory indicates that the motivation to read would be facilitated by situations which are less externally regulated and where more opportunity for internal regulation is offered. As far as the locus of causality is concerned, a challenge in the reading classroom will be how to develop intrinsic motivation by fostering feelings of autonomy, for example, through offering choices in reading tasks or texts, and how to support students to be self-determined, to engage in behaviour out of free choice and not because of external pressure. As such, classrooms should support the basic human needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness. Different instructional approaches have been developed, based on the development of integrated, intrinsic and autonomous behaviour in reading (for example, De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste & Rosseel, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014).

Research quoted by Moran et al. (2012) indicates that academic achievement, perceived competence and a general sense of well-being are some of the positive impacts of autonomous, internalised motivation in education. Furthermore, Gurland and Glowacky (2011) posit that offering choice, as well as information on the importance and value regarding tasks, results in more self-determined motivation.

De Naeghel et al. (2012) conclude that, if children experience identified regulation, namely that reading is an activity of personal relevance, they would be more motivated to read. Identified reading motivation is autonomous in nature and a better option for building reading motivation. Additionally, regarding the satisfaction of needs, De Naeghel, Valcke, De Meyer, Warlop, Van Braak and Van Keer (2014) indicate the way in which the autonomy-supportive behaviour of teachers, as well as their investment in interpersonal relationships (thus enhancing feelings of relatedness), can build reading engagement among students of varying socio-economic conditions, especially for girls. Socialisation around books can build feelings of relatedness and competence.

The Self-Determination theory thus provides a way to approach reading motivation in a differentiated way, and can provide a foundation to develop and sustain reading motivation, also in reading-for-pleasure contexts. Creating opportunities to interact around texts may prove challenging in a situation like that of Namibia, where access to reading resources is not a given.

2.3.3   Motivation: Perspectives from the Expectancy Value theory

The Expectancy Value theory is concerned with the development and understanding of motivated behaviour by exploring ideas around the value one attaches to an activity and how feelings of competence affect motivation. The Expectancy Value theory was initially developed for explaining the behaviour of adolescents (Wigfield, 1994) and is, therefore, regarded as important for my study. As indicated in Chapter One, during adolescence, declines in achievement and motivation frequently occur. Closer examination of these issues benefits from using concepts from the Expectancy Value theory which explains how beliefs about competence to read and the value of reading tasks affect motivation and performance in reading.

The Expectancy Value theory has inspired many research projects on reading motivation and engagement (Boerma, Mol, & Jolles, 2015; Schiefele et al., 2012). As far as reading-for-pleasure contexts are concerned, Malloy et al. (2017) indicate how expectancy and value differ between individuals and how self-concept as a reader and value of reading can be measured with regards to the reading of fiction and non-fiction. The reading of fantasy fiction may be enjoyable for the same individual who is reluctant to read informational texts because the information in the text is not seen as valuable or useful. The roots of this theory can be traced to the Expectancy Value theory of achievement motivation, developed by Atkinson in 1957 (Malloy & Gambrell, 2010; Schunk, 2009). A more contemporary view of this theory was refined by Eccles and Wigfield, as documented in Eccles and Wigfield (2002), Wigfield (1994) and Wigfield and Eccles (2000).

The Expectancy Value theory broadly postulates that motivational acts (described as the willingness, choice and persistence to engage in achievement behaviour), and the resulting performance or achievement, hinge on two broad factors:

- The individual's expectancy of success in a task; the degree to which a person believes that he or she will be successful in a venture;
- The degree of value that the individual attributes to the task or the activity and the value of completing the task successfully (Green, 2002; Malloy & Gambrell, 2010; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010).

Individuals are motivated to act if they regard an outcome as attainable, which in turn impacts performance and achievement. Thus, expectancies and values are assumed

to be influenced by task-specific beliefs or perceptions about competence, task difficulty, individual goals and self-schema (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 118).

In the Expectancy Value theory, one can, furthermore, distinguish between competency beliefs (or ability beliefs) which are "broad beliefs about competence in a given domain" and expectancy beliefs which are conceptualised as more specific beliefs or expectancies regarding success in an upcoming task. According to this theory, the perception of task attainability, of doing well in a task, is more important than the real difficulty of the task (Schunk, 2009, p. 363). (This concept of individual perception of doing well or achieving success resembles the construct of self-efficacy as developed by Bandura).

Subjective task value refers to the individual's reason for engaging in a task or "how a task meets different needs of individuals" (Wigfield, 1994, p. 52). Eccles and Wigfield (2002) outline four components of subjective task value:

Attainment value: the personal importance of being successful in a task, for example, because it offers the opportunity to fulfil a need (Schunk, 2009). Attainment value is, furthermore, "linked to the relevance of engaging in a task for confirming or disconfirming salient aspects of one's self schema" (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 120). Tasks thus can provide "opportunity to demonstrate aspects of one's actual or ideal self-schema, such as masculinity, femininity, and/or competence in various domains" (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 120).

Intrinsic value: the inherent value attributed to the task (also referred to as personal or interest value), for example, the inherent enjoyment of performing the task. Intrinsic value links to the concept of intrinsic motivation as developed by Deci and Ryan, as well as the constructs of "interest" and "flow" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 260).

Utility value: the usefulness of the task, for example, the necessity of a task and how it relates to the attainment of a future goal. Utility value thus motivates – even if the task at hand is not interesting. This concept is related to extrinsic motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Malloy & Gambrell, 2010; Schunk, 2009).

Cost belief: the negative aspects of engaging in a task, for example, what the individual has to sacrifice if opting to engage in a task, and includes aspects of anxiety caused by fear of failure, effort and lost opportunities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield, 1994).

The contemporary model of Expectancy Value, furthermore, recognises the social influences of culture, the environment and personal history (past experiences and affective memories), as well as other achievement-related beliefs (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). These beliefs are affected by other people's attitudes to, and expectations of, the individual (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010). While the model clearly proposes causal links among goals, beliefs, values and expectancies, it also postulates that relationships differ across domains and with age. In educational contexts, research has been especially focused on the domains of reading and mathematics (for instance, Butz & Usher, 2015).

Research developed from this theory indicates that even young children can distinguish between competence beliefs (expectancies of success) and subjective values to some extent. The perceived value of an activity will predict the child's choice to continue or abandon an activity (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield, 1994).

Reading is a complex activity, and success depends on the effort a beginning reader is willing to exert, but the same applies to the older reader of more challenging texts. In terms of the Expectancy Value theory, the reader must value the act of reading and also be confident of some success (comprehension of a text) in order to engage willingly in the act of reading or other literacy activities. In Namibia, similar to other African contexts (Hungi & Thuku, 2010; Lee & Zuze, 2011; Wagner, 2017), the utility and educational value of reading (also by significant others) will possibly be important and reading could be seen as a way to attain life goals.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the theoretical foundations of the project were discussed. These theories of reading comprehension, engagement and motivation were chosen to contribute towards the understanding of the overall research question regarding the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent, primary school learners in Namibia.

Reading involves the understanding, but also the active engagement with, a variety of texts to develop knowledge in order to make sense of the world and to achieve important goals in life. Reading comprehension involves factors of reader, text and activity and takes place in a specific context.

Reading comprehension is influenced by factors of motivation and engagement. Readers can be developed through a focus on their need for competence, relatedness and autonomy. Motivation to engage in activities can be external or internal. Although internal motivation can be regarded as the prototype of all motivation, external motivation can also influence activities because of the attraction to the goals to be achieved. Behaviour is also affected by expectancies of success, as well as the value of the activity.

Motivation is crucial for the development of engaged readers. However, true engagement can only be achieved through the interaction of the complex dimensions of motivation with employing cognitive strategy use and in socially motivated situations.

3 Methodological Considerations

3.1 Introduction

Duke and Mallette (2011) conclude their publication on methods in literacy research with important messages for literacy researchers. Two of these messages deal with the fact that a variety of research methods is required to respond to the complex challenges of studying literacy. They advise that "synergy across research methodologies" (p. 469) should be pursued, because of the unique contributions that can be made to specific topics in this way. Similarly, Smith (2006), and also Florio-Ruane (2008), argue for the use of "multiple methods" in education, because research has not been able to address all challenges faced in education by adopting "single design" approaches alone (Smith, 2006, p. 458). As far as reading research specifically is concerned, Schiefele et al. (2012, p. 459) indicate the need for the adoption of more than one research approach. They argue that there is, for example, a need to validate the quantitative results from self-report instruments with alternative, behaviour-based methods, such as parent and teacher reports, as well as student diaries.

The topic of reading motivation research in a Namibian context can be seen as complex and multifaceted, requiring more than one approach to describe and explore the field, as well as to demonstrate what could be learned from innovations aimed at enhancing reading for pleasure in Namibian schools. The integration of various methods of data collection in a mixed methods design was thus seen as an appropriate choice to answer my research questions. I aimed at developing a design that would give *flexibility* to explore a terrain not previously researched in Namibia. The design should also allow in follow up phases for the possibility of delving deeper into some of the findings and to integrate findings from multiple sources of data.

3.2 Mixed research

Both qualitative and quantitative research have inherent strengths and weaknesses. While quantitative approaches attempt to reveal "truths about the social world", qualitative approaches "have the goal of subjective understanding" (Hesse-Biber, 2010, pp. 49-50). Onwuegbuzie and Mallette (2011, p. 302) point out that quantitative

research cannot explain the why and how in research adequately, while qualitative findings are seldom generalisable to larger populations. Employing the strengths of both these approaches in an integrated design allows for the triangulation and validation of findings.

The combination of more than one method is referred to as mixed methods, multiple methods or mixed research. 'Multiple methods' refers to the use of more than one method or research instrument of similar type, for example, two or more quantitative instruments in a quantitative research design, while 'mixed methods' refers to the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick, 2009, p. 29-30; Smith, 2006, p. 459; Yin, 2012, p. 65; Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3). Referring to the definition developed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 22) describe a mixed approach to research as involving the "collecting, analyzing, and interpreting [of] quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon."

According to Cohen et al. (2011), mixed research should be regarded as a separate third paradigm (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 21) to address complex research problems. I regard the term "mixed research" as useful to describe the approach adopted in my project. Through mixed research, a phenomenon can be studied from varying perspectives and, by asking a variety of questions, this approach can enhance the quality of research. Onwuegbuzie and Mallette (2011, pp. 303-309) caution that this approach concerns more than just the mixing of methods. Mixed research draws from multiple approaches in all stages of a research process (formulation, planning and implementation, cf. p. 309), and is sensitive to "local and socio-political realities, resources and needs". This last point reflects an important consideration, when dealing with research located in Namibia, because of the country's unique demographic diversity, the vast discrepancies between rich and poor and the impact of poverty on communities.

Some researchers regard mixed research as "messy" and controversial, largely because of the effort of bringing together different paradigmatic assumptions (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p. 116; Smith, 2006, pp. 459-461). Normally, quantitative approaches are associated with a positivist paradigm (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 23), based on the belief in scientific objectivity and the establishing of truth, while qualitative (interpretative) approaches are associated with humanistic epistemologies, based on

a view that all research is inherently subjective, representing one of several views of the "truth".

According to Johnson and Christenson (2013, p. 468), mixed research often adopts a pragmatist philosophy. A pragmatic world view holds that there is space to move between opposing world views, "that there are multiple views of both truth and reality, sometimes subjective and sometimes objective, sometimes scientific and sometimes humanistic" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 23). It embraces methodological "pluralism" (p. 23) and focuses on the similarities of quantitative and qualitative approaches with regards to the gathering and analysing of data, as well as formulating and explaining research results. A mixed approach is thus frequently found in *all* steps of such research projects. Johnson and Christenson (2013, pp. 468-469) call this approach "dialectical pragmatism", explaining that it is focused on employing "multiple paradigms and interdisciplinary perspectives". However, it is not an approach of "anything goes", since it requires a careful combination and integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches and results, aiming at a more comprehensive view of the object of study.

David Plowright furthers the argument for a third paradigm of research and, in rethinking approaches to educational and social research, rejects the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods (Plowright, 2011). He proposes that an integrated framework for research be adopted, where integration means "to combine and structure the different elements of the process into a unified, coherent whole" (pp. 3-4). No element is seen as more important than another. Regarding the question of philosophical positioning, Plowright argues that an integrated framework allows and encourages "a more responsive, flexible and open-minded attitude", where the research question will lead to logical choices for participants, as well as data collection methods and analysis (Plowright, 2011, p. 7).

3.3 The mixed research design employed in the study

Even though Plowright does not stress the distinction, mixed designs are commonly described based on two criteria, namely whether the quantitative and qualitative approaches have equal weight and whether the phases or sub-studies take place simultaneously or sequentially.

As presented in Chapter One, this mixed research study was divided into three phases. It took place from 2012 to 2018; it can be described as both exploratory and descriptive and followed mainly the principles of a sequential, mixed design (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 25; Onwuegbuzie & Mallette, 2011, p. 313). Phase One was mainly quantitative and Phase Three mainly qualitative (see Figure 7):

Figure 7: Design of the different phases

| Phase 1 | QUANT+qual | Phase 2 | QUANT | Phase 3 | QUAL+quant |

The first descriptive and exploratory phase broadly mapped the Namibian context in terms of reading opportunities and preferences of primary school learners. This was followed by a correlational study of the reading motivation, activities and achievements of primary school readers. The final phase documented learners' views on an action research project where a reading programme was developed and implemented. The phases followed chronologically and one phase determined the approach and the population of the subsequent phase. Phases One and Three demonstrated elements of a parallel (concurrent) design, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously and where different types of data complemented one another. This phase were employed for triangulation purposes (Boeije, 2012, p.158; Cohen et al., 2011, p. 25). Phase Two was mainly quantitative in nature, and focused on exploring relationships between the variables. Each phase of the study culminated in a research article.

The following table gives an overview of the research methodology of the project.

Table 2: Overview of research design

What are the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent primary school learners in Namibia?			
Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Article number	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
Article Title	Tötemeyer, A-J., Kirchner, E., & Alexander, S. (2015). The reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian children. *Mousaion, 33*(2).	Kirchner, E., & Mostert, M. L. (2017). Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers. *Cogent Education, 4(1).*	Kirchner, E. (unpublished). "Sitting there - cool and reading": Results of a reading-for-pleasure programme with Grade Seven Namibian learners.
Research questions	What is the overall situation regarding reading and reading preferences amongst Grade Six learners in Namibia? What is the home and school environment like? Do Namibian children read for pleasure, and what do they read? What factors influence their behaviour? Are there significant differences in the reading behaviour of rural and urban learners, and between learners from	What is the nature of reading motivation and reading activity amongst urban, Grade Seven, Namibian learners who have adequate reading skills in English as a second language? What are the relationships between reading motivation, reading activity and reading achievement amongst these learners, and to what extent do these variables differ between boys and girls?	How do pre-adolescent, Grade Seven, urban learners in Namibia view the provision of reading-for-pleasure opportunities in an action-based research project?

	well-, reasonably and poorly resourced schools?		
Method	Mixed research: Quantitative, qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Research: Action research and practitioner inquiry Qualitative, Quantitative
Sample/Participants	1402 Grade Six learners and 88 teachers from 36 schools in seven regions	402 Grade Seven learners from six urban schools in one region	48 Grade Seven learners from one urban school and one language teacher from one region
Sampling measures/methods	Area; linguistic; demographic; quota; stratified; judgement; convenience	Strategic, criterion, random	Convenience
Data	Quantitative descriptive data from questionnaires; Transcriptions of interviews; Narrative report from researchers (documenting observations and photos)	Quantitative data from questionnaires and standardised achievement test	Transcriptions of interviews; Numerical data from questionnaire; Journal entries and posters; Reflective notes and programme description from researcher
Data Analysis	Quantitative analysis of questionnaires (using SPSS); Qualitative manual analysis of interviews	Quantitative analysis of questionnaires (using SPSS)	Qualitative, manual analysis of interviews and questionnaires; Quantitative analysis of questionnaire
Quality issues: Reliability and validity assurances	Triangulation with other data sources; Pre- and post-pilot testing of questionnaires; Pilot study; Sampling; Anonymity	Reliability measures Internal consistency (via Cronbach's alfa); Pilot testing; Anonymity	Pilot of interview protocol; Triangulation within instruments; Documentation of action research process

3.4 Population, sample and sampling measures

The population of the study can be regarded as upper primary school learners of Namibia. In Phase One, the sample was taken from Grade Six learners (normally aged between 10 and 12 years), as it was argued that this would enable the comparison of findings with SACMEQ results in reading achievement, which is also conducted with Grade Six learners. For Phases Two and Three, it was decided to extend the study to Grade Seven learners (normally 12 to 14 year olds), as these pre-adolescents participated annually in the Namibian National Standardised Achievement Test (SAT) and, possibly, also had better English language skills (see Articles One and Two for broader motivation). The sample, as well as the sampling methods employed in each of the three phases, differed in accordance with the research questions.

For Phase One rigorous, unbiased and representative sampling (Muijs, 2011, p.33) was important for population validity (Article One, p. 9). The aim was to compile a fairly large sample, carefully planned to include the relevant characteristics of the larger population of Namibian Sixth Graders to be able to generalise the findings. This was possible as, for this phase, the University of Namibia (UNAM) funded the field trips of myself and my co-researcher from the university. Although I was appointed as the principal researcher, throughout the study I had the cooperation of two other researchers (a colleague from UNAM and a research fellow from the University of South Africa (UNISA), who was also the chairperson of the Namibian Children's Book Forum) to plan and execute the research. In line with a mixed design, various sampling methods were applied to support validity. We accounted for the geographical, linguistic and demographic diversity of the Namibian school and general population, as well as accommodated some practical considerations. As indicated in Table 2, geographical, linguistic, demographic, quota, stratified, judgement and convenience sampling were employed. Seven of the 13 (as the situation was when the project started in 2012) regions from northern, central southern and eastern Namibia were included in the study. Adequate numbers of speakers of the main languages of each region (these languages were also offered as school subjects) were included. Similar to the demographics of Namibia, more rural than urban schools were selected. Three strata of schools were included: well-

resourced, reasonably resourced and poorly resourced. Two hundred learners from three to five schools per region were included, totalling 1402 learners from 36 schools, as well as 88 teachers (teaching different languages and managing the school library). The researchers employed judgement sampling, in collaboration with regional directors, to decide on the initial selection of schools representing the different strata. The remoteness of some schools, and the vast distances that had to be travelled, resulted in convenience sampling also playing a role in the selection. (More details can be found in Article One.)

In Phase Two, the specific population was less diverse and narrowed to learners who, due to language proficiency and access to reading resources, could be regarded as adequate readers (as opposed to learners who struggled to read in the language of schooling). The Phase Two learners were sampled from Grade Seven urban schools in the Khomas region, a region in the central part of Namibia. Strategic/criterion-based and random sampling methods were employed. A strategic list of reasonably resourced, well-performing schools, according to SAT results, were compiled, from which 6 schools (402 participants) were randomly selected. For convenience and practical purposes, full class groups were utilised. No efforts were made to control language and gender in this phase, and the results were not intended as generisable beyond similar populations in other regions. The Khomas (and also Erongo) region can be seen as demographically and economically somewhat different from other regions. The Khomas region is largely urbanised (97% compared to the 43% average) with a higher employment percentage than the rest of Namibia (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2011). Oshiwambo languages, Afrikaans, Khoekhoehowab and Otjiherero are widely spoken, and the majority of these mainly urban inhabitants are possibly far more exposed to English than those in the rest of Namibia.

Phase Three was an action-based project where the researcher acted as teacher in a self-designed, reading-for-pleasure programme which aimed at changing the content of school hours allocated to reading. This phase evolved sequentially from Phase Two. A full group (48) of Grade Seven learners of one urban school from Phase Two was conveniently selected and, in line with this type of qualitative design, no attempts at further sampling occurred. This group represented only themselves, and no quantitative generalisation to other schools and regions is possible.

Decreasing the sample size in each phase of the research allowed me to study the population from different angles and to obtain richer data.

3.5   Data collection instruments

3.5.1   Selection of instruments

The main focus of the study across all three phases was to explore the views of Grade Six and Seven learner-participants regarding issues of reading and motivation. As far as possible, data were gathered directly from child-participants, although other sources of data were also utilised (observations, documents and interviews with teachers). As indicated in Table 3 (see section 3.6), the data collection instruments were categorised according to three main types: asking questions, carrying out observations and undertaking artefact analysis (Plowright, 2011, pp. 54-62). All instruments are appended in a separate document as Appendices 1 - 9.

3.5.2   Asking questions

Asking questions, by means of questionnaires and focus group interviews, was the main instrument of data collection in all phases of the research. Self-administered questionnaires (where learners completed a printed document at their own pace and without the intervention of an interviewer) were the most structured instrument across all three phases.

The instruments for asking questions (the questionnaires and interview protocols) in Phases One and Three were entirely newly designed and developed. In Phase Two, existing instruments were utilised, and in the case of the Reading Activity Inventory (RAI) and Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), the instruments were extended and adapted. In this section the development of learner questionnaires and focus group interview protocols will be discussed in detail to demonstrate how issues regarding validity and, where appropriate, reliability were addressed to contribute to credible results or warrantable conclusions (Cohen, et al., 2011; Plowright, 2011, 138).

These instruments were thus structured across the phases as follows:

Phase 1: Learner Questionnaire, Part One

       Learner Questionnaire, Part Two (separate questionnaires for story readers and general readers)

       Teacher questionnaire

       Semi-structured group interview guide

Phase 2: Reading activity inventory (RAI)

       Motivation for Reading questionnaire (MRQ)

       Namibian National Standardised Achievement Test (SAT)

Phase 3: Semi-structured, focus group, interview protocol

       Programme Evaluation Questionnaire

       Unstructured interview with teacher

The Namibian National Standardised Achievement Test (SAT) is a standardised Namibian instrument, testing reading and language, and was employed in Phase Two with permission from the Ministry of Art, Education and Culture.

3.5.2.1 Development of questionnaires:

Bell (2007) argues that carefully constructed questionnaires can be administered effectively to children from the age of seven. Employing questionnaires with young children is a fairly recent development. The practice has previously been to let adults speak "for" children, or to rely solely on qualitative instruments like observations and interviews. Bell states that:

> While qualitative research can produce extremely valuable results, the collection of quantitative data from children themselves seems an important expression of the modern western perception of them as social and economic actors in their own right, with their own unique perspectives on their social worlds. Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence that children are able to provide more reliable information about themselves with respect to a range of issues even than adults who know them well (Bell, 2007, p. 461).

In compiling questionnaires for Namibian children to be answered in English, issues of item writing, scales and language needed careful consideration in order for the data to be valid. During Phase One I, together with my co-researchers, spent substantial

time on the development of the questionnaires. As documented in Tötemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2014), three versions of the learner questionnaire were developed and tested before we embarked on a pilot study. The main challenges to reliability and validity were social desirability, as well as the initial complexity of the questionnaire design and issues of language (see section 3.8). After the pilot study, the questionnaire was repeatedly tested to arrive at a final format (a ninth version). While this was very time consuming, the lessons learnt during Phase One had a positive impact on the development of instruments during subsequent phases.

Because of the size of the sample in Phase One, it was important to ensure that responses could be fairly easily converted into quantifiable data. Open questions, as well as questions which required complex ranking and simple yes/no answers, were all considered (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 381).

During the testing of the different versions, we realised that we had to balance the amount of reading, writing and the complexity of the questions and instructions. Simplicity of design and language seemed to be the key to designing good questionnaires for children and for second language learners. Advice from existing research also was to keep to short questions comprising straightforward syntax (Bell, 2007 p. 462; Cohen et al., 2011, p. 397). For the child-participant to understand what is expected, and for the compiler to formulate the question in a clear and unambiguous way, only very simple items were employed in Phase One. More complex items proved beyond the comprehension level of rural, Grade Six learners. For example, we found that participants would rather leave out questions if they had to write long explanations (for example, answering questions like *Do you like reading? Motivate your answer*). During the pretesting phase and the pilot study, it also became evident that especially the Grade Six, *rural* participants found it challenging to rate or rank responses and, therefore, this type of item was kept to a minimum. Participants tended to tick an option randomly even if they had not understood the question. Throughout, we strove to make use of examples that did not rely on the knowledge of foreign cultural practices, but were considered relevant to the specific world of the respondents. The sample question in Figure 8 illustrates this.

Figure 8: Example of questionnaire item

Mark with an X the 4 kinds of stories you like to read MOST.

Bible stories, e.g. Noah and the ark; birth of Jesus	
Love stories	
Animal stories, e.g. pets; wild animals	
Magic stories, e.g. monsters; talking pots	
Family stories	
School stories	
Adventure stories	
Stories about long ago	
Sports stories	
Stories with facts/information	
Fill in any other kind of stories you like to read about	

Although the questionnaire was in English, during the pilot study we allowed for response in either the mother tongue or English. Very few learners (less than 6%) opted to write in their mother tongues during the pilot study, and thus the quality of the data did not really increase markedly. It was our conclusion that this type of accommodation did not make data collection more valid in this context and, therefore, we decided to abandon it in subsequent phases.

During the pilot study, especially in the rural areas, we had reason to believe that social desirability strongly influenced results. This phenomenon refers to "the tendency to deny socially undesirable traits and to claim socially desirable ones, and the tendency to say things which place the speaker in a favourable light" (Nederhof, 1985, p. 264). The participants strove to portray themselves as learners who read a great deal, visited the library often and had positive attitudes to reading, while living under conditions which made the development of these reading habits quite unlikely. Social desirability was curbed by removing information from the questionnaire that biased their responses and also by adding distractor questions. The first part of the questionnaire was employed to determine whether learners could be regarded as out-of-school readers or not, and only the questionnaires of those who characterised themselves as out-of-school "readers" were further analysed. Social desirability was thus subsequently minimised in the results of Part One of the questionnaire (see section 3.8).

After this rigorous process, the research team regarded our instruments as valid and reliable. Statistical tests were not conducted, mainly because it was argued that the questionnaire tested various, unrelated constructs regarding reading preferences and access to resources.

During Phase Two, two of the three instruments (the MRQ and RAI) were adapted versions of existing instruments employed by Guthrie, McGough and Wigfield (1994), Wang and Guthrie (2004), as well as Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). Because our data were to be gathered in a multicultural and multilingual community and were based on lessons learnt from Phase One, similar accommodations for the RAI and MRQ were considered for the African, second language speakers of English who were to be studied in this phase. Two main differences in terms of the sample of Phases One and Two had a major influence on questionnaire development. In Phase Two, learners were selected from *urban* schools in the Khomas region only. These learners were *older* (in Grade Seven), and their understanding of English was far better than that of the participants in Phase One. Some items of the MRQ were adapted slightly or substituted to ensure that learners from Namibia would be able to understand them in terms of complexity of language and context. For instance, the item, *If I am reading about an interesting topic, I sometimes lose track of time,* was simplified to *When I read something interesting, I forget about the time*, and *I like having my parents often tell me what a good job I am doing in reading* to *I like to be praised when I read.*

The RAI was based on the structure of the Guthrie instrument, but the items were compiled based on the specific aims and context of the study. To facilitate understanding, the format of all questions was the same (a Likert scale with four options and, for the RAI, preceded by a Yes/No question). These instruments were pilot tested with four learners. Apart from answering the questionnaires, they were requested to explain in their own words what the different questions meant, and whether there were any items or words they did not understand well. During the pilot testing of these instruments, the participants had no difficulties with comprehension. Small adaptations were still made based on their suggestions. Internal consistency reliability of the final instruments was ascertained by utilising Cronbach's alfa (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 639).

In Phase Three, a questionnaire to evaluate the reading programme was developed to ensure that the views of all participants could be gathered. The questions

systematically asked their opinions on all aspects of the programme, and all items also followed the same structure. The closed questions were all of the Likert type.

3.5.2.2 Focus group interviews

In Phases One and Three, I had the option to interview a sample of learners individually or to make use of a group method and thus to include more learners. The latter route was taken, and interviews were conducted in focus groups. In the article based on Phase One, the term, *group interview*, was employed.

Essentially, a focus group interview involves "engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion […] 'focused' around a particular topic or set of issues" (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177 as cited by Onwuegbuzie, Dickenson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). Other sources stress the *expertise of the participants* (Merriam, 2009, p. 93) as defining. The latter interpretation is often found in market-related research and when consumer attitudes are sourced (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Both these aspects were relevant to the envisaged research: apart from focusing the discussion on a specific area, capturing the opinions and attitudes of a variety of participants was also essential. In the context of the project, the opinions and expression of learner attitudes were treated as authentic voices of a community of experts.

Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 150) furthermore, characterise the focus group approach as having a non-directive style of interviewing, the prime concern being to "*encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topic* in focus". The aim of the focus group in this context was thus *not* to create a consensus opinion, but rather to gather various opinions and experiences, resulting in thick data.

Utilising groups for data gathering has obvious advantages (Cohen et al., 2011; Flick, 2009; Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins, & Popjoy, 1998; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). It is less costly and relatively easy to organise in a school setting where access has already been achieved. Given time constraints, the opinions of more respondents could be sought in a shorter time. However, the main motivation for considering utilising group interviewing in this study had to do with the unique insights this form of interviewing could add to the outcomes. The group is a natural, social format for adolescents – far more natural than a structured interview alone with an adult. Ideally, a group interview allows for more normal interaction, the airing of views and a freer discussion of issues. The group dynamics that develop as a result had the added advantage of evoking

spontaneous, deeper and richer responses because of stimulating statements by group members. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 900), furthermore, refer to the mobilising of the "collective energy" of the group that "generate[s] all kinds and amounts of data that are often difficult, if not impossible, to generate through individual interviews and even observations."

Involving learners to express their views on decisions regarding their education, as proposed by Wagner (2017), is not overtly present in the Namibian educational context. Apart from participating in classroom activities and influencing the topic or outcome of a small unit of learning, they are normally the receivers of a curriculum developed by powerful adult experts. In this regard, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 904) indicate that making use of focus groups can "decenter" the role of the researcher and facilitate the democratisation of the research process. In Phase Three, Namibian learners were afforded this opportunity. In the educational arena, focus groups have been utilised to give voice to individuals and groups in various, oppressed contexts. Referring to the work of Freire and Kozol, Kamberelis and Dimitradis (2005, pp. 889, 897 and 903) indicate that 'focus groups' has emerged as a space for a pedagogy of social justice. Similarly, I argued that members of these groups should be regarded as active participants whose input can work towards an agenda of change regarding the provision of reading for pleasure in Namibia. The focus group creates energy and a context where participants can support one another and deliberate in an open way, without the fear and intimidation they might experience in a session alone with an interviewer (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, pp. 889, 897 and 903). Interviewing Namibian children in *groups* was regarded as useful as it encouraged interaction between these young participants, instead of answering an interviewer in the shortest possible way (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 433).

3.5.2.3 Influence of language and culture

On top of the general sensitivities when interacting with children, dealing with issues of culture and language in the Namibian context required further careful consideration. In the rural areas, there is far less diversity in classrooms and teachers and learners often share similar cultures and mother tongues. The fact that the researchers were two white women proved to be quite challenging during Phase One while visiting the rural areas. Our presence in schools could not be regarded as normal. Although we

were introduced by the principal and a teacher frequently accompanied us, shyness was a challenge in the data collection, especially in Phase One. We had to rely on assistance from the teachers to explain our presence in the mother tongues of the learners. However, we also had to consider that teachers could also encourage learners to "put their best foot forward" and thus also influence their responses. Therefore, whenever possible, we preferred to work alone with the children, and asked for assistance and translation only when real challenges occurred. These issues were taken into consideration in planning subsequent phases of the research. Cultural and language diversity is far more common in urban areas, especially in the Khomas region where data were gathered for Phase Two. In Phase Three, it was relatively easy to establish rapport with the learners and the teachers. Although there were no 'white' children in the particular school, learners made largely use of Afrikaans (the researcher's home language) in their social interactions. These learners could speak and understand both Afrikaans and English well. The researcher worked with the class for some weeks before the focus group interviews, and had built a relationship with the learners, as well as had a good sense of their language abilities. However, the imbalance of power in this adult-child relationship had to be taken into consideration. One advantage of group interviews with Namibian learners lay in the fact that it was less intimidating than one-on-one interviews. The interviewer strove to create a relaxed atmosphere, encouraging children to participate in spite of the presence of a grown up (Cohen et al., 2011) as described in Article Three and section 3.9.

3.5.3 Artefacts and observations

Secondary sources of data included documents, observations and field notes of the researcher, as well as journals and artefacts from learners. These additional data sources were mainly employed to triangulate results, but in Phase Three might be analysed in more depth for subsequent articles.

Artefacts included research reports, annual reports and official documents about the Namibian educational, resource and socio-economic situation that were employed to validate and frame our data. In Phase One, artefacts were utilised to compare the data obtained from teachers in schools, our own observations and from our quantitative analysis. An understanding of the development and influence of the

educational language policy and school curricula in Namibia was also crucial throughout. In Phase Three, additional artefacts that were collected and produced included learner journals and artwork. The journals were valuable as additional to views emerging from focus group interviews. Observation of learners' engagement and understanding could be made during the production of posters.

In Phases One and Three, the researcher and data collectors made use of field notes, reflections, recordings and photos to capture the observations made during data collection. Photos, field notes and recordings were mainly utilised to document the context and the activities, and also served as memory of observations made.

During Phase One, structured observations of the school and its surroundings were collected at every school and summarised on a standardised form. During the administration of the questionnaire, notes regarding the interaction with learners (whether they were confident to use English, whether an interpreter was necessary and how long it took to complete the questionnaire), were also taken. The researchers also recorded their observations regarding the availability of text books and other books in classroom collections and/or a library. The researchers, furthermore, made informal observational notes after a school had been visited, and commented on the overall behaviour of the learners, the facilities available and the attitude of learners and teachers to the research project. These observations were compared with the responses from the teachers' questionnaires.

In Phase Three, the researcher was also the teacher. As participant observer, she made continuous unstructured observations (Cohen et al., 2011, pp. 464-470) of learner behaviour and interaction during the intervention, as well as during the focus group interviews. This entailed jotting down impressions of events as they occurred and expanding on these notes afterwards. These observations added valuable information to the views expressed in discussions and interviews.

3.6   Data and data analysis

Table 3 gives an overview of the data gathered across the three phases.

Table 3: Data gathered across three phases

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
Data gathered via asking questions: Learner responses on questionnaires Teacher responses on questionnaires Transcriptions of audio taped, focus group interviews	*Data gathered via asking questions:* Learner responses on questionnaires (RAI and MRQ) English reading results from SAT	*Data gathered via asking questions:* Transcriptions of audio taped, focus group interviews Numerical data from programme evaluation questionnaire
Data gathered via observations: Field notes Narrative report from researchers (documenting observations and photos)		*Data gathered via observations:* Reflective notes from researcher (documenting participant observation)
Data gathered via artefacts: Official documents Photos		*Data gathered via artefacts:* Reading programme description from researcher Learners' journal entries Learners' posters about novel

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyse the data gathered by means of the quantitative instruments. In Phase One, the results for every item were calculated, and frequencies of responses obtained for each possible answer. The results of Part One of the questionnaire were employed to identify which learners could be regarded as readers. In Part Two, the responses of readers preferring fiction and those preferring non-fiction were calculated separately. The chi-square test of independence was applied to determine whether the responses to questions were related to the variables of area (rural and urban), resources of schools (poorly, reasonably and well-resourced) and gender.

In Phase Two, scores as obtained through the MRQ for the different dimensions of reading motivation, the higher order constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as

well as mean motivation scores, were calculated. The same was done for the RAI and mean scores for the reading of fiction and non-fiction, reading for pleasure and for academic purposes, as well as reading in print or digital formats, were calculated. Spearman's correlation was utilised to determine whether there were significant relationships/correlations between reading activity, reading motivation and reading achievement. In Phase Three, only simple descriptive statistics and percentages were employed to present the questionnaire data.

In Phases One and Three, focus group interviews were first transcribed and then analysed. Following the method of Boeije (2012, pp. 74-79), interviews were first analysed (fragmented) manually and codes assigned inductively: the transcribed data were colour coded and segmented. The interviews were reread several times and codes assigned to segmented pieces of text. During a second analysis, coded text was reassembled (structured) according to categories. During the third phase, some codes were merged and new codes assigned, and categories were assigned to a specific broad theme.

3.7   The action research design in Phase Three

In Phase Three, data were gathered during a two-month intervention at a school, during which a reading programme was implemented. The implementation followed the principles of an action research design. Action research, according to Burns (2009, p. 289), is the "interaction of two modes of activity – *action* and *research*". Action refers to the development and implementation of interventions in a societal context like a school or a classroom with the aim of affecting change or improvement. The research component, on the other hand, refers to the observation, analysis and description of the process (Burns, 2009, p. 290). The reading intervention brought a change in teaching practices; the aim was, furthermore, to bring about a change in learners' behaviour (increased motivation to read). Equally important was the aim of gathering and incorporating the views of the learners regarding the texts and activities introduced in the intervention. These views could be employed when developing future programmes – as part of the action research cycle (Cohen et al., 2011). By way of the journal entries, collaboration with participants (Burns, 1999, p. 31) occurred

throughout. Ideas and suggestions from learners were considered, and the programme adapted on a weekly basis.

Although important in all phases of the research, in Phase Three, the careful documentation of the process was regarded as a validation procedure (McNiff & Whitehead, 2008, p. 15). During Phase Three (the implementation of a reading programme), the researcher had to adopt a reflexive attitude (Cohen et al., 2011, p.359). I continuously had to be aware of my own possible bias in documenting the research. As teacher researcher, I was part of the research process, and had to remain conscious of the effect that my attitudes and values had had on the research process. I also had to be responsive to the needs of the participants, and thus made adjustments to the programme accordingly.

3.8   Credibility of research

In this section I discuss why my research process and conclusions can be considered as credible in terms of reliability and validity measures implemented. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 201) indicate that the term *reliability* is contested, and Plowright (2011) prefers the use of the term "warrantable research" (p. 138) with reference to the process of arriving at conclusions in a credible way. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 179) point out that validity should be addressed in various ways, ranging from the selection of the participants, their honesty, the quality of the instrument and the treatment of the data. As indicated in Table 3 (section 3.6), aspects of validity and reliability were considered in every phase of my project as my mixed research design called for an integrated view regarding quality and credibility.

Angrosino (2007, p. 58) indicates that " 'reliability' is a measure of the degree to which any given observation is consistent with a general pattern and not the result of random chance". Reliability in quantitative research thus has to do with the consistency of measurement and whether the results can be replicated (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 200).

Issues of reliability were considered during the development of the instruments of data collection in all three phases. As pointed out in section 3.5.2, in Phase One the initial questionnaires were pre-tested, implemented in a pilot study and, after amendments, tested again before data collection. In Phase Two, the instruments were developed from existing questionnaires. The original Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

(MRQ) has a history of high construct validity, and is based on well-researched dimensions and higher order constructs of motivation. For the Namibian context the adapted version was pilot-tested and further, statistical measures of internal consistency reliability (using Cronbach's alfa) employed.

The language of the questionnaires was English, and the amendments ensured that complexity of language as well as cultural and contextual factors would not affect the reliability of the measures. I thus had to reconsider the impact of employing complex English in a situation where, in many regions, learners struggled with the official language. In Phase One, the language as well as the structure of the questionnaire had to be extensively simplified. Though high in construct validity, adapting instruments from another continent led to particular challenges regarding (both validity and) reliability. Different accommodations in language testing (for instance, translation, simplifying language, and valuating items for expressions foreign to urban Namibian learners) were, therefore, considered in the development and pilot testing of the instruments.

To improve reliability in Phase Three, the developed interview protocols were discussed with experts in the field beforehand, and pilot tested in small groups. During the interviewing phases, the interviewers took care that the broad themes were addressed in all interviews, while probing questions and follow-ups could differ.

Validity has to do with the "truthfulness" of the answers to research questions (and refers to a judgement about the findings of the study and the "fidelity" of the research (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 181). In Phase One, the sampling design strove to allow for the generalisation of results, and population validity was deemed important. Different kinds of sampling measures were, therefore, employed. A serious threat to the validity of the data in Phase One had to do with social desirability (see 3.5.2.1). This aspect had to be extensively dealt with after the pilot study. Extensive adaptations to the questionnaire were, therefore, made. In all phases, our awareness of this fact assured the strengthening of communication to participants of the fact that their identities would not be revealed – that the ethical principle of anonymity would be respected. As researchers we had to consider the tension that arose between ethical and quality (or validity) considerations.

In all phases of the research and especially in Phase Three which was predominantly qualitative, validity was enhanced through the careful documentation of the research

process. In Phase Three, this involved the development and implementation of the reading programme, and included constant reflection on the process, as well as the data gathered. During focus group interviews, care was taken to include all participants and to avoid leading questions. Follow up questions were phrased carefully to limit researcher bias and contamination of data. All comments on the programme, positive and negative, were regarded as relevant.

In my dual role as teacher and researcher, my interaction with, and motivation of, learners did influence results – something that was inherent in the approach employed. Because the aim of the programme was to stress the value of reading and to enhance motivation and aspects of self-determination, these changes were evident in the findings as gathered from the interviews and questionnaire. However, as researcher, to assure valid or warrantable findings, I purposefully worked on bracketing my own feelings and values about my research topic to strive to let the authentic voices of participants be heard. During the programme implementation and interviews, I strove to react neutrally towards motivational stances that could be regarded as negative or amotivational but, as teacher, did provide individual, positive feedback in the journals. As researcher-participant, I thus strove to ensure that findings were trustworthy and not unduly influenced by my own personality, so that the true "voice" of the focus group would be audible.

In Phases One and Three, triangulation played an important role in validating the data. Triangulation can be described as the utilisation of "two or more methods of data collection", and the study of human behaviour "from more than one standpoint" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 195). The similarity of findings across different methods as described in Articles One and Three, as well as the impact of a sequential design, allowed me to present the findings with confidence.

Periodic reviews of recordings, transcriptions and codes employed, enhanced internal validity. Listening to the views of others regarding the data, for example, during doctoral workshops, furthermore, proved extremely valuable. Throughout the project, I strove to enhance validity by discussing and presenting preliminary data at teacher conferences. During the ensuing discussions, it was possible to audit my data by comparisons with teacher experiences. Throughout, though not in all respects, some similarities in my findings and those of teachers were found.

3.9 Ethical guidelines

Ethics has to do with both general, moral codes that people live by and specific ethical practices associated with a specific activity, such as educational research (Plowright, 2011, p. 150). Therefore, a researcher should be inherently ethical, and should be aware of the ethical and moral implications in the various stages of the research process.

In all three phases of my research project, care was taken to adhere to accepted ethical practices guiding research, as well as to the ethical provisions and conditions from the Data Protection Official at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) in Norway, as well as the University of Namibia (UNAM), as regulating body for employees of the institution. In all phases of my project, I had to obtain ethical clearance to conduct research in Namibia. Phase One was conducted as a cooperative venture between three institutions (UNAM, NCBF and UNISA), but our main funding agent, the University of Namibia (UNAM), assured ethical provisions. For Phases Two and Three, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN) had become my workplace, and I obtained ethical clearance through both INN and NSD, as well as UNAM, as I had to adhere to the ethical requirements of both Namibia and Norway. Confirmation letters of ethical clearance are included as Appendices 16, 17 and 18. As required, all permission letters were in place before the researcher commenced with data gathering (cf. Appendixes 10 – 15).

Permission to conduct research in Namibian schools was obtained on five levels: from traditional "gatekeepers" (national, regional, school, parental (guardian) levels, as well as from participants (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 79). The administrative and executive head of the Ministry of Education, the Permanent Secretary, gave permission for Phase One already in 2011. Further information was given and permission obtained from the regional directors of the seven regions, namely Khomas, Hardap, Omaheke, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango and Caprivi (the names of the last two regions have since changed) involved in Phase One of the research. Separate permission was obtained from the Regional Director of Khomas for Phases Two and Three of the research. In their responses, telephonically and in writing, regional directors took note of schools proposed for the research, but indicated that schools had the authority to withhold permission, should they regard the research as intrusive in the school

programme. This happened only in one case, where an alternative school had to be found.

The identity of learners targeted in the research, were regarded as confidential (Cresswell, 2003, p. 66; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 73). Questionnaires were safely stored in a lockable cupboard. Only in Phase Three were lists, linking learner names to numbers and pseudonyms across questionnaires, interviews and recordings, employed. As per NSD requirements, these lists were stored in a password-protected, separate file on the personal computer and the external hard drive of the researcher.

Consent was obtained from all schools to conduct research with learners and to interview teachers. During the first phase, it was problematic even to make contact with some schools due to their remoteness. In some cases only telephonic permission was possible prior to data gathering. Therefore, on arrival, an on-site meeting was held with the principal where the purpose of the research was again explained. For Phases Two and Three, it was possible to visit the school physically in advance and to discuss the nature of the research in detail. Permission was obtained in writing from all principals. In all cases, the principals agreed to obtain permission from parents and learners. During Phase One, principals consented on behalf of the community, as it was virtually impossible to obtain written permission from parents. They indicated that parents and learners were informed via normal school channels. For the other phases, consent from parents and learners was obtained in advance and in writing. The researcher also indicated willingness to explain the research to parents in additional meetings. This was not required.

Because of the intense nature of the research conducted in Phase Three, the school was visited and meetings with the principal and teachers held on more than one occasion. The researcher also held a separate meeting with the learner-participants for clarifications and explanations regarding consent. The protection of the identities of participants during this phase was quite complicated. The school management, the collaborating teachers, guest speakers, as well as all Grade Seven learners, were aware of the study, and might have spoken about the project. Though confidentiality will normally be guaranteed in reporting the research, this is not fully the case in the action research phase and in the actual focus group discussions (see Morgan, 1997, p. 3), since members of the group might report and disclose what an individual has said. The researcher took this into account when formulating the guiding and follow-

up questions during the different activities. Since the topic of reading motivation and engagement is not particularly sensitive, guarantees as to absolute confidentiality may not be a limitation in this case. However, I remained open to further, unforeseen, ethical issues (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 69). In Phase Three, for instance, the learners discussed how ridicule among adolescent peers affected their social interaction. Giving voice to a group of learners entails a responsibility that should not be evaded, and researchers face the challenge to decide "how best to stay close to children's voices, perspectives and original meanings while maintaining their right to confidentiality" (Rogers, Labadie, & Pole, 2016, p. 38).

Rogers et al. (2016) indicate that informed consent "hinges on three premises. First, participants will be given information about the research in an accessible manner. Second, their consent to participate in the research is voluntary. Third, the participant has the competence to give their consent" (Rogers et al., 2016, p.45). This entails that efforts should be made to present information about the research in ways accessible to child-participants. In my project, I opted to engage orally with children prior to data gathering. They were informed about the practical implications of the research: the time the intervention would take, as well as, during Phase Three, the expectation of participation in additional reading activities on a weekly basis and possible benefits of participation. It was stressed that the participation was voluntary, that participants could withdraw from the study at any time, even if parents had consented and that the identities of participants would be protected.

In Phase One, participants were sampled from Grade Six learners with lower language proficiency than initially expected (Tötemeyer, Kirchner, & Alexander, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, as already discussed, we went to great lengths to use simplified language (Burns, 1999, p. 73). In the case of remote rural areas, this also included the possibility of assistance from a Namibian language teacher who could interpret. In Phase Three, the participants were made aware that class discussions and focus group interviews would be recorded. This gave rise to additional, ethical considerations regarding anonymity, confidentiality and invasion of privacy.

Throughout my project I remained aware of the fact that consent from minors based on full understanding as ideal might not be readily achievable. Child-participants might be inhibited to withdraw or refuse consent, due to the fact that normally, they were not in a position to withdraw from school activities. As also alluded to in section

3.5.2.2, power relations did not work in favour of the child (Rogers et al., 2016, p. 47). They might not be able to cope with the fact that they had agreed to activities that they, in the course of the programme, became uncomfortable with. When dealing with children, a process of ongoing assent seems advisable (Cohen et al., 2011, p.81; Rogers et al., 2016, p. 54). Without seeming to encourage non-participation, as researcher, I tried to assure that learners felt comfortable to participate during all phases. In Phase Three, apologies for not attending and participating afternoon activities were accepted in an atmosphere of understanding.

Research is not value free, and in action research, the desired change that the researcher wanted to bring about, involved a set of values and perceptions (Kelly, 1989, p. 93), in this case, about reading as social practice and liberating activity. Consent from gatekeepers entails that they would share the values of the action research (one parent who had refused consent in Phase Three actually indicated that she could not endorse the value of the programme and that it was a waste of time).

While participants should understand the purpose of research, Kelly (1989, p.100) points out that this may jeopardise results. This was an issue we grappled with, particularly in Phase One. While informed consent was regarded as an important principle throughout, informing participants in detail about the research objectives, resulted in unusable results during the piloting of the questionnaire. The analysis of the pilot results revealed that the emphasis on the fact that *reading* habits were the objective of the study, resulted that participants gave information that would put them in a positive light regarding their reading. They gave information about visiting libraries and reading storybooks that could not be regarded as a probable reflection, seen against the background of their resource situation. Taking into account the principle of non-maleficence and heeding the warning against "deception", (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 85; 95), the researchers decided to discuss the aims of Part One of the questionnaire only broadly, and to refrain from using the word "reading" or images of books as recreation on the cover page of the questionnaire. Much less emphasis was placed on reading activities, and reading was included as one of several after school activities that learners could engage in. This decision was reached only after carefully considering the impact of an approach where the detailed purpose of the research was concealed to a certain extent. Full details regarding these and other challenges are documented in Kirchner et al. (2014) and Tötemeyer et al. (2014).

The ethical issues listed in Creswell (2013, p. 59) includes not only reporting positive results. In my project, I regarded this as particularly important. The above dilemma, as well as the process of developing and pilot testing the questionnaires in Phase One, is documented in a separate article (Tötemeyer et al., 2014) but not included in this thesis. Another example is the inclusion of a discussion of the challenges faced regarding the inclusion of digital modes of reading and participation in virtual discussion groups during Phase Three.

The reconsideration of ethical issues across the three phases of my study revealed a growth in my own conception of ethical issues. At the start of the process, I was mainly concerned with gaining access to research participants in schools. Gradually, in my interaction with participants, as well as with literature on research ethics, I realised that formal permission in research was only an initial step in being an ethical researcher. "As in all research involving humans, protection of the people involved in an interview study is a paramount responsibility of the researcher" (Brenner, 2006, p. 361). Ethical research entails a constant awareness of the impact research can have on all stakeholders and at all stages of the process. Research involving minors needs a special kind of awareness, as it requires a balance between "giving voice" and "providing protection" (Rogers et al., 2016).

As indicated, the diverse Namibian context and the fact that the participants were children had a marked impact on data collection.

3.10 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter an overview of the methodology was given. In an overall, mixed research design, each phase has its own combinations of sequential and concurrent designs. This allowed the researcher to approach the data from different angles. The researcher could, firstly, describe a sample as representative of a larger population and then zoom in and examine the phenomenon of reading motivation and engagement in detail.

The description of the research instruments clarified how issues of reliability and validity were dealt with and how the understandings of the researcher developed over the three phases. Ethical dilemmas in the different phases were also reflected upon.

4   Summary of the Articles

This chapter summarises the three articles included in the PhD: dissertation.

4.1   Article One: Summary

Tötemeyer, A-J., Kirchner, E., & Alexander, S. (2015). Reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian children. *Mousaion, 33*(2).

The aim of the article was to explore and describe various reading-related matters in Namibia. The article is based on a report of extensive collaborative research between the University of Namibia, the University of South Africa and the Namibian Children's Book Forum (Kirchner et al., 2014). It describes the methodology, findings and recommendations regarding the information and reader behaviour of Grade Six Namibian learners.

 The research questions were:

What is the overall situation regarding reading and reading preferences amongst Grade Six learners in Namibia?

What is the home and school environment like?

Do Namibian children read for pleasure, and what do they read?

What factors influence their behaviour?

Are there significant differences in the reading behaviour of rural and urban learners, and between learners from well-, reasonably and poorly resourced schools?

The research was undertaken in seven regions of Namibia, both rural and urban, and involved 1402 learners and 88 teachers. Data were collected by means of learner questionnaires, as well as focus group interviews. Teachers also completed a questionnaire, mainly about the resource situation in schools.

The first part of the article is devoted to a literature review regarding factors affecting reading in schools, and the general lack of articles about the readership of Namibian and African children has been pointed out. In Namibia, after the country's independence, language teachers seem to have been inadequately prepared for the change in language policy and the role of English as medium of instruction. The

English language proficiency of Namibian learners has been reported as generally poor. Furthermore, only very limited training for library teachers are provided, and the development of school libraries has not progressed well. The publishing industry in Namibia does not find it economically viable to publish in Namibian languages, leading to a lack of resources in Namibian, African languages.

The findings of the study correspond well, and add to information from the reviewed literature. As far as the the socio-economic situation, as well as the resource status in schools are concerned, the findings depict a landscape of deprivation. While the school library was indicated as the most important source of books, these libaries were understocked and poorly managed – mostly by untrained personnel. Less than a third of schools had had internet connectivity at the time of the research. School text books, supplemented by photocopied pages, were reported as the main sources of reading material, and classroom collections were virtually non-existent. Similar to findings from our literature review, reading material in the homes was found to be mostly lacking. Nearly 80% of schools reported that learners did not have access to reading material at home, and community libraries could be up to 20 km away from schools. Finally, 57% of the schools reported that the majority of learners did not have enough to eat, and that the parents were minimally involved in the school and assistance with homework of their children.

Part One of the learner questionnaire ascertained how many learners could be identified as readers who read for pleasure. A reader is here defined as a person who has some knowledge of the basic types of reading material available, who either spontaneously mentions reading for pleasure or chooses reading among different options as an after school activity. Learners could also indicate a preference for fiction or non-fiction. Our findings indicate that only 22.4% of the sample could be regarded as such readers, of which 18.8% identified themselves as readers of fiction and only 3.6% as readers of non-fiction. Given the socio-economic conditions of the average student as indicated by this study, these results are not surprising, and are possibly contributing to the challenges facing the students in the Namibian education system. Learners, however, indicated that reading, together with socialising with friends, takes up second most of their time (after homework, indicated as the activity on which most time was spent). Rural students and students from less well resourced schools produced fewer readers than urban and well-resourced schools.

Only the questionnaires of learners who could be regarded as "readers", according to the definition used in the project, were analysed further. These results, further corroborated by focus group interviews, indicate that these learners had positive perceptions of reading, and that they read mainly for instrumental and utility reasons. Posssibly due to the fact that material was mostly available in English, nearly all indicated that they read mostly in English after school, but nearly 70% of readers revealed that they had nothing to read and that a reason for not reading was because it was regarded as difficult. More readers from well-resourced schools regarded reading as a fun activity, while more rural readers experienced oral story telling as more fun, and they listened to the radio.

Finally, these Namibian readers indicated a preference for Bible stories, school stories and historical stories, and stated that they chose books based on the recommendation of teachers and peers.

Recommendations following from these findings are aimed at policy makers, and include the strengthening of reading proficiency, improving access to reading materials, training for school library managers and the provision of adequately trained language teachers. All recommendations hinge on the improvement of the general well-being and care of Namibian learners. The recognition of the role of reader motivation and engagement gave rise to further research that are reported in Articles Two and Three. The main findings of this study were reported in the local media, and also discussed with the Minister of Education of the time.

The University of Namibia (UNAM) was the main funding agent for the research project, and they appointed me as the principal researcher and first author of the main research report (Kirchner et al., 2014). I was fully involved in all aspects of the project, and had a leading role in the writing of the research report and the articles. The project was initiated by Prof. Tötemeyer. Because of her seniority and considerable experience, in this article she was indicated as first author. All authors have completed a co-author statement, included as Appendix 19.

4.2   Article Two: Summary

Kirchner, E., & Mostert, M. L. (2017). Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers. *Cogent Education, 4(1).*

Drawing from Article One, the first part of the second article gives a brief overview of the Namibian research context. It investigated the reader motivation of Namibian primary school learners, and discusses aspects of their reading activity, also in relation to reader achievement. With this article, the aim was to contribute further to new insights about reading motivation and reading activity, specifically from the African context.

The research questions were:

What is the nature of reading motivation and reading activity of urban, Grade Seven, Namibian learners who have adequate reading skills in English as a second language?

What are the relationships between reading motivation, reading activity and reading achievement amongst these learners, and to what extent do these variables differ between boys and girls?

The first part of the article gives background information regarding reading motivation and the influence of the Expectancy Value, as well as the Self-Determination theory, regarding the conceptualisation of the project (cf. Chapter Two). The choice and adaptation of the instruments of data collection of this quantitatative study were based on the research of Guthrie, Wigfield and colleagues who conceptualise reading motivation as multifaceted, comprising 11 different dimensions. The higher order categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were also discussed, with the first referring to the drive to engage in an activity because of the value attached or because of the results eminating from participating in an activity such as reading.

Following from lessons learnt in the first phase of the study (cf. Article One), for this second article, 402 slightly older Grade Seven learners were sampled, and important characteristics of pre-adolescent readers were pointed out. The readers included in our second study could be regarded as proficient, urban readers, more able to read and understand the official language. They possibly were also readers who were experiencing a decline in their intrinsic motivation to read, given the multiple leisure

activities available in which to engage, and their more realistic self concept regarding their efficacy as readers.

The Reading Activity Inventory (RAI), a self-report instrument, initially developed by Guthrie and colleagues, was adapted to include information on reading frequency, reading purpose and preferred mode of reading. Information could thus be collected about the frequency that readers read fiction and non-fiction for pleasure and/or for academic purposes, as well as whether they read mostly in digital or print formats. The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), widely used in research worldwide, was adapted for African children by considering aspects, such as length, language and cultural issues. This instrument was based on the 11 dimensions of motivation, and included self-efficacy, intrinsic-extrinsic motivation and learning goals. To be able to relate the results to reading achievement, a Namibian, standarised, English, achievement test (SAT) was also administered.

Separate sets of data were gathered for reading during the "past week", as well as about reading activities in general. Results indicated that, during a previous week, these urban and proficient readers had read more to satisfy their own interests than for school purposes, and had read more in print than in digital format. Mostly newspapers and stories were read, and more frequently for own purposes; consequently, the reading of other types of informational texts was low. While technology (internet or mobile phones) was engaged in almost half of the participants, its use seemed to be fairly restricted to social purposes only. General patterns of reading proved to be similar, and were all above the average midpoint. Participants read texts in traditional print mode more frequently than digital texts on cell phones or computers. Reading for pleasure (own purposes) had a higher score than reading for academic (school) purposes. Print text for pleasure was read most often, but the score for digital reading for pleasure was also fairly high.

These results indicate that, in the compilation of reading material and reading programmes, the reading frequency of fiction should be maintained by offering interesting texts to read. The low interest in non-fiction should be addressed. Newspapers are readily available and could be a valuable teacher resource. The growing awareness and use of digital modes of reading, including the use of the internet, should be further explored. These recommendations were taken up in Article Three.

As far as the the descriptive statistics of the MRQ are concerned, relatively high motivation levels for all dimensions were recorded, and the average motivation level was gauged at 3.24 (out of a possible 4). The most important dimensions of reading motivation with which these early adolescents identified, were curiosity about topics, the importance of reading and reading for grades. While texts should be selected based on the individual interests of learners, sharing information about the importance and value of reading to fulfil academic and career goals was also essential for these readers. These Namibian readers seemed to be slightly more intrinsically motivated to read, but the separate dimension scores are possibly more relevant in interpreting levels of motivation. Support of relevant intrinsically motivated behaviour and less emphasis on grades and competition should facilitate the improvement of reading competence in the long run. The relatively low importance of reading for social reasons is surprising, given the fact that current research indicates that the sharing of reading experiences is considered motivating and engaging. This finding needs to be followed up in future research.

In the final analysis, relationships between reading achievement, reading activity and reading motivation were investigated. Reading motivation correlated moderately with reading activity, and specifically (and stronger) with the reading of texts in traditional print format, texts read for pleasure and printed texts read for pleasure. Reading for pleasure also correlated separately with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While no statististically relevant correlations between reading activity and reading achievement were established, small, positive, statistically significant correlations between reading achievement and some dimensions of motivation were found. Different from some other research findings, the mean scores of boys and girls were very similar in terms of motivation, reading activity and achievement, with girls obtaining marginally higher scores.

In general, this article documents the high motivation levels of these urban, Namibian readers, different than results reported from other contexts. This may be the result of the high status of reading in the community, as well as the importance of reading for future academic success. These findings may not be generalisable to Namibian readers where reading levels are lower and where reading material is not as readily available as in this urban region. However, results confirm previous research that reading motivation is a strong, psychological variable which influences reading

achievement. The positive attitudes of these readers should urge stakeholders to reverse the inequalities, unequal opportunities and lack of access to resources that may still exist in Namibia.

This article was written under the guidance of one of my co-supervisors who is, therefore, indicated as second author. All data collection was my sole responsibility, and I was primarily responsible for all aspects of the research design and implementation. During the conceptualisation of the research project, as well as the design of the instruments, she made valuable suggestions. She also contributed to the improvement and revision of the article. Her statement of co-authorship is included as Appendix 20.

4.3   Article Three: Summary

Kirchner, E. (unpublished). "Sitting there – cool and reading": Results of a reading-for-pleasure programme with Grade Seven, Namibian learners.

In this article, the researcher strives to ascertain the views of learners about reading-for-pleasure activities developed for an urban Namibian school.

Research has shown that reading for pleasure has important motivational value, and has a marked impact on addressing socio-economic disadvantages affecting school achievement. This article explores the way in which a Namibian initiative to provide time in the school curriculum for reading activities could be developed into a practical reading programme. It reports on this process by describing the development of the reading programme and by documenting learner views on an action-inspired project, where the researcher adopted the role of both researcher and teacher.

The research question was:

How do pre-adolescent, Grade Seven, urban learners in Namibia view the provision of reading-for-pleasure opportunities in an action-based research project?

An eight-week, reading programme was developed, based on various principles derived from UK research (Cremin et al., 2014), as well as research grounded in the Self-Determination and Expectancy Value theories (Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Enabling physical and social classroom contexts that promote reading for pleasure were investigated, with a view of reading as part of a variety of literacy

practices that could include forms of reading not necessarily part of a curriculum. In this programme, feelings of competence and autonomy were developed by providing opportunities to self-select texts from a wide variety of reading resources. It aimed at building on the need for social interaction and relatedness by providing opportunities for free discussion around reading activities. Throughout the programme, the teacher-researcher attempted to model the joy and value of reading, also by being responsive to the emerging needs of the participants.

This programme was implemented with 48, Grade Seven learners of an adequately reading-resourced, urban, primary school in the capital of Namibia. The participants were all proficient readers, and spoke a variety of the Namibian languages as mother tongues. The primary sources of data included eight focus group interviews, as well as a questionnaire evaluating the reading programme which was completed by all participants. The transcribed interviews were analysed and coded according to emerging themes and categories while simple, descriptive data were obtained from the questionnaire.

Results from the reading programme evaluation questionnaire indicated that all aspects of the programme were appreciated. On average, 90 % of the learners indicated that they had found the programme enjoyable. Activities rated highest in the questionnaire by most readers were interacting with the teacher-researcher and the reading of multimodal books. The programme was regarded as successful and exciting, mainly because of the diversity of texts and activities. Independent reading and watching and discussing a film were positively rated, and learners seemed to prefer reading on their own rather than listening to texts being read aloud or reading the same novel as everybody else in the class. Learners recommended that in future programmes the technological component should be further developed.

During the analysis of the focus group interviews, categories of coded responses emerged across four broad themes: views of the reading programme and the activities included, views of the text types the learners appreciated, the motivating strategies employed in the programme and the opportunities to engage in digital, reading activities.

The mostly positive views of the reading programme centred on the time and place allowed for reading in the school day, as well as during the afternoon activities. The participants expressed appreciation for the variety of activities and the opportunities

to interact socially around texts. Learners spent much time discussing text types they found entertaining. They preferred fictional texts, and often referred to titles or topics they enjoyed reading. When prompted about choice, differing views about self-selecting texts versus texts being introduced by the teacher emerged. While there was agreement that both suggested readings and allowing self-selection were important, some preferred the instruction and monitoring by a teacher. In general, there was a strong focus on the educational value of reading throughout, and the merit of responding to texts in writing was further pointed out. Most learners agreed that grading in such a programme would be inappropriate, and that the activities included (like watching a film or meeting an author) were rewarding in itself. These early adolescents had varying views about recognition for reading, as well as about the impact of others' views of their reading proficiency.

Learners agreed that the sharing of views of reading experiences built understanding of texts and was motivating. Similar to Article Two, the social reasons for reading seemed complicated and reading ability was regarded as a personal matter. Lively discussions ensued from innovations involving reading on websites and response in digital format. Generally, learners commented that using digital devices was an exciting and motivating activity. Because of various challenges regarding access to cell phones and the equal participation of all group members, this part of the project could not be regarded as successful, but valuable lessons were learnt.

The 48 learners demonstrated similar patterns of reading activity, in the sense that some learners showed a preference for traditionally printed texts, and demonstrated less interest in informational texts. Some learners also regarded grading and assessment of activities as relevant. Social interactions around texts were not always regarded as motivating.

The Namibian (African) classroom context and learners' views of motivation may differ substantially from those investigated in other (American and European) contexts. It seems clear that the principles of the programme, where the classroom was flooded with a variety of texts and the inclusion of texts as a result of a wider concept of literacy, stimulated the rediscovery of the joy of reading. Providing time and space in the school gave much needed time for independent reading. The offering of choice and the non-competitive atmosphere coupled with social interaction around texts were positively viewed. These results should be interpreted against the fact that

results could have been influenced by the fact that the researcher was also the teacher, and that these proficient readers might have responded partly in a socially desirable manner. However, other researchers found similar positive attitudes about reading for pleasure.

The article concludes that, similar to other research findings, reading for pleasure is valuable in developing reader motivation. These small innovations may inspire other Namibian teachers to utilise the reading period as an opportunity to develop learner reading engagement and motivation through independent reading. The value of the study is situated in the contribution to the development of guidelines for similar programmes, as well as in the illustration of useful strategies for building a reading culture in schools. The study should also be recognised for the opportunity it afforded learners to influence teaching and learning, in a process where learner views were respected and regarded as important.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

With this final chapter, I aim to demonstrate the coherence of my research project across the three phases. Therefore, the chapter will commence with an integrated presentation of the key findings in relation to the overall research question. Apart from the findings and conclusions of each of the phases of the study, other contributions effected through the particular research design and theoretical framework will be considered. The implications and recommendations emanating from the research will then be discussed, as well as the contribution of the project to the specific research area and the teaching of reading, also in relation to the theories employed. This chapter will also reflect on limitations of the research and the influence the project had on the development of my research capacity and views. Some suggestions for future research will be made.

5.2 Main findings

As indicated in Chapter One, reading proficiency and literacy impact opportunities throughout life. Reference was made to the fact that PISA results show that adolescents who read a wide variety of texts, and who engage in reading for pleasure, seem to be better readers. Being motivated to read is considered to mitigate the effect of socio-economic status to a large extent (cf. section 1.2.2). It thus seems likely that developing engagement and motivation in Namibian readers may contribute to social change and the creation of better opportunities for children from deprived communities.

The main aim of this study was to contribute to the research on reading motivation and engagement by investigating the reading preferences, reading motivation and reading engagement of pre-adolescent primary school learners in Namibia. The findings can be related to aspects of the theoretical inspirations employed (and, therefore, my main findings will be presented against this background). The RAND model provided a valuable framework for the study (cf. section 2.2.2). Reading takes place in a particular context which can be supporting or challenging. Essential to the

reading comprehension process is the interaction of reader, text and activity against this context. Motivation and engagement are essential components of reading and reading comprehension, and affect the purpose of reading. In my research project, aspects of context, reader, text and reading activities in a Namibian reality, were thus investigated.

The contexts in which Namibian children from urban and rural, and from rich and poor backgrounds live, differ markedly. Because of this diversity of the Namibian educational and socio-economic context, broad generalisations about "Namibian readers" can only be made with the utmost caution. The cultural complexities in Namibia will, furthermore, always call for caution to generalise findings in the Namibian context.

I reported findings on different contextual levels – broadly Namibian – followed by zooming in on one region and, finally, on the views of readers in one classroom. While broad aspects of texts and readers in a country-wide context were investigated, the focus shifted to aspects of reading activity, motivation and achievement in one region. Finally, with reference to engagement approaches to reading, a small innovation on reading for pleasure was implemented, and learner views on selected classroom strategies and their influence on the participants' motivation for reading were investigated.

In Phase One, it was evident that findings about Namibian readers should be interpreted against an overall picture of resource deprivation, where schools had poorly resourced libraries, should these be present at all, where reading proficiency was low and where less than a third of schools could provide any form of internet connectivity to learners. Parents, normally seen as important in socialising children to become reading adults, could hardly be expected to buy books for children, when they were not always able to provide financially for their children (as was found in this study). Teachers, without proper support in terms of training and reading resources in appropriate languages, were also challenged to promote a culture of reading in schools.

In both Phases One and Three, the importance of an enabling context for reading was demonstrated. Resource-rich environments allowed learners to experience reading for pleasure and develop as readers who choose to read. In Phase Three, the influence of enabling classroom contexts was demonstrated. Time and space were

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allowed in the school for learners to engage in reading for pleasure. A classroom collection with a wide variety of books was made available, and various after-school activities, as well as opportunities for utilising mobile phones for reading, supported the reading activities. Students were allowed choices, and the teacher modelled and supported the value of reading. Nearly 90% of the learners indicated that they enjoyed the programme based on such a context.

The opportunities to engage in, and enjoy, reading for pleasure – as demonstrated in Phase Three – are still not available to the average Namibian child. As was found in Phase One, very few Namibian, pre-adolescents (22.4% as was indicated by this study) can be regarded as leisure time readers, based on participation in reading-related, literacy practices like visiting libraries and reading for pleasure. This should not necessarily be ascribed to a lack of interest in reading or low levels in motivation to read (as most research in other contexts show). This result is rather more related to the lack of opportunities and resources to develop as readers. More learners identified themselves as readers in urban and well-resourced communities, where reading levels were higher and where they had better access to material.

The low levels of English proficiency seem to have had an impact on results. In the rural areas, children found reading, in general, difficult and not always enjoyable. The high success of the reading programme in Phase Three was also the result of readers being confident to read in the language which was the medium of instruction in their school.

As far as gender differences in reading and motivation were concerned, my findings could be regarded as inconclusive when comparing the differences in results from Phases One and Two. While research normally finds differences between reading motivation and competence between boys and girls, no gender differences were found in Phase One, and very small differences in Phase Two. This could point to differences between Namibian readers and readers from other contexts, but more likely highlights a trend of more similarities between the reading habits of boys and girls. In this regard, a recent analysis on gender and reading motivation indicate that differences between boys and girls regarding reading achievement and motivation might be over-emphasised in past research (Phillips, Loerke, & Hayward, 2018).

When one considers preferred and suitable texts, Namibian readers, across all three phases, could express their text and reading preferences, and indicated their

enjoyment of adventure stories and stories about characters that they could identify with. Learners, who had opportunity and access to read for pleasure, were interested in a wide range of topics, themes, genres and elements, and could discuss these at length. The elaboration of this aspect provided in Phase Three is far more detailed (cf. Kirchner, unpublished). Their involvement with texts during the reading programme expanded their knowledge and experience, and – different from the other two phases – allowed them to mention specific titles that impacted on their enjoyment and motivation. Throughout all phases, a preference for fictional texts emerged and, in Phase Two, also for newspapers.

While Namibian readers indicated a preference for traditionally printed texts, results confirmed a growing interest in, and utilisation of, other formats and text types for reading, interacting and the sharing of information; these included the internet and mobile phones, as well as films.

Namibian adolescent life is affected by new literacies. The inclusion of such literacies should be considered in order to keep education relevant. It was evident in Phase Three that readers needed a wide range of texts to choose from. The flooding of the classroom with a wide variety of text types and topics influenced the reading activities and motivation of learners. The reading preferences and interests of readers should be taken into account in curriculum development, and the view of Namibian readers that multimodal and digital texts should be included in reading programmes and activities, is significant.

As far as the reading activities and purposes for reading were concerned, the results of Phase Two of the study, where the reading habits and preferences of the small group of readers were analysed, corroborated, but also added to, results from Phase One (cf. Kirchner & Mostert, 2017; Tötemeyer et al., 2015). Urban, Namibian readers read fairly frequently for pleasure. Less reading for academic purposes and a low preference for reading of informational (non-fictional) texts were evident across all phases of the study.

The mixed research approach highlighted aspects of reading activity, and reading motivation (which are both related to reading engagement), also in relation to reading achievement. It was evident that factors of context affected the reading behaviour to a large extent. Namibian, urban readers demonstrated above-average levels of reading activity. Phase Three, furthermore, demonstrated that providing sufficient

time and space for reading fostered positive attitudes. Data integrated from different sources indicate an emerging interest in the use of the internet and mobile phones for literacy activities – for both leisure and academic purposes.

Reciprocal relationships between reading motivation and reading activity were found. The reading of printed texts and the reading of fiction correlated significantly with reading motivation. Only modest relationships between some dimensions of reading motivation and reading achievement were evident from the quantitative results.

The readers who participated in the study were motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. They read for enjoyment, but also indicated that reading was important to improve language skills and knowledge, and valued reading as activity to achieve life goals. Namibian readers reported relatively high levels of reading motivation, and it seems quite possible that the decline in reading motivation of African adolescents manifests in different ways than in other contexts. In rural areas, where reading resources were low, reading and literacy were held in high esteem. The study highlighted that the value assigned to reading, though it may not be possible to be practised in all contexts, was regarded highly, as was the educational value of reading.

Findings regarding social motivations for reading were intricate, and revealed positive and negative views as far as interacting with peers and the discussion of texts were concerned. The complexities of social reasons for reading among adolescents in our context were highlighted in the project. While recognising the motivating role of interaction around texts it also pointed to the impact of peer pressures and opinions. In a supporting classroom environment, learners could discuss their reasons for reading at length, and could also participate meaningfully in discussions about their readings.

The Namibian readers involved in the study generally demonstrated interest and appreciation for a variety of reading-related activities. Afternoon activities celebrating the joy of reading and providing opportunities to interact socially around texts, enhanced engagement. It was noted, however, that reading for academic purposes and writing activities were less popular, and that learners preferred oral engagement, possibly relating to their African traditions.

5.3   Contribution to research area and to the teaching of reading

The findings, especially the relationships between practices, motivation and engagement, confirm and add to the existing research on adolescent readers. They highlight the importance of taking reader preferences into account when designing reading programmes and recognise the importance of reading fiction when addressing reading motivation and achievement. This study also points to the importance of including reading motivation and engagement as part of the reading process. The intricacies of social reasons for reading emerging from this study can be seen as relatively new findings. While recognising the value of the interaction around texts, it was enjoyed by fewer learners. In both Phase Two and Three, results indicate social reasons for reading as less motivating than the results from other research. The sensitivities regarding reading fluency, coupled with the effect of the individual's image in the group, seem to have had an impact on the value of social interactions around reading and texts.

Furthermore, the study contributed in terms of research instrument development. Apart from adapting the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) for Namibia, the Reading Activity Inventory (RAI) was modified and expanded. In most studies, reading activity has been investigated in terms of the time spent on reading activities, as well as the breadth of reading (types and genres read). I have included purpose and preferred mode as part of reading activity. I have also demonstrated that research instruments and theories developed in other parts of the world are useful and relevant to the Namibian context, and that modifications of instruments can provide useful new perspectives. This study, specifically, adds to the scant research regarding reading motivation and engagement in African contexts. In this regard, the Self-Determination, as well as Expectancy Value theory provided an important grounding for the development of strategies to enhance reflection on reader motivation and engagement.

I demonstrated that Namibian learners are aware that reading is important, and are also excited to read stories in spite of challenging circumstances. In the further development of the reading period, as stipulated in the Namibian school curriculum, the findings of this study could be utilised to give practical guidance to teachers in the development of reading for pleasure. Motivating and enabling environments should

unlock the joy of reading for the wider adolescent population in Namibia. My mixed research design allowed me to confirm this from different perspectives. Reading cannot develop if learners do not read. Consequently, alternative ways to bring books to children in Namibia will have to receive continued attention. It will also depend on political will. The value of this study, furthermore, lies in the opportunity it afforded learners to influence teaching and learning. My research has voiced the views of learners, and I hope they will be heard in the development of reading opportunities for Namibian children.

5.4   Limitations and reflections

Although I answered my main research question, I am aware of limitations and shortcomings in the study. In the articles resulting from the different studies, these limitations were discussed.

Because of choices made regarding the population of the study, as well as sampling procedures, findings should be applied and generalised with care, and only in similar contexts. In the first phase, only seven of the thirteen regions could be included in the study. The different sampling methods employed addressed this limitation to a large extent. As far as Phase Two is concerned, it was explicitly stated that generalisations were only possible to similar populations of urban, Namibian readers.

The choice of data collection methods – largely though the method of asking questions – also led to limitations. What I have captured are learners' views on their reading behaviour and motivation, as well as on the reading programme. Self-report questionnaires have inherent limitations. However, giving voice to students was regarded as a main focus of the study. As explained in the different chapters, I was constantly aware that power relationships, as well as issues of shyness and proficiency in English, were factors that could have influenced my results to some extent.

The third phase of the research (the implementation of the reading programme) lasted eight weeks only, and was conducted with a relatively small group. It was not long enough to ensure any lasting impact on reading motivation and views of reading. In this phase, the views of all students were included as data, and no specific individuals were followed. This had an impact on the richness of the data.

A mixed research design has inherent limitations. To be well versed in the integration of a variety of approaches, as well as to manage the research project in very specific time constraints, proved daunting at times. Especially in Phase Three, I experienced the challenge of being a single researcher and of taking on the dual role of teacher and researcher. While no research can be regarded as truly objective, I recognise that being a participant-researcher, as well as an observer, could also have influenced the findings. However, it also allowed for opportunities that I would not have forgone. To be involved as participant in challenging research contexts added to my understanding of the realities faced by Namibian teachers on a daily basis.

Reflecting on this study that took a number of years to complete, I became very aware of the development of my research skills over the three phases. The gaps that exist in phase one of the project in terms of methodology and reporting, now seem obvious, compared to a far tighter structure and design of the consecutive phases. However, the opportunity to develop within a team, and to experience the challenges of researching in uniquely African circumstances, remains invaluable and an opportunity that I regard as vital to my growth as researcher.

5.5   Areas for further research

As indicated in the different articles, this study pointed to various areas needing further research. This includes complementary research by employing different research instruments, the inclusion of teachers' and families' views and beliefs regarding reading, as well as the further investigation of social reasons for reading. Action research projects aimed at documenting professional, teacher development in aspects of reading motivation and the use of the reading period also remain crucial.

The increasing availability of internet connectivity in schools and communities could conceivably lead to a change in classroom strategies where information and communication technology will be utilised increasingly in academic spaces. This would need additional research.

As was pointed out in Article Three, ways to expose Namibian readers in deprived communities to enabling classroom contexts should be investigated further. More studies, adding to the available literature on developing literacy in book-poor

environments would, therefore, be necessary to implement reading programmes elsewhere in Namibia.

5.6 Final word: Implications and recommendations

As indicated in Article One, the Namibian constitution promises access to reasonable educational facilities. This should include access to reading resources. The continued attention to time for pleasure reading in the curriculum, through the reading period, is not an optional extra, and an important step towards creating readers for the future.

Reading remains an important prerequisite for academic success and for participation in society. In this regard, reading resources in different formats, and the skills to deal with these, are important.

In a personal evaluation of my research, I believe that it contributes positively to the knowledge of reading motivation and engagement. Its focus on developing countries should further support reading initiatives in my home country and foster understanding of young, adolescent, African readers. Urban, Namibian readers have much in common with their global counterparts, even though there may be some differences. Namibian learners were found to be positive and motivated to read.

Reading and reading motivation can only develop in situations where learners are in a position to read. Rural pre-adolescents regrettably lack opportunities to interact in literacy and reading activities due to a lack of resources in their schools and the community at large. Addressing this should also include resources in the various languages spoken in Namibia. In spite of the effect of globalisation, reading remains a social practice influenced by the cultures and beliefs of communities. I have worked in education and with reading promotion in non-governmental organisations (the NCBF) for a substantial part of my life. I trust that this project will energise (and motivate!) me to return and support the struggle in Namibia against limiting social and educational conditions and poverty.

In conclusion, I would like to remind myself of a statement by Guthrie and Klauda (2015, p. 48), namely that "… the benefits of motivation for achievement growth are not a mere marginal luxury. Reading motivation may stand as the strongest psychological variable influencing achievement".

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Dissertation articles

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READING BEHAVIOUR AND PREFERENCES OF NAMIBIAN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the observation that most Namibian children have not developed adequate reading habits. The study gauged the percentages of Namibian children who either do or do not read in their free time. It also explored the reasons why some children do not read in their leisure time; the kinds of reading material readers are inclined to choose; whether they prefer

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to read either in their mother tongue or in English; and the role of traditional storytelling and oral literature as a form of pre-literacy in Namibia. The findings revealed a picture of deprivation in the schools and environment of the majority of Namibian children. Of the 1 402 Grade 6 students in seven regions of Namibia selected for the study, 77.6 per cent do not read in their free time, while 22.4 per cent, most of whom attend well-resourced, mainly urban schools, read in their free time. Many children struggle to read, and reading materials, particularly in their mother tongues are scarce. The study established relationships between the students' reading behaviour and various other factors, including resource provision in Namibian schools, the availability of reading materials in the environment as well as the socio-economic conditions of Namibian families. Extensive recommendations have been made for government, educators, libraries, publishers and other authorities responsible for the education of children, including ways in which a more concerted effort could be made to promote good reading habits and develop the various Namibian languages.

Keywords: reading behaviour, reading preferences, reading proficiency, school library services, socio-economic conditions in Namibia

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Namibian Children's Book Forum and the University of South Africa (Unisa) requested the collaboration of the University of Namibia (UNAM) to join forces to launch an extensive project on the reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian children. The three-and-a-half year study was concluded in the first half of 2014. A report of 367 pages was presented to the Minister of Education on 30 June 2014 (Kirchner, Alexander and Tötemeyer 2014). This article is based on the methodology, findings and recommendations of the report. The motivation for the study grew out of the observation that Namibia does not have a well-developed reading culture and that this situation is an impediment towards the development of a knowledge-based society.

Even though the goal of getting 100 per cent of all children of school age admitted to Grade 1 each year has now been reached, it is a matter of concern that many children do not complete their schooling. According to official statistics (Namibia MoE 2012, Table 33), 49 240 students between Grade 1 and 12 dropped out of school in 2011. Of this group of school leavers, 16 per cent were in primary school, some even dropping out during the lower primary phase (Namibia MoE 2012, Table 37). It is an open question whether or not early school dropouts could be proficient in reading.

The research sought information on various reading-related matters but the parameters of the study excluded an investigation into *reading proficiency*, which is a domain within the discipline of education. This means that the research did not probe

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the students' acquisition of reading skills and their comprehension of texts. What was undertaken is *readership research*, which is a part-discipline of information-user studies. It includes information behaviour research and reader behaviour research in the field of information science. It is also part of the sociology of reading.

A search was undertaken to find published readership and reading-related studies conducted during the last decade in Namibia and in other African countries. A South African study of relevance by Snyman (2006) focused on the reading behaviour and preferences of a group of relatively privileged Afrikaans-speaking students ranging from 9–15 years old in both urban and rural areas.

A second study, conducted by Wikan et al. (2007), was a comparative study of the reading habits and attitudes of Namibian and Norwegian Grade 6 students, also both rural and urban. The latter study presented mainly combined statistics of Norwegian and Namibian respondents and was therefore of limited use for the current study. In addition, the findings of Wikan et al. (2007) on the reading habits of Namibian children differed in many respects from the findings of the current study. The researchers admitted that responses on reading habits may have been unreliable (Wikan et al. 2007, 23).

Intensive database searches produced meagre results on readership studies of African children, while several studies were found on formal education, reading proficiency, child literacy as well as family literacy, child poverty, the effects of HIV AIDS on children, child mortality, child disability and the empowerment of female children. These studies will be referred to below where relevant.

Several studies on African school libraries have been conducted over a period of many decades, of which the most recent were those by Mojapelo and Fourie (2014), Mutungi, Minishi-Majanja and Mnkeni-Saurombe (2014) and Smith et al. (2008). These studies did not focus on readership issues but are of some relevance to the study under discussion. Nengomasha, Uutoni and Yule (2012) found that school libraries as centres of books and other information materials may be influencing factors of children's reading behaviour.

The current study gauged the percentages of leisure time readers and non-readers and the preferences of the former for either fiction or non-fiction. Preferences for reading in either mother tongue languages or in English were also investigated, as well as the topics that respondents like to read about.

The researchers, in addition, required information on the status of information provision in the environment in the form of books, non-book print materials, audiovisual and electronic media and from which sources these were accessible for respondents.

Some of the questions that arose during the research were:

- Are these materials available in the schools and homes?
- Are there libraries in the schools and surrounding environment?

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As the status of information provision in the schools and the surrounding environment varies greatly in Namibia, the research therefore studied the reading behaviour of students in well-resourced schools as compared to the reading behaviour of students in reasonably- or poorly-resourced schools.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

When Namibia became independent in 1990, English was declared the only official language in the country. The language policy for Namibian schools adopted by government in 1991 called for mother tongue languages as media of instruction for Grade 1 to 3. In 2012, 13 languages were used in 1 515 schools as the main media of instruction from Grade 1 to 3 (Namibia MoE 2012, Table 17).

From Grade 4 on, students gradually switch over to English as the medium of instruction and in addition study one of the other Namibian languages as a school subject. In 2012, 55 422 students in Grade 6 were studying a local language as a subject (Namibia MoE 2012).

2.1. The qualifications of language teachers

According to statistics supplied by the Namibia Ministry of Education (MoE), almost one third of all primary school teachers are not qualified to teach the languages they teach (MoE 2012, Table 43). Being a qualified teacher in Namibia also does not automatically mean that the teacher can speak, read and write English well. According to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II 2005, Table 7.4), 58.8 per cent of Grade 6 language teachers could not reach the highest level on the scale for Grade 6 student reading competence. Teachers with the lowest competencies were teaching in more than 70 per cent of the primary schools in the country.

2.2. Tertiary teacher training for the Namibian languages

Teacher training for the Namibian languages is inadequate. Currently, UNAM does not train Grade 8 to 12 teachers for all 13 Namibian languages. No teacher training is offered for six local Afro-Namibian languages (Tötemeyer 2010, 27–29). Furthermore, the full-time enrolment figures for the Bachelor of Education (BEd) Secondary in Otjiherero and Khoekhoegowab are low, with student totals of 19 and five, respectively, in 2012. The possible expansion of mother tongue instruction in schools will lead to a severe shortage of local language teachers in almost all languages.

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2.3. Reading proficiency

As mentioned above, the study did not probe the reading proficiency of Namibian students, but it is nevertheless important to take the results of reading proficiency research into account as low reading proficiency levels may be a reason – albeit not necessarily the only reason – why students do not read.

The results of the three SACMEQ studies published in 2000, 2005 and 2010 (SACMEQ I, II and III), were of particular interest as they reported on reading proficiency in 14 sub-Saharan African countries, including Namibia. According to SACMEQ III, 38.7 per cent of Namibian Grade 6 students could not read for meaning in English in 2010 (IIEP 2010, 12–14).

The latest Namibian study showed that English reading proficiency is deteriorating in Namibian primary schools. The last Namibian National Achievement Tests (SATs) showed that 45 per cent of Grade 5 students have a reading proficiency for English second language that is below the basic achievement level, which means they cannot read for meaning. The 2013 results have declined by 2 per cent since 2011 (Mupupa 2014, Table 2; Figure 2).

No extensive study to test the mother tongue reading proficiency of Namibian students or their teachers could be found. Mother tongue reading proficiency does not seem to have a high priority for the Namibian government.

2.4. Tertiary training in school library management and the teaching of information skills

According to Beukes-Amis (pers. comm., April 10, 2014) there has been no professional tertiary training for either school librarians or for teachers to teach the compulsory non-promotional school subject, Basic Information Science (BIS), since 1998. Without instruction school-going children do not seem to know when and why they need information. BIS enables students to source knowledge and information independently, and teaches them how to evaluate, use and communicate it. The teaching of BIS, however, is being allocated to teachers who are not professionally qualified for the task (Ndala, pers. comm., April 25, 2014; Smith et al. 2008).

Currently, student teachers receive very basic information training at university as part of a subject called Integrated Media and Technology Education (UNAM 2014).

A new reformed school curriculum is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. In this curriculum BIS is no longer a subject, but is integrated into a new subject called Information and Communication (Wannberg, pers. comm., May 11, 2015).

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2.5. The role of government regarding school and community library services

In 2000, the Namibia Library and Information Service Act (No. 4 of 2000) was announced and a directorate for the service was instituted. Community libraries, especially in the information-deprived north, were established, which numbered 64 in 2015 (Shuumbili, pers. comm., May 8, 2015). Most remote rural areas, however, do not have either community libraries or school-community libraries as alternatives.

School libraries have not advanced well (Smith et al. 2008). By 2008, only 368 out of 1 610 schools had a standard library. In 1990, the year of independence, full-time school librarian posts in the 66 former white schools were scrapped, resulting in the closure of some of the biggest school media centres in Namibia. This was a pity because in the same year these schools were opened up to all races. Mojapelo and Fourie (2014, 127) report that this also happened in South Africa in 1995.

A positive step to rectify the situation was the institution of posts for school librarians by the Ministry of Basic of Education in 2010. However, these posts were misused from the beginning, and are still misused today, primarily in order to appoint an extra teacher for other subjects (Kirchner et al. 2014, 17–22). No library assistants are being appointed to keep the school libraries open at all times during school hours. Teachers' resource centres are being managed by mainly unqualified staff.

2.6. Availability of children's books in the indigenous languages of Namibia

Since independence, the indigenous African languages in Namibia have been neglected. Tötemeyer (2013, 17–18) reports that the publication of trade books for Namibian children in the various Namibian languages diminished from 13 trade books per year to less than four (3.8) books per year during the 12-year period from 2000 to 2011. Publishers do not find African language publishing economically viable, especially in the face of the language policy for schools, which favours English.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research team of three, namely the authors of the article, undertook the gathering of all primary and secondary data. Assistants were not used.

3.1. Research process

A questionnaire for Grade 6 students was developed and tested three times on small groups. A pilot study of 226 students in seven schools, both urban and rural, in three

education regions, speaking three languages was conducted in 2012. Data analysis of the pilot study showed that the researchers underestimated the impact of social desirability bias. There was reason to suspect that social desirability bias motivated most respondents to answer untruthfully.

Black (2003, 223), Huisamen (1996, 123) and Nederhof (1984, 264) define social desirability bias (or social desirability response bias) as the tendency to provide information that places the respondent in a favourable light; to deny socially undesirable traits; and to claim socially desirable ones.

The results of the pilot study also showed that the respondents' reading levels were much lower than was expected. The questionnaire had to be drastically redesigned. Six further versions of the questionnaire were developed and tested on small groups before implementation in the main study. The level of difficulty of the final questions was designed in such a way that the students could answer them independently without the intervention of adults. This first phase of the research has been published in a separate article (Tötemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander 2014, 2–24).

The outcome of the pilot study resulted in two decisions, namely: that additional information should be gathered from teachers in order to form a more complete picture; and that interviews with students would only be possible once leisure time readers had been identified.

3.2. Instruments of data collection

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, 92–93), *non-experimental research* includes surveys and examines the relationships that occur between two or more variables, such as age, gender and socio-economic status. Many variables *co-vary*, that is, they occur together and mutually influence one another. Welman et al. (2005, 231) define *descriptive statistics* as being 'concerned with the description and/or summary of the data obtained for a group of units of analysis' (respondents).

The instruments of data collection for the main study were a separate self-administered questionnaire for students and another self-administered questionnaire for teachers and librarians. Observations by means of field notes were made and interviews were held at a later stage with selected students who had been identified as leisure time readers. The study thus made use of mixed methods of data collection, the two questionnaires being quantitative methods to gather non-experimental, descriptive data.

After the data had been collected, the questionnaires were coded, that is, numerically converted, and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The Chi-square test of independence was done to determine if variables were independent or related. The variables in the analysis were:

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- area (rural and urban);
- resources of schools (poorly-, reasonably- and well-resourced schools);
- gender;
- reading preferences.

Observational methods that were applied included a structured observation form for the observer to complete, and uncontrolled observations in natural settings, without precision instruments through field notes and photographs (Gilham 2008, 19; Kothari 2004, 96; Muijs 2012, 48).

Interviews were conducted by means of a semi-structured set of pre-determined, specific but open questions in the form of a guide. A set of carefully chosen books, a list of topics and themes and cards with certain types of literary characters were used. These instruments assisted interviewees to clearly indicate their preferences and actions when choosing books. Summaries and transcriptions were made of the responses.

3.3.   Triangulation, reliability and validity

Triangulation is a device for enhancing the credibility of research undertaken and a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross-verification from two or more sources. According to Jick (1979) and the Global Environmental Facility (2010), triangulation can be applied in both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the methodological type of triangulation these may be questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups and documents. Documents may include specific studies, national statistics and other official documents, trend analyses, policies, strategies, action plans, other external documents and personal communications.

Triangulation is an alternative to traditional criteria like reliability and validity as it increases the credibility and validity of results. In this particular study, reliability and validity were strengthened not only by triangulation, but also through piloting and anonymity as suggested by Lambert (2012, 137–139). Therefore, the study did not require standardised tests to measure reliability.

Multiple versions of the questionnaire were tested in pre- and post-pilot small-group sessions, in an attempt to address consistency over time. Internal consistency was addressed by adapting the questionnaire to finally include three items with the same aim in mind, namely, to identify *readers*.

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Jick (1979, 603) refers to this method as 'the "within method" … a form of triangulation that is used to cross-check the same construct for internal consistency or reliability'. In the study under discussion, respondents' answers to the three items contained in Part 1 of the questionnaire, could be applied to identify and rule out respondents whose answers to Part 2 of the questionnaire were influenced by social desirability bias.

The 'between or cross methods' type that allows for cross-checking data from multiple sources is, according to Jick (1979, 602), the one mostly used. The method searches for regularities in the research data using multiple methods 'to examine the same dimension of a research problem … to test the degree of external validity' (Jick 1979, 602).

Interviews were conducted with 14 Grade 6 students (leisure time readers) at four schools at the end of the data collection period. The interviewees were selected from well-resourced and medium-resourced schools only, as few readers emerged from poorly-resourced schools. The interviewees were numbered Int 1 – Int 14 for reference purposes (see Section 4.3).

3.4. Sampling

The researchers endeavoured to choose samples that were unbiased and representative as far as possible. Huysamen (1998, 37) and Muijs (2011, 33) consider this as important to ensure population validity. There are various methods of sampling to choose from. Huysamen (1998, 40–43), Muijs (2011, 36), Kothari (2004, 15–17), Black (1993/2003, 118–121) and Welman et al. (2005, 68) present information on the various types of sampling that may be used for a given population. They describe the following types of sampling, namely: random, stratified random, stratified, cluster, area, judgment, convenience and purposive. Kothari (2004, 15–17) states that several of the methods of sampling may be used in the same study in which case it can be called 'mixed sampling'.

For the current study, the primary sampling was based on geographic, linguistic and demographic considerations. The population (as in 2012) was 55 422 Grade 6 students in 1 515 schools in the 13 regions of Namibia, studying 13 mother tongues or local languages. The following sampling methods were applied:

1. **Area sampling:** Seven out of the 13 regions (as in 2012) were chosen to include regions from the north, the south, the east and the centre of Namibia, namely: Khomas, Hardap, Omaheke, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango and Caprivi.
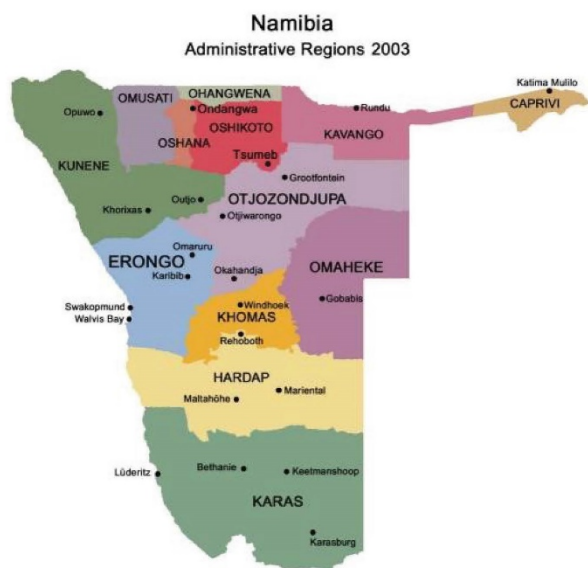
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Figure 1:   Map of Namibia

Two of the regions chosen, Kavango and Caprivi, underwent certain administrative changes after data collection. Late in 2013, the Kavango region was divided into two regions, Kavango East and Kavango West, rendering 14 regions. A name change for the Caprivi region to Zambezi region was also announced. This article will, however, refer to the Kavango and Caprivi regions, as these were the official areas and names used during data collection in 2012.

2.   **Linguistic sampling:** In each of the seven chosen regions, at least one of the six main local language groups had to be the dominant language which is also taught to Grade 6 students. Schools were thus selected that offer – in diminishing order of number of speakers – Oshiwambo, Khoekhoegowab, Afrikaans, Otjiherero, Rukwangali or Silozi as a subject in addition to English.

3.   **Demographic (urban/rural) sampling:** Official statistics show that more than 70 per cent of all Namibian primary schools are situated in rural areas and less than 30 per cent in urban areas. The research team therefore selected schools according to the proportion of 70 per cent rural – including schools in remote areas – and 30 per cent urban.

4.   **Quota sampling:** A total of 200 Grade 6 respondents in three to five schools from each of the seven regions was selected. This rendered 1 402 respondents in 36 schools. The number of teachers selected for the sub-study depended upon

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the number of languages offered in each of the 36 schools, and whether the school had a library teacher. The library teacher for the school, as well as one teacher for each language taught in Grade 6, was selected. This rendered 88 teacher respondents.

5. **Stratified sampling**: According to Kothari (2004, 15–17), a population group that is not homogeneous may be 'stratified into non-overlapping sub-populations or strata'. As there are vast differences in socio-economic conditions and the availability of resources among Namibian schools, the research team created three strata of respondents, namely: learners in well-resourced schools; those in reasonably-resourced schools; and those in poorly-resourced schools. The intention was to see if there were more readers in well-resourced schools and environments than in poorly-resourced schools and environments. For this purpose *ex post facto* correlations were made between reading findings and the three strata, taking into consideration that correlational relationships are not causal (Black 2003, 64; Welman et al. 2005, 235). This means that it is not possible to infer that one event is caused by another event.

6. **Judgement sampling**: As it was unknown at the time of data collection which schools belonged to which resource stratum, the seven regional directors for educational and cultural matters were asked to provide a list of schools in their respective regions which they judged as being representative of each of the three strata: well-resourced, reasonably-resourced and poorly-resourced. This initial classification of schools was, however, considered as provisional only. The final classification was based on the outcome of the separate survey for the teachers.

7. **Convenience sampling**: From the lists compiled by the regional directors, three to five schools per region that could be most conveniently reached were chosen, taking care to include schools representing all the different strata on the list for each region. Some rural regions, however, did not contain any well-resourced schools (see Section 4). The team visited a number of remote schools even though it entailed extensive travelling.

3.5. Questionnaires and data gathering

During a data-gathering visit to every school, Grade 6 students and the language teachers, as well as the library teacher if there was one, completed the respective questionnaires. The language medium of both questionnaires was English. The rationale was that Namibian Grade 6 students would be in their third year of English medium instruction and should therefore be able to answer questions in simple English. There was a 100 per cent response from the chosen students' sample. There was also a 100 per cent response from the language teachers, but not from the library teachers. Since there are almost no full-time librarians in Namibian government schools, library teachers in some of the schools were not available during data

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gathering; they were busy teaching other subjects and the library was not accessible for viewing. Of the 36 schools visited, 22 per cent had no library and 47 per cent had a collection of fewer than 500 books.

During the visits, observations were also recorded and photos taken inside and outside the schools. Interviews were only conducted at a later stage after the coding and analysis of gathered data was completed.

3.6. Contents of the student questionnaire

The self-administered student questionnaire, which was in two parts consisting of 25 questions in total, was answered anonymously. Only 21 questions were used for data capturing, because four 'distractor' questions were used. The majority were simple questions that could be marked off with an 'X'. There were also dichotomous, 'Yes/No' questions, one ranking question, one matching question, multiple-choice questions, and some open-ended/free-response questions that required written replies.

Part 1 of the questionnaire was distributed to students first as it contained three questions by which it was possible to establish if a respondent was either a reader or a non-reader. Only after a respondent completed and handed in Part 1, did he or she receive Part 2 which probed his or her reading preferences.

3.7. Contents of the teacher questionnaire

The self-administered teacher questionnaire consisted of 27 questions to be answered anonymously. The answers to the teacher questionnaire enabled the researchers to do the final classification of the 36 schools into three groups: well-resourced, reasonably-resourced and poorly-resourced. This was needed for the correlational studies. As there were three or four respondents per school (totalling 88 teachers), a group or majority answer for certain generic questions was taken as representative of a particular school (totalling 36 answers, i.e. one group answer per school). For questions that invited opinions, however, all 88 respondents' answers were considered individually (totalling 88 answers).

3.8. Ethical matters

Permission for the research was obtained in writing from the Namibia MoE. Schools were identified and contacted in collaboration with regional offices. Letters of thanks were sent to all participating schools and authorities that were involved in the selection of schools.

The school principals and teachers were fully informed about the aims and objectives of the research. Researchers furthermore adhered to the ethical requirements of anonymity and confidentiality. Recommendations were made with

a view to contribute to an improved learning environment, including conditions and facilities in the schools.

3.9. Limitations of the main study

1. General information on whether language teachers are qualified to teach the languages they teach was procured only from the MoE tables.
2. Namibia is a large country but the sample was selected to be as representative as possible, as regards the coverage of the six main languages taught in the schools and the rural/urban distribution of the schools.
3. Shyness was a challenge, particularly among rural students. It is possible that some students misunderstood certain questions but were too shy to ask for clarification. A possible reason for this reticence is traditional African culture that does not encourage free conversation between adults and children and particularly not with strangers. The pilot study as well as other research showed that interviews with children may lead to inhibited behaviour, particularly among children from poorer educational and socio-economic backgrounds (Ferguson 2010, 334; Siririka 2007, 41; Thorne 2010, 418). The researchers observed this behaviour in poorer rural areas, but most of the respondents who finally emerged as readers were not from poor backgrounds and were generally more vocal and candid. Interviewees were chosen from this group.
4. Social desirability bias was no limitation to the main study. Where there was reason to suspect the influence of elements of social desirability bias it was emphatically stated that those results should be viewed with caution.
5. Although the researchers were aware of certain limitations attached to observational methods and interviews, this information was nevertheless essential to complement the statistical data in order to facilitate full understanding of the research context. It was noted that Maxwell (2013, 125–126) cautions against 'reflexivity' in the sense that the interviewer always influences the interview. He is, however, of the opinion that interviews 'provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on'.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic and socio-economic profile of students and schools in Namibia

The purpose of the teacher questionnaire was, mainly, to obtain a profile of all schools visited and to gather information on the students' socio-economic status. The respondents were language and library teachers. The profile could also be used to ascertain how far the study findings are corroborated by other studies.

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4.1.1. Rural/urban distribution and resource status

As there are vast differences between rural and urban schools in many respects, it was important to study the demographic distribution of Namibian schools. It was also important to establish the resource status of schools. The following two figures present this information:
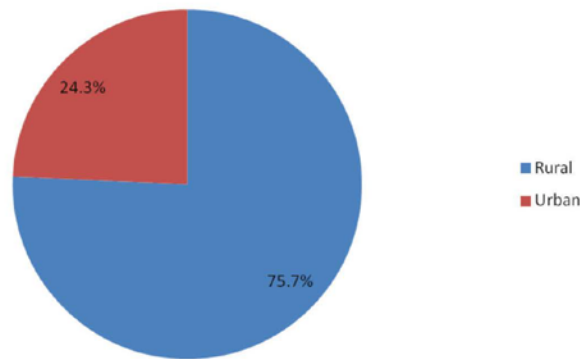

Figure 2:   Demographic setting (rural or urban) of schools

Of the 36 schools visited, 24.3 per cent were in urban areas and 75.7 per cent in rural areas. This is very near to the distribution of all schools in Namibia.
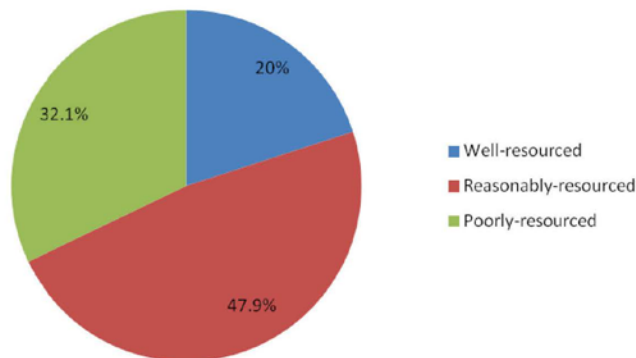

Figure 3:   Resource status of schools

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Nearly half of the schools (47.9%) could be classified as reasonably-resourced, while a third (32.1%) were poorly-resourced. One fifth (20%) could be classified as well- resourced. (Tests of independence were done to ascertain whether there were significant differences between the responses of students from these types of schools.)

4.1.2. Gender

Among the student respondents, the two genders were equally represented. This is also the average real gender balance in Namibian schools. In the analysis of gender by answers to questions as reported in Section 5 (even though small differences existed), no significant differences between male and female respondents were found. The study, therefore, does not support the findings of Wikan et al. (2007, 67, 71), for example, that girls demonstrate more positive attitudes towards reading than boys.

4.1.3. Status of school libraries

Schools indicated that the school library is the most important source of information for students.
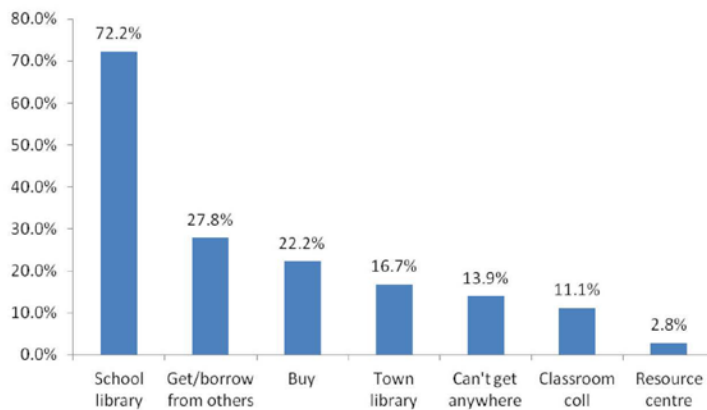
Figure 4: Where students get books to read

The school library was indicated by most teachers (72.2%) as the main source for students to obtain books. Other, far less reliable sources for books were also indicated: 27.8 per cent of the teachers stated that students may borrow books, or get books as presents from friends or family members, while 22.2 per cent opined that books are bought for students, for example, by their parents. Only 16.7 per cent

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indicated that a town library is an option to obtain books, and even fewer mentioned classroom collections (11.1%) or a nearby resource centre (2.8%) as options. Some teachers (13.9%) indicated that students cannot get books anywhere.

In her study of reading preferences among Afrikaans students, Snyman (2006, 169–171) also found that the school [library], as well as the public library are important sources of books.

As the school library is the most important and often the only source of information for students, it is a matter of great concern that the majority of these libraries are under-stocked, poorly managed and lack proper lending systems. The researchers also observed that very few libraries could be regarded as functioning properly. Most (91.3%) schools indicated that the library teacher was also teaching other subjects, that is, there was no full-time librarian.

The information from the schools further indicated that 29.4 per cent had access to the internet, and that 26.5 per cent could provide some access to computers for students.

The study findings are in line with other studies on the conditions of schools and information resources in Namibia (Makuwa 2005; Marope 2005; Smith et al. 2008; Nengomasha et al. 2012), which have shown that Namibian school libraries are in a poor state. Smith et al. (2008) found that three-quarters of Namibian schools had either no library or only a small collection that did not meet minimum standards. The average size of collections was a meagre 37 books in 2008, and many libraries were housed in store rooms. Information communication technology (ICT) was absent in more than 80 per cent of the schools and the majority of Namibian children were not familiar with the internet as they did not have access to it (Smith et al. 2008, 4.1.6 and 7). There were also no full-time librarians in government schools. This situation resulted in a library that was poorly managed and rarely open. The subject BIS was neglected to the point that it was not being offered at all, even though there were slots on the time-table for BIS.

Recent studies conducted in South Africa and Kenya on libraries and information resources in rural schools and the training of teacher librarians yielded similar results (Evans 2014; Mojapelo and Fourie 2014; Mutungi et al. 2014).

4.1.4. Teaching materials

The current study showed that language teachers mainly make use of school textbooks supplemented by photocopied pages of stories to teach. Only 14 of the 66 language teachers (21%) indicated that they have classroom collections. The observations of researchers were that classroom collections are virtually non-existent.

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4.1.5. Other sources of information

Namibia is predominantly a book and information poor society with great regional variances. In the north-east and in some of the central northern regions there is an extreme lack in this regard. SACMEQ II (2005, Table 3.1) states that in 2004, the national average number of books at home was 22.

Kasokonya and Kutondukoa (2005, 117) found that 50 of the Namibian homes they visited had no books or printed materials of any sort. Only 6 per cent of the homes had newspapers and only 2 per cent storybooks or children's books. Eighty percent (80%) had radios and 14.5 per cent television sets (2005, 101).

In the current study, 61.8 per cent of schools reported that they cannot provide school books for home study, and 76.5 per cent of schools further reported that students do not have access to reading material at home.
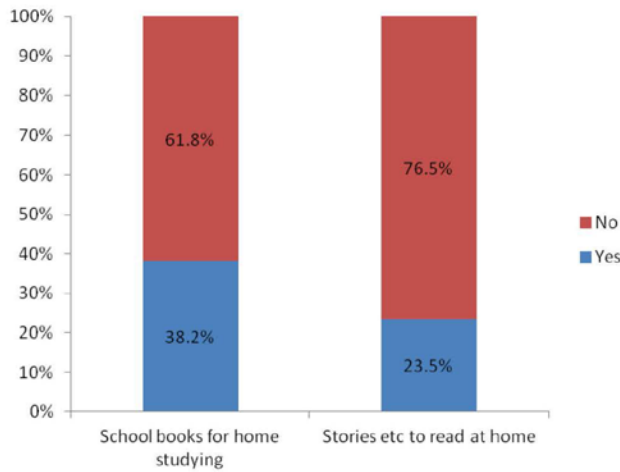
Figure 5:   Availability of textbooks and other reading materials to use at home

Schools further reported that other libraries and resource centres were too far away to be a source of information for students. Two thirds (66%) indicated that these centres are further than 5 kilometres from the school, and 38.2 per cent indicated these centres are further than 20 kilometres away.

4.1.6. Socio-economic conditions

Studies by the Namibia Directorate of Adult Education (Namibia MoE 2011, Figure 2.1.9), the Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey of 2009/10 (Namibia Statistics Agency 2010, Graph 1, Table 1.5) and the United Nations Children's

Fund (UNICEF) Trend and GAP Analysis (2011, 19 and 44) showed how poverty was impacting on the health and education of Namibian children. Nearly one fifth (18.3%) of children were living in severe poverty and a third (34%) in poverty. Regions with a higher annual per capita income and less poverty achieved better results in the SACMEQ II Grade 6 reading proficiency test. Better results were also found in schools where the teacher was using a teachers' resource centre.

The state of nutrition of many students is related to the above statistics on poverty. Of the schools surveyed, 57 per cent reported that only half or less than half of the students have enough to eat.
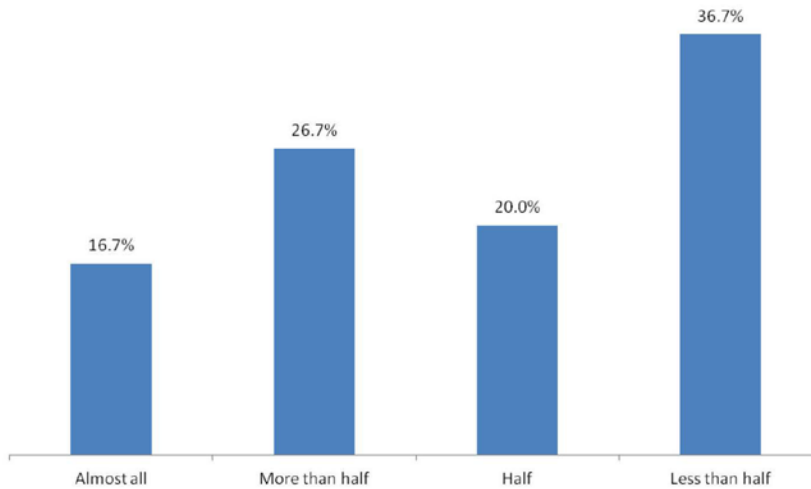
Figure 6:   Percentage of students who have enough to eat

Nearly 80 per cent of schools were relying on feeding schemes. More than 80 per cent of the teachers stated that parents do not have enough money to take proper care of their children. Schools further indicated that more than three-quarters of students live in traditional huts and that nearly all students walk vast distances to and from school. Wikan et al. (2007, 6–7) recognise the impact of similar socio-economic and home environments in their discussions of reading habits and attitudes of Namibian students.

4.1.7. Parental involvement

Studies by Kaperu (2004, 56–57), Kasokonya and Kutondukoa (2005, 96–119), SACMEQ II (2005, Tables 3.1(b) and 3.2), Siririka (2007) and Wikan et al. (2007), have shown that Namibian parents were only minimally involved in the education of

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their children. Only a minority of parents supported their children with homework. Almost 40 per cent of parents had either no schooling or only minimal primary education.

The results of the current study were similar to those of the abovementioned studies: 81.9 per cent of the schools stated that less than half or almost none of the parents help their children with homework, and 61.8 per cent of the schools stated that less than half or almost none of parents are involved in the school.

4.2.   Reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian students

For the purpose of the current research, a reader was defined as 'a person who had some knowledge of the basic types of reading material available, who either spontaneously mentioned reading for pleasure as an activity, or gave reading a priority among various options on which a substantial amount of time was spent after school'. Part 1 of the questionnaire enabled researchers to distinguish between readers and non-readers, as well as to identify reader preference for fiction (stories) or non-fiction (fact books). The researchers labelled the two main types of readers as *story readers* and *general readers*. There were some questions specifically for readers of mainly fiction and other questions specifically for readers of non-fiction. The main findings were as follows:
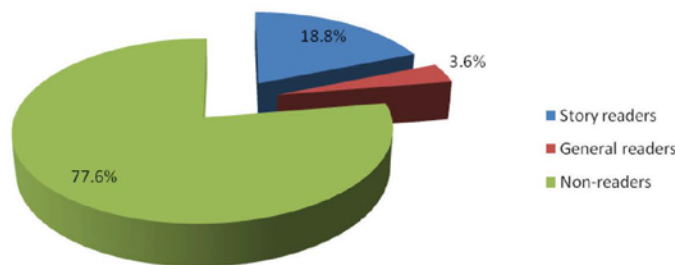
Figure 7:   Reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian Grade 6 students

The majority (77.6%) of the sample population were non-readers. Readers formed a minority of the students, 314 out of 1 402 (22.4%). Furthermore, the study showed that very few Namibian children prefer to read non-fiction for recreational purposes. Readers of non-fiction (general readers) made up only 3.6 per cent of the total respondents, while 18.8 per cent preferred fiction.

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This behaviour is at the root of many challenges the education system is currently facing. However, given the socio-economic conditions of the average student as shown by the study, these results were hardly surprising. Students cannot improve their performance without improving their reading skills – and their reading will not improve if students do not have access to enjoyable and rewarding reading materials, outside as well as inside the classroom.

Part one of the questionnaire also attempted to find out what these Grade 6 students do in their free time. Students had to rank a series of activities.

The histogram in Figure 8 indicates the percentage of students that ranked a particular activity that takes up most and second most of their time.
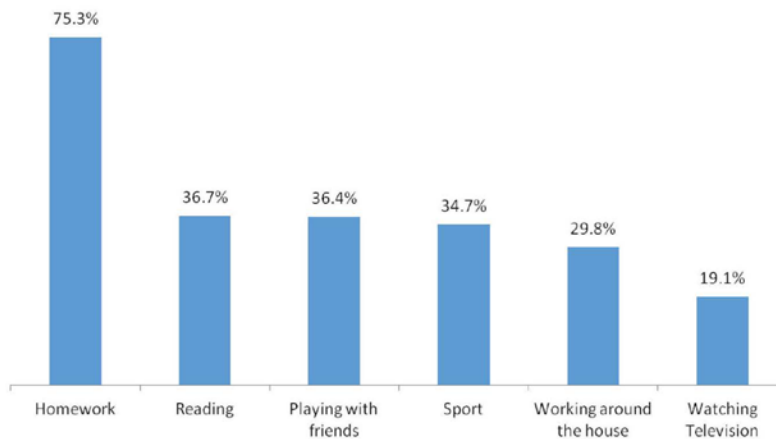
Figure 8: Activities on which students spend most time

Homework takes up most of the students' time after school – very little time is left for anything else. More or less equal time is spent after school on reading (36.7%), playing with friends (36.4%) and on sport (34.7%). It is interesting to note that reading was rated approximately equal to these other activities. Watching television was ranked first or second by only 19.1 per cent. In Namibia television is available in some schools but is not widely available in rural homes. Nearly one third (30.1%) of students indicated that watching television outside of school hours is an activity they seldom or never do.

Regarding the relationship between the number of readers, the situation and the resource status of a school, it was clear that more readers are produced by well-resourced schools and by urban schools:

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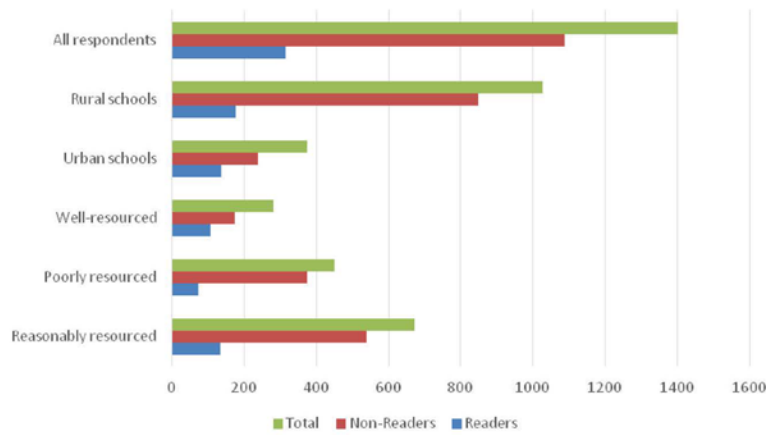
Figure 9: Readers and non-readers produced by type of school

In well-resourced schools 37.9 per cent of students were categorisd as readers compared to 19.9 per cent of students from reasonably-resourced schools, and only 16 per cent of students in poorly-resourced schools. In rural schools only 17.3 per cent of students were found to be readers, compared to 36.5 per cent from urban schools.

Although it is not the only factor, it is evident that the area (whether rural or urban) and the status of resourcing of schools play a vital role in the development of readers. In poorly-resourced schools 83.6 per cent of students could not be classified as readers. As with various other factors, it seems as if the urban child, given that the environment provides better access to information, has greater opportunity to develop into a reader. However, percentages of readers remain low across the country The differences in reading preferences between these groups, as they emerged in tests of independence, will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Readers' reading preferences

Part two of the questionnaire was designed to determine the readers' attitudes towards reading (stories or non-fiction); the kind of topics, characters and themes they liked to read about; and the criteria they used when choosing a book. It was also ascertained where readers got the books from; who motivated them to read; and in which languages they read. Finally, some questions focused on whether stories were read or told to them; and if they listened to stories on the radio.

4.3.1. Students' perceptions of reading

While the readers in general had a very positive perception of reading, they rated the functional or educational value of reading higher than reading for enjoyment and fun. Some readers even indicated that they do not like reading. Some respondents seemed to think that liking an activity does not mean that it is fun to do it. Interviews corroborated the abovementioned functional view of reading – as being important solely to gain information. Some interviewees, however, also mentioned reading for enjoyment – that it can be interesting and fun. Some responses were:

I like reading because it's my hobby and I love reading … (Int 1)

… it's fun for me to read and I get more information … (Int 2)

I like storybooks because it's always interesting and I enjoy it … (Int 1)

… it is part of my leisure … (Int 13)

… there is always something interesting behind it … you get a surprise … (Int 3)

… reading is not a nerd thing … (Int 11)

I read to understand … (Int 10)

It makes me feel new … (Int 11)

… as if I am in another world (Int 14)

The tests of independence revealed that more students in well-resourced schools viewed reading as a fun activity than students in poorly- and reasonably-resourced schools. This view can be linked to the lack of entertaining stories and interesting factual books in the poorer schools.

Students' perceptions of reading, the value of reading, as well as the language of reading material were determined. These results are given in the figures that follow:
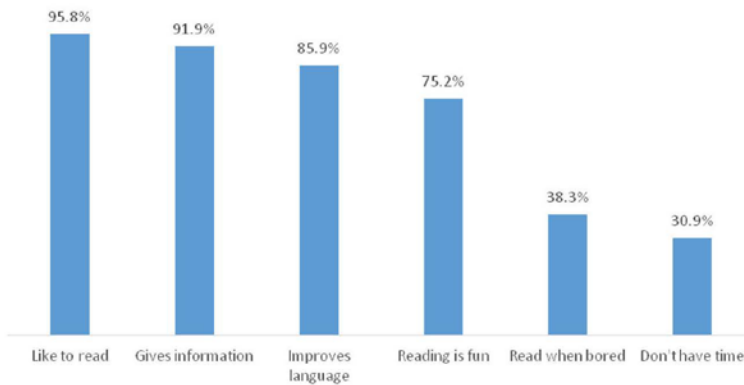

Figure 10: Students' perceptions of reading

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- 91.9 per cent of the reader group indicated that reading improves their knowledge.
- 85.9 per cent felt that reading improves language skills. These views were supported during the interviews.
- Readers also indicated that they were aware that books can 'teach you a lesson'.
- The view that reading could be interesting and fun, and that reading develops the imagination and conveys information in a more interesting way, was supported by a smaller percentage.

4.4. Language used for after-school reading

Nearly all readers (94.3%) indicated that they read in English after school and fewer readers (58.7%) that they read in the mother tongue after school. While it appears that respondents prefer to read in English, this may be because students have access to mostly English materials while publications in Namibian indigenous languages are virtually non-existent (see also, Snyman 2006, 155; Tötemeyer 2013, 17–18).

The results from the tests of independence showed that students in well-resourced schools are less inclined to choose a book written in their mother tongue than those in poorly- and reasonably-resourced schools. Rural students prefer to read in their mother tongue. During the interviews, a respondent indicated that English is *more beautiful* than the mother tongue (Int 14). This statement reflects the low esteem in which indigenous languages are generally held in Namibia.

4.5. Reasons why students do not read

The reasons for students preferring not to read either in English or in their mother tongue were similar: either there is nothing to read, or reading in the language proved to be too difficult. Nearly 70 per cent (69.7%) indicated that there is nothing available to read in English and 19.4 per cent indicated that English is too difficult. With regard to the mother tongue, 44.7 per cent indicated that there is nothing to read and 34.2 per cent that they find reading in the mother tongue difficult.

4.6. Characters and themes in storybooks; topics of non-fiction

The following types of stories were favoured. Bible stories were chosen by 79.5 per cent – making these the most popular texts, followed by school stories and stories set against a time in history. The popularity of Bible stories might be connected to the fact that these were the only stories readers really knew well. Interviews supported this information:

> I liked the story because God was in it ... (Int 1)
>
> ... then I know what happened long ago ... (Int 1)
>
> ... it's about a kid trying to get through his middle school without getting into trouble (Int 12)

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The more sophisticated readers, however, indicated that they also like humour in stories, adventure, enriching information, for example on nature, a captivating storyline, suspense and a story where a problem is solved in the end:

> ... you laugh about it and you enjoy it ... (Int 14)
>
> I chose the book about electricity because I think it is exciting! (Int 4)
>
> ... because it is about nature and many people trash nature ... (Int 11)
>
> ... there is the nasty vampire they must get rid of ... (Int 13)
>
> ... about people who were lost ... and then they were found ... (Int 4)

The results further showed that story readers are open to stories about people who are different from them or who lived long ago. Story readers are nearly equally attracted to characters who are fellow Namibians (76%) and to those who live in other countries (72.9%).

Interviews indicated that readers want to identify with the character, who must be colourful/lively and that they want to learn from the character:

> It did grip me because it teach me ... When I'm at high school I will know what is coming next ... prepare me for things ahead ... (Int 3)
>
> He (the Wimpy Kid) is like me ... (Int 12)

4.7. How readers choose books

The questionnaire as well as the interviews gauged how students choose books. In the interviews a practical activity was included where students could choose from a selection of children's books, followed by a discussion on the reasons for choosing a specific title.

Researchers observed that interviewees chose a book by looking at the cover picture, the title and by paging through. Some said that in a book shop or library they would go to certain sections to find their favourite theme: for example, adventure stories or Bible stories. Some indicated that the author played a role; some read the back cover to see if the topic was interesting.

The results from the questionnaires showed that the recommendation of another person (especially a teacher) was the most important consideration for choosing fiction. Generally accessible and easy-to-read texts were also important for readers. The tests of independence further showed that the role of the school and the teacher is very important in the rural areas – more than in urban areas, and that rural respondents would rather choose a book that looks easy to read, has an inviting cover and has pictures inside, and with easier language and less print.

This is in line with the fact that many rural readers do not see reading as fun. Urban respondents were much less influenced by these factors, and emerged as much

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more self-regulatory, independent and discriminatory readers, many of whom also read for enjoyment.

4.8. Motivators of children's reading

The majority (86.9%) of the readers indicated that they love reading and do not need to be motivated by anyone to read. External motivators were, as mentioned, teachers (79.3%), followed by parents (55.8%) and then peers.

The tests of independence revealed that grandparents, family members, friends as well as teachers have a bigger influence as motivators of reading in rural areas than in urban areas. Teachers' influence showed high scores (89% rural against 67.2% urban). When asking interviewees if they would read a book if a teacher recommended it, one response was:

> Yes ... the teachers know more than the children ... and sometimes they are right (Int 14)

4.9. Where readers find books

The analysis of the tests of independence on sources available to students in well, reasonably and poorly resourced schools revealed that the highest percentage of readers in well-resourced schools get books from family or friends. They were also the predominant book buyers among all the readers identified by the study. More readers from poorly-resourced schools indicated that they use church libraries. Together with reasonably-resourced schools, readers in poorly-resourced schools make greater use of the school library than those in well-resourced schools.

The school library remains an important source of information, but *readers* have far more possibilities of accessing books than *non-readers*. Eighty per cent of the readers have access to school libraries, while 67 per cent could also get books by buying, as well as from friends and family (66.3%). The interviews showed that most of these respondents lived in urban areas. This is indicative of the affluent reader. The study therefore poignantly demonstrates the inequalities among Namibian children and the way in which this situation is influencing their reading or non-reading behaviour.

4.10. Story reading and storytelling

The last questions of Part 2 of the questionnaire determined if reading stories to groups and storytelling were still activities taking place in the different Namibian communities. Some respondents did not answer this question. Of those who answered, nearly one third (31.5%) indicated that parents told them stories and one quarter (24.3%) indicated that teachers told them stories. During the interviews some readers said that it was mostly their grandmothers who told the stories at home.

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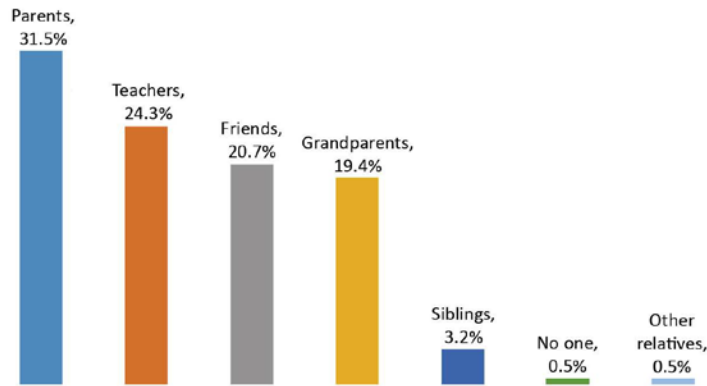
Figure 11: Storytellers

When asked whether someone read stories to them, 76 per cent of the respondents answered in the affirmative and that it was mostly the teachers who did so. A substantial percentage of readers, however, did not answer this question. Both teachers and students indicated that the children sometimes listen to stories on the radio. The interviews corroborated this. The tests of independence revealed that these oral forms, storytelling, story reading and listening to stories on the radio, were activities practised more in the rural areas than in urban areas.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the recommendations is to advise stakeholders on how an enabling environment more conducive to reading could be created. As a significant proportion of Namibian parents are not role models for reading, the recommendations focus mainly on schools. They include the following:

5.1. Strengthening reading

- School curricula should include reading programmes across the curriculum.
- Mother tongue languages should be the media of instruction in primary schools and English be phased in gradually.
- The urgent need to improve the reading proficiency of students in both English and mother tongue languages requires that teachers be supported through a variety of books in both English and the relevant mother tongue languages, over and above teacher manuals, set books and readers.

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- The production of children's books in the indigenous languages for use by language teachers could be increased if publishers and government collaborate to produce the needed literature. A special fund could be established to subsidise publishers for such purpose.

5.2.   Improving access to reading materials

- Government should make real efforts to give children more access to books and information materials through the development of school libraries, as the school library is often the only source of reading materials in the community. The minimum size of a school library collection should ideally be at least ten information units per student in all languages offered in the school and on a variety of topics. Even though this minimum size is considered quite a small library, it may be necessary to start with an even smaller number, namely a collection of five units per student and gradually enlarge the collection.

- Every standard school library should have a special needs collection that will include books to meet the needs of reluctant readers, poor readers and students with emotional problems. These books can be used by the qualified librarian together with the responsible language teacher for bibliotherapeutical purposes.

- A qualified librarian, dedicated to the library and the teaching of information skills *only* should be appointed for every school library as it must be open at all times during school hours.

- For schools without a library or where the school library is still in an embryonic stage, the following recommendations could be considered: the development of classroom collections, community library support to schools and/or the provision of book boxes to remote schools.

5.3.   Training for school library management

- UNAM was urged to institute courses in school librarianship and the government advised to make school librarianship a priority field of study with proposed quotas to the university, as well as provide dedicated study grants to these students.

- The government was requested to strengthen the short in-service training courses offered by Education Library Services to equip library teachers operating in schools without qualified librarians with the necessary skills.

- The MoE was also requested to investigate the misuse of school librarian posts for the full-time teaching of other subjects.

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5.4. Training language teachers

- As teachers unqualified or under-qualified in the languages they teach are mostly not able to develop students into avid readers, it is recommended that they receive in-service training in reading-motivation techniques on a continuous basis. All teachers should be well versed in ways to help students master not only the mechanical aspects of reading, but also to become engaged with books. They need to know how to promote more sophisticated ways of selecting reading material.
- The training of language teachers should include basic knowledge of remedial teaching and reading support towards struggling readers.
- In order to address the shortage of indigenous language teachers across all school phases, the MoE should make the indigenous languages a priority field of study with proposed quotas to UNAM, and provide dedicated study grants to these students.
- The university was urged to offer courses in all Namibian languages and ensure that all teachers for Grade 0 to 5 be enabled to effectively use an indigenous language as medium of instruction across a variety of school subjects. It was suggested that university students of languages, in addition, be equipped to create and supplement the literature available in the specific language.

5.5. Promoting reader motivation

Various recommendations were made to promote reader motivation and engagement with children's books in order to enable all children, individually and in groups, to experience the joy and benefits of reading:

- Large classes and the overloading of language teachers should be avoided as these conditions are counterproductive to reading engagement programmes.
- The weekly reading period (as proposed in the new revised school curriculum) should be a social and rewarding experience. Engaging material, suitable for different reading levels and preferences in more than one language, should be available.
- The topics, characters and themes favoured by students (as they emerged from the study) should be taken into account in book selection for schools and libraries.
- It is important that teachers and librarians have a sound knowledge of titles available for different age and interest groups. If a variety of materials in English and in the local languages is not actively made available through a national drive, the danger will be that teachers use school textbooks and readers, and thus reinforce existing negative attitudes towards reading. If a teacher does not have

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suitable books for the reading period, it is still better to use newspapers than boring school textbooks. Newspapers require minimal financial input and are widely available in all the major Namibian languages.

- Language teachers should make time for students to discuss among themselves what they have read and encourage the creation of book clubs/reading clubs to stimulate a reading habit among students.

5.6. Involving the parents

- Parents should be encouraged to get involved in the school, including the library, while ways and means need to be found to empower parents with a low level of education to become involved in their own education and that of their children. Family literacy and community education programmes should include the reading of picture books with minimal text within the family group, as the enjoyment of sharing books is a sure way to engender enthusiasm for reading.
- Parents from traditional backgrounds should be invited to share the indigenous knowledge of their culture with the school. Parents will feel respected for who they are, irrespective of their level of formal education.
- As the best way to get across a message is by means of a story, schools and community libraries should be encouraged to invite storytellers and knowledgeable senior citizens for storytelling sessions at the schools.
- Reading festivals should include the performance of poems, praise songs, dramas, proverbs and riddles and the exhibition and sale of books in the local languages. Particularly in remote areas people are often not aware of the existence of such books.

5.7. Harnessing technology

- Training or in-service training should prepare the language teacher to work under both ideal and less ideal circumstances – operating in a developed as well as a developing world setup.
- Access to technology and internet connectivity is rapidly changing in Africa. Teachers should be able to adapt and keep abreast of technological changes and use these innovatively to enhance their teaching and promote reading.
- Ideally all schools should have a computer centre or even classrooms with a laptop for each student. As very few schools are well-equipped in this regard, schools should at least have one or two notebook computers. Teachers could then use resource centres where information could be downloaded and then used in the school. It is therefore important that teachers be trained in the use of the

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internet. There are reading websites where students and teachers can browse and find material to read for enrichment and/or to use in the classroom.

- Educational programmes and story readings in all the local languages and in English can reach schools and individual students in remote areas through the radio. New books in the local languages can be publicised through weekly or monthly book discussion programmes in the local languages.

- Television can also be used to communicate information on various topics and as a medium to promote an interest in reading (e.g., by dramatising popular storybooks).

- Social media can stimulate an interest in reading among youth (e.g., a blog on a very popular book where comments and questions could be posted).

  Mobile phones could also be used to read stories in serial form.

5.8. Improving students' well-being

- A strong plea to government was to strengthen the existing school feeding programme further, as under-nutrition results in stunted children with lower levels of cognitive ability and lower IQs.

- The last recommendation was that government develop after-school facilities where students can have a place to study and access information by establishing more hostels for students in remote areas.

- The relationship between the quality of school infrastructure and the quality of learning was pointed out, and that the development of a reading culture is dependent on the overall well-being of children and the accessibility of the needed literature.

6. FINAL STATEMENT

The study on the reading behaviour and preferences of Namibian children has revealed a picture of deprivation in the schools and environment of the majority of Namibian children. The main finding that 78.6 per cent of the 1 402 Grade 6 students selected for the study do not read in their free time, is therefore not surprising. Only 22.4 per cent of the 1 402 respondents, most of whom were attending well-resourced mainly urban schools, read in their free time, and the larger part of this small percentage, regrettably read mostly for utilitarian purposes. Very few of these children have had the opportunity to experience the joy of reading. Mere utilitarian reasons to read are not very conducive to forming a love of books and reading. The development of a reading culture is also connected to affective processes and not only mental processes (Merts 2002, 34).

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The challenge for Namibia is to give children the opportunity to experience that reading is not only to learn facts but that it is fun to read and a source of pleasure. In order to achieve this goal, increased production of children's books, particularly in the local languages and nationwide access to these materials, should be a priority.

Another matter of prime concern is the poor English language competency of the majority of teachers. An extensive project to improve teachers' English language competency was launched far too late, that is, 20 years after the institution of English as the main medium of instruction.

The inadequate qualifications of most teachers to teach the various Namibian languages are likewise disturbing. Improvement of the language competency of mother tongue/local language teachers does not seem to be a priority with government.

The study as well as related studies and the statistics consulted show that the challenges the majority of Namibian children are facing to get a good education are just too great for them to cope with. The typical child identified by the study is about 13 years old; belongs to a poor and mainly uneducated family; does not receive any help with homework; lives in a hut without books in an information poor rural area where English is only heard within the school; feels hungry most of the time; and has to walk up to 10 kilometres and more a day to an under-resourced school often without the basic amenities and no functioning school library, with teachers who are not always qualified in the subjects they teach.

The government succeeded in getting almost 100 per cent of Namibian children of school entry age into school since independence but the infrastructure of the schools has been and still is inadequate to ensure quality education. Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution (Republic of Namibia 2010, 12) states that: 'Primary education shall be compulsory and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia.'

School libraries, particularly in the rural areas can be seen as 'reasonable facilities'. A standard school library is no luxury but an important factor of academic success and a facility without which no rural school can nurture the reading habit. Without basic reading materials in an easily understandable language, Namibian children will not be able to develop into informed and well-educated citizens. Namibia's mandate to evolve into a knowledge-based society within the next fifteen years as set out by Vision 2030 through ETSIP (2004) (Training Sector Improvement Programme), is being seriously threatened by the lack of a reading culture in the country.

No society can afford to waste talent. A part of at least two school generations (12 years each) of human potential has already been lost in post-independence Namibia in the face of the serious constraints under which many children have been trying and are still trying to get a decent education. That these children do not read is certainly not their choice; it is their fate.

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In order to educate the next generation for citizenship, leadership and participation in the knowledge economy and also to promote social mobility depends on quality teaching and the resources to offer a rich learning environment. Giving access to education for all children is essential but a poor learning environment defeats the purpose. Children are precious human capital for the future; the country cannot afford to lose them during the most impressionable years of their lives.

Urgent attention to the recommendations that emanated from the research will pave the way towards the development of a reading culture that is a prerequisite for the advancement of a knowledge-based society.

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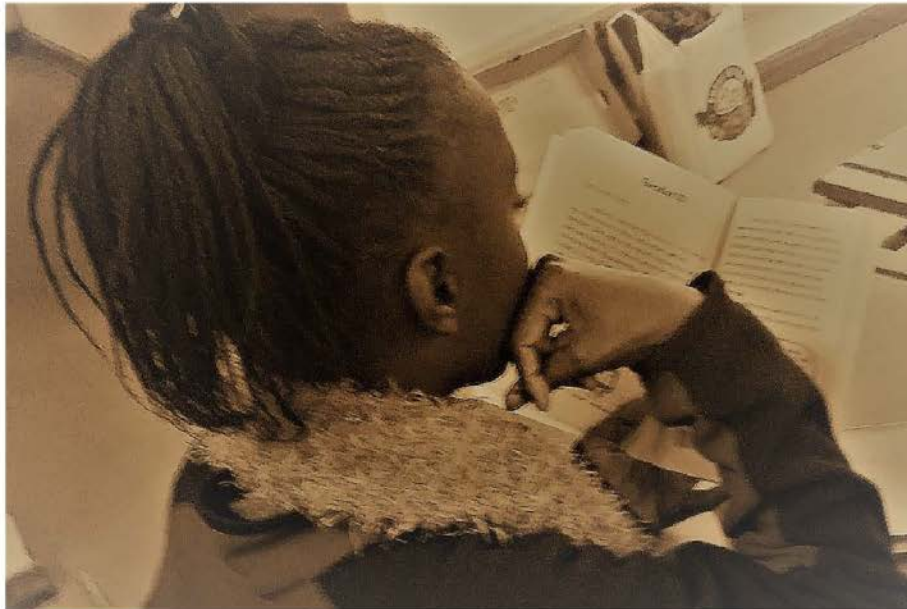
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Cover Photo

Levels of READING MOTIVATION and READING ACTIVITY in NAMIBIA

Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers

Emmarentia Kirchner and Maria Louise Mostert

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Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activities of Namibian primary school readers

Abstract

This paper reports on the reading motivation and reading activity of 402, urban, Namibian learners in 6 schools in the central region of Namibia. From the fourth grade these Grade 7 learners received their instruction through the medium of English, and offered English as Second Language in addition to another Namibian language. They were enrolled in schools that performed above-average in the Namibian Standardised Achievement Test for English language and with reasonable access to reading resources. Employing adapted formats of instruments, developed by John T. Guthrie and colleagues, the relationships between various aspects of reading motivation, reading activity and achievement, as well as gender differences, were explored. Different from early adolescent readers in North America, the group showed moderate reading activity and high levels of motivation. Learners reported that they read slightly more often for pleasure than for academic purposes, and read fewer texts in digital than print format. Recognising the multifaceted nature of motivation, this study revealed that aspects, such as curiosity about specific topics, the importance of reading and reading for grades, were factors that highly motivated these Namibian learners. Positive relationships between motivation and reading activity, as well as between reading motivation and reading achievement, were established. Contrary to expectations, no statistically relevant correlation between academic achievement and reading activity was found. Relationships between these variables and gender, though modest, corroborate findings from previous research. These results may prove valuable in further research regarding the development of effective and inclusive classroom practices in the Namibian context.

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Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers

1. Introduction

Reading remains one of the most important ways to connect with people and to make sense of the world. As societies are becoming more complex, literacy and reading are involved in many daily activities. In the journey to become "a lifelong reader who can engage with text for information, knowledge, aesthetics, and enjoyment" (Pearson, 2015, p. 8), reading competence is an essential and necessary skill (De Naeghel, Van Keer,Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012, p. 1018). The ability to read determines future career opportunities and is crucial for academic achievement (Chhabra & McCardle, 2004, p. 3). Learners cannot move through their school careers without interacting regularly with a variety of texts, such as prescribed text books, additional reading material and assignments. In addition, children can access information not only through printed text, but also via visual and audio media, and increasingly in digital format via mobile phones. Research indicates that the amount, frequency and breadth of learner reading activity affect various aspects of performance (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p. 420; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox, 1999, p. 232-233). Learners who are willing and able to engage in these literacy based activities (especially reading), has an advantage over less skilful and reluctant readers.

Attention to reader engagement and motivation, is therefore important to increase reading proficiency and achievement in school (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 245; Guthrie & Klauda, 2015, p. 47). Gambrell, Malloy and Mazzoni (2007, p. 19) indicate that motivated readers "choose to read, read more and become better readers than their less motivated peers". In this respect, various researchers refer to the 'Matthew effect' regarding reading, the ever-widening gap between proficient, skilful and less competent readers, as well as the importance of motivation to curb this outcome (Bates, D'Agostino, Gambrell, & Xu, 2016; Chang, Wang, & Ma, 2015; Malloy & Gambrell, 2010). How to motivate learners from diverse backgrounds and cultures is central in addressing these disparities. The fact that, from 1990 to 2015, percentages of "illiterate" youth in Sub-Saharan Africa have increased to almost half of the world total is a

cause for concern, given the role that various forms of literacy and reading can play in accessing education and creating more just and equal societies (Unesco, 2017, p.8). Research on reading activity and reading motivation, in these contexts is important. The impact of mobile technology and the cost of connectivity in African countries might also have marked influences on literacy in these contexts.

Regarding reading motivation and engagement and its relations to reading activity and reading achievement, most research has been conducted in Canada and the USA, and relatively little information on learners in African countries is available (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012; Mucherah & Herendeen, 2013). Research on the motivation of English Language Learners seems to focus more on motivation or investment in learning English as second or foreign language, and not on reading motivation per se (Mori, 2002, p. 92). Research focusing on African contexts is, by comparison, relatively meagre, but does cover a wide range of topics ranging from creating reading cultures in schools and communities, researching reading attitudes amongst tertiary students and teachers, as well as, important for our study, the effect of social interaction on adolescent reading motivation (Bitz & Emejulu, 2016; Lukhele, 2013; Mucherah & Herendeen, 2013; Okebukola, Owolabi, & Onafowokan, 2013; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). In Namibia, no related studies have been conducted to date. In their review on research regarding reading motivation, Schiefele et al. (2012) did not include any studies from African countries, like Namibia. Greany and Neuman (1990) conducted a cross-cultural study on reasons for reading in 13 countries, and included Nigeria. While they identified three important reasons for reading across varied cultures, nothing specific is reported on reading motivation of African children. The research of Mucherah & Herendeen (2013) is a notable exception, and deals specifically with the reading motivation of Grade seven and eight learners in Kenya. One of their findings specifically point out that the relationship between reading motivation and engagement does not seem to be similar across countries and cultures (p.590). This article will, therefore, contribute further to existing knowledge regarding the nature of reading achievement, reading motivation, as well as the preferred modes and purposes for reading, of Namibian, early-adolescent learners studying through a second or third language in an African urban context. The following questions guided our research: What is the nature of reading motivation and reading activity amongst urban, Grade 7, Namibian learners who have adequate reading skills in

English as a second language? What are the relationships between reading motivation, reading activity and reading achievement among these learners, and to what extent do these variables differ between boys and girls?

2.   The Namibian Context

The relatively small but culturally diverse Namibian population of 2.1 million speak around 13 mother tongues (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2011). After Independence in 1990, English was declared the only official language, and, apart from the first four years of education, is also the medium of instruction in schools. According to the language policy for schools the various Namibian Languages are expected to be used as instruction media in the first three years of schooling, with Grade Four regarded as a transition year. The Namibian languages and (mostly) English *Second* Language are offered as subjects throughout the school year until grade 12. Especially in urban areas, demographic diversity results in some learners having to opt for another local language in the place of their mother tongue as medium of instruction as well as school subject (Ministry of Education and Culture, Namibia, 2015, p 30). The implementation of the language policy and the inadequate role or attention to mother tongue education has been seen as problematic in Namibia (see Harris, 2011; Tötemeyer, 2010).

While the value of learning and reading in the home language cannot be contested (see Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002, Brock-Utne, 2001) it is also true that, despite efforts by Government and the private sector, the provision of Namibian reading materials in all languages leaves much to be desired. The provision of reading material in all African languages, albeit desired, is fraught with challenges. In fact, in Namibia the provision of trade books has declined at an alarming rate over the past years. (Tötemeyer, 2013, p. 17-18). Except for Afrikaans, reading for pleasure in the mother tongue is not really possible in Namibia, and learners often have to rely on English material published outside of Namibia. Most newspapers are published in English with small sections in other Namibian languages. Adequate English reading skills under these challenging circumstances in Namibia is therefore important.

Despite massive urbanisation, the majority of the population (57%) still live in rural areas (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2011), where English is not widely spoken. This fact, together with the large disparity between rich and poor (Schmidt, 2009, p. 4), makes the provision of equitable and equal, quality education particularly challenging. Academic achievement in Namibia remains a concern. For example, from 2005 to 2011, the promotion rate of Grade 10 learners remained unchanged at only 55.6% (Ministry of Education, Namibia, 2012, p. 58). The lack of reading proficiency in English is possibly one of the most important factors underlying this poor outcome. According to the reports of SACMEQ[1], the largest African, comparative study on learner literacy in English Second Language reading and Mathematics, Namibia's performance can be seen as weak. .Although there was marginal improvement between 2005 and 2010, the reading proficiency score for Namibia in 2010 was 496.9, compared to a mean score of 511.8 for all 15 participating countries. Furthermore, the report shows that only 2.5% of learners reached the highest level, Level 8, signifying critical reading (Makuwa, 2005; SACMEQ, 2010). The 2015 results of the Namibian National Achievement Test (SAT) show a decline in performance and indicate that 87% of Grade 7 learners performed in the below basic and basic achievement categories. Relatively large differences in achievement exists across the regions which can partly be attributed to demographic and socio-economic differences (Mupupa, 2016). The two top performing regions, Khomas and Erongo, have larger urban proportions living in relatively better socio-economic conditions. While, similar to other African contexts, English can be regarded as a foreign language in poor rural areas and not used much outside of school (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002, p 349-359), the situation of urban learners is different. They live in communities where English is also spoken outside of school, and where teachers are also better qualified (Ministry of Education, Namibia, 2012, p. 69).

Another challenge facing Namibian schools is the lack of reading material in homes and schools and the absence of functioning libraries in schools and the community. Like elsewhere in Africa, parents are frequently not in a position to buy books for their children (Parry, 2003, p. 743; Tötemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander, 2015, p. 16) and few Namibian learners thus have the privilege of exposure to a wealth of children's literature. Various studies indicate that Namibian school libraries, especially in rural areas, are generally in a very poor state (Makuwa, 2005;

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[1] The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

Nengomasha, Uutoni, & Yule, 2012; Siririka, 2007; Smith, Fouche, Muirhead, & Underwood, 2008; Tötemeyer et al., 2015). Schools are often very far from public libraries or resource centres. While a minority of advantaged learners from affluent homes and in well-resourced schools have access to books, this is not the case for the majority of Namibian children. Good reading habits cannot be developed in situations where there is little or nothing to read, and comprehensive reading instruction programmes and motivational support can only be successful when a variety of reading materials on different reading levels are available.

A Namibian study, comprising 1402 learners, found that only 22.4% of the sampled group could be regarded as readers who read for pleasure. Of these readers, only 3.6% indicated a preference for non-fiction while 18.8% preferred fiction. Furthermore, for most of these children, reading seemed to be a laborious and mechanical task, not associated with pleasure at all (Tötemeyer et al., 2015, p. 23). According to this study most leisure readers came from urban and well-resourced schools, and were female. In order to shed more light on the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian learners who are in a position to read for leisure, the present study aims to focus particularly on the reading motivation and reading activities of Grade 7 urban early-adolescent readers.

3.   Reading motivation

This study draws upon a number of theoretical frameworks of motivation. The expectancy value theory, as developed by Eccles and Wigfield (2002) postulates that the perceived value of a task and the expectancy of success in task engagement influences and directs behaviour (Malloy & Gambrell, 2010, pp. 164-165). The self-determination theory has contributed to the development of the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and indicates how feelings of autonomy versus control affect motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). An engagement perspective of reading, as developed by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), holds that motivation, in combination with strategy use, will result in higher levels of reading achievement (Van Steensel, Van der Sande, Bramer, & Arends, n.d., p. 10). Engagement perspectives also account for the social reasons for engaging in activities, as well as stress the impact of cultural and sociocultural factors (Ellis & Coddington, 2013, pp. 232-235).

Based on the concept analysis of a vast number of articles, Conradi, Jang, and McKenna (2014) describe reading motivation as "the drive to read resulting from a comprehensive set of an individual's beliefs about, attitudes towards, and goals for reading" (p. 156). Motivation can thus be seen as an internal factor that causes or guides different types of behaviour and engagement as the observable and unobservable actions associated with reading activities (Unrau & Quirk, 2014, p. 272).

Comprehensive overviews on reading motivation and engagement (Conradi et al., 2014; Guthrie & Klauda, 2015; Schiefele et al., 2012) indicate the complexity of motivation and its relationship to reading achievement, as well as to the amount and breadth of reading. The motivational profiles of learners differ across age groups, gender and cultures, and there are numerous individual differences in how these variables combine.

3.1 Dimensions of reading motivation

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) maintain that self-efficacy beliefs, reading goals and values, as well as social aspects of reading, are central to reading motivation, and that motivation should be viewed as multifaceted or multidimensional. Based on both qualitative and quantitative research, they argue that eleven dimensions of motivation could be identified. These dimensions have been debated and amended (Bates et al., 2016; Boerma, Mol, & Jolles, 2015), and employed in various combinations in follow-up studies (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie et al., 1999; Schiefele et al., 2012; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). After careful consideration of the studies conducted with learners from diverse ethnic backgrounds (see 3.2.1), we opted to use all 11 dimensions in this study. Based on existing accounts of these dimensions (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Schiefele et al., 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006), they are defined as follows:

1. Reading efficacy: the belief and confidence in one's reading ability; that one can be successful at reading;
2. Reading challenge: willingness to engage with complex reading material; the satisfaction of mastering complex ideas in text;
3. Reading curiosity: the desire to learn or read about a particular topic of interest;
4. Reading involvement: the enjoyment of experiencing different kinds of literary or informational texts; to 'get lost' in a story;

5. Importance of reading: the desire to achieve important goals through reading, such as furthering one's education;

6. Reading work avoidance: the inclination to avoid reading-related activities, disliking reading;

7. Competition in reading: the desire to outperform others in reading and to reach higher levels of reading achievement than other learners;

8. Recognition for reading: the gratification or pleasure in receiving a tangible form of recognition for success in reading, such as rewards or praise for good reading performance by teachers, parents or friends;

9. Reading for grades: the desire to improve one's grades in school and to be evaluated favourably by the teacher;

10. Social reasons for reading: the process of sharing the meanings gained from reading with friends and family;

11. Compliance: reading because of an external goal, requirement or because of external pressure.

3.2 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

The motivation to engage in an activity, such as reading, can be integral to the activity itself; it can stem from the value attached, or the result which one wants to achieve by participating in the activity. Ryan and Deci (2000) use the following distinction as point of departure: Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is "inherently interesting or enjoyable" (p. 55), while extrinsic motivation refers to doing something "because it leads to a separable outcome" (p. 55). In extrinsic motivation, the focus is thus not on the activity itself, but rather on the result, such as a reward (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Moran, Diefendorff, Kim, & Liu, 2012). A central issue in the classroom will thus be whether learning tasks are pursued because of the enjoyment of the activity and whether the motivation also stems from the possible outcomes or rewards and 'educational' value attached to the activity (Conradi et al., 2014, p. 156).

Normally, the argument is that intrinsic motivation is more sustaining and that extrinsic motivation can impact negatively on intrinsic motivation. However, the impact of some forms of extrinsic reward remains a reality, and many actions are, in part, extrinsically motivated.

According to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), reading motivation will differ, depending on the extent to which behaviour can be regarded either as autonomous and self-regulated or externally controlled.

Employing different theoretical perspectives, as well as results from research, Guthrie et al. (1999) and Wang and Guthrie (2004) relate their dimensions of motivation to these higher order categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. We followed the model of Wang and Guthrie (2004) to build composite scales for measuring intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The intrinsic motivation composite is made up of challenge, curiosity and involvement (dimensions 2, 3, and 4) and the extrinsic motivation composite of recognition, grades, competition, social reasons and compliance (dimensions 7-11).

3.3 Reading and the early adolescent

The interpretation of research results regarding reading and reading motivation is dependent on age. Ideally, the early-adolescent reader should have developed as a learner who is fluent in reading and engaging in reading by choice. However, most research indicate a decline in the amount of reading, as well as in the intrinsic motivation and engagement with reading and literacy activities, specifically by learners in the senior primary phase (elementary school) and onwards (Cábral-Marquez, 2015; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, & Tonks, 2004). For the early adolescents this occurs when they are faced with a myriad other changes pertaining to their development and social worlds. The change to a new school brings a new environment, new social responsibilities and exposure to multi-literacies, resulting in changes to their world view (Ryan, 2010, p. 100). From the many leisure activities they could choose, such as television and spending time on social media, *reading* is not necessarily selected as a preferred activity by adults and children alike (Van der Voort, 2001, p. 113). In today's technological era, specifically older children value reading less than their younger peers. The awe and excitement with which the pre-schooler regards reading and the reading of numerous texts fast disappear as learners relate reading to schoolwork and boredom. Adolescents also have lower beliefs in their abilities to perform well in reading tasks, and are less self-efficacious. Malloy and Gambrell (2010, p. 4)

refer to "decreasing positive beliefs" regarding reading abilities. Adolescent girls have been found to be more positive about reading, both academically and recreationally, than boys. This attitudinal gap seems to widen over time, especially in terms of recreational reading (Bozack, 2011; De Naeghel, Valcke, De Meyer, Warlop, Van Braak, & Van Keer, 2014).

4. Methodology

4.1 Population and sample

The population for this study was Grade 7, Namibian learners of the Khomas region, one of the 14 educational regions in central Namibia. These early adolescents (Ryan, 2010, p. 100) were in the final year of the senior primary phase, and should be independent readers, intrinsically motivated to read widely.

Strategic, criterion and random sampling techniques were used in this study. To strategically include learners who were in a reasonable position to read and who could report realistically on their reading behaviour and motivational levels, only schools within the region that had scored an average of 50% and above in the 2014 SATs for English Grade 7, and with access to some reading resources, were included in a list. This list was employed for the further random sampling of schools. The final sample (see Table 1) included 402 learners (mostly between 12 – 14 years old) from 6 urban schools, in and around the capital, Windhoek. All schools were from previously disadvantaged communities in the Khomasdal and Katutura neighbourhoods and, according to school principals, the majority of learners came from average to below-average income groups. Of the participants, 54% were female and 46% male. The learners were representative of 12 language groups. The majority spoke English as second or third language, and all of them studied English as first or second language at school from Grade 1, together with their home language or another local language. All of these learners received their instruction through the medium of English for more than three years. Similar to the Namibian demographics, participants from the Oshiwambo language group comprised the majority. The participants could be regarded as relatively good readers, with an above basic mean score of 63.6% for Reading Achievement (as measured with the SAT).

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample

	Sample	f	%
Gender	Male	186	46.0
	Female	216	54.0
Age	12	129	32.0
	13	189	47.0
	14	57	14.0
	15	13	3.5
	Other/Not indicated	14	3.5
Mother Tongue	Afrikaans	53	13.2
	English	11	2.7
	Khoekhoegowab	28	7.0
	Oshiwambo languages	174	43.3
	Otjiherero	99	24.6
	Other languages	37	9.2
Reading achievement level	Mean SAT score	31.8	63.6
	SD	9.8	
Total participants		402	100

4.2. Instruments

Three instruments were administered to all Grade 7 learners from the selected schools. These were the Reading Activity Inventory, the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire and the Namibian Standardised Achievement Test.

4.2.1 Reading Activity Inventory (RAI)

A self-report instrument was designed, based on the Reading Activity Inventory developed by Guthrie, McGough and Wigfield (1994), as a measure of the frequency and breadth of children's reading. While no traditional reliability for this measure is available (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), Cox and Guthrie (2001, p. 241) have reported the adequate, predictive validity of the RAI. Normally shortened versions of the instrument were used. After the pilot study, and based on the need for further studies on reading amount as formulated by Schiefele et al., 2012, p. 458) it was decided to once again broaden the scope of the instrument to include questions on *breadth* (genres read), *frequency* (how often a genre was read) and *purpose* (in and out of school reading: for school work, academic purposes versus own interests or for pleasure). Items regarding the *mode* (reading fictional and non-fictional texts in traditional *print* versus *digital* modes of

reading, using computers and mobile phones) were also included. This added a new dimension to the original RAI.

A questionnaire of 20 items was subsequently developed. Internal consistency, when using Cronbach's alfa, was measured at .782. The items were structured as follows: learners were first asked whether they had read a certain type of text in the previous week, and they had to respond with *yes* or *no*. If they responded with *yes*, they had to complete a follow-up question requesting specific information, such as the topic about which they had read. Lastly, a second set of questions required learners to give an indication of how frequently they read the different types of texts or genres in general (responding with 1, 2, 3 or 4 to the options *almost never, about once a month, almost once a week* or *almost every day)*.

4.2.2 Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)

The MRQ, a self-report questionnaire, developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995; 1997), assesses the 11 different dimensions of reading motivation, grouped around three theoretical constructs of motivation: self-efficacy; intrinsic-extrinsic motivation and learning goals; as well as social motivation for reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p. 422). In their study, reliabilities for the different dimensions ranged from .43 (Grades) to .81 (Competition), and factor analyses indicated evidence of construct validity for all 11 factors. Baker and Wigfield (1999) and Bozack (2011) reported similar reliability results.

According to research conducted by Conradi et al. (2014), Wigfield and Guthrie's instrument is the most frequently utilised tool for measuring reading motivation. Adapted and abbreviated versions of this instrument were employed in various other studies, including a variety of contexts and cultures (e.g Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Bozack, 2011; Chang et al., 2015; Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Hedges & Gable, 2016; Lau, 2009; Louick, Leider, Daley, Proctor & Gardner, 2016; McElhone, 2012; Neugebauer, 2014; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Baker and Wigfield (1999) applied it on an African-American and White student population, while Unrau and Schlackman (2006) compared the motivation levels of Asian and Hispanic six to eight graders. Chinese versions of the MRQ was developed by Wang and Guthrie

(2004), Chang (2015) and Lau (2009), and also used outside of the US in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Mucherah and Herendeen (2013) used the MRQ in upper level primary Kenyan schools. The version of the MRQ utilised in this study was adapted slightly for the Namibian context (see below), but is closely aligned to the one used by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), Baker and Wigfield (1999) and Wang and Guthrie (2004). This enabled us to compare our results with those from other contexts and countries (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006).

During the process of adapting the MRQ for the Namibian context, literature on the compilation of questionnaires for children was consulted and various accommodations to assure validity were considered (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2015, pp. 232-234). Because our urban population had a relatively good command of English, but might not have had equal reading skills in their home languages/mother tongues, as they did not necessarily studied it as school subject at all, it was decided not to opt for the translation of the MRQ into other Namibian languages. However, accommodations which included simplifying the language and aligning items to the Namibian reality, were made. For example, because not all parents are in a position to be involved with the reading abilities and homework of their children, the item "My parents often tell me what a good job I am doing reading" was substituted with "I like it when the teacher says I read well".

The adaptation of the MRQ was executed in collaboration with reading experts in Namibia. To address issues of validity in a diverse context, the 'Namibian' version of the questionnaire, together with the Reading Activity Inventory (see 3.2.2) was pilot-tested on four Grade 7 learners with different home languages at the end of 2015. This included students rephrasing items in their own words and indicating items that they found difficult to understand. The revised and shortened MRQ finally consisted of 45 items presented in random order. The items were tested for internal consistency reliability during data gathering and a score of .864 (Cronbach's alfa) was obtained.

Similar to the original MRQ, all the items related to a specific statement (motivational stance) to which respondents could reply on a 4 point Likert scale: 1 = very different from me; 2 = a little different from me; 3 = a little like me; and 4 = a lot like me. Mean scores for every dimension, as

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well as a mean motivation score (averaging the scores over the 11 dimensions) per participant and for the total sample, were calculated.

4.2.3 Namibian National Standardised Achievement Test (SAT)

The SAT was conducted to verify the reading achievement of the sampled group. The SAT is a measure that was developed by the Ministry of Education in Namibia in 2009, and implemented and utilised until 2015. This test monitors learner achievement in English Second Language for Grades 5 and 7 (Mupupa, 2016). The researchers obtained permission to use one form of the 2014, Grade 7, English Second Language Test as a measure of reading achievement. The test consisted of 50, standardised, multiple-choice items based on a variety of short texts, reflecting key competencies in the Namibian English Second Language syllabus. Individual scores were recorded out of 50 (see Table 1).

4.3 Procedure

Ethical research procedures, as stipulated by the Centre for Research and Publications, University of Namibia, and the Data Protection Official at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, were strictly adhered to. This specifically included informed consent from all learners, as well as the confidentiality of individuals' data and data storage. After obtaining the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education and Culture in Namibia, the purpose of the research was explained to the principals at the selected schools, and written consent from parents and learners was obtained. Data were collected in March 2016. The SAT was administered first, followed by the MRQ and the RAI, after a short break. With these questionnaires and tests, the reading motivation, reading activity, as well as reading achievement of learners, were established. All data were entered into a data base and SPSS 24 was used for all statistical procedures.

5. Results

First, the descriptive statistics of both reading activity and motivation will be discussed. This is followed by a presentation of the relationship between these two variables, as well as the relationship with achievement and with gender.

While all participants completed the instruments, complete data sets for all 402 were not obtained, as some did not complete all the items. As recommended by Pallant (2011), the "exclude cases pairwise option" (p. 58) was, where relevant, utilised to exclude cases where data were missing, only for the dimension of motivation, mode or purpose of reading. This accounts for differences in the n-statistic. Only cases with complete data were included to calculate the mean MRQ and RAI scores.

5.1 Reading activity

For this study, reading activity refers to the breadth (text type or genre), frequency, purpose and mode of reading. Both reading during the previous week and the general frequency of reading a genre were gauged. Composite scores were created to measure the purpose of reading (reading for own interest or reading for school purposes), as well as the mode of reading (reading of traditional print text or reading in digital format).

5.1.1 Reading activity during the previous week

For the first set of questions in the RAI (reading texts for own interest or for school work *during the past week*), the vast majority of participants who responded affirmatively, also gave additional, narrative information on the topics read. Table 2 compares the responses for each of the text types, modes of, and purposes for reading.

Table 2: Scores for the reading activity during the previous week

Reading activity	For own interest	For school	Mean
Traditional print mode	%	%	%
Storybooks	57	54	56
Information books	32	28	30
Newspapers	63	22	43

All traditional print	51	35	43
Digital mode			
Internet	49	50	49
Mobile/Cell phones	52	33	43
All digital	51	42	46

n=402

Although participants demonstrated a fair amount of reading, they read more for their own interest than for school. They read the various text types in print format (which excluded school text books) more for their own interest than for school purposes. Both digital and print modes were also used more for their own interests than for school. Newspapers were read far more for their own interests (63%) than for school (22%). The reading of information books seemed unpopular, for both own purposes as well as for school (32% and 28%), in comparison to the reading of story books. About half of the participants indicated that they used the internet for reading – equally for school work and for their own interests. Mobile phones were mostly used for personal communication.

5.1.2 General reading activity: Purpose and mode

For the second set of questions in the RAI the composite scores on frequency in terms of mode and purpose of reading were used, i.e. how of often they read in digital versus print mode, and how often for academic versus pleasure purposes. Participants responded to a 4 point Likert scale. All statistics were calculated out of 4, with 1 indicating low reading activity and 4 indicating high activity. A mean reading activity score was calculated, based on all the items in this second set of questions. These results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Scores for general reading activity: Purpose and mode

Reading purpose and mode	mean
Academic print	2.69
Academic digital	2.45
Pleasure print	2.82
Pleasure digital	2.76
Academic (print and digital)	2.60
Pleasure (print and digital)	2.79
Print (academic and pleasure)	2.75

Digital (academic and pleasure)	2.60
Reading activity (all)	2.69
n = 402	scale 1 - 4

All the scores, except those for reading for academic purposes in digital mode, were above the midpoint of 2.5, and showed little variance. Participants read texts in traditional print mode more frequently than digital texts on cell phones or computers. When the digital and print modes were combined, reading for pleasure (own purposes) had a higher score than reading for academic (school) purposes. This held true for texts in print and digital formats. While the highest reading activity score recorded was for reading printed texts for pleasure (2.82), the score for digital reading for pleasure, was also fairly high, and included reading text messages from friends and conducting internet searches.

5.2 Reading motivation

Descriptive statistics regarding the results from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) are presented in Table 4. Sample size, means and standard deviations are presented separately for each dimension of motivation; for the mean of all 11 dimensions (further referred to as Mean Motivation Score); as well as the mean score for extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. All scores are out of 4, with 1 indicating weak motivation.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Reading Motivation

Dimension	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Reading efficacy (4 items)	391	3.38	0.53
2. Reading challenge (4 items)	388	3.33	0.55
3. Reading curiosity (4 items)	397	3.54	0.49
4. Reading involvement (5 items)	396	3.14	0.55
5. Importance of reading (3 items)	399	3.62	0.51
6. Reading work avoidance (5 items)	394	2.83	0.52
7. Competition in reading (4 items)	390	2.78	0.39
8. Recognition for reading (4 items)	394	3.33	0.54
9. Reading for grades (3 items)	395	3.48	0.54

10. Social reasons for reading (5 items)	394	2.81	0.67
11. Compliance (4 items)	393	3.00	0.59
Mean motivation score (11 dimensions)	338	3.24	0.34
Intrinsic motivation (Dimensions 2-4)	380	3.34	0.43
Extrinsic motivation (Dimensions 7-11)	369	3.08	0.39

In general, participants reported relatively high motivation levels. The Mean Motivation Score for all participants with complete data was 3.24. However, clear differences existed between dimensions rated high and those rated low. The dimensions of reading motivation rated highly were importance of reading (3.62), reading curiosity (3.54) and reading for grades (3.48). Lower means were obtained for competition in reading (2.83), social reasons for reading (2.81) and reading-work avoidance (2.8). The sampled readers thus seemed highly motivated to read, but less so for social reasons or in competition with others. They also claimed not to be avoiding reading tasks.

Furthermore, participants were slightly more intrinsically (3.34) than extrinsically motivated (3.08) to read. Higher scale scores came from both intrinsic (Curiosity) and extrinsic composites (Grades). In the next sections, correlations between these findings and other variables will be discussed.

5.3 Relationships between motivation and reading activity

The relationship between reading motivation and reading activity was investigated by employing Spearman's correlation. The Mean Motivation Score, as well as means for composites of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation were correlated with various composites of reading activity. Statistically significant, positive correlations were found between Reading Motivation and the various composites of Reading Activity. Results are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlations between motivation scale scores and reading activity

	MEAN MOTIVATION	INTRINSIC MOTIVATION	EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION
MEAN MOTIVATION SCORE			
INTRINSIC MOTIVATION	.865**		
EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION	.866**	.526**	
READING ACTIVITY Print for pleasure	.405**	.318**	.372**
READING ACTIVITY Print for academic	.132*	.085	.158**
READING ACTIVITY PRINT (ALL)	.326**	.242**	.325**
READING ACTIVITY Digital for pleasure	.140*	.146**	.085
READING ACTIVITY Digital for academic	.110*	.064	.114*
READING ACTIVITY DIGITAL (ALL)	.143*	.113*	.107
READING ACTIVITY PLEASURE	.374**	.313**	.305**
READING ACTIVITY ACADEMIC	.145*	.093	.157**
MEAN READING ACTIVITY SCORE	.274**	.212**	.236**

Note: Ns range from 266 to 380
$**p \leq 0.01$; $*p \leq 0.05$

The Mean Reading Motivation correlated moderately with Mean Reading Activity ($r = .274$; $p < 0.01$). The highest correlation was found between Mean Reading Motivation and the reading of print text for pleasure ($r = .405$; $p < 0.01$). Slightly lower correlations were found between reading motivation and reading for pleasure (digital and print) ($r = .374$; $p < 0.01$), as well as reading of print (academic and pleasure) ($r = .326$; $p < 0.01$). Low, yet statistically significant, correlations were evident between motivation and reading print texts for academic purposes, as well as for all forms of digital reading. Other correlations were negligible and/or statistically not significant.

The same trends were found when reading activity, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were correlated. Higher correlations were found between *pleasurable* reading and all 3 motivation constructs ($r = .374$; $r = .313$; $r = .305$; $p < 0.01$) than between these and academic reading. The reading of *printed* text also correlated positively with the motivation scales throughout. Noteworthy is that a higher correlation between reading activity and *extrinsic motivation* ($r = .236$; $p < 0.05$), as opposed to intrinsic motivation ($r = .212$; $p < 0.05$), was found for this sample.

5.4 Relationships between motivation and reading achievement

The mean scores of the different dimensions of reading motivation, as well as for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, were correlated with reading achievement and reading activity. No statistically significant correlations between Reading Activity and Reading Achievement in English Second Language were found. However, several small, positive and significant correlations between Reading Achievement and dimensions of motivation (including the composite scale of Intrinsic Motivation) were established (see Table 6).

Table 6: Correlations between Reading Motivation and Reading Achievement

DIMENSION OF MOTIVATION	READING ACHIEVEMENT
CHALLENGE	.159**
INVOLVEMENT	.219**
SOCIAL REASONS FOR READING	-.258**
COMPLIANCE	.180**
INTRINSIC MOTIVATION (composite score)	.186**

Note: Ns range from 380 to 396
**$p \leq 0.01$

A statistically significant, positive correlation was found between Intrinsic Motivation and Achievement ($r = .186$; $p < 0.01$). Similar to correlations with Challenge, and Compliance, this is a fairly weak correlation and thus these variables can only be regarded as slightly related. Higher correlations between Reading Achievement and the dimension of Involvement emerged. A small, negative correlation between achievement and Social Reasons for Reading was found.

5.5 Gender differences regarding motivation and reading activity

The mean scores of boys and girls were very similar in terms of motivation, reading activity and achievement, with girls obtaining marginally higher scores. Girls scored higher in reading achievement (33.18 against 30.22). They also obtained higher mean scores for digital reading (2.7 compared to 2.5) and reading activity in general (2.76 compared to 2.61). Girls also had

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slightly higher scores in motivation, with the biggest difference in the intrinsic motivation score (3.4 compared to 3.03). All these differences were statistically significant.

6. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to describe the nature of the reading activities and reading motivation of a sample of Namibian, early-adolescent, urban learners with adequate reading comprehension skills in their second language. A further aim of the study was to ascertain whether there were significant correlations between the different aspects of motivation and reading activity related to this sample, as well as to determine whether gender played any role in these variables. The suitability of the MRQ in an African context was explored, as well as a new instrument for Reading Activity utilised.

6.1 Reading activity

In most studies, reading activity has been investigated in terms of the time spent on reading activities, as well as the breadth of reading (types and genres read.) We have included purpose and preferred mode as part of Reading Activity.

When one looks at the recent reading activities of the participants (past week), it is shown that newspapers and stories were read most. The high frequency of reading fiction (similar to the results of Moje, Overby, Tysvaer & Morris, 2008), could possibly be linked to the own preferences of these adolescent readers, as they read fiction for pleasure as well as for academic purposes; however, it could also be linked to what teachers expect from them. The fact that the newspaper is an important source of information in Namibian homes possibly accounted for the high reading frequency of newspapers for own interest. It is worrying that, apart from reading story books, reading for academic purposes seemed low. The percentage of participants indicating that they read information books was low, and newspapers were also not read for academic purposes, such as for school assignments. This is a cause for concern, given the demands of the curriculum regarding the reading of non-fiction in subsequent school years. Together with the participants' possible preferences, the shortage of non-fiction in print form

was most likely a causing factor (Tötemeyer, 2013). Given the availability of this resource in Namibia, the internet played a significant role in reading both for pleasure and academic purposes for this group of early adolescents. Mobile phones were more frequently used for own, recreational purposes, such as chatting and playing games. It was also used for clarifying information about school assignments or to connect to the internet by means of smart phones.

In general, participants indicated moderate reading activity. Over a week, they had read more for pleasure than for academic reasons, confirming the reading patterns reported above. Texts in print were most frequently read. The use of digital modes for reading was less frequent than that of printed texts.

It seems important to respond to these findings in the compilation of reading material and reading programmes. Reading frequency could be maintained by offering interesting stories to read. However, the low interest in non-fiction should be addressed urgently, as this can be regarded as a prerequisite for school success. It seems that, apart from motivating the reading of non-fiction texts in various ways, newspapers could be a valuable teacher resource, given the participants' high interest in reading newspapers. Therefore newspapers should be made available for reading during school hours. The growing awareness and use of digital modes of reading, including the use of the internet, should further be explored in the Namibian context. In this regard, McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths & Stothard (2015, p. 565) point out that digital literacy activities are increasingly replacing traditional book-reading in adolescents' reading activities.

6.2 Reading motivation

Reading motivation scores were relatively high, which is typical in self-report-questionnaires in Namibia (Tötemeyer, Kirchner, & Alexander, 2014; Wikan et al., 2007). The most important dimensions of reading motivation that these early adolescents identified with, were curiosity about topics, the importance of reading and reading for grades. These dimensions correspond closely with those rated highest by Kenyan learners (Mucherah & Herendeen, 2013, p.581). This finding is also similar to that of Greany and Neuman (1990) who indicate escape, enjoyment and utility as central functions of early-adolescent reading across a range of cultural settings. This

implies that these participants read because of the inherent nature of the text, but also because they could identify with the value of reading. External reward in the form of grades also played an important role. In line with Self-Determination and Expectancy Value theories of motivation, these dimensions of reading motivation represent motivational stances across a continuum – from being intrinsically motivated to read to having integrated and internalised the value of the activity. This implies that teachers should adapt strategies to reply to these varying, motivational stances (Cole, 2010). While texts should be introduced based on the interests of the individual, sharing information about the importance and value of reading to fulfil academic and career goals is also essential. Our findings support the work on reading preferences previously conducted in Namibia (Tötemeyer et al., 2015). The fact that these Namibian readers seemed to be more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated to read, indicates that support of relevant intrinsically motivated behaviour should facilitate the improvement of reading competence.

The relatively low importance of reading for social reasons and competition in this group is surprising, given the fact that current research indicates that the sharing of reading experiences impacts positively on motivation, also in the African context (Bright, Emmanuel, & Tuboulayfa, 2015). We can only speculate on causes for this phenomenon. It is quite possible that these results reflect the Namibian school culture where social discussion about reading can sometimes be met with gossip and ridicule (Kirchner, 2017), and where only the top achievers usually engage in interaction around texts, as well as compete to outperform peers in reading tasks. Further research to explore the different ways that classroom talk can be used to strengthen discussions around texts seems important. In discussions on the challenges in Namibian and African classrooms, the continued emphasis on teacher-led discussions, as well as the challenges to implement learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning, are often alluded to (O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 600, Cleghorn and Rollnick, 2002, p.356).

The high motivation levels were quite surprising and encouraging for a sample of early adolescents and might point to differences between the Namibian and other contexts. The high, self-reported motivation levels could be seen as a result of the status of reading in the Namibian community, where illiterate parents are not uncommon. Another reason might be, as Mucherach and Herendeen (2013, p. 589) postulated, that reading motivation levels could be high during the

final year of primary school, based on learners' aspirations towards higher grades and access to good secondary education. These high motivation levels may not be generalisable to other, early-adolescent, Namibian readers where reading levels are lower and where reading material is not as available as in this urban region.

6.3 Relationships between reading activity, reading motivation and reading achievement

We found positive relationships between reading motivation and reading activity supporting other research findings (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Similar to Morgan and Fuchs's (2007, p. 177), this correlation can be seen as reciprocal, where high reading activity increases motivation, and the resulting higher motivation again gives rise to higher reading activity.

Specifically, the reading of (print) texts for pleasure correlated relatively highly with motivation. This relationship may indicate the important impact that a good story has on reading motivation, and that the reading of fiction stimulates intrinsic reasons for reading. The reading of extended texts, in particular the reading of books, was found to impact positively on reading achievement (McGeown et al., 2015, p. 565). Low correlations between the reading of academic texts and motivation could be explained by Namibian readers' relatively poor exposure to interesting, non-fiction material in print. The same may be true for reading in digital format.

Since readers were more intrinsically motivated to read, the significant correlation between *external* motivation and reading activity was surprising; however, at this stage this finding is uncorroborated by other research. This could be explained by the fact that Namibian readers were aware of those values and benefits of reading that were linked more directly to aspects of *external* motivation, such as the educational value of reading and reading to be successful in school (Tötemeyer, et al., 2015, p. 22).

Research evidence indicates that the amount of leisure, out of school reading; and the reading of fiction; contribute significantly to reading achievement (De Naeghel et al., 2012, p. 1019; McGeown et al., 2015, p. 566; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2016, p. 2). However, we did not find any correlation between reading activity and reading achievement. Nevertheless, the amount of out of

school reading, specifically the frequent reading of fiction, found in the current study with relatively competent readers, remains relevant.

Research consistently points to the fact that reading motivation and reading achievement are interdependent and correlated (Conradi et al., 2014; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Klauda and Guthrie (2015. p. 262) found stronger relationships between these two variables for advanced readers, compared to struggling ones. In line with these findings, various positive though modest correlations between reading motivation and reading achievement were found in this study. Readers enjoyed the involvement and challenge of a variety of texts. Various studies demonstrated this correlation between reading achievement, as measured by standardised tests, and intrinsic motivation, for both elementary and middle school learners (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2009; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). In line with Self Determination Theory intrinsic and autonomous motivation, in contrast to external motivation, normally correlates positively with reading achievement (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, Haerens, & Aelterman, 2016, p. 233).

The complexity of these relationships are highlighted by the slight correlations between achievement and compliance as well as social reasons for reading. External pressure to achieve thus do impact on the motivation of these learners. The negative correlation with social reasons for reading was surprising, and may indicate that high achievers did not find discussions about reading in Namibian classrooms or with peers enriching or valuable. In this respect, the Namibian classroom atmosphere and activities might have differed substantially from those investigated in other, American and European contexts. However, providing opportunities for social interaction remains important as individuals may differ in their need for discussing texts (Cole, 2010, p. 161).

The modest correlations between the reading of digital texts and other variables possibly indicate an unexplored, though promising, field of study in Namibia. The current research should be followed up as the increasing availability of internet connectivity, also at schools, could shape these results in the near future, and may conceivably lead to a change in classroom strategies where information and communication technology will be used increasingly in academic spaces.

Our research confirms most of the findings regarding gender differences, in terms of early adolescents. As was found by Taylor (2004), girls were better readers than boys, and also seemed to demonstrate more breadth in their reading activities. Similar to De Naeghel et al. (2014), Bozack (2011) and Schiefele and Schaffner (2016), we found that girls, in general, showed more positive attitudes and higher motivation towards reading than boys, and seemed to be more intrinsically motivated than boys. The finding that girls used digital modes of reading more often than boys was surprising, and is not supported by other gender research. It could be possible that girls spent more time on social media than boys. Therefore, our findings are thus somewhat related to the findings of Svensson (2014, p. 347), who found that female learners spent more time on social media than males. The gender differences observed in our study were small. Our findings, therefore, can neither confirm nor refute those of Tötemeyer et al. (2015), who reported no differences in reading preferences between Namibian girls and boys, as well as Mucherach and Herendeen (2013) who also found no gender differences regarding reading motivation amongst African learners.

7. Conclusion

It seems abundantly clear that attention to reading motivation in schools and the reading classroom is not an optional extra, but should be included in all reading curricula. Guthrie and Klauda (2015, p. 48) posit that "… the benefits of motivation for achievement growth are not a mere marginal luxury. Reading motivation may stand as the strongest psychological variable influencing achievement". Motivated readers, moreover, have a good chance of becoming life-long readers (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

While valuable within the African context, this study also had limitations. Relatively small in scale, the results should be generalised with care, and only within similar contexts, such as to schools with some basic, reading resources, and to urban African contexts only. Furthermore, the data of this study were gathered quantitatively, by means of self-report questionnaires measuring reading motivation as general construct, which inherently have limitations in explaining variation (Neugebauer, 2014) and may not be totally free from some influence of social desirability.

The Namibian, early-adolescent readers included in this study seem highly motivated to read. Intrinsic, as well as extrinsic, motivation played a role in the reading profiles of these readers. Given the challenges to improve reading and general school achievement in Namibia, educationalists should use these positive attitudes to advance the reading agenda. The fact that the attitudes of this group may differ from rural and deprived communities should urge stakeholders to reverse the inequalities, unequal opportunities and lack of access to resources that may still exist in Namibia. The provision of reading material for classroom collections and school libraries remain crucial, and should include stories but also information texts, aimed at including the preferences of boys as well.

These results, furthermore, add to the research on reading motivation in Africa. It also indicates that quantitative instruments, such as the MRQ and RAI, are useful within the African context, albeit not without some basic adaptations. Further research in Namibia on reading and reading motivation, specifically regarding early-adolescents, should include different kinds of intervention studies that document reading strategies and reading programmes developed for this specific context. These findings should also be expanded further by including studies of teachers' views and beliefs about reading. Considering the development of programmes (similar to McGeown et al., 2015) that include digital opportunities for reading and instruction to navigate this complex reading process effectively also seem important, given the rollout of internet connectivity in Namibia also to schools without electricity.

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Public interest statement

This paper reports on the reading motivation and reading activity of 402, urban learners in 6 schools in the central region of Namibia. Employing adapted formats of three instruments the relationships between various aspects of reading motivation, reading activity and achievement, as well as gender differences, were explored. This sampled group of pre-adolescents seemed highly motivated to read, which is different from the normal tendency that reading motivation and reading activity decline as readers get older. Even though reading resources are quite scarce in Namibia, these readers showed curiosity about different topics and regarded reading as important. Positive relationships between motivation and reading activity, as well as between reading motivation and reading achievement, were established. These findings, as well as learners' interest in reading stories and newspapers outside of school, should be used to improve reading conditions in Namibian classrooms and for all Namibian children.

3

"Sitting there – cool and reading": Results of a reading-for-pleasure programme with Grade Seven Namibian learners

Emmarentia Kirchner (unpublished)

Abstract

This article explores the way in which a Namibian initiative to provide time in the school curriculum for engagement with reading may be developed into a practical reading programme. Based on principles of Self-Determination theory and Expectancy Value theory, enabling physical and social classroom contexts that promote reading for pleasure, were investigated. Viewing reading as part of a variety of literacy practices, different forms of reading, as well as a variety of reading activities, which were not necessarily part of the daily curriculum, were integrated in the programme. The article reports on this process by documenting learner views on the reading programme developed in a project inspired by action research. The programme was implemented with 48 Grade Seven learners of an adequately reading-resourced, urban, primary school in the capital of Namibia. The primary sources of data included eight focus group interviews, as well as a questionnaire which evaluated the reading programme that was completed by all participants. Results indicate that the implementation of the principles of the programme regarding choice and variety of texts, stimulated the rediscovery of the joy of reading. Learners recommended that in future programmes the technological component should be further developed. There was a strong focus on the educational value of reading throughout. Furthermore, the merit of responding to texts in writing was pointed out. While learners agreed that the sharing of views regarding reading experiences built understanding of texts and was motivating, social reasons for reading seemed complicated and reading ability was regarded as a personal matter. The article concludes that, similar to other research findings, attention to reading for pleasure is important in developing reading motivation. The value of the study is situated in the use of student views towards the development of guidelines for similar programmes, as well as in the illustration of useful strategies for building a reading culture in schools.

Keywords

Introduction

"If knowledge is power, then literacy is the key to the kingdom" (Ippolito, Steele, & Samson, 2008, p. 1).

The improvement of literacy is a global concern and recognised as crucial to the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2017, p. 70). Since its independence, Namibia has been struggling to become a literate society and to create a culture where reading is valued and appreciated. The revised Namibian school curriculum, implemented in 2016, includes a measure to address the lack of a reading culture in schools. A weekly, compulsory reading period, to be utilised for sustained, silent reading, is proposed for all Grades with the aim of providing time in the school day to read for pleasure. The curriculum states explicitly that the ideal would be that everybody at the school, including the principal and the institutional workers, should be reading during this time. Reading material, in any language, should be provided in classrooms, and should be aimed towards the interests of learners (Ministry of Education Namibia, 2015). This article reports on the views of students taking part in a project aimed at developing such a period as part of a reading-for-pleasure programme. The implementation of the reading programme was organised as an action research study in which the researcher assumed the role of teacher. The quotation "Sitting there – cool and reading" is a comment on the programme made by one of the learners.

Reading for pleasure or *leisure* and *independent reading* refer to "the reader's volition, their agency and desire to read, their anticipation of the satisfaction gained through the experience and/ or afterwards in interaction with others" (Cremin, 2014, p. 5). The reading-for-pleasure

pedagogies developed and implemented in various countries (Bloch, 2000; Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2014; Ikonen, Innanen, & Tikkinen, 2015) inspired the development of the Namibian reading programme presented here. Safford's conceptualisation of a reading-for-pleasure pedagogy has been of special importance. She explained a pedagogy containing the following four components. Reading for pleasure:

- includes *time* (opportunity) in a curriculum for independent reading, based on *choice*, "fostering volition and preferences" of young readers;
- includes an enabling and conducive physical and social *environment*, adequately resourced to develop reading "as pleasurable activity";
- provides opportunities to *read aloud* together and to build communities of reading;
- provides ample opportunities to *engage* in meaningful (non-instructional) *conversations* about books and reading (Safford, 2014, p. 90, my bullets and emphasis).

Engaging in reading for pleasure positively influences the motivation to read (Atkinson, 2009; Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012). It also impacts reading achievement. In fact, research has shown that exposure to pleasurable reading material goes a long way in mitigating the impact of socio-economic disadvantages normally affecting school achievement (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Venter, 2007; Wilhelm, 2016). In the PIRLS (2006) and PISA (2009) reports, the regular reading of non-fiction outside of school is linked to higher reading scores (Department for Education, United Kingdom, 2012). Reading for pleasure is regarded as more important than the qualifications of parents (Cremin, 2007; OECD, 2002). This was also found in the Namibian context (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017).

The project reported here is the third part of a larger study on reading motivation and engagement by means of mixed methods research. It developed from an observation that, in Namibian schools, most readers were not yet in a position to read extensively for enjoyment and pleasure. An initial study conducted amongst Grade Six learners indicated that only 22.4% of the sample population of 1402 could be regarded as learners who read for pleasure at all. Within a context of poverty, lack of qualified language teachers and resource deprivation, the small percentage of learners who read for pleasure valued the functional and educational purposes of

reading very highly (Tötemeyer, Kirchner, & Alexander, 2015). These results are similar to outcomes in other African contexts (Hungi & Thuku, 2010; Lee & Zuze, 2011; Wagner, 2017).

The group of learners who read for pleasure was investigated further in a quantitative study of 402 urban Grade Seven learners. Kirchner and Mostert (2017) found significant positive relationships between reading motivation and reading activity, as well as between reading motivation and reading achievement. Mostly stories and newspapers were read, mainly for pleasurable, own purposes. The motivational levels were generally high and the relatively strong relationship between the reading of printed text for pleasure and motivation indicated the effect of story reading on reading motivation.

The third part of the study, the reading programme, was implemented in 2016. At the time, an innovation in the Namibian curriculum, namely to introduce a weekly reading period, had not yet provided guidelines to assist schools with its implementation. Part of the project was to explore the use of the principles of the reading-for-pleasure pedagogy as posited by Safford (2014) in a Namibian context. The first part of this article describes the principles that underlie the design of the reading programme. The main research question addressed, however, focused on how urban, pre-adolescent, Grade Seven learners in Namibia viewed the provision of reading-for-pleasure opportunities in an action-based research project.

The development of the reading programme

Reading for pleasure is conceptualised as an internally motivated activity, and at the same time stimulated by social activities around texts, indulged in for reasons of pleasure, curiosity and involvement. The programme was based on principles derived from Safford (2014), but also on other research about classroom contexts that promote reading for pleasure, foster principles of self-determination and conceptualise reading as an activity that is valued as part of a wider view of literacy practices (Cremin, 2014; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). These studies are often grounded in frameworks of self-determination, expectancy value and self-efficacy. The Self-Determination theory emphasises the human need for competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The Expectancy Value theory holds that the perceived value of a task, as

well as the expectancy of success (self-efficacy), motivates behaviour (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Creating time for independent reading

According to the Safford principles mentioned above, a curriculum should provide time and opportunity to read independently. The reading period allocated in the Namibian curriculum aims at providing such opportunity. In the project reported on here, some extra opportunities for discussion and social interaction, both in and out of school, were added. The programme was implemented and conducted over a period of 80 minutes during school hours, as well as one afternoon per week, over 8 weeks, that could be devoted to reading for pleasure. The programme included three recurring sections, namely classroom-based activities (where texts were introduced, read aloud and discussed), optional afternoon activities developed from topics covered in school time (integrating music, art, games and film) and time for independent reading for pleasure.

Supporting competence and autonomy by offering choice and rewards, "fostering volition and preferences"

Allowing choice or the self-selection of texts based on own reading preferences enhances motivation to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Rettig & Hendricks, 2010). According to the Self-Determination theory, humans have the innate desire to "self-organize experience" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 231). Learners had the freedom to choose texts, sometimes within certain thematic parameters, and were encouraged to delve into the texts in their free time in preparation for the reading period.

Research on rewards in literacy contexts often indicates that external reward and competition, such as the offering of prizes and tokens included in many reading programmes, impact negatively on intrinsically motivated (reading) behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, as Deci and Ryan point out, the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be viewed as a continuum (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 72). Incentives and rewards, especially in

educational contexts, can develop self-efficacy (Schunk, 2009, p. 389). If the incentive is proximal to the desired behaviour, for example by providing reading-related rewards, it can foster a culture of motivated reading (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008), and support competence and autonomy. Such rewards were not part of Safford's principles but were still included in this Namibian programme. Apart from the copy of the novel that learners received (for many the first time to own a trade book), books were given as rewards on some occasions. No assessment of activities or attendance of afternoon activities, aimed at controlling behaviour, were included.

An enabling physical environment and access to reading resources

An enabling physical environment entails a comfortable classroom (and library) that is suitably and adequately resourced. While a cosy and informal atmosphere is important, large-scale changes to the physical environment, apart from re-arranging the classroom seating, setting up a reading corner and putting up posters and student artwork, are often limited by financial constraints.

Reading for pleasure was enhanced by providing a variety of longer and shorter texts in various genres and modalities. Access to books, as well as familiarity with books, are key to building reading motivation. It, furthermore, presupposes that classrooms will be flooded with a rich variety of texts and genres (Cole, 2010; Gambrell, 1996; Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). In the development of the programme, efforts were, therefore, made to expose learners to a literary-rich environment and a variety of texts and topics (Neuman, 1999).

The classroom collection strengthened the availability of fiction and non-fiction texts, sourced from the school library, the researcher's own collection and from donations. The collection was supplemented and changed throughout the programme, and works of both fiction and non-fiction were introduced based on the response of the learners and the relevance of texts to be discussed. Multimodal books included graphic novels, comic and picture books for older learners. Because the availability of trade books in most Namibian schools was a major challenge, free, downloadable material from the internet was added.

Reading includes far more than the reading and responding to printed text (Reinking, 2001). Baynham and Prinsloo (2009, p. 14) point out that "New Literacies", as social practice, entail the

integration of "written, oral and audio-visual modalities of interactive human communication within screen-based and networked electronic systems". As documented in other studies, such as Moje, Overby, Tysvaer and Morris (2008), in this programme the borders between home and school reading cultures were purposefully blurred, and links with different forms of literacy, that is links between reading and more popular forms of adolescent literacy practices (watching films or using mobile phones for reading), were established.

One of the aims of the programme was to gauge the views of learners about using computers and smart phones for engaging with web-based, reading material. Learners were introduced to reading websites, for example, the award winning, South African-based *Fundza Literacy Trust* site (http://www.fundza.co.za), where free reading material can be downloaded. Permission was obtained from the school for learners to bring mobile phones to school when needed. Learners who did not have access to phones followed the reading activities as projected on a screen. A further attempt was made to encourage the learners to discuss aspects of the novel read at school as part of their out-of-school-activities on *WhatsApp* groups (reading circles) by using their mobile phones.

An enabling social environment: Creating opportunities to engage in conversations about books and reading

Traditionally reading has been regarded as an individual cognitive activity; however, research has shown that discussion, collaboration and socialisation around reading and books influence motivation and engagement positively (Almasi, McKeown, & Beck, 1996; Almasi, 1995; Cole, 2010; Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie, et al., 2010; Guthrie & Klauda, 2015). According to the Self-Determination theory, this builds on the need for relatedness and competence. As a teacher-researcher, I strived to create a safe and supporting atmosphere where free interaction with books and reading would be welcomed by the Seventh Graders. The responses to texts introduced in the programme allowed for variety and innovation: apart from class and group discussion, dance and art were utilised in addition to oral and written response. The afternoon programme allowed free discussion, play and a variety of book-related activities, such as a treasure hunt with

reading-related clues. It, furthermore, included meeting and talking to authors about writing and the value of reading, as well as book-signing (autographing). Learners' journals were used to document their thoughts and evaluations related to the various activities. Over weekends, the researcher read the journal entries and responded in writing where appropriate, giving feedback on what learners had written and requested. Learners' interaction with both peers and adults (teachers) were employed to build understanding and foster engagement. Learners, furthermore, formed virtual, literary discussion groups where they interacted about their reading of the novel outside of school time.

The role of the teacher: Modelling and supporting the value of reading

The value that significant others place on an activity impacts children's views about the activity (Carstens, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2015). This rationale draws on the Expectancy Value theory. If learners see parents and teachers read, they might value the importance of reading (Du Plessis, 2012; Quirk, 2008). The teacher and the classroom are the chief contributors to reading motivation and engagement (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). The role of the teacher in the development and shaping of reading habits is especially relevant in communities where parents (for various reasons) cannot model such habits (Tötemeyer, et al., 2015). Therefore, in the reading programme, as teacher-researcher, I regularly read aloud to the learners, initiated discussion by sharing my reading experiences and the personal significance of reading. I also invited other role models to discuss the value of reading. As teacher-researcher, I was available during break times to discuss individual student choices and their reading experiences.

Creating opportunities to read together: The use of a Namibian novel

To initiate the project and create an opportunity to read together and discuss one specific text, all learners were provided with a copy of a Namibian children's novel *When you dance with the crocodile* by author Erna Müller – one of the very few Namibian publications available for Grade Seven (Müller, 2012). This adventure story, that includes elements of sci-fi, tells about Helena and her brother, Sam. Through a computer game, these two characters end up in a time zone of one hundred years ago at a time when slave trade was still rampant in Namibia. They

meet Ruth, the daughter of a Barotse chief, and after various adventures, reunite her with her family. The story includes elements of romance and humour. The main, female characters solve major obstacles through their combined knowledge of nature and technology. The story ends when Helena and Sam leave Ruth behind to return to modern day Namibia through a "worm hole". This novel was judged to provide an opportunity to integrate various reading formats, genres and activities, such as a film and other texts about time travel. Learners could also verify the historical background of the novel through internet searches, read more about the life of Einstein and the concept of time travel, and debate the social issues touched upon in the book (for example, slavery and gender violence, as well as the issue of resilience to overcome obstacles in life).

The choice of a local, Namibian novel allowed opportunity to invite the author to address the class about the writing process, as well as the research needed to write the novel. Learners received their copy of this novel as their own property at the end of the programme – and those who wished had their novels signed by the author.

Action research design and methodology

A practitioner inquiry approach to teaching and learning, motivated by action research, was employed in this study. This entailed that, as researcher, I was not an outside observer, but a participant in the action research cycle, and thus "part of the social world" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 225) that I was researching. Action research allows for the investigation of the practical issues regarding implementing a reading programme in a particular social context, as well as for collaboration with the participants "in order to provide evidence that can point to change" (Burns, 1999, p. 31). It is thus based on the assumption that teachers – together with learners – can improve classroom practice and change school practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, pp. 25 - 29; Izzo, 2006, p. 105). Guided by this approach, as well as elements of formative design experiments (Neuman, 1999; Rogers, Labadie, & Pole, 2016), the researcher engaged in continued reflection; for example, the cognisance of the input of learners led to the adaptation of the programme on a weekly basis. In this sense learners, together with the researcher, were co-creators of the data. Being a teacher-researcher interested in learners' views on the programme I

developed and taught myself, I was aware of the dangers of getting overly positive answers when I asked for learners' views. I continually strived to be reflective and aware that my own culture, language and gender might also influence the research (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 225).

Participants and context

The Grade Seven learners of an adequately reading-resourced primary school, situated in one of the lesser affluent areas in the capital of Namibia, agreed to participate in the study. The school was approached because, in comparison to schools in the same region, they performed consistently well in the Grade Seven Namibian Standardised Achievement Tests, a test which is conducted in English (the medium of instruction and a compulsory subject in Grade Seven). Grade Seven learners from this school, coming from various socio-economic backgrounds, could thus voice their views – in English – about reading and motivation from personal, reading experiences. During the time of the intervention, the school had a reasonably well stocked library, but internet and computer access was available only to staff members. No extra-ordinary activities existed in the school to promote reading and library use. The weekly compulsory reading period was also not yet implemented systematically. For the purpose of the project, private learner access to technology, as well as the possible use of mobile phones, was explored through an informal survey. Most learners indicated that they had access to mobile phones and used it mainly for social reasons.

After informed consent was obtained from the different parties involved, including the participating learners, the school availed two periods per week during school hours (the Reading period and the Information and Communication period), as well as Wednesday afternoons, for the reading programme. The researcher led the programme and the Grade Seven English language teacher, who also had the responsibility of managing the school library, observed, assisted with and participated in a final interview.

Information on participants is given in Table 1. Prior to the programme, all learners completed the Namibian Standardised Achievement Test (SAT) to confirm their reading achievement level in English. They scored an average of 40.06 (out of 50, thus above 80%) which is far above the regional and national results of 2015, which were 57% and 41% respectively. Learners spoke a

variety of Namibian languages. The school offered Afrikaans (a local Namibian language and the researcher's mother tongue), as well as English (the official language and medium of instruction), as first and second languages. According to the official language policy, mother tongue instruction was available during the first three school years and, after a transition year, the medium of instruction changed to English.

Table 1: Participant information

	Sample	Programme participants	Focus group Interviewees
Total		48	23
Gender	Male	21	10
	Female	27	13
Age	12	12	6
	13	28	12
	14	7	4
	15	1	1
Mother Tongue	Afrikaans	14	10
	English	0	0
	Khoekhoegowab	4	4
	Oshiwambo languages	9	2
	Otjiherero	9	5
	Other languages	12	2
Reading achievement level	Mean NSAT score	40.06	41.70

Data and data analysis

A programme evaluation questionnaire completed by all 48 learners at the end of the programme, as well as the eight focus group interviews where 23 of learners shared views and experiences, functioned as primary data sources. A focus group consisted of not more than three participants at a time. Based on the learners' personal appraisal of their reading motivation, they were randomly selected to participate in focus groups with approximately similar levels of motivation. This composition facilitated opportunity for ample contribution from each individual. Records of discussions with the language teacher and field notes from the researcher

documented the process. Furthermore, learners recorded their reading experiences in their reading journals (at least once a week). For the purposes of this article, these sources of data (journal entries, reflections and recordings of activities and the teacher interview) will not feature prominently in the analysis and discussion, but were used to triangulate the findings.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, gauging views on the various components of the programme. Learners had four or five options for responding whether they enjoyed or did not enjoy an activity (*like a lot, like, did not like much, did not like at all,* and *did not participate*). The focus group interviews took about 40 minutes, and aspects of the programme, the texts and reading were discussed, guided by a protocol that was piloted with one group midway through the programme. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed afterwards.

Simple descriptive statistics were employed to interpret the questionnaire data. For each question the mean was calculated, as well as the mean score for all the questionnaire items. As teacher-researcher I was aware that results might be very positive due to novelty effects. The main aim of the project was to ascertain what type of activities worked best according to the participants. As main focus of interest, the results (percentages) were ranked from highest to lowest, and then combined into qualitative categories (see results section, Table 2). Three phases of data analysis of the focus group interviews were conducted. Following the method of Boeije (2012, pp. 74-79), interviews were first analysed (fragmented) manually and codes assigned inductively. During a second analysis, coded text was re-assembled (structured) according to categories. During the third phase, some codes were merged and new codes assigned, and categories were assigned to a specific broad theme.

Results: Interpreting data and listening to student voices: How did learners view the provision of reading-for-pleasure opportunities?

Results from the questionnaire: Learners' evaluation of the programme

For the purposes of analysis, positive responses ("liked" and "liked a lot") of the questionnaire were combined and are presented in Table 2. All aspects of the programme were positively rated

and, on average, 90% of the learners indicated that they found it enjoyable. While afternoon activities were not attended by all learners due to a variety of reasons, the learners who attended, enjoyed them. The discussion will focus on the three categories of activities: enjoyed by nearly all participants, enjoyed by most of the participants and enjoyed by the smallest number of participants (see Table 2).

Table 2: Results from the Programme Evaluation Questionnaire

Activity
Category One: Enjoyed a great deal by nearly all participants (more than 90%)
Reading multimodal books (print and visual)
Interaction with teacher
Independent reading
Viewing and discussing film text
Treasure hunt*
Meeting an author*
Category Two: Enjoyed by most participants (more than 80%)
Reading adventure stories
Activities integrating dance and art
Reading on mobile phone*
Reading "prescribed" novel
Listening selection of texts read aloud by teacher
Discussing the value of reading
Listening to a motivational speaker *
Category Three: Enjoyed by the smallest number of participants (70-79%)
Reading and discussing in groups or pairs
Discussing questions with friends
Reading fact books
Participating in virtual reading circles*
Answering questions in writing
Writing journal entries

*Not all participants participated in afternoon activities

Activities rated highest in the questionnaire by most readers were the reading of multimodal books, as well as interacting with the teacher-researcher. Independent reading, watching and discussing a film related to the novel were also enjoyed. Learners seemed to prefer reading on their own rather than listening to texts being read aloud or reading the same novel together in class. Reading-related afternoon activities, like a treasure hunt and meeting an author, were also enjoyed by most. Similar to findings referred to by De Naeghel, Valcke, De Meyer, Warlop, Van Braak, and Van Keer (2014) and Unrau, Ragusa, and Bowers (2014), these results point to

the important role that a teacher can play in modelling the enjoyment and the value of reading. My role as teacher-researcher might have influenced these positive views, but I also think that the action-based approach, as intended, led to these positive results. The action research procedure made it possible to incorporate learners' suggestions on a continuous basis. For instance, mystery stories involving sport stars as characters, novels on the theme of abduction and an additional film afternoon were included in response to learners' suggestions.

Reading aloud was clearly less motivating than expected (and will be discussed as part of the second category as shown in Table 2). This was substantiated by some responses captured during interviews. While some learners indicated that the model of the teacher was appreciated and had improved their own pronunciation and interpretation, it was regarded as somewhat pedantic by others. For these teenagers, it thus seemed that the reading period should be mainly used for independent, leisure reading. Results indicate that the integration of a variety of text types and activities were important motivational factors. Adventure stories which included the reading of the Namibian adventure story were enjoyed by the majority. Although included in this category of popular activities, discussions about the value of reading – also by visitors – were slightly less popular. The more challenging activities (discussing, debating and written response), as well as the reading of information books, were preferred by fewer participants. In this third category, more learners preferred discussing stories in groups than writing about their reading experiences. Reading on mobile phones was enjoyed more than participating in virtual conversations (chats) about texts read.

Results from the focus group interviews

During the analysis of the interviews, categories of coded responses emerged across four broad themes: views on the reading programme and the activities included, views on the text types the learners appreciated, the motivating strategies employed in the programme and the opportunities to engage in digital reading activities. Some questions evoked more enthusiastic participation than others. Although the interview protocol influenced the broad themes, participants returned to topics that were important to them and the learners voiced positive and negative opinions. Learner views will now be discussed according to the themes, and excerpts from the interviews

will be used to exemplify the most relevant aspects discussed by learners. All names are pseudonyms. (A table with a summary of all themes and categories is attached as addendum).

<u>Views on the reading programme</u>

What the children said about leisure reading and a reading period

The Seventh Graders viewed the provision of space and time for recreational/leisure reading in the school day (the Namibian reading period) as motivational and necessary. It seemed as if a very full curriculum, much homework and after school commitments (sport, extra classes and work around the house) impacted negatively on the available time for reading of these urban learners. More than half of the responses under this theme were about the need for or lack of comfortable spaces to read. As both Helvi and Justin explained:

> At home you would be under pressure. While you are reading someone would call you to send you somewhere. Here we all would be concentrating on what you are doing and no one would disturb you (Helvi, Interview 7).

> I enjoyed it cause most of the time during the school day I am under pressure ... you have to do a lot of work and when we are at the reading period I feel calm, relaxed (Justin, Interview 4).

Learners often lacked time to read when out of school and, in an African context where learners often come from overcrowded homes, they did not have space for quiet, independent reading. Similar to this result, Atkinson (2006) found that, for different Grade levels, academically stronger students were positive about reading for pleasure in school, at home and alone. The Namibian participants in my project also indicated a preference for reading at home, even though they did not always have the opportunity to do so.

Learners' views indicated that creating time for independent reading during school time led to a (re-)discovery of the joy and value of reading. Petrus clarified:

> I already liked reading, Miss ... actually it [the reading period] did, it encouraged me to read more – I never had that much time to read (Petrus, Interview 4).

What the children said about the afternoon programme

Learners indicated that they enjoyed the variety of afternoon activities that extended their experiences of literacy practices. They also indicated that the activities included exceeded their

expectations of a reading programme. Petrus explained how he could make connections between different types of texts:

> When we watched the Mr. Peabody movie, it actually connected to what we read ... *When you dance with the crocodile* ... so we would be more interested in the book. They went back in time and in the beginning they also show that she went back in time ... but they went in different ways so you would want to know how this is different from that. So you watch the movie and read the book and you bring it together in your mind and think how you enjoyed both and how they were different (Petrus, Interview 4).

They appreciated opportunities for socialising with their friends around reading-related activities. Many comments, like the one of Justin below, indicated that these activities had an impact on their motivation to read and contributed to changes in their attitudes towards reading:

> I also attended all of the afternoon activities and it was ... I enjoyed them a lot ... they kept me busy ... I enjoyed myself, being with my friends and so on ... It was really motivative ... I started reading more books (Justin, Interview 4).

Views about motivating texts

What the children said about the texts they read

Regarding the type of texts participants found motivating and enjoyable, students mainly discussed fictional texts, and they mostly referred to topics they preferred, or named a favourite title. Similar to findings from Tötemeyer, et al. (2015), action and adventure stories seemed quite popular, followed by mystery and spy stories, scary stories and thrillers. Possibly influenced by the novel that was read in the class, the learners also mentioned fantasy and science fiction. Some were able to specify in detail what they liked to read, for example, books about vampires or scary stories. Quite a number of learners mentioned a specific title of a book they had read during the reading intervention or recounted a story they had read. Participants derived much pleasure from humorous books. These findings are evident from the following discussion:

Teacher:	Can you tell me a bit about stories that you enjoyed?
Bernard:	Ja, *Touching the void.*
Teacher:	And you, Tulela?
Tulela:	I like reading adventure and historical and comedy books.

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Petrina:	I really like reading scary story books like the one I am reading now, which is *Middernagfees*. And I really like characters that doesn't exist or just things that doesn't exist.
Teacher:	Can you tell me why you do like this particular type of story?
Tulela:	Adventure books takes you another place, just by reading the book – And sometimes when I am bored, I read comical books to have a laugh.
	(Exchange between the teacher-researcher, Petrina, Bernard and Tulela, Interview 8).

Less discussion about non-fictional texts took place, in general, compared to the active participation when discussing fiction, corroborating evidence from the questionnaire that factual books were less popular amongst these readers. Participants who preferred non-fiction indicated that they enjoyed the books about history and biography, sport, nature and animals that were suggested to them. Learning about various topics was important for these participants. In this regard, Janice made a comment about "how to" books:

> Miss I like books about dancing and I read those books because it is really nice. Learning new steps to dance (Janice, Interview 1).

One session in the programme was spent introducing and reading comics and illustrated novels. Nearly all exchanges about multimodal texts focused on print and visual image combinations as a way of identifying motivating texts, such as comics, picture books, as well as illustrated fiction and non-fictional texts. The positive views during the focus group interviews were corroborated through the questionnaire where nearly all learners reacted favourably to the introduction and reading of comics and graphic novels. When prompted about this, two participants reacted as follows:

> An example maybe … you have an idea about what is the slave trade and the pictures in *When you dance with the crocodile*, it also helped (Sanna, Interview 3).

> *The diary of the wimpy kid* (sic) was interesting … it has a lot of pictures and the noises that he makes in the book! I also watched the movie two times (Melissa, Interview 1).

Following the views from these learners, multimodal texts could play an important role in changing learners' attitudes about reading.

Views on motivational strategies

Specific motivational strategies were employed to enhance feelings of self-determination. Feelings of competence and autonomy were fostered by offering choices and appropriate

rewards, and relatedness were supported via opportunities for response, discussion and socialisation.

What the children said about choice

When prompted about choice, differing views about self-selecting texts versus texts being introduced by the teacher emerged. Learners indicated that they would prefer to choose their own material, but appreciated the recommendation of certain texts. Some indicated that they should be told what to read. In some interviews learners concluded that both options (choice and suggested topics) should be included in a reading programme for pleasure. According to participants, providing choice is important and fun, as they could select according to their own interest and reading ability. Only a few participants motivated why being told what to read actually added value, for example, a teacher normally recommended stimulating texts with "educational value".

Although some learners preferred definite suggestions by the teacher regarding reading material, the offering of choice remained an important motivating factor. It seems that, in Namibian reading programmes, a balance between choice and suggestions regarding reading material should be followed. This is also recommended in other contexts (Gambrell, 2011; Jang, Conradi, McKenna, & Jones, 2015). Due to limited resources in schools and the economic situation of many parents, Namibian readers are not necessarily familiar with newly published, youth novels, and cannot readily locate suitable reading material themselves. Contrary to other research (Atkinson, 2006), these Namibian learners seemed less motivated by feelings of autonomy. Even though choice was rated highly in the questionnaire, during the interviews learners indicated that suggestions regarding reading material were important, and some also preferred the controlling behaviour of teachers, and stated that the teacher should instruct them to read and monitor their reading activities.

What the children said about response to texts and social interaction

During the interviews the majority of statements were positive regarding opportunities for different responses to texts, both oral and in written formats. Throughout the discussions the

educational value of activities were mentioned by some participants, such as the development of writing and comprehension skills. Most learners indicated that writing developed the ability to respond on both cognitive (formulating understanding) and affective (sharing feelings) level in their response journals. They regarded journal writing as a safe way of sharing personal views. Both Petrus and Ashanti elaborated on this:

> But yes, Miss, some of the questions that I answered ... they were personal ... it was a way of letting me express my feelings about reading ... it made me feel better (Petrus, Interview 4).
>
> It is like talking to my best friend ... but I am just writing in my journal (Ashanti, Interview 6).

These positive interview statements can be regarded as slightly different from the information from the questionnaire, where generally written response was rated less popular than other activities. Similar to the questionnaires, some learners rather preferred the informal discussion of texts above written responses in their journals. Melissa explained this as follows:

> In a group when you discuss and ask each other questions you understand because it is on the level of your group ... you are on the same age group. You understand each other and you can do most of the things (Melissa, Interview 1).

In comparison with such remarks, the questionnaire shows that many of these Namibian readers had a slightly lower preference for more challenging activities in terms of their responses to the text. This may be indicative of a lack of true engagement with texts. This concern, mentioned by Paige (2011), indicated that "desire for easy work increases" during adolescence, while these learners actually needed increased cognitive development and "deeper engagement" with texts (p. 398). However, preference for oral literacy activities is typically an African phenomenon, and should be used in building other literacies (Kiramba, 2017). This observation, as well as the fact that learners rightly perceived the programme as focusing on pleasurable and non-academic activities (reading for recreational and not academic purposes), might further explain these findings regarding Namibian readers.

A common view was that sharing built understanding of texts and was motivating. Justin expressed this view as follows:

> Yes, it was good because it told me more about how my friends act when they are reading and doing different types of things. (Justin, Interview 4).

Participation in the programme was an opportunity to socialise and to come to know one another on a different level. It was an opportunity to learn cooperatively. In addition, non-reading related benefits of building relationships were mentioned, and some learners clearly had their own social agendas during the reading activities.

Interaction with others about reading, however, emerged as quite a complicated issue for some learners. The quality of social interaction as described by the learners varied – and was experienced as both positive and negative. The following interaction demonstrates this:

> Willa: Miss, there are people that take over everything [during discussions].
>
> Joyce: There are people that take the group thing over.
>
> Willa: Like you can't talk ... they want to be ... in front ... talking alone. That day when we prepared questions for the author, the class, there were a lot of eyes looking at you, everyone is looking at you and if you make a mistake, they would laugh.
>
> (Interview 3, exchange between Willa and Joyce).

To some extent, negative group dynamics surfaced in discussions regarding the social interaction experienced during the programme. Similar to Atkinson (2009) one can conclude that these learners were sensitive to the views of their peers (though in this case not only about how proficient they were at reading, but also about how their expression of opinions were received). These adolescents might have very conflicting experiences about acceptance by peers. In this age group, peers can shape self-concept and motivation negatively. The fear of ridicule, exclusion from the discussion and the presence of strong opinionated peers during group discussions made it difficult for some to participate. Bernard and Festus (both boys) elaborated further on this:

> [B]ut my friends, when I tell them, they laugh at me ... they don't like reading books (Bernard, Interview 8).
>
> A little bit, sometimes, but not always good discussions. Because if someone does a mistake then they would like laugh at you ... and talking a lot Miss ... you don't know the answers and all sorts of things (Festus, Interview 3).

Shyness to speak out because of the fear of being made fun of, to stand out as a reader when it might not be seen as socially acceptable in the group are all possible explanations for these findings. This seems similar to the relatively weak, socially motivated reasons for reading, as well as the negative correlation between social reasons for reading and reading achievement found by Kirchner and Mostert (2017).

What children said about external rewards and recognition

The discussion around grades, rewards and recognition evoked substantive responses. Most learners indicated that they felt that it was appropriate not to be graded during the activities, both in school and after school. The competitive edge that always seemed present in class was tiring to some and they expressed relief at not being graded during the programme. Some participants did, however, indicate that grading reading activities was important, and it was evident that assessment driven practices were entrenched among these learners. Martin and Justice elaborated on this as follows:

> It is good (not to be graded), because like when you get grades then you will always be competing with other learners to get higher marks... it was good for me not to be graded (Martin, Interview 7).

> I think it is good because if you get a failing mark you will not feel like reading anymore (Justice, Interview 7).

Ultimately rewards and incentives played a smaller role in motivation to read than anticipated. Erastus and Helvi experienced the interaction with the researcher via journal entries and the variety of activities, such as meeting an author, a treasure hunt and watching a film, as a reward in itself:

> I also think marks will be really bad cause the comments you already get give you the boost up and writing in the journal more Miss ... because I enjoyed writing in my journal ... I enjoyed it very much (Helvi, Interview 7).

> For me the reward was watching the film, it was nice (Erastus, Interview 6).

For these young readers small rewards for participation in afternoon activities that related to the goals of reading worked well. My findings rather indicate that the reading related activities like the creation of a dance and the gift of a downloaded printed story (similar to Ikonen, et al., 2015) enhanced the engagement with texts. In general, learner views about rewards suggest that reading for pleasure should be separated from assessment and competitive stress (similar to the findings of Wiesendanger & Bader, 1989).

The view that social interaction was in itself rewarding, supported the high rating of interaction with "significant others" (in this case, the researcher) in the questionnaire. These early adolescents had varying views about recognition for reading and about the impact of others'

views about their reading proficiency. In this regard Willa and Memory voiced different opinions:

> Yes, Miss, I mind, if the person thinks I read well because it boosts up my self-esteem and I feel good about myself (Memory, Interview 4).

> Do they think they are better than you? I am reading and you are not ... why are you judging me? (Willa, Interview 2).

When asked to elaborate further about how important it was what others thought about their reading, Willa reacted *negatively* quite vehemently and linked it to gossip:

> So I don't care if they say I am a good or bad reader ... I read for myself ... not for anyone else (Willa, Interview 2).

Even when a learner indicated that she or he did not care what others thought about her or his reading ability, the reverse might actually be true. Like Memory, some (though fewer) participants felt that recognition by a teacher was important, and that positive feedback from family members and peers was motivating and boosted self-esteem. The role of the teacher in motivating readers is confirmed by other research, also for other domains like mathematics (You, Dang, & Lim, 2016).

<u>Views on digital reading activities</u>

What children said about digital reading activities

Lively discussions ensued from reading on websites and responding in digital format. In Namibia this reading mode was not widely used in government schools during 2016, if at all. Similar to the questionnaire, the focus group interviews revealed that, should technical and economic difficulties be overcome, it could be a useful and productive way to stimulate reading motivation and enjoyment. In contrast, a few learners did state their preference for reading material in print form. During the discussion many learners explained the various challenges they experienced in the course of attempts to discuss aspects of the novel after school in virtual literary reading circles. Responses mostly alluded to technical and financial challenges as the main reason why this did not work well. They shared phones in the group, parents were unwilling to let them use the family phone, phones broke regularly and they had no smart phones, no data or funds to buy phone credit. As Sanna explained:

> For my group the Wordweavers it did not work, because most of my group members were not on WhatsApp and some were using their parents' phones and then the parents would be at work the whole day and only come back at eight, and they would already be sleeping by that time. And then about reading on the internet. I think it was okay, Miss, because you can go on a website and read from your phone (Sanna, Interview 3).

The attempt to encourage learners to discuss the novel in the mobile reading circles could not be regarded as successful, and never progressed beyond posing and answering simple questions about the novel, as well as writing short motivational messages to each other about reading. Some non-reading related chatting took place in the circles. The researcher reflected that the choice of the novel might have had an impact on the limited interaction. Learners might also have experienced this space as being teacher controlled. Despite the fact that a survey was conducted in advance, the researcher had limited understanding of the challenges these learners would face regarding access to cell phones.

By using digital devices, learners could link reading to activities that they regarded as fashionable or trendy, like using mobile phones, digital applications and social networks. These views might, however, relate more to the novelty of the experience than the advantages of access to material. The reading of other text types (film and digital texts) seems to hold promise to change attitudes towards reading, also in Namibian classrooms (cf. UNESCO, 2016). In the questionnaire, learners proposed the inclusion of more digital reading possibilities in a reading programme. This is similar to Atkinson (2009) where participants recommended a wide range of reading resources, including those that can be regarded as new literacies.

Understandings, implications and limitations

Findings from this study triangulated well with the quantitative study of Kirchner and Mostert, (2017) regarding reading motivation and reading activity among urban, Namibian pre-adolescents. These learners demonstrated similar patterns of reading activity as in the Kirchner and Mostert study, in the sense that some learners showed a preference for traditional printed text and demonstrated less interest in fictional texts. Some learners also regarded grading and assessment of activities as relevant. Social interactions around texts were not always regarded as motivating. The Namibian (African) classroom context and learners' views on motivation might differ substantially from those investigated in other (American and European) contexts. For

instance, Broeder and Stokmans (2013) found that students from South Africa differed markedly from students from the Netherlands and China as far as affective and cognitive reasons for reading are concerned, while Kirchner and Mostert (2017), as well as Mucherah and Herendeen (2013), found different patterns from the declines found in the reading motivation of adolescent readers in different contexts.

The integration of information gathered via the questionnaire and the focus group interviews reflected nuanced views. The value of reading for pleasure seems undeniable (Pressley, 2000), and the principles proposed by Safford (2014), and applied in the programme, had motivating effects according to the learners interviewed in this study. Time and space for independent reading within the school timetable, taking into account the preferences and views of learners, in enabling reading contexts, impacted positively on learner engagement. The flooding of the classroom with a variety of texts (including multimodal texts) and the inclusion of social activities and interaction stimulated positive views about reading. This was found in other programmes as well (Neuman, 1999; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). The reading preferences and interests of learners played an important role in their reading motivation (Bates, D'Agostino, Gambrell, & Xu, 2016; Snyman, 2006). In spite of differing views, most Namibian readers seemed motivated by strategies supporting self-determination, like the autonomy enhancing provision of choice. They were very aware that reading built competence and had value for the achievement of goals. The role of the teacher in guiding their choices, providing enabling environments and building social relationships involving reading among adolescents was important, but quite challenging. The desire of these learners to function as autonomous readers should not be underestimated.

Some of the ideas tried out in this programme could inspire Namibian teachers to utilise the reading period as an opportunity for developing learner engagement and motivation through independent reading. While the reading programme influenced learner views on reading and motivation during the programme, it would require a sustained programme throughout the school year to retain these motivational levels. Reading for pleasure cannot be taught in a traditional way. Similar programme initiatives implemented in the UK indicated that "teachers need to recognise the subtle distinctions between reading for pleasure and reading instruction, one is

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oriented towards the skill, the other the will" (Hempel-Jorgensen, Cremin, Harris, & Chamberlain, 2017, p. 12).

The participants in this study were urban readers who had opportunities and resources to develop as readers. Namibian readers in deprived communities should share this opportunity, and ways to expose Namibian learners to similar classroom contexts should be further investigated. It need not involve expensive changes to the physical environment. Ideally, a balanced reading programme would include a variety of text types and activities comprising non-traditional genres like picture books, comics and magazines, as well as the careful inclusion of digital and audio-visual texts. More studies, adding to the available literature on developing literacy in book-poor environments are necessary to develop and implement a reading programme elsewhere in Namibia. In this regard Kiramba (2017) recommends the inclusion of typical African oral literacies. Responses to texts should utilise discussion as a basis, but develop the stronger cognitive abilities of learners, and should not be limited to affective responses only. Challenging tasks that require high levels of argumentation and response should be included.

This researcher learnt important lessons in her interaction with these learners, and experienced that the views and experiences of pre-adolescent readers were invaluable for developing reading programmes and enabling reading environments that had been created. The study, though valuable in terms of information gathered about learner views, had some limitations. In the Namibian context, self-report measures may often be affected by social desirability. Learners might, therefore, have responded rather favourably to the questionnaire, because they tried to please the researcher or to portray themselves in a positive light. Throughout the discussions and in the journal, responses that the reading programme and all activities were educational and developed their language, demonstrated the belief of learners that reading activities – at all times – should be "educational". For African students, findings to this effect were reported by Broeder and Stokmans (2013), as well as Tötemeyer, et al. (2015). The very positive views of learners could, furthermore, have been influenced by the novelty of the reading programme, as something out of the ordinary.

Teachers should not be expected to drive a reading programme alone, without the support of partners (Bitz & Obiajulu, 2016). A school- and community-wide approach, as envisaged in the

Namibian school curriculum, is important to instil a culture of reading (Ruterana, 2012; Wagner, 2017). The complexities of including digital reading experiences, integrated as a possible solution to provide additional reading opportunities and materials, were vastly underestimated by the researcher. The researcher had to reconsider some of her simplistic views about effective ways of incorporating technology as well. Prinsloo demonstrated that, as a superficial add-on, technology will not contribute to literacy, as it does not have "intrinsic resourcefulness" (Prinsloo, 2005, p.87). However, in Namibia, with the expansion of internet connectivity and the increased use of mobile phones, technology may well be the answer to provide more access to reading material. E-lending libraries in Africa is fast becoming a real possibility, as elaborated by Kirston Hoets at the 2017 conference of the Reading Association of South Africa. As Rowsell, Motell and Alvermann (2017) point out, readers without opportunity to technology and digital resources, are at a disadvantage.

Including student voice in developing reading programmes is not common, but was used by Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) to capture children's views on motivation. Like Braden, Wassell, Scantlebury and Grover (2016, p. 440), I believe that "authorising" student voice, by providing space for students to speak and by responding to their ideas, one can improve instructional practices significantly. This entails that one should be open to learn from students.

In this project, learners' views influenced programme development in two ways: during the programme to improve this special programme and, at the end of the programme, by reflecting on the programme implementation as a whole. Documenting how urban, pre-adolescent, Namibian learners regard reading innovations involving text selection and engagement with texts could contribute to the future development of such guidelines, as well as illustrate strategies for building a reading culture in schools.

Creating space for, and encouraging, student voices and choices to co-determine reading and learning opportunities are important. The value of this study thus also lies in the opportunity it afforded learners, through the reflective stance adopted by the teacher-researcher, to influence teaching and learning, both during the programme implementation and in the further development of similar programmes. As was demonstrated, a variety of views, and not only the perspective of the teacher, should be respected in reading-for-pleasure programmes (Sperling,

Appleman, Gilyard, & Freedman, 2011). In a rapidly changing world, progressive education should allow the experiences and perspectives of learners to influence their education (Cook-Sather, 2002).

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Addendum

Learner views on reading programme from interviews: emerging themes and categories

Theme	Category
Views on the reading programme	Providing time and space for leisure reading
	Opportunity for written reponse
	Introducing texts by reading aloud
	Variety of afternoon activities
Views on motivating texts	Discussion of fiction by topic or title
	Discussion of multimodal text
	Discussion of non-fiction by topic
	Discussion of fiction by structural element
Views on motivational strategies	Offering rewards, grades and recognition
	Building relationships:visualising reading as social activity
	Providing choice and building autonomy
Views on digital reading activities	Technical challenges
	A prospect for future development
	A positive experience
	A negative experience
	Expressed preference for traditional print text