

Are Western Australian adolescents keen book readers?

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ABSTRACT

As book reading offers significant benefit for adolescents, a current understanding of whether or not Western Australian adolescents are keen recreational book readers is important for literacy educators and policy makers. This article considers the findings of a study exploring the engagement in recreational book reading of Year 8 and Year 10 students in 20 Western Australian schools in Term 4 of 2012. The article reflects on the frequency and volume of recreational book reading, as well as current attitudes toward recreational book reading in this cohort. The findings of this study suggest that the majority of Western Australian adolescents may not be keen book readers, and that boys may read less, and have a less positive attitude toward book reading, than girls.

Introduction

Literacy achievement is widely viewed as a key indicator of both individual and societal success. As recreational book reading improves individual literacy outcomes, supporting adolescent recreational book reading is an imperative for educators, parents, policy makers, and the community as a whole.

Benefits of regular reading

Adolescents who read books regularly for recreation can experience cognitive benefit and improved literacy outcomes. In a comparative study, greater time spent in independent reading has been linked to significant gains in 'word recognition and vocabulary' (Samuels & Wu, 2001). Stanovich contends that 'general knowledge, vocabulary' and 'syntactic knowledge' are all developed by regular reading (1986, p. 364). Recreational reading is linked not only to improved literacy outcomes (OECD, 2010; Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988), but also a range of cognitive capabilities (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001). Put simply, 'time spent reading is related to reading success' (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999, p. 102), and regular recreational book reading notably extends time spent reading.

While regular recreational reading can improve literacy outcomes, these outcomes are closely related to academic performance at secondary school (Daggett

& Hasselbring, 2007; Marks, McMillan & Hillman, 2001). At an international level, well-developed literacy skills have been found to improve vocational outcomes post-school (Kirsch et al., 2002). Recent research in Australia suggests that there is a significant relationship between literacy levels and likelihood of employment for both young people and adults (ABS, 2013).

Recreational reading can also help develop positive personal dimensions. It also enables individuals to foster interpersonal connections (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer & Morris, 2008), as well as provide a tool for introspection, escape and enjoyment (Howard, 2011). Encouraging adolescents to read recreationally can improve the likelihood that they will become 'lifelong' readers, and time spent reading had been linked to 'knowledge of the world', equipping students to be more informed, global citizens (Morris et al., 1999, p. 102). The benefits of recreational book reading are not confined to the English classroom; learning in all subject areas benefits from elevated student literacy levels.

Emergent aliteracy

Adolescents' literacy needs for the future are both demanding and complex, with students arguably requiring higher order literacy skills to succeed than in previous generations (Moje, Young, Readence & Moore, 2000). Adolescents need 'advanced levels of

literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives', as well as cope with the 'flood of information' that they are constantly inundated with in the digital age (Moore et al., 1999, p. 99). However, even though literacy demands are increasing, adolescents are choosing to read less. Research suggests that aliteracy, the state in which an individual has acquired the skill to read, but chooses not to, is a growing trend both in Australia and internationally. Adolescent engagement in recreational book reading is reportedly in decline in the Western world (Maynard, Mackay & Smyth, 2008; Nippold, Duthie & Larsen, 2005; Nieuwenhuizen, 2001; Stedman 2009) and beyond (OECD, 2010). US research suggests that 'nearly half of all Americans ages 18 to 24 read no books for pleasure', with adolescent reading at a persistent rate of decline (NEA, 2007 p. 7; IES, 2011).

Similarly, Australian research indicates that adolescents are relatively disengaged from recreational book reading, and this does not appear to be improving over time. Nearly three decades ago, Thompson found that around a third of students read no books other than prescribed school texts and that only 20% of adolescents regularly read books (1987). Later research by Bunbury suggested that 23% of boys and 25% of girls were self-declared non-readers (1995). Similarly, negative findings were subsequently made by Nieuwenhuizen, who found that while 45% of Australian primary students enjoyed recreational reading, only 24% of high school students did (2001). Recent research suggests that nearly a third of Australian adolescents rank reading a book as their 'least preferred' leisure activity (Manuel, 2012, p. 20). Rennie and Patteson's study of adolescents in South-east Queensland had more positive findings, with 47.1% of female and 31% of male participants found to read novels regularly (2010). While inconsistency in the research methodologies of these studies makes it difficult to make assertions about changes over time, research suggests that most Australian adolescents are not avid recreational book readers.

Beyond the early years

State-based policy and practice to improve adolescent engagement in recreational book reading is patchy and insufficient. The current government and institutional focus on literacy in Western Australia is very much on the early years; in this regard it is similar to the US, where 'most well-funded literacy research involves children in the lower grades' (Moje, et al., 2000, p. 404). The key statewide initiative is arguably the Better Beginnings program, which focuses on birth to 5 years of age, on the basis of the assertion that '75%

of brain development occurs in the first three years of life' (Allen, 2010). An unintended consequence of the early years emphasis in both policy and intervention has been the construct of a Critical Period notion, in which literacy intervention beyond these years is, by comparison, viewed as inefficacious and therefore relatively unimportant. Revised collective understanding of neural plasticity in recent times suggests that in fact, even the adult brain is endowed with a high degree of malleability (Doidge, 2007). Thus it stands to reason that literacy initiatives can benefit adolescents also, and it is vital that they be included, as research suggests that adolescence is the point of disengagement for previously keen readers; in the US the dire metaphor 'eighth grade cliff' is used to describe this shift (Grosso de Leon, 2002). Moore et al. assert, 'many people don't recognise reading development as a continuum' (1999), which has led to a cultural relaxation of emphasis on reading once the skill to read independently has been achieved.

As recreational book reading occurs primarily at home, the role of high school teachers in encouraging this practice, once the skill of independent reading has been acquired at primary school level, has not been clearly defined. Previous Australian research suggests that teachers may view the responsibility of encouraging recreational reading as residing firmly with parents, whereas parents viewed teachers as responsible (Bunbury, 1995). As some parents display neutral or negative attitudes toward book reading, the importance of supportive, encouraging teachers is apparent (1995). With high-stakes testing a school-wide priority in most cases, research is needed to provide teachers with justification for including class-based activities to encourage greater reading of books for pleasure beyond the classroom.

Purpose of this paper

In order to develop future goals for the promotion of recreational book reading in Western Australian adolescents, current data must be gathered so that an informed foundation can be established. In Term 4 of 2012, the *West Australian Study in Adolescent Book Reading* (WASABR) was conducted to examine current trends in adolescent recreational book reading in Western Australia. This paper reports on quantitative findings from the study, which provided insight into adolescent students' attitudes toward recreational book reading. Attitude was defined as 'the feelings one has towards reading' (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998, p. 144). Frequency of recreational book reading, as well as the number of books read, were also examined. Data for the whole group of respondents were analysed,

and also organised into two subsets by gender for the purpose of additional comparative analysis.

Gender difference in the data was analysed, as concerns about gender inequity have been at the forefront of much debate around literacy outcomes in recent times. While boys' comparatively poor literacy performance is 'not a new phenomenon', it has become increasingly visible due to emphasis on high-stakes testing performance and the routine collection and dissemination of statistical data (Gilbert, 1998). Possible reasons for inequity have been uncovered by researchers; within Australia, literacy practices may be gendered as feminine (Alloway, Freebody, Gilbert & Muspratt, 2002; Nieuwenhuizen, 2001, p. 7; Nichols, 2002), which subsequently leads to a rejection of reading as an undesirable 'passive' practice (Martino, 2001, p. 6). A UK study has similarly found that boys are more likely to reject reading as 'geeky' behaviour than girls, though notably only a small percentage identified reading as a 'girls' activity' (Clark, Osbourne & Akerman, 2008, p. 6). A recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study identified attitude toward, and engagement in book reading as being a likely cause of worldwide male underperformance in literacy (2010). By providing insight into the differences between boys' and girls' attitudes toward, and engagement in, recreational book reading, this paper contributes insight into a potential source of the disparity between boys' and girls' unequal performances in literacy tests, such as those recorded in National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results (ACARA, 2012) and OECD statistics (2010).

The West Australian Study in Adolescent Book Reading (WASABR)

The WASABR specifically focused on identifying adolescents' attitudes toward recreational book reading, including both fiction and non-fiction books. Many studies of reading treat the reading of all texts as of equal educational benefit, looking at 'reading' as a blanket practice rather than discerning which texts are being engaged with. However, even though texts such as magazines and comics have been in circulation for centuries now, there is a paucity of empirical research indicating their benefit for literacy outcomes- book reading alone holds this distinction.

Evidence of benefit of reading other text types is yet to be substantiated through multiple studies, and findings are mixed; for instance, an IES study determined that, for 4th grade US students, reading for information through sources such as the internet did not confer the same positive benefit as storybook and novel reading

on a combined reading literacy scale (Baer, Baldi, Ayotte & Green, 2007). An international study found that reading comic books was associated with minimal improvement in reading proficiency and in some countries lower overall reading performance (OECD, 2010). The reading of fiction books has been found to confer greater benefit for literacy outcomes than reading non-fiction material and internet-based reading (OECD, 2011a). There is evidence to suggest that cognitive function in reading different text types, such as internet-based sources and books, is vastly different (Carr, 2010). Thus the focus on book reading in this study defines the text type engaged with, narrowing the methodological focus.

While previous studies have explored adolescent recreational book reading in Australia (Nieuwenhuizen, 2001; Bunbury, 1995; Thompson, 1987), there are limited current studies (<10 years old) into recreational book reading practices in Australia (such as Manuel, 2012 and Rennie & Patterson, 2010), and none that focus on Western Australia. Student recreational practices have potentially diversified greatly in recent years, with increased access to technology, and thus current studies are needed to draw legitimate conclusions about current practice. Findings from this study provide insight into the attitude of Western Australian adolescents toward recreational book reading, in addition to the current frequency and volume of engagement in the practice.

Method

The surveys

The type of mixed method approach used in the WASABR was Explanatory Design, whereby qualitative data builds upon the initial quantitative results, facilitating greater depth of understanding of targeted issues (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The research tools were a survey and a semi-structured interview schedule. As this paper reports solely on quantitative data obtained from the surveys, the methodology described will be primarily concerned with the survey phase. The survey gathered primarily quantitative data, though there were additional open fields for gathering supplementary qualitative data. The research was granted ethics approval from the university, the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office.

Calculating the required sample

Prior to the study's commencement, the required sample size of students was calculated to be 383. This was the number of respondents needed in order to obtain results sufficiently robust to be reflective of the target population. This figure is derived from an approximate

population of Western Australian secondary students of 130000 (Department of Education and Training WA, 2008), with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. Creative Research Systems Sample Size Calculator survey software was used to confirm the sample size required. Ultimately, 520 students participated in the final data set, and 34 in-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken, and thus the required sample size for the surveys was comfortably exceeded.

The participants

One Year 8 class and one Year 10 class participated in the survey phase from each of the 20 schools where possible. The age of the 520 students involved ranged from 13 to 16 years. At one school (school G), a Year 10 class could not be accessed, so 2 Year 8 classes participated. At another school (school F) low participation was supplemented by the inclusion of additional Year 8 and Year 10 students. This substitution was allowed to increase the participation of government school students and thus make the sample optimally representative.

The final data set included 20 diverse schools. This included government and non-government schools, single-sex and co-educational schools, and Metropolitan Teaching Program (Band A) schools (which are also known as hard-to-staff schools).

Table 1. Summary of participating schools

School Types	Number (most schools fall into at least 2 categories)
Perth Metropolitan Schools	16
Rural Schools (outside Perth metropolitan area)	4
Government Schools	7
Government Independent Schools	5
Single-sex Schools	2
Catholic Schools	4
Metropolitan Teaching Program Band A Schools	3
Anglican Schools	2

While the majority of participants came from 'un-streamed' or 'general' classes, Gifted and Talented Program (GATE) and Academic Extension Program (AEP) students were represented in the sample.

The process

The research was piloted at a Perth metropolitan school prior to data collection for the primary sample. Minor changes were made to the research tools to reflect issues that arose during the pilot; for example, an open, qualitative field was added to the end of the survey, as students expressed a desire to provide additional insights that the survey did not capture in its pilot form.

Schools were recruited in Term 4 of 2012 to participate in the WASABR. Schools were selected to ensure wide representation from diverse socioeconomic and geographic contexts, which would not necessarily have been the result of random sampling. Principals were emailed with detailed information packages. When they gave Site Manager Approval for their school to participate, Student and Parent Information and Consent Forms were distributed to the classes involved. Only students providing both parental and individual consent were eligible to participate.

The survey was filled out at the school, either online, using Qualtrics online survey software, or in paper form, depending on the school's preference. Paper surveys were subsequently manually entered into Qualtrics by the primary researcher. The data was stored and managed in Qualtrics, in a cloud storage system.

Analysis

Basic analysis was performed in Qualtrics, generating frequency, per cent, mean, variance and standard deviation for data. Analysis of volume, frequency and attitude toward recreational book reading was carried out according to gender. Each of these data sets was cross tabulated and then analysed for significance using the χ^2 test in SPSS. In all three cases, gender was found to be highly significant ($P < 0.01$).

While data on other demographic factors were collected, including country of origin, ethnicity, and first language, there was inadequate information to perform meaningful analysis based on these data. Analysis for age has not been performed, as the data are not longitudinal.

Frequency

Survey participants were asked the following question: 'How often do you read books in your free time?' A clear bi-modal distribution is apparent in the responses in Table 2, with an equal amount of avid readers (2+ times a week) and infrequent readers (> once a month): both at 36%. Thus students tended to favour an avid or infrequent quantity of reading, though more than a quarter of students were more neutrally situated, reading between once a week and once a month. The findings in this sample suggest that there may be just as

Table 2. Recreational book reading frequency

Answer	Response	%
Never	95	18%
Less than Once a Month	91	18%
Once a Month	46	9%
2-3 Times a Month	52	10%
Once a Week	46	9%
2-3 Times a Week	90	17%
Daily	99	19%
Total	519	100%

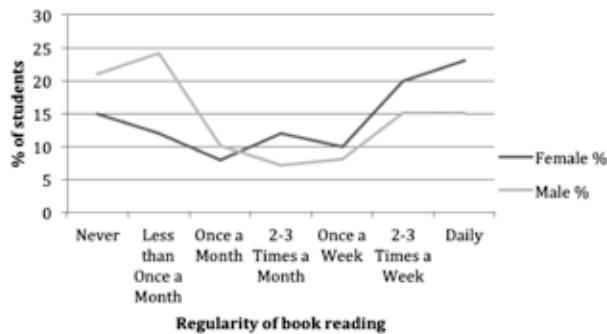


Figure 1. Frequency of recreational book reading by gender

many keen readers as infrequent readers.

When these data were split by gender, as in Figure 1, it was clearly apparent that girls were reading books more often than boys. Instead of a relatively clear bimodal distribution, the data for boys were skewed toward infrequency, and the data for girls were skewed toward frequency.

When the data were further split by gender into avid readers and infrequent readers, the gender difference was noteworthy. 45% of boys were infrequent readers, compared with 27% of girls; 30% of boys were avid readers, compared with 43% of girls.

Reliance on overall frequency, a common measure in international reading studies, is brought into question by an examination of the duration of reading in a data subgroup in the WASABR; the Daily readers. Without this examination, Daily readers could be presumed to be a homogenous group of heavy readers. To determine if this assertion was true, Daily readers were asked to respond to question ‘If you read “Daily”, how many hours a day do you spend reading books during your free time (on average) on a normal weekday?’ A

Table 3. Duration of reading for daily readers

Answer	Response	%
None	0	0%
0-1 hour	34	34%
1-2 hours	32	32%
2-3 hours	22	22%
3-4 hours	4	4%
4-5 hours	3	3%
5-6 hours	3	3%
6-7 hours	0	0%
More than 7 hours	1	1%
Total	99	100%

skip-logic was programmed into Qualtrics, so that students who did not previously indicate that they were Daily readers were not able to respond to this question, and responses for any paper survey candidates who did not fulfil this criterion were likewise discarded.

As seen in Table 3, when the data were examined, it became apparent that a third of this ‘Daily’ group (34%) read for less than an hour a day, and two-thirds of the group (66%) read for less than two hours a day. The findings contest the notion that independently applied, overall reading frequency is a reliable indicator of reading. Data exploring length of reading sessions is clearly of equal importance. If this study is reproduced in the future, duration data will be collected from *all* readers, and the scale will be adapted to allow smaller time increments.

To fully appreciate how comparatively low this rate of ‘avid’ reading was, it should be compared with the self-reported frequency of ‘avid’ student engagement in other recreational practices, bearing in mind that only 34% of avid readers were reading for more than 2 hours a day.

In their free time, 67% of all students spent more than 2 hours a day social networking (texting, online social networking, talking with friends), 36% of all students spent more than 2 hours a day playing sport, and 37% of all students watched more than 2 hours of TV per day. Thus it is apparent that while overall reading frequency findings are useful, without examination of sessional duration, it is impossible to gauge

Table 4. Volume of book reading frequency

Answer	Response	%
More than 3 per week	11	2%
1-3 per week	71	14%
1 a fortnight	108	21%
1 a month	81	16%
1 every couple of months	102	20%
Less than 3 a year	67	13%
No books	76	15%
Total	516	100%

how much book reading is actually being undertaken.

Volume

The use of a measure of volume is limited by the high degree of variability in book lengths. In addition, the length of a book is also not a reliable measure of the degree of complexity of the writing; a shorter book could take longer to read if the complexity of the text is greater. Thus, if applied in isolation, volume is not a very useful measure. When added to supplementary measures of frequency, attitude and duration, it becomes part of a greater picture of adolescent reading, and thus has value.

In order to determine the volume of books the students were reading, they were asked to respond to the following question: ‘Approximately how many books do you read in your free time? Do not include books that you have to read for school.’

As seen in Table 4, while 37% of students claimed to read at least one book a fortnight, 48% read a book less than once a month.

Again, when this data were split for gender, as in Figure 2, the findings peak at different ends, with the highest number of girls reading a book each fortnight, and the highest number of boys reading a book every couple of months. Unsurprisingly, girls, who were reading more often, also subsequently read a greater volume of books.

Interestingly, while 21% of boys claimed to ‘Never’ read for fun, only 19% of boys reported reading no books for recreation. Similarly, while 15% of girls claimed to ‘Never’ read, only 11% of girls reported reading no books for recreation. This highlights validity

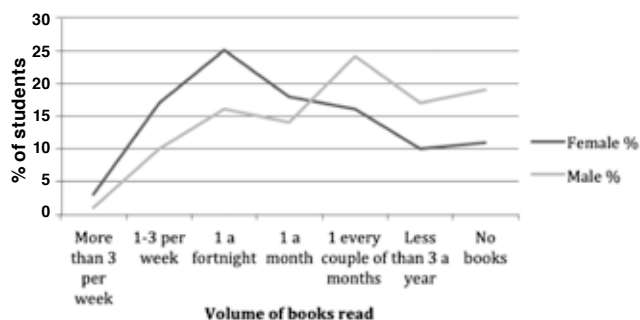


Figure 2. Volume of recreational book reading by gender

Table 5. Agreement with positive attitude statement

Answer	Response	%
Strongly Disagree	64	12%
Disagree	76	15%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	125	24%
Agree	153	30%
Strongly Agree	97	19%
Total	515	100%

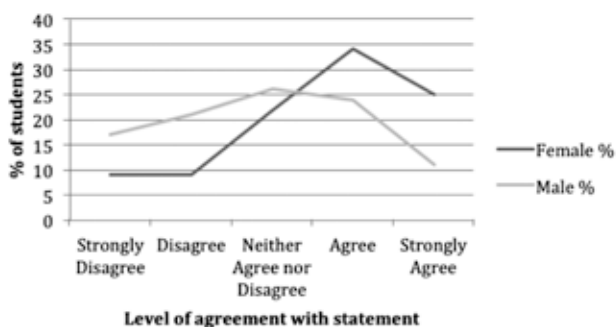


Figure 3. Agreement with the statement ‘I like reading books in my free time’ by gender

issues data derived from self report, with 2% of male and 4% of female non-readers not truly non-readers by their own inconsistent report.

Attitude

To determine students’ attitudes toward reading, students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: ‘I like reading books in my free time.’

As can be seen above, nearly half (49%) of students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with 27% of students disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing. Thus most of the students had a positive or neutral attitude toward reading books for recreation.

When data was split for gender, as in Figure 3, it could be seen that girls were more likely than boys to have a positive attitude toward reading books for fun in their free time, with the data again skewed in opposing directions.

It is worth noting that some students really loved reading books; 11% of boys and 25% of girls, and that the findings in this examination of attitude, where 61% of boys and 81% of girls were neutral or positive toward reading, are not reflective of media statements that claim boys do not like reading books.

Still, the difference between girls and boys findings are troubling, and suggest that, when examining attitudes toward recreational book reading, gender is clearly an issue of significance.

Discussion

Frequency

While there is a paucity of research examining how frequently adolescents need to read books to experience benefit in literacy outcomes, studies looking at 'general' reading (including other text types) suggest that daily reading is associated with better performance on literacy tests (OECD, 2011b). The Institute of Education Services (IES) found that for US 4th graders, daily or almost daily home story or novel reading led to higher than average scores on a 'combined reading literacy scale' (2011, p. 16), reflective of international findings. An analysis of reading achievement and diminishing returns for time invested by 13-year-olds in homework and recreational reading found a positive relationship between reading frequency and achievement, with returns diminishing much later than when time is invested in homework, with 'far more gradual diminishing returns extending to six or seven times per week' (Walberg & Tsai, 1984, p. 449).

According to this study, only 23% of girls and 15% of boys were reading daily, thus there is scope for considerable improvement in reading frequency in order to optimise literacy outcomes.

Volume

The volume of books read by the cohort as a whole was low. While only 15% of students claimed to read no books, suggesting an improvement on Thompson's earlier finding that around a third read none (1987), only 16% of students read at least one book per week,

and 28% of students read less than 3 books a year. The difference in book exposure between these two extremes is noteworthy, as exactly how many books need to be read to confer improved literacy outcomes was the subject of a study by Clark and Poulton, who found that 50 books a year, or 4 books a month, 'seems to be a tipping point' (2011, p. 14). Only 16% of Western Australian students were meeting this 'tipping point' of a book per week; the majority was not within close proximity of this target.

Attitude

As 49% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they like reading books in their free time, and only 27% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed, these results were considerably more positive than Nieuwenhuizen's attitudinal findings in 2001. What is also noteworthy is the fact that this was a much higher positive finding than the data on frequency; the finding that 49% liked reading books in their free time was not reflective of the percentage of students who were characterised as avid readers (34%). This suggests that, in this sample at least, attitude was not necessarily reflective of practice. The relationship between frequency and attitude was not consistent.

Further proof of the lack of unqualified causality between attitude and frequency could be noted in examination of avid and infrequent readers whose attitude was contrary to their frequency. Not all avid readers actually liked reading; 9% had a negative or neutral attitude toward reading in free time, whereas a substantial 33% of infrequent readers had a positive or neutral attitude toward reading in free time. Thus, while it can be suggested that reading attitude impacted upon the 'behavioural intentions' an individual has about book reading, such as whether or not they intend to read and how often, and the feelings evoked by recreational book reading (McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth, 1995, p. 937), this impact was not definitive. A high rate of readers exhibited reading frequency levels that were not wholly reflective of their attitudinal position.

Conclusions

Clearly, some Western Australian adolescents were keen book readers. However, the reading frequency, volume and attitude statistics reported on in this paper suggest that the majority of Western Australian adolescents could not be characterised as keen or avid book readers.

The target that all stakeholders, educators, parents, and the students themselves should aspire to is daily recreational book reading. This should ideally be of at least one hour in duration daily, on average over the

week. The majority of Western Australian adolescents are not meeting these goals.

Prescribing a specific volume of books to read is avoided, as though Clark and Poulton noted the benefit of 4 books a month, this volume is carefully qualified; simply setting a 50-book target is not enough. Doing so may actually have a detrimental effect, as reading for enjoyment rather than meeting targets is more beneficial, and access and ability issues may still remain static barriers regardless of what target is set (Clark and Poulton, 2011).

A challenge for educators and policy makers will be to make the most of the relatively positive attitude adolescents' hold toward book reading to increase reading frequency. It is reasonable to suppose that the 33% of infrequent readers who had a positive or neutral attitude toward reading books for recreation could be readily susceptible to intervention to increase their reading, through encouragement to give some regular preference to book reading over other recreational pursuits.

The gender difference was substantial across all measured dimensions. This was reflective of international findings, which suggest that boys are less likely to deem recreational reading enjoyable, leading to the conclusion that as 'most of the gender gap can be explained by boys being less engaged, and less engaged students show lower performance, then policy makers should look for more effective ways of increasing boys' interest in reading at school or at home' (OECD, 2010, p. 12). Snyder makes the point that current debates concerning gender and reading performance privilege a particular point of view- that boys are 'failing' rather than girls 'achieving' (2008, p. 136); however when reading frequency, volume and attitude were all clearly unequal, consideration of how to improve these dimensions for boys must be worth examining. It should, however, be noted that there clearly was much room for improvement for girls, with over a quarter of girls (27%) infrequent recreational book readers. The fact remains that, internationally, 'although girls have higher mean reading performance' and 'enjoy reading more' than boys, 'the differences within genders are far greater than those between the genders' (OECD, 2010, p. 12). Thus while the performance of the genders are not equal, *solely* focusing on ensuring improvement for boys promotes full attention on a dichotomy that is not reflective of the greatest inequity in performance. While boys deserve additional attention to promote improvement, improving attitude and frequency of engagement in the cohort, as a whole, should be the priority.

From a methodological perspective, the importance of looking at reading through multiple dimensions,

rather than exclusively frequency, volume or attitude, is apparent when examining the findings. In particular, it should be noted that attitude was not a fail-proof determinate of regularity of engagement in reading.

Limitations on the study apply. As student and parent consent was necessary for respondents to participate, it is likely that parents and students with an interest in book reading were more inclined to consent. This means that the findings for the sample were likely to be more positive than for the general population. Also, as previously explored, there are inconsistency issues with self-report measures, which undermine the validity of the findings. The study was also constrained by the fact that it doesn't explore the impact of the examined variables (frequency, attitude and volume) on any of the aforementioned potential benefits of recreational book reading; cognitive benefit and improved literacy outcomes; academic performance and vocation achievement; and the fostering of positive personal dimensions. The article relies on existing research explored in the introduction to give substance to the premise that these correlations exist. Future research in this area could incorporate these additional dimensions.

The findings identify adolescent recreational book reading in Western Australia as an area to be marked for future improvement, ideally through a revision of current policy and practice. This study provides a valuable starting point for reexamining our current position toward adolescent literacy initiatives.

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